

Socialist Challenge

WE'VE BEEN CENSORED!

LEYLAND BRIBES SCANDAL



At 12.45 pm on Tuesday 17 January, the Editor of this paper received a phone call from Chief Superintendent Wilson of Scotland Yard. We were warned that if we published all but one of the documents in our possession, relating to details of bribes paid out by British Leyland, we would be prosecuted.

Given the shortage of time it was impossible to obtain the necessary legal advice. We have therefore delayed publication. For further details see Page 3. We apologise to our readers for the imbalance this has produced in the newspaper.

Editorial

Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.
Editorial 01-359 8180/9. Distribution and
Advertising 01-359 8371.

Whatever happened to nationalisation?

CONSPIRACY is the name of the game in Britain's nationalised industries. The rules are simple. A pact is concluded between the Labour Government, the Confederation of British Industry and the Liberals. Wages are to be held down below 10 per cent for Britain's six million public sector workers.

When these workers fight back (or even if they don't) the trump card is brought out. The nationalised industries are bankrupt. You must take a wage cut, you must accept compulsory redundancies, speed-up and demanning.

Balance sheets of nationalised industries appear to confirm the argument. But closer examination reveals a different story. There are several reasons why nationalised industries consistently show a loss.

In a private sector company, two different groups of capitalists get a rake-off: the shareholder and the loan stock holder. There are no shareholders in nationalised companies. Their capital all comes from loans. Shareholders are paid dividends from after-tax profits. Interest on loans is calculated on pretax profits. A large part of these loans result from compensation that the government paid to the old private owners.

In addition the nationalised industries, particularly power industries, make losses so that private industry can benefit. Several nationalised industries also calculate the cost of depreciation of capital, a cost of production, on the basis of the cost of replacing capital equipment rather than on the current value of their assets. This is not to say that workers should demand their rights because of hidden high profits in nationalised industries for on that basis they should hold back when these industries genuinely do make a loss.

No, the argument is that all decisions on nationalised industries are politically inspired. The government can veto all proposals which put the responsibility for the capitalist crisis on the backs of workers in these industries. This is why nationalised industries are so chary about releasing information on the wheeling and dealing between themselves and the Government. Even MPs who wanted information on the steel industry, the better to make proposals for slashing jobs, were denied access to letters between Varley and Sir Charles Villiers. Villiers even declared himself ready to go to the Tower of London, so sensitive is this area of Government policy making.

FIGHT BACK

There is a less dramatic but much more effective policy that the workers movement can adopt to counter the conspiracy against them in Government and industrial circles. Opening the books and revealing all the confidential information of nationalised industries will start to give a political basis to the fight-back against redundancies in the steel industry, Leyland and other industries. It will show that the Labour Government is the most deadly enemy in such a fight-back.

Who would start such an investigation? Well, it won't be the union leaders. In the row over the Villiers/Varley correspondence, Iron and Steels Confederation secretary Bill Sims supported Villiers refusal to hand over on the basis that, 'if he had handed over the correspondence, we would have been on his back.' Nor did press leaks of Michael Edwardes' plans for Leyland seem much of a surprise to union leaders like Derek Robinson (see page 2).

Union leaders are up to their necks in collaboration with the Government and bosses. Elected committees, accountable to the rank and file to start the investigation, are the way a workers' solution to the crisis of Britain's nationalised industries can start to be thrashed out.

Mass redundancies at Leyland

End participation now!

Thousands of Leyland workers facing the sack this year will be pleased to know that the wife of Cars managing director, Derek Whittaker, is 'not worried about money because of her husband's decision to quit'.

Few car workers can afford to be so complacent, writes PAT HICKEY, steward at Leyland's Rover Solihull plant.

12,000 jobs will go in 1978 alone, according to plans outlined by Whittaker at last Thursday's meeting of the Cars Council, the top workers participation body in Leyland. The proposals were in line with the new year revelations by Michael Edwardes that 30,000 jobs will go by 1980.

SACKINGS

Edwardes is not one to do things by half. The cut of ten per cent in the workforce this year will be accompanied by an increase in production from 780,000 cars last year to 825,000 cars in 1978. The theme is reduced manning levels plus higher productivity.

Parts of the full plan, officially unveiled by Edwardes last Monday, were revealed to trade union leaders before Christmas. But they remained silent.

There is good reason to believe that the 'leaks' to the press were a ploy to enable the senior stewards to tell their members that they knew nothing of the plan till they read the papers.

PARTY

Even so the immediate response of Derek Robinson, senior steward at Leyland's Longbridge plant, was to splutter about the lack of consultation, rather than to condemn the sackings. Now Robinson will have 'consultation' in plenty.

After Thursday's meeting, the Edwardes plan will be taken to a full participation conference in February. The purpose of the exercise is to involve the union leaders in achieving the company's objectives with the minimum of disruption.

But Edwardes has already made it clear that the role of participation committees is to

discuss implementation. His contempt for his union lackeys, like Communist Party member Robinson, is made clear in his statement that these discussions with employees' representatives 'cannot be prolonged'.

The real decisions will be made in collaboration with the National Enterprise Board and Industry Minister Eric Varley. So much for the view expressed in the Communist Party pamphlet on Leyland that participation gives 'a say in future decisions on investment and location of work which helps to ensure job security'.

INVESTIGATION

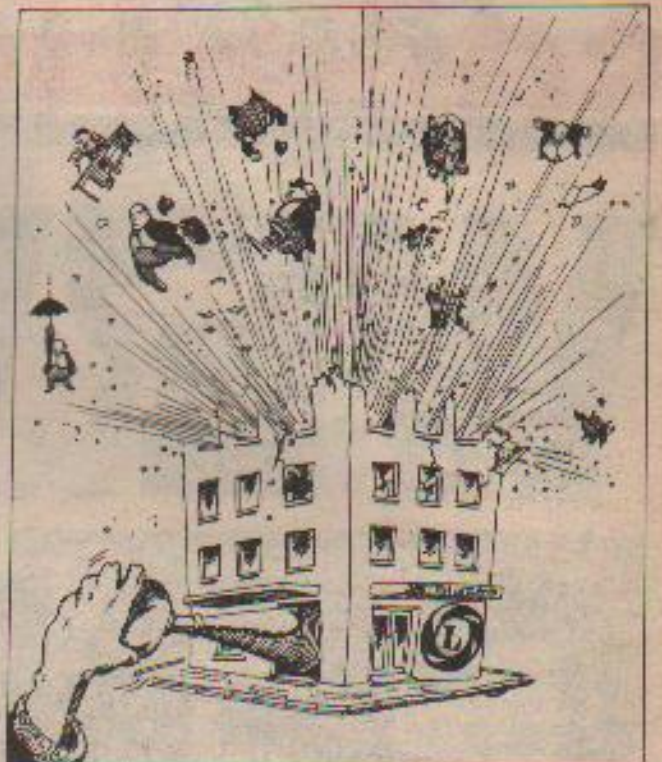
Perhaps Derek Robinson would now care to justify the Communist Party claim that: 'Where the question of redundancies has arisen...the unions are receiving long term warning of this and alternative work offered.'

In fact participation is being used to prevent opposition to the company's plans. So one of the central demands for launching a fight back must be an end to all forms of participation.

In those plants where participation schemes operate, militants must demand withdrawal from these bodies. All negotiations must take place by elected committees.

CONFERENCE

The new plans threaten the security of every Leyland worker; white collar, skilled and unskilled. They come on top of the new wages and incentive scheme which will continue to hold wages down and put future negotiations in the hands of the union leaders already up to their necks in collaboration with management.



A national conference of Leyland stewards is necessary to unify the work force and prepare the fight back conference must end participation and elect a leadership committed to fighting for a decent wage for all of Leyland's workers and to opposing redundancies and speed up.

It should also call for an investigation into the company's books by an elected committee to establish the real situation in Leyland — for example estimating the amount of money creamed off to the finance houses in interest.

While exposing the ongoing scandal of the millions of pounds allocated to the 'slush fund', it would also need to enquire into the books of the component suppliers to discover how they manage to double and treble their profits in servicing a 'bankrupt' Leyland.

COMMUNIST

The Communist Party will argue that the newly revived

Cars Group Combine meeting on 21 January will plan and co-ordinate action. But bodies like this in the past, unaccountable to the rank and file, have never been more than a face-saver for the senior stewards.

And they really scrape the barrel when they say that there are too many Leyland stewards for a full conference. We need them all. We can hire the Albert Hall if necessary.

FIGHT BACK

Socialist Challenge supporters throughout Leyland will be putting resolutions in shop stewards committees calling for an end to participation and for a national conference to prepare the fightback. All plant based struggles such as that at the Speke plant on Merseyside must receive the maximum support to overcome their present isolation.

If we do not stand together, we will hang separately — with Edwardes tightening the noose and participation committees releasing the trap door.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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

I am interested in more information about activities in my area.

I would like additional literature and enclose 50p to cover costs.

(Delete if not applicable)

NAME

ADDRESS

Send to Socialist Challenge, 328/329 Upper Street, London N1.

OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

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

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

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

HOW THEY CENSORED SOCIALIST CHALLENGE

Statement from editorial board

Within the last week Socialist Challenge has received anonymously through the post copies of documents which appeared to be internal memos and correspondence from British Leyland. If genuine these documents reveal a trail of corruption and bribery.

Because *Socialist Challenge* does not have the resources to check the authenticity of these documents we handed them to a national newspaper, with an agreement that we would publish on the same day.

When that paper approached British Leyland, the company promised to comment on the documents by 12 noon on Tuesday 17 January — the day we go to press.

When that time arrived Leyland was still refusing to comment. Instead they contacted the police. The editors of both the national newspaper and *Socialist Challenge* were then contacted by Detective Chief Superintendent Wilson of Scotland Yard, on behalf of the Director of Public Prosecution.

We were then formally warned that if we published the documents we could be found in contempt of court. This could mean a crippling fine and possible imprisonment. The case in question is that against Graham Barton, the Leyland executive who leaked documents on the slush fund to the *Daily Mail* last year. Two of these were later said to be forgeries.

Socialist Challenge decided not to publish the documents in question, but we publish one on this page, which we were told is not involved in the Barton forgery case. This document reveals that the 'market factor' — the polite term for bribes and illegal payments — is still continuing, despite official denials from both Leyland and the Government.

The decision not to publish is made for this issue of the paper only. We are seeking urgent legal advice on the possibility of publishing these documents in a future issue.

One thing we can state. Every day national newspapers, and indeed the left press, publish articles which are technically in contempt of court. They are

not threatened by top police officers. No charges are made against them.

The reason we have been warned by the police is because of the nature of the documents we have — listing how, whom, and how much Leyland bribe. They involve the very top of Leyland management and huge sums—in one case a bribe of £700,000.

It is obvious that Leyland and the Labour Government would do everything in their power to stop the publication of such documents. That is why Chief Superintendent Wilson contacted us.

The affair is the latest stage in a cover-up which stretches back six months. The case against the *Mail* allows Leyland to sweep under the carpet documents that even the company has never claimed to be forgeries. It was these documents — as well as some new ones — that we intended to publish.

This week Leyland bosses threaten to sack thousands of workers. This week as well evidence emerged of a cover-up by the Department of Industry on the running of the nationalised British Steel Corporation. Now there are the threats against *Socialist Challenge*.

We say that working people have every right to know what goes on in nationalised industries. We say the attempts to censor are a direct attack on the free press. We say that in this instance the contempt of court issue is just a smokescreen — one more attempt at a cover-up.

We demand a full workers' inquiry into how nationalised industries are run.

In the meantime we make this promise. This is by no means the end of the affair. We still have the documents and one way or another we will make sure that their contents become known to the labour movement.

W. Seiler - Lausanne
G. Nockles

D.B. Prentice

14.2.77

cc R.C. Field -
BLI Ltd. - Longbridge

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

ACCOUNTING FOR "MARKET FACTOR"



This is to confirm the accounting procedure for special commissions known as "Market Factor" in respect of Leyland Cars. A similar procedure will operate in due course for Leyland Truck and Dats.

On or before the 10th working day following the end of each respective period:

- (i) Bob Field will telex W. Seiler with the value of the "Market Factor" for the period (he will send or have sent details of this total figure separately).
- (ii) Bob Field will send Gilbert Nockles a copy of this telex with the relevant credit notes from Leyland Cars.

The value of the "Market Factor" will be accounted for in the period;

- (i) by BLIS as an expense simultaneously establishing the respective liability
- (ii) by BLIS as income debiting Leyland Cars
- (iii) thereby the expense of BLIS and income of BLIS will offset each other in the period

4. The precise account codes to be used for these transactions will be determined after consultations with W. Seiler.

D.B. PRENTICE
Finance Manager - Special Projects



GRAHAM BARTON — the man who leaked details of the Leyland slush fund to the *Daily Mail*.

THIS IS the one document the Director of Public Prosecutions did not prevent us from printing.

It deals with the accounting procedure for what is known as the 'Market factor', also known as 'special commissions'. It is clear from other documents in our possession that 'special commission' is the term used to describe the bribing of foreign government officials. It is what Dobson referred to as 'bribing wops' in his notorious after-dinner speech.

This document suggests that the money is 'laundered' through BLIS — British Leyland International Services, in Switzerland. From there it finds its way into the pockets of the government officials named in other documents.

Previous allegations concerning the operation of the Leyland 'slush fund' suggested payments were made up until August 1976. This document suggests the 'market factor' was operated after this date — until February 1977 at least.

Slush, slush, whisper who dares

In their trading interests representatives of British business are prepared to admit the existence of the 'market factor'. When the Daily Mail first published revelations of the Leyland slush fund Sir Fred Cookson of the British Overseas Trade Board admitted that bribery is necessary. 'If you want to do business in these areas', CHRIS O'BRIEN reports



There is a slush fund, it is true, but it is not the one you think it is. It is not a fund of money, but a fund of influence. It is a fund of connections, of favours, of 'market factors'. It is a fund of 'bribe' money, but not in the way you think of it. It is a fund of 'market factors' which are necessary to do business in these areas. CHRIS O'BRIEN reports

The 'market factor' is a term used by British businessmen to describe the influence of 'bribe' money in the 'market factor'.

SPEASING

The 'market factor' is a term used by British businessmen to describe the influence of 'bribe' money in the 'market factor'.

BRIBERY

The 'market factor' is a term used by British businessmen to describe the influence of 'bribe' money in the 'market factor'.

The 'market factor' is a term used by British businessmen to describe the influence of 'bribe' money in the 'market factor'.

SHARE

The 'market factor' is a term used by British businessmen to describe the influence of 'bribe' money in the 'market factor'.

Racial corruption trial

Bribery 'absolutely necessary' official

Bribery is 'absolutely necessary' for business operating in the Middle East, so Sir Bellier has said. The firm in question was unfortunately not Leyland but Karel Electronics, but the spokesman was Sir Lester Stoddart, who used to work for British Leyland before he moved on to head the 'Market Factor' business, reports CHRIS O'BRIEN

Selling to the highest bidder

The 'market factor' is a term used by British businessmen to describe the influence of 'bribe' money in the 'market factor'.

The 'market factor' is a term used by British businessmen to describe the influence of 'bribe' money in the 'market factor'.

The 'market factor' is a term used by British businessmen to describe the influence of 'bribe' money in the 'market factor'.

CENSORED

RECEIVED

The 'market factor' is a term used by British businessmen to describe the influence of 'bribe' money in the 'market factor'.

Lessons of FBU strike Troops and bureaucrats ensure defeat

by Noel Hibbert and Rich Palsler

'I shudder to think what would have happened to me if it was not for the police'. That was Terry Parry after he had squirmed past 350 lobbying firemen at the Bridlington recall conference. And no wonder.

A majority of three to one accepted Rees' surrender proposals and the nine week old firemen's strike was finally crushed by its own leadership and the TUC.

After starting a strike with even greater public sympathy than the miners' strike of 1974, the conference accepted an offer within the Government's 10 per cent code.

In a press conference following the debate Terry Parry claimed that: 'Long term gains in wages and conditions have been won, that other trade union leaders would give their right arm for.' But when asked what guarantees there were that the pay promises would be immune from the fourth round of incomes policy in November being mooted by Jim Callaghan, he said 'promises from Mr Callaghan himself'.

But the strike was called precisely because of the failure of Labour and Tories to honour past promises on pay.

Nor is the FBU going back to work in a strong position to enforce those promises. In Lincolnshire, for example, the County Council is going on the offensive and claiming that fewer appliances used for fire cover during the strike are now

sufficient for permanent use.

But even if the promises of future increases are met, this cannot compensate for the cut in real wages which the firemen are suffering now by accepting 10 per cent. More could have been won, but when the FBU leadership failed to call for active support from the 17 union leaders who voted in support of a campaign against the 10 per cent at the TUC General Council meeting of 21 December — demanding that they organise national solidarity action — they set up their members for defeat.

RESPONSIBILITY

It was because more could have been won, and the FBU leadership failed to take the steps to achieve it, that they must bear the responsibility for the defeat of the strike along with the TUC General Council.

There are those on the left who would like to think otherwise. The *Morning Star*, in its Editorial of 13 January, says



the real responsibility lies 'not with the leadership of the Fire Brigades Union', but with the General Council majority.

This is hardly surprising, since to have criticised the FBU leadership would have meant facing up to the equally disastrous failure of the TUC minority, including Communist Party member Ken Gill, to wage a campaign for mass solidarity action by other trade unionists with the firemen.

The main challenge to the union leadership from the ranks of the FBU came from

the 'Rank and File Firemen' grouping. After the lobby of the Bridlington conference, a meeting of 150 firemen discussed the lessons of the strike. Jim Fitzpatrick of Battersea FBU argued:

'If there is one thing every man here is committed to, it is driving Terry Parry out of the union. The achievement of this strike is that many workers have come to understand the need to democratise the union. That means removing the unaccountables.'

'We have to make sure that

resolutions that are moved through branches to remove Parry are made to stick'.

Democracy is certainly a central lesson, but Rank and File should have been fighting for this throughout the struggle by calling for elected strike committees at area and national level to plan the way forward.

Equally it should have been fighting inside the union to demand the leadership name a date for national solidarity action and a national demonstration by other trade unionists.

Instead the rank and file group attempted to substitute itself and its bulletin for a national union strike bulletin, raising no demands upon the FBU leadership, and simply calling for the rank and file to organise flying pickets.

Unfortunately even initiatives at rank and file level could not be achieved without confronting the union leadership who stepped in to prevent the mobilisation of other trade

unionists.

In the absence of any clear alternative strategy for winning the strike, the executive were able to win a vote for a return to work. Whilst this is certainly a defeat for the firemen, as for all workers suffering wage cuts, a fightback against the union leadership is possible.

UNION LEADERS

The claims to insurance of offices (standing at £42,700,000 for November as against an average of £18,500,000 per month on average in 1977) show that it was not only the troops, but also the TUC and the union leaders who defeated the strike.

Thousands of firemen realise this. Rank and File Firemen should now hold a national conference of FBU militants to thrash out a policy which can really challenge Parry and his supporters on the executive, and prepare the FBU for future struggles.

Low poll in UCATT elections

by 'Building Worker' Editorial Committee

'Left win control' and 'UCATT left turn' declared the building trade press after the election results for a vacancy on the UCATT executive. And if that were true, it would make the employers' blood run cold.

Even the *Morning Star* last week headlined its article: 'Left advance in union'. But does the election of Kelly, a Labour Party member with a 'left of centre view' — as he describes his politics — mean a left advance?

A closer examination of the figures in the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians elections shows in fact the decline of the left vote. The four leading candidates polled as follows: Kelly: 6,706; McTurk: 3,765; Graves: 2,513; Rea: 2,195. All of them are full-time officials. The other candidates polled less than 900 votes between them.

Only about 5 per cent of the membership bothered to vote — 16,176 out of 300,000. And little work was done for 'left' victor Kelly — he was not even formally backed by a Broad Left meeting in the North-east because he is an organiser in Aberdeen, and no-one knew anything about him.

The *Morning Star* could better have said: 'Left of centre candidate scrapes home in abysmally low poll as right wing in UCATT shows itself to be even more disorganised than the left.'

Next September, nominations will open for general secretary of the union. Official Communist Party policy is not to stand a candidate, but to support the present assistant general secretary, Les Woods, on the grounds that the alternative, Hardman, is more right wing.

This continual cringing before the UCATT leadership has not produced any dividends. The CP has moved rapidly to the right since publication of *Building Workers Charter* ceased in 1976.

The CP has also moved to the right on the issue of rivalry

between UCATT and the Transport Union. Several of their leading lights have attacked the TGWU over recruitment of building workers, especially Party members and Building Group secretary Peter Kavanagh. Not all CP members have gone along with these policies, but little or no opposition has emerged.

A picket last Friday outside the civil engineering employers office shows the attitude of CP members in UCATT. The picket was to protest at the death of four construction workers on the Littlebrook power station site, and was called by Kavanagh. The *Morning Star* mentioned the picket only briefly two days before, and no leading CP members in UCATT showed their faces there.

A group of building workers broke away from the CP in the London Joint Sites Committee in September, 1976, and formed a Rank and File Building Workers Committee. Since then we have produced eight issues of the paper *Building Worker*.

The framework for a national organisation was thrashed out last year, but it is still very weak, and there has been no national activity apart from selling the paper.

If the Communist Party does not campaign or put forward a candidate on a principled policy for the general secretary's position there is a strong possibility that *Building Worker* will mount a campaign for socialist policies around a candidate, following an open national meeting of all *Building Worker* supporters.

Copies of the *Building Worker* policy statement and eight issues of the paper are available from: 17B Studholme Street, London SE15. Price 50p.

Ford shop steward victimised

Over the last ten days the Ford management, aided and abetted by union Convenors have succeeded in sacking one militant shop steward and causing two others to lose their credentials. STEVE HARPER explains what happened in the factory.

FOR SOME time now the company has been looking for pretexts to get rid of these stewards. Their pressure succeeded in getting the trade union officials to send letters to the shop stewards threatening them with disciplinary action. The so-called crimes of these stewards have been that they have been doing their job too well. They have consistently fought against speed-ups, dangerous working conditions and sackings.

CONFRONTATION

This has brought them into confrontation with the convenors and union officials. The latter have over the years developed a cosy 'don't rock the boat' relationship with the company. This relationship was cemented by an agreement after the paint, trim and assembly plant strike last June.

The terms were as follows: the company would give a 24-hour notice before any lay-offs provided that all disputes were taken through procedure. The convenors and union bureaucrats were only too happy to accept, as it strengthened their position in relation to the shop-floor.

The result of this has been that the senior stewards on the joint works have become the policemen for such agreements. Even worse the letters sent by the T&GWU and the AUEW to the company in October 1975, stating that any sacked workers would get immediate union backing, were withdrawn.

SHOP STEWARD

The reasons given by the company for sacking militant shop steward Tom Birmingham were that he had 'sabotaged a Fiesta underbody

and urinated in an airduct'. Much to their displeasure and embarrassment another worker admitted that he had been responsible for the damage. He too was sacked. The department where Tom Birmingham works voted on 10 January to strike against the sackings, but a third to a half resumed work under heavy management pressure.

CP COLLUSION

The remainder were to be dealt with by the trade union officials. The Joint Works Committee members, who included longstanding members of the Communist Party, colluded with the management to send telegrams calling the men back to the department for a meeting the following day. It was here that the Works Committee members recommended an immediate return to work without Tom's re-instatement. It was accepted.

The following day the company, encouraged by its success, threatened another

shop steward, Dave Wray, in the same department with the sack. Mick Murphy, the T&GWU official suggested to Wray that he should resign his post in order to keep his job. Wray refused and was supported by his branch. The following day the Joint Works Committee members called another meeting and persuaded it that if Wray was not removed it would 'create more trouble'. They accused Wray of being 'irresponsible' for not giving in to management pressure. In this atmosphere of confusion and pressure a vote of no-confidence was passed against Dave Wray.

SUCCESS

The company had succeeded, in connivance with convenors and union officials, in inflicting a defeat on what is known as a 'strong trade union department'. The repercussions of this will be felt elsewhere. The company are boasting that they have drawn up a 'list of troublemakers.'

Another Grunwick picket gaoled

by JONATHAN SILBERMAN

CHRISTOPHER ROYS, a Bradford University student, was arrested on the Grunwick picket line last summer. In September, Roys was fined £50 plus £25 costs for allegedly using threatening behaviour on 24 June.

Roys appealed before Judge Stucley at Knightsbridge Crown Court on 6 January. The judge concluded that a £50 fine was not enough. He sent Roys to Pentonville Jail for 21 days. Roys is the latest in a number of Grunwick pickets to be jailed, but the first to have his sentence raised on appeal. With more than 200 pickets still awaiting trial, Roys is clearly being made an example of.

Grunwick has been the battleground in the fight for the right to picket. In his book, *Fort*

Grunwick, George Ward calls for a change in the law to restrict the number of pickets to six, and to prevent anyone from outside the firm in dispute from picketing. The National Association for Freedom supports such a change.

The *Financial Times's* Assistant Editor, Joe Rogaly, argues for changes in the law to 'make the work of the police easier', in his book, *Grunwick*. The Tories favour further change, and the Labour Government itself has announced the need to

look at the picketing laws.

While these people stand for the right to picket, they oppose the rights of effective picketing, and as discussions continue, the police and the courts have used such deliberations to attack picketing rights. Thus the enormous number of arrests at Grunwick.

The police have used Grunwick as a training ground for improving their 'military' capacities. Pickets have been picked up, beaten and then released. More sinister was the Special Patrol Group attack on the Chapter Road picket on 7 November which led to charges of police brutality from Labour MPs and trade union leaders.

Eldon Griffiths, Tory and special police MP, confirmed

that the SPG attack came after the Grunwick bus had gone through the Cooper Road gate. Police knew this through their 'walkie-talkie' system, and their attack was nothing but a premeditated decision to inflict physical damage on pickets, an action supported later by Home Secretary, Merlyn Rees, in Parliament.

A defence campaign for arrested pickets is vital. Funds are particularly needed. Collection sheets can be obtained from Brent Trades and Labour Hall, 375 High Road, London NW10. The *Newsreel* Collective film of the events of 7 November can be obtained from the Strike Committee at the above address.

McKinnon affair

Get rid of him!

SO MUCH for Labour's Britain having 'the most advanced anti-racist laws in the world', which Callaghan boasted about in India. For despite demonstrations, protests and 113 Labour MP's demand for his dismissal, Judge Neil McKinnon remains in office. And fascist leader Kingsley Read faces nothing more than the slogan 'Black is Beautiful' daubed on the side of his semi-detached Blackburn house.

by SUE LANDAU

Judge McKinnon, a white Australian immigrant, who doesn't mind being called 'nigger' by an old school-friend, has asked not to handle further cases raising race issues. And the Lord Chancellor 'in the circumstances, is taking no further action'. Not a very good advertisement of the Labour Government's commitment to fighting racism to the people of

India, Bangladesh and Pakistan to whom Callaghan recently paid a visit. Much less so to black people in Britain, to whom Read was referring when he said: 'One down, a million to go'. They

SPINELESS

are unlikely to agree with McKinnon that 'Well, that can mean anything, can it not?' The Labour Government has this week amply demonstrated that it is utterly spineless in the face of racism by its failure to dismiss McKinnon for his racist remarks. The whole case has however sparked off controversy even among the right wing columnists of the national press. The *Economist* comes out in favour of 'limiting the expression of honestly held opinions — but only when freedom of expression conflicts with another, more important right, which in this instance is to show your face where you want to in peace, even when it be brown or black'.

And Peregrine Worsthorne, a self-confessed 'Tory realist' on questions of race and one of Fleet Street's most prominent right-wing scribes, says his own views cannot be freely expressed without giving offense 'to people who are now

RACIST 'REALISTS'

my fellow citizens'. He describes Judge McKinnon's remarks as demonstrating 'a somewhat light-hearted and jocular approach to these matters', of which he implies disapproval. Tory realists like Mr Worsthorne claim to have taken race questions seriously all along and recognised white racism, which they clearly share, in their desire to restrict immigration and thus identify

black people as their own problem, since you must expect racism where there are black people. But he doesn't think that even he should be free to incite hatred against those black people.

You would expect a Labour Government to take that view too — in fact it is implied in the new 1976 Race Relations Act. You would expect them to want to maintain a facade of protecting black people especially as the new law is part of the whole 'race relations industry', set up not by black people in their own interests but by the Government as an intermediary between the State and those people who suffer from racism. That way there is a machinery to dissipate their struggles against their oppression.

INDEPENDENT?

But whatever law is passed is open to interpretation in the courts by the 'independent' judiciary — people like McKinnon — and they may not always have the same ideas on race relations as the Government, much less as anti-racists. If the McKinnon judgement shows anything, it is that the 'independence' of the judiciary is never an independence in favour of the labour movement, but an active boost to people like fascist Kingsley Read or to the institutionalised police harassment which is a daily reality for many black people.

Anti-racists in the Labour Party must now urgently challenge the Labour Government — unless they want to allow all the good effect of the recent broadcast against the National Front to be destroyed. And all anti-racists should continue the campaign to sack McKinnon, and refuse to allow racists to hold public office in the judiciary or anywhere else.



Black community bookshops say:

'We won't be terrorised'

DOES HOME Secretary Merlyn Rees want a pogrom? That's the question the Bookshop Joint Action group, a group of bookshops which have been attacked by fascists, are asking.

And on Tuesday they picketed the Home Office to protest at the inaction of the police and Home Office when bookshops have been fire-bombed, and to hand in their fifth letter to Mr Rees drawing his attention to the threats and attacks against them.

If it's fifth time lucky this time they might receive a reply. Because the four previous letters were ignored, misplaced, and only one replied to by a card of acknowledgement since last February — almost a year ago.

The Bookshop Joint Action say the inaction of the police and their failure to arrest any of the fascists who are terrorising them is astounding.

The unusual failure of the Police and the Home Office raises the very serious question of complicity between sections of the police and the neo-fascist forces in the country', they say. And they cite examples of the attitude of the Metropolitan Police while

making their enquiries into attacks on their shops. Headstart bookshop in North London were told that the police would not be able to mount a 24-hour watch guard after they received threatening phone calls saying 'Nigger get out. Some time this week we're going to bomb you' — followed by their windows being smashed in November last year.

They could only give that sort of protection to Buckingham Palace and Downing Street, the police told Headstart. And one senior police officer suggested that unless the fascists were caught in the act or near it, it would be difficult to make arrests. But the bookshops, most of which serve the black community, are standing firm and say: 'We won't be terrorised out of existence'. They are asking anti-fascists to raise the matter with any organisation they are in, and write to the Home Secretary expressing concern at the attacks and anger at his total indifference. Further information from: Bookshop Joint Action, 5A Chignell Place, Ealing, London W13 [Tel: 01-579-4920]



Old time fascist leader Cleaver (Iain Cuthbertson) in a scene from *Destiny* by David Edgar, to be shown on BBC1 at 9.25pm on 31 January. The play sketches the revival of British fascism in the late 1980s and the conscious decision to use race to propel itself onto the political scene.

On one side we see the splits between the 'fascists' and 'populists', on the other the paralysis of the Labour Party in the face of fascism, contrasted with the self organisation of striking black workers.

Though *Destiny* is a tough political drama, there is no oversimplification or cardboard characters. Not only is it the best-ever British play on racism and fascism, it remains the best play to have appeared on the West End stage for some time. Make sure you see it.

In Brief

A MAJOR broadcasting union has adopted a code of conduct on how its members who originate news and current affairs programmes should deal with race reporting. There is also a clause dealing with drama and light entertainment.

The code — based on the policy of the journalists' union — has just been accepted by the general council of the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians.

Playwright David Edgar, a member of ACTT's equality committee which drafted the code, says that it establishes a union policy of not being neutral on domestic racism.

racist allegations are made or racist views expressed.

In drama and light entertainment, the code calls for the portrayal of blacks and other ethnic minorities as ordinary members of the community.

At ACTT's annual conference last year, delegates narrowly defeated — by 84 votes to 74 — a motion to pull out the plugs on any party political broadcast by the National Front. For this reason, the new code is so far confined to programme originators, such as producers and directors, rather than those who handle material, such as camera operators and film

COMMUNICATIONS HOUSE



Martin Webster outside London Broadcasting House prior to discussion programme, including the Bishop of Woolwich, on the Monty Modlyn Radio Broadcast.

The code calls on members not to originate material 'which encourages discrimination or incites hatred on the grounds of race, colour, creed or national origin'.

It says that the sympathetic presentation of racist ideas should be discouraged, and that black and anti-racist organisations should have an automatic and contemporaneous right of reply whenever

processors. 'In my view, the code is a first step,' says Edgar, 'and it will prove of limited value unless it is ultimately enforceable. Part of the impetus to draw it up came from the NUJ and the Campaign Against Racism in the Media, and I hope that the opposition to racism that has now built up within the labour movement will help us to win a harder line.'

THE CHELMSFORD campaign against racist prejudice and organisations got a big boost at its second meeting in Chelmsford's AEU House on Thursday 12th January. Forty delegates, individuals, and observers, from fourteen organisations learnt that NALGO, one of the larger white-collar unions in Essex, had donated £50. The Essex County Branch of the National and Local Government Officers Association has also decided to affiliate to the campaign.

Speakers from the Anti-Nazi League and the Newham Community Renewal Programme will be invited to address the March meeting of

the campaign. Last week's successful meeting concentrated on exploring a wide range of possibilities for future action. Education against racist prejudice, theatre group shows, leafletting, exhibitions, holidays for inner-city children, and active opposition to the National Front were some of the suggestions. A motion criticising Judge McKinnon for his recent remarks will be sent to the local MPs and the Lord Chancellor.

Officers elected were: Secretary — Graham Evans [Liberal party], Treasurer — Harry Dempsey [Labour Party], and Press Officer — John Whitfield [NALGO].

10 February is now the date set for the NF meeting in Bolton Town Hall. John Tyndall will be the main speaker. The council are clearly determined to allow the meeting to take place despite increasing pressure from the trade union movement, immigrant organisations and MPs.

There is every sign that the Trades Council's picket will be a large one but the Community Relations Council, supported by the local Labour Party, is trying to undermine its support by organising an 'alternative meeting' on racial harmony elsewhere in the town at the

same time as the NF meeting. The CRC have asked immigrant organisations to boycott the picket and attend the meeting instead.

This makes it all the more necessary for anti-fascists in the North West to mobilise for the Bolton picket. Just as important is the proposed NF meeting in Tameside — scene of their last major defeat — on 26 January, where the Tameside CARF is organising a picket.

Further details and information from Neil Duffield, 52 Yewdale Gardens, Bolton.



NIGGERS BEWARE!
HANDS OFF WHITES!
...OR DIE!

BOX 6414 Lincoln, NB 66506

This filth was affixed outside The Other Bookshop in Islington last week.

rect outcome of this fact.

The election of a Labour Government in February 1974 and its re-election the following October brought out all the political weaknesses of the British labour movement. The ruling class now had an instrument at its disposal which could wage an offensive against the workers without meeting an immediate class hatred: this instrument was a Labour Government backed by the major trade union leaders.

It was confronted with a working class which was very active and strong on the economic issues, but which had not faced up to the big political ones. The Labour Government and trade union bureaucracy used their political hold over the working class to break up, disrupt, and defeat the struggle of the working class on economic questions.

The fashion in which an incomes policy was introduced by Labour provides a class illustration of the real political way the bureaucracy defeats the masses. Here the Labour Government utilised the very depth of the economic crisis and transformed it into a political weapon against the working class. In 1974, the Labour Government allowed wage increases. These were rapidly eroded by inflation. The Labour leaders utilised this fact to claim that the struggle could bring no results and was therefore pointless.

Following this, Wilson successfully exploited the nationalist and chauvinist weaknesses of the Labour left to defeat it on the Common Market referendum. Membership of the EEC was a vital question for British capital. A successful assault by the workers' movement could have had dramatic implications. But the Benn campaign failed to dent the ruling class. It put nation before class. The result was yet another defeat and the further political strengthening of

the Labour bureaucracy. Immediately following the referendum there was a massive campaign around the 'collapse of the pound'. It was paralleled by calls for a National government to deal with the crisis.

In this situation, Jack Jones delivered the final blow. He proclaimed that the Tories or a coalition had to be kept out at all costs. The workers should accordingly accept every sacrifice to keep Labour in power. The utter bankruptcy of Labourism was once again revealed in all its nakedness. The campaign was successful. Incomes policy was successfully imposed without any mass resistance of the sort which had defeated the Tories.

Since the introduction of incomes policy of course important struggles have taken place. While some of these have encountered repression, as outside Grunwick, that has not been the main reason for the defeats.

Throughout this whole period the real trump card held by the bureaucracy has been politics. Whether it be the 'national interest', 'keeping the Tories out', 'preserving democracy against the siege economy', or, next in the list, 'accept Phase four to win the election for Labour', it has been the big questions which the bureaucracy and bourgeoisie have utilised to defeat, disorient and demobilise the economic struggles. Any struggle, to be successful, has to combine not only militancy but also a political strategy to fight the bureaucracy. To that problem economist sectarianism — the idea that 'if you look after the little things the big ones look after themselves' — has no answer.

REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY

The post-1974 period represented a trial of strength between the traditions of 'British Marxism' and the realities of the class struggle. The traditions were found to be seriously wanting. That is what explains the indelible mark which the struggles in 1975-77 have left on the far left. It is not that the economic defeats are final, nor that the days of mass trade union struggles are over. What has been decisive is the glimpse we have had into the future of the class struggle in Britain. That future will not be dominated by 'little things' but by the biggest possible issues of the crisis of British society and politics — issues increasingly inserted in a European context.

The economist strategy can provide no answers. Nor can sectarianism. What is needed is a strategy which attempts to both unite the left and take up the challenge of bourgeois politics by developing a working class political strategy. The launching of *Socialist Challenge* and *Socialist Unity* were our modest attempts to contribute to reversing the processes of the last years.

But to break with economism and sectarianism requires a conscious break with the dominant tradition of the British left. It means learning that big political questions are more important than 'style' or tactics. It means understanding that internal democracy is not a luxury but a weapon without which a revolutionary party cannot be built. It means grasping that united action of revolutionaries and working for a united revolutionary organisation isn't an 'obstacle to building the party', but a vital part of taking forward the struggle of the working



Photo: G. M. COOPERSON [Socialist Challenge]

Challenge looked of British society armist and centrist aged the analysis of this crisis and the ered. In this final cle, JOHN ROSS esent crisis has also e old 'traditions' of y left wanting.

class and the oppressed. In short, it means standing the entire conventional wisdom of British Marxism on its head. It means a policy based, not on economism and sectarianism, but on politics and the fight for united action and united organisation.

This is the real challenge facing the revolutionary left in Britain in 1978. The class struggle has already begun to deliver its verdict on the traditions of the British Marxist left. But whether the crisis which is already underway will be followed simply by collapse into a new economist sectarian ghetto for revolutionaries socialism in Britain depends on the actions of the revolutionaries themselves.

The first small steps in attempting to develop a new strategy were taken in launching *Socialist Unity*, in developments in some trade unions, in the women's movement, among students, and in some other fields. How far they succeeded in creating an alternative political and unitary tradition to that of economism and sectarianism; how much they succeed in gaining roots for such a tradition in the working class and oppressed; how far they succeed in translating that policy into the building of a new revolutionary organisation, will be the yardstick by which the activity of revolutionaries during the coming year will finally be judged.

National Rank and File DELEGATE CONFERENCE



Photo: JOHN STURROCK [Newspire]



Long Kesh Letter

A celebration

New Year's day has been a memorable and historic one for us in Cage 13. For the first time, Provisional and Irish Republican Socialist Party prisoners have been moved into the same cage — a demonstration of the unity which repression by the establishment can bring between republicans and socialists in Ireland.

The benefits to both groups should be enormous, both politically and domestically. With a constant influx of prisoners, the monotony of imprisonment will be lessened, and a united front against the prison authorities guaranteed.

It will probably take a while to get adjusted to this new development, but as most of us come from the same working class background and we are all anti-imperialist prisoners, there should be little difficulty.

Christmas was not very exciting in here, but it would have been a lot poorer had it not been for those extras supplied by friends and sympathisers. We had enough to eat and a little to drink, as we have a few expert poteen makers around.

VERY POTENT

Poteen is a very potent alcoholic beverage made illegally (which makes it taste better) from yeast, potatoes, fruit and many other ingredients. It is usually brewed in the mountains or in an isolated area to avoid confiscation by the police. Those caught making it are liable to a heavy fine or even jail. We were lucky we weren't caught!

But Christmas wasn't all extra food and niceties, and if we had been dependent on the prison authorities we would have had a very poor 'holiday' indeed.

Terry George, a fellow comrade was refused compassionate parole for his grandmother's funeral, even though he was on the last six months of his six-year sentence. Cathal McQuade, another comrade who had only 17 days left of his eight and a half-year sentence

was refused compassionate leave to see his 88-year old father who was seriously ill.

No doubt the Christians in the Northern Ireland office have a curious way of interpreting the Christmas spirit of joy and goodwill.

HARASSMENT

The prospects for 1978 aren't all that bright for us in prison. All we seem assured of is continued harassment, a deterioration in living conditions, and another year of oppression from those who occupy our land. Those of us in Long Kesh who have political status can always comfort ourselves by comparing our position to those in H Block, who are being denied political status for the same alleged offences for which we were convicted.

These three hundred or so prisoners are not more than 250 yards from us. They live in the most despicable conditions, clothed only in a blanket and confined to a cell for 24 hours a day.

The conditions in which we, with political status, live leave a lot to be desired. The huts are old and cold; the authorities seldom repair them, and we are plagued with leaks in the galvanised iron roofing.

This year will be one of intense struggle by all anti-imperialist prisoners. The struggle outside the walls will also continue — as long as there is a British presence in Ireland. It will probably be a long drawn out affair, but the determination of those of us in prison will ensure that this will be the final struggle for the liberation of Ireland.

Yours
Tiofuadh Ar La

Phil Flynn returns to Britain

International Tribunal launched next week

PHIL FLYNN, the deputy general secretary of the Irish local government union, returns to Britain on 24 January — just one month after he was held in Liverpool under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, reports TOMMARLOWE.

Flynn is one of the main speakers at a public meeting at the House of Commons. The meeting marks the public launching of the International Tribunal on Crimes Against the Irish People, which will be held in London later in the year. Joan Maynard MP will be another speaker at the meeting, to be held in Room 8, House of Commons at 7.30pm on 24 January.

The launching of the International Tribunal coincides with the announcement of the verdict by the European Court in which Britain is being tried for torture — for a few of the many crimes committed by imperialist forces in Ireland. The verdict is expected to further embarrass Britain, which in the past couple of weeks has suffered a number of set-backs in its war effort.

SUCCESS

Most recent was the row over the statement by Irish premier Jack Lynch, that Britain should indicate its willingness to leave Ireland some time in the far distant future. The hysterical reaction to Lynch's remarks was truly amazing. Mason accused Lynch of 'interference', while the British press — led by failed Irishman Conor Cruise O'Brien in the *Observer* — accused the Irish premier of all sorts of evil.

Yet Lynch's remarks were no more than a watered down restatement of the traditional position of his Fianna Fail party. One of the reasons they caused such annoyance was because British policy in Ireland is going through something of a minor crisis.

On the military front, the boast of Mason and Callaghan



that the IRA were on the verge of defeat has received a rude shock in the last couple of weeks. Since Mason's end-of-year statement about defeating the IRA, three businesses a day have been blown up or burnt to the ground by IRA activity. Last weekend eight more bombs exploded.

Also disappearing into thin air have been Mason's political 'successes'. All the major parties have now withdrawn

from the bi-partisan talks on a future political structure for the North. The Unionist parties used Lynch's statement as an excuse; but the truth is that the talks had more or less collapsed anyway.

All and all, it could not be a better time to launch an international tribunal which aims to investigate closely the whole repressive nature of British presence in Ireland.

COMMENT

Bloody Sunday from Sinn Fein

A CHAIRDE COMRADES. Sinn Fein, Britain, wishes to make the following statement about the situation that has given rise to the probability of two separate Bloody Sunday demonstrations. One is supported by nearly all the far left organisations and both sections of the Troops Out Movement.

ORGANISATIONS

The other is called by the main anti-imperialist force — Provisional Sinn Fein — and supported by the Irish Republican Socialist Party, the Prisoners Aid Committee, the Revolutionary Communist Group, Irish Support and Friendship Committee, Relatives Action Committee, West Indian Defence Committee, Indian Workers Movement, some trades councils and individual members of U.T.O.M.

That this situation has arisen can only be regarded as a sign of weakness on the part of the left.

It has become clear since the inception of TOM that a troops

out position is meaningless without taking a position of solidarity with the forces actually fighting the British State in Northern Ireland.

We appreciate the difficulties in building an anti-war movement among the British working class, but only when British imperialism has been defeated by the Irish will the chauvinism of the working class here be seriously undermined.

IsMise
SINN FEIN, Britain.

Socialist Challenge replies: WE AGREE that all revolutionaries in Britain should have a position of solidarity with the anti-imperialist forces involved in the Irish struggle. But that a few thousand revolutionaries in Britain proclaim that solidarity is not in itself a tremendous benefit to the Irish people.

Indeed, often it's proclaimed with such moralistic table thumping that it becomes an excuse for ignoring the task of British socialists — involving as many people as possible in an active opposition to the British presence in Ireland.

UTMOST UNITY

It is this task to which the British left needs to address itself, and if one thing has been proved in the last couple of years it is that the utmost unity — around the demand Troops Out Now, Self Determination for the Irish People, is needed to accomplish this task.

It was to secure such unity that the bloody Sunday Commemoration Demonstration Committee was established, and in so doing it has

achieved a fair amount of success. Sinn Fein — after originally saying it supported the BSCDC — withdrew, despite having no principal differences on the demands of the demonstration.

DIFFERENCES

If Sinn Fein is now saying that such a demonstration must have as a stated position 'solidarity with the IRA', then such differences do indeed exist. That position, as a basis for a demonstration, is in our view politically incorrect; the key issue for socialists in this country is the oppression by 'their' government of the Irish people, and the means of that oppression — the British troops.

We repeat what we have said before. No organisation in this country has the right to dictate how the solidarity movement should be built; none has the right to demand that they lead it. This is not only sectarian in that it puts the interests of one organisation before those of the movement as a whole; it is also self-defeating, in that it

remember
Bloody Sunday
6th JANUARY 1978

DEMONSTRATION
1.30pm SUNDAY JANUARY 29
Assembly: SHREWSBURY BUSH GREEN, WALSLEY
THEatre: THEATRE ROYAL, WALSLEY

PUBLIC RALLY
Bernadette McAliskey Eamonn McCann
Tom Clancy Terry Aisling

BRITAIN OUT OF IRELAND!
SELF DETERMINATION FOR IRELAND

splinters the movement and demoralises many activists.

If Sinn Fein does not accept this, we hope it will do so in the future. Meanwhile, we hope it will at least take up the invitation of the BSCDC to have a speaker at the rally after the march. Not to do so would deprive themselves of an audience the size of which is not usually available to them. It really would be cutting off their nose to spite their face.

What's Left

LONDON IMG Day School on the Revolutionary Party. Saturday 4 February, 11am-5pm at Caxton House, St John's Way, London N18. This school is open to all IMG sympathisers and Socialist Challenge supporters by credentials from London IMG, c/o PO Box 50, London N1, or by signed letters from local IMG organisers.

NORTH LONDON Socialist Unity Public Meeting. 'Hospital Closures and the role of Labour Councillors'. Speakers: Mike Simpson, (GMWU shop steward, Royal Northern Hospital) plus speaker from EGA (invited). 7.30pm, Thursday 26 January. John Barnes Library, Camden Road, London N7.

DEFEND Keith Hackett, arrested for distributing anti-recruitment leaflets. Pickel Crown Square Magistrates Court, Manchester. Tuesday 24 January at 9am. Banners welcome. For further details contact Manchester Anarchist Organisation, c/o 21 Holmfirth St., Longsight, Manchester 13. Tel 061 224 3022.

CLEVELAND Association of Trades Councils conference on community relations. 11am, Saturday 21 January in the AUEW Hall, Middlesbrough. Open to labour, political and community organisations — one delegate each plus observers. Phone Stockton 582351 for more information.

SOCIALISM and Feminism. Meeting Thursday 26 January. Speaker Hilary Wainright. 7.30pm at the International Community Centre, Mansfield Rd, Nottingham.

YORK UNIVERSITY Week-end Conference 'Marxism and Culture.' Organised by University Socialist English Group. 28/29 January. Theory and Practice. Outside speakers include Terry Eagleton and David Craig. Creche, canteens available. For more details contact Anne McLaughlin, 8 Priory St, York.

LONDON IMG will be organising a series of all-London aggregates over the next two months as part of the IMG's pre-conference discussion. Because of the crisis of perspective on the revolutionary left and moves towards revolutionary regroupment, the following organisations and individuals have been invited to attend the conference: Workers League, Big Flame, International Socialist groupings, Libertarian Communist Group and Socialist Challenge supporters. If you are a member of any of these currents and would like to attend the London discussion, write for details to London IMG, c/o PO Box 50, London N1.

CAMPAIGN against Racism in the Media. General meeting to discuss policies and activities in 1978, in particular preventing the fascists making party political broadcasts. With speakers. Friday 27 January, 7pm at the Roebuck Pub, Tottenham Court Road, London W1. (Between Goodge St and Warren St tubes.) Please note new address of CARM, c/o PO Box 50, London N1.

JOURNALIST CHARTER disco Saturday 21 January at the Roebuck Pub, Tottenham Court Road, London W1 (Between Warren St and Goodge St tubes). From 8pm to midnight. Tickets at the door £1.

SALT OF THE EARTH. Showing of the film about the great Mexican mining strike with songs from the period. Friday 20 January, 8pm. At the Brixton Socialist Club, The Canterbury (behind Brixton police station), Canterbury Crescent, Brixton. Adm. 50p.

East German dissidents attack Eurocommunism 'Unmask the demagogues'

Criticism of Eurocommunism has been voiced for the first time by a group of East European oppositionists.

by MARTIN METEYARD

The criticism is contained in an open letter to Wolf Biermann from members of the East German Communist Party which was recently published in the West Berlin journal *Der lunge Marsch* (The Long March). Timed to mark the first anniversary of Biermann's expulsion to West Germany, the main purpose of the letter is to express continued solidarity with the poet and singer against the bureaucracy's contemptuous dismissal of socialist democracy.

SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY

But the authors go on to say that they 'do not share your sympathies for what is termed "Eurocommunism", for it ties the aspiration for socialist democracy to the illusion that socialism can be achieved without the violent destruction of the bourgeois state

apparatus, without establishing the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat'. They ask how it is that Biermann can sing the praises of the Italian Communist Party while at the same time drawing the opposite conclusions from its leader, Berlinguer, on the fate of Popular Unity in Chile.

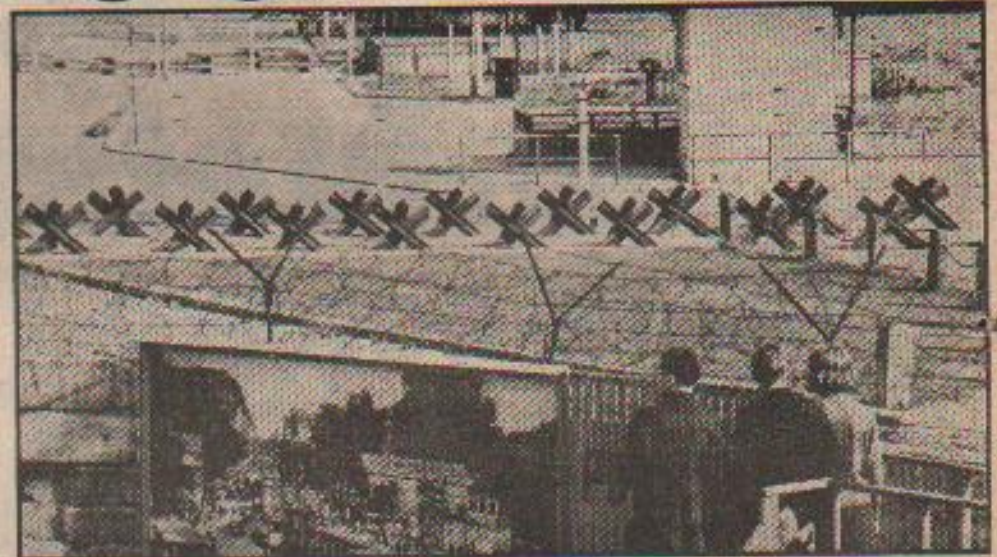
The authors stress that their conception of socialist democracy involves 'a commitment to the right of everyone to express their political conceptions whose declared aim is not the overthrow of socialism'. But they add that 'the struggle for freedom of thought and other democratic rights can only lead to socialist democracy when it is tied to a relentless determination to unmask the demagogic slogans about freedom which are propagated by the bourgeoisie and its right-wing social-democratic agents through the channels of the bourgeois mass media, when it is subordinated to the direct domination of the

working class.

'Socialist democracy without the direct exercise of power by the working masses is impossible; just as this exercise of power is impossible without the organisation of the workers in councils established by themselves or their delegates... the construction of socialist democracy must for this reason be the work of the workers themselves; that is why the oppositional communists must pay the greatest attention to the interests and needs of the workers.'

OPPOSITION

As for themselves, say the authors, they see their initial task as working in communist 'circles' and initiating debates there in favour of socialist democracy. They will fight to remain in the party in order to avoid the political isolation which was fatal to Biermann, given the present relationship of forces between the bureaucracy and the opposition. But at the same time they



will not let up in the struggle to allow Biermann to return to East Germany. 'You remain a citizen of East Germany because the citizens of this country wish it so.

Together with Rudolf Bahro's book, *The Alternative*,

and the texts produced by workers and students in Jena who were expelled from East Germany in September for solidifying with Biermann, this open letter is yet further proof of the emergence of a current in East Germany which is rediscovering and defending

the classical positions of revolutionary Marxism. Those in the West who, like them, reject both Moscow and Eurocommunism must do everything possible to ensure that they are not isolated in this task.



Mourners at the funeral of Steve Biko, murdered in a South African jail last September

Soweto struggle continues Soweto fights on

We all remember Soweto in 1976: mass demonstrations, attacks on government buildings, a schools boycott and two general strikes, all within a few months. But, as JOHN HUNT explains, Soweto has fought on, and its continuing struggle holds important lessons for revolutionary strategy in South Africa.

Blacks must pay school fees while white education is free; the pupil-teacher ratio in black schools is 60:1, in white schools 20:1; government expenditure on each white pupil is 17 times that on black pupils. School students were the first section of the Soweto population to adopt on a large scale the ideas of the Black Consciousness movement, spread by the South African Students Movement, which were based on the rejection of every racist institution.

to 'visit' the UBC mayor, UBC members rapidly began to resign.

The next day Sechaba Montitsi, the SSRC president, called on the people of Soweto to form their own representative body. The students had recognised the need for a permanent political expression to be given to the mass struggle which drew in the whole of Soweto. A committee of 10 composed of leading militants was formed to investigate putting this into practice.

Then a campaign was launched against the school boards — bodies of black parents who participated in the running of the Bantu Education Schools. Mass action smashed the boards in weeks. The SSRC called for a period of mourning from 16 June, the anniversary of the first shootings. In effect this was a call for a general strike.

The success of the students in winning other sections of society to the common struggle against apartheid was shown by the fact that football clubs, beer hall owners, and the traders' association readily agreed to shut down for that period. On the 16th, 40 per cent of Soweto's workers stayed at home. There followed several weeks of mass demonstrations, attacks on state buildings, and shootings by the police.

STUDENT ACTION

These were expressed in a form that was neither socialist nor even particularly coherent, but they met the needs of the moment because they challenged the institutions through which the regime controlled the Soweto working class.

1977 began quietly. The pupils who had been boycotting the schools went back, saying that they would give the Government six months to change its policies. Then in April the West Rand Bantu Administration, the government body responsible for Soweto, decreed a heavy rent increase. In a township where 1½ million live in only 100,000 houses and 12 government hostels, this was an explosive issue. The students demonstrated, rioting erupted, and the Government backed down.

In June the students turned their attention to the Urban Bantu Council, a puppet city council full of government stooges and without powers. The Soweto Student Representative Council summoned the UBC to a meeting. The UBC failed to arrive at the appointed time, whereupon large numbers of students went

Dr Motlana, who had emerged as the leader of the Council of 10, put forward a programme for the self-government of Soweto and demanded government action on housing. These were not demands for the reform of apartheid; they were important attempts to mobilise the masses to impose their alternatives to racist institutions.

Soweto's mass circulation paper, *The World*, carried floods of letters discussing what sort of future South African society should have. By September a massive boycott by pupils was underway. 700 teachers resigned in sympathy. Mass meetings of pupils, teachers and parents discussed setting up an education system out of state control.

SOLIDARITY

In the face of this mass movement and the rising anger at the death of Steve Biko, the state responded on 19 October, banning *The World*, the Black Consciousness organisations and the SSRC, and arresting all the leading militants it could lay its hands on.

1977 showed that even Vorster's repression cannot stop mass action — the school boycott still continues. And it shows that a revolutionary strategy in South Africa must be based on the political mobilisation of the urban working class, not, as some would have it on abstract schemas of guerilla warfare.

The solidarity movement in Britain has unfulfilled responsibilities to educate the British working class about events in Soweto. In the March trade union week of action on South Africa education workers and students in particular must take up the fight for solidarity with Soweto, and especially the continuing struggles in its schools.

*Thanks to CIS, 9 Poland Street, London, for the use of their archives.

Egypt: 'prisons all around us'

POLITICAL repression in Egypt has been on the increase since the mass protests against food price rises a year ago. One of the most prominent victims of this repression has been the popular poet Ahmed Fouad Negm, who has just started a hunger strike with 21 other political prisoners in protest against their detention.

Negm is suffering from a haemorrhaging stomach ulcer and it is feared that the Egyptian authorities may try to intimidate the opposition by 'doing a Biko' on him.

Negm was born in 1929 in an Egyptian village, received no formal education and worked for years as an agricultural labourer. His stinging political poems are read throughout the Arab world. The example we print here gives some idea of why Sadat's regime is afraid of him.

BUILD YOUR PALACES

You can build your palaces on our fields
With our labor and our hands
You can set up night clubs near the factories
And prisons instead of gardens
You can let your dogs loose in the streets
And put your prisons all around us
You can steal our sleep
We have slept too long
You can overwhelm us with pain
We have come to the end of our suffering
Now we know who inflicts our wounds
We are conscious and we are united
Workers, peasants and students
Our hour has sounded and we are marching
No turning back
Victory is in the palm of our hand
Victory is on the horizon

Ahmed Fouad Negm

In Brief

ARGENTINA: On Christmas Eve Susana Lugones became the fortieth journalist to disappear in Argentina since the military coup in March 1976. 29 others are dead, 70 are in prison and 400 in exile. Thousands of journalists from all over the world are being invited to cover the World Cup in Argentina this summer.

IRAN: On 9 and 10 January police opened fire on a demonstration, killing more than 100 and wounding 500. 1400 were arrested. The protest was against the banning of religious ceremonies.

BOLIVIA: President Banzer, the military dictator who recently promised elections in July, has now said that 'if the people wish there will be no elections.' What worries him is the flurry of activity and growing strength from the left parties and the hunger strike of four hundred people demanding a genuine amnesty for political prisoners after Banzer's fake amnesty announced at Christmas.

AUSTRALIA: One of the more obscure aspects of the recent election campaign was the arrival of a boatload of Vietnamese refugees, just in time to give the right-wing campaign a boost. Labour spokespeople have pointed out that 29 such boats have arrived since the end of the Vietnam war and that there is some profiteering racket behind it.

CANADA: The publication of the wartime diaries of William Mackenzie King, the then Canadian Prime Minister, provides a revealing insight of the qualities needed to run a capitalist country. He was obsessively affectionate to his Irish terrier. When it died he sang hymns over its corpse and reassured himself that they would be reunited in the next world. When he received the Order of Merit he wrote that 'the little creature deserved an OM a thousand times more than I do.' In 1947 Mackenzie King had at least 32 visions, including two of Adolf Hitler.

THE IMG is holding a school on 'South Africa — the rise of workers struggles' on Saturday 28 January, 10am, at Small Lecture Theatre, 1st floor, Polytechnic of Central London, New Cavendish St, London W1. (Note the change of venue.) Socialist Challenge supporters are welcome.

SHARE

THREE far-left organisations in France have published a joint platform for the March elections. The text of this agreement, signed by the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), Communist Workers' Organisation (OCI), and Communist Committees for Self-Management (CCA), is printed in the first issue of the new combined weekly *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*. Other features in this issue include: 'Bangladesh — The Unfinished Revolution', 'Where is the EFA Headed?', and 'Suarez's Economic Emergency Plan — Big Cut in Real Wages'. Single copies are 30p plus 10p p.p. but why not take advantage of the favourable subscription rates: £9 for one year (48 issues), £5 for six months (24 issues), or £2.50 for an introductory offer of 10 issues. All new subscribers will also get a free copy of *Inprecor* No. 19 (New Series) devoted to the world economic situation. Write now to: Intercontinental Press/Inprecor, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. All cheques/POs should be made out to Intercontinental Press.

Italian government crisis
Communist Party promises to behave

By the time you read this, Italy will probably be without a government. There's nothing so sensational about that. Cynics might say that it hasn't really had one for thirty years. But the difference with this governmental crisis — Italy's thirty-seventh since 1944 — is that people are now seriously talking about the entry of the Communist Party into government, writes RICHARD CARVER.

It looks as though the possibility of Communist participation at ministerial level had receded even before the Carter administration made its typically clumsy intervention to denounce this 'non-democratic' party. The leadership of the ruling Christian Democrat party had rejected requests from the Communists (PCI) to go one step beyond the 'government of abstentions' whereby the PCI has kept the right-wing minority in power since June 1976.

The PCI now faces an awkward dilemma. On the one hand it desperately wants to consummate its strategy of the 'historic compromise' and enter government alongside the major capitalist party. On the other, it is firmly committed to austerity, law and order, and all the other garbage of Christian Democratic rule. If it creates too much trouble now it will have

undone all its years' work of convincing the Italian ruling class of its 'responsible' attitude towards the country's problems. So the most likely outcome is an extension of last summer's governmental accords. Then the PCI put its name to a programme which included an extension of police powers of surveillance, greater government control over the mass media, increased selectivity in education, and cuts in wages and social spending.

STRIKES

One of the conditions the Christian Democrats have now laid down for collaboration with the PCI is that it becomes a true 'party of government', not a 'party of struggle'. That transformation was completed a long time ago, but as a token of its good faith PCI trade union leaders have used the past few days to clamp down on militant opposition to the



Government's economic policy. A planned national strike against austerity has been called off in favour of sporadic local actions, and even on this the leadership could hardly have shown itself less enthusiastic.

This has provoked angry reactions from the rank and file. Assemblies in the country's two largest car plants — Fiat in Turin and Alfa Romeo in Milan — rejected the executive instruction and demanded that the strike go ahead on 18 January. PCI delegates were understandably embarrassed and at Alfa's decided to abstain. Their embarrassment was only

increased as, one after another, factory councils and regional federations of the PCI-dominated union came out against the decision to call off the strike.

Just to pile on the agony, this was followed immediately by the simultaneous publication of economic policy documents from the unions and the Confindustria, the employers' federation. In essentials the two documents are identical. Only the vocabulary is different: the employers talk about 'reducing labour costs' while the unions prefer a 'responsible restriction of demands'.

Both are agreed on the need

for 'mobility of labour'. Workers have to be able to move from one factory to another say the unions, though the more likely prospect is that they will move from their factory onto the dole queue. The unions also back the bosses' demands for higher purchase tax and a further cut in public spending.

This is 'Eurocommunism' in action. It is a little ironic that while the British Communist Party routinely denounces wage controls their Italian comrades are putting forward a policy that makes the Social Contract and its successors look mild by comparison.

Gaullists abandon Giscard
Four-part disharmony

French politics are in a mess. A year ago nobody could have predicted the four way split which was finalised last week when Jacques Chirac's Gaullists broke from the majority alliance led by President Giscard d'Estaing.

Until quite recently it seemed that the March elections would be a straight fight between the two alliances of ruling and working class parties. Now, with the Union of the Left finally disunited, the slender thread which held the right wing together has been snapped. On both sides there is

a clear crisis of leadership in the face of inevitable class confrontation.

The crisis of the right is more than a dispute between parties. It reveals the crucial weakness in the Gaullist constitution as a whole. That weakness has been exposed, not from outside — for the working class parties

by RICHARD CARVER

will do anything to avoid challenging the constitution — but through the absence of the personnel to make the system work.

PRESIDENT

The 1958 constitution, with its overwhelming presidential powers, was designed by one man for his own use: de Gaulle. When he departed there was an

adequate, if uninspiring, successor in Pompidou, who had been trained in all the Louis XIV pretensions of presidential power. But Giscard, who followed him, made a big mistake: he tried to revise a method of government which was unreformable.

CENTRE

Where de Gaulle and Pompidou had used a solid bloc of patriotic middle and ruling class support to maintain their authoritarian rule, Giscard has tried to dispense with his old-style reactionary backers and win a new centre ground. But he chose the very moment when the 'centre' was disappearing.

His project is well expressed in his book *French Democracy*, where he admits the possibility of a left-wing party taking a slice of governmental power. The working class parties are happy to return the compliment and serve in government under Giscard, respecting the 1958 constitution.

For the most part Giscard's capitalist backers have been prepared to buy this sort of idea. The old style Gaullists — still the largest single section of the French electorate — have not. The middle classes are unimpressed by Giscard's gimmickery — his women ministers and 'progressive' legislation.

CHIRAC

At a time when the economy was worsening, workers' struggles were on the up, and a left government seemed increasingly likely, the middle classes were not prepared to wait in the centre to become voting fodder for an aging

trendy. They jumped one way or the other.

Jacques Chirac, Giscard's Prime Minister, recognised this. While Giscard was developing his own unique blend of the chic and the folkay, Chirac wanted an early legislative election to forestall the Union of the Left. As Giscard wouldn't listen he set up on his own, stood against Giscard's candidate for major of Paris last year... and won.

Already the line-up was clear. On one side Giscard and a government of 'technicians' who would come up with all the right policies to save the ruling class — wage cuts, unemployment and the rest — but couldn't win an election to save their collective life. On the other Chirac and the majority of the majority.

COLLAPSE

Too late Giscard tried to stop the split. The past year of French colonial adventures in Africa was, in part, an attempt to reassert Giscard and his appointees as the representatives of a united France.

But this could only work as long as the opposition held together. The Gaullist supporters lived in fear of a working class electoral win and the mass upsurge that would follow — worse than 1968. The collapse of the left and their pathetic failure to provide a working class leadership has been the cue for the definitive break. The old Gaullist 'consensus' is dead.

No doubt the next few weeks will spring more surprises, but we can say with confidence that French politics will never be quite the same again.



Demonstration in London last Saturday in solidarity with Turkish steel workers, who have been on strike for six months.

In 2 months time, on 12 March, France goes to the polls. In these elections to the Legislative Assembly there exists a good possibility that the Socialist Party (PS) and the Communist Party (PCF) will win an absolute majority. A government in Western Europe in which a 'Eurocommunist' Party has a prominent position is on the agenda.

Ten months ago such an outcome was a near certainty. In the municipal elections the PS and PCF had swept to victory. However since that time the Union of the Left, which includes the PS, PCF and a small bourgeois party, the Left Radicals, has openly split.

In September of last year the PS and PCF found themselves unable to agree over the re-drafting of the 1972 Common Programme. The dispute arose over two issues. The secondary one related to the national minimum wage. The PCF called for a minimum wage of 2200 francs, while the PS stood for 2000. On this question the PS found itself in a difficult position as both major Trade Union federations, the CGT and CFTD, demand 2200. Since September the PS has fallen into line.

The major point of disagreement occurred over the extent of nationalisation the Common Programme would call for. The Programme states that nine major firms would come under state control. However it does not specify if all their subsidiaries would be included. The PCF therefore claimed that 1450 firms should be nationalised. The PS said only 60. After discussion the PCF lowered its figure to 729 and the PS upped its to 250. Among the concessions the PCF made was to drop the demand for nationalisation of the motor giant Peugeot-Citroën which employs 180,000 workers. The differences between the two Parties had narrowed to such an extent as to only involve 150,000 workers, or less than 1 per cent of all the firms in France. But let us not forget that both agree to leave 85 per cent of the economy in private hands. Nevertheless this difference proved insoluble. The negotiations on the updated Programme broke down and a fierce polemic began.

LEFT TURN

In fact the debate over nationalisation was a pretext. Underlying this apparently minor issue are fundamental questions of the balance of forces within the Union of the Left and the prospects of the two Parties should they form a joint Government.

In the space of ten years the Socialist Party, under the leadership of Francois Mitterrand, has risen from a humiliating 5 per cent Presidential vote, to the country's largest vote winning Party. In the 1976 cantonal elections the PS, for the first time, won a larger percentage of the vote than the PCF. From being a Party irrelevant to the ruling class the PS has become the one which may yet prove their saviour. The PS has made this advance essentially since its agreement with the PCF in 1972. The 'left turn' it took at its 1971 congress, the growth of the CFTD (the trade union confederation led by the PS), the radicalisation of white collar workers and the credibility and hearing gained within the working class due to its alliance with the PCF has consolidated the growth of Mitterrand's social democratic party.

Mitterrand, recognising that the PS has grown due to the Union of the Left, knows he cannot govern successfully without the backing of the PCF. It is the PCF, via the CGT, which dominates the heavy industrial sectors of the workers movement. Without the support of the CGT and the PCF Mitterrand could give no guarantee of stability and thus his use for the ruling class would decline. Mitterrand therefore wants the PCF to be responsible to a new 'left' government, but he has no wish to make any concessions to the Communists to persuade them to do so.

CLEFT STICK

The Communist Party finds itself caught in a cleft stick. On the one hand it desires to force its way into government and secure positions for itself within the state apparatus. On the other hand it realises that when in government it will have to implement austerity measures which can only lose its support in the workers movement.

The recent local elections were a stern warning to the PCF. On its right flank the PS continued its rise to become France's largest political party, while on its left a revolutionary slate won not insignificant votes. The conclusion drawn from this election by a section of the PCF leadership, led by an old member of the Political Bureau, Roland Leroy, was to reassert the authority of the PCF within the working class as 'The Party of the Poor.' Above all the Party leadership wants to avoid a repeat of 1945-47 whereby it took its place in the De Gaulle government only to be unceremoniously dropped after two years with no lasting gains.

If the PCF is to take the responsibility in a Government facing a capitalist economic crisis then it wants its own ranks homogenous

FRANCE: The State of the Union

It is now two weeks since the French Communist Party finally tore up the Common Programme, which was expected to sweep themselves and the Socialist Party to power in the legislative elections on 19 March.

Furthermore the same conference of the Communist Party threatened not to transfer votes to the Socialist Party after the first round of the election on 12 March.

What are the reasons for this turn-around in the tactics of the Communist Party leadership?

RIC SISSONS and PAM HURST explain.



Voting figures for the PCF and PS since 1967 [per cent]

	1967[L]	1968[L]	1969[P]	1973[L]	1976[C]
PCF	22.51	20.05	21.52	21.29	22.82
PS	18.96	16.53	5.07	19.16	26.28

[L]: Legislative. [P]: Presidential. [C]: Cantonal.

and something in return. The prize it desires is ministerial portfolios and leading management positions within the nationalised industries. Within those sectors of the economy designated by the Common Programme for nationalisation the CGT is the dominant union. As it is the employees who will elect the managing director, the PCF is sure through its influence in the CGT to win such positions.

Nevertheless the present situation, and a future government including the PCF, can only lead to tensions both within the leadership of the Party and between it and the rank and file.

Since the September break over the re-drafting of the Common Programme the PCF has launched a sharp polemic against the PS. After the Central Committee of 5-6 October last year Georges Marchais, the General Secretary of the PCF, accused the PS of moving to the right; of seeking new allies in the centre of French politics; and wanting to implement a left austerity programme. On all these points we can only remain sceptical. Was it not this same central committee

meeting that Marchais stated:

'Have we been seeking a project for the construction of a socialist society? Obviously not!'

It is also the case that the PCF, not content with dropping from its programme the call for the dictatorship of the proletariat, now also supports the maintenance of the French nuclear strike force and favours a year of compulsory military service. A PCF deputy in the Assembly recently stated, 'We have confidence in the military.'

Marchais accuses Mitterrand of seeking new allies. Does this mean that the PCF has dropped its approach of broadening the Union of the Left to the 'Union of the People of France'? How was this to be done if not by seeking allies in the centre such as the 'left' Gaullists? If Marchais is so concerned about allies in the centre does the PCF still favour the presence of the bourgeois Radical Party in the Union of the Left?

Marchais continued by attacking Mitterrand for: 'preparing to implement an austerity programme following the example of his English and Portuguese colleagues.' But have not Marchais' fraternal parties in

Spain and Italy already supported austerity measures. Does the PCF now condemn Carrillo and Berlinguer?

In reality on the fundamental issues the PCF does not differ from the PS. Both agree their role to be that of reform; both accept that the capitalist market will be paramount within the economy; both are prepared to form a Government under Giscard, the 'omnipotent' President who has the right to dissolve the Assembly; neither challenges the constitution drafted by De Gaulle after his coup in 1958; neither wanted to drop the bourgeois Radical Party from any alliance; and both defend NATO and the EEC.

This polemic against the PS was renewed in January of this year when the PCF held a two day national congress. At this congress, attended by 3,000 delegates, Leroy stated:

'The strength, power and influence of the PCF constitutes, henceforth, the only way for the workers to obtain change.' In so doing he merely echoed the two and a half hour report of Marchais who told the assembled representatives that the PCF should not pledge itself to vote for the PS in the second round in those towns where the PS was the highest placed workers party after the first round.

As the French system operates on two rounds the usual practice is for the less successful workers parties to withdraw after the first round leaving the highest placed to take on the right. Marchais categorically stated that if the PCF only received the 21 per cent being predicted in the opinion polls, they would not withdraw. Thus the possibility arises of the two major working class parties contesting each other in the second round and allowing the right to win. If such a decision was implemented it is certain that the workers parties would win an overall numerical majority but be the parliamentary minority!

GENERAL STRIKE

Marchais, rallying the Party's forces before the election, set the target of a vote of 25 per cent in the first round. This he considered to be the only way to block the PS austerity moves. But was it votes or the general strike that won the working class the 40 hour week and paid holidays from the 1936 Blum popular front government?

Whilst Marchais campaigns for 'democracy' in France within his own party that is a different question. Marchais' report, which was put to the vote, was only shown to the leadership of the Party 24 hours before the congress and not at all to the membership. There was no right to amend the text. All the 3,000 delegates were picked by the federal committees in the regions, not elected by the rank and file. There is no right to form opposition tendencies within the ranks of the PCF, a position which Althusser, the PCF's leading left intellectual, supports in his article in *New Left Review* 104. Needless to say there were no opposition speeches at the congress and when it came to the vote not one delegate voted against or abstained!

At the present time with the Giscard-Barre Government implementing an austerity programme the central task is their removal, having blocked all such moves by mass strike action for the last 12 months the PCF now jeopardises that possibility by a sectarian refusal to call for a vote for the highest placed workers party in the second round.

CLASS STRUGGLE

For revolutionaries a campaign for a second round vote for the highest workers party comes to the fore as this meets the desire of the masses for unity. But that alone is not enough. It is also vital for revolutionaries to intervene in the elections around a programme of demands which can take the class struggle forward. For example not nationalisation of limited sectors of the economy, but of all the key sectors, and most importantly without compensation and under workers control.

Such a campaign can aid the mass mobilisation of the working class, which is the only way to stop the implementation of austerity programmes. It is through the self-activity of the workers movement that Giscard and the 1958 Constitution can be removed and it is on the basis of this mobilisation that the reformist leaderships of the SP and the PCF can be forced to break with the bourgeoisie, its parties, such as the Radicals, and with the capitalist economy.

Such a revolutionary alternative does exist in the first round. Encouraged by the success of the revolutionary slate in the 1977 municipal elections three organisations, the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (French section of the Fourth International), the Organisation Communiste des Travailleurs and the Comités Communistes pour l'Autogestion have agreed a common platform and list of candidates under the title 'For socialism, the power to the workers.'

A large vote in the first round for a clear revolutionary socialist alternative can advance the struggle for revolutionary change in France today.

Of saints and sinners

IF MY old friend Martin Shaw is going to get anywhere as the self-appointed Patron Saint of Regroupment (Letters: SC 12th Jan 78) he ought to moderate his spleen against SWP. Last week's installment of his running commentary on the state of the Left with its potted history of the debates on Socialist Worker was stunningly inaccurate and out of date.

Although a lot of other things were going on, the argument about the direction of SW in 1974 was not about jettisoning politics to attract a wider audience — an absurd and insulting conception. It was rather about how to find new ways to present the full range of socialist politics in a genuinely popular idiom.

Cliff's conception was for a more political paper rather than the narrow 'trade paper' which the Trotskyists sects still churn out. In particular, and here the Russian revolutionary journalists excelled, we wanted SW to present the ideas of working class people, in their own words, rather than processed by professional journalists.

We also wanted to overcome the London centredness, to introduce more literary material and non-industrial features. On the first week of the change paper, far from 'imposing' an 'abysmally low', 'brash', 'sensational' etc paper, Cliff was wandering round the office suggesting we publish a rather poignant short story by Maxim Gorki.

As for *Socialist Challenge*, I've enjoyed some of its features and think it has had a stimulating effect on Left journalism. God knows, almost anything would have been an improvement on *Red Weekly*. But there are two fundamental objections... which apply to the Socialist Unity project too and do much to explain SWP's lack of enthusiasm for Socialist Unity (its genuine disinterest not top-down sectarianism, honest).

The first is that there seems to be no central commitment to working class politics, to the battles and the disappointments and the passions and the creations that make up working class life and from which socialism draws its meaning. Sure there are strike reports and attacks on union leaders and what Martin Shaw thinks of as 'politics' — reviews by Marxist intellectuals, preferably him, of other Marxist intellectuals' recent books.

But the paper reeks of a kind of Upper Street chic, with very little interest or appeal to the sort of people who will make the revolution you are so busy drawing up programmes for. The Xmas issue illustrates the point; at a critical week in a critical strike you produce an anthology of not very funny Marxist in-jokes and re-prints.

The second problem is that, despite all the strenuous efforts to appeal to the general left, *Socialist Challenge* is still completely controlled by the IMG who are themselves subject to the discipline of a Trotskyist International. The IMG wolf has worn its sheep's clothing before. After failing to take over *The Black Dwarf*, there was *Red Mole*,

launched with much talk of revolutionary unity, non-sectarianism, Scarfe cartoons and moral uplift.

It even had independents on the editorial board. Then the IMG changed its mind again, all the carefully groomed independents were dropped and it was *Red Weekly* time. Now, if the IMG and Big Flame want to go out with each other, swap a few members, even to merge for a month every general election, well that's great. But don't dress it up as some great event in labour history. It's what's called in the trade a 'unity offensive'.

We in SWP do believe in revolutionary unity, now, not next election and between people actually involved, not self-appointed revolutionary diplomats. We work all the time with CPers and non-aligned and, when they exist, the IMG and Big Flame — on racism, Grunwicks, Hounslow, the firemen, the cuts, in the unions... as well doing as doing things in our own right. And we don't need Ernest Mandel to give us permission.

Finally, Martin sneers at the 'rather irregular' appearance of the *International Socialist Journal*. *ISJ* is in fact the longest established revolutionary journal in Britain and we sectarian hacks and unpolitical buffoons of the SWP still, in my opinion, produce a more interesting, reliable and regular publication than the tyros of Big Flame and theoretical sophisticates of the IMG.

My guess, based on the experience of the National Convention of the Left and VSC, is *Socialist Unity* is no-hoper and independents involved will come out worst. I could be completely wrong. But either way, it won't get anywhere on the inaccurate jibes at the SWP which are such a central feature of the present menu.

DAVID WIDGERY

Sexism and the labour movement

In your 5 January edition you printed a letter from Dick Hall of the National Union of Miners defending Arthur Scargill. He basically said that whatever the wrongs of having a pin-up in the *Yorkshire Miner*, it was a secondary matter compared to the overall struggle to achieve a socialist society.

I sympathise with a lot of what Dick said. Scargill is undoubtedly one of the best union leaders we've got, and considering the shit that has been thrown at him recently by the capitalist press, it is unfortunate that *Socialist Challenge* should be criticising him as well. The *Yorkshire Miner* is generally a good paper, and from what I hear its sexism is more the doings of the journalists who produce it than Scargill's.

But having said that I think there are dangers in some of Dick's views. Certainly the problems of oppressed groups can only be eradicated by transforming the whole structure of society.



But that doesn't mean, as many male socialists think, that the largely male industrial workforce has to destroy capitalism, and then women, blacks, etc. will be able to do something about their situation.

Take Grunwicks which Dick mentions. It is the most hard-fought and politically advanced struggle of the year. Firstly, it is being fought by Asians, many of them women. Secondly, it is a struggle — primarily — against the super-exploitation of the sweatshop, and against the low pay and bad conditions faced by many women and immigrants.

The white, male working class — including many miners, — have been taught one hell of a lot about the role of the State and union leadership by the sectional struggle of these women. This is the same way that the miners in their sectional struggles have taught the rest of the working class a lot.

One of the tasks of revolutionaries is to be continually trying to generalise sectional struggles, not saying to one half of the population 'Hang on a few years whilst we miners defeat capitalism.' Struggles of women against capitalist exploitation/oppression are not going to be generalised whilst many men see women only as sex objects and unpaid domestic labour and so say 'Who cares whether they get the sack — they are only women'.

Ultimately only the self-organisation of women will change those attitudes — which are a fundamental part of reformist consciousness, but the pin-up in the *Yorkshire Miner* doesn't help. Would Dick be angry if *Spare Rib* or *Women's Voice* — generally good publications — suggested to miners' wives that they shouldn't support their husband's strike because they don't treat their wives with enough respect? I am sure he would.

Finally, I must add that I think miners will go on accepting productivity deals and working in dangerous conditions as long as they feel that they have to work hard and risk their lives to preserve their image as 'real men'.

JOHN WALLER, Linby Colliery, S. Nottinghamshire

A sounding board

THE DEBATE on the future of *Socialist Challenge* has raised a crucial question for socialists: how do we utilise our resources in the most effective way to get our ideas across to the working class and its allies, in order to intervene in the struggle for socialism?

I see several dangers in the approaches mooted so far. Comrade Mellings sees everything in quantitative terms — 10-12,000 sales. Those of us who have experienced the worst kind of manic-activism (Healy's Workers' Revolutionary Party) know how meaningless are paper sales, when divorced from a consistent political struggle.

More than this, the paper should be a resonant sounding board in the class struggle: a two-way tribal tom-tom, a bridge with a double-flow of traffic, not just a bleak sign shouting its messages from a spray-canned hoarding.

If the paper is the 'organiser' of the Party (Lenin), then it brings forces around it, clarifies ideas through discussion — hence, genuine debate is not a concession to liberalism, and it mobilises 'within you and without you' (Lenin).

I do not believe that the choice is between a 'revolutionary' *Mirror* or a militant *Vanguardian*, as Comrade Cantell argues. It is nonsense to suggest as does this comrade, that SC is simply a newsified version of a theoretical journal like *New Left Review*.

If it has a fault, then the failure lies in the inability to bring theory into issues in a consistent educative way. I agree with Big Flame that the ideal socialist paper would be an agitational weapon in the working class, and

that SC is not. Certainly, a change of format/role is the main question on the agenda.

However, this does not entail collapsing into the mawkish populism of *Socialist Worker*. The short term gains of the SWP and its paper underestimate, and ultimately short change, the working class by confronting its consciousness at the level dictated by the bourgeoisie. SC should have the perspective of becoming the paper that provides these answers in a form suitable for mass propaganda work in the class struggle.

Yet the problem remains: is the left ready for such an intervention? True, there is always the possibility of a botched, hurried, empty espousal of struggle-for-struggle's sake. Again, it is true that SC is little more than a review, a contemplative reflection of politics for a fixed constituency of committed militants.

But this 'little' is quite a lot. It is the one, thin, piping reed of rationality to be heard on the left for a long time.

Unless/until the left gets its ideas/arse together to decide what its strategy of intervention in the working class is going to be, then there is no point in putting on a proletarian accent to deepen its effect.

'brown shoes don't make it leave school don't fake it' (Frank Zappa)

JIM MASTERS, London

Refreshing and healthy

Having had a tendency towards socialism from an early age, and a past member of the Communist Party and the International Socialists (SWP), I would like to express my appreciation of recent issues of *Socialist Challenge*.

Your policy of printing critical comments I find refreshing and healthy, because it at least seems to indicate the paper is being read by other socialist groups besides those who are unaligned, thus stimulating essential political debate.

I must stress I am not a member of the IMG. But at 59, I do not find this bars me from combined political discussion and struggle, alongside comrades from other organisations, including the IMG.

May I suggest that your supporters and critics alike read again the 'Battle of Ideas' in the 19 November, 1977 issue. In it Oliver MacDonald commented on the crisis facing the CPGB at its 35th Party Congress.

To do so could possibly lead to the combining of what I see at present as cadre organisations — capable of linking together in an effort to provide more impetus — toward the inevitable classless society.

I am looking forward to the Xmas 1978 issue.

JOE HILL, [Manchester].

Out of the kitchen

Does the official abandonment of the firemen by the TUC mean that, like the Labour Party, they have finally betrayed those very principles which are their only reason for existence?

Before any of the apologists, Labour, TUC or comen come out screaming, consider the following questions:

Is it possible, in a genuine democracy, to officially restrict incomes whilst allowing, under an obviously phoney smoke-screen of controls, prices and profits to run wild? This is an important question since when wages and salaries in basic industries are recognised as the platform of the economy and thus control indirectly 'all' wages and salaries.

Then before phases 4 and 5 etc. are accepted we have the 'right' and 'duty' to insist upon knowing the wages and salaries in basic industry expressed as a percentage of the consumer prices in those relevant areas. This must include figures both now and, for comparison, 25 years ago, before price and profit inflation went mad.

Also, we need to have stated officially what is the currently acceptable percentage relationship of wages and salaries to consumer prices in the same areas excluding the payroll subsidy.

This letter is a direct accusation that vital opinion-forming material is being withheld from public knowledge as national policy; that this situation is an intolerable breach of human rights — a denial of the basic principles of democracy: i.e. the decision of the people in full knowledge of all of the facts.

The ability to recognise, resist and expose this kind of political mindbending and mass indoctrination is a principal qualification for all genuine trade union and political representatives: right, left and centre.

To those in office and to the TUC: if you can't do it, get out of the bloody kitchen!

T. WILKINSON, (Rhyl)

Socialist Challenge EVENTS

For details of activities in the NW write or ring the Manchester Socialist Challenge Centre, Third Floor, 14 Piccadilly, Manchester 1. 061-236 2352.

Open Tuesday 8-8pm, Thursday 8-8pm, Saturday 10-1pm. Room available for meetings. Duplicating facilities available. **GURK Socialist Challenge** group meets every Wednesday, 8pm, at the Wheatheaf pub, in Bury New Road, Whitefield (near Whitefield bus and train station).

LIVERPOOL Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Wednesdays at the Dolphin, Canning Place.

WARRINGTON Socialist Challenge group meets regularly. Ring Manchester Socialist Challenge offices for details. 061-236 2352.

NORTH EAST

DURHAM Socialist Challenge group meets 1st and 3rd Thursdays in the Big Jug Pub, Claypath, Durham City. Next meeting, 18 January on 'Aims of Socialist Challenge' with a speaker from the Socialist Challenge editorial board. Further details from J. Fox, The Avenue, Durham.

MIDDLESBOROUGH Socialist Challenge sales on Saturdays outside Boots in Cleveland Centre, 11-1pm.

HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge is on sale Saturdays from 11am-1pm outside the Library in the Piazza. Next Socialist Challenge group meeting on Thursday, 26 January at the White Lion pub, Cross Church Street, 8pm and fortnightly thereafter.

SCOTLAND

For information on Socialist Challenge contact Scottish Socialist/Socialist Challenge bookshop, 64 Queen Street, Glasgow (Tel: 041-221 7481). Open weekdays 10-4. Late closing Thursday 6.00pm. Wide range of FI publications.

DUNDEE: Information about Socialist Challenge activities from 64 Queen Street, Glasgow. Join in SC sales outside Boots (corner of Reform Street) each Saturday, 11am-2pm.

EDINBURGH Socialist Challenge meetings every second Wednesday. Contact George Kerevan, 12 Merchiston Grove, Edinburgh. Tel: 031-346 3466.

SOUTH WEST

PORTSMOUTH Socialist Challenge readers group every Monday, 7.30pm at Wiltshire pub (upstairs), Hampshire Terrace.

MIDLANDS

COVENTRY Socialist Challenge meeting. Oliver MacDonald on 'Socialist Opposition in Eastern Europe', Friday, 3 February, 7.45pm. Elastic Inn.

LONDON

BRENT Socialist Challenge group. For details of meetings write c/o London IMG, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

CAMDEN Socialist Challenge group meets every first and third Wednesdays of each month in Kentish Town. For details ring Neil 359-8288 or write PO Box 50, London N1.

GREENWICH/LEWISHAM Socialist Challenge group meets every two weeks. For details ring Ray on 01-659 1187.

SOUTHALL Supporters group meets fortnightly. For details phone 01-573 6060.

SOUTHWEST LONDON Socialist Challenge supporters meet every two weeks in Battersea. Further information from 26 Latchmere Road, London SW11.

WANDSWORTH Socialist Challenge group meeting. 'Building the Revolutionary International', Wednesday, 25 January, 7.30pm. Speakers: Harry Wicks Workers' League, plus a member of the IMG Political Committee, York Library, Wye Street.

HARINGEY Socialist Challenge readers group meets fortnightly in the West Green Community Centre, Stanley Road (off West Green Road). Nearest tube: Tumpike Lane. Next meeting, Monday, 23 January, 7.30pm 'The Current Situation in Ireland'. Speaker: Geoff Bell from Socialist Challenge editorial board and author of *The Protestants of Ulster*.

John Berger on Padre Padrone

SET IN Sardinia, *Padre Padrone* is the story of a shepherd boy who is taken away from school at the age of five by his father, who already needs him in the mountains to look after the family's sheep and goats.

Thus, denied literacy and tyrannized by his father, the son finally revolts, and his revolt takes the form of his becoming a scholar of language: eventually he takes a degree in linguistics. The story, however, is not the conventional one of the bright peasant boy who, after a hard struggle, makes good and becomes a bourgeois.

PADRONE...

For the son's acute awareness of language and its relation to experience forces him to return to study the Sardinian dialect in the village where he was born, where he was taken away from school, and where nevertheless the meaning of his life remains.

The film, based on an autobiographical book by Gavino Ledda, was made by the Taviani brothers for Italian television. A prize winner at the 1977 Cannes Festival, it was heralded by Roberto Rossellini, just before his death, as a masterpiece. And in my opinion Rossellini was right.

Having himself contributed so much to the creation of authentic cinema — films made to be faithful to the lives of those they depict — he recognised that the Taviani brothers had made what is perhaps the first authentic film about peasants.

Most comments on this film have concentrated on the individual story of the son. This may come from an understandable urban bias of the cities. (Concerning the big London critics one cannot speak of bias but only, as usual, of facetiousness and ignorance.)

PEASANT CRUELTY

What interested me even more than Gavino, the son, was the mother and father. In an unauthentic film the father would have been cast as a villain. We see him as cruel and tyrannical, obstinate and vengeful, and yet the film also allows us to see him as the human pivot of a world. He is not guilty.

In this comparatively brief article I want to discuss one central issue raised by the father's character: the issue of peasant cruelty. Yet before doing so, it's necessary to make two general points about the film, so that this great work of the Taviani brothers is seen for what it is.

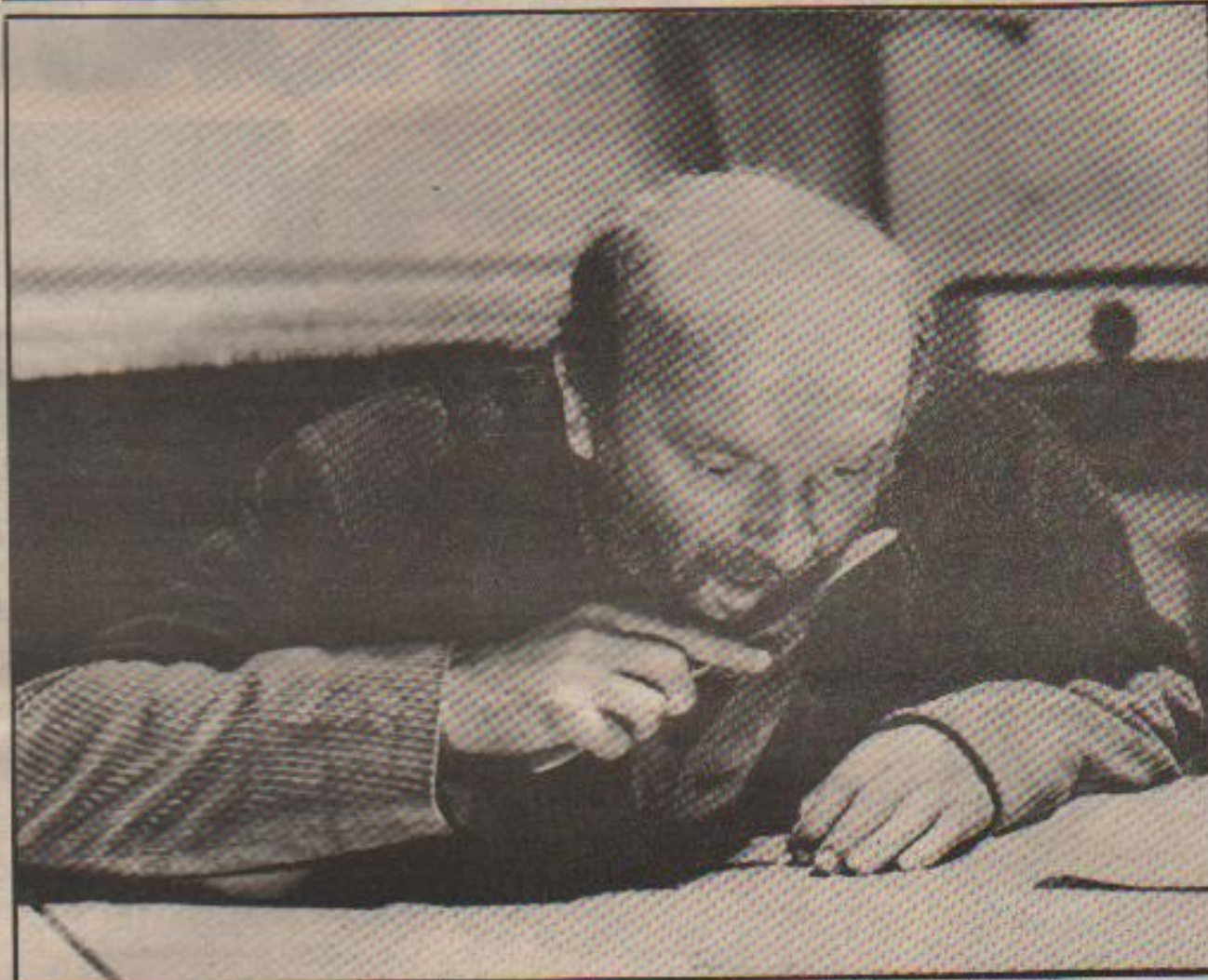
First point: the story is specifically about a village of Sardinian shepherds, it has been created by local history and so — although it is exactly what I'm going to do — it is in some ways unwise to generalise from it. For example, the submissive role of women in the story is by no means typical of some other peasant communities.

COOLNESS

Second point. The way the film has been made discourages the spectator from all vicarious identification. This has led some comrades to find it lacking in emotion and psychological depth. The proper theatrical comparison would be with Brecht. Yet there is another reason for the 'coolness' of the film.

Peasant emotions are expressed more often in music — as the film breathtakingly shows — than in narrative; peasant

'The cruelty of peasants has often dismayed the urban observer The violence inflicted on them has often been far more individualised than that suffered by proletarians.'



OMERO ANTONUTTI as Gavino's father: 'cruel and tyrannical, obstinate and vengeful, but also the human pivot of a world'.

narrative is epic and therefore cool.

As for psychological interpretations, they do not exist as such in peasant culture for they presuppose a certain space cleared by leisure, and this space is never there; questions of psychology remain questions of character. 'He's as straight as a goat's hindleg'. Not 'What made him dishonest?'

PUNISHMENT

The cruelty of peasants has often dismayed the urban observer. Gorki, for example, was appalled by the cruelty he witnessed in the Russian countryside. I cite Gorki because, unlike many other observers, he cannot be accused of cosy sentimentality. It was not the killing of a rabbit which appalled him. Unque, ionably peasants are capable of a special kind of cruelty — just as they are also capable of a special kind of courage or generosity.

In the film there are at least two instances of such cruelty. Once when the father is punishing the son — and, given the conditions of life in those mountains, the punishment is just — he continues to beat him until the boy is unconscious.

The second incident concerns a vendetta between two families. A young shepherd from one family agrees to a reconciliation, and it follows that the two families will shear their sheep together. When the shearing is done, the custom is

to kill two lambs and celebrate by feasting. The son of the other family stuns the first lamb; when, in turn, the shepherd holds the second lamb, he himself is murdered — with a blow from the same sledge hammer.

Nothing is served by defending such cruelty. Yet if it is to be judged, this cruelty has to be understood for what it is, and this means relating it to the whole context of peasant experience. It will remain an evil, but not necessarily the one the stranger first assumed.

Straightaway one must come to terms with the fact that over centuries the peasantry has been the victim of every kind of violence inflicted by the ruling class and its servants. And this violence has often been far more individualised — far more apparently gratuitous than that suffered by proletarians who were able, in some measure, to organise their own defence.

STRICT DISCIPLINE

One must also reckon with the fact that a peasant family's chances of survival have usually been so slim that traditions of strict and obstinate discipline became necessary to sustain even the hope of that survival.

Such mega-historical explanations, however, cannot take us very far towards understanding the specific act of cruelty. They suggest a kind of determinism and, as a result, they make generations after

generations of peasants appear too passive. Whereas in truth the impulse towards cruelty usually stems, in the case of peasants, from a frustrated desire for action.

This frustration has little to do with what is now called frustration in the cities. It is a fury at the immediate and inexorable connection existing between event and consequence.

There is no time or space for pleading. You live with your face right up against what has happened to you. No outside intervention or compensation is possible. You are the events which have occurred in your life — most of them beyond your control.

The father, who is responsible for the survival of the whole family, has to train his eldest son to be a reliable shepherd. The training of a boy incurs punishments as does the training of an animal. When the boy fails, the father beats him. So far no cruelty is involved. But he continues to beat him, the beating making him ever more furious because his son has made him beat him, furious because he has no choice. This fury is what has to be understood. Though when understood, the boy has still been beaten into unconsciousness.

In general peasants are neither indifferently nor secretly, covertly, cruel. They are expressively so. And the act of cruelty is a way of expressing how near to disaster one is oneself. It is a comment on an event

which, unchosen, now belongs to your life.

(I say comment because I hesitate to use the word appeal yet in a world where, as I have said, there is no space for ap-

peals, an act of cruelty is a black appeal; each murder in a vendetta is a protest against that vendetta.) Except to the law, peasant cruelty is seldom denied or justified; instead it is assumed — in the sense of being taken upon oneself.

ABSTRACT

The evil of such cruelty (a term which most peasants would accept) needs to be distinguished from another kind of cruelty which, far from being expressive, is anonymous, denied and systematic. A cruelty which operates apart from those who inflict it, and derives, not from any situation of insufferable closeness, but from an abstract principle of distant planning.

The latter cruelty is implicit in most penal systems, forced labour, racist policies, torturing and genocide strategies: practices which many governments endorse without question. The good citizen believes that he or she anyway will be exempt from institutionalised cruelty.

Peasants are cruel because they have never been able to gain exemption from their own pain. Their acts of cruelty — and they can be called nothing else — are concentrations of, active monuments to the pain — both their own and that of others — which they have suffered.

WHERE TO SEE IT

16mm prints of *Padre Padrone*, suitable for showing by film societies, will be available by the end of March from the distributors: Artificial Eye, 3 Tottenham Street, London W1. Tel 01-637 2332. The film (certificate X) will be showing at the following cinemas:

Camden Plaza, North London, until 9 Feb. Aaben, Manchester, 22-28 Jan. Arncliffe, Bristol, 31 Jan.-5 Feb. Tyneside Film Theatre, Newcastle, 7-11 Feb. Arts, Cambridge, 9-11 Feb. Edinburgh Film Theatre, 13-18 Feb. Stoke Film Theatre, 23-25 Feb. Queens Film Theatre, Belfast, 27 Feb.-4 Mar. Stirling Film Theatre, 5 Mar. Arts Centre, Warwick University, 13-14 March. Norwich Film Theatre, 20-22 Mar. Doncaster Film Theatre, 20-21 Mar. Sherman Film Theatre, Cardiff, 16-19 May.

A breath of air in Brixton

by NICK DAVIDSON

SOCIALIST MUSICIAN and song writer Leon Rosselson played in South London last Friday on the opening night of a new club in Brixton. The club, the Brixton Socialist Club, will be providing songs and music, argument and discussion, information and entertainment on most Friday nights.

This week the film *Salt of the Earth* will be shown. It's about the great Mexican mining strike with songs from the period.

The aim is to provide a good night out and a chance to meet other socialists and militants in the area, plus an opportunity to advertise and learn about what's going on and what others are doing. The club is supported by Lambeth Trades Council, local socialist organisations, and dozens of individuals.

Lambeth, like many parts of the country is short on social centres for socialists and trade unionists. There's no Labour Club in the borough, and the one or two former 'working men's' clubs and 'radical' clubs long ago lost any links they may have had with the labour

movement. The club's first job is to fill this vacuum.

More ambitiously, and tentatively, we see a couple of other goals the club should strive for. First, we want to use it as an opportunity to get away from the common idea that socialist politics is only about elections, meetings and strikes, and demonstrations. We want to show that socialism is about a lot of other aspects of life.

Secondly, and more difficult, by presenting a wide range of events, we want to break out of the 'charmed' circle of the left, and provide a place where people who never normally think of themselves as political or left wing will come along and feel comfortable. Not an easy or short term task. It should be easier when we get our own premises in the not too distant future.

For details of the programme look in the events column of this and other left papers and *Time Out*. Come along to The Canterbury, Canterbury Crescent, behind Brixton Police Station, at 8pm. Help and suggestions of events welcome. Entrance 50p.

Socialist Challenge

As Callaghan steals Tory clothes WILL THEY PLAY THE RACIST CARD?

Immigrants do not have to wait for the return of the Tories to see how state racism operates. A forty strong picket at Durham jail last Saturday drew attention to the case of Rupa Ali, an immigrant from Bangladesh who has been held in custody for over a month facing deportation for illegal entry.

There is nothing terribly exceptional in that, but what does make Rupa's case rather different is the fact that he has been held twice before by police and each time he has been told he has the right to stay in Britain.

One explanation for this treatment might be found in the attitudes of the Northumberland police, who last month invited Nazi leader Martin Webster to speak on 'law and order'.

The police put Webster up at a five star hotel, in marked contrast to their treatment of Rupa Ali. The latter's lawyers are currently applying for a writ of habeas corpus. There will be a rally against racism and fascism at Newcastle City Hall on Saturday 21



THE TORIES are in a dilemma. Most of their clothes have been stolen by Callaghan and the Labour government. The defeat inflicted on the Fire Brigades Union and the successes scored by the right wing in the National Union of Mineworkers on the 'incentive schemes' have further strengthened Callaghan's standing in ruling class circles. For there is little doubt that an attempt by the Tories to do what Labour has accomplished would have aroused an explosion on both fronts. Callaghan has indeed become Labour's answer to Baldwin in the eyes of British capitalists.

RACIST CARD

So what should Mrs Thatcher do? Should she Prioritise or Josephise? Her choice on this front is not unrelated to the question of racism. For if the Tories decide to further increase unemployment, implement more cutbacks in social expenditure, there could well be 'rioting in the streets'. An ideological cover which plays on the weaknesses of the labour movement could therefore serve as a useful smokescreen. Why not then play the racist card? It might not come out trumps but it could aid in further dividing the working class.

However for that the Tories would need to launch a major

political campaign. Their present state and the overall political situation in the country precludes this possibility. In the first instance the Heath/Walker wing of the party would be extremely hostile to such a move. Peter Walker has been, in recent speeches, stressing the necessity to make more funds available to deal with urban housing in the black ghettos. An overtly racist campaign would sharpen the existing divisions within the party itself. Secondly a racist campaign at this stage in British politics would aid the racist and fascist organisations more than the Tory Party. So while there must be strong temptations to play the racist card — and Speed's proposals are a reflection of this — the Tory Party will be content merely with warning Labour that they have this card in reserve.

IMMIGRATION

The Tory proposals in themselves are not new. They have been discussed by numerous civil servants in the Home Office for the past five years. They seek to put more racist measures on the statute book by restricting the right of black dependents and East African holders of British passports to enter Britain. If the Tories wage a campaign on this it must be fought and



resisted. The last Labour Party political broadcast will be seen as an exercise in pure cynicism unless Labour MPs fight publicly and openly against the racist immigration controls which their own party has put on the statute book.

Get us off the drawing board

AFTER A GOOD start to the spring fund drive, the flow of money has begun to dry up. Over the past seven days only £85.25 has come in. This brings the cumulative total to £244.85, which puts us slightly in arrears. Unless our readers respond,



future issues of Socialist Challenge — like the Tullin tower, our fund-drive logo — might not get off the drawing board.

Tullin's monument to the Third International was to have incorporated all the latest technological developments. At its summit an immense screen projecting all the latest news reports was planned. Within the structure there were to be meeting halls, offices, and communication systems. These rooms were to be cylindrical, and to rotate — the uppermost level making one turn per day, the second rotating once a week, and the third once a month.

Socialist Challenge is also endeavouring to use the most modern technological equipment to produce a better quality paper; but these can be very expensive. With your money we could take a turn for the better!

The week's most interesting subscriber must surely be the information officer at British Leyland. They know Socialist Challenge carries all the inside information. We brought Leyland workers the news of the racist Sir Richard Dobson, and today we reveal more details of the slash fund used to bribe overseas officials to 'win' orders.

Our thanks this week to:

D. Smith	1.00
J. Kolodziejki	2.00
M.B.	15.00
A. McBurney	0.25
Nottingham supporters	6.00
C. Gardner	10.00
J. Fowles	5.00
A. McNeillie	10.00
Anon.	0.50
A. Mhlongo	1.00
D. Tradgett	0.25
Anon.	6.00
Travellers Inn	1.00
T.A.	15.00
J. McDermid	2.25
Anon.	5.00
R. Howard	5.00
TOTAL	£85.25

Special Offer

Russian Revolution special. Text by Isaac Deutscher, design by David King. 50p.

1978 Calendar. 13 posters from Paris, May 1968. 4 colours. £1.

Subscribe for one year to Socialist Challenge (£10) and receive a calendar for 1978 free.

Set of 6 postcards of Peter Kennard photomontages on South Africa, Ireland, 1974 miners strike, Seveso, USSR and Chile. The set £1.

Socialist Challenge supporters badge. 20p each plus 7p postage. Orders of 10 or more 16p each, post free.

All available from Special Offers, Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1.

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

Domestic: 6 months, £5; 12 months, £10
Abroad: Airmail, £16.50 - Surface, £10 per annum.

Name

Address

I enclose a donation for the Fighting Fund of

Cheques, POs and Money Orders should be made payable to 'Socialist Challenge'.

Complete and return to:

Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.