

Socialist Challenge

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Leyland workers vote to

TAKE ON THE TORIES



THE 2-1 vote of BL workers for strike action against the derisory 6.8 per cent pay offer is not just a challenge to Leyland management — it is a threat to everything the Tories stand for.

BL boss Michael Edwardes is one of the Tories' favourites. For two years under Edwardes, the car workers have had to suffer massive redundancy, cuts in real wages, and attacks on working conditions. Since last April, when management arbitrarily imposed its 92-page 'slaves charter', there has been a sustained onslaught on traditional working practices and shopfloor organisation.

Edwardes' stand has to be seen in the framework of the crisis of the Tory government. Thatcher's financial policies haven't worked. Now she is imposing a strict 10 per cent wage ceiling in the public sector, as well as demanding thousands of millions of pounds in extra cuts.

Private employers are falling in line. Many of them are offering wage rises of less than 10 per cent — Ford and Rolls Royce have made offers well under this figure.

BL's offer shows everything that is wrong with Tory Britain — once again working people are being asked to pay for the crisis of the bosses' system. The response of the Leyland workers shows the way forward — mass action can throw the Tories back.

A general fightback is urgently needed and eminently possible. A fightback on wages can be led by BL workers. Workers at Ford and other plants should co-ordinate action on their claims with that of BL workers.

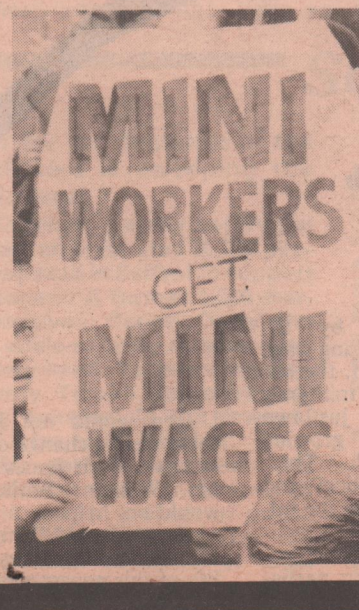
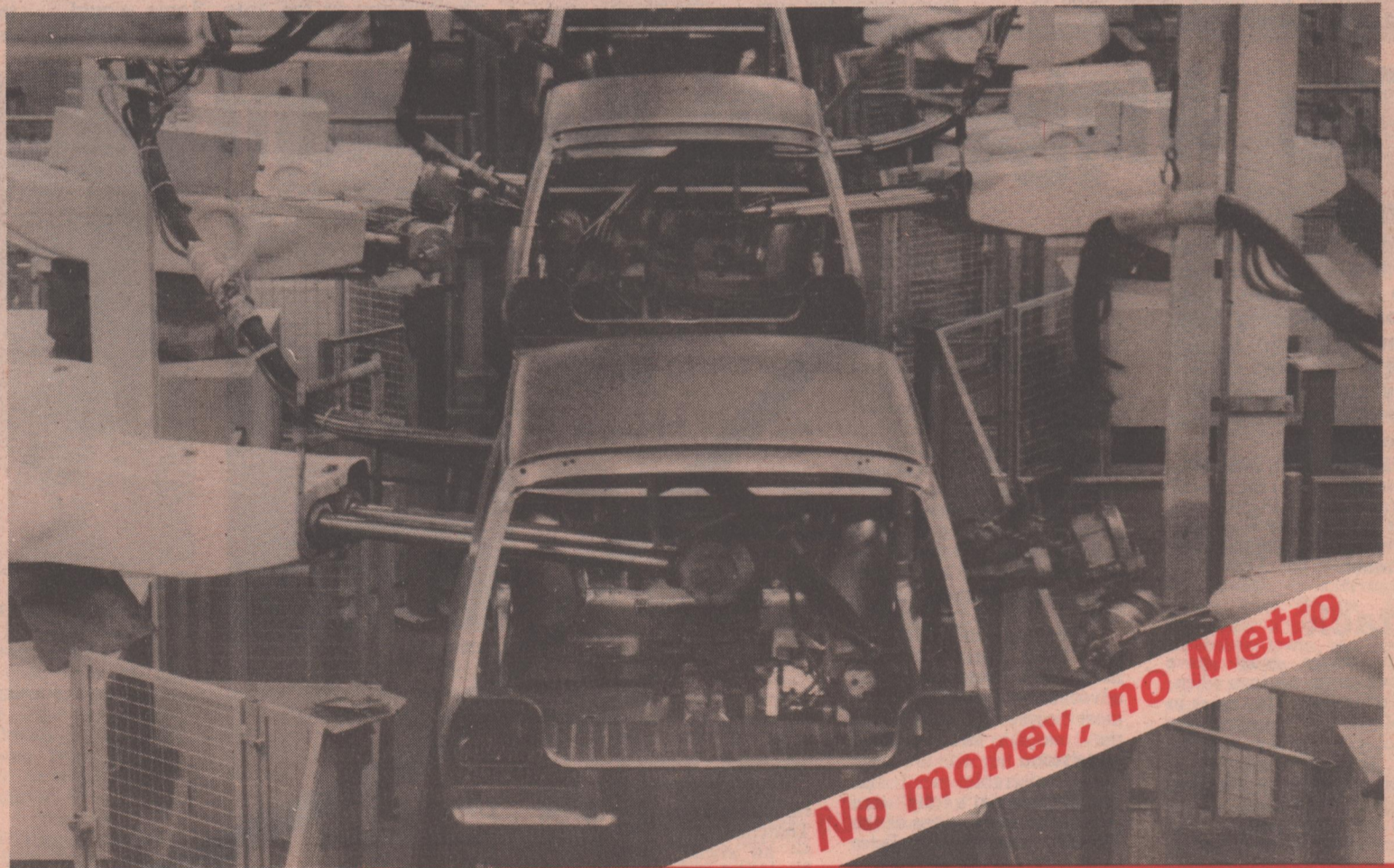
A fightback on unemployment is being started by the occupation at the Gardener's engineering factory at Eccles near Manchester, and the huge Labour Party demonstration against unemployment to be held in Liverpool on 29 November.

A fightback on the cuts can be organised on the basis of the decisions of last Saturday's Labour movement conference against the cuts, which demanded that Labour councils should refuse to implement the cuts or sell council houses.

All these struggles need to be co-ordinated towards a fight to throw out this hated government. Another year of the Tories will only mean 3m unemployed, more cuts, and ever-falling living standards.

The best way to avoid that is to ensure maximum solidarity with all those who are fighting — especially the BL workers and the workers occupying the Gardner's factory.

The logical outcome of bringing these struggles together will be mass action, culminating in a general strike to throw out the Tories.



Labour leadership: neither Healey nor Foot but Benn

WHOEVER wins the current MPs-only election for a new Labour Party leader, the Labour left has got itself into a hopeless tactical tangle.

Having persuaded Tony Benn, the authentic leader of the Labour left, not to stand, it is pulling out all the stops to try to get MPs to vote for Michael Foot.

Having just a couple of weeks ago denounced the whole election as a fraud and a stitch up —

which it is — the left has now forgotten its own starting point.

By launching an all-out campaign for Foot it is lending legitimacy to the whole undemocratic charade.

Of course, there is one positive aspect of the left's campaign. The demand being made by many GMCs that MPs vote according to local party instructions is excellent. But if the left wanted to put the main emphasis on that, then Benn should have stood.

The illegitimacy of the MPs-only election is be-

ing lost in the hustle to get Foot elected.

If Foot wins, it will become increasingly difficult to replace him with Benn when an electoral college decides on a new leader. Foot will be seen as the person who can 'unite' the party.

Socialist Challenge stands for Benn becoming leader of the party. He is the real leader of the left; any democratic election system would sweep him to power. That doesn't mean we support his politics.

A victory for Benn would be a massive blow against the right at every

level of the Labour movement, and a blow against the autocratic position of the parliamentary Labour Party.

In the meantime supporters of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and the Rank and File Mobilising Committee are in grave danger of smothering themselves in allegedly 'subtle' tactical ploys which will end up failing to get Benn elected and missing the main point: that the present MPs-only election is a fraud and a farce from beginning to end.

IF THE pundits are correct, by the time Socialist Challenge hits the streets Denis Healey will have topped the first ballot in the contest for the Labour leadership, and Michael Foot will be in with a shout when it comes to the second ballot on 10 November.

The experts say that Foot is liable to pick up the majority of the votes of the Peter Shore and John Silkin supporters the second time around, and accordingly we are in for a close-run race.

Foot's chances were reckoned to be strengthened at the weekend when Eric Heffer told a rally at Blackwood, Gwent, that all left-wing MPs should vote for Foot.

He argued that 'a clash between the parliamentary party and the constituencies has to be avoided', and that supporting Foot was the best way to prevent such a confrontation.

Such logic is probably sound, the problem is the premise on which it is based.

Clash

Michael Foot may well be the best way to avoid a clash between the 267 members of the Labour Party who happen to reside in the House of Commons and the hundreds of thousands of Labour Party members elsewhere, but where is the merit in avoiding such a clash in the first place?

Ever since the Blackpool conference the majority of Labour's left-wing in parliament has offered compromise and concession to the party's right wing.

A few days before his endorsement of Foot, Heffer was saying that the election shouldn't take place at all. A surprisingly high number of Labour MPs — 66 — voted to postpone the election.

Playing Footsie



FOOT (right) was Callaghan's faithful deputy



Now the expectation is that most if not all of them will troop into the Foot lobby when the vote takes place, thereby giving credibility to the whole process. Such attitudes sum up the thinking of many of the left MPs — state a principle

and when that principle isn't accepted, drop it, and put into practice the contrary principle.

Socialist Challenge is against MPs participating in the vote. Some would say, no doubt, that this isn't 'practical

and that now the contest is on a vote has to be cast.

But we would suggest that if the 66 MPs who voted against the election taking place didn't vote it would be much easier to argue the irrelevance of the outcome.

Democracy

The more serious argument against Eric Heffer is that a to-the-death 'clash' between the rights of the 267 MPs and those of the majority of the Labour Party members is not something which should be encouraged. The election now taking place illustrates why.

What it is about is not just this or that candidate; rather it is an act of defiance of the Labour Party conference decision to widen the franchise for the election of the leader.

The right wing of the party and the majority of MPs have decided on that act of defiance: it is they who are promoting a clash; their challenge to Labour Party democracy needs to be taken on, full-frontal. Instead Heffer and others in the parliamentary left have opted to play Footsie with the Labour right.

As a consequence, whoever wins the present election, it is the Labour rank and file who are the losers.

The decision of those who have sought to represent the rank and file — the Rank and File Mobilising Committee and the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy — to also endorse Foot is particularly regrettable.

Both these groupings correctly advised Tony Benn not to stand, because of the fraudulence of the election process. Now they say Foot should be voted for. It might be all very well to have your cake and eat it, but to take away the cake and then promote the feast is gastronomically unsound and politically inept.

Photo: Chris Davis Report

The Winterton of discontent

By Tom Marlowe

TORIES like to think of themselves as honourable gentlemen and ladies. Criticising each other in public is not usually the sort of activity that fits in with their public school ethics.

Far better to argue in private away from the ears of Joe (and Joan) Public who might get ideas if they hear their masters squabbling with each other.

Attack

So things must have reached panic stations when, on Wednesday of last week in the House of Commons, one Nicholas Winterton, a right-wing Tory MP launched a blistering attack on his own, Thatcher government.

'I say to my party — for heaven's sake wake up before it's too late,' was Winterton's message. 'Tens of thousands are being put out of work unnecessarily because of inflexible monetarist policies,' he complained. 'There is only one group of people doing well — big business,' he observed.

Hardly the sort of criticism to be expected from a right-wing Tory. But then, attacking Thatcherism has become an increasingly favourite pastime among those who once popped champagne corks at the mere mention of Margaret Thatcher's name.

Change

The Confederation of British Industry was one of the latest to get in on the act. Its director general, Terence Beckett, told the *Guardian* last Thursday: 'A lot of companies are, as you know, clos-

ing plants, sometimes closing all their operations because they can't carry on.

'This is a very serious state of affairs... I have every sympathy with the government in its present plight, but it does need a radical change in direction.'

Even more outspoken was the latest issue of the *Economist*, a magazine which advocated monetarism before most people had even heard the word, never mind understood it.

'A miserable mess' and 'the government's folly' were two of the descriptions of the Tories' economic policies supplied from this source.

Survey

These criticisms were backed up with sheets of statistical evidence.

The CBI's quarterly survey of industrial trends reported that only 4 per cent of the 2,000 bosses who had been questioned said they were 'more optimistic' about 'the general business situation in your industry' than they had been four months previously.

The St James Group, a forecasting club of industrial, commercial, and financial companies, predicted that this time next year the official unemployment figures will be hovering around three million; the balance of payments deficit will be four times as bad as now, and company profits will be half what they were under the Labour

government.

The cracks in the Tory ranks are good news for all Thatcher-haters everywhere — an enemy divided is a weakened enemy — but it's not appropriate to perform as cheerleaders for the CBI, the *Economist*, or Nicholas Winterton.

For one thing, the strategy some of these critics are advocating would make things worse for the rest of us.

Both the *Economist* and the CBI have called for mass sackings in the public sector, together with 'the imposition of a single-figure limit to wage increases' — at a time when inflation is running at twice this rate.

Criticism

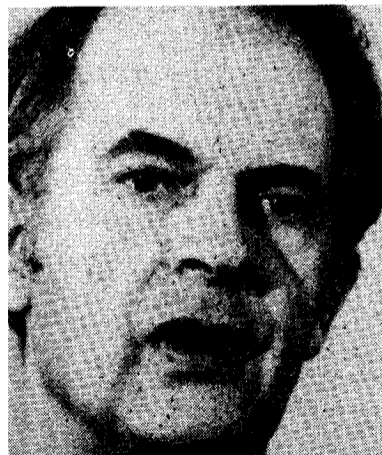
Indeed the mounting criticism from within the Tory and ruling class ranks is connected with the approaching wage round, and the growing evidence that significant sections of the working class are willing to stage their own, very different revolt against



Joseph



Thatcher



Winterton

ONLY one group is doing well — big business. That's the opinion of Tory MP Nicholas Winterton (Right). He blames Joseph and Thatcher for inflexible policies

Thatcher.

The rejection by BL workers of the insulting wage rise offered to them, the obvious signs of militancy among miners, are just two indications of the growing ineffectiveness of Thatcherism as a political and economic strategy for the ruling class.

But Tony Benn was correct when he said in parliament last week: 'MPs should not devote too much time to the possibility of a U-turn. A

U-turn would not help. If there were a change of Prime Minister to Mr James Prior or Mr William Whitelaw it would not help.'

Instead, said Benn, it was necessary to 'look beyond the life of this government'.

What Tony Benn did not say is that it is important that the government's

life be terminated as soon as possible. Their divisions are our opportunity; needed is a winter of discontent which would make that of 1978-79 look like a springtime romance.

Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)



Photo: Republican News

Who are the hunger strikers?

By Geoff Bell

THEY are, said Michael Allison, the Tories' North of Ireland minister responsible for prisons, 'a few crazy hunger strikers'.

He was referring to the seven political prisoners in the H Blocks of Long Kesh who are now in their second week of a hunger strike until death. Mr Allison's choice of words was another example of the human, tolerant attitude for which the Thatcher government is famous. Such a contrast to the 'crazy' or 'terrorist' prisoners of the H Block.

But for the moment let's not entirely accept the descriptive accuracy of Mr Allison's words. Let's examine just who the hunger strikers are.



Brendan Hughes

First, there is Brendan Hughes, from the Catholic working class district of West Belfast. He and other prisoners point out that when the British government abolished political status in 1976 it was going back on a policy adopted four years earlier giving the prisoners of Long Kesh the rights they are asking for today.

Brendan Hughes has personal experience of the effect of this policy change. His first

taste of British justice was when he was arrested in 1973. He wasn't given a trial, or any nonsense like that; he was merely locked up in an internment camp along with hundreds of others whom the British government decided didn't merit the attention of judge or jury.

Brendan didn't think a great deal of being locked up in an internment camp so the following year he escaped. When finally caught, he was given a trial. One of the charges against him concerned his escape. That was a nice twist of British justice: tried for escaping from an imprisonment to which he had been committed without trial.

When convicted, he became a 'special category' prisoner. This meant that he was allowed to wear his own clothes, freely associate with



Sean McKenna

other prisoners, decline prison work, and organise his own recreation and education.

The following year the British parliament passed legislation which meant that any person who committed a crime after a certain date in May 1976 wouldn't have such rights. Two years later Brendan was attacked by prison

warders. He fought back. Consequently he was dragged before a juryless court where he was sentenced to an additional five years in prison.

Stand

Because this 'crime' had been committed after special category status had been abolished Brendan was sent to the H Blocks. So, one day in 1978 Brendan Hughes was judged a political prisoner and imprisoned in the special category cages of Long Kesh, the next day he was deemed an 'ordinary criminal' and sent to the H Blocks.

Then there is the case of Sean McKenna from Newry. Like Brendan, Sean was interned from 1971 to 1975. During his initial interrogation, Sean was made to stand spreadeagled against a wall for 30 hours consecutively. He had a hood put over his head, was denied food or sleep, and was subjected to a continuous playing of 'white

noise'.

All this the British government admitted when Sean's case was one of those brought before the European Court of Human Rights in 1976. This institution described the treatment Sean received as 'inhuman and degrading'.

When Sean was released in 1975 he went to live in the South of Ireland. On 12 March the following year he was kidnapped by armed men and taken back across the border where he was handed over to the RUC.

Justice

The armed kidnapers were widely assumed to be those upholders of British justice and fair play, the SAS. Sean was charged with the attempted murder of two members of the RUC and sentenced to 25 years in prison. He is now on hunger strike.

So too is Tommy McKearney from Moy, Co



Tommy McKearney

Tyrone. Tommy was arrested at his home at 3am on 18 October 1977. He was taken to Castlereagh interrogation centre near Belfast. Seven days later a police surgeon, Dr Robert Irwin, saw him.

Dr Irwin was to later report that Tommy was 'pale, nervous and exhausted'. He had a black eye, multiple bruises, a swollen forehead, a swollen neck. He told the doctor that he had been punched, beaten-up, had his wrists bent, and been nearly suffocated when his interrogators had pulled a black plastic bag over his head.

Such 'questioning' produced a 'confession' from Tommy. On this basis he was tried, convicted and sentenced in the special 'Diplock' courts in which one, government-appointed judge sits alone without a jury.

Strike

Brendan, Sean and Tommy are just three of the seven prisoners on hunger strike; three of the 500 or so prisoners in the H Blocks of Long Kesh who are now 'on the blanket'. Their cases are not exceptional.

They have been tortured, kidnapped, framed, interned, and tried in courts in which everything is against them. Now, because they dare to protest against all this, the Tory government says they must die.

Solidarity spreads

SUPPORT for the demands of the hunger strikers is sweeping the north of Ireland.

On 26 October, the day before the strike began, an estimated 25,000 people demonstrated in Belfast in support of the prisoners. A further 1,000 marched in Dungiven, County Derry, the same day, while a similar number marched in Derry itself the following day.

In County Tyrone approximately 600 people marched in the town of Coalisland, also on 26 October.

A similar pattern was seen this week. At the weekend thousands of people took part in pickets of police and army barracks throughout the north of Ireland. A series of local demonstrations and pickets were also held.

In just one such protest 800 people marched through the Twinbrook housing estate in Belfast, last Sunday.

The same day an Irish football match was leafleted in South Down, and afterwards several hundred attended a meeting. On Monday, in Belfast there was an hour-long occupation of a Belfast employment office by over a hundred people organised by Youth Against the H Blocks.

Support has also been coming in from the south of Ireland. Several hundred attended an eve of the hunger strike meeting in Dublin on 25 October, and a similar number participated in a torchlight procession in Dublin the following day.

Last weekend there were vigils and meetings in a number of southern

Ireland towns, including Drogheda, Monaghan, and Dundalk.

In Britain a highly successful Charter 80 tour, organised jointly by the Socialist Students Alliance and the Socialist Workers Student Organisation, has just ended. Many meetings attracted over a hundred students, although in a couple of instances Charter 80 meetings were broken up by fascists.

Preparations are now going ahead for a 48-hour fast outside Downing St this weekend, in which a number of prominent individuals have agreed to take part.

Further details of activities in Britain can be obtained by phoning the national office of the Troops Out Movement, on 01-267 2004.

Gardner's solidarity — urgent task for the left

By Pete Clifford

THE GARDNER'S occupation in Eccles, near Manchester, has inspired workers all over the country as the first major struggle against unemployment. It shows the way to fight redundancy and tackle Thatcher — mass industrial action.

Gardner's is also a test by the Engineering Employers Federation to use the recession to undermine and break up shop floor organisation.

Redundancy notices, sent out to Gardner's workers last week, were specially designed to make sure shop stewards, including the AUEW convenor Tom Macafee, were among those sacked.

The Gardner's management are using the 'Michael Edwardes tactic' — the secret ballot. So far they have just sent out a 'ballot about a ballot'.

By these methods the management

are attempting to split up and undermine the shop stewards' movement in the plant. But they can be effectively countered through the sort of organisation which the Leyland unions have built up their present strength — regular section meetings, information on the progress of the dispute, and massive solidarity.

For the engineering employers the stakes are high. Victory for the workers at Gardner's will provoke a wave of industrial action against redundancy in

Manchester and possibly nationally.

At a second factory in Eccles, Lankros Chemicals, the TGWU has withdrawn cooperation with management and are discussing action over a jobs dispute.

With tens of thousands on short time or facing redundancy, the danger for the employers of a jobs' fight explosion is real. Two bus depots in Manchester are discussing industrial action against redundancy. The best possible solidarity with Gardner's, apart from sending cash, is to turn this potential into action.

But a lead must be given. In Man-

chester the Engineering Confed has called an emergency meeting to discuss Gardner's involving all Manchester engineering workers.

That sort of lead would start a debate on a fightback on every shop floor in the area.

On 29 November thousands of workers from all over Britain will attend the joint Labour Party/TUC demonstration against unemployment. The Labour Party NEC should be flooded with resolutions calling for Gardner's to lead that demonstration.

Tony Benn and Bob Wright should do a repeat of their tour in favour of Labour Party democracy, but this time in support of action against unemployment.

Benn's call in parliament for support for every worker fighting unemployment should be backed up with action. Benn and Wright should put their money where their mouth is and lead the fight.

'If we win there will be struggles against redundancy all over Manchester'

IN the fourth week of the strike, Gardner's is a hive of activity. One of the best organised sections in the plant is the Milling Department — 'Macafee's Marines' as convenor Tom Macafee calls them.

Redmond O'Neill talked to Dave Walton and Neil Wray about how the section is organised.

'THE millers were well organised long before the occupation,' explained Dave. 'We started a shop fund to cover us in disputes over bonuses. Everyone had a name card and paid weekly. So when the occupation started we had a fair bit of money to pay for food and everything we needed.'

'Like other sections we had fortnightly meetings where the stewards reported back from shop stewards' meetings and we could raise any problems we had.'

'We've continued meeting since the strike started so we were able to organise a rota of everyone in the section to come in, and we've got a chart on the wall showing who turns up. That way we could make sure everybody's pulling their weight and keep them informed about activity.'

Kettle

'First, we started with our own food, cooker, kettle and the rest of it. So, as a lot of us were quite active some people had a funny attitude to us — as if we were the militants or something. Since then, we've moved upstairs to the offices and nearly all of us are involved in or around one committee or another.'

'Now we're not so cut off and because people can see we're effectively organised, people's attitudes towards us have changed, and we've earned a lot of respect in the factory.'

Millers are one of the youngest sections of the Gardner's workforce with an average age in the early 20s. Dave explained how they've tried to involve the less experienced workers.

'We've been going out around the country collecting cash. So whenever we go on a delegation we take one of the younger lads with us. It gives you a lot of confidence to see the sort of support we're getting. Since the strike started, I've been really surprised at the sort of people we've been getting involved.'

Thick

'Sometimes you'll get someone who has hardly opened their mouth for five years and who is now right in the thick of it. Just to give you an example of what it is

important to be democratically organised — the other night there was a scare, a false alarm that the police were coming to the factory.'

'There were only a handful in from our section at the time, but within an hour we were able to get another 28 people down here. That's because the millers have stuck together at meetings while some other sections have tended to split up.'

Afloat

Like a lot of other workers at Gardner's, Dave is well aware that they are leading the fight against unemployment and that solidarity and extending the action to defend jobs is vital.

'The Engineering Employers Federation must understand the stakes involved in this strike. If we win there'll be struggles against redundancy all over Manchester. So I bet they're pumping money into Gardner's to keep management afloat.'

'But that won't do them any good. A big help in ensuring that we win would be for other factories to start fighting on jobs.'

'The Engineering Confed has called an emergency shop stewards' meeting to discuss unemployment. What I'd like to see them do is call a one-day strike of the whole Confed or a day of action to get the ball rolling.'

Ballot

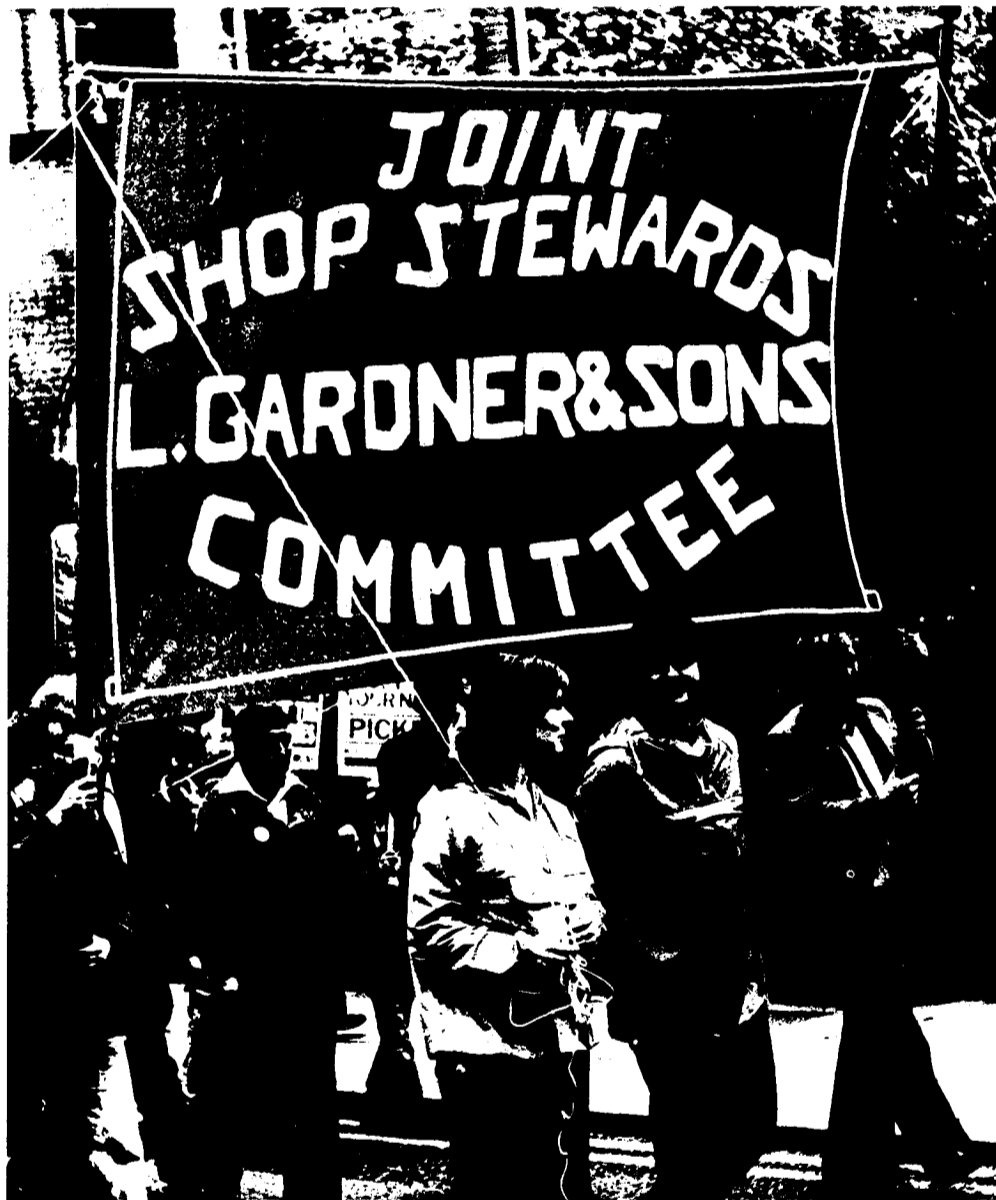
From the start of the occupation, Hawker Siddeley has refused to follow the usual pattern of negotiating redundancies, and instead opted for confrontation.

Having failed to break the strike before the AUEW district levies started coming in, the management have been trying to split the workforce by introducing a ballot.

Each worker received a slip of paper with no name, number or identification on it.

The question was, 'Do you agree that a secret ballot should be arranged about a return to work?'

Management claim to have received over 1,000 replies in favour. The stewards hit back against this poorly ballot.



They ceremoniously burnt 1,700 blank ballot papers which they had produced themselves and which were identical in appearance with the ones issued by the company.

But the company is intent on balloting, and it is due to take place this week. Letters from the AUEW district secretary and the convenor have gone out from the occupation to every Gardner's worker calling for an abstention.

Tom Macafee said that all this was part and parcel of the Prior Act's attacks on the unions: 'We definitely need a campaign to get rid of the Employment Act, a prerequisite of which is another movement similar to that against the Industrial Relation Act.'

Next Week: We will have a full report from the Labour Coordinating Committee trade union conference that took place on 1 November in Leeds.

'The 29 November demonstration is very important to us'

TOM MACAFEE, convenor at Gardner's told Socialist Challenge: 'the whole dispute is linked up directly with Thatcher's attacks on the unions and on jobs.'

'The Tories are well aware that it is not just the Hawker Siddeley board who would benefit from the unions being smashed at Gardner's, but also the whole Engineering Federation.'

Meanwhile the financial support keeps coming in and the response has been especially good in Sheffield, Nottingham, Huddersfield and London. Trips by delegations to Birmingham (organised by Birmingham Gardner's support committee) to Scotland and the South Wales executive of the NUM (arranged by South Wales Right to Work Campaign) are set up for this week.

Said Tom: 'It is the energy of the shop floor in the factory and the left wingers which have secured the response we have had so far.'

'I have circulated every AUEW district secretary in the UK asking them for their good offices in reproducing and circulating our appeal sheets. I know for a fact that this simply hasn't been done in some areas.'

'However the response when we do go to places is generally favourable. The 29 November demonstration is very important for us in getting more support. We will be taking a big contingent to Liverpool that day. I believe our banner should take a very prominent place in the march.'

'We have the support of the Right to Work march from Manchester to Liverpool, and we will be sending an official contingent. It is good that the Manchester Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering unions have called a special meeting for all shop stewards in a week's time to discuss support for the occupation.'

'We definitely need some sort of action organised for this meeting in our support.'

Sheffield raises £500 for Gardner's in three days!

By Rab Bird, AUEW

NEARLY all of Sheffield industry is on short-time, and steel-making is at half capacity. Despite this, the Gardner's occupation has received widespread support.

Six shop stewards from the occupied factory toured the city, and raised £5,000 in three days from shop stewards committees. Their visit was widely publicised in the press and on TV.

The AUEW district committee has set in motion a local ballot to start a district levy of 5 pence a week per member.

This will raise £2,000 a week for the occupation. The procedure to establish the ballot is lengthy, and it is urgent that the local executive committee take steps to speed up the process.

Setting up a Sheffield-wide inter-union committee would be ideal for organising support throughout the entire labour movement. The trades council has already pledged its support for the occupation.



Tom Macafee

Photo: KEVIN COEN

Miners: 'Fight for the full claim'

By Paul Wilson, Bolsover NUM

AFTER submitting a wage demand of 35 per cent plus other holiday pay and retirement claims, the National Union of Mineworkers was offered only nine per cent by the Coal Board last month.

This insult to Britain's miners has, however, *not* been rejected totally by our president Joe Gormley. Once again he has shown a great weakness in leadership.

Arthur Scargill rightly criticised Gormley for giving press statements before any decisions had been made by the full executive committee of the union.

Each time Gormley has

been faced with leading our union in the fight for wage increases, he has had the same attitude. The rank and file know this well. The time is now right for the total recall of all our leaders, especially Joe Gormley, and for new leadership elections.

Before the NCB offer, Gormley told us that he was determined to improve wages and demand the full

35 per cent. When questioned about the 9.25 per cent offer he told the *Guardian*: 'Whether I would say the same today, having heard the statement from the NCB, is another matter.'

He also said that he would settle for the going rate of inflation — put it modestly at 16 per cent, but we all know that it's nearer 22 per cent. With a leader like this, there is little wonder that our living standards are deteriorating.

The offer from the NCB amounts to £86m. This would mean an across-the-board payment of around £7.50, a rise of between seven and ten per cent. A total of £145m is available.

but the NCB is telling the same old story and pleading poverty.

At present the current average earnings of a miner before tax is £73.50; the coal-face worker gets a basic wage of £102 per week, and his average is said to be £147. Of this £32 is supposed to be incentive bonus — speaking for my own area that figure is a myth!

If we were to win our full demand, this would give coal-face workers £7,500 per annum. Yet the press talk about the £10,000-a-year miner!

Pressure

It's easy for non-miners to make such statements, but speaking for myself and my comrades in the mining

industry, they are worth every bloody penny. We must demand the full £100 a week minimum for surface workers, since the last 20 per cent rise was eroded before it was even received.

Both the Tory government and the NCB are putting the pressure on the miners. The industrial relations department of the NCB has predicted that with a wage and coal price increase they would incur a loss of £50m.

The government has also held back grants to the NCB, and has instructed it to break even by 1983-84. These issues, plus the endless excuses of the recession, put the coal industry in the front line of the onslaught of capitalism.

The Western industrial countries reckon that by the

year 2000 their own coal output must increase three-fold from 1979 levels. Given Britain's large coal reserves, the future should look good. In terms of world energy, oil is very expensive and has a fairly short life expectancy. Coal will be in great demand at the end of the century.

Policy

However, coal reserves can't be mothballed like oilwells when demand falls off, and reopened when the demand is greater. The current NCB policy and the government grant reductions can only mean the threat of pit closures.

A pit that is closed today is closed forever. This is *not* the future that we miners or

any other worker wants.

On 6 November the full executive of the NUM will meet the Coal Board, and we hope to hear better news than last time. With the present government throwing workers on the dole by the hour, the miners' leaders should stand firm by their decisions to secure a brighter future for their members.

Demand

All the Tories have done is increase inflation and unemployment. Our union leaders should demand the full 35 per cent and not allow pit closures and further erosions in living standards to damage our future.



One year after Derek Robinson sacking....

Leyland workers fight back

By Paul Lawson

FOR the third time in a year Leyland workers have gone into struggle against the attempts of BL management to solve the problems of the ailing car giant at the expense of the wages and conditions of the workforce.

The master plan of Leyland boss Michael Edwardes includes forcing down workers' wages, through speed up, rationalisation and weakening of shop floor organisation.

A year ago Longbridge convenor Derek Robinson was sacked for advocating opposition to the Edwardes' plan. Despite the resulting strike action, made official by the TGWU, the struggle was diffused and eventually sold out by the leadership of Robinson's own union, the AUEW.

The real struggle building up around the Robinson case was sabotaged when AUEW



president Duffy announced an 'inquiry' into sacking.

By the time the inquiry reported the obvious fact that Robinson was unjustly sacked, the workers were in no mood, in the financially tight post-Christmas period, to enter into further strike action.

The sacking established Edwardes' point: he showed that he could move at will against any militant, any sign of opposition to his plan.

Spurred on by this victory, Leyland management moved last April to ram home their advantage.

In the wake of Robinson's dismissal they were able to impose acceptance of the derisory five per cent wages offer. At the same time they forced acceptance of their new 92-page code of conduct which defined new working practices, including mobility of labour and the introduc-

tion of 'time and motion' engineers to assess new working rates.

The imposition of this defeat last April was anything but inevitable. Led by the Rover plant at Solihull, 18,000 workers came out on strike. As support snowballed, there was every chance that Cowley and Longbridge would have eventually fallen in step with the struggle.

Suddenly however Moss Evans announced the TGWU agreement with the management. The strike was stabbed in the back.

Despite the demoralisation caused by these defeats, and the further decline in Leyland workers' living standards and conditions which has resulted, the votes at the plants last Thursday show that the workforce is far from defeated.

Offer

Management offered the workers a derisory 6.8 per cent, in reply to the claim for an across the board £17.21p, at a time when inflation is around 17 per cent. To add insult to injury this offer comes in the wake of two successive 5% pay levels.

Leyland's much vaunted bonus scheme has resulted in an average net bonus of 6p per week. No wonder the offer met with such a decisive rebuttal!

But an analysis of the vote, plant by plant, shows that those plants which last April came out and were defeated, were those which are most reluctant to take on the management again.

Rejection

Whereas rejection of the offer was overwhelming at Longbridge and Cowley, at Rover — faced with dramatically falling orders and more redundancies — the vote was to accept the offer. Even the more militant SD1 plant voted 2-1 in favour of acceptance, although even in Solihull there were some close votes — the Landrover plant accepted by only 2,700 to 2,300. But the decisive thing is that all the most important plants voted against.

The decision to reject the company's offer and to take strike action is not only a threat to the Edwardes' plan, but a major threat to the Tories.

By Brian Grogan

TERRY Duffy, the right-wing president of the Engineering Union, justified his agreement to a massive wage cut for his members because of 'the perilous state of the industry' and 'the first priority is to save jobs'.

This puts him to the right of Tory leaders like Angus Maude who at the Tory Party conference admitted that unemployment was not the fault of the unemployed.

Unlike Duffy, most left-wing leaders are now opposing the Tories' idea that the highest level of

Do wage rises cause unemployment?

unemployment for 40 years is due to workers pricing themselves out a job

On the AUEW national committee, Roy Halverson opposed Duffy's acceptance of the 8.2 per cent pay offer, arguing: 'People cannot afford to buy the products of British industry. This is why goods are piling up in the shops and firms are going out of business.'

Accepting low pay does not save jobs. Ask

British Leyland workers. Under Duffy's guidance, they have accepted 5 per cent 'rises' for the past two years. Twenty-five thousand jobs have been lost during the same period and more redundancies are in the pipeline.

Ask the steelworkers. They accepted a 16 per cent wage increase - 5 per cent below the then rate of inflation. Subsequently 50,000 jobs have been lost in steel and

they are still disappearing. Low wages don't cause unemployment, either.

Increasing demand doesn't solve capitalism's problems. During the '60s a massive expansion of credit kept crises at manageable

from the character of our profit-based economic system. Crises, throwing millions of people out of work, have occurred periodically throughout capitalism's existence. This is because in such a system there is no planned relation between pro-

to maximising profits.

The result of this anarchy is that production under capitalism is subject to successive periods of boom and bust.

Investment rushes into booming sectors to try to get a share of the proceeds. Greater investment pushes profits down. The market then becomes incapable of absorbing the goods at a price which keeps up profits.

The result is massive over-production. Investment takes a nose-dive and massive unemployment results.

We have no interest in uniting with the employers by promising them higher profits through higher wages, as the Labour left argues. Pin the convict's badge where it belongs, on the bosses and their system!

Rather than 'share' wages and take a cut in living standards, as the Tories are demanding, we say 'share the work, and shorten the working week'. If the system can't manage to grant these things in this day and age, companies should be expropriated.

In this way a move towards a system which can plan the relation between production and people's needs could be made. This is what we mean by a socialist programme. This is what the new unions in Poland are starting to demand.

Profit is what causes unemployment. A government which backs workers' actions against the bosses and takes measures to end the capitalist anarchy is the answer. This is the nettle the Labour left has to grasp.

Arguments for Socialism



levels. By the 1970s the consequences of such policies was to send inflation through the roof.

'Counter cyclical' measures are not the cause of unemployment. They simply cover over what's really going on. Unemployment arises

duction, that is, investment - and people's needs.

Only after the event, when it can be seen whether a profit has been made, are investment decisions judged to have been right or wrong. Each firm dedicates itself

NO MORE TORY CUTS!

That's the message from the Lambeth conference

By Pat Kane

NO more Tory cuts. That was the message from the Local Government in Crisis conference held in London last weekend. The conference, called by Lambeth Labour council and unions, was a huge success with over 700 delegates attending from all over the country.

They represented local authority trade unions, Labour council groups, and constituency Labour parties. Three hundred observers were packed into the galleries.

A draft statement calling for strike action against the Tories was discussed. **Ted Knight**, from Lambeth council Labour group, opened the conference by demanding that all Labour councils should refuse to implement Tory cuts provided that the unions agree to organise a general strike from 1 January '81.



Conference Delegates discuss while the Labour Party NEC observers look on



Ray Varnes

teachers' union NUT moved that a steering committee should be elected by the conference, and that it should be ready to re-call a conference 'in support of councils or councillors penalised by the Tories'.

Jack Brown from Barnsley Labour Party, which is dominated by the Yorkshire miners, moved that the conference should 'call on the TUC to prepare a plan for a general strike' to defend workers' interests.

This was a fighting conference. The steering committee that was elected will meet on 15 November to plan further action.

Rates

But not everyone had come along to the conference ready to organise this type of action.

The national executive of the public employees' union NUPE tabled amendments which called on Labour councillors to raise rates - and then blame it all on the Tories.

Ron Keating, the union's assistant general secretary, was pessimistic about any

Where the delegates came from

THE provisional list of delegates shows that around 450 came from local authority trade unions, including the manual building unions; 200 of the country's 635 constituency Labour parties, and 50 Labour council groups were represented. The final figures will be published next week.

fight the cuts, you'll have no members anyway, since the Tories want to destroy the services which employ them.'

Lambeth Trade Council's amendments attacked the utopian demand for strike action from next January. Instead it called on activists to begin the campaign that could stop the Tory cuts.

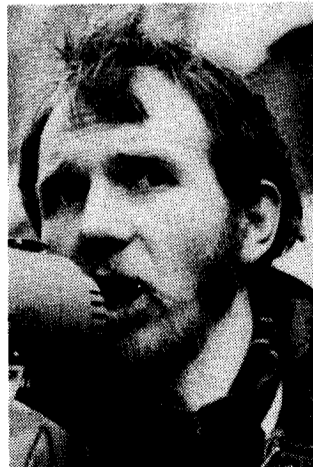
Unity

Wiseman argued for a more realistic approach than both the pessimism of NUPE and the impossible plan of Knight.

'We have to start by taking a stand now,' she said. 'No one should be selling council houses, or planning cuts. We have to build a movement that can save our services.' The Lambeth amendments argued for an ending of overtime and a shorter working week.

Solidarity and unity were needed to beat the Tories. That meant 'both local unions and councillors acting together to stop the cuts'.

Speaker after speaker countered the NUPE executive position. **John Sud-**



John Suddaby

daby, president of NUPE's London divisional council and a Socialist Challenge supporter, argued: 'What we need is for both Labour councillors and trade unionists to take a stand. It is possible to mobilise our members against cuts.'

Delegate after delegate argued that the mood among the ranks of the labour movement was for a fight.

Cliff Fox, from Clay Cross, where councillors were

disbarred from office by the last Tory government, said that they were right to do that, and they would fight this government too.

If **Ted Knight** and Lambeth council refuse to make cuts they will be assured of the support of thousands of ordinary workers throughout the country, Fox added.

Vote

David Morgan, leader of Sheffield Labour group, tried to save the NUPE executive by proposing a compromise - delegates should vote for everything!

Ray Varnes, vice president of NUPE London division, insisted that the conference should support the trades council's position. He announced that a lunchtime meeting of his delegation had voted to oppose the NUPE executive leaderships' position. In the event, only a handful of delegates voted for the NUPE leadership's position.

Other amendments strengthened the draft statement. Lambeth branch of the

What the conference decided

THE final decisions were overwhelmingly for action. Labour councillors should undertake:

- ★ no cuts in jobs or services - no redundancies or run down of direct labour.
- ★ no rent or supplementary rate rises this financial year to compensate for government cuts.
- ★ no sale of council houses or housing land.
- ★ to work with local anti-cuts committees and community groups to build local support.
- ★ strike action and occupation of threatened facilities.



Vanessa Wiseman

Photo: Newelline

Photo: Joanne O'Brian

H Block — it's up to us

ONCE again we are faced with the daunting prospect of Irishmen dying in occupied Ireland. The blanketmen have been forced by an uncaring British government to face death through hunger strike like so many of their comrades down through Irish history.

The British government would have us believe these men are criminals and that as a matter of principle they could not concede to their demands.

In the British government's attempt to ensnare the Republican movement in an issue they feel capable of controlling, the lives of the blanketmen have become expendable, like pawns on a chess board to be played with at the whim of some Tory politician.

To the British the fact that the blanketmen have a right to political status becomes irrelevant. Faced with such a hopeless situation how can the blanketmen win?

They can win through the help of the mass of the people, who can let their opinions be heard and felt through letters of protest to local clergy and people of influential standing in the community and so on.

Let the British government know that the lives of defenceless prisoners are not footballs to be kicked around the political arena.

Down through the generations the Irish nation has always rallied to the support of their defenceless prisoners on hunger strike. Is this generation going to abandon today's prisoners to the inhuman excesses of the British? I do not think so; this generation will play its part in putting an end to the insane policies of the British government.

I will end by quoting an expression much used by the blanketmen: 'Tiocfaidh ar la.' — our day will come. Your day has come to throw your weight behind the blanketmen and to ensure that none of these young men die.

Is mise le meas.
JIM MORAN, Derry

Watch out, there's a red pencil about

All the letters on this page have been edited...so, please try to keep letters to 300 words.

Getting it right on socialist feminism

I FEEL angry and upset about Valerie Coultas's article on the socialist feminist conference (30 October). It is inaccurate and misleading in its account of events over the past three years and, with the exception of Women's Aid and the National Abortion Campaign, wholly negative about the activities of the Women's Liberation Movement.

This is not the first socialist feminist national conference since the January 1978 conference in Manchester. There was a large national conference in London in March 1979, out of which came the proposals for a conference on Women's Oppression and Imperialism.

The present conference was not 'continually postponed'. On the contrary, a

long time was spent planning it to allow detailed discussion of the theme, agenda, and structure. A resource list of films, books, and articles was produced, and in many parts of the country there were regional meetings, series of talks, and other events to prepare for the conference.

Valerie refers in her article to the collapse of Women Against Racism and Fascism (WARF) as an indication of the weakness at the present time of the socialist feminist current of the women's movement.

But this is much more likely to reflect the problems in Britain of developing a broad anti-racist, anti-fascist movement, which effectively challenges state racism rather than simply the activities of the National Front.

WARF was an extremely important development for the women's and anti-racist movements, both theoretically and in terms of the numbers of women it

coverage of the fight for Jewish rights in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Argentina, and the Arab world — for example Syria and Iraq — as a part of anti-bureaucratic and anti-capitalist struggles.

We need to explain the alternatives to Zionism that have and will exist — Bundism and revolutionary Marxism, and help to win Jews from Zionism to a struggle for Jewish liberation.

We also need to explain our programme for the Arab East and our position on the Israeli Jewish nation and Jewish national and other minorities in the Arab world, for example Morocco.

This should emphasise our programme for the joint

struggle of Jewish and Arab workers both inside and outside Israel to overthrow the Israeli and Arab ruling classes so as to establish a united socialist states of the Arab east. At the same time we defend the right of self-determination of the non-Arab national minorities such as the Kurds and the Israeli Jews.

Our weakness has allowed the Israeli government to divide and weaken the anti-fascist movement by playing on the fears that many Jews have that the Palestinian Liberation Organisation is linked to fascist movements.

These fears are partly based on links the PLO had with some of the leaders of the Palestinian National Movement in the '40s — the

El Husseinis, for example, did have links with the Nazis.

We can only undermine the attempts of the Israeli ruling class to put its interests before those of the mass of Jewish people by vigorously combating anti-Semitism, by demonstrating our support for the fullest possible development of Jewish culture and identity, and by our opposition to forcible assimilation.

The article did not understand the fear under which most of the world's Jews live. We will only weaken Zionism by being the best champions of Jewish rights internationally.

MARK SOLOMONS,
Manchester



Anti-Semitism must be combatted

I WAS rather concerned to read the article on the bombings of the Paris synagogue (9 October).

Although there is an obvious need for a united anti-fascist front, we need to explain to the left in Europe the necessity to combat anti-Semitism which influences millions of Europeans and, unfortunately, the left itself.

Socialist Challenge should carry an 'Arguments for Socialism' on anti-Semitism drawing on Abram Leon's and Nathan Weinstock's work, explaining our ideas on Jewish self-organisation and Jewish liberation and its contribution to the international fight for socialism.

This should include

Soviet unilateral disarmament?

FRED Halliday criticises the Militant tendency's appeal to the Soviet government to renounce nuclear weapons and to 'rely on a combination of a workers' militia and the class consciousness of the Western proletariat'.

I agree that the 'revolutionary instincts of the West European working class' are not very strong at the present time, and that 'hostility to the Soviet Union is very deep'.

But surely renunciation

Soviet nuclear weapons 'are not defensive'

I WAS amazed to read Brian Grogan's piece on nuclear weapons (9 October). I find it literally incredible — I haven't read anything like it from the IMG since 1973.

I'll mention just one point. Brian says: 'The possession of nuclear weapons by the Soviet Union is overwhelmingly defensive.' Not so; strategic nuclear weapons (intercontinental missiles and bombers) are the practical tools to implement the theory of strategic air offensive.

This theory, developed in the Second World War by the British and Americans, said quite simply that you can most quickly defeat your enemies by destroying their industries by bombing. This very quickly became accepted orthodoxy and was practised against both Germany and Japan.

Now the myth about the strategic air offensive (as perpetuated in films like the *Dambusters*) is that it works. In fact it doesn't — as the Americans found out in Vietnam when that country failed to grind to a halt. (It didn't work against Germany and Japan either, but that's another story.)

The point is that it is still generally accepted by the military that it does — and by the Russian military no less than the American.

The second point is that the strategic air offensive is precisely that — offensive. I cannot see how destroying American, British, and other Western countries' industry can be a 'defensive' policy of a workers' state.

Perhaps comrade Grogan might like to reconsider his position: hopefully before the workers' bomb has frizzled us all into cinders.

BARRY PAVIER, London

of nuclear weapons by the Soviet Union would have an enormous impact in the West; it would give a tremendous boost to the anti-war campaigners from which the left as a whole would benefit.

Who knows many of those who invariably associate leftists with the Soviet Union might be more ready to listen to us if they could see that the Russians were 'behaving nicely'.

No government can ignore public opinion entirely, and it would surely be difficult to prove 'aggressive intent' against a government which had renounced nuclear weapons.

JIM PARKES, Walsall

'London dominated'

Perhaps the most disturbing feature of the recent trial and sentence of the Scottish Republicans at Glasgow has been the total absence of comment in the far left press.

One can hardly believe that this would have been the case had these events occurred in London. Many Republicans who consider themselves socialists follow the arguments of John MacLean and accuse the far left of being 'London-dominated organisations', and as long as situations such as this remain unremedied protests to the contrary will cut little ice.

This is especially so when one considers the record of the left in defence of Mathew Lygate of the Scottish Workers Party who received one of the harshest sentences in Scottish legal history.

Of course, we have serious differences with the urban guerilla strategy, but the only way to win these people from this erroneous conception is by being the first to defend them against the bourgeois state.

CHARLES PALMER,
Falkirk

What's Left

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

WORKERS Power Forum: Down with Imperialist War Moves! Defend the Iranian Revolution! For Proletarian Revolution in Iraq/Iran! Speaker: Mark Hoskinson. Fri 7 Nov 7.15pm Friends Meetings House, Euston Rd.

NORTH-WEST LONDON TOM public meeting 'Don't let the hunger-strikers die'. Tues Nov 11, 7.30pm, Tavistock Hall, Tavistock Rd, NW10 Speakers: Angie Sharrif, Brent East LP (personal capacity), person from the Relatives Action Committee.

DEMONSTRATION in protest against the closure of St Benedict's Hospital and all Health Service cuts called by St Ben's Hospital Defence Committee. Sat 15 Nov, 10.30am St Benedict's Hospital, Church Lane, London SW17. March to S London Hospital for rally.

PEOPLES Festival '80. 12 hours of culture, politics and fun. Sun 30 Nov, 11am-11pm Belle Vue, Manchester. Tickets £2.50, reduced for non-earners. Details: 28, Heathersage Rd, Manchester 13. 061-224 5378. Org: M/cr Area CPGP.

Fleet St Star gazers

MENTION of Lord Matthews, the boss of Express Newspapers and Cunard (30 October), reminded me of a TV interview which he gave some months ago, indicating how the political con-game works.

Matthews said that he personally vetted every editorial in his paper. Anything which displeased him came out. That's very interesting because one of his papers, the *Daily Star*, broadly supports the Callaghan-Healey mob.

Matthews evidently does not regard the Labour right as a threat to capitalism. This just shows how much choice voters have.

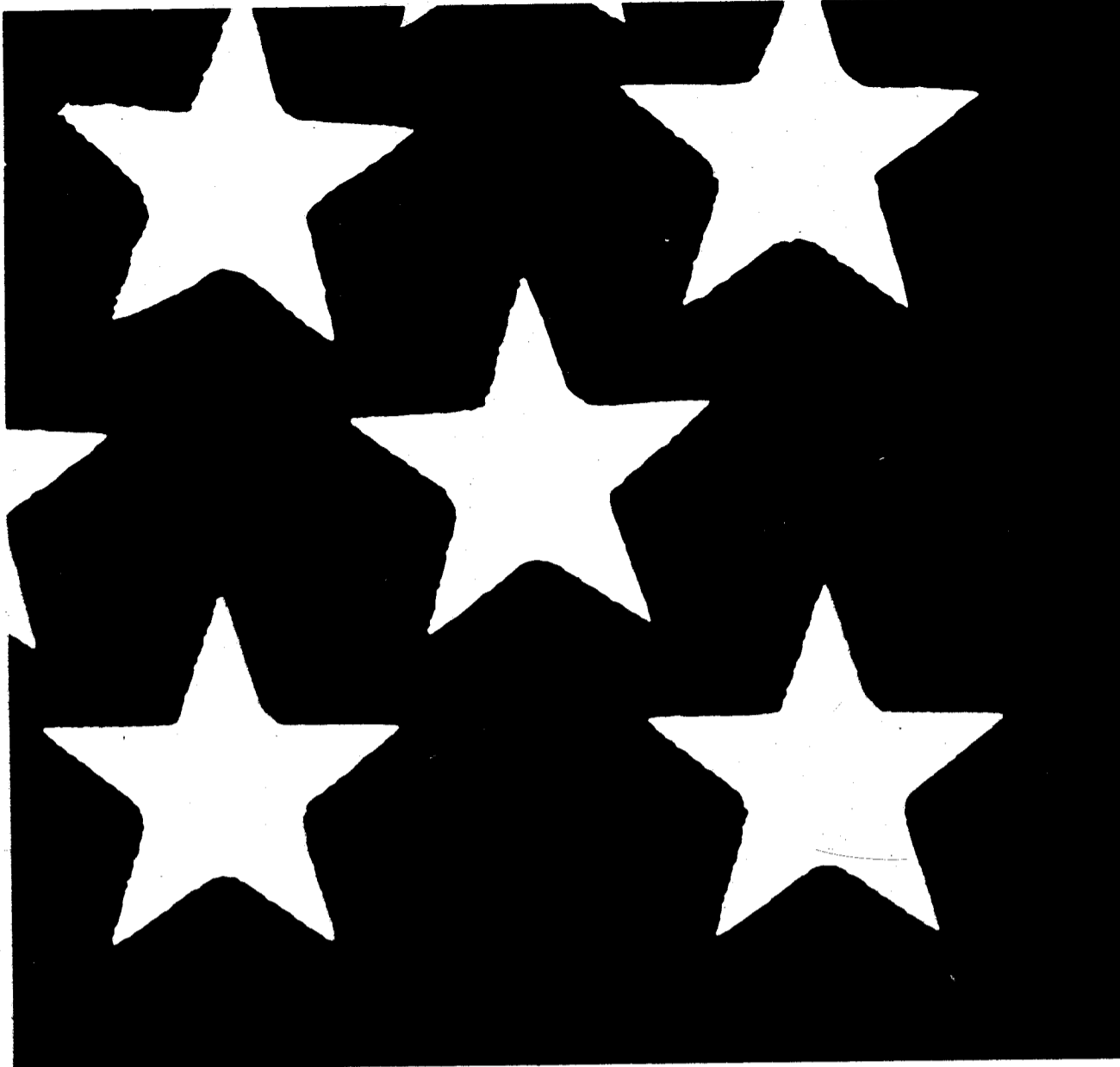
JIM PARKES, Walsall

New pamphlet from Socialist Organiser: THE FIGHT FOR TRADE UNION DEMOCRACY.

Includes: why officials should be elected; why voting should be in workplace meetings; women in the unions; democracy on the shop floor; democracy on AUEW, EETPU, ISTC, TGWU, NUPE. 20p (plus 10p postage) from 5 Stamford Hill, London N16.

New pamphlet from socialist youth paper Barricade. CLASS WAR NOT NUCLEAR WAR.

Facts and figures on the new arms race plus analysis of its causes and socialist strategy to fight it. 15p plus 10p postage from PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.



U.S. WORKERS A LABOUR

THE United States has elected a new president. In Britain, TV and press concentrated on the match between Carter and Reagan, but these were not the only candidates. Also standing for the presidency was steelworker Andrew Pulley, the candidate of the Socialist Workers Party, an organisation in political solidarity with the Fourth International.

Phil Hearse and Tessa Van Gelderen spoke to DOUG JENNESS, a leader of the SWP, about the US elections.

For the first time in many years the living standards of American workers are being cut. How are they responding?

Yes, the employers want to drive down the real income of the American worker; to boost business profits they have cut social services, resisted unionisation and held down wages. But the workers, defeated in no major struggle, are becoming angry, frustrated, and open to new ideas.

There has been a growing number of wildcat strikes and big

battles over unionisation. At the shipyards in Newport News, Virginia, black and white workers shared in the most important strike victory in America for many years. White workers even seem to feel less hostile towards black rebellions than they were a decade ago.

America's rulers have failed to work up a patriotic fervour among workers over events in Iran. There has, for example, been a total unwillingness to support the idea of using US troops to recover the hostages.

The move to re-introduce the

draft (or draft registration) following the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, was thoroughly unpopular.

On the other hand, labour leaders have persuaded some of their followers to accept the idea of import controls and restrictions on immigrant workers, whom they accuse of stealing the jobs of Americans.

What does the SWP think of the suggestion that workers should vote for Carter to keep Reagan out?

The American party system is

different to the European. The two big parties, the Democrats and the Republicans, are both capitalist. Indeed, it is almost as if they were two wings of the same capitalist party. Nor is there a significant petty bourgeois party.

The problem is that although a substantial portion of the industrial working class is organised in powerful trade unions there is no mass party of labour. The idea of forming such a party has been at the forefront of our campaign.

ported the Equal Rights Amendment?

Yes, there has been considerable labour movement action in support of the Amendment. Several big demonstrations took place in the past year, one in Virginia, which consisted primarily of labour organisations, and a huge march in Springfield, Illinois, in which they played a prominent part.

Only three more states need to ratify the Amendment and it becomes part of the Constitution.

The National Organisation of

Women is striving for an alliance with the labour movement. Its leaders seek to confine it to agreements at the top, but this legitimises the idea of an alliance amongst the base of both movements.

Why has the struggle of blacks declined in the 1970s?

In the late 1960s black people were inspired by the success of the civil rights movement in smashing legal segregation, and they went on to win concessions like jobs' and anti-poverty programmes. We think that desegre-



gation was the most important victory in the class struggle since the construction of the CIO in the 1930s.

But today the leadership of the black movement is in crisis. In the new economic climate, the ruling class is granting few concessions to the black community so that black leaders of a middle class outlook have nothing to offer their followers. At the same time the most militant black leaders of the late 1960s were assassinated and militant organisations like the Black Panthers were smashed by repression.

Only by joining forces with labour can the black movement go forward.

The Democrats and Republicans have millions of dollars to spend on TV advertising. Can a small workers' party like the SWP hope to make an impact? It was hard for you even to get on the ballot.

Despite the struggle we had to get on the ballot, our candidates received some publicity on local, if not national, TV and radio. Still our ideas, in some form or other reach millions of people.

We get to talk to thousands of people in factories, on campuses and at our forums. It all helps to win people to the party.

We will of course not win the presidency. Last time we got 100,000 votes. But the vote is not the main thing; it is the opportunity to get out and fight for our ideas and to win new recruits for socialism.

The SWP has been involved in a major legal battle with the FBI and other state agencies. What is the result?

Watergate revealed inform

ERS NEED PARTY



Are there any moves towards the creation of a Labour Party besides the propaganda of the SWP itself?

Well, there's more discussion in America today on the labour party question than for 35 years. The head of the California state AFL-CIO (the AFL-CIO is the US equivalent of the TUC) last year called upon the trade unions to give the matter formal consideration and arranged a conference of representatives of various trade unions to discuss it.

Another prominent trade unionist, a vice-president of the

Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers' Union, has been talking about a labour party.

Most important perhaps was the recent conference of the International Brotherhood of Machinists, a major industrial union with a million members. It refused to endorse Carter's candidacy and debated the idea of a labour party, and decided to take the debate into the wider labour movement.

Have workers taken up the demands of the women's movement? Have they sup-

other methods. The government claims that the harassment programme is discontinued, but we've plenty of recent evidence to show that it's not.

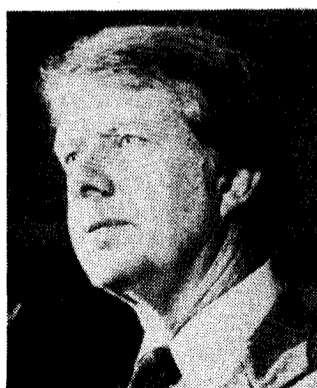
The litigation has had a big impact on the country. The case comes to trial in January, and we're gearing up for a big campaign.

Finally, who is going to win the presidential election, Reagan or Carter?

Well, either way the American working class will lose. In the 1964 election the Republican

Goldwater was presented as a far-out reactionary, but press and TV have given Reagan cosmetic treatment. On the other hand, the labour leaders are making a last-minute effort to get the vote out for Carter, so he might win a last-minute victory like Truman in 1948.

It's going to be very close. **The bosses' presidential candidates, Reagan (above) and Carter (right). Andrew Pulley (left) is the candidate of the Socialist Workers Party**



Jamaican elections

Uncle Sam's man wins

By Pat Kane

THE result of the Jamaican election was a crushing defeat for Michael Manley's People's National Party. The only real winner has been American and British business interests.

The right-wing Jamaican Labour Party has won 52 of the 60 parliamentary seats. The party is openly associated with the business community, and is pledged to reverse all the measures of the Manley government.

It has been co-operating with the Central Intelligence Agency in the 'de-stabilisation' programme of economic sabotage and terrorism against Manley.

Violence has been more noticeable than policy speeches in the election campaign. The Red Cross estimates that there have been over 700 political murders this year alone.

Contrast this with the US presidential election. The only thing that breaks the boredom is the outrageous stupidities of Reagan (now dubbed Ray-gun), such as his claim that '80 per cent of pollution is caused by plants and trees.'

The Jamaican election was extremely violent because it reflected the struggle between classes. The American election campaign is about differences between friends in the American upper class.

The first act of Edward Seaga, the new prime minister in Jamaica, was the expulsion of the Cuban ambassador, Ulises Estrada.

In a pre-election interview Estrada said that the JLP has accused Cuba of 'spreading subversion' in Jamaica. Explaining the Cuban aid programme, he added: 'I am not a terrorist or murderer. I am simply a revolutionary. That's why the JLP hate me.'

For the past seven years, Manley has steered Jamaica away from dependence on the main international powers. Through the non-aligned movement he has sought closer links with Cuba and other third world countries.

Manley infuriated the imperialist powers by introducing a series of mild social reforms. They objected to the PNP's 'democratic socialism'.

The International Monetary Fund demanded savage welfare cuts before it would advance further loans. Manley refused, and the de-stabilisation programme went into top gear.

Like Allende in Chile, Manley did not respond with decisive counter-measures. This would have required organising working people to overcome the economic sabotage, and to defend themselves against terrorist attacks.

Twenty years ago the Cuban revolutionaries were faced with the same problems. Their response was to carry out the most sweeping land reforms ever seen in Latin America.

Their country was invaded, and the Cuban people rallied to defend their revolution at the Bay of Pigs. Fidel Castro then announced that they would 'nationalise the Yankees down to the nails in their boots.'

But Manley did not break out of the sphere of influence of big business. He took the road of compromise with the capitalists.

On 2 October, the *Financial Times* reported a Jamaican official as saying: 'Manley will have to go back to the IMF. The PNP has no alternative.' There is an alternative, and just now the revolutionary governments of Grenada and Nicaragua are carrying it out.

Clear socialist measures can win the support of working people and small farmers. This means breaking from parliamentary politics and placing the country's future in the hands of the ordinary people.

This doesn't mean nationalising everything at a stroke. The Nicaraguans and Grenadans haven't done this. What they have done is attacked the power of the upper class and demanded that the latter operate policies favourable to working people.

When the managers or police chiefs have refused, they have been removed and replaced by workers. To ensure success the revolutionary leaders have organised huge demonstrations, and both countries have armed the people and formed militias.

The lessons of Jamaica will not be lost on the leaders of Cuba, Nicaraguan, or Grenada. The JLP victory will encourage reactionary attacks on their own revolutions.

The struggle in Jamaica is not over yet. The new government will attack all the measures of the Manley régime. Terror and violence is on the increase.

Already fighting has broken out in the capital, Kingston. Solidarity is now urgent to defend the militants of the PNP from Seaga's repression.

SC Sales

ABERDEEN: SC sold Saturdays outside C&As — for more info ring Colin, 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 4.30-5.40, Sat 10-4. For more info phone 643-0669.

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

BRIGHTON: SC sales regularly every Sat outside Open Market, London Road, from 11am-1pm.

BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. For more info contact Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpelier, 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: supporters sell SC every Saturday morning at Ridley Road market E8.

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 Elliot St, Hamilton.

HUDDERSFIELD: SC supporters sell papers every Saturday 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.

KILBURN: SC sales every Sat, 10am in Kilburn Square.

LAMBETH: SC available from Village Books, Streatham; Tethric Books, Clapham; Paperback Centre, Brixton; Oval tube kiosk. Also sold Thur and Fri evenings and Thur mornings outside Brixton tube.

MANCHESTER: SC supporters sell 11-1pm Sat at OLDHAM outside the Yorkshire Bank, High St; at BURY in the shopping precinct and at Metro Books; at BOLTON in the town centre; and in MANCHESTER outside the central reference library in St Peter's Square and at Grassroots and Percivals Bookshop. Tel: 061-236 4905 for further info.

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 Way. Can be delivered weekly; phone 483 8909 (evening), 236 4905 (day).

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 outside Woolworths on Stockton High Street.

WOLVERHAMPTON: SC sales on Thur/Fri at Poly Students Union from noon-2pm and British Rail 4.30-6pm; on Saturday near Beatties, town centre from 11am-2pm.

Is your town or city mentioned above? If not, why not send in details to the Socialist Challenge sales column.

International Marxist Group notices

NALGO FRACTION Sun 16 Nov 12-5pm, National Centre. Agenda: the turn; perspectives; Cruise; women's liberation.

POEU FRACTION: Sat and Sun 15/16 Nov. Leeds. Agenda: perspectives; Labour Party; women's liberation. Details of venue later.

CPSA FRACTION Sat 22 Nov, 12.30-5pm National Centre. Agenda: the turn; perspectives; Cruise; women's liberation.

RAIL FRACTION: Sat 13 Dec, 1-5pm at national centre.

WOMEN'S LIBERATION FRACTION: 22/23 Nov — venue to be announced. Also a 'Women and the Turn' day school the same weekend. Cdes involved in the work and from the TU fractions to attend.

IMG WOMEN'S LIBERATION NOTES: Is your branch receiving them every week? If not write to women's organiser at the centre. And why not send in a report for inclusion in the bulletin? All contributions in by Monday each week. Ring Judith on 01-359 8371 to discuss a visit from the IMG women's organiser this autumn.

OFFICE EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Both IMG and Socialist Challenge offices need all types of office equipment and furniture. Particularly needed are metal waste paper bins and 30 stacking chairs. Can collect if necessary. Contact Penny on 01-359 8371.

Socialist Challenge Events

MANCHESTER Socialist Challenge public meeting on Thur 6 Nov, 7.30pm. 'IS Russia Socialist?' Star and Garter pub, Fairfield St, nr Piccadilly Station.

MANCHESTER Socialist Challenge public meeting on Thur 20 Nov, 7.30pm. 'Revolution in the Caribbean', Star and Garter pub, Fairfield St, nr Piccadilly Station.

SOUTHAMPTON Socialist Challenge meeting on Mon 10 Nov, 7.30. 'British Troops out of Northern Ireland' with speaker from Troops Out Movement, St Matthews Hall, Brintons Road entrance. Six Dials.

BRENT Socialist Challenge/Revolution celebrate the anniversary of the Russian Revolution and Bonfire Night with a fundraising social, Sat 8 Nov, 5 St Marys Rd, London NW10. Food, bonfire, fireworks, games and other surprises. Adm £1 + 1 firework.

Revolution Youth Notices

NATIONAL STUDENT FRACTION: Sun 30 Nov in the North West — exact venue to be decided. For all student comrades.

COLLEGE MEETINGS: Cruise missiles and Charter '80 meetings should be arranged as soon as possible. Speakers and dates arranged by Ann (01-359 8371) or Stephanie (021-359 5921).

LONDON AGGREGATE: 9 Nov, 12-5pm at UCL Students Union. Agenda: Building 15 Nov Irish demo. Very important meeting for all London cdes.

GAY LIBERATION FRACTION: Sat 6 Dec at National Centre 11am. Write for details to Paul, c/o PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Other

THE BOOKSHOP

CSE London Working Group
The Alternative Economic Strategy — a Labour movement response to the economic crisis
CSE Books, £2.50

This working group of the Conference of Socialist Economists argues the Labour Left's alternative to monetarism in non-technical language for political activists, trade unionists and anyone suffering from the impact of the Tory economic policies.

Ed. David Widgery
The Book of the Year — September 1979 to September 1980
Ink Links, £5.95

The book presents interpretations of the year with 200 photographs, cartoons, interviews and essays from some of the best of Britain's radical photographers, designers, and writers backed up by a glossary, statistics and a day-to-day chronology.

John Downing
The Media Machine
Pluto Press, £4.95

This book shows how the media shapes opinion in key areas such as industrial conflict, racism and sexism in order to reinforce the status quo. It also looks at alternatives to the established media by examining the left press in Britain and socialist free radio in Italy.

Available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, London N1. Tel: 01-226 0571. Please add 15% if ordering by post.



A segment of CND's rally in Trafalgar Square last month

SOCIALIST Challenge has launched a national speaking tour on the theme of 'Jobs not Bombs'.

We aim to build meetings in dozens of towns and cities around the country with speakers from the major struggles against the Tory government.

Gardner's workers have agreed to speak where possible to the meetings. The platforms will also include CND and anti-missile campaigners.

The campaigns against unemployment and against the imperialist war drive are the two most vital issues for the workers movement this

'Jobs not bombs' tour hits the road

winter. The two are not unconnected. Spending billions on new weapons while throwing hundreds of thousands on the dole sums up the priorities of the Tory government.

But it also shows the

urgent need to build a strong revolutionary party here and internationally. Socialist Challenge is sponsored by the International Marxist Group, the British section of the Fourth International — an international revolu-

tionary party.

Revolution Youth is an independent youth organisation in political solidarity with the IMG and the FI. Both Socialist Challenge and Revolution Youth will have

speakers on the Jobs not Bombs tour, appealing for people to join us in the fight for socialism.

We also aim to use the tour to boost the sales and subscriptions drive for Socialist Challenge, winning hundreds of new regular readers.

Send in the details of the 'Jobs not Bombs' tour to Socialist Challenge. Meetings already arranged include the following:—

- 28 Oct. Leeds
- 5 Nov. Edinburgh
- 11 Nov. East London
- 12 Nov. West London
- 13 Nov. Birmingham
- 13 Nov. Newport
- 16 Nov. Leicester
- 20 Nov. North London
- 23 Nov. Newcastle
- 25 Nov. Wolverhampton

BIRMINGHAM

Kevin Coen (Gardner's steward)
Val Coultas (Socialist Challenge)
Pat Hickey (TGWU steward at Rover Solihull)

Nov 12 at 7.30pm Star Club,
Essex St, off Bristol St.

EAST LONDON

Speakers include:
Kevin Coen (Gardner's steward)
Trina Shane (Tower Hamlets trades council executive, personal capacity)
Patrick Kodikara (Hackney Labour councillor)
Jane Connor (Revolution Youth)
Mick Drake (IMG Fords worker)
Right to Work Campaign representative

Tues 11 Nov 7.30pm
Stratford Town Hall, Stratford
Broadway

EALING

Speakers include:
Gardner's shop steward
Film: Failsafe
Benefit for Gardner's occupation

Nov 12 at 7.30pm
Princes Room
Ealing Town Hall

Trotsky under review in Italy

By Norman Geras

BETWEEN 7 and 11 October an international conference on Leon Trotsky took place in Italy. Organised by the Feltrinelli Foundation, it was hosted by the Regional Council of Tuscany, which is to say it had the support of the Italian Communist Party.

Forty years after Trotsky's assassination, researchers from Italy, France, Germany, Britain, the United States, and other countries, gathered in the coastal resort of Follonica and, assembling daily in the town library (formerly an iron and steel factory), discussed over five days almost every aspect of his political record.

His pre-1917 writings, the theory of permanent revolution, Trotsky's role in the October insurrection, his standpoint in the economic debates of the 1920s, his analysis of and struggle against Stalinism, the foundation of the Fourth International — these and yet other topics were considered.

The political complexion of the conference was diverse. It included participants from the Italian Communist Party, members and sympathisers of the Fourth International

and Trotskyists of other affiliation, academics broadly sympathetic to Trotsky as well as academics broadly hostile.

There was, however, one notable absentee and, around the conference, some speculation as to why he had not been invited. The question was voiced at one of the sessions: where was Ernest Mandel?

At another session the conference adopted a statement calling for Trotsky's works to be made available once again in the Soviet Union and for all materials relating to him in Soviet archives to be opened up to free research.

The proceedings of the conference were by and large positive. That such a diversity of contributors could, in sober and reasonably dispassionate manner, discuss the significance of Trotsky's record and ideas is in itself a



AN unprecedented event: an international gathering discusses Trotsky's life and work hosted by the CP-backed Regional Council of Tuscany Italy.

development to be welcomed, and there were several contributions of great interest.

There was a tendency, it is true, especially during the early sessions, to speak of Trotsky as a figure of history, albeit a great one,

and to play down his contemporary political importance. But a number of speakers pointed out that the enterprise must be in vain; the subject matter of his work defied such treatment. He belongs by right today to both library and

factory. In the end, perhaps the most important thing about this conference was the very fact of its occurrence. Many of those present seemed to have a sense of this. In a way it was an unprecedented event.

Stop the missiles



The Insane Society

A nuclear war every other day! (Well, nearly)

AN American Congressional committee has just revealed that the North American Defence Command

experienced 147 false alarms during an 18-month period.

Each of these false alarms was serious enough to require evaluation of whether or not a nuclear attack was taking place. In addition there were 3,703 lesser alarms, which were evaluated almost immediately as not representing an immediate attack.

Four of the alarms resulted in instructions to B52 bomber crews to

take off and missile sites being placed on a higher state of alert.

What caused all these alerts on the radar screens? First, equipment failures; for example a micro-chip which went wonky in a communications device resulted in an attack warning. On another occasion, a Soviet space rocket falling through the atmosphere caused the alarm.

Other 'atmospheric disturbances' picked up by US spy satellites over the USSR included fuel

crashes, aircraft crashes, forest fires, sun flares, and similar events. Yet another alarm resulted from the test firing of Soviet missiles from a submarine.

Danger

The frequency of these serious attack warnings is a dramatic indication of the continual danger that nuclear war could be triggered accidentally. On a purely mathematical basis, the danger of an accidental firing of a nuclear weapon seems high.

The Congressional report, ironically, was in part the work of Senator Barry Goldwater — not widely known for his anti-militarist, anti-nuclear views.

Anti-imperialism or neutralism?

The Socialist Workers Party and the war drive

THE last conference of the International Marxist Group decided to fight to build a united revolutionary organisation with the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). That remains our policy.

The irresponsible division of the revolutionary left is an important cause of its weakness. The creation of a single revolutionary organisation, uniting all the main forces to the left of the Communist Party, would provide a powerful pole of attraction for radicalising workers.

The SWP has refused to even discuss with us our proposals on unity. While we hope that in the

longer term they will see the error of refusing to fight for revolutionary unity, nonetheless, this struggle will not be served by hiding political differences.

In the last six months there have been important political differences between our two organisations. In particular the SWP's policies on the new arms race, the Labour Party, and the struggle in Poland are profoundly incorrect. Over the next few weeks we shall be explaining these differences, starting this week with the cold war and the new arms race.

By Phil Hearse

SINCE the mid-1970s a new arms race has been underway. The United States has decided to site Cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe and to construct the giant 'MX' missile system in the United States.

The British government has agreed to buy five Trident missile-carrying submarines at a cost of £5bn. In retaliation the Soviet Union is to site its new short-range SS20 rockets in Eastern Europe.

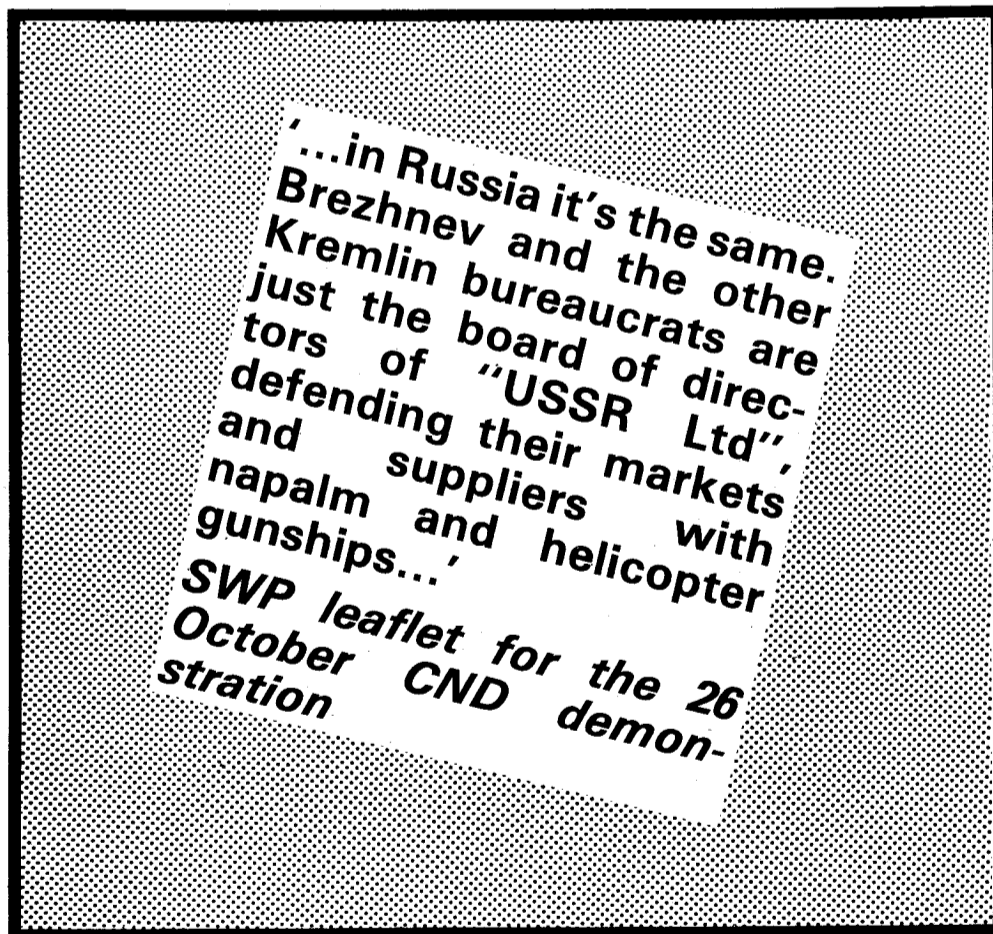
What explains this apparently sudden deterioration in relations? The fundamental cause are the grave reverses that American imperialism has suffered in the 1970s — both through the economic recession and the damage done to its international business interests by the revolutions in Iran, Nicaragua and Zimbabwe following on from the defeat in Vietnam in 1975.

These revolutions have severely upset the apparent stability of the world status quo that existed in the early '70s. The United States has launched its militarisation drive to cement together the Western alliance against the 'Soviet threat', to convince American workers that the main cause of economic crisis is abroad (either 'the Russians' or 'the Arabs'), and to try and reassert its military dominance in the world.

Difference

For us the responsibility of the war drive lies with American imperialism supported by Thatcher.

For the SWP the explanation is very different. Their leaflet on the 26 October CND demonstration stated: 'The presidents of the big corporations, with their friends in the Pentagon and Whitehall need arms to protect their investments...But in Russia it's the same. Brezhnev and the other Kremlin bureaucrats are just the board of directors of "USSR Ltd", defending their markets and suppliers with



napalm and helicopter gunships...'

In an absurd analogy Peter Binns says in the SWP pamphlet, *Missile Madness*: 'In many ways the situation today resembles the run up to the First World War. Then as now there was an arms race; in place of Russia and America there was Britain and Germany.'

But hasn't the SWP noticed a vital difference between the world situation then and now? The First World War followed a period of imperialist expansion and self-confident growth. The current conflict between the major powers occurs in a period of imperialist decline and the upsurge of the world revolution.

In Iran, Nicaragua, Grenada and Zimbabwe the despotic pro-imperialist regimes have been booted out by victorious revolutions. The militarisation policy of imperialism is primarily a response to that.

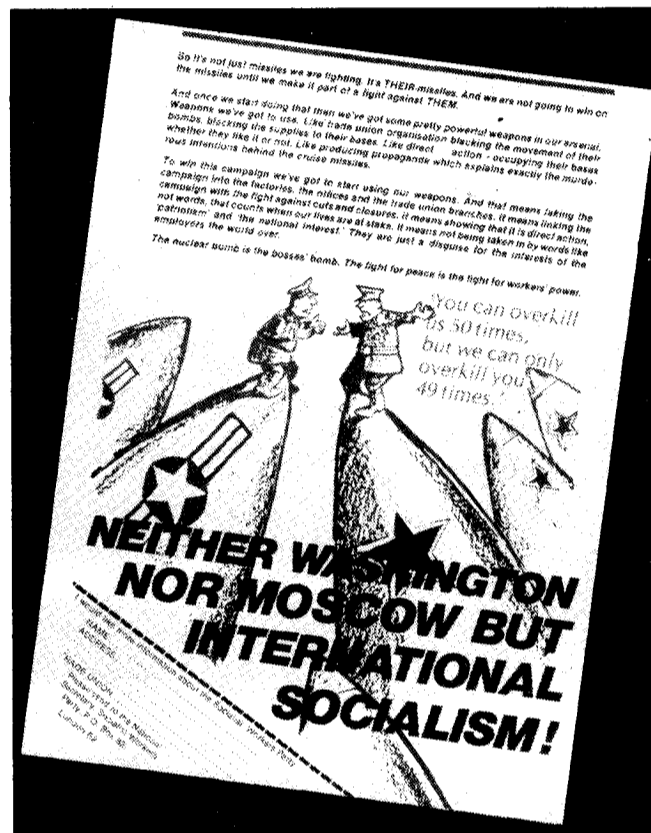
Painting the world situation as dominated by the conflict of two imperialist blocs leads the SWP into some uncomfortable dilemmas on its world analysis and its orientation to the anti-missile campaign in Britain.

In *Socialist Worker* of 25 October they argue: 'Some people say Russian H-bombs have defended revolutions elsewhere. Just the opposite is true. When Russia put nuclear missiles in Cuba in 1962 it ended any hope of

an independent development for the Cuban revolution. Since then Cuba has been a Russian satellite, a pawn in the big powers' game.'

This view is outrageous. The Cubans, despite their alliance with the Soviet Union, have had a certain freedom of action — surely the SWP don't think the backing of revolutionary movements in Latin America, or Che Guevara's mission in Bolivia were simple instructions from the Russians?

A more fundamental problem with the SWP's analysis is the implication for the prospects and fate of revolution in our time. In a world completely dominated by two imperialisms, revolutions which start against one inevitably



get co-opted by the other. That's what the SWP say about Cuba today — that it's a pawn of Russian imperialism — and that's what they'll say about Nicaragua tomorrow.

It's easy then to see why the SWP doesn't share the IMG's enthusiasm about the radical and increasingly anti-capitalist measures of the FSLN government in Nicaragua — after all, in this wretched world of ours carved up by two major imperialisms, it's going to end up as state capitalist, and a pawn of Russian imperialism to boot! In this dream world the room for revolutionary and socialist movements in the third world is virtually non-existent.

Peter Binns' assertion in *Missile Madness* that 'USSR Ltd' defends its markets and colonies just like the Western imperialist powers is an absurdity. The whole American economy relies on the operations of the huge multinational corporations — like ITT, Texaco, General Motors, and Ford.

These corporations have a huge and regular flow of 'repatriated' profits from abroad — without them the American economy would collapse. Binns and the mythmakers of the SWP will have a long and hard search for the 'repatriated' profits of the Soviet Union.

Aid

Third world countries allied to the Soviet Union, like Cuba, receive huge amounts of aid from the Soviet Union. Of course, the Soviet bureaucracy gives this aid grudgingly and for its own reasons — but it does not result in the transfer of huge amounts of 'profit' to the Soviet Union. The Soviet economy does not rely on such a mechanism.

That does not mean that socialists defend the Soviet bureaucrats. They may not be 'imperialist' but neither do they defend the interests of the

workers in the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe. We stand for the overthrow of the Soviet bureaucrats and a system of workers power.

Peter Binns in *Missile Madness* makes mincemeat of the assertion that the Soviet Union is just itching to march into Western Europe and extend its empire. This is absolutely correct. But this contradicts his argument: 'If Russia is imperialist, then it is by nature expansionist — USSR limited must want to expand its empire.'

Enemy

A genuine Russian imperialism would want to create a series of client states in Western Europe, even if this was only a long-term aim — just as it's manifestly obvious that ultimately Western imperialism would like to push back the limits of the non-capitalist world in Eastern Europe.

The SWP's analysis gives them big problems in relating to the growing anti-war movement. The founding statement of the European Nuclear Disarmament Campaign (END) places blame on both Russia and the United States equally. Logically the SWP should do the same.

If the world is dominated by the clash of two imperialisms then both are equally to blame for war preparations and war itself, irrespective of who made the first bombs or fired the first shot.

The SWP have to resolve this dilemma in the campaign. Are they going to concentrate their fire on US imperialism and Thatcher, or are they going to be logical with their analysis and intervene with the 'neutral' slogan, 'Neither Washington nor Moscow, but International Socialism?'

In fighting the imperialist war drive, the SWP would do better if they knew who the real enemy was.

By Rose Knight

MOST low-paid workers are women. We make up two-thirds of all workers earning less than £60 a week, and our average hourly earnings dropped since 1977 from 75 to 73 per cent of men's hourly rate.

This has not been prevented either by the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts, the collective bargaining

How women are cheated on pay

agreements made by trade unions, or the setting of minimum wage rates by the wage councils which cover many of the smaller firms employing the majority of women workers.

A report by the Low Pay Unit, *Minimum Wages for Women*, shows that the number of women working in the distributive trades and service industries has risen from 58 per cent in 1959 to 71 per cent in 1979.

In manufacturing, women are largely confined

to food, drink, tobacco, clothing, footwear and textile manufacture and electrical engineering. And women are concentrated among the lowest grades, even in industries where they are a majority.

The report also shows how wage councils have failed women workers. Not only are the minimum wage rates set by the councils low, they are not enforced. Firms are cheating workers out of millions of pounds a year.

Most workers in industries covered by the councils do not even know of their existence, nor are Wage Orders publicised. In these industries union membership is at its lowest.

Wage councils are nominally 'independent' but controlled by the employers. The maximum penalty for failing to comply with the rates is £100 — half the fine you pay for not having a TV licence.

In any case, in 1978 there were only 16 prosecu-

tions out of a total of 10,624 cases brought. There are just 150 inspectors covering 3,000 firms; and the government wants the number reduced.

The Equal Pay Act made no difference to women in jobs where mainly women are employed. The Report says that the Act is less effective than 'measures which tackle low pay at its industrial roots'. But its own solutions are cautious. There is no mention of

measures to tackle job segregation, which the TUC described in a recent discussion document as 'the main impediment to equality for women', nor does the report suggest how to deal with the fact that 40 per cent of women who take a job outside the home are forced to work part-time.

The Low Pay Unit report recommends a recruitment drive by the trade unions, the first priority being a struggle for

the right to hold union meetings during work hours so that women workers can attend.

If the Equal Opportunities Commission and trade unions funding the report are serious about raising the wages and jobs opportunities of women they should fight to raise the basic minimum wages of all workers in these industries, and launch programmes of positive designed to help women wanting to take more highly paid and skilled jobs to do so.

The pamphlet is available from the Low Pay Unit, 9 Poland St, London W1V 3DG. Price 50p.

'WE WON'T ACCEPT SECOND BEST'



AN indication of the breadth of the women's movement a dozen years after it surfaced in Britain...

Alison Agnew, aged 10, says: 'When I first became a feminist I thought that having a group was a good idea. Why do we have to be treated different from the boys?'

'So I asked a few girls if they could become feminists and they said Yes. Every playtime we have meetings. It's a girls' rights group. Feminism means ladies, women that don't flaunt in front of men. They class themselves as human beings' — from a report in Spare Rib.

LEONORA LLOYD contributes to a series on the history of the women's movement: its achievements and weaknesses, how it has organised, and what is happening now. She records the rise and fall of the first contemporary organisation to raise women's issue.

I WAS in hospital having my second baby when I read a report of the first public meeting of the organisation which was to take the call for equal pay on to Britain's streets.

It was October 1968. The organisation had a mouthful of a name — the National Joint Action Campaign Committee for Women's Equal Rights.

Two hundred people attended the meeting, which was held at the House of Commons, and among the fifty who volunteered to take part in the committee were some of the women workers from Ford, Dagenham, who had been the first to strike for equal pay.

NJACCWER (the campaign's initials, at least, were just about pronounceable) was to be my first experience of organising on women's rights.

I had been involved in politics since I was 14, when I joined the Labour League of Youth. My parents were both involved in the Labour Party and my mother has always been a feminist. She was keen that my sister Tessa and I should have careers of our own and not be dependent on men.

Thus I became involved in NJACCWER, getting in touch with the campaign as soon as I was on my feet.

It was Fred Blake, a district official of the National Union of Vehicle Builders (now part of the TGWU) who'd had the idea of starting the campaign following the Ford strike in the early summer of '68. He acted as secretary and treasurer, assisted by his secretary Doreen Lane.

Audrey Hunt, an ASTMS member who had written a

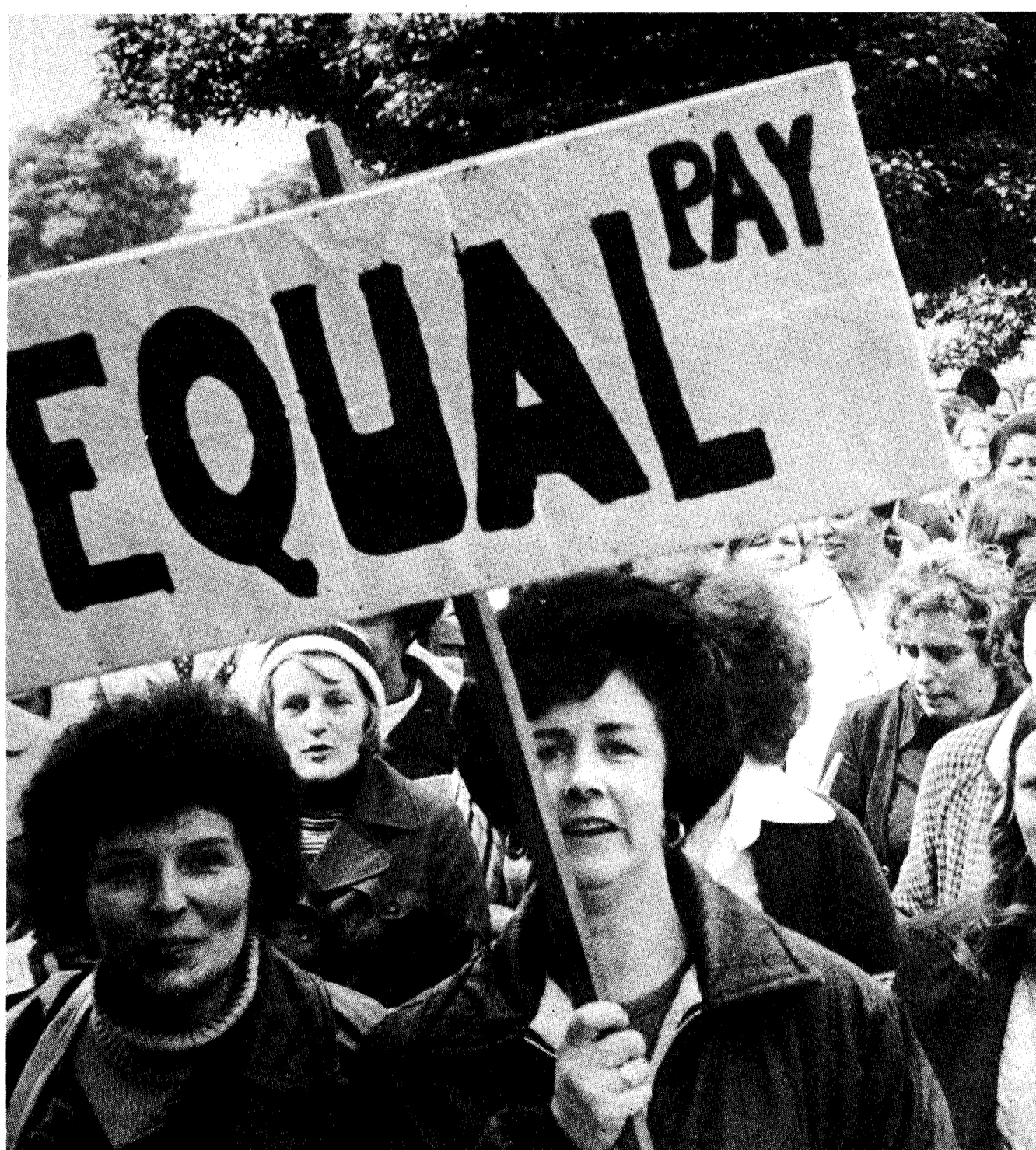


Photo: CHRIS DAVIS

Survey of Women's Employment, and Christopher Norwood, a Labour MP who had presented a private member's Bill for equal pay, were the joint chairpersons of the campaign.

An early leaflet vowed that the campaign 'will keep on fighting until the women of this country have full rights in every sphere', and NJACCWER's charter carried a similar promise. It demanded:

1. The removal of sex discrimination against women in employment, education and public life.
2. The inclusion of equal pay for work of equal value in all agreements between employers and trade unions.
3. That MPs enforce equal legal rights for women through parliament.
4. That the TUC leads and coordinates a national action campaign for equal pay and opportunities in industry, in accordance with the decision at the 1968 Congress.
5. Immediate government ratification of the ILO Convention 100, specifying equal pay for work of equal value.

In practice the campaign cen-

tered on the equal pay demand. Support grew apace, from union branches, trades councils, and women's organisations.

While such bodies had no formal relationship to the general committee heading the campaign, local NJACCWER committees sprang up, often from local campaigns for better pay.

Then came the campaign's main activity, a rally held on 18 May 1969. Postcards were produced publicising the rally. Equal pay badges were very popular. A TUC meeting was lobbied. There were poster parades, including one along Oxford St in London.

On the day of the march and rally it poured with rain, yet a thousand women — many of them active in the unions — turned up.

There was an argument just before the march. A Maoist group brought placards expressing solidarity with the Vietnamese women fighting US imperialism. A Communist Party union official threatened to call the police if the women didn't take their placards away.

There had also been a row at a meeting of the campaign's general committee in London. Most of the women who attended

the two-monthly meetings were, like myself, those who helped to set up women's liberation groups in Britain.

When we proposed that there should be a creche at the meetings, uproar broke out. The divide was between younger women and the women from Ford and their official representatives, who were aghast at the idea of women not being with their children.

Since only members of the committee could vote, the proposal for a creche was lost.

Many of the younger women wanted to democratise the campaign structures, to open the committee to new members. But the constitution was extremely bureaucratic, and the fees for joining were so high that smaller trade unions and local women's groups couldn't afford them.

Press

The campaign continued to grow. Fred Blake was overworked and I had been helping him a great deal. When he decided to resign as secretary he pro-

posed me as his replacement. I had joined the International Marxist Group in 1968 and was well-known as a Trotskyist.

Although I was the only person nominated I was not a member of the committee. Christopher Norwood, the Labour MP, was in the chair and he declared that nominations should be re-opened. Norwood became the new secretary. He did little to build the campaign, and it wasn't long before it petered out.

With the 1970 Equal Pay Act looming, hard campaigning was needed. There were plenty of proposals, such as holding factory gate meetings at selected plants, and lobbying the TUC and Labour Party conferences.

Explaining the other aims of the charter would also have been a good idea, especially with the support that would have been forthcoming from the growing women's movement. In many ways the campaign reflected the male-domination and lack of democracy in the labour movement.

Whatever its shortcomings, NJACCWER showed that working women were prepared to fight for the rights. That fight continued into the '70s.

Under Review

'WOMEN don't have enough depth to be artists' — Roland Piche, sculptor and member of the 1980 Arts Council Awards Panel.

'I am quite sure the vitality of a great many women students derives from frustrated maternity; most of these, on finding the opportunity to settle down and to produce children, will no longer experience a degree of passionate discontent sufficient to drive them towards the labour of creation in other ways' — Reg Butler, ex-head of sculpture at the Slade art school.

These statements were displayed at the ICA gallery entrance, to be ridiculed by what was on display within.

What I saw as I excitedly ventured forward was a crowd of women, mainly in small groups, discussing and arguing. It was almost like meeting friends at a women's conference — exhilarating; the traditional silence of a gallery broken by laughter.

For the first time the tables were turned. Women, the usual 'objects' of artistic representation, had crossed to the other side of the canvas, camera, and studio to give their idea of men.

Frankly, after so many centuries of seeing our bodies

By Marie-Jo Sissons

and personalities mutilated and used for stirring up emotions, I would not have been surprised by a sort of revenge from these women artists. I was half expecting vicious representation.

Although some works were satirical and sometimes sombre, the general view was far from callous.

One of the most interesting aspects was the variety of media used: photography, montage, collage, painting, sculpture, and video.

The combination of differing views and techniques is striking and presents a kaleidoscopic view of the world. It is a world of per-

sonal experience for women and many themes of the exhibition will be familiar to feminists.

Some women, like Deborah Law, chose to paint men as vulnerable and dependent. In *Cuddles* she shows how a woman's emotional comfort is more important in the end than a man's physical strength, openly revealing a reality that most women experience.

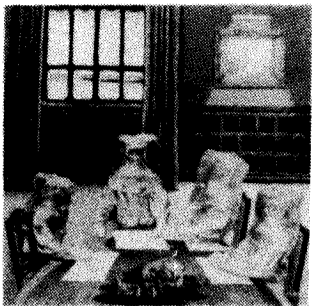
By focusing on certain parts of the male anatomy, whether genitals, arms, face, or legs, several of the artists try to convey an objective view of a body and sometimes make a powerful critical statement against the disembodiment of women in traditional art.

Joan Wakelin brought a smile to my lips as her camera caught a relaxed footballer, squatting, legs apart, completely unaware, or uncaring, that his penis was sticking out of his shorts.

In a satire of advertising devices, Lill-Ann Chestow drew laughter with her

photographs of scantily attired men of all ages wearing KP nuts or Bold washing powder near or on their genitals.

Smile again, but this time



'Boardroom', by Pat Whiteread (above); 'Bold', by Lill Ann Chestow-Lusty (lower left); 'The Landlord', by Mouse Katz (lower right); 'Cuddles', by Deborah Lowensberg

a little more forced, at the view of Elena Samperi's screaming Madonna, when the baby sucking her breast

turns out to be a grown up man in cap and tie who bites her nipple hard.

But many a feminist's teeth must have clenched when they stopped in front of Gertrude Elias' study of the relationship between male doctors and women patients; it was a little too close to home.

Robots

Another theme familiar to the women's movement was the equation of technology with male dominance. There was a hustle-bustle in front of Pat Whiteread's collage *The Boardroom* where four gold and silver robots sat planning. As for nuclear holocaust, one of the women in Helen Cherry's cartoon *Nuclear Fallout* attributes it to 'centuries of male know-how'.

Bitterness was the main emotion prevailing in Evelyn Williams' photograph of a woman left with a child by a passing man.

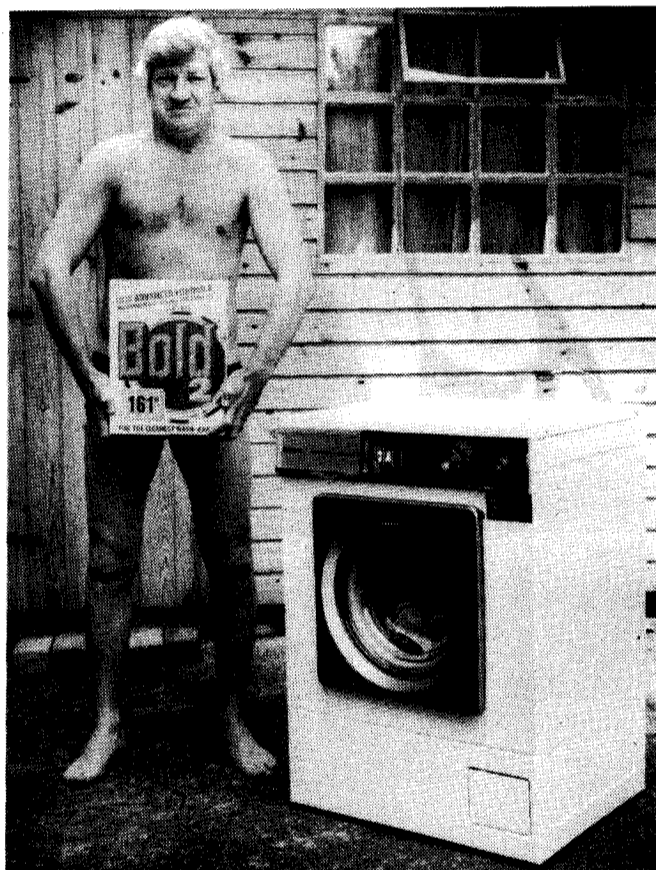
The most sombre and striking images were Jac-

queline Moreau's attack on religious patriarchy; Ana Maria Pacheco's identification of torture with a male figure in her sculpture *Some Exercise of Power*, and Sue Coe's collages on political violence, rape, and fascism.

On the whole the exhibition struck a balance between images of men full of pathos and vulnerability and those where they appear as agents of suffering. Weak or strong, tender or threatening, men — like women — are pushed into roles by this society.

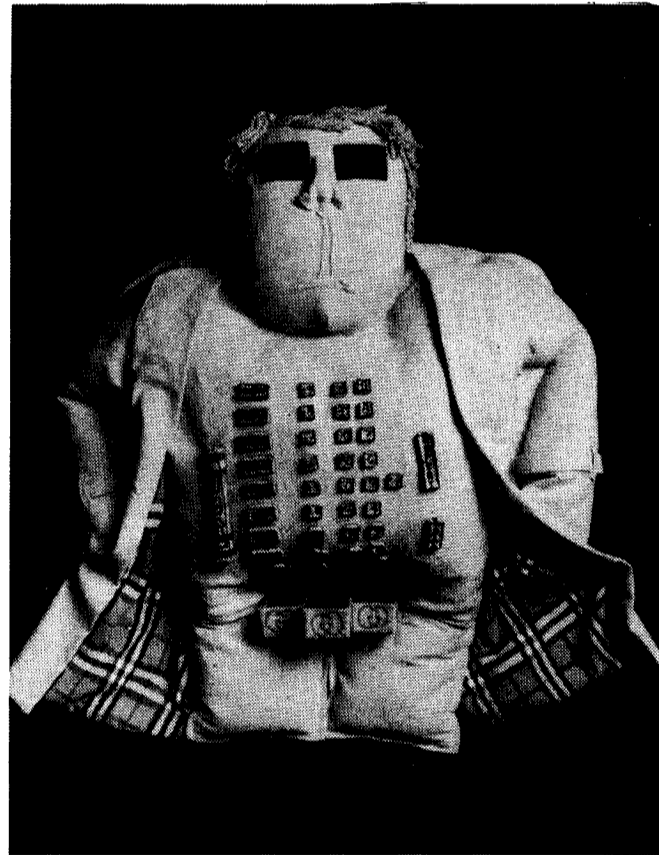
The exhibition is not a ghetto. It is living proof that together women have moved forward from the investigation of their own place in society to that of the world around them. It is a challenge to the roots of male dominance.

Women's Images of Men on tour: Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol, 8 Nov-2 Jan; South Hill Park, Bracknell, 10 Jan-15 Feb; Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool, 7-28 March; Third Eye Gallery, Glasgow, May-June.



WOMEN'S IMAGES OF MEN

'WOMEN'S Images of Men', an exhibition by 35 women artists, has just closed at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London. Now it goes on tour. We asked two visitors to the exhibition, a woman and a man, to review it for us.



'IMAGES of men do not "mean" the same things, to either sex, as images of women'.

Whether or not you agree with this — and you probably will after seeing this exhibition — few of us will have seen images of men portrayed by women.

Art history is also the history of women's oppression: women at art schools were not allowed to paint from a naked model until this century; even when this right had been acquired women were expected to continue painting (not sculpt, sculpture being out of the question) only subjects considered appropriate: portraits, still lives, domestic scenes.

Excluded from most fine arts practices, women were very much included, as we know, as suitable subjects to be painted, sculpted, and photographed by men.

Women were — and are often still — depicted passively, anonymously, possessively. They were depicted standing still, seated, or reclining. They were depicted dressed but often naked; the 'nude' was and is subjected to the sexual and possessive gaze of the artist, the spectator, and the owner of the artwork.

Take the example of two Ancient Greek sculptures. One is of a naked man, the other a naked woman. In their time these figures represented respectively a gladiator or athlete, and a slave or concubine.

Far from being a han-

By Paul Russell

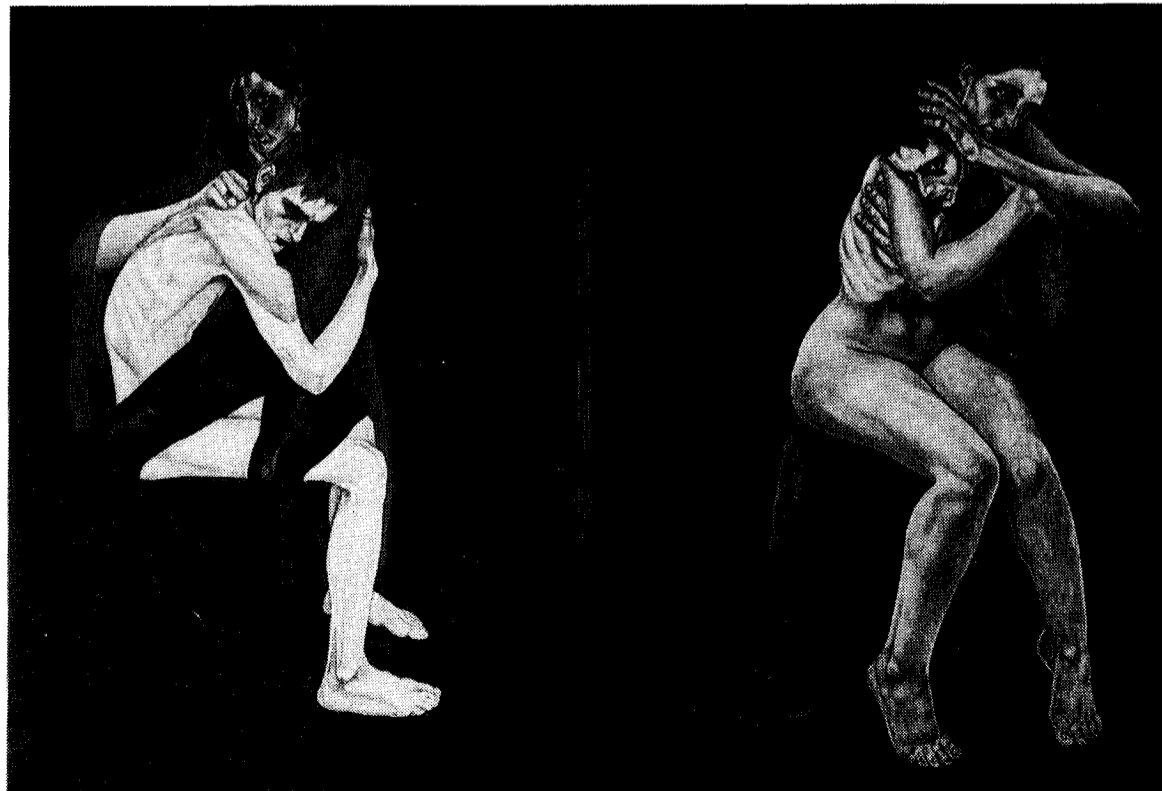
dicap, the man's nakedness alludes strikingly to his active participation in his society; whereas the woman's nakedness is more than a handicap, it is an expression of vulnerability.

Both sculptures, of course, were a cultural reflection of the social relationships of the day. These stereotypes have remained. Since artists constantly refer to and draw on the work of past masters — women's art being hidden, suppressed, or poorly rewarded — it follows that the only visual tradition open to artists has been patriarchal.

Values

When I went to see the exhibition I found myself responding with anxiety and surprise, feelings not normally associated with visits to art galleries. This is because I was no longer a 'neutral' observer, but a male visitor who was himself being observed and scrutinised, dissected and analysed.

'Male' values which I had assumed were an intrinsic part of my identity, and which were cherished securely, were being held up as role-playing assumptions by others.



Joan Wakelin's photograph of a cheerful mud-spattered footballer, sitting knees-up holding a beer bottle and grinning at the photographer, could have been merely a good sports photo. Except that a male photographer would not have undercut the hearty good-life message by

capturing the moment when the man's penis had inadvertently slipped out from his shorts.

I am shocked. So that's what it feels like to be portrayed in a 'crotch' shot.

Wakelin's *Man and Girl* is equally disturbing. A seated young man stares complacently at the camera

while a woman is hunched between his open legs with her face pressed up against his groin.

In her catalogue introduction Margaret Walters sums up this photo: 'The corrupt self-satisfaction of a man who has never, not for a fraction of a second, questioned that the world and

women are there to service him.'

The man is gazing back challengingly at the photographer whose very act is a challenge to him. Both in turn challenge the viewer to reflect on their own attitudes.

Jane Lewis and Jenni Whitman have truncated

and castrated the male figure in a way that women's so often is, but with two significant differences. First, they have portrayed the body minus the limbs or genitals, rather than the other way around. Second, where amputation has taken place a raw wound is left.

The artists indicate the mutilation involved in fetishising the human figure.

Roberta Juzefa and Helen White have photographed naked men stretched out flat on their backs. In catalogue statements both women draw attention to the uncharacteristically passive pose of their subjects.

Both women speak warmly of these people, Helen White saying that he is 'a man with whom I have lived for several years'. Once again a tradition, that of painting an anonymous nude, is breached.

Given the novelty of approach and the total lack of adequate precepts or models to go by, it is too soon to tell whether the artworks in this exhibition are representative pointers to a possible way of depicting relationships and attitudes between men and women.

We can be confident, though, that in a liberated future we should be able to rephrase the opening sentence: 'Images of men mean the same things, to either sex, as images of women.'

By Erica Flegg

NEARLY half of Britain's uranium comes from Namibia, in defiance of United Nations' rulings and international law. This is made possible by the presence in Namibia of 60,000 South African troops repressing the liberation struggle there.

These facts are hardly known to the many activists in the new mass movements against nuclear weapons and energy programmes, let alone to the general public.

The Namibian Uranium Contract was signed in 1970 by Tony Benn on behalf of the British government. It was worth £150m to the notorious multi-national, Rio Tinto Zinc, which is the majority owner and manager of the Rossing mine in Namibia.

RTZ's 'popularity' in Namibia can be seen from the arsenal with armed guards it has set up for use in 'emergencies' at Rossing.

Successive British governments have ignored the United Nations security council's

Stop the Namibian uranium contract!

vote in 1970 for sanctions against South Africa over Namibia, and the decision of the International Court of Justice in 1971 that economic collaboration with South African-occupied Namibia was against international law.

The UN Council for Namibia — the responsible authority for Namibia since South Africa's mandate was revoked by the UN — enacted Decree number 1, prohibiting the extraction and export of Namibia's natural resources. This decree nullified all such export contracts, ruling that all mineral and other resources so extracted could be seized and

forfeited to the UN.

The British government refuses to recognise this UN decree. While the Labour Party has now committed itself to cancelling the uranium contract — Benn claims he wasn't fully informed about the contract before he signed! — we have to fight for labour movement action now to stop the contract being renewed in 1981.

Already the National Union of Seamen has resolved to enforce the UN decree, and the North West Trade Union Anti-Apartheid liaison committee has called a mass

demonstration outside the British Nuclear Fuels Ltd Springfields plant in Preston where the uranium is processed.

The South African regime, in collaboration with the Western powers, has learnt how to enrich uranium, and has recently exploded a nuclear device. This makes the overthrow of the apartheid regime in Namibia and South Africa even more urgent.

Stop the Namibian Uranium Contract!
End South Africa's occupation of Namibia!
No nuclear collaboration with South Africa!

Demonstrate, Sunday 8 November

Assemble at Preston Polytechnic car park, Fylde Rd, noon.

For further information on speakers, literature, and campaigning, contact CANUC and the NSC at 188 North Gower St, London NW1, or ring 01-388 6539.

Union leaders hand victory to Fiat bosses

By A Duret

FIAT car workers in Italy have suffered a major defeat in their struggle against redundancies.

On 10 October, fifteen million workers across the country downed tools for four hours in support of Fiat workers, who were clearly seen as the spearhead of a united working class resistance to job loss.

But the union leaders saw things differently. Their response was to call off all actions aimed at taking the struggle beyond the factory gates. This gave Fiat boss Agnelli the opening he needed.

Deal

White-collar workers and managers from all over Italy were assembled in Turin. The company paid the bill. Protected by the police, 10,000 of these employees were organised to march through the streets calling for an end to the strike.

This gave the bureaucrats the pretext they needed to call off a struggle which was threatening to escape their control. Late on 14 October they signed a deal con-

signing 23,000 workers to the 'cassa integrazione' (a form of technical unemployment where workers draw 90 per cent of their wages).

Trouble

Previously the union had rejected this, proposing instead that workers be rotated through technical unemployment. This would have meant no separation between employed and unemployed workers. It would also have stopped the company from removing militants out of the plants.

Other aspects of the agreement include early retirement and voluntary redundancy, a block on all hiring, mobility of the workforces between different plants, and retraining schemes for those technically unemployed. The latter have the consolation that their re-employment is 'envisaged' by 30 June 1983!

The effect of all this is massive redundancies by the back door.

On 15 October there was a meeting of the central council of Fiat shop stewards. Anticipating trouble, the top bureaucrats came along.

The union leaders didn't even attempt to justify the terms of the deal. Instead they claimed that the company-rigged demonstration showed that the relationship of forces was unfavourable; there was no alternative.

Vote

A delegate from the Spatura plant, a Trotskyist from the LCR (Italian section of the Fourth International), then took the floor to show from the previous weeks of struggle that this was a lie. He was massively applauded.

There was the same reaction when Rocco Papan-drea, another member of the LCR and a steward at the Mirafiori plant, presented a sort of counter-report to that of the bureaucrats. The latter then left early, not daring to put their proposals to the vote.

Next day mass meetings were held in the main Fiat plants. Once more the top bureaucrats turned up. Again there was strong opposition. But the company also had its say. In the machine-shop at Mirafiori, all the white-collar workers and managers walked in just as the vote was about to be taken. With their help the agreement was narrowly adopted.

Some plants voted for it,

others against. In every case of acceptance the union leaders claimed an 'overwhelming' majority. By the end of the day they were claiming overall acceptance, while confusion and demoralisation were gaining hold among the workers.

There was a complete split between the union apparatus and the vanguard workers. The bureaucracy had won its position by basing itself on the white-collar workers and managers organised by the company, and on the least class-conscious workers.

Although there was a massive rejection of the reformist leaders' policy, no alternative leadership existed which could crystallise this opposition and give it a perspective for taking its struggle into the heart of the working class.

For the first time since 1969, therefore, massive redundancies have been forced through in a decisive sector of Italian industry. Identical measures are now being prepared in steel and petrochemicals.

As in other West European countries, the government and the bosses aim to use the weight of unemployment to weaken the unions and introduce new divisive working practices.

This new offensive will not be carried through without sharp conflicts. But more and more their outcome will depend on the existence of concrete alternatives to the reformists at the level of policies and leadership.



Polish soldier: waiting for the Soviet tanks

Polish crisis intensifies

By Davy Jones

POLISH workers may be back on strike again next Wednesday. The Polish Supreme Court meets on the weekend to decide on the statutes of the biggest independent trade union, Solidarity, which now says it has 10m members.

Unless the Supreme Court removes from the statutes the insertions made by a Warsaw tribunal concerning the 'leading role of the Polish Communist Party' another strike seems certain.

The Polish authorities are desperately trying to cool the situation following their meeting with Soviet party chiefs in Moscow. They have already agreed to bring forward some of the wage rises promised within one month of the Gdansk agreements but subsequently delayed to next January.

Platform

Perhaps most significantly the party leaders have conceded that Solidarity will have the right to produce an independent weekly paper. At present the only other independent paper is the Catholic *Tygodnik Powszechny* produced in Krakow, which is heavily censored.

Premier Pinkowski has requested that the new paper should not be used merely as a platform for attacking the authorities. A printing press destined for Solidarity — apparently sent by Swedish workers' organisations — will be released from Warsaw airport by the authorities.

The Polish workers' leaders are demanding more concessions. They are insisting that any reference to the 'leading role of the Polish Communist Party' be taken out of the union statutes. They want the recognition of the independent farmers' union as part of Solidarity.

Tense

They are also calling for an end to the harassment of the dissidents in KOR, and they are asking for an improvement in the situation of food supplies — meat, sugar, and potatoes in particular are in very short supply.

The latest negotiations between the authorities and Solidarity representatives take place against an increasingly tense background.

As the Soviet leaders summoned Pinkowski and party chief Kania to Moscow, both the East German and Czech régimes tightened restrictions on travel to and from Poland in an attempt to minimise contact with the Polish 'experience'.

According to *Le Monde* the Inter-factory Strike Committee in Warsaw is drawing up plans for resistance in the case of a military attack. The committee is consulting those who participated in the insurrection during the Second World War.

A replacement leadership has been created in case the present leadership, composed entirely of workers, is arrested.

Workers in this country should step up their solidarity with Polish workers demanding that there be no interference in Polish affairs by imperialism or the Soviet bureaucrats.



Fascists hope for comeback in Bolton

By Pete Middleton

THE National Front has been refused permission to hold a rally in Bolton precinct on 23 November.

Local fascists organiser John Hambeldon says that the ban will be

defied and the Front will be holding a demonstration on a Saturday — as yet unspecified.

The fascists have not had a public face in Bolton for a couple of years, and it is known that they are anxious to establish a base in the North-west.

Bolton East CLP has called for a counter demonstration to any NF action. The Anti Nazi League is organising leafletting, especially in the immigrant areas, and will be holding a meeting at the Spinners Hall on 18 November.

Tories try to strangle student unions

By Dave Clarke, President, Birmingham polytechnic students union

IN 1971 Tory education minister Margaret Thatcher launched a major attack on student union independence. Some 400,000 students came onto the streets backed by trade unionists who saw the link with the Tories' infamous Industrial Relations Act. The attack was defeated.

Ten years later the Tories are at it again. The Employment Act aims to shackle the trade unions, and the new education minister, Rhodes Boyson, has revealed plans to the National Union of Students for carrying on where Thatcher left off in 1971.

Student unions will no longer receive their funds directly. The Department of Education and Science will now pay over the cash to the relevant funding authority — the local education

authority, the university grants committee and so on — as part of their regular income.

These bodies will pass on the money to the college authorities as part of the tuition fees income. The students unions will have to compete with every other department of the college for funds from the college authorities.

The student union will thus lose its financial independence entirely. No two guesses as to which

'department' might face the chop as part of college cut-backs in the future!

The figures the DES is using to calculate the level of student union funds are also ridiculously low. It has admitted that its original figures were millions of pounds out.

Nor is there any mention in the proposals for money for part-time or further education of technical college unions to gain recognition as autonomous students unions.

Last February we in the Socialist Students Alliance (SSA) warned of the danger of Boyson's proposals. We were attacked as 'scaremongers' by the Left Alliance leadership of the NUS. At last they have realised that the whole ex-

istence of NUS is threatened, and have launched a major national campaign for adequate student union funding and for the inde-

pendence of student unions. A national demonstration has been called for Friday 28 November in Lon-

don. The SSA will back this demonstration and campaign in particular for the rights of FE students to autonomous unions.

We need to call for the NUS to approach trade unions for their support. The SSA is building support for workers' struggles against the Tories, such as Gardner's, and we will be arguing for students to join the Labour Party demonstration on unemployment in Liverpool on 29 November.

NUS
A MILLION MEMBERS
ONE MOVEMENT

The fight to defend student union autonomy cannot be separated from the struggles to defend trade union rights and autonomy. We beat the Tories in 1971 through student-worker solidarity. The time to go on a similar offensive is now.



Anwar Ditta 'Bring my children home!'

'YOU have the power to bring my children home. Come out and demonstrate.' That's the message of Anwar Ditta, who for the past four and a half years has been struggling to be reunited with her three young children.

What is preventing her is the barbed wire round Britain's coast in the form of the Immigration Act. Your opportunity to demonstrate your opposition to these racist laws is on Saturday, 15 November in Rochdale.

Assemble at Church Stile, off Drake St, at noon. Speakers from the Pakistani, Indian, Kashmiri, and Bangladeshi workers' associations.

Demonstrator jailed

ANOTHER of the Southall 342 defendants has been sent to prison.

For allegedly throwing a brick at a policeman, Mahmood Malik stands convicted of possessing an offensive weapon and causing grievous bodily harm.

Following a three day trial at St. Albans Crown Court, he was sentenced

to nine months and three months imprisonment. Two other defendants face imprisonment in the next few weeks on charges arising from the Southall events.

Socialists should note the contrast between the sterling efforts of the police in pursuing the case against the black people of Southall and their 'determination' to find the police murderer of Blair Peach.

Pies that are not for eating

By Chris Murray

HERE is a message to consumers of King Henry pies: Don't buy them.

One reason is that the lousy safety conditions at the pie factory in Manchester result in workers' fingers being chopped off. In the past six months alone there have been three such incidents.

Management has just been fined £500 under the Health and Safety Act for an incident in which a worker lost two fingers. That was because a machine wasn't properly guarded.

But the firm has been fined previously, and couldn't care less about these trifling sums. That's why half the 70 workers at the factory have joined the Bakers' Union.

Thirty of them came out on a one-day strike for union recognition during the summer, and they are still fighting over the issue. On Saturday 7 November there is to be a mass picket at King Henry Foods, Stanbrook St, Levenshulme, Manchester 19. Starts 6am.

Rock against Thatcher

AS PART of its November Month of Action against the Tory government's economic policies, the South-east region of the TUC in association with Rock Against Racism is organising several Rock Against Thatcher concerts. Admission will be free to unemployed youth.

The first of the concerts will be held in East London's Poplar Civic Hall, Fairfield Street, E3 on Saturday 8 November at 8pm. Two Birmingham bands, the Au Pairs and Fast Relief, will be playing with the East End band Far Cry. Admission is £1.50

Ken Hulme, one of the organisers of the concerts, says:

'Racism, crime, vandalism, violence, and the politics of despair are the bitter harvest this government's policies are beginning to reap among unemployed kids in

London.

The social consequences of continued unemployment combined with public spending cuts in inner London are going to be disastrous unless organisations like trade unions step up their work with the unemployed — and fast!

He adds: 'This concert is the start of a campaign by trade unionists to reach out to unemployed kids in London, to show them we are concerned about their problems and to offer some positive focus for protest.'

Be brief!

If you have a short news story, this page is for you. Articles can be sent in by post, to arrive by 10am Monday, or rung through on Sunday 10.30am-5.30pm, on 01-359 8189.

Join a union and take a pay cut

THE contractor on the Elm Village site in Camden, North London, had a novel proposal to make to building workers who asked for union recognition. Join the union, they were told by the Taylor Powell company, and you go on the minimum wage.

This generous offer

meant a £35 a week pay cut. So 14 members of the building workers' union UCATT have been on strike for over two months, and the police have been keeping them company on the picket line.

Over three hundred cops turned up for one mass picket. As the strikers' spokesperson Hugh Sloan puts it:

'We've seen a massive show of strength by the police. They were actually picketing the gate to keep us off the site. They've since been using the picketing code to keep down our numbers.'

The site is owned by Labour-controlled Camden council. Next mass picket, Monday 10 November, Midland Rd, NW1 (nr St Pancras Station). Starts 7am.



Sex if you're married, only

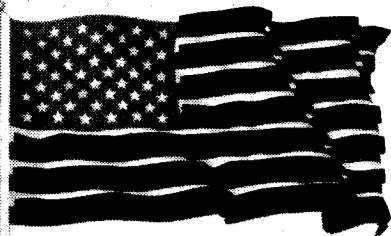
IF you're not married, you are not legally entitled to contraceptives in the south of Ireland. That is the effect of family planning legislation which came into force on Saturday.

Outside the Aer Lingus office in London, 20 feminists picketed in protest at the new law.

The action, organised by the National Abortion Campaign and the International Contraception, Abortion and Sterilisation Campaign, was in solidarity with the Access for All campaign in the south of Ireland.

Photo: Joanne O'Brian

Socialist Challenge



**Whoever wins
the workers lose**

AS we go to press the latest opinion polls suggest that a majority of the American electorate won't bother to vote in the presidential election.

Hunger striker writes to Socialist Challenge

A CRY FROM AN IRISH DEATH CELL

Comrade,
Once again, Irishmen face death; resisting imperial British oppression.
I and six of my fellow hunger strikers in the H Blocks of Long Kesh have taken it upon ourselves to face the supreme challenge in pursuance of our political ideals.
Our decision to hunger strike was inevitable. We had long tried, by all and every means, to gain our right to political status, which had been repressed in March 1976, but to no avail.
Our original protest of non-cooperation with the criminalisation policy was met with barbaric... (indecipherable). We were deprived of every mental and physical comfort and we were subjected to a campaign of physical assault.
We, the blanketmen, suffered these conditions between September 1976 and April 1978. By the latter date we found ourselves much deteriorated in physical and mental conditions, and two of our comrades had been driven insane.
We were compelled, due to the aforementioned facts, to embark on a dirt strike in an attempt to highlight our plight. A campaign of savage and physical assault was the government's answer to this protest.
We have lain, since April 1978, in cells covered in filth with nothing but a filthy mattress and the token blanket. Beatings continued and so, too, the many and various forms of degradation, so clearly seen in the perverted mirror search during which we were forced to squat naked over a mirror while six to eight screws degrade us.
Long much-publicised protest had been made on our behalf. Yet the imperial war-lords at Westminster refused to yield. So, on Monday 27 October we embarked on a hunger strike to the death!
We seven do know that the right-wing war-lords are more than willing to allow us to die, but we also know that if our hunger strike receives the support of all concerned workers, the British authorities will simply collapse under the pressure.
But the only support which speaks clearly is support shown through action. So I, on behalf of all our struggling comrades offer you a true socialist challenge. Use all means at your disposal to prevent another tragedy. And help bring this, our prison struggle, to a successful conclusion.
I write to you in full hope and confidence of your continued solidarity and support, not only for our present struggle... (indecipherable) ...but for the achievement of Ireland's dearest need — British withdrawal from Ireland.
Comradely greetings,
Sean McKenna, POW, H Block 5, Long Kesh

Faced with a choice between TweedleCarter and Tweedle Reagan this is hardly surprising. It is an appropriate comment on the election campaign that one of the main news stories in the run up to the vote was the discovery of a hole in one of Reagan's shoes.

Carter launched a desperate last-minute drive to win the votes of trade unionists, women and blacks who fear Reagan's reactionary policies. But 'Peanuts' own record is too appalling to inspire anybody, and in the course of this election campaign his own militarism became indistinguishable from Reagan's.

The election was overshadowed by the possible release of the American hostages held in Iran. The government and the media have been whipping up a hysterical racist campaign against Iranians since the hostages were taken a year ago.

A national opinion poll last week revealed that almost half the American people felt that Iran was the biggest enemy of the USA, even more so than the Soviet Union.



The hypocrisy of this anti-Iranian campaign stinks. It was a CIA-inspired coup that brought the Shah to power in the first place. And successive United States governments gave total support to the Shah and his barbaric regime which imprisoned and tortured tens of thousands of opponents.

American governments gave billions of pounds of 'aid' to the Shah's Iran — most of which he spirited away into his private bank accounts abroad.

Now the press are outraged because the Iranians are asking for it back!

American governments in recent years have launched countless military attacks on regimes challenging imperialism — from Vietnam through to the farcical raid to free the hostages.

US imperialism has as much respect for human rights as the majority of US voters have for the presidential candidates — precious little.

* Inside — US workers need a labour party — an interview with an American socialist.

SOCIALIST Challenge has received a letter from Sean McKenna, one of the seven Irish political prisoners now on hunger strike in the H Blocks of Long Kesh.

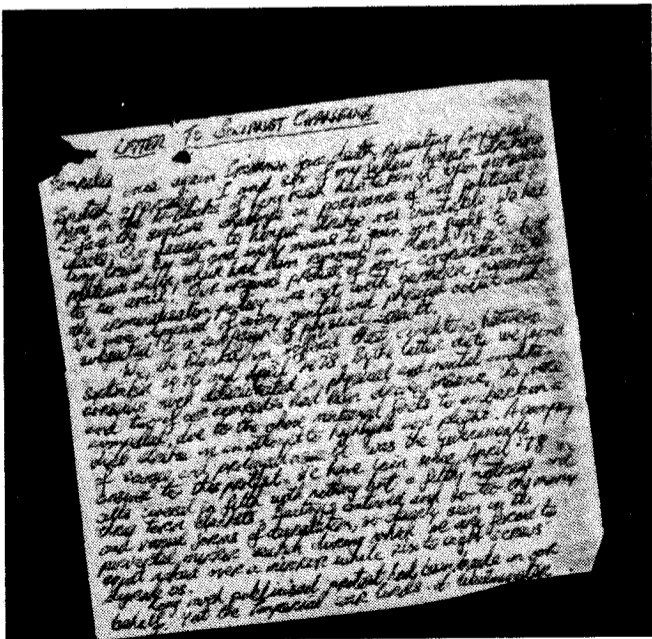
The letter arrived at our offices over the weekend written in tiny handwriting on wafer-thin paper just two inches square.

It was smuggled out of the H Blocks last week as the seven prisoners started their 'fast until death' in pursuit of the demand to be treated as prisoners-of-war.

Help

Sean writes to 'offer you a true socialist challenge. Use all means at your disposal, expressing your help and support to us, to prevent another tragedy'.

His plea is to 'help bring our prison struggle to a suc-



Life-size copy of H Block letter

cessful conclusion'.

The smuggled communication is headed 'Letter to Socialist Challenge'. Its full text is:

All readers of Socialist Challenge will have the opportunity to express their 'support through action' on

Solidarity

Saturday 15 November in London, when a demonstration takes place on the very demand Sean expresses in the last sentence of his letter — British withdrawal from Ireland.

Support for the prisoners' demands for political status will be one of the themes of that demonstration.

Sean McKenna may not have another opportunity in his lifetime to ask for your solidarity. Don't ignore his death-cell plea: all out 15 November.

Coaches

Details of coaches to 15 November demonstration include:

Manchester: St Peters Sq, 8.15am 15 Nov. Tickets £1.50. Phone Manchester 273 1162

Liverpool: Mann Island (Pier Head) 8am, 15 Nov.

Birmingham: Hall of Memory, 10.30am 15 Nov. Tickets £3 return.

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