

Socialist Challenge

BUILD A SOCIALIST OPPOSITION FOR A UNIFIED REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION 12p

14 July 1977 No.6

Grunwick Dear All,



Well here we are on the mass picket. It's really great. There are tens of thousands of us here, all fighting for low-paid workers, mostly Asians, who've been sacked for joining a union.



This is the postal workers leader from Willesden who stopped the mail and was sacked as a result together with his mates.



Here's Arthur. He brought 1500 miners from Yorkshire. If only the Strike Committee had asked them to stay a bit longer we'd have shut the factory that day.



The Blue Cossacks were sent to clear a way for the scabs' bus but they didn't have too much success. We chanted 'The Workers United Will Never Be Defeated!'. They ran away.



Most of the time we dealt with the cops without trouble, but the black brother here was caught on his own.

This space is reserved for absent friends - old Judge Scaman and Roy Grantham of APEX. They were chatting to each other at the Court of Enquiry. We decided to stay here.



This is the secretary of the Strike Committee, Mahmood Ahmed. He wants mass picketing to continue.

Photos by ANDREW WIARD (Report) and DEREK SPEIRS (JFL)

WISH YOU WERE HERE - EVERY DAY!

Editorial

Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.
Editorial 01-359 8189
News 01-359 8180
Distribution 01-359-8301

phew! what a week

WHAT A WEEK for the workers' movement! The transport workers throw out wage controls. The miners vote against the productivity deal trap and the 12 month rule. 15,000 march for victory at Grunwick.

The capitalist class were suitably dismayed. Only in one part of the labour movement was that despair shared. Callaghan, Healey and Jones have slaved away for three years to impose their wage-cutting Social Contract. They have succeeded in demoralising and disorienting many workers.

The results have been seen not only in the massive falls in living standards but also in the abstentions and the votes for the Tories in one by-election disaster after another. The final act of this tragi-farce was the Liberal-Labour pact. Saffron Walden saw Labour votes going to the Liberals!

What could be achieved with a socialist leadership worthy of the name is obvious. Any threatened return of the Tories could be met with the promise of the same sort of action that was used to end Heath's government. The need for the Lib-Lab pact could be ended by announcing that the Government would fight an election on the basis of socialist policies backed up by the power indicated by the trade union conferences and shown at Grunwick.

But far from drawing any lessons from their suicide course, the Labour leaders now intend to deepen their alliance with the Liberals. Alternative policies are needed for the struggle ahead.

STRUGGLE

Rule one in building the leadership necessary to counter the manoeuvres of Jones and Callaghan is that in the fight between capital and labour what **decides** the issue is never Parliamentary or backroom in-fighting, but the mass struggle.

The workers' movement is capable of launching the sort of mass struggle which blocked Labour's anti-trade union **In Place of Strife**. If a fight is made for policies that can give those struggles a socialist direction, then the ruling class will think twice before backing the return of a Tory government that would be tottering right from the beginning and the labour movement will be shaken from top to bottom in a struggle for socialist policies that can bring victory.

But the result of accepting the joint manoeuvres of the TUC leaders and Callaghan would lead to further falls in living standards, guarantee Thatcher's return, ensure that such a Tory government is the most reactionary since the 1930s and would leave Callaghan and Healey and the other architects of defeat firmly in the saddle.

Every single shade of political opinion in the workers' movement is going to be put to the test. Those who call for, support and

organise mass action and put forward policies for a socialist outcome for the struggle are going to aid the labour movement. All those who merely talk or openly aid Callaghan and the TUC leaders are giving succour to the employers, the Tories and Liberals, and every enemy of the workers' movement.

Instead of fighting for the Labour Party conference to endorse the stand of trade unionists against 'Phase 3 by the back door' — the 12 month rule — the 'left' Labour MPs will go no further than their campaign of opposition to the Common Market.

SABOTAGING

The Communist Party has claimed credit for the union decisions while keeping very quiet about their record of sabotaging struggles against Phase 2. They have refused to follow up the Liaison Committee and National Assembly of Labour Conferences by action and organisation in local areas.

There are only two forces in the labour movement who can have nothing but pride in their record and nothing but confidence in the future.

The first are thousands of workers who refused to follow their misleaders and gave their support to the strikers of Heathrow, Port Talbot and those other workers who have already gone into action against the pay policy. Those disputes were landmarks on the road to throwing out wage control and culminated in the votes at last week's trade union conferences.

The second force which stood firm against the Social Contract was the revolutionary left. Still a small minority in the working class, still pursuing tactics which are often sectarian, nevertheless only the revolutionaries have opposed the Social Contract at every stage and supported every struggle against it.

That stand of the revolutionary left has given it a new audience, potential and standing inside the workers' movement.

If the revolutionary left pursues a consistent policy of unity in action with all those prepared to fight, if it puts forward policies that open up the necessity for a socialist solution of the crisis, if it can come to a sensible policy for the general elections, if it unites into the strongest possible united organisation, the left has the greatest opportunity for decades to grow into a powerful force in the labour movement.

In this week's issue of **Socialist Challenge** and in future weeks we look at the news, analysis, policies and debate necessary for victory.

George Ward lives here

Just around the corner is a tennis court. Nearby is Hendon Golf Club. A quarter of a mile away is Mill Hill public school, and the same distance the other way is a British Army barracks.

George Ward, boss of Grunwick, lives here, surrounded by leisure facilities and the type of people who share his views on the world.



Send him a postcard, letting him know what you think: George Henry

Reginald Ward, 17 Holmdene Avenue, London NW7.

Uncle Tom Jackson

by GEOFF BELL

ON SATURDAY Tom Jackson, general secretary of the Union of Postal Workers, was loudly heckled when he spoke at the 4,000-strong TUC anti-racist demonstration in Manchester. The shouts of 'scab' were an obvious reference to the role Jackson has played in trying to smash the Grunwick solidarity action of the Cricklewood sorters.

Throughout the previous week he had done all in his power to force his union members at Cricklewood to handle Grunwick mail. He argued that to do otherwise might 'prejudice' the findings of the Scarman court of inquiry.

Jackson has a touching, if dangerous faith in courts of inquiry, independent tribunals and other 'sensible' ways of settling class conflict. Take his attitude to the Arbitration Conciliation and Advisory Service, which was established under the Labour Government's Employment Protection Act. ACAS was meant to safeguard workers from being sacked for joining a union, and protect the right of workers to join a union.

In December 1975 Tom Jackson gave Michael Foot a whole page in the UPW newspaper to argue the virtues of ACAS. According to Foot, ACAS 'offer every conceivable method to find reasonable and acceptable settlements of disputes to what might otherwise have led to what should be the last resort — strike action'. In arguing last week for his union members to trust the Scarman tribunal on Grunwick, Jackson maintains his faith in such methods while all about him are losing theirs.

But Uncle Tom Jackson has not recently acquired this capacity for self-delusion. In November last year he called off a previous boycott of Grunwick mail because he said '(Grunwick) have agreed to provide the necessary facilities for an inquiry by ACAS and the recognition question could be settled by the end of next week'.

POSTAL BOYCOTT

In the event George Ward told ACAS where to get off. As for settling the issue by the end of the week, Ward was later to admit that had the postal boycott continued he would have been forced to close Grunwick within two weeks.

Jackson's trust in ACAS goes back even further. In September 1975 he asserted,

A slave to good sense

'Although there may be disappointments about the process of legislation no trade unionist can complain about the Employment Protection Act'. A lot of Grunwick strikers have done a lot of complaining since those words were spoken.

Jackson uttered them in the course of a speech delivered at Newham Town Hall when he was arguing the case of super-scab Reg Prentice who had just been sacked by his Constituency Labour Party. Jackson backed Prentice because of 'the real necessity of maintaining the fabric of the party... only in unity can we achieve the success of this and future Labour Governments'.

Once again events were to rather embarrass Jackson. Prentice's version of 'unity' was displayed in April this year when he said, 'I would like to see a new party of the centre, wider than the Liberals, embracing the more progressive element in the Conservative Party'.



The Grunwick strike has not spoilt Jackson's record of being proved wrong. Last Tuesday he assured his union members that after the initial suspension of 27 Cricklewood sorters the Post Office 'intend not to impose further suspensions'. By the next day, 75 more Cricklewood postal workers had been suspended.

So it is hardly surprising that the Cricklewood workers disregarded Jackson's advice. For just as Jackson's policies have a record of failure, the type of action methods the Cricklewood sorters adopted have a record of success.

A recent example was in February when postal workers in East London went on strike in an overtime dispute. Jackson opposed the strike and refused to give it official support. On one occasion police were called in to evict the strikers from a sorting office. But the strike continued and the strikers eventually won.

So it is not simply a case of Tom Jackson trailing behind him a long list of defeats and humiliations. It is the methods of struggle which are on offer which is important. Jackson speaks of tribunals, inquiries, trust in right-wing Labourites. The Cricklewood sorters join their sisters and brothers at Grunwick and promote class struggle policies. The records of British Petroleum director Tom Jackson and the record of the East London postal strikers leaves no room for doubting which takes the working class forward.

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:

1 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, gay — struggling for their liberation. This socialism can only be achieved by creating new organs of power and defeating with all necessary means the power of the capitalist state.

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

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

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

4 The Communist Parties in Europe are in crisis. Neither the '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 factions and tendencies.



Photo: MARK RUSHER (IFL)

11 JULY A DRESS REHEARSAL FOR TOMORROW

OVER 18,000 trade unionists demonstrated their solidarity with the Grunwick strikers. They came despite an official TUC circular saying that the mass picket should not be supported. They came despite the attempts of trade union bureaucrats like Tom Jackson to prevent solidarity action. They came despite the fact they knew that they had to face the police violence ordered and sanctioned by the Labour Government.

That is a mighty warning to those in and out of the labour movement who preach caution, 'good sense' and class collabor-

ation — whether they be advocates of courts on enquiry for settling class struggle, or upholders of the Social Contract as a way of

taking the interests of the working class forward.

Once again the tactics of the mass picket have been vindicated. Seven drivers who work for Grunwick joined the strike on Monday — the day of the mass picket. The picket itself, on two occasions, stopped the scab-carrying bus from entering the factory. By and large the police attacks on the pickets were repelled.

Of course, once the picket dispersed to join the TUC-bac-

ked demonstration the bus did enter the factory.

But even the TUC diversion could not detract from the power that was displayed outside the factory gates — workers' power.

That power must not be dissipated now. As far as Grunwick is concerned it means stepping up all forms of solidarity action, placing no reliance on those trade union leaders who did their level best to sabotage Monday's picket.

Solidarity is the key. The

workers at the Cricklewood sorting office turned the TUC's verbal support of the strike into action. They have been suspended by the Post Office and harassed by Tom Jackson to lift the boycott. They have been joined by workers at the Luton sorting office, who have blocked efforts by George Ward to smuggle outgoing post through postal sorting offices outside London. They need the support of every worker to continue to withstand this pressure. The best possible support for the Cricklewood workers is the extension of the boycott to all supplies.

The best possible support for the Grunwick strikers is to extend the mass picket. Work-place meetings should be used to organise mass delegations for the picket line, and to build support for a further day of strike action — named provisionally by the Strike Committee as 23 August. Build support committees in every town. Produce local bulletins, arrange speaking tours for members of the Strike Committee.

23 August has been chosen as it marks the first anniversary of the Grunwick strike. The mass picket of 11 July can be multiplied by 23 August. It can grow best by organising national strike action on that day. If the national trade union leadership will not act it is up to those who

built 11 July to lead the fight for such strike action. This means principally the Yorkshire and Welsh miners.

This is the way that the trade union movement can win at Grunwick. The Scarman Tribunal is a diversion. Workers know from long experience not to rely on the judges, but only their own strength.

This does not only apply to Grunwick. Attacks on trade union rights are becoming more and more frequent. In Darlington 108 journalists have been on strike for six weeks — fighting for the right to operate a closed shop. A mass picket at Darlington is planned for 15 July.

Relying only on our own strength is also the principle which the fights that lie ahead for the whole working class should be based on. The solidarity shown to the Grunwick strike should serve as a warning both to the Labour Government and to any future Tory Government what it can expect if the strength of the labour movement is mobilised.

11 July was not a complete victory. But victory is now possible. Up and down the country, in union after union, let the organising begin now.

★ All out 23 August
★ For National Strike Action
★ Victory to the Grunwick strike



Photo: MARK RUSHER (IFL)

STAND UP FOR ABORTION RIGHTS

The Benyon anti-abortion Bill could get through its third reading this month

EMERGENCY PUBLIC MEETING

Friday 15 July

7.30pm, Central Hall, Westminster

You must be there to stop the Bill and defeat the anti-abortionists

More information from National Abortion Campaign
30 Camden Road, London NW1. Tel: 01-485 4303

Miners-claim £135

Test 12 month rule

THE Tynemouth conference of the National Union of Mineworkers voted to fight for £110 a week for face workers from 1 November. These demands punch a hole right through any 10 per cent norm and the TUC-backed '12 months between claims' rule.

GEOFF RYAN reports and explains how the miners' right wing leadership are already trying to wriggle off the hook of the membership's decision.

They came out with all the tricks. Joe Gormley tried to pull off the fatherly chat, delivered in a bluff, 'down to earth' Lancashire accent. Lawrence Daly — the 'left' that no-one on the left listens to any more — now plays the role of ventriloquist's dummy for Callaghan and the National Coal Board.

Sam Scott from Northumberland showed how price rises had eroded all the gains of the '72 and '74 strikes. He estimated that if thresholds were still in force, miners' wages would have been over £90 a week by April this year.

Of course, Daly did not disagree in principle with Northumberland's call for threshold agreements. He just thought they 'are not an adequate instrument for doing the job of protecting wages and all the other jobs that need to be done.' What he really meant was that they would stop the Labour Government cutting real wages and increasing prices.

The executive's main attack was reserved for composite No. 2, however, and the amendments of the Yorkshire area to the Nottingham resolution which stubbornly insisted on the executive being committed to fighting for a wage of £110 a week for face workers and £90 and £80 for other underground and surface workers.

UNANIMOUSLY

Daly was against tying the executive to a definite figure 'without alteration or hesitation' because it would 'tie the hands of the NEC too rigidly in forthcoming negotiations...'. When you have Gormley and Daly negotiate for you, it's not only their hands you have to tie — you have to nail their feet to the floor!

Being wedded to democracy,

Daly then went on to defend the Social Contract, although Conference had unanimously rejected it. He boasted: 'I am proud that the miners took the lead in supporting TUC and Labour Party policy.' He 'forgot' to explain why the miners were not getting £90 a week to compensate for the cost of living increases and why the average family have suffered a cut in real wages of over £10 a week since the introduction of the Social Contract.

LIFE-SAVER

The Nottingham resolution was like a life-saver to the right wing. It called for more money, but less action. It did not tie anyone's hands.

But the Nottingham resolution still gives the NEC a large headache. Henry Richardson, moving it, said: 'We mean by this resolution, we seek £135 by November 1977, and if we do not get it, then we consult the membership with a view to taking industrial action.'

For the NUM leaders and Tony Benn, guest speaker at the conference — who does not believe the vote is against the Social Contract — the Nottingham resolution is a moderate compromise. But for the working miner it means £135 now and the words 'seek to achieve' boil down to the same as 'demand'.

This is why the proposed incentive scheme got such short shrift. Even Gormley's reference to East European productivity schemes left the conference unmoved. They were evidently not desperate to win a Stakhanovite award.

The dumping of the Social Contract rubbed even further salt into the wounds of the right. As Nottinghamshire area executive member Joe Whelan caustically remarked: 'If you believe the



Henry Richardson, Nottingham, motivating his area's successful motion:

'We mean by this resolution that we seek £135 by November 1977, and if we don't get it we consult the membership about industrial action'.

Social Contract has benefitted the working class, then you will believe that a mouse thinks a black cat is lucky.'

The decisions on wages, the Social Contract, and the productivity deals have put the Press in a frenzy and have not exactly bucked up Denis Healey. They are a slap in the face to Gormley and his friends. However, the majority of the executive will not fight for these decisions.

Gormley told the conference after NCB boss Derek Ezra had spoken: 'I did not write his speech for him. Mind, we said the same things.' Gormley and Daly will now try and get off the

hook by encouraging different areas to accept productivity deals and by meekly endorsing another year of TUC wage restraint, if this year's Trade Union Congress can fiddle the vote.

What is needed now is a real campaign inside the NUM by the Yorkshire, Kent, South Wales and Scottish areas to make sure that the union goes all-out for the demands of conference.

These areas have the base of support and they can turn that into a real majority in the other areas. If that is not done then the right wing will flout the miners' voted at conference.

Lobby the No deal

THE CONFERENCE DECISIONS of the transport workers, miners, engineers and other groups of workers, have destroyed the lie that the Social Contract and the policies of the Government enjoy the support of the labour movement.

Through their delegates five million workers have come out clearly and demanded an immediate return to free collective bargaining — a large majority of trade unionists.

But it would be a mistake to believe that the battle against wage controls has been won. Within hours of last week's conference decisions, the leaders who brought in the Social Contract were manoeuvring to overthrow their union's democratic decisions.

Jack Jones graciously declared to the Transport and General Workers Union Conference that, although his policies had been rejected, he would do his best to implement their policy of a return to free collective bargaining from 1 August.

But as soon as he left the conference Jack Jones declared to the television cameras that he would continue to participate in the TUC-Government negotiating committee.

Later the T&G Executive rammed through a resolution to allow him to stay in the discussions to discuss the general policies of the Government. But the only purpose of these talks is to conclude a deal on Phase 3! He is following in the path of Hugh Scanlon who continued to negotiate Phase 1 despite the rejection of wage controls by his union conference.

Joe Gormley announced that there was not a 'cat in hell's chance' of a Phase 3. Then he threw all his weight behind the motion at the National Union of Mineworkers conference which refused to name a definite wage demand this year.

Wanting 'flexibility' to reach a deal with Healey, Gormley's job will be made a lot harder by the simultaneous decision of the Tynemouth conference to reject productivity dealing. But already he and Daly are wheeling and dealing on the National Executive (where the right enjoys a small minority) to extricate themselves from this clear mandate.

The supporters of the Social Contract have the same contempt for union democracy as they have for the living standards of their members. They aim to continue the policies that have imposed 1.5 million unemployed, the slashing of welfare services and the wage cuts that have meant the lowest standard of living for working people since 1973.

The fig leaf to cover that naked betrayal will no doubt be brought to the TUC Congress. There, a determined attempt will be made to throw the summer conference decisions. The first steps to end this threat are:

* Demand that all representatives of unions that voted against wage controls withdraw immediately from the Government-TUC negotiations.

* Build the largest possible lobby of the TUC conference in September.

Because throughout the coming months the struggle for wage rises and the struggle for union democracy are going to go hand in hand.

Tribune and CP put to test...

IT WAS a difficult week for *Tribune*. Just as the opposition to Callaghan's policies reached a new peak in the labour movement, the house journal of the left MPs was so embarrassed it didn't know where to look.

For the whole life of the Social Contract they have continued their praise and support for Jack Jones and Michael Foot. Unsurprisingly then that they ducked out of taking any position on the vital vote on wages at the Transport and General Workers conference.

In the 1 July issue leading up to the conference, *Tribune* complained that there was a danger that workers might want to end wage controls. 'Lack of emergency measures by the Government pushing unions into pay row', was their page three headline. The article moaned that 'the Treasury had itself killed off all

hope of a binding agreement (on wages)'. Jack Jones' successor was interviewed with the plaudits 'as far as socialism goes, Moss Evans has the policies'. What cutting living standards through the Social Contract has to do with socialism was not explained.

Throughout the whole of this year *Tribune* has failed to consistently support any struggle or any policies which threaten to decisively end wage control. At a time when thousands of the rank and file of the Labour left decided the outcome of last week's conferences and the mass picket of Grunwick and been in the leadership of some of the most important struggles like Port Talbot, *Tribune* has remained consistently opposed to the central and burning needs of the working class.

The Communist Party declares a different record. The *Morning Star* of 8 July thundered in self-praise about 'the campaign it has helped to activate against the

Social Contract'. It is true that the CP have kept a consistent verbal opposition to wage controls.

But every militant knows that the best way to have stopped Phase 3 was to have defeated Phase 2. At every point when the struggle against incomes policy threatened to conflict with the CP's bid for unity with the 'left' leaders of the trade unions the CP opted for the latter.

* That was why the toolroom workers struck and clashed with their union leadership, the CP backed Scanlon and joined in the

chorus telling those workers to go back.

* That was why the CP ignored the Heathrow dispute and refused to condemn the AUEW leadership for their scab role.

* That was why the CP first did, then didn't, organise national strike action on the 20 April Day of Action called by the Leyland stewards' conference.

* Action only with the permission of, or with the aim of persuading the left' is the first motto of the CP leadership.

So, as with those lefts, united action where possible, but alliance never.

... fight for an alternative

BIG OBSTACLES face the labour movement in the job of burying the Social Contract.

The Government claims that any struggle will lead to the return of the Tories. If wage rises cannot be protected from inflation, de-

moralisation can set in. If demands such as a minimum wage are not advanced, the low paid can be isolated from the stronger organised sections of the working class. If racism and sexism are not rebuffed the working class could be seriously split.

That's why it is vital that the revolutionary left in Britain should not only support trade union demands but advance a socialist programme of action which can begin to show practically workers' solutions to the crisis.

But such policies need organising for. Sectarian front organisations cannot meet that need.

Far from rank and file organisations being organised around one political group, what is needed is genuine united front organisations. These must include all those forces prepared to take action against wage controls, cuts and unemployment, and oppose the Social Contract.

The type of class struggle organisation needed is demonstrated by the all-London shop stewards committee of health-workers, CLASH, in broad based cuts committees, in public sector alliances and every similar type of organisation.

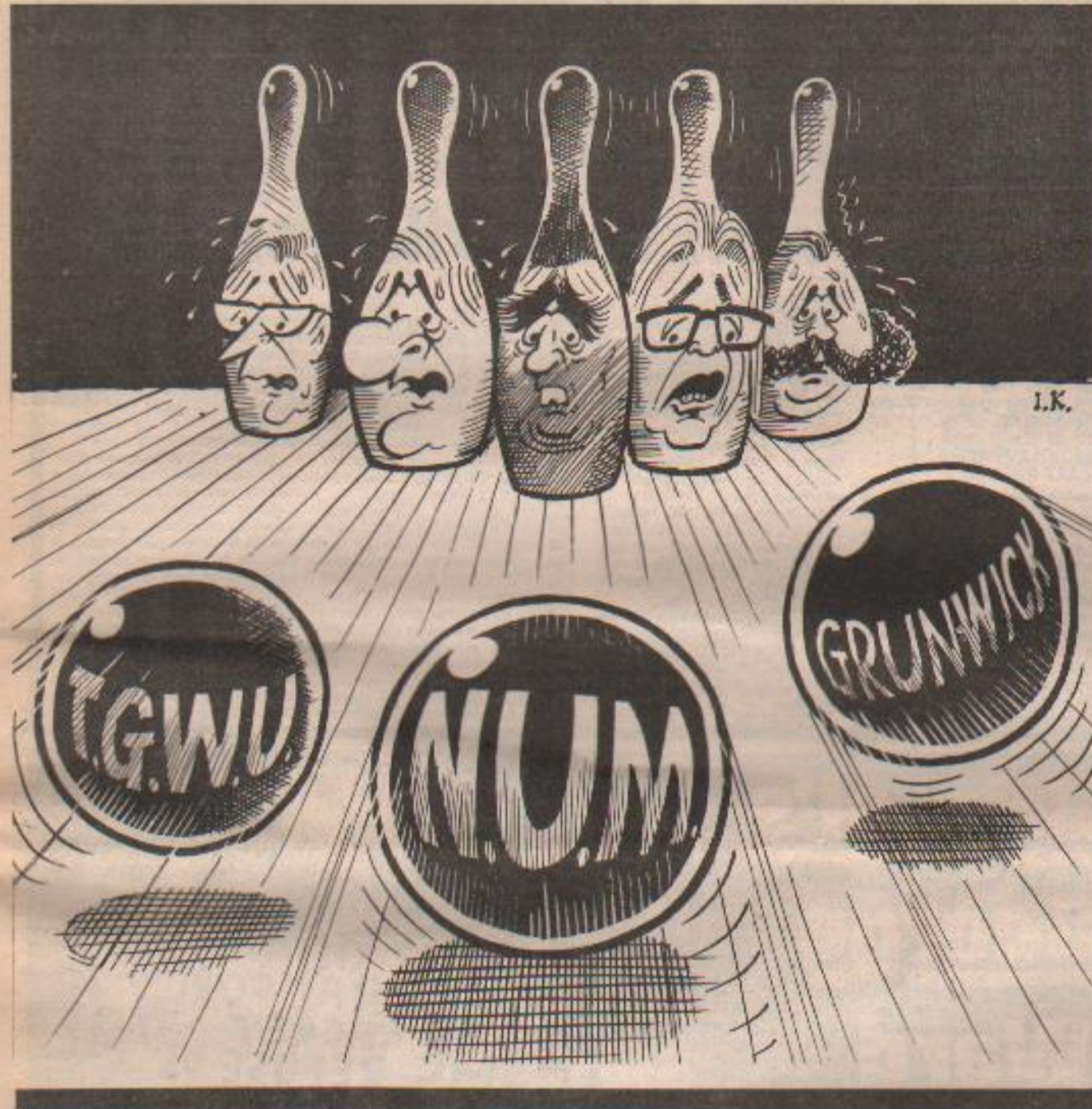
Finally the present political situation demands a strong socialist alternative to the dead-end reformism of the Labour Party and Communist Party.

United action is the first step. Running united left candidates in trade union and Parliamentary elections is vital. But of course only the strongest possible united revolutionary organisation will be able to consistently impose united action on the reformists.

The revolutionary left is still a small minority in the working class. But it is not totally insignificant and has gained new audiences and standing through its consistent fight against the Social Contract. The 27,000 votes for revolutionary candidates in the Transport and General Workers Union election, the increased membership and support of revolutionary organisations in all unions, the fact that well over 100,000 people will undoubtedly vote for revolutionary candidates in a General Election all shows what has already been achieved and the much greater potential of what can be done in the future.

A united revolutionary organisation is a real possibility. A sectarian 'we are the party' will serve neither the needs of revolutionary socialism, nor of the working class, nor, in the long run, even of the organisation which puts it forward.

TUC with Healey



The Great Wage Debate

'I believe that most active trade unionists would agree with your executive council that the £6 flat rate policy, initiated by our Biennial Delegate Conference, was not only of importance in restoring stability to the chaotic situation of mid-1975, but was in the circumstances the best possible deal for the vast majority of trade unionists... It secured the retention of the Labour Government in power — and who would have fancied any of the Tory remedies in that situation?'

So said T&G chairperson Stan Pemberton in his opening address to the 1977 Biennial Delegate Conference, setting the terms of debate for when Phase 3 would be discussed two days later.

Throughout the next two days delegates waited expectantly, as Jack Jones tried in vain to get resolutions composited into a single motion which called for a return to free collective bargaining without specifying any date — which would have allowed the executive to keep Phase 2 intact for twelve months.

But for once the 'man who runs the country' couldn't run the T&G, and two main resolutions were put before the conference on the Wednesday morning.

The first called for a return to free collective bargaining 'on the expiry of Phase 2', when differentials, consolidation of basic rates, low pay and productivity dealing would be treated as priorities.

No mention of restoring the cuts in living standards over the last two years was made.

The second resolution called for 'a return to unfettered collective bargaining from 1 August, 1977'. Time and time again the supporters of wage restraint echoed the arguments of Stan Pemberton — a 'wages free for all' will lead to massive unemployment, claimed the mover of the first resolution, and the low paid, the unemployed youth and T&G policies like the 35 hour week would all go by the board.

ESCALATOR

'Does anyone in the conference seriously suggest that the Tories will give us these?' he asked. Jack Jones, speaking towards the end of the debate, tried to argue that 'we are all agreed on a return to voluntary collective bargaining, the only problem is how to get there', and that all he was asking for was that delegates stick to the twelve months agreed for Phase 2. 'Do we carry out our bargain or do we repudiate our words and become hotheads?'

But as Alan Thornett pointed out when moving a third resolution calling for 'cost of living

escalator agreements to offset the full amount of price inflation, additional to increases in the hourly rate', at no time had the T&G membership been given the chance to accept or reject Phase 2.

CONDITIONS

He pointed out that the last T&G conference in 1975 had agreed to accept Phase 1 on seven conditions, none of which had been met, and that David Steel's condition for continued support for Labour was further wage cuts.

And then there was Jones' trump card: 'No action of ours should bring about the fall of our Government. By doing that you open the way to reaction', he said. 'The cry "every man for himself" goes out when the ship is sinking. We should not let the ship sink.'

But as Danny Harris said in summing up on the motion opposed to further wage restraint, if the labour movement is the ship 'then we are the crew and the ship will only sink if the crew allow the captain to run it on the rocks.'

With that conference went to the vote, and rejected Jones' plea by two-thirds to a third. The great wages at the T&G conference was over. Representing nearly two million members it killed the Social Contract — but will its ghost be allowed to continue?

Not all victories at T&G conference

ISLE OF MAN: The vote for a return to free collective bargaining from 1 August is the first major defeat suffered by Jack Jones in his leadership of the union and the first step in mounting a fight to regain lost living standards.

But far from this vote against wage restraint reflecting a more general rejection of Jones' class-collaborationist policies as a whole, it was rather more a matter of once bitten, twice shy.

by RICH PALSER

Sylvia Greenwood, a delegate who had supported Phase 1 at the 1975 Biennial Delegate Conference, summed up the mood perfectly:

'The proof of the pudding is in the eating. I've eaten two-thirds of the pudding, and it's given me food poisoning.'

Two years of the Social Contract, and wage restraint in particular, has left working class pockets empty. So when the conference rejected Jones' plea it was saying 'No more'.

On other issues, however, it became clear that the absence of any clear organised opposition to Jones' collaborationist policies meant that they were able to go by unchallenged debate after debate.

Immediately following the wages debate was 'industrial democracy'. A composite motion supporting Bullock and urging the Government to move ahead with legislation 'to effect these proposals in the public and private sectors' was carried overwhelmingly. The only real alternative which had been offered to the debate had been that:

'There is nothing in Bullock that cannot be achieved through the extension of free collective bargaining'.

But even more significant was the debate on 'TUC/Labour Party objectives' the following

day. The executive moved a 'priorities' motion which was intended to allow Jones to go right on having discussions with the Government over the Social Contract.

A resolution in opposition called for the T&G to 'influence the Labour Government to change its disastrous policies on economic strategy'.

Walter Wainwright, in moving the motion, had pointed out that when canvassing for Labour 'people who have been voting Labour for thirty years are now telling me that they've had enough'.

Opposing the resolution for the executive, Moss Evans argued that the conference 'should be positive about the record of the Labour Government:

'When you knock at doors to get Labour back in office, let's have more on the credit side and less on the debit side!'

Again the executive carried the conference overwhelmingly.

Not for nothing did Jack Jones get a standing ovation at conference.

As I heard one delegate say in the coffee bar: 'What ever you say about Jack, it was him who built the shop stewards' movement, and if it wasn't for him we wouldn't be where we are now.' You could say that.

Public sector crunch End cash limits

'If the Government holds the line, the private sector will do its damndest to hold the line as well.' That was CBI director Methven last week demanding that the Government take a stand on the 7 million workers in the public sector.

Healey and Callaghan lost no time in rushing to assure the CBI and the Tories that in no circumstances would they give in to the public sector unions.

The clash in the public sector is now going to be crucial. The municipal manual workers' claim goes in for November. The health workers' claim is a month later. Reinforced by cash limits, and eagerly policed by the new Tory councils, the Government intends to fight for wage controls by defeating the public sector workers.

If the Government defeats this section of workers, then the car workers, miners and others can be threatened with isolation.

The whole union movement has to rally to defeat this policy. In the first place there is a burning need for an alliance among the public sector unions themselves. This developed on cuts in some areas, and in the 17 November demonstration. But it hasn't developed on wages — on the contrary, unions such as NALGO and COHSE voted in favour of a new round of wage controls.

It is vital now that the unions both organise an alliance and put forward the types of demands which can unite all public sector workers — automatic wage increases to compensate for inflation, and a £50 minimum wage. The struggle has to demand the ending of the cash limits and instead demand automatic increases in public expenditure to maintain the real value of that spending. This demand is vital both in the struggle against cuts and in that to defend workers' living standards.

Other unions have to ensure that public sector workers are not isolated. The cuts already affect every worker. A Government defeat of public sector wage claims would help isolate other workers and divide the labour movement. Solidarity on the pickets, solidarity strikes, support of demands that unite the working class. These are all needed for the public sector crunch.

- * £50 minimum wage after stoppages;
- * End the cash limits;
- * Automatic compensation for inflation in wages and social spending;
- * For a public sector alliance.

Carworkers take up the challenge

CARWORKERS are the first to take up the gauntlet of wages after Phase 2 ends. The first step was at Vauxhall and Ford workers demanding 15 per cent. Then Leyland Longbridge put in for £15. These need to be backed up by the demand that agreements contain automatic cost of living increases to protect the real value of wages against inflation. No matter what the TUC tries to cook up between now and September, the way to fight for the democratic decision of the union conferences is to put in the claims now.

Another possible lead in the struggle against the Social Contract came from the national meeting of skilled workers in the engineering union which met in Birmingham on 2 July. Chaired by Roy Fraser from Cowley, the objective of the meeting was not to discuss any so-called 'tool-makers union' as certain officials in the AUEW had stated with the hope of discrediting those involved.

Rather, the meeting was a first attempt to consolidate the mass support from the AUEW members that emerged when the Executive Council of the union scabbed on the Leyland tool-makers.

The common theme that has united those at the meeting has been what they see as the erosion of differentials over the past years, together with the failure of

the AUEW to advance their interests in any way via the official negotiating channels.

But the fact that these sections see the need to break out of simply narrow concerns shows the huge pressure and need for organisation in the unions against the policies of the Social Contract. In the public sector such class struggle oppositions have developed to some extent. The initiative of the toolmakers is an important step into spreading the move into wider sectors.

While the extent to which such a movement could be generalised throughout the labour movement will be weakened by the toolmakers pre-occupation with differentials, the lessons will not be lost on any militant shop steward who wants to launch a fight to defend living standards.

Fighting to make up the fall in living standards by rejecting new wage controls, building up a class struggle opposition in the unions are two of the most vital steps in the entire trade union movement. On both the rest of the trade union movement needs to follow the carworkers' lead.

* Dockers have also set the pace on claims to defend living standards after 1 August. Liverpool and Southampton have already accepted the proposal of the national port shop stewards committee for a 20 per cent increase. All other major ports will be voting before 31 July.

Expulsion threat!

Now these NUPE members fight for their rights

by BOB PENNINGTON

RANK-AND-FILE members in the Southampton branch of the National Union of Public Employees are having a tough time fighting against cuts, job standards and deteriorating conditions for patients in the hospitals.

But it is not just the Government, the Area Health Authorities and the hospital managements they are taking on. Also ranged against them is the union right wing led by the local full-time official, Sean Hilliard who intends to expel these 'awkward' people from the union if he can.

After all, as his supporters have been saying, they are a 'bunch of commies and reds'. And they claim there is good proof of their allegations.

Challenge, which is the news sheet of a group of rank and file members in its first edition spelt out its aims: Against the imposition of wage restraint; For democracy in the workers movement; Against all public spending cuts; For the maximum solidarity of the labour movement around these issues.

Knowledgeable and objective authorities like the Economic League or Mr. George Ward would immediately recognise a 'red plot' behind those aims.

At the July branch meeting, Hilliard and his side-kick, branch secretary George Hill, moved into action. To demonstrate their devotion to trade union principles and their supporters they first voted down a resolution of support for the Grunwick strikers. Then came the real business. Clearly, when you are defending democracy against reds and subversives, you have to make sure that no chance is given to these people to distort your case. Therefore no notice was given, written or verbal, to the five people they intended charging under Rule 18 (11) of NUPE's Rule Book — 'circulating misleading or false reports about the union'.

The motion appeared under any other business which made sure that the 'reds' did not have time to concoct some devious defence before the item was reached.

The five people being charged include the present chairperson of the branch Paul Jenkins, Paul Mitchell, a former chairperson of the branch, two shop stewards and another rank and file member. Jenkins told me: 'By forming a Challenge group we were exercising our right to organise inside the labour movement so we could win the membership over to support for our policies. This is exactly what Engineering



PAUL JENKINS, Southampton NUPE Branch Chairperson.

Voice, Hospital Worker, Building Workers Charter, etc do. If this attack on us succeeds, then it will open the way for attacks on all the rest of the rank-and-file newspapers.

'We intend to fight this. Firstly we will go back to the membership in our hospitals who elected us. We will hold meetings and circularise a petition and get resolutions of protest and support.'

'We desperately need national support in NUPE and we want NUPE members to put down resolutions to the National Executive Council demanding an end to the threat of expulsion. Although we have not yet been told we think it might come up on 30 July meeting. We will of course be considering calling a picket of the EC.'

Locally, the Socialist Challenge readers group is inviting militants from all organisations in the workers movement to discuss building a campaign in our defence.'

Copies of Hilliard's letter to NUPE Assistant Divisional Officer, George Anderson, explaining the 'detrimental' activities of Challenge, as well as copies of the paper itself are obtainable from Paul Jenkins at 26 Tennyson Road, Portswood, Southampton. (Tel: 0703-23347).

Trade unionists, particularly those in NUPE, are urged to contact him.



Building workers strike for jobs

BOOSTED by their recent gains in local elections and spurred on by Labour's policies of slashing public expenditure, Tory councils are busy carving up Direct Works Departments.

by JOHN HEWITT
[UCATT Steward]

In Nottingham, the Direct Works Department has been cut by over 100 workers since the Tories took control in 1976 and another 100 jobs are going in the next months. The planned cutbacks in Merseyside will push the unemployment rate of construction workers in that area up to 30 per cent.

Resistance to these closures is, however, mounting. Last week 800 trade unionists in Birmingham responded to the call for an

official demonstration called by the Union of Construction Allied Trades and Technicians when all direct labour sites in the city were shut down for the day on Tuesday 5 July. Delegations of building workers from the West Midlands and Yorkshire as well as NALGO members from Birmingham council offices and public sector workers joined the demonstration.

In Nottingham, 500 building workers, joined by local tenants' associations marched through the city centre protesting at cuts in the Direct Works Department.

The Midland Region of UCATT, supported by a number of other regional committees, had called a one-day strike which got a 100 per cent response in Nottingham and throughout the region.

Delegations from the mine-

workers' union and electricians from the West of Scotland marched on the demonstration, which also got support from sections of the Transport and General Workers Union, the General and Municipal Workers, and the FTAT. In Liverpool on the same day, 1,000 building workers downed tools for the day and over 300 workers took part in the city's demonstration.

Brian Simister, vice-president of the Nottingham Trades Council supported the stoppage and said: 'Jobs have to be defended, and will be defended.... A united campaign is needed by the trade unions against the cuts, to make this Government fear the labour movement more than they fear the international bankers.'

Jack Rogers, one of the organisers of the Liverpool march, pointed out that the unemployed

building workers on Merseyside represented enough labour to have built Skelmersdale and Runcorn. A Birmingham worker said: 'We are short of houses. There are not enough repairs being done. Building workers are out of jobs. Now they want even more cutbacks.'

Last week's strikes and demonstrations show that building workers are ready and want to fight back. What is at issue is whether materials and labour should be idle whilst there is a chronic shortage of homes, schools, hospitals, nurseries, etc.

A united campaign against cuts has to have as one of its foremost demands the need for a programme of socially useful public works which would not only provide jobs for everyone but would provide the services that working people need.

Bristol's George Ward

BRISTOL — Arthur Radford, managing director of Radford Electronics, clearly fancies himself as the local George Ward.

But it's not only Radford who sees the similarities with the Grunwick dispute. Last Thursday Mahmood Ahmed, secretary of the Grunwick strike com-

mittee, joined the Radford picket.

TWO SACKED

After talks for union recognition for test engineers in his factory broke down, he sacked two of them. Other engineers walked out in protest and have been on strike for the last five

weeks, demanding reinstatement for their colleagues and recognition for their union, TASS.

The strikers' list of complaints is long. They claim that there are no fire extinguishers, or alarms, and say that the roof is made of polystyrene with newspapers underneath for insulation. Heating and ventilation is inadequate and

the mains wiring is so poor that the workers have frequently got shocks from the equipment they use.

Most of the strikers are young. Radford refuses to pay for day-release courses.

The rest of the 60-strong workforce are mostly women who do part-time wiring jobs for 80p an hour, before deductions. Yet Radford — being a 'kind' dad — pays his daughter £8 an hour for the very same work.

The women are still working, but as striker Chris Clarke says:

'The women are not very confident. They are worried that if just one or two of them stand up and say they want to join the union they will be sacked. This is why we have to build the picket line so that we can show them we have more strength than Radford reckons on. Then they will be out.'

Support is growing for the pickets. Jim Willis, convenor at Welding Industries has won an agreement from his management that allows 50 workers to go from that factory to the Radford picket every Wednesday and Friday. But more support is needed.

Radfords make electronic amplifiers, audio and acoustic equipment. Workers should put an embargo on all their products and local militants should picket any of their retail outlets. As many people as possible should get to the Radford picket line.

Donations and offers of help to: Radfords Electronics Strike, c/o Dave Yeomans, Room 5, 2nd Floor, York House, Bond Street, Bristol — telephone Bristol 45808.

Union flashpoints

EQUAL PAY OCCUPATION

THE ESSEX International plant in Kilwinning, Ayrshire, has been occupied by 130 workers — all but 20 of them women — in their ninth week of strike action. The strike at this electrical components factory began over the demand for the withdrawal of a time and motion study. But once out, women discovered clear breaches of equal pay laws.

An important aspect of the dispute has been the agreement by the Engineers Union to pay for childcare during the occupation. Full report next week. Send messages of support and donations to: Nan Gilmore, c/o AUEW, 420 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G2.

WEIR HOSPITAL

SIX HUNDRED trade unionists opposed to the closure of the Weir maternity hospital in South

London barged into the local area health authority meeting on 6 July — to be met by two coachloads of police and chained gates.

Forty demonstrators were finally allowed in to present a petition signed by over 10,000. It was ignored, as were the speeches of the few workers from the occupied hospital who managed to address the meeting.

After hearing medical opinion that perinatal death at the Weir was so high as to make it unsafe, the AHA voted to close it as a maternity hospital and to 'consult with interested parties as to its future use'. The proposal to change the hospital into offices was withdrawn.

The occupation is continuing until all the workers are guaranteed jobs. But there is still strong feeling among local campaigners against any change in use of the hospital. The health authority makes no attempt to disguise its cynicism. After the demonstrators left the meeting, the AHA voted to close the casualty department at Putney Hospital.



THE strike at Desoutter's engineering works in North London, just up the road from Grunwick, is now entering its tenth week. The strike is over trade union recognition. Despite approaches by the strikers' union — the NUCEW — and a representative of ACAS, the conciliation service, management have refused to negotiate. The Desoutter workers need finance and support on the picket line. Contact them at 16 Yew Grove, London NW2.

As judges give rapists the go ahead: Driving a stake into the heart of sexism

by JANE PETRIE

Rape is an act of physical, mental, and sexual violence against women, all women. It is an ever-present threat which controls our movements — not going out alone after dark; and our behaviour — not talking to strange men in pubs, they may think it's a come-on.

Rape is a fundamental assault upon our right to self-determination at many levels. Rape is also a criminal offence, and this makes the fight against rape a knotty problem for socialists and feminists.

Rape as a feminist issue gained publicity in 1975 over the Morgan case, when the Law Lords decided that an 'honest though unreasonable belief' that the woman was consenting to sexual intercourse, even though the woman was not consenting, was a good defence to a charge of rape.

Not surprisingly, this decision met with a great deal of hostility and anger from the Women's Movement, and from the left of the Labour Party — always ready to have a go at judges. The decision led to a public debate which exposed the sexism of the law and the legal system's apparent double standard of sexual morality.

SENTENCING

Variations in sentencing minimise the importance of rape as a threat to all women. The controversy over this in 1975 led to Jack Ashley's Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act which attempted to deal with some of the more obvious aspects of the double standard in the rules of evidence in rape trials and modified the effect of the Morgan case.

But once again, in the Holdsworth case the judges have shown their true opinion of the seriousness of rape. That is, they don't tend to think rape is a crime at all.

Holdsworth was a Guardsman with a promising career ahead of him shooting Catholics in Northern Ireland. One night in Yarmouth he got carried away and had it off a few times with this woman he'd picked up in a bar. Well, she asked for the violence because she wouldn't lie still and the poor guy couldn't help himself. We'll have to let him off; his career might be ruined if we put him away.

REACTIONS

Reactions to these legal decisions and a host of others, have come mainly from two directions. The left Labour MPs see rape as a problem solved by and through the State apparatus. They direct their efforts to reforming the legal system — the 1976 Act — and call for a statutory minimum sentence of 5 years.

The reaction of the Women's Movement has been more complex, showing an understanding that the problems of fighting rape is part of everyday life, part of our culture. For example, I'm writing this article and listening to the Stones and 'Midnight Rambler'. The Rape Crisis Centre offers support and advice to rape victims; Women Against Rape do understand that rape is integrally linked to women's dependence economically, socially, culturally, and sexually.

However, despite these advances, many feminists have not come to terms with what our attitude to the State should be. At the national women's liberation conference in April an attempt was made to pass a

seventh demand, calling for an end to rape, support for retaliatory action by women against rapists and the establishment of feminist vigilante squads.

This response, while motivated by righteous anger, is dangerous since it relates directly to right-wing calls for vigilantes against black 'muggers' (and rapists). It is essentially an attempt to over-simplify the question of rape and to by-pass the question of the State and its role in the oppression of women.

FIGHT

In the fight for sexual self-determination and against attacks on this right, we cannot accept the courts' definitions as to what constitutes 'rape', as distinct from 'normal' sexual intercourse. At the same time we cannot ignore the State by advocating that women alone take responsibility for the defence of our right to self-determination — since the State itself forms part of the attack on that right.

DEMAND

Instead we must demand that the State make available the resources necessary for women to exercise our right to self-determination, and argue that the labour movement supports this position.

However, it is important to understand that the fight against rape cannot be separated out from — and indeed *must* be part of — an ongoing campaign against sexism in all aspects of our lives. Otherwise the struggle will remain within the terms laid down not by our understanding of the oppression of women, but by the bourgeois legal system.



Is women's self-defence possible?

by ANN BOND

IMAGINE A ROOM full of women kicking their legs into the air — and screaming. Quite an amusing sight, sure. But any man on the receiving end of it could be kicked with such force that he'd be wearing his balls as earrings.

And that's the serious side of it. Because those women are learning karate — one response to the increasing number of violent sex attacks.

We know that all rapes are not perhaps as brutal as the 'Guardsman rape'. And we also know that many women would not have had the courage of his victim in fighting to try to prevent that rape. But at last women are beginning to discard the age-old conditioning we have all gone through and are beginning to fight back.

Usually, the only acceptable way for women to 'fight' has been to use our highly polished, long fingernails to scratch; or at the most to deliver a sharp slap across the face. Now we understand that we can begin to develop our strength and our

bodies and use them to fight with skill and precision.

The Women's Movement debate on rape has quite rightly been given a lot of attention by socialists. The left is beginning to gain a broader understanding of the issue and to offer ideas on action against rape attacks. It is in this context that we have to clarify our ideas on women's self-defence.

We argue, again quite rightly, that rape is a product of sexist, decaying capitalist society. As such, the social nature of rape is not one of individual men and women. Thus we argue for overall measures against it — the provision of better street lighting, State funding of Rape Crisis Centres and refuges, and so on.

However this should not mean that we overlook the *mechanics* of rape — the nature of the actual attacks. Now in other situations we have had no hesitation in proffering the solution of self-defence — for example, against racist attacks. But while I believe that self-defence against rape must be supported, it would be dangerous to draw a simple

parallel and *automatically* call for self-defence for women.

In the black ghettos it is relatively straightforward to call for community defence. Women are not in ghettos; rape is not a localised crime. It is understandable that women, especially in the United States, have been frustrated and angry about police treatment of victims and have organised against rapists themselves. But this action is not defensive; it is *retaliatory* and as such has opened the door to State intervention. Thus women become double victims of the rape attack.

Our support for women's self-defence has to be support for women who are preparing ourselves mentally and physically to smash the mechanics of the rape situation. It should be a logical conclusion of our attitude to judges and the rest who recommend that we should submit 'to avoid injury'. We say 'sack the judges'. We support women developing the potential if necessary to disarm or disable a would-be rapist.

Bringing home women's issues What's Left

Spare Rib is a monthly women's liberation magazine, launched in June 1972 and produced by a collective of ten women. It is to date the only non-commercial independent women's magazine available from newsagents all over the country.

The existence of *Spare Rib* is, in itself, a challenge to the way women and women's issues are constantly belittled and distorted in the regular media.

In a recent survey we learned that 96 per cent of our readers are women and over half of these are union members. One of our strengths is our accessibility — we are not an exclusive club or sect. Readers write to us from the most isolated parts of the country — people in or out of the women's movement, with or without a history of political involvement.

Their different experiences of life are fed back to us in readers' meetings, through letters or manuscripts. Often the magazine is a woman's first contact with women's liberation. Bridging the gap between the development of theory within the movement and the isolated woman confronting everyday sexism is one of *Spare Rib's* most important functions.

Every issue of 48 pages con-

tains features on health, sexuality, cultural events, and work; plus regular news coverage of what women are doing together to change their situation both here and abroad. We try at all times to avoid sensationalist or dogmatic reporting which encourages complacency and passivity and prevents people thinking for themselves.

Spare Rib is not only concerned with campaigns and organised struggle. We write about what it is like to grow up as a woman in this society and how it affects our sense of ourselves.

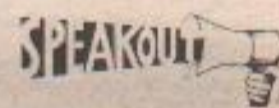
For too long we've had to conform to commercially limited male-identified ideas of proper behaviour — at work, at home, and in bed. Now we are exploring alternatives based on what we need and want. *Spare Rib* provides a way of sharing these attempts to create a new future; and the regular fiction, poetry, and arts section shows the growth of a strong feminist



culture.

From month to month we try to keep in touch with our readers and encourage them to contribute ideas and news of what they are involved in. To this end we hold regular readers' meetings to which women travel from all over the country. Since we are based in London and don't have money to travel it is easy to become London chauvinists. To help combat this we have regional pages (the next will be on Sheffield) to focus on what is happening in different areas of the country.

This month is our fifth birthday and in honour of the occasion we have produced 16 extra pages. Our article probing the benefits (!) of the Equal



SPARE RIB COLLECTIVE

Opportunities Commission, 'Voice in Manchester', is a leading feature.

On sexual politics a lesbian mother talks with her young daughter, and on the cultural side we've articles about Feminist's exhibition, 'Portrait of the Artist as Housewife', Women in Punk, and an interview with Erica Jong. The cover celebrates the international feminist alternative to the clenched fist — a symbol in increasing use — most recently in Italy. Posters, stickers and badges of this symbol are available from Spare Rib Extras, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.

So, having read all this you want to know what *Spare Rib* has to offer you! The fact is that the information you find in *Spare Rib* just isn't available in any other magazine. *Spare Rib* is unique. Support us and you support your history and your future.

Rates: 3p per word. Display: £1.50 per column inch. Deadline: 3pm Saturday before publication.

MANCHESTER. Big Flame meeting: 'Trotskyism: Its Relevance Today'. Speakers: Paul Thompson (BF), Tony Whelan (Revolutionary Marxist Current), IMG speaker, Monday 18 July, 7.30pm, Unicorn Hotel, Church Street (off Piccadilly Gardens).

MANCHESTER. Meeting to set up Socialist Unity Committee. Speakers include Bert Elliott (Tameside). Discussion on the need for revolutionary socialist candidates in the Greater Manchester area, Monday 25 July, 7.30pm, Unicorn Hotel, Church Street (off Piccadilly Gardens).

OUTCOME Latest issue, No. 4. A sexual liberation magazine produced by gay people. 20p incl. postage from 35 West Road, Lancaster.

HULL SOCIALIST TEACHERS Conference: Saturday 16 July, noon. Venue: Students Union, Hull University. Speakers: Terry Ellis and Brian Haddow (Tyndale), Dave Ploton (STA). Conference fee: £1. Contact: G. Daniel, 41 Savery St, Hull. Tel: 0482-799184.

BELT & BRACES Roadshow's Global Rock Pantomime A Day in the Life of the World, Collegiate Theatre, Gordon Street WC1 (01-367 9629). 7.30pm. 13-23 July, Late Night Show. Not So Green as It's Cabbage, 11pm. 20-22 July. Half price seats for booking of 10 or more!

ENGINEERING VOICE Public Meeting: 'Hear the case for Engineering Voice'. Speakers: Mike Cooley (TASS), Lucas Combine Committee, Billy Taylor (North London District Committee). Chair: Chris Topping (Shop Steward, Fords Dagenham). All in personal capacity. 7.30pm, Thursday 14 July, Green Room, Hammar Smith Town Hall, nr Hammar Smith Broadway (Hammar Smith tube).

SCHOOLS' OUT. Newspaper for school students and leavers. Free to school students and unemployed youth. 20p for adults. They also need donations. Write to Schools Out, c/o 153 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds 2, England.

INSTITUTE of Race Relations. Meeting 8.30pm Tuesday 19 July. Maurice Ludmer, Editor of *Searchlight*, on 'The Rise of British Fascism in the 70s'.

BENEFIT BOP for the Children's Community Centre, Dartmouth Park Hill at Caxton House, St. John's Way, London N19. Friday 15 July, 8-12pm with Jam Today, Clapperclaw and Mystery Band, Disco and Bar. 85p (80p for claimants).

SOCIALIST FEMINISTS North West regional one-day conference, Saturday 18 July, Manchester Polytechnic Students Union, Cavendish House. Starts 10am. Women only. Further details from Nuala Morton — Bolton 44539. Crache provided.

battle of ideas

"TROTSKY AND REVO

Last Sunday, 10 July 1977 — 60 years after the Russian Revolution — the Communist Party [CP] debated the International Marxist Group [IMG] on the subject of Trotskyism. The two edited extracts we print below from the main speeches of Robin Blackburn [IMG] and Monty Johnstone [CP] convey only a partial flavour of what turned out to be a useful and lively discussion. A complete transcript of the debate will be published at a later date by the organisers of the event, the Communist University of London [CUL].

Robin Blackburn (IMG)

WE IN THE IMG regard ourselves as Marxists and Leninists, though not in any dogmatic sense. We nonetheless place Trotskyism firmly within that tradition which is one of revolutionary working class politics.

A lot of what we say is not original to us or to Trotskyism and we have no particular desire to be original in that sense. There are special political problems which developed especially after the ascendancy of Stalin in the Soviet Union, which did require an original analysis. Trotsky and the Fourth International, in our opinion, have made a decisive contribution to that analysis.

The basis of revolutionary politics for us, as for all revolutionary Marxists, is the independent political capacity of the working class — a capacity which we see as being rooted in the position it has in the capitalist mode of production on a world-wide basis. We see the working class as an international revolutionary force, partly because it has been created by capitalism which is in itself a global system of production. The working class is revolutionary because it creates the material basis for an alternative ordering of production relations. It is its creation in a co-operative and collective form that gives it the possibility of creating a totally new form of society in which oppression and exploitation can be suppressed.

Now this independent political capacity of the working class has

been expressed very dramatically throughout history over the last hundred and fifty years and it has been the basis of the development of Marxist politics. Its capacity to create a new order of society has tended to erupt during special periods of capitalist crisis. The mass strike in Russia between 1905 and 1917 clearly helped to provide a very special stamp both to revolutionary Marxism and to Trotskyism and its conception of the working class. That glimpse of 1905 which was reproduced with historic results in the October Revolution has not departed from Europe in the intervening period of nearly three-quarters of this century. In fact it has been continually reborn in periods of capitalist crisis. The working class has intervened either potentially or actually as the decisive

political force in society. It has done so in whole movements of resistance to fascism; it has done so especially, we would argue, in the new crisis of capitalism which has marked capitalist Europe since May 1968, the subsequent general strike of the Italian workers in 1969, in the death agonies of Francoism, and the consequences of the overthrow of the Caetano regime in Portugal. One saw the political capacity of the working class also in the great movement which ousted Heath in 1974. We should remember that he was decisively ejected from power because there was this important extra-parliamentary mobilisation, a strike action by the miners.

The working class has historically developed workers councils and soviets which are forms for transcending this division that exists in capitalist society between politics and economics. I would say frankly to you that as Trotskyists we stand on this tradition of revolutionary Marxism and proletarian politics whose most historic product was the October Revolution of 1917 and we would dispute the theses that are to be found in the *British Road to Socialism* (New Draft) which reject this model as being applicable to Britain. I'm referring to the sentences on the lines numbered 1090 where it says:

'Britain's road to socialism will be different from the Soviet Road. The Soviet path of insurrection and civil war, the creation of new organs of power [the Soviets], and the subsequent development of the one-party system, was governed by the historic conditions and background of Tsarist autocratic rule, imperialist intervention and the development of the counter-revolution...'

We would reject this conception put forward in this sentence as being utterly misleading. It implies that the Soviets were the expression of the Russian Revolution. It even implies that they followed the revolution — the outbreak of the civil war and the insurrection. That the Soviets somehow came after the insurrection. This is historically false. The Soviets preceded the insurrection and the civil war. They were neither the direct emanations of the Bolshevik Party, nor were they controlled by it. The Bolsheviks were in a small minority in the Soviets. The Soviets were not chosen by the Bolshevik Party as an instrument of party intervention among the masses. It was exactly the other way around. They were the creation of a spontaneous mass eruption during the crisis of Tsarism.

There is one idea in this sentence which is not so incorrect. In absolutist regimes the working class is much more able to directly develop its own political institutions. It is most unlikely that the collapse of a bourgeois parliamentary regime in an advanced capitalist country will take exactly the same form. But the essential question for



Some of the 200 hu

revolutionary Marxists is this: will new institutions, new organs of power arise representing the masses in a qualitatively new way and will they be compatible with the bourgeois regime? We answer respectively that yes, they will arise, and no, they will not be compatible with the bourgeois regime. There will be a test of force between them. That is the basis of Trotskyist politics.

Where, then, does the originality of Trotskyism lie? I think it lies in grappling with the problem of political articulation and representation of class interests both in a post-capitalist and a capitalist regime. Trotsky was well aware of the problems related to the development of Soviets. He of course had a direct personal experience of how soviet power can degenerate and how the independent political capacity of the working class can, as it were, seize up, bureaucratically freeze into a conservative form. Most

form under which it exists. The state only has a proletarian character because it has to rest on a class and it, in fact through a highly bureaucratized Communist Party, does rest on a class — a layer of the working class. Without that it would be unable to govern and rule society. It dominates in a terroristic fashion the class which it represents, but it remains a form of political representation.

Trotskyism was a critical reflection in agonising political circumstances of this particular form of political representation. It led to a new understanding of the relationship between party and soviets. In Trotsky's writings we see the first statement within classical Marxism of the necessity for pluralism within the political practice of the working class... This advance enables us to eliminate a particularly fatal temptation in revolutionary working class politics — the

councils as soon as possible. This would be the sheerest adventurism. It does mean creating workers councils as soon as possible and rooting them in the masses. It means, above all, recognising and encouraging all the spontaneous forms of working class action that always emerge in a period of capitalist crisis. The Western Communist Parties have no basic understanding of this process. They are often nervous and fearful.

To conclude: I think our theory is more relevant than ever before, precisely because of capitalist order in Europe weaker than ever before. Its weaknesses are not always of the old, familiar kind. We try and analyse its new features...

The victory of socialism will require taking on and smashing the existing forms of capitalist power and organising ourselves to do that in a way which is of most appropriate in relation to the societies in which we function. To that end we should look forward to the creation of a united Marxist party that could really take on the Labour Party — in the process driving it to the left or stimulating a vigorous left within it. There is a burning need for a framework of united action for all Marxists to the left of the Labour Party.

In the IMG at the moment we are exploring the possibility of class-struggle candidates to stand against Labour and to present a socialist alternative to the masses. This is something which doesn't exist in this country at this time. In that sense our conceptions should have a life that is of interest to militants — the CPGB, because you're in a situation that is not so different to that of our French or Spanish comrades of the Fourth International. You're a small cadre organisation on the fringe of a large mass party. I think that you should therefore seriously study the strategy and tactics that Trotskyists have debated over the last decades because they are directly relevant both to the situation of your own party and to the conditions of class struggle in an advanced capitalist country.

"That glimpse of 1905 which was reproduced with historic results in the October revolution has not departed from Europe....."

of the specific contributions Trotsky had to make come out of his penetrating insights into this phenomena and also out of his observation of workers organisation and representation under bourgeois regimes. One thing that is very shocking to Stalinists and to ultra-lefts in Trotsky's theory is that it admits the possibility of both good and bad representation of class interests.

It regards, for example, the USSR as a workers state despite the fact that it has none of the ideal characteristics of a workers state. In that sense it is a non-normative theory of political institutions in a social formation. The Soviet Union is a workers state because it is based on a planned economy and it is planned because of the state

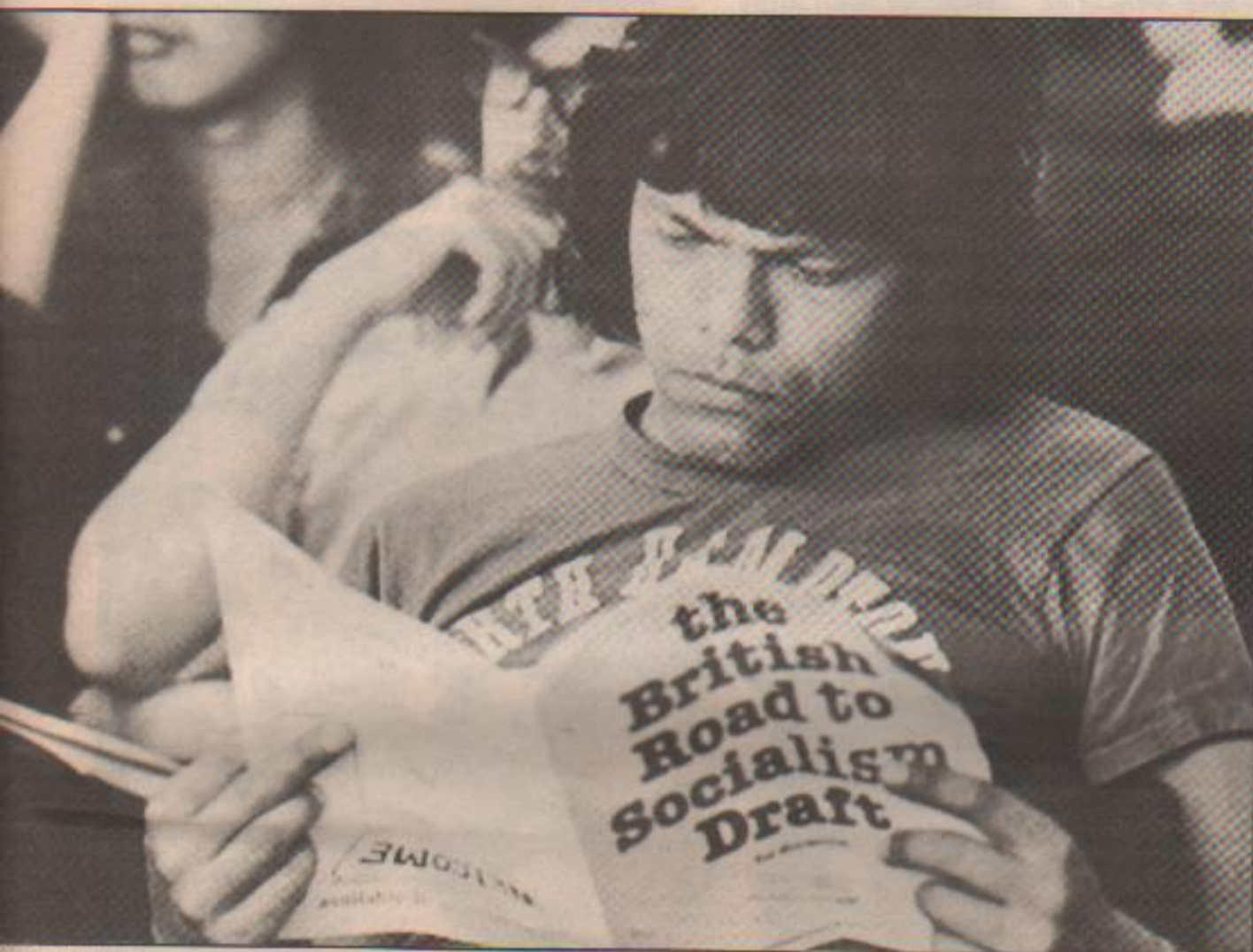
temptation of Jacobinism, one-party or non-party soviets and militarist and commandist conceptions of the transition to socialism.

In the advanced countries it will need a complex combination of tactics to achieve a socialist revolution, partly because the bourgeois order itself has found a mechanism for absorbing and integrating working class organisation... We are in favour of the formation of workers governments on the terrain of bourgeois democracy, but the key question remains to delineate the character of the socialist transition. As revolutionaries we insist that the whole orientation of such a government should be to stimulate soviet-type bodies. It doesn't mean creating armed workers



ROBIN BLACKBURN

EVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY IN EUROPE"



strong audience

Monty Johnstone (CP)

I AM IN A SLIGHT DIFFICULTY because it is clear that Robin Blackburn has understood the title differently from me. The title is actually 'Trotsky and Revolutionary Strategy in Europe'. Robin has re-entitled it as 'Trotskyism and the British Road to Socialism'. However we will try to find some common basis for dialogue

Let me say at the outset — and not just for polemical purposes — that I think that it is unfortunate that neither the IMG nor any other group which claims allegiance to the ideas of Trotsky has yet produced for us anything remotely resembling a long-term programme setting out their strategy for Britain. All we have from the Trotskyists, and I will say more about the contents later, is this document drawn up by Trotsky in 1938 as the programme of the Fourth International.

And it would be helpful as a basis for the dialogue which Robin genuinely desires and our comrades from the IMG genuinely desire if instead of only putting criticisms from the sidelines, they would themselves attempt to plot — not as a blueprint; we don't try to do that — but to set out in positive, constructive terms, the kind of programme which we are at present discussing around the draft of the British Road. I don't think any of us regard this as perfect or finished and that's why we are having — as everybody who reads the *Morning Star* or *Comment* has seen — a very big discussion, here at the University, as well as in our branches throughout the country — to which we invite all parts of the labour movement, including our Trotskyist comrades.

The whole emphasis of the British Road to Socialism is precisely on mass struggle — both through the traditional organs and organisations of the working

class in this country, as well as through grass roots organisations which are coming into existence. That is why, for instance, we say on line 1405 that especially important would be 'the campaigning at local level through the Trades Councils and other democratic organisations and movements for new forms of popular organisation and new forms of struggle, giving united expression to the demands of the people will also undoubtedly develop and should

"We totally reject any talk of a parliamentary road to socialism....."

be encouraged'.

The point is not as to whether we should encourage organs of struggle at grass roots level either as far as we or the Italians are concerned — who place the greatest emphasis on the development of forms of direct democracy — or any of the other Communist Parties that are roughly lumped together as 'Eurocommunists'.

The point is basically this — whether we see such organs of struggle as complementary to the gaining of a parliamentary majority and the transformation of the existing institutions — representative institutions — or whether we see a scenario which broadly repeats that of October 1917, namely through forms of dual power. In other words,

these organs set up in opposition to the existing representative institutions in the same way as the soviets in Russia were set up, in opposition to such institutions and ultimately in opposition to the Constituent Assembly, that was finally dissolved in January 1918.

But in fact historical experience shows that it is a mistake to imitate forms which have been successful in one country. The conditions existing in Western Europe have not in fact led, as the international communist movement expected, to a victory of soviet power. Frankly, there does not appear to be any likelihood of that particular scenario, although nothing can be excluded and we wouldn't be dogmatic. But we certainly would not share the Trotskyist point of view which is essentially a dogmatic one, that this is the way in which it will take place.

We consider far more likely the possibility of a combination of the use of existing representative

institutions plus organs of direct power which will take many forms. Already we have in this country a whole variety of organisations — some of them traditional organisations of the working class like Trades Councils which are a particularly advanced form of organisation; shop stewards committees; others coming into existence in localities like tenants committees, women's movements and organisations which will have an important role to play.

We totally reject — and this is a slander made often against the Communist Party by people who haven't adequately read our programme or our literature — we totally reject any talk of a parliamentary road to socialism. A

parliamentary road to socialism means what the Labour Party envisages — namely that you elect a Government through Parliament which takes over the running of the capitalist economy and the capitalist state machine.

What do we say? We say firstly, that it is a question of a combination of all matters of struggle — including mass struggle based on the industrial working class. We have the perspective — in the first instance — of the election of a left-wing Labour Government, not because we prefer a left-wing Labour Government to a Bolshevik Government or something else, but because under the existing conditions in our country we regard that as the realistic next stage forward.

But we see a left Labour Government which will be pushed forward under the pressure of the working class and its allies — pressure from below in order to ensure that it carried out measures in the interests of the working class — widespread measures of nationalisation and economic planning, not in a bureaucratic way but with the participation of the working people. Measures at every level which would lead to as far reaching a democratisation as possible of the state.

We do not have any illusions that before socialism we can transform the state from a capitalist state into a socialist state. But we do believe that the working class and its allies are strong enough — and Robin does not seem to deny this — to win certain concessions from the ruling class, and we will be in a better position to win them if, in addition to the strength from below, we also have the strength from above in terms of a left Government which would allow, as he quoted, the trade union organisation of the armed forces and police and as far ranging a democratisation as possible.

We regard the state as being something which absolutely clearly and unambiguously is the

state of monopoly capitalism. What we are concerned with — and I quote — is 'a profound change in the balance of forces in the country, in the economy, and in the state apparatus, for social revolution and the transition to socialism'. However state power is critical. What is needed is the winning of power from the old ruling class by the working class and its allies, and the democratisation of the state apparatus.

On no subject in Britain is there such political hypocrisy as on that of the state. The modern state is a product of monopoly capitalism. We outline our perspectives — through struggle, not from above by some tinkering operation, but on the basis of mass pressure and mass struggle of making the furthest possible inroads into the state apparatus. This includes the democratisation of its most sensitive parts, namely the bodies of armed men, the main armed forces and so on.

We envisage that in the course of this process, the old ruling class will strike back to the best of its ability. We warn on the dangers of military coups. At the same time, we do not adopt a fatalistic approach to this because we have got a fundamentally internationalist perspective in that we see the revolution taking place in this country in the framework of the advance of the revolution in other countries throughout the world.

That will bring about, we believe, a strengthening in the working class forces — a change in the international balance of forces so that as much as the capitalist class would like to prevent the advance towards socialism, this field of action will be limited. We are not going to lull anyone to say it won't be able to do anything. On the contrary, we warn that it will try.

But it is up to us to create a situation which makes it as difficult as possible to do so; where it will be confronted with the full force of the majority of the population not only in polling booths, but in organisations throughout the country, and in the armed forces — which will themselves help to make a kind of opposition by a capitalist minority impossible. Once a socialist government is in power, it will make a turning back of the wheel of history that

much more difficult.

The Trotskyists take their perspective over from Trotsky — and after all what we were meant to be debating was Trotsky and a strategy for revolutionaries — I think we should see what are the basic ideas of Trotsky that the Trotskyist organisations base themselves on. I would argue that Trotsky — who played a very great role as the second major leader of the October revolution — although he made a contribution in the early years of the Communist International; had at only one major stage during the Third Period between 1928-34 a correct policy against the Communist International. As far as his basic political positions, especially in the 1930s and as reflected in the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International — the only programme which has been produced by the organisations of the FI, this suffers from a fundamentally mistaken method and approach. Its mistakes lie, firstly in making an assumption of a fundamental urge to revolution of the masses which it is assumed, if it doesn't succeed, can only be because these masses are held back and betrayed by counter-revolutionary Stalinists or Social Democrats.

This is a fundamental failure to understand what Lenin understood far, far better — namely the consciousness of the masses under capitalism. Anybody who has attempted in this country to do serious political work — not among some limited vanguard but among wider sections of the working class — knows this for themselves. You need only to look at the political situation in this country to know it. Also the mistake of seeing events through the prisms of the October revolution, instead of making the kind of analysis that the Communist International was beginning to make at its Seventh World Congress in 1935, that has been carried further by Communist Parties in recent years. Gramsci's ideas have played a very important part in helping to stimulate our thought, but all this is rejected basically by the Trotskyist organisations, in favour of a strategy which, for all the sophisticated presentation that Robin Blackburn has given us here today, is basically the scenario of October 1917. ■

Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)



MONTY JOHNSTONE

Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

Interview with Israeli socialist

Begin at the beginning

EMMANUEL FARJOUN, a member of the Socialist Organisation in Israel (Matzpen), visited London recently. NIGEL WARD spoke to him.

There is a great deal of confusion as to the importance of the recent election results in Israel. Can you begin by explaining the differences between the Likud and the Labour Party?

These differences are not a recent development but go back to the earliest period of the Zionist state. The Likud and the Labour Party represent different interests within the ruling class. The Labour Party based itself on the state bureaucracy and established itself with the expansion of the Zionist colonisation and the state sector of the economy.

By comparison, the Likud represents more typical capitalist

interests. That is, they are interested in the growth of private investment and business, with the state encouraging this development rather than substituting for it.

A good example of these differences is the attitude towards Arab labour. The Labour Party defends the concept of exclusively Jewish labour, whilst the Likud determines its attitude to assure the maximum profit, and so is prepared to use Arab labour.

Bourgeois commentators have looked upon the Likud victory as a setback for the US peace plans for the Middle East. How do you

view the foreign policies of the Likud in comparison to those of the Labour Party?

On questions of foreign policy there is no substantial difference between the parties. Both agree on the alliance with imperialism, with Israel as the bridgehead for US capitalism in an area still very underdeveloped. Naturally, their policies towards the Arabs are very similar.

What then are the differences in the parties' policies?

The main differences between the parties are over the economic policies to be pursued in Israel. The reasons for this are obvious from my reply to your first question. The Labour Party wants to maintain the strength of the state sector within the economy (about half of the economy is state owned), whilst the Likud wants to see a further expansion of the private sector.

Because of this, the Likud is more likely to take action to control inflation which will mean further attacks on workers' interests. This will include forced arbitration for workers in dispute over wages.

Why then did the Labour Party lose the election?

The Labour Party had control both politically and over the economy. The standard of living of Israeli workers has been falling sharply year by year, since the increase in wages has been about 20 per cent compared to an inflation rate of 40 per cent. This latter figure is dominated by the enormous increase in the price of basic necessities (food and housing). Meanwhile the destabilising economic influence of massive military spending has remained.

Many of the problems of the Labour Party can be traced back to the 1973 war. The outcome of the war was a big shock for all Israelis. It is accepted that there can be no solution to the Arab-Israel conflict and since the outcome of any future war is in doubt a feeling of insecurity has replaced the pre-73 feelings, which were based on the total

economic and military preponderance of Israel over its Arab neighbours.

The vote for the Likud was particularly high amongst the youth and the oriental Jews, who are the basis of the industrial working class, being 50-55 per cent compared to the general 30 per cent support. There is a

simple reason for these defections to the Likud — they were the only alternative to the Labour Party, so their victory can be regarded in this sense as a protest vote.

How do you see things developing in Israel under the Likud?

Within the occupied territories the repression is likely to increase but this will not be a qualitative change simply because the present level of repression is so high!

The state will intervene more quickly to suppress strikes and unemployment, which is almost non-existent at present, will increase, particularly amongst Arab workers. However, any conflicts or strikes will become more obviously political.

Previously, the Histadrut (supposedly a Zionist trade union organisation, but totally integrated into the state and one of the major employers in Israel) was used as an 'independent' arbitrator in disputes between workers and employers. This body has a strong working class base and is dominated by the Labour Party. From now onwards, the state will intervene more directly in disputes and the Histadrut will not be used to block worker struggles in the same way as before.

It is in this context that the Socialist Organisation in Israel (Matzpen) to which I belong is developing its present intervention in the working class struggle and in the Palestinian struggle for liberation.

Iranian writers attack censorship

FORTY of Iran's most prominent writers and intellectuals belonging to the Iranian Writers' Society have written an open letter to the Iranian Prime Minister.

In it they describe how the cultural and artistic life of the country has come to a standstill as the result of censorship, the total lack of freedom of expression and constant arbitrary harassment of writers and artists.

They point out that: 'Writers and intellectuals are denied all legal, judicial, political and social guarantees, and have no official authority or support to which they can resort when confronted with the violence of the state and censorship agencies. So much so that one can name people who have or are spending years in prison for the crime of writing, translating or even reading books.' They demand an end to restriction and freedom of operation for the Writers' Society.

The Iranian Writers' Society was formed in the 1960s by a

number of prominent writers for campaigning against censorship and the denial of the freedom of expression. In 1969 the regime forced it to disband officially, but it has continued to exist in a clandestine manner.

Among the signatories of the open letter is the famous dissident writer Gholam-Hossein Sa'edi. Sa'edi was jailed for nine months in 1974 during which time he was tortured. Ever since his release he has been under constant surveillance by Savak, the secret police, and banned from publishing any works. Earlier this year when a Guardian reporter tried to interview him he refused saying that it would result in yet another session of Savak interrogation. There are now reports that the authorities are preventing him from leaving the country.

Another of the signatories is Fereydoon Tonekaboni, a writer who has only recently been released from jail. He was arrested in March 1974 after publishing a satirical work about the political situation in Iran.

Italian 'Book of dreams' published

The Communist Party's Austerity Plan

'A book of dreams' was how Amintore Fanfani, the leader of the Christian Democratic right, described it. L'Unita, the Communist Party paper, on the other hand, devoted hundreds of column inches last week to a presentation of the most important points of its party's agreement with the governing Christian Democrats.

Not many Italians will get round to reading the 57 tightly printed pages, but the accord will have implications which will affect all of them. RICHARD CARVER reviews the book of dreams.

Most sinister are the proposals on public order. The Christian Democrats have long been looking for a 'strong state' solution to their economic and political crisis as a way of repressing the workers' movement rather than collaborating with its leaders. But in this accord they have managed both.

The Communist Party (PCI) has put its name to an extension of police powers of surveillance — including phone tapping — and detention, a tightening up of police security and a more stringent prison system.

The proposals on the press point in the same direction. The independent radio stations, many of which are favourable to the far left, are to be 'regulated'. A foretaste of 'regulation' was provided when the state closed down the left-wing Radio Alice

during the recent confrontation in Bologna. The PCI's voice of protest was not to be heard.

Both the press and public order proposals are aimed primarily at the threat emerging from the left of the PCI, above all in the student movement. The education proposals address themselves more explicitly to that problem. In essence they are an endorsement of the Malfatti 'reforms' which provoked student unrest in the first place.

The main aim is the reduction of the student population. The student movement of the late 1960s managed to open up selection procedures in higher education, creating the opportunity for more working class people to take advantage of it.

But advantage is hardly the word. Possibly as many as 2 million people under 29 are

jobless, of whom 40 per cent are graduates. Youth unemployment in the 15-24 age range as a whole is 64 per cent. The Government has launched a job creation scheme which has had about the same dazzling success as its British counterpart.

Now it is using unemployment as an excuse for cutting university entry. This is a topsyturvy rationale for creating more jobless who, if they are school leavers, are not entitled to benefit; for cutting state education spending; and, of course, for weeding out the 'troublemakers' and eroding the limited gains on working class entry.

STOCK EXCHANGE

In early June there was a strike of stockbrokers' employees which closed all stock exchanges. Apart from the disruption of the financial system, the strike had a symbolic value in reminding Italian capitalists whom it had to take on if its profit margins were to be restored — as if it needed reminding!

The document uses the quaint banalities of bourgeois economics to explain its central purpose: an attack on working class living standards. The idea is to reduce imports by cutting consumption



MENACHEM BEGIN, the new Israeli Prime Minister — support for West Bank settlements and attacks on living standards.



ALDO MORO [left] with Christian Democrat secretary BENIGNO ZACCAGNINI. The deal with the Communists was Moro's idea but now they are wondering what the morrow will bring.

[that means wages] and to cut labour costs [wages again] to boost exports.

The problem is that last year's unexpectedly high growth was too much and led to a worsening trade deficit. Part of the solution is massive spending cuts.

The Government has recently increased spending on social security to offset the large sums at present being paid out by private employers. The present agreement also increases the proportion of central government subsidies to local government to stop local short term borrowing.

This, combined with the inevitable rise in police spending, only heightens the need to cut elsewhere. And elsewhere means the gross spending on public services.

There is a certain agreement among Italian capitalists on these

basics, but there is discord on other points. Many of the big private companies such as Fiat, which have been pressing ahead with export deals in the Middle East (particularly Iran) and the Comecon countries, are dissatisfied with the Government's sloth in responding to demands for increased export credit facilities.

DEVALUATION

And those producers not using imported raw materials tend to oppose the Government's deflationary direction and advocate a further devaluation of the lira.

The Confindustria, the equivalent of the CBI, has predictably been even harder than the Government on wages and spending. That may have been one of the things Fanfani had in mind, apart from his own manoeuvres within the Christian Democratic

Party, when he attacked the deal.

But the PCI has swallowed the Government policy hook, line and sinker. 'An investment policy must be applied which makes Italy move into sectors... which strengthen and renew export capacity', argues L'Unita.

But it's dog eat dog in the world of international capital. The rulers of Europe may be prepared to bail Italy out to a certain extent for political reasons — that is to keep the PCI out of government, to avoid all the explosions that would provoke in the working class.

But as West Germany's Helmut Schmidt explains: 'Italy must be helped to pull its head out of the water, but not to take herself back onto the beach.'

* Next week we begin a series on the response of the Italian far left to the crisis.

Pakistan generals pre-empt junior officers

Cynicism and despair

by TARIQ ALI

The army has taken over Pakistan once again. The first time it did so was in 1958. The then dictator, General Ayub, ruled for 13 years. He was overthrown by a mass uprising. The second period of military rule was shorter, but led to the disintegration of the Pakistani state with the establishment of Bangladesh.

What can the third Martial Law offer a country whose masses have had to rely on a staple diet of demagoguery and religion for more than two decades, but cynicism and despair?

On the face of it the army take-over was designed to break the political deadlock between Bhutto and the opposition PNA (Pakistan National Alliance). In our opinion this was merely a pretext. A major factor was the growing crisis inside the army itself.

It is now obvious that junior officers — majors, captains and lieutenants — were becoming increasingly disgusted with the political situation. The political sympathies of most of these officers are with the right-wing religious political groups. Religion acts as a cloak which both shields them from more radical ideas and provides them with a political and moral cover. Thus Bhutto's high living, and the corruption which existed on every level of society and which increased a hundred-fold under Bhutto, merely fanned the flames of their discontent. They want a real blood-purge to cleanse society.

Their model is Saudi Arabia, but many of them realise that a Saudi Arabia without oil is a non-starter. Many of these young

officers found the job of shooting demonstrators and policing the cities for Bhutto highly distasteful. It is likely that some of them were considering a young Turk revolt which could have been a bloody affair. The generals pre-empted them.

It remains to be seen whether the new dictator, General Zia, will organise a free election on 7 October, or whether the taste of absolute power will make him look for other solutions. A lot will depend on the mass movement. The opposition has in effect welcomed the coup, but the mass movement was not 100 per cent dependent on the PNA. Sections of the PPP (Pakistan People's Party — Bhutto's organisation) are quite capable of attempting a passive resistance to the military regime.

NEO-FASCIST

Secondly, Zia will want to ensure a result which will keep his junior officers placated for the time being. This could be done by a PNA electoral victory which would give the obscuran-



Tanks move in to break up anti-Bhutto demonstrations earlier this year — viewed with distaste by many junior officers.

tist, neo-fascist Jamaat-i-Islam (Party of Islam) ministers in the new cabinet.

On the other hand the young officers might well decide that they would rather stay in power, given the 'mess made by the politicians'. In such an eventuality a second and more vicious

coups cannot be excluded — a coup which could be a bizarre combination of the Thai and Bangladesh models.

An extended period of military rule in Pakistan could rapidly lead to the disintegration of the country. The reason is a simple one: the two minority nationalities are unlikely to tolerate a third Martial Law for too long. The Baluchis and the Pathans who populate Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province are already in political opposition. If elections are not held on 7 October they will begin to prepare a national opposition.

Given the strategic character of the provinces in question (one borders Afghanistan and the other Iran) any unrest tends to affect neighbouring countries. The Shah of Iran has indicated that he would intervene to prevent 'instability in the region'.

Then there is India, which would also be unhappy if the situation in Pakistan remained unsettled. What is therefore at stake is not simply whether or not to have a general election, but the very future of the country.

Bhutto and several PNA leaders are in 'protective custody'. They will obviously have to be released in order for a fair election to take place. Their release will be an important indication as to the intentions of General Zia-ul-Haque.

'PROFESSIONAL'

Zia has the reputation of a 'professional soldier'. So did his military predecessor Yahya Khan, who attempted to drown Bangladesh in the blood of its own people. Zia's hands are also bloody. Despite all his talk of Islam and Muslim brotherhood he participated in the brutal massacres of the Palestinian resistance in the Black September of 1970. He commanded Pakistani mercenaries sent to aid the

Hashemite monarch Hussein. For his crimes he was decorated by the Jordanian butcher.

When he became Chief of Staff of the Army in 1976 he said that the slogan for the troops would be 'Faith, Abstinence and Holy War'. The first virtue he saw displayed in Jordan in 1970, the second could lead to banning liquor in the Army messes. As for the third, the only people he could fight a 'holy war' against are the Pakistani masses. To attempt it against India or any other state would sound the death-knell for Pakistan.

The generals are embarked on an extremely dangerous course. Their temporary salvation lies in promoting the election of a right-wing government, but even that would not solve the real problems which confront the masses. They are the old problems of land, bread and shelter. The coup signals a new period of instability in Pakistani politics. Where exactly it will end we cannot yet predict. If the Bangladesh military dictator — also General Zia — is a model, then Pakistan is in for a hard time.



ZIA-UL-HAQUE has now ordered public flogging and amputation of hands to bring Pakistan in line with Saudi Arabia as two of the world's most reactionary Muslim states.

Entry ban hits Chileans

by CHRIS O'BRIEN

BRITISH immigration authorities are refusing entry to two Chilean sailors on a ship doing a regular passage between this country and Norway.

The two men, Victor Soza Duran and Fernando Ayala Canas, work on the Greek registered bulk carrier *Dapo Sailor* which docks regularly in Cardiff, Liverpool and Glasgow. Both wish to settle in Norway or Britain but immigration has refused to allow them even to come ashore.

When the *Dapo Sailor* docked in Cardiff in early May both men

were held in jail for the duration of the stay. On a later visit immigration officials boarded the ship when it docked and refused them leave to go ashore.

It is believed that high immigration officers have informed the shipowners that the men could be sent back to Chile if they leave the ship again. Both left Chile to escape repression by the military junta.

Tommy Hanley, a Cardiff official of the National Union of Seamen, commented that 'not even American immigration (among the worst in the world) would go that far'.

Britain's arms showcase

Every little Belize

by STEVE POTTER

ONCE IN A while Britain's arms industry needs a more glamorous show case than the streets of Belfast or the dusty fields of Aldershot. One was laid on this week for the Queen in a massive display of strength in West Germany. Another was the shores of Belize in Central America.

Last week, for the second time in two years, the Labour Government despatched a squadron of Harrier jump jets and a battalion of infantry to this old colony of British Honduras in the name of self-determination.

Apart from the dignitaries who attended the Jubilee version of the Red Square parade on the Rhine, buyers in the arms trade will be keen to see how the Harriers operate in what will be only their second sortie outside Europe. The first was also in Belize in November 1975.

There are already 800 British troops in Belize. Among them is a contingent of the Special Air Service which patrols the borders with neighbouring Guatemala. In the past they have cooperated with Guatemalan security forces



in flushing out bases of guerrillas opposed to the US-backed Guatemalan regime.

That regime is making claim to Belize on the basis that both were united under Spanish colonialism. Of course Guatemala has no legitimate claim to Belize. Ever since the CIA invaded Guatemala in 1954 on behalf of the United Fruit Company the regime has subsisted on a diet of the most bloody repression combined with a series of boundary

wars against weaker neighbours such as Belize and El Salvador.

These forays are an attempt to act as a diversion from their domestic problems — the per capita income in Guatemala is four per cent that of its protector, the USA. Valuable raw materials such as the oil deposits off-shore from Belize are another motive.

The last Labour administration to 'defend' the interests of the Belize masses was that of 1945-51. A popular revolt against British economic exploitation was brutally put down by the British. Subversion control legislation was used to imprison the leaders of the anti-colonial movement. The Belize City council, the most important oppositional body, was dissolved because it refused to hang a portrait of George VI in City Hall!

Then as now, the Labour Government has no real interest in the needs of the Belize peasants. Socialists can only respond with the strongest possible condemnation of the way in which imperialism uses the Balkanised states of central America in its power games.



The hardware on display in Belize. Clockwise from top left: Hercules transport, Blowpipe missile, the frigate Achilles, and Harrier jump jet.

IN BRIEF

SAHARA: Troops of the Polisario Front, the independent Government of the Western Sahara, shelled and machine-gunned the Mauritanian capital of Nouakchott for 45 minutes last week. This is an indication of the Polisario's ever-improving military position against Mauritania and Morocco, the two countries which lay claim to the mineral-rich former Spanish colony. Also last week, unidentified guerrillas shot the Mauritanian ambassador in Paris. The Polisario, which has never undertaken military operations in Europe, disclaimed responsibility.

CHINA: There is growing opposition in the West to the fast-moving rehabilitation of former Prime Minister Teng Hsiao-Ping. Charles Bettelheim, the leading pro-Peking economist, has resigned as president of the Sino-French Friendship Society, accusing the Chinese leadership of 'revisionism'. Albania's official party paper has launched a veiled attack on Peking by rejecting the principle of 'my enemy's enemy is my friend'. This refers to the Sino-Soviet dispute.

ALBANIA: Unfortunately we cannot confirm the suspicion that the Albanian attack is connected to the revelation in *Burke's Peerage* that China's old friend Richard Nixon is ninth in line for the Albanian throne through connections on his mother's side.

ARGENTINA: The Montonero guerrillas have demanded a reduction in the price of tickets for next year's World Cup football matches.

JAPAN: The Japanese Communist Party is standing in the elections to the Upper House on a platform which is very similar to the 'Eurocommunists', calling for the nationalisation of the energy industry. It also says that it will only support a treaty with the USSR after the latter returns four islands of the Kurile Chain to Japan.

IRELAND: The European Commission of Human Rights has ruled as 'admissible' a case brought against the Southern Irish Government by a Cork woman. The charge is that the Irish Government is denying human rights for women by making it extremely difficult for a woman to get 'judicial separation' from her husband. A successful outcome could mean the full legalisation of divorce in Ireland.

INDIA: George Fernandes, the Socialist Party leader jailed by the Gandhi Government, has been appointed Industry Minister in the Janata Party Government.

PERU: The Finance Minister has resigned after the refusal of the International Monetary Fund to meet the Government's request for a stand-by credit.

MEXICO: Police have arrested 20 workers who were part of an occupation of the National University campus, demanding pay rises and union recognition.

ITALY: After last week's report of West German detectives advertising their services to the private sector, we have this item from Italy. 'We are fed up with working as chambermaids, cooks, chauffeurs and telephoneists', says a public appeal from 33 police. It refers to the practice at many levels of the state bureaucracy of employing police to do menial domestic tasks.

Zimbabwe Nationalists Advance

Last week Des Frost, the chairperson of the ruling Rhodesian Front party, resigned. This followed the expulsion of 12 of the party's MPs who support an apartheid-style solution to the problems of the white regime. This is one of the more spectacular indications of the growing crisis of the regime and the successes of the nationalist forces.

In the first of two articles JULIUS KARANJA examines the nationalists' successes. Next week he will deal with the burden this places upon the Rhodesian Government and state.

RECENT attacks by the troops of the Smith regime on guerilla bases on the borders of Zimbabwe have received much publicity in the press. This has given the impression that the white racist state remains still in command of the situation.

However, a closer examination of the current developments in the country seems to indicate that the state of attacks are a testimony more to the 'death throes' of the regime than its supposed strength.

The armed struggle in Zimbabwe has been increasing in its

penetration into the country, while at the same time the nationalist movements are deepening their influence amongst the black population. Official figures estimate that in March this year some 2,500 guerillas were active inside Zimbabwe, whereas in September 1976 the figure was only 1,700. The most recent figure is an increase of 1,700 since the same time last year.

Reports indicate that guerilla bases have been opened up in Botswana and Zambia. This has meant that while previously the front was mainly in the eastern

Smith regime in crisis

region (code-named Hurricane, Thrasher and Repulse regions by the Smith regime) a more intensive front has been opened in the West (Tangent region). This is reflected in the fact that the entire length of the Botswana border, from the Wankie National Park in the north-west to the Shasi Tribal Trust Lands in the south-west has been declared a 'no-go' area of some five miles deep.

The military activities of the nationalist movements have been primarily directed at various

economic targets, particularly the communications systems. The Bulye river bridge on the Beitbridge railway line (connecting with South Africa) was attacked in mid May, while other roads and railways are constantly threatened with landmines or explosives. Not only has this caused expensive damage to the communications system, but more importantly it has heightened the crisis of an economy already suffering from restricted and overloaded transport routes, particularly following the closure of the Mozambique border.

MASS WORK

But, contrary to the reports of the mass media, nationalist activities have not been confined to military work, though this remains a crucial aspect. There is evidence that a substantial amount of work is being carried out in developing a mass base inside Zimbabwe, particularly in the 'Tribal Trust Lands'.

It is common knowledge that schools have become a 'recruiting ground' for the guerillas; what is not so well known is that there have been an increasing number of school boycotts. In March the Government estimated that over 36,000 students had been boycotting schools in the Maranke, Zimunya and other 'Tribal Trust Lands' in the Umtali district alone. As a result, it is estimated that some 500 teachers have lost their jobs since April this year. Nor is this protest confined to the youth: cattle-dipping — for which the state charges a 'a dollar-a-dip' — in the Tribal Trust Lands has been widely boycotted.

Just as in Soweto recently, where actions by workers and students led to the collapse of the 'Urban Bantu Councils', so in the Tribal Trust Lands the puppet 'African Councils' have come under attack: some fifty out of 240 councils are today bankrupt as result of actions against liquor halls and stalls, licensing and rates offices. Since half the annual incomes of the councils come from these sources, their bankruptcy reflects the depth of feelings amongst the black population; these councils have now come under the 'direct' command of the local District Commissioners.

Mozambique: Building the basis for socialism

This letter was passed to *Socialist Challenge* by a militant in the South African solidarity movement in Britain. It was sent to him by a comrade in Mozambique who is very critical of the International Marxist Group's assessment of the situation there. Although it was not originally intended for publication, it was felt that it would be a useful contribution to the debate.

The IMG seems to be making an incorrect analysis of Mozambique as yet another petty-bourgeois, neo-colonial Government — for example because migrant labour still goes into the mines and FRELIMO is not calling for the right to strike in South Africa and so on.

To answer this we first have to look at the objective conditions. It should be remembered that it is not two years since independence from Portugal. And those two years have been a period of war, with nearly 150 invasions from Rhodesia in 15 months. In the last one the town of Mapai was decimated with every building dynamited.

The invasions are aimed at economic destruction, massacres

of civilians to intimidate the population, inflicting defeats on the army and sowing the seeds of dissension against the exemplary internationalism of FRELIMO's support for the Zimbabwean liberation struggle.

There have been the worst floods in living memory, with 100,000 people in the Limpopo valley being relocated in *aldeias communais*.

Capitalism is in crisis through the country. There is a shortage of techniques and skills needed to keep the economy going — very often this is the result of direct sabotage.

The South African Chamber of Mines has a policy of reducing Mozambican immigrants. The 115,000 of 1975 is only



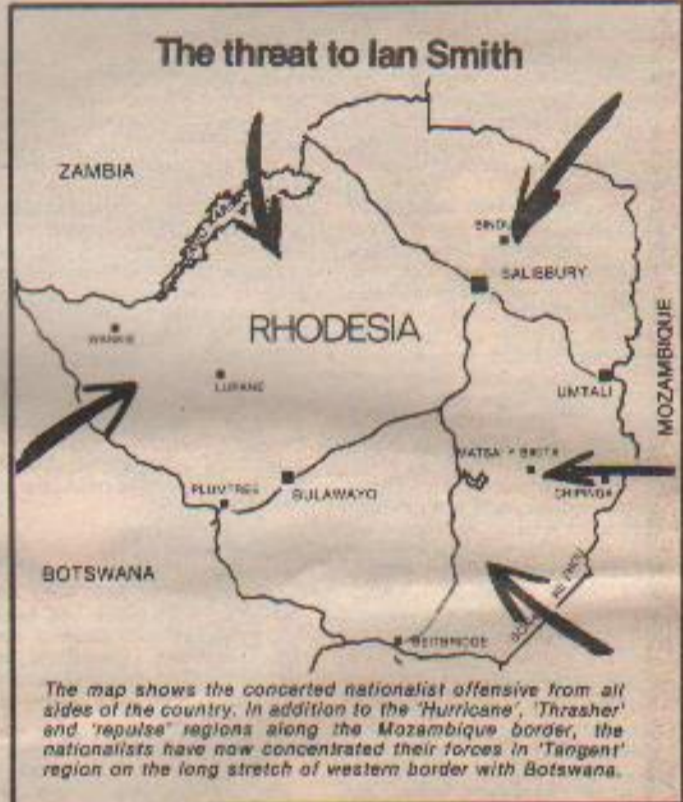
30,000 this year. FRELIMO was paid in gold that it could sell at the free market price, which accounts for at least 50 per cent of the country's foreign currency earnings. South Africa is determined to cut this off by recruiting workers internally instead.

Since 1972 black miners' wages have gone up 500 per cent, making the mines competitive with industry. This tactic is consistent with reducing the huge unemployment and under-employment within South Africa.

The South African army could create absolute havoc here under these conditions. The priority is to construct the material and ideological base for building socialism. Zimbabwe and Namibia are first on the agenda. There is much ground work that needs to be done and is being done inside South Africa.

FRELIMO's position in relation to South Africa at this stage of the game is tantamount to the revolution committing suicide or becoming a client of a major

power. *Grupos dinamizadores* (dynamising groups) are forming spontaneously in the compounds. Class struggle goes on. The essential problem is not defending the right to strike for migrants in South Africa — a meaningless slogan at present — but thinking how the male population of the south, which has been used to comparatively fabulous wages in South Africa, can be incorporated inside Mozambique when they find themselves unemployed!



Belfast mothers demand justice

This month three women from Belfast are due to address a public meeting in London to 'demand justice'. Each of the women has had a son recently murdered by British troops in Northern Ireland. They are:

Mrs. Norney — whose son Leo was shot dead by the army on 13 September 1975. The army claimed at the time that they shot Norney because he was 'carrying arms', but the Ministry of Defence has now admitted that this was a complete fabrication. Mrs. Norney has been paid £3,000 compensation but the soldiers who murdered Leo have not been brought to justice.

Mrs. Stewart — whose 13 year old son Brian was killed by British troops in October 1976.

Brian was standing on a street corner when the soldiers opened up with plastic bullets. One smashed the youngster's skull and seven days later he died. The army claimed that he had been involved in a riot but television crews could find no evidence that such a riot had ever taken place.

Mrs. McCooey — whose son Danny died on 20 May this year.



DANNY MCCOOEY

20 days after a British soldier rammed a rifle butt in his stomach. The attack led to grave internal injuries of which Danny later died. The army claimed that he was 'violently resisting arrest', and that they 'rushed him into hospital'. But hospital records refute this.

It is to bring these and similar cases of British army 'peace-keeping' to public attention that

the women are coming to London. They do so at a time when the Labour Government is busy fulfilling its promises of more 'security' made at the time of the Loyalist strike.

Recently Northern Ireland Secretary Roy Mason has announced:

- * A doubling of sentences to ten years for being a member of 'proscribed organisations';
- * An increase in 'specialist operations' by the SAS;
- * An increase in recruitment to the almost totally Protestant Royal Ulster Constabulary. The RUC is to grow by 25 per cent;
- * An increase of 40 per cent in the membership of the Ulster Defence Regiment. This paramilitary wing of the British Army is again almost exclusively Protestant and over 100 of its members have been convicted of Loyalist violence.

Perhaps it is because the step up in repression by Britain in Ireland is now so obvious that the meeting in London next week has attracted much support.

Speakers include Martin Ennals, secretary general of Amnesty International, Labour MPs Joan Maynard and Andrew Bennett, writers Edward Bond and Adrian Mitchell, and Ernie Roberts, assistant general secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers.

The meeting takes place at NUFTO hall, Jockeys Field, London WC1 on Tuesday 19 July at 7.30pm.

Hungarian Premier In the footsteps of Imre Nagy?

by OLIVER MACDONALD

THE Hungarian Communist Party daily, *Nepszabadsag*, has published an article in response to the Soviet *New Times* attacks on Santiago Carrillo's book on Eurocommunism. The article calls for respect for diversity of views within the Communist movement.

This is only one of a series of signs of growing differences between Moscow and Budapest. Some months ago Hungarian Party leader Janos Kadar visited Austria just after the Bulgarian leadership had published an attack on 'anti-Soviet' trends in some of the Western CPs. In Austria Kadar was asked whether he agreed with the Bulgarian view. Instead of evading the question or parrying the question, Kadar replied with a blunt 'No!'

His subsequent talks with West German Chancellor Schmidt, conducted, according to Western commentators, in an atmosphere

that went far beyond the bounds of normal diplomatic friendliness, is seen as part of a diplomatic effort to consolidate his positions.

Moscow's greatest concern about Eurocommunism is its impact on Eastern Europe. But the Soviet leadership has not even managed to line up the East European Party leaderships in its drive against Eurocommunism.

One factor behind Kadar's moves is opposition to Moscow's efforts to make the East European Governments allocate large sums for investment in the USSR. Budapest also claims that the Soviet economic managers are increasing the number of 'sub-standard' imports from Hungary so that they could get the allowed cut in import prices. The Hungarians claim that their goods are no poorer in quality than they ever were.

Increasing independence in the diplomatic field is also excellent domestic politics for the hard-pressed regimes, looking for

ways of strengthening their popular base without weakening bureaucratic controls.

Whatever the causes the Kadar regime is starting to tread a path taken by the previous leader of the Hungarian CP, Imre Nagy. In the face of the Soviet invasion in 1956 Nagy declared Hungary a neutral country. He was murdered by the Soviet bureaucracy in 1958 — a murder welcomed, or at least not criticised, by any of the European CPs. No CP has yet called for Nagy's rehabilitation and Kadar has a long way to go before approaching Nagy's neutralism.

But his small, initial steps towards greater independence must be producing some of the same, gnawing, nervous feelings that were felt in Moscow when the first signs of a crack-up in Eastern Europe appeared in the early 1950s.

USSR: Harsh sentences in frame up trial

THE secret court in the little town of Druzhkovka has reached its verdict. Mykola Rudenko and Oleksa Tykhy, Ukrainian human rights campaigners charged with 'anti-Soviet' activity, have been sentenced to seven years in jail and five years exile, and ten years and five years respectively.

For Rudenko this is a death sentence because of his bad physical condition, a result of his war wounds. For Tykhy, aged 50 and sick, it is a life sentence.

They have repeatedly pointed out that their only crime was to campaign for the implementation of the Helsinki accords signed by the Soviet regime.

Pyotr and Zinaida Grigorenko in Moscow confirmed the details

of the trial to the Committee in Defence of Soviet Political Prisoners. Friends and relatives of the defendants, including the Grigorenkos, only heard about the trial days after it had started. Some friends were detained for up to three days by the militia when they arrived in Druzhkovka.

Neither defendant had any proper legal representation. Tykhy refused to accept the officially appointed lawyer and had to defend himself, while Rudenko was saddled with an advocate who cooperated fully with the prosecution.

According to Zinaida Grigorenko: 'The authorities violated both juridical and human rights at this trial.'

LABOUR FOCUS ON EASTERN EUROPE

A Socialist Defence Bulletin on Eastern Europe and the USSR



JUST OUT! Includes new information on Polish repression, letter from Czech dissident Jiri Mueller to the CPGB and anti-semitism in the USSR. Single issue 30p. One year sub £3.50 (9 issues) from Bottom Flat, 116 Cazenove Road, London N16.



BRIAN STEWART

IT IS NOW exactly ten years since the Arab-Israeli War of June 1967, the event that led to the emergence of the Palestinian resistance movement as a major factor in Arab politics, and which resulted in the growth of solidarity with the Palestinians on an international scale. The 1967 defeat of the conventional Arab armies by Israel weakened the Arab states and thereby enabled the Palestinian resistance movement to become a significant force in the Middle East; although the movement has undergone many trials in the past decade, the right of the Palestinians to self-determination and their existence as an oppressed people are now almost universally recognised.

This anniversary therefore makes it an especially appropriate time to re-examine the experience of solidarity with the Palestinians, and the relation of this experience to the recent debate on Zionism and racism amongst British students. It is my conviction that while Zionism and the state of Israel are in a definite sense 'racist', the equation of Zionism with racism and the denial of a platform to Zionists are erroneous.

PALESTINIAN SOLIDARITY

Support for the Palestinian struggles rests on two basic arguments. The first is that the Palestinians are an identifiable people, who have suffered an extreme form of colonial oppression — expulsion from their lands. Zionists have tried, and continue to try, to deny this, either by refusing to admit that the Palestinians exist, or by claiming that the latter abandoned their lands voluntarily.

But it is indisputable that the establishment of the state of Israel led to a mass expulsion, in various ways, of the majority of the indigenous population. Up to two out of three million Palestinians are now denied the right to return to, and live in, their homeland.

From this it follows that the Palestinians have the right to struggle, both politically and militarily. Everyone knows that some Palestinians have adopted unjustified, diversionary tactics in their struggle. But this does not contradict their basic right, as an oppressed people, to fight. The second argument follows from this. Since Zionism has exerted a strong influence internationally, and on most of the European and North American left, solidarity with the Palestinians has also necessitated a critique of Zionism. The basic tenets of this critique are well-established and can be summarised as follows:

Firstly, Zionism — the ideology of a movement aiming to set up a Jewish state in Palestine — is inescapably linked to the oppression of the indigenous population. Zionist colonisation entailed the eviction of the Palestinians, and Zionist ideologists either advocated this explicitly, or tried to obscure the issue by claiming that Palestine was an empty country.

Secondly, although it adopts a socialist vocabulary, Zionism is not socialist. Zionism is colonialist — a feature inconsistent with socialism. The much-vaunted socialist sector in Israeli agriculture — the *kibbutzim* — is a tiny part of the whole; the Israeli economy is a capitalist one. Israel's very existence as an economic and military entity is dependent on funds received from 'friendly states and individuals in the capitalist world, and especially the USA.

Thirdly, anti-Zionism is not equivalent to anti-semitism. The defenders of Zionism always try to confuse the issue, but while anti-semitism is a racist ideology directed against Jews, because they are Jews, anti-Zionism is directed against the oppression of the Palestinian people, and far from being racist is itself a form of anti-racism.

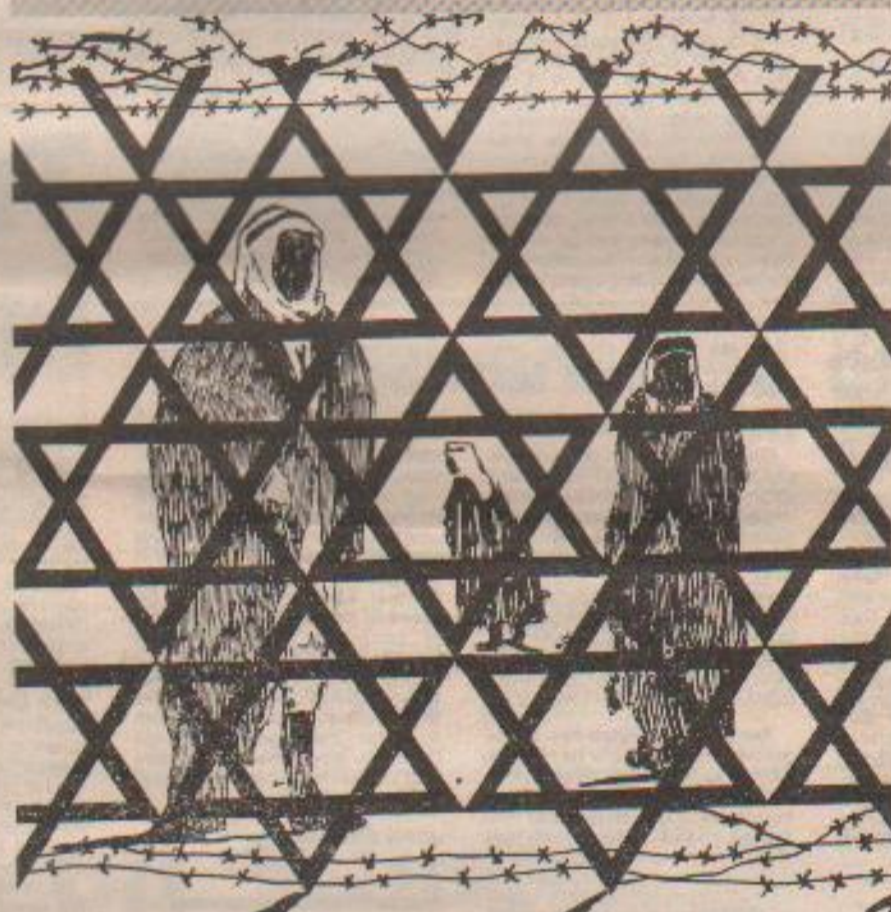
BEYOND NATIONALISM

The emphasis of much solidarity work with the Palestinians has been on countering the almost total support for Israel that has existed internationally since the state was established in 1948. But the three arguments listed above do not form, on their own, an adequate basis for a socialist and internationalist position on the Arab-Israeli question.

Support for the Palestinians by socialists elsewhere cannot merely take the form of reproducing outside the Middle East the arguments presented there, since the latter arguments are, for obvious historical reasons, determined by the predominantly nationalist context in which the Palestinian question is understood. There are further aspects of the question which must also be placed at the centre of any solidarity work by socialists engaged on this issue and which combine with the above points to form an internationalist position. They can be summarised as follows.

1. Zionism derives a great deal of its support by reticulating people of the murder of six million Jews under Nazism. Zionism wrongly uses this genocide as a justification

Zionism, racism, & free speech



Socialists who support the Palestinian people must not be stampeded out of a sense of solidarity into political positions that are based on partial formulae. The fight against Zionism must be a principled one and take a political form appropriate to the history and nature of this problem.

by Fred Halliday

for the oppression of the Palestinians. But it is, on the other hand, the height of political idiocy and callousness to ignore the fact that this genocide occurred, and to ignore the memories and deep, sincere feelings of solidarity with the Jewish people and Jewish culture that have resulted.

On the left, there is the added fact that solidarity with the Jewish people formed an intrinsic part of anti-fascism. Some of the arguments used in attacks on Zionism have taken no notice of this problem; and the fact that some of the most vigorous attacks on Jewish traditions and feelings have come from anti-Zionists who are themselves Jews has not made this approach any more justifiable.

2. Anti-semitism is not just a phenomenon of the past, and continues to flourish overtly in countries like the Soviet Union and Poland, Uruguay and Argentina. Although Jews are no longer the main objects of racism in Britain, anti-semitic attitudes of a thinly-veiled kind are still common. Some of the anti-Israeli material produced in the Arab countries has an anti-Jewish character that — even if distinguishable from European anti-

semitism — is still of a pernicious kind.

Those engaged in solidarity with the Palestinians must be especially alert to this phenomenon, both because it is in itself racist and because the continuation of anti-semitism acts as a continued argument in favour of Zionism. One need only reflect on how Zionists have used discrimination against Jews in the Soviet Union to strengthen their case.

3. Zionism argued that the Jews form a separate nation with the right to settle in Palestine. Socialists opposed this. But while the Jewish communities in different gentile countries did not and do not form a nation, the process of Zionist colonisation has produced a new nation, the Israeli nation. This has its own language, culture and class structure. While it is true that the Israeli nation came into existence through oppressing the Palestinians, this does not make it any the less a nation.

Nor is it accurate to claim that the Israelis cannot form a nation since they have been formed through immigration: all nations are historical products, not eternal entities, and many nations have been formed through immigration. If this is a

valid reason for denying nationhood to the Israelis, one would have to do the same to the Cubans, the Americans, the Australians, the Argentinians and a score of others. One may or may not wish that it had happened, but the fact of Israeli nationhood is now indisputable.

It is at this point that the greatest divergences are likely to occur between different supporters of the Palestinian movement. For, if the Israelis are a nation, do they have the right which Lenin emphasised is that of all nations — the right to self-determination and a separate state? The answer can only be: Yes. The Israelis do have the right to a separate state, but they do not have the right to exercise this at the expense of the Palestinians.

The distribution of available territory and population must be such as to allow both national groups to exercise their rights. Zionism denies that the Palestinians are a nation with the rights of separate statehood; the de-Zionisation of Israel therefore involves the achievement of Palestinian statehood and the removal of the other oppressive features of Israeli society that have been forged to ensure Israeli domination. De-Zionisation does not equal the denial of Israeli nationhood.

The question then arises whether it is inevitable that two states should come into existence, or whether it is not possible to create a unified entity — a bi-national state or a 'secular democratic' one, as many Palestinians call for. It may be that the latter kind of solution is more desirable, as is a 'united socialist Middle East'. But it is only possible to advocate these in a principled manner if, at the same time, it is clear that each nation has the right to choose whether to enter such entities or not.

ZIONISM AND RACISM

This issue of the existence of an Israeli nation, and of its rights, is central to any internationalist position of solidarity with the Palestinian people, since it determines whether the position adopted is fundamentally a nationalist or socialist one. And, in conjunction with the other arguments on anti-semitism, it relates directly to the recent dispute on Zionism and racism.

In essence, the denial of a platform to Zionists results from a combination of the UN General Assembly resolution of 1975 equating Zionism with racism — 'Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination' — and the policy of fighting the National Front in Britain by preventing it from speaking.

The question that first arises is: Is Zionism racist? It is racist because it suppresses the existence and rights of Palestinians, and because an undeniable element of Zionist ideology is that the Palestinians are inferior (when not non-existent). Zionism's racism is also evident in the discriminatory legislation and practices of the state of Israel, which distinguishes between people on the basis of their ethnic origin (Jewish, non-Jewish) and not on the basis of whether they come from within the territory of that state.

But to state this is not to accept the UN Resolution, since the latter in two key respects is a distortion. First, Zionism is a much broader ideology than just anti-Palestinian racism, and it is a polemical simplification to reduce it to racism or a form of racism.

Secondly, the UN Resolution forms no basis for fighting Zionism in any socialist manner, since it fails — as both the Zionists and the Arab nationalists do — to make any distinction between Zionism and the oppression it involves on one hand, and the existence and rights of an Israeli nation on the other. Any critique of Zionism which fails to make this latter point as well is, in practice, playing into the hands of the Zionists as well as being wrong in principle.

The denial of a platform to Zionists is, however, not merely wrong because the UN resolution is wrong. It is wrong because, if Zionism is an ideology with racist elements, it is not a major form of racism in this country, and presents a quite distinct danger from the NF and other similar organisations. The way to fight it, and win over the very large number of people who sympathise with Israel to a greater or lesser degree, is by open and informed argument with the Zionists.

Moreover, the ban on Jewish societies is an act which ignores the fact that these societies are involved in a wide range of activities, only one of which is explicit backing for Israel. On this basis, one would have to ban every Labour and Conservative Club in the country, since they too are linked to organisations that sustain states that have racist features (the British) and enforce racist legislation.

One need hardly add that in tactical terms campaigns against Jewish societies are completely unjustified: such acts appear to be forms of anti-semitism and only strengthen sympathy for Israel and Zionism.

Socialists who support the Palestinian people must not be stampeded out of a sense of solidarity into political positions that are based on partial formulae. The fight against Zionism must be a principled one and take a political form appropriate to the history and nature of this problem.

Facts on CP opposition

YOUR COVERAGE of the debate inside the Communist Party has been marred by seeing the dispute as essentially one between the leadership and the supporters of French.

The French grouping in reality has not increased dramatically in size and is still isolated from the main oppositional currents in Scotland, Manchester, parts of Yorkshire, Wales, North Midlands and North London.

The opposition in these areas regards itself as the 'mainstream opposition' and is broadly united around:

1. The need for a vanguard, 'Leninist' cadre party with roots in the masses. Against paper membership and against a

mass-membership party.
2. Opposition to a purely parliamentary road to socialism. Opposition to too much stress on electoral work as opposed to grass roots organisation in the organisations of the working class.

3. Opposition to the 'opportunistic attacks' of the party leaders and 'Eurocommunists' on the Soviet leadership. Stress on the importance of the might of the 'socialist countries' and emphasis on how this could permit a peaceful road to socialism under certain circumstances.

In contrast to the French grouping, however, it is not uncritical of the Soviet bureaucracy but believes that any criticism of the Soviet Union must be made in the context of emphasising the 'positive achievements of the socialist countries'.

What is more, all talk of a split if the new draft is passed has fallen on very stony ground as a strong unitarian sentiment prevails among 'mainstream oppositionists' who see little future outside the CP.

One of the main reasons for this is the political heterogeneity of this current. The clearest political statement to emerge from its ranks has been Charlie Doyle's critique of the new draft; but Doyle's conclusions are very much his own and do not represent a consensus even of

oppositionists in his own North London branch.

Even in terms of their attitude to the *British Road*, positions vary not only from branch to branch but even among oppositionists in the same branch, from outright opposition to the concept of a 'British road' (Doyle's position) through support for the 1951 *British Road* to support for the 1968 edition.

While it does not function as an organised tendency like the French grouping, this mainstream opposition is beginning to organise at branch level by setting up internal party meetings against the draft and organising contributions to the discussion in *Comment* and the *Morning Star*. There have been no serious attempts at national co-ordination and there is no prospect of an organised tendency emerging in the short term — certainly not before Congress.

This is best illustrated by the lack of reaction to the suppression of the Doyle pamphlet. Not only was there no serious fight against the ban on circulation of this pamphlet, but in many strong centres of opposition like Glasgow and Dundee the pamphlet has not even been informally circulated.

It is true that the political polarisation of the party over the new draft is completely unprecedented in the history of the CPGB since its very early days; and it is certain that 'business as usual' will not be restored after Congress. However, the almost certain adoption of the new draft and the political uncertainty of its opponents make it likely that the crisis in the party will be a long drawn out affair. The only split which we might anticipate in the

The real role of Alan Law -hotel workers

AT THE LAST meeting of the Hotel & Catering National Action Committee, attended by TGWU and GMWU hotel workers, including representatives of the Night Out strike in Birmingham, we discussed your article in *Socialist Challenge* of 9 June on the strikes in Trust Houses Forte, and in particular, your characterisation of Alan Law, the Birmingham TGWU full-time official, as a 'known associate' of the National Association for Freedom.

As the Action Committee was formed through the bringing together of hotel

strikers from the disputes against T.H.F. and at Oxford's Linton Lodge, we have had first-hand and bitter experiences of the 5 month strikes in the Randolph & Grosvenor hotels and of how the TGWU bureaucracy eventually organised their sell-out. We have no illusions about the role of these union leaders and their identification and collaboration with the employers' interests.

However, NAFF have shown themselves in favour not of collaboration with the likes of Law, but outright confrontation, which in the hotel strikes

meant that Law was actually singled out by them as a prime target! I think NAFF's actions subsequently in the Grunwick strike confirm this point. Simply to argue that the union bureaucracy will sell you out is not enough. Only by recognising where they stand and what they represent can an effective fight-back be organised.

Sean Morrisroe
Secretary, Hotel & Catering National Action Committee,
c/o 265 Seven Sisters Rd,
Finsbury Park,
London N4.

Socialist Challenge EVENTS

DARLINGTON. Fortnightly forums held on Tuesdays, 7.30pm, public library, 19 July: 'What is press freedom?'

NORTH WEST

For details of activities in the NW write or ring the Manchester Socialist Challenge Centre, Third Floor, 14 Piccadilly, Manchester 1, 061-236 2252.
Open Tuesday 6-8pm, Thursday 8-10pm, Saturday 10-1pm. Room available for meetings. Duplicating services.

MANCHESTER. Series of educational talks for readers.
Thursday 21 July, 'Which Road to Socialism - The Debate in the CP'.
Thursday 4 August, 'The Crisis in the Family'.
Thursday 18 August, 'Racism'.
Thursday 1 September, 'Need for a Revolutionary Party'.
All at the Manchester Socialist Challenge Centre at 7.30pm.

BOLTON. Why Revolutionary socialism? Sunday 17 July, Bolton Institute of Technology, Deane Rd., Bolton, 2pm. Croche. Raffle winners: Pete Sweet, Anthony Whiteside, Rita Timkin, 706, June Wilkes.

PRESTON Supporters Group. Thursday 28 July at Windsor Castle pub (nr bus station), 7.30pm.

MIDLANDS

For details of activities of local supporters contact Socialist Challenge Centre, 75b Digbeth High Street, Birmingham, (021-643 9209).
WOLVERHAMPTON. Discussion Group: 'What is Marxist Economics?' Tuesday 26 July, 7.30pm at the Vine Hotel, Broad Street, Wolverhampton.

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.

WEST & WALES

SOUTHAMPTON Readers meet fortnightly on Thursday in the Anchor pub, East Street from Thursday 28 July. For further details phone Paul at 0703-551132.

LONDON

For details of activities ring 01-263 3081, 10-5pm.

SOUTHALL. Supporters group meets fortnightly. For details phone 01-573 5095.

HOME COUNTIES

BRIGHTON. Forum, 'Fighting the Transport Cuts', Thursday 7 July, 8pm, Springfield pub.

YORKSHIRE

YORK. Readers group meeting, 'Consciousness raising and revolutionary organisation'. Sunday 24 July, 7.30pm. Spread Eagle pub, Walmgate, York. Meeting every fortnight on Sundays at 7.30pm.

SHEFFIELD. Readers Group. Thursday 14 July, 7.30pm, The Lion Hotel, 3 Nursery Street (off the Wicker), Sheffield. Further details 0742-53156.

Rape - no sectarianism

IT WAS predictable but still disappointing to see that *Socialist Challenge* gave so little coverage to the controversy blown up over the release of the army guardman guilty of rape.

But more importantly, Dodie Weppier's article chose to take as its main thrust an argument against the women who had been the only people to directly intervene during that week on the grounds that they were politically confused about Wages for Housework. But given the fact that there are far more important points which the article did not take up it could only appear sectarian — coloured with a slight guilt that not one revolutionary group had managed to take up

the issue.

One example is the way in which the judges saw the 'career' of a soldier as infinitely more important than the 'career' of a woman singer, never mind the injury and humiliation she suffered.

Can one also imagine the reaction in the capitalist press if instead of being a member of Her Majesty's Forces the man in question had been a young Jamaican from South London?

Socialist Challenge has a responsibility to educate its readers on how to take up this issue; not by concentrating on stiffer sentences as Jack Ashley did (although it should be noted that Cuban soldiers were executed in Angola for rape) but through the sort of direct action the Women Against Rape took in occupying a court-room where the three Appeal Court judges were, to demand their removal.

After all the rape case exploded the same week as a report was released, which got much less publicity, showing that women stand a one in five lesser chance than men at an Appeal Court hearing. Such facts could have been used to explode the myths created by legislation against sex discrimination. After all it will be these same judges who will administer these laws!
Socialist Challenge could have taken up the question of the necessity to defend women from harassment, assault and rape in general.

Pope & Pill

AMONG the big capitalist trusts on whose boards sit representatives of the Catholic Church are pharmaceutical companies manufacturing the birth control pill.

According to the *Washington Post* of 12.10.76:

'The Vatican has a financial interest in the Istituto Farmacologico Serono which manufactures the pill. The president of the institute is Prince Giulio Pacelli, nephew of Pope Pius XII.'

R. HATCHER [Birmingham]

near future is of a small group immediately around Sid French with as little prospect of a political future outside the CP as the Swedish pro-Moscow split-off reported in *Socialist Challenge*.
RON WARD [Leeds]

In many parts of the country women are now unable to go out after certain times for fear of men molesting them. The need to organise in the communities against such attacks and the great step forward it would be if every town or city had a Women Against Rape group to take up cases of women getting the sort of treatment they do in the courts, to fight for compensation for those women assaulted, to organise to protect women in the localities etc. are all issues *Socialist Challenge* should have taken up given the prominence that the unfree press, radio and TV gave the issue.

JOHN GRAHAM [Birmingham]

Carrillo's book

WE ARE writing to confirm that, as suggested in your introduction to the extracts printed from Santiago Carrillo's 'Eurocommunism and the State' (in *Socialist Challenge* last week), we shall be publishing the English edition of this book later this year. We would therefore be grateful if you would apply to us for permission before printing any further passages from it.

NICHOLAS JACOBS
JEFF SKELLEY
[Lawrence & Wishart, London]

Docherty & sexual liberation

Thomas Docherty was a very well paid manager, whose standard of living soared way beyond the wildest expectations of most of us. His pay was not subject to restraint. He received big allowances. He is famous. And football managers do come and go quite a lot.

So, many *Socialist Challenge* readers may be tempted to dismiss the sacking of Tommy Docherty as manager of Manchester United last week as not worth a second thought.

But this would be a mistake. Docherty's contract was not terminated because he was a failure as a manager. On the contrary, since he took over in December 1972, Manchester United has gone from being in danger of relegation to victory in the F.A. Cup Final just seven weeks ago. The 'Doc' was sacked for changing sexual partners.

The issue is a simple one: Do Mary Brown and Tommy Docherty

Big Flame's account of the history of the Troops Out Movement (*Socialist Challenge* no.4) is rather inaccurate. I have been in the TOM for some time as an independent, a member of the ROG, and now as an IMG member, and in my experiences very few individuals were immune from the charge of sectarianism. 'Independents' were sometimes the worst offenders, and I am not impressed by Big Flame's pious claim to purity. The claim itself is a piece of sectarianism. I will resist the temptation to drag out of my files the several occasions when Big Flame members happily trampled on the principles of basic democracy; the point is not to rake up the past, but to admit and understand past mistakes.

It is important to grasp that the basis of the 'sectarian divisions' which Big Flame talks about (some were genuine political differences, and nothing to do with sectarianism) is not, as Big Flame suggests, Trotskyists. It is not true that 'the antagonists were all Trotskyist groupings' — we were all at each other's throats at one time or another. Nor is it true that any group I have been associated with 'attempted to win control in order to impose its own particular strategy'. Trotskyists — whatever our shortcomings — defend Ireland's struggle because we recognise the principle of national self-determination.

The TOM did not collapse because of attempts to 'suppress activities which were not a

priority'. It would be a great mistake to conclude that we should abandon our concentration on the demand 'Troops Out Now'. TOM collapsed because of our inability to defend democracy in our ranks, and to rescue the group from the domination of one particular comrade. I suggest that Big Flame takes an honest look at its own responsibility for that failure. One final point: in the battle fought by several women comrades against the sexism we faced in the TOM, Big Flame did not distinguish itself from any other tendency by any noticeable support.

I hope this letter is understood not as an attack on anyone, but merely as an invitation to honesty. I am confident that we can all learn from our past mistakes, and that in particular, with the help of a few socialist-feminists, we can in future avoid the male-dominated atmosphere of the TOM.

CELIA HOLT [London]



ly have the right to live together if they so choose without being generalised by society?

The capitalist media focus all their attention upon the 'abandoned', not because they care about sexual love, but in order to strengthen the repressive attitudes towards sexuality that are so necessary to the maintenance of the family.

For Marxists, however, the family is not an institution worthy of much praise. At best it forms some kind of partial refuge from the emotional and sexual desert of capitalist society. And from this point of view, of course, we must defend the right of the family to exist (as in the case of families split by reactionary immigration legislation) where it is the wish of all the people involved.

But the rest of the story is that the family-relation is for most people, especially women and children, a repressive burden, a fountain of possessiveness, jeal-

ousy, repressed sexuality, alienated sex, and often violence. This is not to deny that joy and love are ever experienced in the family. But even where there is such 'compensation' for the straitjacket of family life, it is inevitably distorted and disjointed by such a narrow and intense framework.

That is why socialists must be the best fighters in defence not only of the victims of the family and of capitalist society's reliance upon the family for the provision of our most basic emotional and physical needs, but also of the democratic right of all men, women and children to form mutually desired sexual relationships with whomever they will.

For the liberation of humanity which is our goal as revolutionaries is also a sexual liberation.

PAUL HUNTER [Birmingham]

Illustrious compromises

A bourgeois geriatric obsessively stares at the mummified remains of his Renaissance predecessors. As he leaves the tomb he is gunned down. *Illustrious Corpses* (Cadaveri Eccelenti) is Francesco Rosi's latest film, reviewed by CHRIS ROSEBLADE.

The dead man was a judge, an 'excellency' and thus he too is an 'excellent' — or in English — an 'illustrious' corpse.

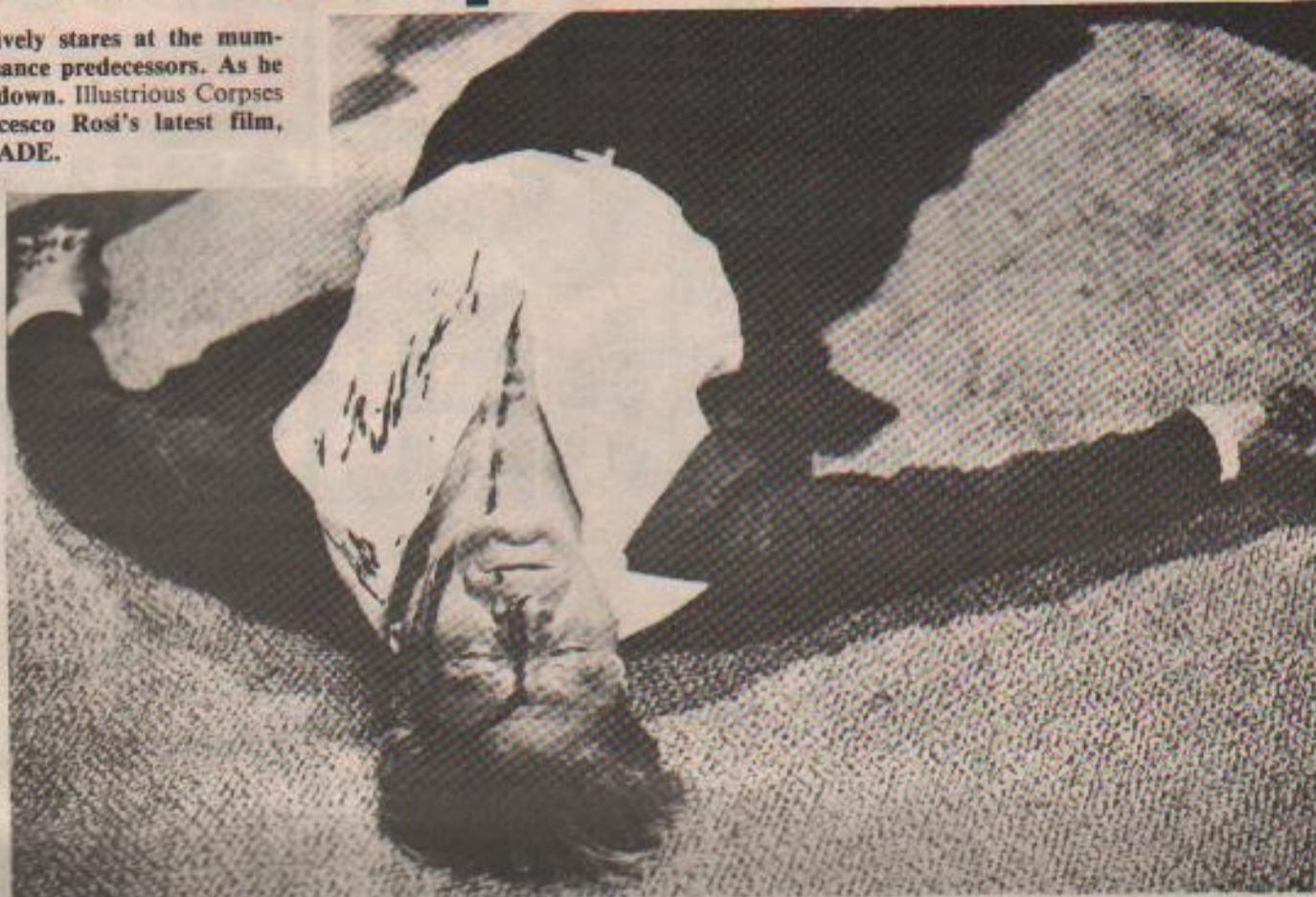
In Rosi's hands the investigation of a murder moves resolutely towards the heart of darkness in Italian politics. In 120 minutes this remarkable film draws together the threads of individual murder and social crisis through the interwoven themes of irrationality, death, and politics until it demonstrates that for an irrational society in crisis, politics is murder and civil war.

HISTORY

History is everywhere in *Illustrious Corpses*, not merely because Rosi enjoys filming churches, tombs, courts and Renaissance towns; but because it highlights the uniqueness of contemporary Italy — a capitalist society overlaid with the powerful residue of feudal institutions and attitudes. Rosi creates a rich tapestry of Italian society, a compound of feudalism and imperialism, industrialisation and Dante's *Inferno* reborn in the ghettos of today's Naples.

The judge's funeral is Italy. The forces of reaction gather in a magnificent Catholic church — mafiosi, the chiefs of staff, the magistracy; props of the old order confronted by a massive demonstration of the new. 'Mafioso, mafioso' the left chant at the corpse. A signal, and the army moves in.

Black horses draw an ancient black hearse through a veil of smoke, roiling debris, confetti and thunder. These are not merely images of corruption or surrealist self-indulgence, but a real scene in a town whose funerals are archaic, where the refuse workers are on strike, leaflets are everywhere, and the thunder is the roar of airforce



jets preparing to intervene against the proletariat.

As the murders and the investigations continue the political crisis matures. The Christian Democrat government goes into crisis, the parliamentary regime is discredited, mass demonstrations take place, the army continually intervenes, the President appeals for 'law and order' and the detective is reassigned to the political police, who are convinced that the murders are the work of the far left.

Through a labyrinth of blind-alleyes the detective eventually stumbles upon the truth. What can he do? In desperation he turns to the only force in Italian society not corrupted by office — the Communist Party (PCI).

Already he has received ample proof that they too are hopelessly compromised.

The Christian Democrats call them 'friends'. One famous novelist announces: 'Yes I am a bourgeois Catholic communist. But at least I've been one for ages. I haven't just hopped on the bandwagon.' Yet the detective is a reactionary and cannot believe that the PCI will not reveal the truth behind the 'illustrious corpses' — 'I'm not saying start the revolution before the counter-revolution, just let parliament know.'

Relentlessly the axis of the film has shifted from 'whodunit' to the question of how the left can avoid another Chile. The crisis reaches breaking point and

the bourgeoisie perpetrate the ultimate provocation. There is a massive PCI demonstration; the Party leadership is faced with a clear dilemma. Should they reveal the truth about the illustrious corpses or defend their illustrious compromise with the bourgeois order?

The chanting of the masses soars. The PCI leader demands of his comrades: 'Do you want head-on collision, civil war? Arouse the masses? That's what they want!'

So for the PCI 'the truth is not always revolutionary'. The roar of the masses reaches a crescendo, the camera focusses on a painting of a demonstration, the red flag and the face of Lenin are everywhere — the credits roll

past.

Rosi has made a political thriller which surpasses *Z*, most of all in that it offers a warning and not an epitaph. Rosi is politically confused and one can criticise the film both dramatically and politically — the far left for example are seen throughout the film as playboys or tools of the ultra-right.

But Rosi understands one thing: ultimately bourgeois society does depend on conspiracy and murder. The bourgeoisie are prepared, the working class is not. His knowledge and his confusions epitomise the Italian left today, trapped between the historic compromise and the impotent far left.

COMMENT

No more insults, please

I HOPE that John Boran read Jane Clarke's 'Comment' in *Socialist Challenge* (30 June) on the page opposite his letter in which he claimed that my review of Janco's *Private Vices, Public Virtues* was 'pretentious verbiage'. Because she at least showed that there's no point in merely throwing insults at each other. There are serious matters under discussion here. And surely the minimum requirement is accuracy. I therefore also hope that no-one will be put off the Janco film by Boran's attitude, because his letter isn't accurate. It neither represents my review nor the film accurately. For example, the film does not show 'women naked first, men second'. The first naked body we see is that of the Prince, private parts included, and that is very deliberate precisely because Janco wishes to challenge conventional expectations.

The trouble, judging from the list of films Boran approves of, is that he is apparently unable to respond to this kind of challenge, unable too, to respond to the level of metaphor and symbol which the film engages. And in this he is actually far behind the responses even of many bourgeois critics, who at least recognise that such films cannot be taken literally, even if they then bend over backwards to avoid the implications.

Aesthetic production works on many levels. A failure to recognise this not only leads to barren criticism. It also leads to Stalinist cultural policies.

MICHAEL CHANAN (London)

COMMENT

Film in struggle

MANY THANKS for the article on Film from the Clyde printed in your paper. Apart from *Newline* yours was the only paper on the left to include a mention of a film financed almost entirely by the shipyard workers of the Upper Clyde and shipyard and dockworkers from Denmark.

The left in Britain, unlike the rest of Europe, seems very slow to recognise the importance of working class film in recording the history and struggles of the labour movement, and in breaking through the monopoly of television in audio-visual communication. We therefore very much appreciate your paper's lead in recognising the important role of film in the struggle to preserve and extend the means of communication for the working class.

We hope you will continue to print articles on the implications and potential of working class film, and thank you again for your coverage of Film from the Clyde.

JULIA, Cinema Action (London)

Barbarism on wheels

At one point in *Life of the Automobile*, Ilya Ehrenberg states: 'This is not a novel. This is a stock-market bulletin and this is a political history'. Certainly the ambitious scope of this unique piece of revolutionary writing defies the conventional categories of bourgeois literature.

It is this explosion of tradition, to express a new and all-embracing materialist content, which makes Ehrenberg's 'novel' one of the most important literary products of any post-revolutionary society. At the same time it manages to be both fiction and non-fiction, novel and documentary, fantasy and reality.

STYLE

Yet its greatness is diminished, not by anything within it, but the knowledge that Ehrenberg so rapidly became a subservient upholder of the barren tenets of 'socialist realism'. Its publication in the Soviet Union in 1929, must have been one of the last flourishes of a genuinely free, post-revolutionary culture.

This was soon annihilated by a vulgar Stalinist artistic dogma. From then on, Soviet artists were compelled to adopt even Stalin's bankrupt style of writing and expression, to remain alive.

Nevertheless *Automobile* must still be assessed in its own terms. It began from the historical materialist premise that the fast-growing capitalist car industry was global, expansive, inter-linked and totally destructive of all the social relations into which it penetrated. The book is a savage attack on the cruel,

anarchic conditions of the world car industry. But it is much more than that.

Ehrenberg asked himself the question: How and through what forms can I express this evolving totality in all its facets? The forms to hand were too limited, too parochial and restrictive.

So he dispensed with the conventions, such as a central character or 'hero', chronological or geographical continuity and 'plot' in the accepted sense. What we are left with is a series of interlinked but shifting tableaux, high-lighting in stunning and often poetic detail the world auto industry in all its guises.

'VILLAIN'

But the whole is held together by an essential materialist worldview — the only real 'villain' is the motor car. This for the writer, was the stark embodiment of twentieth century capitalism. People make things, but they are immediately dominated by them — Marx's concept of 'alienation' comes to full fruition in new and startling ways.

We see, for example, the manager of the rubber plantation in Malaya, dogged by the nightmare that his wife and all his property is turning to evil-smelling rubber. The various commodities connected with the

by CARL GARDNER

motor-car swamp and invade everyone's life.

We see, too, the gambler, Citroen, locked in battle with his mentor Ford. We witness the first victim of an auto accident, driven to destruction by his own vehicle. We live with the numberless workers on the grinding assembly lines, tied to that same car by invisible, economic cords.

We see the suicidal stock-broker, destroyed by the same crash; the butcher, Churchill, carving up the world market; the lonely engineer; the nineteenth century inventor; the bloodied plantation-slave and the omnigamete. And all tied together by a real motif — the gleaming, glittering, murdering automobile.

CRITICISM

If one could have any criticism it would be that this rich panorama excludes the mass resistance to the barbarity of the unfettered

rule of wheel and piston, which took place even in the 'twenties. The only labour dispute ends in death, and presumably defeat.

Ehrenberg's workers are passive and numb. Of course this was before the momentous days of struggle, in the mid-thirties, when US labour came of age in the car industry. But the Italian Fiat workers' councils remain forgotten.

Nevertheless this is an incomparable, socialist classic, indicating once again that Marxism need in no way stifle creative writing.

It shows, too, that a revolution in form as well as content is the only starting point for revolutionary art. As such, nearly 50 years later, it leaves most contemporary novelists wallowing in a superceded literary antiquity. Truly, this is not a novel. For after Ehrenberg, the novel was, in a real sense, dead.

The Life of the Automobile, by Ilya Ehrenberg, is published by Pluto at £2.70.



AARDEN CINEMA

Jackson Crescent, Hulme, Manchester.
Tel: 061-226 1153

The Battle of Chile

Part 1 — The Insurrection of the Bourgeoisie
Part 2 — The Coup d'Etat

2 complete performances each day, both parts
2pm and 7pm, 17-23 July

'Not only the best films about Allende and the coup d'etat, but two of the best documentary films ever made, changing our concepts of political documentary with a framework so accessible that they deserve the largest audience.' (Scott Meek)

and
25-28 July Part 1 at 6.30pm
at
Part 2 at 8.30pm

25 Tottenham Street, London W1. Tel: 637 9306/9

THE OTHER CINEMA

Socialist Challenge

Abortion emergency

ACT NOW TO BURY THE BILL

'Free family planning is nothing more than sex on the rates.' This is the profound view of Sir Stephen McAden MP, one of the leading anti-abortionists in the House of Commons.

And in the Commons such opinions are treated seriously. Consequently McAden is deputy chairperson of the Standing Committee currently in session for over 24 hours at a stretch to consider William Benyon's anti-abortion Bill.

If its supporters have their way, the Bill will be ready for a third and final reading in the House of Commons on 15 July.

Since the Homeless Bill was shifted out of the Standing Committee with suspicious speed, the anti-abortionists have used every trick in the book to shove through Benyon's attacks on abortion rights.

NAC Emergency Public Meeting, Friday, 15 July at 7.30pm, Central Hall, Westminster.

Just how concerned Parliament really is about democratic debate is evident in the treatment handed out to the detailed amendments that pro-abortion MPs have made to the Bill. To date, these manoeuvres haven't been successful.

Amendments based on detailed medical arguments presented by the British Medical Association

were lost. So were those which sought to cut out Benyon's proposals for increased police access to doctors' files.

As many as 80 amendments have been quickly disposed of in one sitting — often being curtly ruled out of order. By relying on this method, the pro-abortion MPs have been forced to amend a Bill they publicly oppose.

If the anti-abortionists don't succeed in pile driving their way through the Standing Committee, their next ploy will be to fight for extra time after Parliament's summer recess. To get such time requires the co-operation of the Labour Government, and accordingly the National Abortion Campaign is making an all-out effort to demonstrate to the Government just how widespread is the opposition to

Benyon's measures.

The week leading up to NAC's emergency meeting on 15 July was filled with intensive campaigning. Thousands of leaflets were distributed at the Grunwick mass picket and direct actions planned for the entire week.

Whatever happens in Parliament on Friday, it is such actions fought outside which will decide the attitude of the Government. How to take this fight throughout the working class will be discussed at the emergency meeting called by NAC.

Socialist Challenge readers across the country are urged to travel to London on Friday so that their experience in fighting for women's control over their fertility can provide the basis for launching an even broader campaign in the coming months.

GAY NEWS

CRUCIFIED!

'Kill a queer for Christ' is the horrible slogan under which the anti-gay movement in the USA operates. Last Monday's verdict at the Old Bailey which found Denis Lemon and Gay News guilty of libel could herald the beginning of such a campaign in Britain unless the rights of homosexuals are immediately defended.

Mary Whitehouse insisted the charge as part of her campaign to strengthen 'family morality' and capitalist values in general.

The Crown then took its case. The prosecutor stated its case, Mr John Smyth: 'We have freedom of speech, which means that you can say anything about religion...within the limits of decent controversy.'

How often have we heard this one from the State? You have the

right to picket...so long as you don't stop scabs. You have the right to join a trade union...as long as your employer agrees. You have a right to be gay...as long as you don't challenge any fundamental assumptions about sexuality.

In fact you have the right to do anything—as long as the State, with its judges, police and courts, agree with you.

Sheer disbelief at this ludicrous charge and verdict are not sufficient. Reverse the verdict! Quash the sentence of Denis Lemon and Gay News! For the rights of gays to organise and express their views without State harassment!

Defend Gay News. Send donations to GN Fighting Fund, 1A Normand Gardens, Greyhound Road, London W 14 9SB.

AS WE GO TO PRESS: Judge King-Hamilton has sentenced Denis Lemon to nine months suspended and fined Gay News £1000.

Cash transfusion wanted

Socialist Challenge has been described as: 'a professional, well researched newspaper, far broader based than its socialist rivals'. Not our words but those of the London Evening Standard on 8 July. Now you've got to believe us!

The fact that Socialist Challenge is professionally produced, well researched, and more importantly broadly based, has no doubt helped to maintain the flow of new subscriptions.

We set ourselves the target of £600 in new subscriptions from the launch on 9 June to the end of September. To date £430 has come in, so we are confident that the target will be reached. Students should remember that for £1.50 you can receive the next 12 issues direct through through the post to your door during the long summer vacation.

For the paper to survive into the winter months we need to do more than build the subscriptions — the £1,800 fund drive

dragon has to be slayed by 30 September. An oversight in the last issue only recorded one week's total rather than the cumulative figure. In fact after two weeks we had received £281.93. To be sure to deal a mortal blow to the dragon we need an average of £130 per week until the end of September.

This week's £117.38 is below the average needed, but because of good responses in the previous weeks we keep on line for the £1,800. After three weeks the cumulative total is £399.31.

WARNING

Warning signs should be flashing. The dragon has barely begun to bleed and holidays in July and August mean that many of our readers will not have cash to spare — but no matter how much please send it in. If you are sunning yourself on the beach as you read this then think about

those militants on the streets selling the paper. Instead of the next pint or ice cream, send the money to Socialist Challenge.

The normal distribution outlets for magazines and papers are not available to journals like Socialist Challenge. We rely for the most part on our readers to sell the paper. If there is no group of SC supporters organised and selling the paper in your area then why not start one?

Begin by taking a few extra papers to sell to your friends and other militants. Keen readers in Chelmsford, Exeter and Nelson are already doing this. We will supply the papers post free.

Some newsagents, however, are willing to take revolutionary papers. Supporters in West London went to Hounslow, where as yet we have no regular sales

pitch. They visited all the newsagents and found two prepared to sell Socialist Challenge. So now the paper is available from: Patel's, 134 Heath Road, Hounslow, and Cromwell newsagent, Cromwell Road, Hounslow.

FUND DRIVE

For the Fund Drive this week, our thanks to:

R. Molo	48.00
I. Fullerton	5.00
A. Adler	1.25
T. Hooley	1.00
Coventry supporters	5.00
Bristol supporters	30.00
Reading supporters	15.00
Gravesend reader	2.00
South East London meeting collection	9.13
TOTAL	£117.38

Socialist Challenge

BUILD A SOCIALIST OPPOSITION FOR A UNITED REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

Subscribe now!

Increased postal charges mean that we have had to raise the subscription cost. But they are still exceptional value.
Domestic: 6 months, £3.75; 12 months £7.50
Abroad: Airmail, £12.50. Surface, £9 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.

