

Socialist Challenge

● The Labour Party conference voted by a two to one majority to reject all forms of wage restraint and instructed the NEC to campaign against the 5 per cent norm.

● It is perfectly clear from Callaghan's response that neither he nor the Labour government are going to accept this decision by the conference. In fact all the signs are that 'Cabinet ministers against the Labour Party' will soon be busy launching a dirty counter-offensive.

● For members of the Labour Party committed to party policy there are two intertwined tasks. The first is to utilise the local, regional and national machinery of the party to campaign against the 5 per cent norm.

This means backing all strikes which challenge the pay policy. It means NEC members and local Labour parties mobilising support for solidarity actions and picketing.

Secondly, a campaign to get rid of Callaghan and the Five Percenters from the leadership of the Labour Party becomes an important priority. They must be replaced with people who are prepared to accept the decisions of the Labour Party conference.

True, there will be a massive witch-hunt against those who wage such a campaign. Democracy is fine provided it goes against the left. If the latter makes gains then it can simply be discarded. This law of bourgeois democracy should find no place in the Labour Party.

● Callaghan has challenged the unions. What is your solution, he has demanded. Healey has threatened further unemployment and union-bashing, using the example of the defeat inflicted on the FBU strike last winter.

Callaghan's challenge will not be taken up by the

union leaders — for the simple reason that they have no other alternative. But militants in the unions have a responsibility to organise a nationally co-ordinated opposition.

● For there is an alternative way of dealing with the crisis. But it requires socialist measures which will please neither the City of London nor the International Monetary Fund. Some of these are discussed on our centre-pages this week. Others will be discussed in our pages in future issues.

● The central slogan of Callaghan, Healey, Foot and the other Five Percenters is an old one: we represent the nation. We are for the 'national interest'.

The very idea of a 'national interest' is clearly ludicrous. For the interests of the overwhelming bulk of the population [those who sell their labour power] can never be the same as those of a minority which owns and controls the banks, building companies, insurance and mortgage firms, defence industries, etc.

The Labour government acts in the interests of this minority which controls Britain. It puts their interests before those of the class which votes it to power.

● What is needed is an alternative national plan to beat the crisis. Such a plan could strengthen the working class politically. For it would be based on satisfying the needs of a majority of the people of this country.

The left social-democratic leaders in the Cabinet are either engaged in sordid compromises [Benn] or are busy buttressing Callaghan's position [Foot]. It is clear that a fightback will have to be organised at the base of the Labour Party to remove the Five Percenters. We shall aid that fight in every way possible.

CALLAGHAN MUST GO!!!

All out with Ford workers — Weds. 11 Oct.
Official demonstration — assemble Tower Hill 2pm.
Smash the 5% limit — 35 hours now!

EDITORIAL

Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.
Editorial 01-359 8160/9, Distribution/Advertising 01-359 8371.

Jilted Jim and the do-nothings

THE FORD strike injected an element of reality into the Labour Party conference. Callaghan and friends had planned the conference to be a rousing, pre-election rally. A bit of rhetoric, lots of Tory-bashing, and the theme of 'unity'.

The Ford workers exploded these plans by striking when they did. Their example gave heart to other workers throughout the country. It prodded the union leaderships into action.

The result was there for all to see. The 5 per cent was decisively rejected. The exultant crooner of the TUC conference sat dejected on the platform. Healey looked extremely discomfited. The Financial Times was angry beyond belief. The votes against the 5 per cent were 'know-nothing' votes cast by a 'rabble'.

Some of the language deployed by Callaghan, Healey and Foot implied that the Ford workers and the trade unionists in the hall at Blackpool were morons. Jilted Jim simply refused to understand how he could have been discarded so rapidly and without much ceremony.

NOT OUR CRISIS

The reasons are simple. Growing sections of workers are refusing to accept that the crisis of the system is their responsibility. They are doing so in deeds rather than words.

Their union leaders are hurrying to reassure the bosses and the government that the unions are as loyal defenders of the 'national interest' as anyone else. But this or that group of workers is a 'special case'. The two arguments go together.

This is a load of rubbish, of course. And unless militants begin to understand that there is no such thing as a 'national interest' in a society divided on the basis of class, the bosses will always have the final laugh.

No, it is not the workers or those who fight with them who are the morons or the 'know-nothings'. It is those who believe that they can deceive workers all the time who should be classed in that particular category.

It is the leaders of the Labour Party who know that their government is wrong, but refuse to fight back, who are even worse than the supposedly 'know-nothings'. For they do know something, but they do nothing.

When Callaghan shouts: 'What's your alternative, then?', the do-nothings stay silent. It is this silence which has now become oppressive.

What did Tony Benn feel as the conference rejected Callaghan's policies? More to the point, what will he do? Is he, the firm believer in the authority of Labour Party conferences, going to defend his party or the government?

Cynicism and apolitical manoeuvring can go so far and no further. Does Benn realise this, or is he totally hypnotised by the prospect of a peaceful transition to the leadership of the Labour Party?

PATHETIC JESTER

As for Foot, he is displaying clear signs of political and physical senility. A Falstaffian figure, he now appears pathetic. One could almost hear some of his former friends shouting at him: 'Get thee away old man, white hairs! become a pathetic jester'.

Where Benn evades, Foot justifies. Where Benn resorts to manoeuvres, Foot is blatantly apologetic. The difference in tactics is explained by the fact that one hopes to become the leader of the Labour Party, whereas the other has already lost the battle.

It is obvious that a broad-based fightback against Labour's policies is urgently needed both in the unions and at the base of the Labour Party itself. But this fight can only be successfully waged if it transcends the limits of Labourist politics.

In other words, the battle to defeat Callaghan and the 'do-nothings' cannot simply be fought on the terrain of the Labour Party. A contest will be necessary in the broader arena of the class struggle. The relationship between the two has been vividly demonstrated by the Ford strike. It is one which we should be seeking to institutionalise.

FORD WEEK TWO

Would you buy a used pay policy from this man?



FORD BOSS Terence Beckett: 'A species of tetanus'

SIR TERENCE Beckett, former British Army officer in India and Malaya and now boss of Ford UK, made a speech last week in London to the World Planning Congress.

Or, to be more precise he made two speeches. GEOFF BELL explains.

The first speech had been written before the Ford strike started. Copies of it had already been distributed.

In that speech Beckett attacked what he called 'government interference' in industry — including pay negotiations. He termed such interference 'a species of tetanus'.

But before he rose to speak, Sir Terence changed his mind. In the second speech — the one he actually made — all criticism of the government or its 'interference' in pay negotiations was dropped. Instead the Ford boss took up a more familiar union-bashing theme.

So instead of Sir Terence attacking the government for insisting on a rigid pay policy, he attacked Ford workers for striking against that policy.

As if such a change in line, such an extraordinary example of double think, wasn't enough, Sir Terence then went on to attack the unions on the grounds of morality.

He said that union decisions to make the walk-outs at Ford official represented the 'breaking of solemn promises'. What's more, such actions 'threatened the whole fabric of society'.

To say the least, such

righteous pontificating appears somewhat uncharitable. This year, for instance, it is estimated that Ford UK will make a profit of something like £100 million.

This profit comes from the labour of the workers on the shop floor. In Ford UK there are 57,000 of them. If you work it out, that means that this year alone each Ford worker will have made a profit for the bosses and shareholders of over £5,000.

And while they have produced this enormous wealth, the workers themselves have suffered a dramatic decline in their living standard.

Between October 1974 and October 1977 the basic weekly rate of a 'B' grade Ford worker — the largest single category — rose by 36.6 per cent. In the same period the retail price index shot up by 64.8 per cent.

Bringing the comparison up to this October, the union estimates that Ford workers will have experienced a 20 per cent decline in the real value of their take-home pay in the last four years.

Faced with such facts, it is hardly surprising that Terence Beckett resisted the not very strong temptation to discuss the merits of the Ford workers' claim and instead wandered off into the realms of morality and the 'fabric of society'.

Yet Ford Motor Company has never actually been renowned for its sense of integrity. Henry Ford II in April 1977 can be cited:

'Nobody's making a con-

sumer buy anything. He (sic) buys of his own free will. Now if we build a lousy car, he is getting screwed. And we build lots of lousy cars, no question about it, can't deny it.'

Or if Beckett wants to talk about the evilness of arbitrary actions — as he did when condemning the unions for breaking promises — there is the following 'advice' handed down to Ford workers in Dagenham last year:

'You will know that the new Cortina is one of the best selling cars we have ever built. In order to improve the supply situation we have advised your shop stewards of our intention to run the Cortina line at 55 jobs per hour instead of the present 45 jobs per hour'.

Indeed, the speed-up of the assembly line without consultation is a world wide practice of the Ford Motor Company, whose UK chairperson now has the cheek to prattle on about the value of consultation, negotiation, etc.

When the Ford bosses aren't droning on about the need for civilised behaviour — and Henry Ford I, with his support for fascism, was an expert on good conduct — their favourite pastime is to attack their workers for not working hard enough.

For instance, Henry Ford I had a unique solution which would permit his employees to work in the rain:

'We have found ways to cut down corrosion and to limit deterioration by electroanalysis, ways to prevent rust,

Rust-proof metals are being developed, we are finding ways to preserve wood....

The point is, if there is enough thinking done, there is no reason why we could not do the same with the human body. There is no law against it. The great problem is to get people in the mental attitude where they are willing to try and do it...'

More seriously, the current pastime of Ford UK is to compare their British workers with those elsewhere and to say how much more quickly a car is produced in Belgium, say, or Germany than in Britain.

It is difficult to establish the exact truth of all this, but there is some evidence. For instance, the most 'productive' Ford plants in Europe are those at Bordeaux in France, which also happen to be the most automated. It is also true that there are fewer unofficial strikes in Ford Germany than in Ford Britain — because unofficial strikes are illegal.

But if Ford management wish to discuss such comparisons they have an easy option.

For the past year the unions have been asking for the full figures on productivity, employment, and wage rates throughout Ford Europe. Just as often management have refused to make public such details.

When shop floor workers at Ford UK make over £5,000 per head for Ford bosses, the latter's unwillingness to discuss the real facts about the 'unproductive' British worker is understandable.

OUR POLICIES

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

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

1 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.

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

2 One 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 the 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.

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

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

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

(Delete if not applicable)

NAME

ADDRESS

Send to Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper St, London N1.



Working for Ford in West Germany A 19th century horror story

IT'S A summer's afternoon and the shifts have not long changed. On the shop floor the temperature is over 30 degrees Centigrade and already several workers have fallen ill with the heat. No replacements have been provided, so their mates

take on their sick comrades' work quotas.

The heat and noise are unbearable, but yesterday's promise of more breaks has come to nothing; production has if anything been increased.

Beneath the racist-daubed walls, and under the eyes of the management, a sweat-soaked workforce grapples with new output targets and hangs on — for the next break, the end of the shift, the weekend.

A leaflet arrives and the workers struggle to read it; it's a battle, for nearly all are immigrants and the language is strange, and production goes on, so it's one sentence at a time — but worth the effort — maybe news of a new break!

'Because of the new sales situation', the leaflet explains, 'the company requires full production on every Saturday from now until Christmas'.

The readers are dismayed — it's not certain yet, but there is a strong probability that they will lose their weekends for the next four months. There's even a management call for starting a 'special shift' — on Sundays!

Something from the nineteenth century, perhaps, or a Grunwick horror story? No, the above scene took place six weeks ago in the pride of modern capitalism, the giant Ford complex in Cologne, West Germany.

MICK HODGE, who was an assembly line worker in this plant until last month, describes what it was like.

It's in the stench and heat of this factory that 31,000 workers create the production figures that are the toast of capitalists and stock-in-trade of hack journalists everywhere.

Henry Ford rakes in the cash and urges other members of his international 'family' to follow suit. Once again we hear of the legendary German workers, eager and industrious, so pockets full of money, etc.

A good time, then, to look at what those production figures are really made of!

A Granada in less than thirty hours means a line whose speed is constantly changed without consultation; it means working on both sides of the track at once because your mate is sick; it means jumping clear of the cars that ram into each other as they are so close together on the finishing band.

STOPPAGE

It's a lost break because of a mechanical stoppage; a 35-minute canteen queue in a 30-minute dinner break; and not just walking quickly but actually running. And it is also losing every weekend from now till Christmas!

Those production figures are, however, made of much more than just working quickly. They are made of something much more basic, and of vital consequence to workers everywhere — they are made of sacrificed rights.

DISUNITY

The whole factory is permeated by disunity and fear: 'fear of the poverty of the Turkish or South Italian village where over 90 per cent of the track workers have been shipped from (and where their families remain), for dismissal means instant return;

'fear of the hundreds of workers queuing before dawn at the employment office, for Ford deliberately site their plants in zones of high unemployment;

'fear of the guy down the line, a qualified electrician who is sweeping the floor and badly needs your job.

It is fear of saying anything in protest when informers are everywhere and a word is enough (for all new applicants are vetted by the political police, and in a climate where even liberals are dubbed 'terrorist sympathisers' you must be careful what leaflets and papers you read).

It is the disunity of racism, of a separate break table for Turkish workers, of the 'better jobs for Germans' approach of the management. It is the hatred that still exists following the defeated strike in 1973, when the press set the German workers against 'the foreigners'.

ENCOURAGEMENT

And it is the disorganisation of a union which, unless you study your bank statements, you might think had since disbanded.

The whole atmosphere in this supposedly 'model' car plant is nicely summed up by an incident that took place just before I left. A production manager actually punched an Italian driver in order to make him go more quickly, and called him a 'Turkish swine'!

A subsequent investigation, at which the Italian was not given access to an interpreter, deemed that the manager had only given 'encouragement', and the case was dismissed.

As many of the workers said to me: 'Ah, but in England everything is different — here they can do what they like!'

Police 5

A POLICEMAN in a North London borough was recently assaulted by a lad 'resisting arrest'. The policeman came out of it rather badly and had to be taken to hospital. The local paper sent a journalist along to interview him and write the usual story of our 'plucky bobbies', 'law and order', etc.

The policeman revealed that what made the attack even worse was that this was the second injury he'd suffered. 'What was the first?', queried the intrepid journalist.

'Well', replied the copper, 'I shouldn't be telling you this, but...' Gradually the tale unfolded. In July he'd been in a training session with the new post-Lewisham riot-shields when he had a brick hurled at him.

He should have used the shield to defend himself. He couldn't. Result: he was badly hurt and lost his hearing in one ear. This part of the story will not be appearing in the local paper.

Our 'law and order' correspondent writes: I am absolutely disgusted at the needless risks which policemen have to undergo in the course of their duties. There should be an immediate end to all such training sessions.

Power in the Darkness

OUR WEST Midland correspondent writes:

'Phil and I went to a Tom Robinson concert on Monday. Sold plenty of Revolutions [a reference to the new revolutionary socialist youth paper which was such a hit at Carnival 2].

'After a tremendous hand for 'Glad to be Gay' you could see the bouncers thinking, 'We've got a right lot of queers here'. As he started to play 'Power in the Darkness' the bouncers began to beat up a kid who had got up to dance.

'Robinson stopped playing. When they wouldn't leave the kid alone, Tom screamed out, 'stand up and fight for your rights'. And the place exploded! The kids rushed the stage. They trampled the bouncers out of the way — started giving the clenched fist.

'We were in the balcony and none of the kids would sit down when ordered to do so by the bouncers. We got into a fight and the kids came and got us out of it. I haven't felt so confident about where we're going for a long time.'

Our music critic comments: Neither have I. Keep up the good work, Phil and friend.

Revisionism at the COI?

THE CENTRAL Office of Information is a propaganda outfit which serves the needs of whatever government happens to be in power. A NFN reader has informed us that a vital publication of the COI is currently undergoing certain revisions.

The publication in question? A pamphlet entitled *Human Rights in Britain*. This 'reference pamphlet', as it is coyly described by Anthony Osley from the COI Reference Division, is 'intended largely for an overseas readership and will be distributed by British Information Services through British Embassies and High Commissions'.

It is intended that the pamphlet will be ready to commemorate the 13th anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1978.

A few facts which we think will not appear in this pamphlet: (a) How British oil companies, aided by Labour and Tory governments, defended 'human rights' in Zimbabwe; (b) How Britain helps the Shah of Iran; (c) How Britain aids that well-known practitioner of human rights in the Arab Gulf, the Sultan of Oman.

Finally, there is the entire record of Britain in Ireland. The ruling of the European Court on British tortures will not, we think, be included as an appendix.

Remember George Ward? d?

GEORGE WARD, the Tory employer who owns Grunwick, has been put on the Tory Party Parliamentary Candidates List. Is anyone surprised by this decision? Certainly no supporters of Labour will be particularly worried.

But opposition has come from Tory trade unionists. In a recent letter in 'News For Trade Unionists', a publication of Conservative trade unionists, a ferocious debate is raging on this issue.

A large proportion of active Tory unionists [i.e. 14 people] have demanded that Ward be removed from the list. They ask: 'How can we, as a party which allowed the formation of trade unions, introduced unemployment benefit, brought in the right to strike and peaceful picketing... identify with an employer who denied his workers certain of these rights?'

Answer: Because most Tory Party leaders were strong supporters of Ward throughout the strike. Because Thatcher had numerous meetings with him and because Ward is regarded as a champion of free enterprise. Hence he is the darling of numerous Young Conservative meetings and Tory clubs at universities.

Question: What are all you lot doing in the Tory Party anyway?

Tea without sympathy

THE POSTPONEMENT of the general election has disrupted a number of planned Tory gimmicks. One of these was to be a specially-produced biography of Tony Benn. This was full of 'atrocity' stories. Two are particularly revealing.

The first was a statistical survey of the number of cups of tea Benn drinks in a year. Since tea contains some stimulants, the conclusion is obvious. Benn is permanently in a semi-drugged state.

The second tale is more sinister. The author of this masterpiece rang up Ken Coates. Was it true that Benn was in the habit of long telephone conversations with Coates? 'I'll give you the correct answer, provided you reveal who leaked that particular one', replied Coates. But the deal wasn't on.

Could it be, as Chapman Pincher alleges in the Express, that the intelligence services are up to their usual tricks? Or was it the officer in charge of hearing tapped telephone calls?



FORD WEEK TWO

**Ford wives
'Striking
for
everyone'**



STELLA COOPER is married to a striker from the engine plant at Dagenham. 'This strike is not just for Ford workers,' Stella says. 'It's for everybody — because what's at stake is the 5 per cent.'

'It's important to try to win the strike quickly otherwise there's a danger that the strikers' wives will get divided from their husbands.'

'The longer it goes on, the more they'll worry about where the money's going to come from to feed the family, and could put pressure on their husbands to return to work.'



Ms. ADJET's husband works at Dagenham body plant. She is completely behind the strike. 'After all, it's a hard job and with prices going up the workers deserve more money.'

She doesn't think that Ford workers are a special case. 'Other workers work hard and everyone has suffered the same rising prices.'

Ford (UK) Workers Combine Even the convenors wear the claim badge



Workers lobby the union side of the Ford National Joint Negotiating Committee.

THE FORD (UK) Workers' Combine has played a major role in building support for the strike and for the £20 across the board wage claim.

'Socialist Challenge' talked to the secretary of the Combine, who wishes to remain anonymous for fear of victimisation. He explained what the Combine is about.

The Combine is made up of militant rank and file workers and stewards from every major Ford plant in the country.

There are a couple of Labour Party activists and a few members of the Communist party, IWA, SWP, IMG and Big Flame of which I'm a member. But it's dominated by none of them, most are independents.

The idea of the Combine arose after last year's pay claim. Last year's claim was for an increase of only 15 per cent on basic rates — drawn up by the convenors and officials, without consulting the shop floor.

ORGANISE

When Ford offered between 11 and 14 per cent for different grades, workers didn't feel there was anything worth fighting for.

It was clear that militants in every Ford plant had to

organise at a much earlier stage to make sure this year's claim was worth fighting for.

Two groupings of militants — the Ford Workers' Group at Dagenham and the Ford Langley Action Committee — called a national meeting in April of this year.

OPPOSITION

That meeting decided to form the Combine and fight for a simple claim with three main points — £20 across the board, five hours off the week, and no strings.

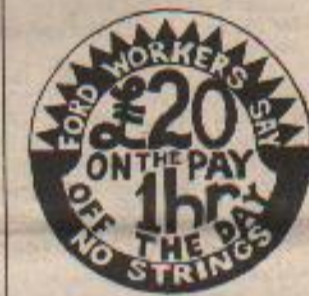
We ran up against opposition immediately led by people within the National Convenors Committee.

They wanted a claim that did not mention a definite figure but called for 'a substantial rise', to avoid confronting any future incomes policy.

The Combine organised a campaign of mass leafletting and worked for resolutions

through the shop stewards committees and the union branches.

A day before the national shop stewards conference in Coventry — called every year to finalise the claim — the convenors committee met and



decided by 13 to 12 to support the claim that we'd been pushing, which had been endorsed by several shop stewards committees.

CAMPAIGN

The next job of the Combine was to launch a campaign for the claim among Ford workers. We produced a series of leaflets, which went into all the British plants, and our badge, which is now being worn by one

in 12 Ford workers. Even the convenors began wearing them.

PLACARDS

The badge has become something of a symbol of the struggle. When Halewood first walked out, workers on the night shift produced large round placards with blow ups of the badges.

The main task of the Combine now is to prevent a sell-out through productivity deals.

The lines have been cut so much already that there's no room for more increased productivity. That's why one of our most important slogans has been 'No strings'.

What's more, you can lose a productivity bonus if the line breaks down or if there's a shortage in supplies. That could happen a lot this winter with other struggles against the 5 per cent.

But our main arguments against productivity dealing is that it would mean harder work and more unemployment.

PICKET

At a Dagenham shop stewards meeting last Tuesday,

mass picketing at Harwich — which is the port of entry for imports of Granadas, Capris and Cortinas from Germany — was rejected in favour of a slow 'official' approach.

Three days later, cars were still coming in. The Combine organised a flying picket with our own small resources — two carloads going up — and stopped it.

REGULAR

We're also pressing for regular mass meetings to keep everyone involved and informed.

We have proposed strike committees involving both stewards and active strikers, but so far this has been rejected by the plant leaderships. But we will continue to press for these.

Our third priority is to get support from other groups of workers. We have to fight the idea that we are a special case.

We are fighting against wage restraint not only for ourselves but for the whole of the working class. All sections of the class need a big wage rise.

We don't go along with the idea that just because nurses don't produce a profit for Henry Ford, that they shouldn't get a wage rise.

SUPPORT

We've produced 15,000 copies of a broadsheet explaining our case — showing how much we really earn — and explaining that we're fighting for everyone.

There's a feeling amongst Ford workers that they can do it on their own, because of their strength. But this isn't just a fight with the Company.

This is a fight with the government and the 5 per cent.

You can't take on the government as just one section of workers, no matter how strong.

This means the setting up of strike support committees.

It means pushing for workers with claims pending — like British Oxygen, Vauxhall's, NUIPE and so on — to launch struggles for their claims now and not to wait to see how we get on.

'We want an elected strike committee'

COLVILLE RAINY has been a steward for six of the nine and a half years he has worked at Fords. He is in the engineering union and in the body plant at Dagenham. He represents 400 workers on the A shift. He is also a member of the SWP.

What lies behind this explosion of rank and file militancy?

It comes from the frustration that has built up over the Labour government's attempts to impose Tory policies. For a while many workers were prepared to accept wage restraint because they believed it could bring down inflation.

Now this is seen not to be true. The real result of the government policy is a massive increase in profits — across the board, not just at Ford.

Are the high profits of Ford a big factor in people's minds?

Yes. Workers are well aware that Ford puts its prices up every 90 days. They wonder why they can't have higher wages in the same way.

Are they aware that they will have to take on the government?

They know that the government will do all in its power to impose the 5 per cent.

But do you think the present leadership of the strike is capable of winning both against the government and Fords? Do you think Fords is a special case?

No. All workers are a special case. The low profits at Leyland is the fault of the Leyland management, not the workers.

We will be fighting to get support for our strike throughout the workers' movement.

We want successful picketing of the docks, flying pickets and mass peaceful demos.

Obviously the present leadership won't carry that through. We must learn from the experience of the past few years. We will be fighting for the stewards to take the initiative.

We will be putting a resolution to the first stewards' meeting calling for the recall of the Coventry stewards conference, and getting an elected strike committee.

Will you be calling for the involvement of the mass of workers — mass picketing, regular mass meetings?

In general we will be fighting for this. When the workers come to pick up their wages and tax rebate on Thursday, we will be calling for the holding of mass meetings.

But few Ford workers live in



the vicinity of Dagenham. Many have to travel up to 30 miles. So it's not so easy.

Do you think revolutionaries should try to make a common intervention into this dispute?

Yes. But this is already happening, through the Ford (UK) Workers' Combine, which is a grouping of left-wing Ford workers.

'Pie in the sky'

'THERE'S a history of the union selling us down the river.'

BILLY JONES from the Ford body plant at Halewood on Merseyside told TOMMY HEALEY about the view from the picket line.

The Transport Union let us know three months ago that the strike was coming up. Since then — and this is where the union has fallen down — they've only had one leaflet out, telling us about the claim.

The main item is money. Secondly, the shorter working week. And the toolies here walked out for the shift allowances and holidays.

Everything has been blocked from going in or out of the plant. I've just spoken to a contractor who's been thrown out. He said no one is going in there. The strike is absolutely solid. It's really fantastic.

The strikers realise they are taking on the Labour government and not just Ford. The response has been amazing. A fortnight ago it was dead. I was talking to lads on the line and they said I was talking pie in the sky — £20 a week.

They've been so put down by

the government, and the unions have gone along with it for so long — four years now. They've really been bashed but they want something to have a goal.

There is a history of the union selling us down the river. If the unions and the shop stewards keep the strike going we'll be alright. We'll hold out and keep the morale going.

They don't involve the shop floor, though. They need to know what's going on and be involved in picketing and so on. It's a good laugh on the picket, seeing your mates. It builds confidence and solidarity.

'FORDS and the 5 per cent' was the subject of a 90 minute phone-in debate on Radio City, the Merseyside local radio station, a couple of days after the strike began.

Four out of five callers opposed the pay limit and supported the Ford strikers.

Stewards recall meeting is now vital

THE UNION side of the Ford National Joint Negotiating Committee met at Transport House last Thursday. It was the union side's first meeting since the eruption of the Ford strike.

JONATHAN SILBERMAN reports.

As delegates arrived at 10.30 in the morning, they were greeted by a vocal lobby calling for opposition to any proposed productivity dealing as a way around the 5 per cent.

'No strings — fight for the full claim', was the message to the 45 delegates who attended.

Ron Todd of the Transport and General Workers Union and head of the union side on the FNJNC reported the meeting to the press (though not to the lobbyists in the cold outside).

The meeting decided that 'there is no purpose in a meeting (with the company) unless they are prepared to bargain with us freely', he explained.

RESPONSE

Tough Toddie. That's how the press described his performance. It's going to be a long strike with the union leaders so intransigent. Fleet Street warned.

But the position of the union

leaders was not quite as militant as the popular press would have us believe.

Todd said, 'There is no use probing what the company means by productivity unless they are prepared to respond to our claim as regards the basic wage...'

Todd's original response to Ford's offer was that there was still plenty of negotiating to do. Presumably around the offer of productivity deals.

His present intransigence is not so far removed from that. The main difference being that the mood of the Ford workers will not allow him to start talking productivity until the company is prepared to move off the 5 per cent.

Moreover, Todd's report that the union side meeting had not discussed a productivity deal was only formally correct.

The main discussion had been over an approach that had been made the previous Tuesday by Ford's employee relations director, Paul Roots.

Despite the vagueness of the



RON TODD, chief T&GWU negotiator in the Ford dispute: 'These days to talk of free collective bargaining is to sound revolutionary'.

offer and the effects of productivity deals in lengthening the dole queues — something the demand for a reduction of 5 hours in the working week was intended to reverse — the major item for discussion at the union side meeting centred on management's approach for informal talks on productivity!

At the union side meeting, the AUEW was joined by the EETPU in proposing that management's offer of infer-

mal talks be taken up.

Their proposal was defeated by the narrowest of margins, 24 votes to 21.

This vote was important. It makes it very difficult for the union leaders to come back with another proposal to start talks, unless the company comes up with something on the basic wage.

But leaders like these — not accountable to the workforce out on strike — will doubtless be seeking other ways to do their dirty business.

The Coventry conference of Ford shop stewards, which formulated the original claim, passed a resolution providing for its recall in the event of any offer from management.

That recall is needed now to firmly throw out any idea of productivity dealing and to appoint a national strike leadership firmly under the control of the strikers.

No more dirty stories

The 1977 Trade Union

Congress passed a resolution on pay.

In it, Congress: 'instructs the General Council to call for an orderly return to free collective bargaining at the end of the second stage of the Social Contract...'

On 21 December, 1977, the General Council voted by 21 votes to 17 to refuse to implement this resolution.

They threw out a resolution calling for a campaign against the 10 per cent limit and in support of the Fire Brigade strike.

This year's Trade Union Congress in Brighton passed a composite resolution moved by the National Union of Mine-workers, and seconded by

IASS, the white-collar section of the Engineering Union, with the sponsorship of 21 other national unions.

In this resolution, Congress: 'declares its opposition to government policies of intervention and restraint in wage bargaining, including government sanctions, and to any form of restrictive government incomes policy. Congress instructs the General Council to oppose any arbitrary pay limits...'

'Congress recommends that bargaining priorities for the next round should include the negotiated reduction of the working week to 35 hours...'

WHAT WILL THE GENERAL COUNCIL DO FOR THE FORD STRIKE?

'I have been opposed to incomes policy and the social contract ever since the Labour government brought it in.

'I support your (Ford workers) efforts and those of anyone else who seeks to destroy the social contract which has resulted in the erosion of the living standards of working people.'

ARTHUR SCARGILL, President Yorkshire NUM

An easy recipe for success

SPEAKING at a rally against low pay in Newcastle a couple of weeks ago, Alan Fisher, General Secretary of the public employees' union, warned that this would be a 'winter of discontent', unless the government gave up its 'pay policy'.

RICH PALSER asks what lies behind Fisher's sudden warnings of 'major confrontation in the public sector'.

Primarily, Fisher's statements reflect the growing discontent amongst NUPE's 700,000 members over low pay.

But reflecting the current desires of the membership is a long way from consistently expressing the interests of the membership.

Just two years ago Fisher was endorsing Phase 2 of Labour's incomes policy.

Last year, when the TUC was calling for an 'orderly' return to free collective bargaining, he was pleading for NUPE to keep the door open for talks with the government.

At the same time, he was a main initiator of the inter-union steering committee against the cuts, which organised 80,000 workers on a demonstration against the cuts in 1976.

His latest creation is the 'low pay campaign', holding rallies around the country for a £60 minimum wage.

HOPSCOTCH

Political hopscotch, jumping with his right foot in the camp of the social contract and his left foot in the camp of the

opposition, is Fisher's speciality.

With the election of a Labour government in 1974, cuts became key. 'Our big campaign against public expenditure and our arguments for an alternative government strategy to overcome the country's economic problems make sound common sense to workers in the public services', he said in the union journal in 1976. 'If you add to this the services provided by the union to the membership... you have all the ingredients for success'.

Despite the failure to halt the cuts which threaten union membership through lost jobs, membership continued to rise.

Presumably the 'low pay campaign' is the new ingredient in his recipe for success.

The political strategy which lies behind NUPE's campaign against the cuts, and the low pay campaign, is that of

pressure politics.

The 'alternative Government strategy' that NUPE advocates — largely adopted by the TUC as well — consists of increased intervention to better manage the capitalist economy.

Fisher is popular with the membership because he offers a political way forward to workers who know they cannot simply win through trade union muscle.

But because this political alternative depends on a Labour government prepared to implement it, when the government refuses to be pressurised the membership is left nowhere.

He marches the membership up to the top of the hill only to march them down again.

Sooner or later the army will either disperse in demoralisation, or go marching on without him.



Photo: BOB MURPHY (Socialist Challenge)

Public employees next in line



Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

PUBLIC SECTOR workers are the next in line to take on the government over pay.

RAY VARNES, NUPE district secretary for the Inner London Education Authority, looks at the situation in the union and the effects of the Ford strike.

The National Union of Public Employees' claim, for a £60 minimum wage, is very good.

If it were implemented it would go a long way towards meeting the needs of our members, many of whom are on exceedingly low pay.

FAR ENOUGH

The massive support among the membership is shown by the fact that at our conference in May the only disagreement was over whether the claim went far enough.

But it will be very difficult to

get what we want unless we start taking action now.

NUPE's low pay campaign has come at the end of a long line of campaigns by the union, mainly around the cuts. None has included any specific demands on the government.

The present low pay campaign crucially fails to provide any perspective for actually winning our £60 claim.

MORALE

The most important thing is to start a fight in all the union's branches and district committees to bring forward the claim and fight now alongside the Ford workers.

And it's vital for the Ford strikers to seek support among other workers to further their own claim.

For us in the public sector, the Ford strike can help strengthen our own fight, by

ensuring that the government does not get the chance to take us one by one, as happened last year.

Morale is high, particularly because the TUC has not openly moved against the car workers' strike. We should

Public employees claim

THE UNIONS representing local government manual workers, which are NUPE, the TGWU and GMWU, have agreed to submit the following claim for the pay review operative from 1 November.

demand that the TUC starts co-ordinating support for the Ford strike and for our claim.

In NUPE, we need to start organising pay action committees now to make sure that control of any strike is firmly in the hands of the rank and file.

* a minimum consolidated basic rate of £60, with the value of the agreement protected against rises in the cost of living.

* reduction of the working week to 35 hours, without loss of pay.

* review of sickpay scheme (to move to average earnings when sick).

* improved shift allowance.

* a grading review to correct anomalies.

* examination of the productivity agreements with regard to workers not on bonus.

NAC heavily in debt

Abortion rights - it's up to you

THE NATIONAL Abortion Campaign is £2,000 in debt and its creditors are closing in.

'The campaign is only kept going at the moment on borrowed fivers', says NAC office worker Sue Watkins. 'What happens now is really up the women's and labour movements.'

MARTIN METEYARD looks at what is at stake.

In a way the present financial crisis goes back to NAC's very successes. The need to fight off attempts by one right-wing MP after another to introduce anti-abortion legislation meant that the campaign used to be constantly on full alert.

But since the defeat of the Benyon Bill a clear national focus has been lacking.

Many NAC groups have remained active on local issues - Leicester, for instance, have called a demonstration for an out-patient clinic on 4 November.

But the national structures are in some disarray. The only left group which still sends representatives to meetings of the steering committee is the International Marxist Group. And the money's stopped coming in.

So what is to become of the campaign for abortion rights? One significant step forward is the trade union conference called by NAC and the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign for 25 November at Caxton Hall in London.

As Sue Watkins explains: 'This is really the only major initiative on a women's issue in the trade unions that there's been for ages.'

'The TUC's decision to call a demonstration against any restrictive Bill has been a real boost. Through the conference we hope to build a big campaign among trade unionists to defend abortion rights.'

But as Sue adds: 'If NAC were to fold, who else would organise such a campaign?' One answer is to look more closely at its relationship to the women's movement.

Sue argues that NAC needs to have a 'special relationship' to the women's movement, and that in the past this hasn't really been reflected in its orientation.

A closer relationship with the women's movement would, she feels, lessen the problem of having to have a national focus since it would allow more feedback from the base.

'At any rate, it's obvious that we have to take this discussion about the future of NAC into the women's movement now. I'd like to see articles in Spare Rib, Scarlet Woman, WIRES, etc.'

What is clear is that the threat to abortion rights is far from over. Once the general election is over another restrictive Bill in Parliament is



SUE WATKINS

very likely.

There is also a new offensive against abortion rights internationally which has to be met. Again it is NAC which is playing an important role in

helping to coordinate international action which is being planned for next March.

So if you don't want to see the struggle for abortion rights go under, now is very definitely

ANL organised in Spitalfields

THE ANTI Nazi League took root in Spitalfields last Sunday as a new branch was organised. The main speakers were Paul Beasley, leader of the local Labour council, and Charlie Rosenberg, who has taught in the East End for many years.

The meeting discussed two campaigns. The first is to isolate the new NF headquarters in Shoreditch by organising union boycott action.

Hackney council has already voted to refuse planning permission to convert the warehouse into offices and a 'sports club'.

The second campaign is to launch a vigorous defence of all those arrested in or around Brick Lane in recent months. This is particularly important since at least one of the magistrates concerned, a Mr Nichols, has made no secret of his view that people who go down to Brick Lane do so to 'break the law'.

A number of heavy sentences have already been handed out. Steve Wright, a member of the SWP with no previous convictions, was sentenced to two months imprisonment for 'threatening behaviour'.

Greg Tucker, a Socialist Challenge supporter, has been sentenced to one month's imprisonment for the same offence. Both are appealing.

In Tucker's case there is a further 'anomaly'. He is not allowed [under his bail conditions] to be within a mile of Brick Lane.

The problem is that he lives within a mile of the Lane. So he is legally barred from going home!

Brick Lane Defence is going to be collaborating with all other defence committees in the area, and can be contacted c/o Law Centre, 341 Commercial Road, London E1 (01-790 6311).

the time to do something about it. Win sponsorship for the trade union conference, send a donation - 'basically', says Sue Watkins, 'the message is: get involved'.

The address to contact (please note that they've just moved) is: NAC, 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1 (tel. 01-278 0153). Write that cheque now and mail it off!

PHIL MARFLEET: A CLARIFICATION IN LAST week's issue we implied that Phil Marfleet, an East End organiser of the SWP, had attacked the ANL together with a number of sectarian speakers.

Phil assures us that our account of what he said was grossly inaccurate, and we unreservedly withdraw the remarks pertaining to him.

CPSA anti-racists explain Why we back Wolverhampton campaign

THE DEFENCE campaign for Dave Stevens and three other anti-racist militants arrested on a demonstration in Wolverhampton on 11 March is winning wide trade union support.

One union where it has been taken up in a big way is the Civil and Public Services Association. SUE AUSTIN [Wolverhampton branch chairperson] and JOHN KELLY [Wolverhampton branch secretary and Broad Left regional organiser] told us why.

Sue: We got our branch to affiliate to the Wolverhampton Anti-Racist Committee earlier in the year because we consider it's important for trade unions to educate the members in the

dangers of racism. We think this case is an issue that should be taken up by all trade unionists whenever possible. It isn't just something which affects anti-racists.

What happened in Wolverhampton was related to the way trade unionists were treated by the police on the Grunwick picket line. If we don't build campaigns on these issues we're leaving the way open for Britain to become more and more like a police state.

How have you gone about getting support?

Sue: We've done lots of things. Our branch took a motion to the local trades council and got them to sponsor the campaign. We sent

the petition forms and leaflets to all the National Executive members - everyone from the Broad Left on the National Executive is sponsoring the campaign.

We've circulated petitions and leaflets through the CPSA in the Midlands - round all the Department of Employment offices, and through the Regional Committee and the Broad Left.

John: We also arranged for the defence campaign to have a stall at the CPSA Broad Left national conference, and for

Dave Stevens to speak to the conference. And an article on the case has been sent to our Broad Left journal, Broadside.

Sue: We're also going to put a resolution to try to get official union backing for the picketing organised by the campaign whenever any of the cases come up in court. On 20 October another of the people has his committal proceedings at Wolverhampton Magistrates' Court, and we'd like to be there with our union banner.

WHAT'S LEFT

5p per word. Display £2 per column inch. Deadline: 3pm Saturday before publication. Payment in advance.

TYPYST WANTED

Comrade with fast, accurate typing needed immediately for full-time position. Be part of the Socialist Challenge team. Wages £55 a week. Send applications to FI Lfho, 328 Upper St., London N1 2XP stating experience, etc.

BASQUE COMRADE from the Fourth International desperately looking for accommodation in London. Any information to be phoned to Jean-Christophe at The Other Bookshop. Tel: 01-226 0571.

LATIN AMERICA: IMG day school now changed to Sun. 8 Oct. Open to IMG members and close contacts. Topic: 'The crisis of Castroism: Britain, with special reference to Chile and Argentina'. Cost £1 plus pooled fare. Possible reduction for wageless. Details from local IMG or LAF, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

CONNECTIONS: Britain and Southern Africa - a one day conference for trade unionist and youth. Sponsored by the North West TUC. Chaired by Colin Barnest (Sec. NWTUC). Workshops on: action in the workplace, action in the Labour Party, an ABC of Southern Africa, Soweto and youth women under apartheid, the media. Venue: Abraham Moss Centre, Crumpton, Manchester. Sat 11 Nov. 10-8pm. Details of tickets and conference from Manchester Anti-Apartheid, 59 Tinsley Ave, Manchester M20 8ND. Tel: 051-434 7549.

ROCK FOR REVOLUTION disco at the Hemmington Arms pub, corner of Hemmington Rd and Offord Rd, London N1. Sat 7 Oct. 8pm. Adm. 45p.

MANCHESTER Revolutionary Communist Group public meeting: 'End all immigration controls'. Speakers from Bradford Asian Youth Movement and RCG. Thurs 12 Oct at 7.30pm at Langlight Town Hall, Stockport Rd, Langlight.

TOWER HAMLETS Socialist Unity is holding a media jumble sale on 8 Oct. We urgently need books, records, posters, tapes etc. Bring anything suitable to The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, London N1 or phone 247 2717 for arrangements to collect.

OUT NOW! Workers Power pamphlet on Marxism and the trade unions. Articles on the Minority Movement, the rank and file today, RLU thesis, Marxism on the trade unions. 85c inc postage from BDM, Box 7750, London WC1 or from left bookshops.

RED COLLAR: ASTMS Rank and File paper now available from EDA Books, 34 Cowley Rd, Oxford, price 10p. Rank and File conference on ASTMS Rules Revision at Central London Poly on 21 Oct. Details from above address.

AN INFORMAL meeting for those interested in finding out about the Society of Environment and Resources Association and renewing its activities. Wed 20 Oct 7.30pm, Drill Hall (Action Space), Chancery St, London WC1. Further details from SERA, 9 Folland St, London W1. Tel: 01-437 3749.

ART AGAINST the Nazis aims to harness the immense creative potential of cultural workers for idea interchange and to work nationally and locally with anti-Nazi organisations. Contact: Jeff Sawell, ANL, PO Box 151, London WC2.

BELFAST Workers Research Unit Bulletin No 5 now available. Women in N. Ireland plus De Lorean motor car company exposed. 80c inc. p&p from 52 Broadway, Belfast.

COLONEL 'B' Boe - benefit for ABC defence committee. With the inmates, Khan's villains and the Leighton Buzzards plus disco. 11 Oct at the Queen's Head, 877 Green Lanes, London N8 (nearest tube Turnpike Lane). Adm. £1.50. £1 wageless and students. 8pm to 2am (late licence).

PREPARE for the general election now! Choose your parliamentary candidate for Bethnal Green and Bow constituency, then see the Bell & Bones Road Show for E1. East London Socialist Unity public meeting, 6pm Sun. 8 Oct, City of London Polytechnic Students Union, 102 Whitechapel High St., London E1. Aldgate East Tube. Croche if needed. Open to all Socialist Unity supporters.

WORKERS ACTION meeting: Socialist and the next government. 7.45pm at the General Post, Whitechapel Rd, Cable-station Rd., London N1 on Sun. 8 Oct.

CARIBBEAN Labour Solidarity urgently needs £300 to send a delegate to Jamaica. First benefit at 79 Somerset Rd, Walthamstow, London E17 on 7 Oct. £1.75 on 7 Oct. Adm. £1 including food. All welcome.

'WE HAVE the power of the winds', a play about the struggles in Portugal and the role of occupationalists, performed by Broadside Mobile Workers Theatre, followed by Raul Valencia, a singer from Chile, and a discussion of the issues raised in the play. 8.30pm, Hounslow Hospital, Slaines Rd, Hounslow, Middx. Sat 7 Oct. Food and drink available.

PICKET GARNERS: Main pickets every day, noon to 3pm and 5.30 to 11 pm at 399 Oxford St., London W1 (opp. Selfridges); 243 Oxford St. (Oxford Circus); 40-41 Haymarket; 55 Whitcombe St. (Leicester Sq.). Mass picket every Saturday at noon, 395 Oxford St. Donations urgently needed as strike pay is only £5. All donations to Gamers Strike Fund, c/o TGWU, Rm 84, 12-13 Henrietta St., London WC2. 01-240 1056.

LIVERPOOL Big Flame public meeting: 'The Fight Against Closures and Wage Limits'. Thursday 12 October, 7.30pm - AUEW Hall, Mount Pleasant. Speakers: Huw Beynon (author of Working for Fort and What Happened at Speke?); Standards worker; Big Flame.

NW LONDON Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory public meeting: 'What prospect for a Labour victory?' Speakers include Ernie Roberts and Ken Livingstone. Tues 10 Oct, 7.45pm, Anson Hall, Anson Rd/Chorley rd, NW2.

SUPPORT DRYLANDERS occupation March to factory organised by St Helens Trades Council, Sat. 7 Oct. - assemble 10.30am, town centre.

EALING/SOUTHALL Socialist Unity present Bail & Braces in Red Rock Revue. Mon 9 Oct. 8pm. Venue: Ealing Tech. College - Students Union, St. Mary's Rd, Ealing.

SOCIALIST FEMINIST educationalists for women only, imperialism, immigration and racism at the Methodist Church Hall, Lancaster Rd, London W11. Sun 29 Oct, 10.30am to 8pm. Imperium educational Sat 11 Nov 10.30am to 7pm. Immigration and racism educational. Slides and films. Organised by women from the Women and Ireland group, Women Against Racism and Fascism, the Poster Collective, the North London Black Women's group and women involved in struggles in various Third World countries. Adm. one day £1 (50p wageless), both days £1.50 (75p wageless). Cheap vegetarian food available. We cannot organise accommodation as please do not come exceeding 11. Registration, papers, details from Jane, Hadley, 7 Lynton Court, Horn Lane, London W3.

INTERVENTION No. 2 Out now! Revolutionary politics as a hobby. Jim Masters aims the unmentionables of the left. An essay on the irrational in politics - the left as a subculture. Copies 85p (inc p&p) from Intervention, 539 Battersea Park Rd, London SW8 1.

WORCESTER ANL social disco late bar at The Albion, Bath Rd. 14 Oct at 8pm. Adm. 50p (25p wageless and students).

HOUNSLOW HOSPITAL commemorates one year of occupation. Fri 6 Oct. afternoon, presentation of community hospital to area health authority evening. Areas, health, music. Sat 7 Oct. noon, march and rally (passing Hounslow Hospital). 2.30pm, workshop discussion, evening, films, songs, video Hounslow Hospital, Slaines Rd, Hounslow (Hounslow Centre tube). Tel. 01-570 4445.

WHO NEEDS the Labour Party? New pamphlet from the Revolutionary Communist Tendency, it analyses the evolution and politics of the British Labour Party and explains its pro-imperialist role today. The pamphlet argues against 'critical support' for Labour and provides a strategy for confronting reformism. 35p (+13p p&p). Payments to RCT Association, BM RCT 14, London WC1V 6XX.

CHARTER NEWSPAPER: open planning meeting to prepare the launch of the Working Women's Charter Campaign new paper for the unions. Sat 14 Oct, 1pm, Transport House, Hartshead St, Sheffield. Further info: Felicity Jones, tel. Sheffield 307421.

Ford and students

The same fight

AS STUDENTS arrive back for the new term, the need for an organisation which will campaign in their interests is glaringly apparent, writes PAMELA HOLMES.

There is no way that the latest grant increase of 8.9 per cent can cope with rent increases of 20 per cent and more. Thousands of students are already withholding rents in opposition to the increases, and a call has been made for co-ordination on an all-London level.

This looks like being taken up nationally as university students return to find themselves facing the same

problems as the poly students already on rent strikes.

The main problem with rent strikes at this stage is that they cannot by themselves achieve a real improvement in the standard of living of students. Continually fighting to maintain a situation in which you can just about cope is no substitute for the kind of campaign around grants that is needed.

The National Union of Students has committed itself to a large-scale campaign on grants this year, starting with the need for mandatory awards for 16 to 19 year-olds.

In the context of a national

grants campaign, students should be seeking to organise local activity to explain and win support for a return to at least the 1962 purchasing level.

ENORMOUS

The massive support for the Ford workers shows the determination within the labour movement to end a wages policy that has resulted in widespread poverty and an enormous fall in living standards for the majority of the population.

A victory for the Ford workers would mark the first

step of a massive offensive against the government's policy of making working people pay for a crisis not of their making. And the best way that students can express their support is to take part in that offensive.

A first step would be to invite Ford workers into the colleges to explain their case and to start organising collections. At the same time student unions should be developing the campaign around their own claim.

The most effective strategy would be to join up with the public sector unions in education, submitting the claims together and campaign-

ing around them together.

The kind of unity around our common demands that can be achieved is shown by the joint lobby of Oxford education committee being organised by the South Oxford nursery campaign, Oxford Poly students union, and two local schools hit by the cuts. This is essential for students at Oxford Poly in gaining support for their campaign against rent increases.

Such activity up and down the country could transform the grants campaign and give students their only chance of winning.

Liverpool social workers to join strike



About 2,000 social workers marched through London on 27 September in support of the campaign for improved gradings. A one day strike was called by the all-London social workers' action group and supported by London NALGO.

OVER 300 Liverpool local authority social workers will almost certainly be joining those on strike in London and Newcastle over regrading, writes PETE CRESSWELL [Liverpool NALGO Social Services Staff Committee].

At a packed meeting last week, the social workers voted by a majority of over six to one for an indefinite strike from Monday 9 October. They now have to be balloted before they can come out — but given the feeling of the members, that should be a formality.

PREDICTABLE

We put in our claim on 22 May, but the council only replied properly on 25 September. Predictably they claimed that they could not negotiate locally.

It seems that the council is

banking on a national deal. But the initial proposals here are utterly pathetic — they offer practically nothing to most social workers.

What little there is also has to be taken out of next year's pay settlement. It's just a crude attempt to divide us from the rest of our colleagues in the National and Local Government Officers Association.

One point about our dispute is confusing a lot of people. The regrading claim does not breach the pay guidelines, as it is based on extra duties we have been given.

But the employers' stubbornness shows the impossibility of getting even this kind of pay rise under the present pay policy. They say we're entitled to such rises — but that if we do get a rise we will have to pay for it next year!

MAJORITY

The political significance of this will not be lost on the majority of social workers.

JOHN MARSTON adds: The social workers' strike in Tower Hamlets is really beginning to bite. Postal workers are refusing to cross pickets outside the town hall, which means that all council business has to be carried out by phone. Outside contractors are also being turned away — which could affect the supply of heating oil to council premises.

CORRECTION

*In last week's report the criticism of the NALGO leadership for holding back the escalation of the struggle was made by Dave Burn of Islington NALGO and not by Dick Charlton, a representative of the Tower Hamlets strike committee.

Mass rally-picket Garners workers can win!

IT IS NOW nearly two years since the workers at Garners Steak Houses in central London began to organise themselves into the Transport and General Workers Union, writes MICK GOSLING.

For the last eight months many of them have been on strike for union recognition in order to fight conditions which often saw them working 70-hour weeks and taking home £28.49 for the compulsory 55 hour week.

Saturday sees a mass rally and picket in support of the strikers, starting at 3pm at Speakers Corner after the normal lunchtime picketing (details in 'What's Left'). Far from marking the swan-song of

the strike, recent weeks have seen an important new surge in active support.

The signs are that Garners boss Margolis is seriously worried by an 80 per cent loss in profits in his 11 restaurants, and feelers are now being put out for negotiations.

The boycotting of supplies is now as effective as it can be, with Margolis reduced to sending out senior staff in unmarked vans at the crack of dawn in order to purchase

vegetables. He has also been forced to rotate his meat suppliers every fortnight.

Sustained picketing is the key to victory. The vast majority of potential customers will not cross a picket line when the strikers' case is explained to them.

REGULAR

The Greater London Association of Trades Councils has taken the lead in organising all London trades councils into a regular evening picket rota. The Executive of the Civil and Public Services Association has

joined the pickets, and CPSA members have also refused to handle Garners' scab jobs at a nearby Job Centre.

That Garners is not simply another Grunwick is one of the messages the strike committee will be trying to get across at Saturday's rally by asking everyone to stay and join a nearby picket.

Thus it is hoped that this Saturday's activities will not only serve as a focus for the Garners strikers and their supporters — who for eight months have been stretched out across 11 restaurants — but also for the labour movement at large.

Huntley Street

THE MASS eviction in August of 160 women, men and children squatting in London's Huntley Street has led to international solidarity from Dutch squatters who besieged the British Embassy in The Hague, writes PIERS CORBYN.

The arrest of 14 of the Huntley Street squatters is the first large scale use of the new criminal trespass law. The charges against them relate to 'being' in occupation rather than any events at the eviction.

The trial is thus a test case for the whole labour movement. What is involved is a frontal attack on occupations in factories, colleges and the community.

It is with this understanding that the Huntley Street Defence Campaign is seeking support from trade unions, trades councils, the Labour Party, tenants' and student organisations, etc. The campaign will also be submitting evidence to the TUC inquiry into the Special Patrol Group [which largely handled the eviction] and the Special Branch.

There will be a mass picket when the trial of the 14 starts at Marylebone Court at 10am on 4 December. Details of the campaign, speakers, and a video film from: HSDC, c/o Camden Law Centre, 146 Kentish Town Road, London NW1 or phone 01-267 1456.

Papering the Charter

THE CONFERENCE of the Working Women's Charter Campaign earlier this year issued an appeal for a new newspaper for the unions. The conference to launch this will take place in the spring, writes CELIA PUGH.

The new paper will seek to involve the widest possible support from unions, women's groups, and individuals who fight around the issues raised by the Charter.

Already the NATFHE national executive has expressed interest and will send representatives to the planning meetings. Next meeting is Saturday 14 October, 12pm, Transport House, Hartshead Street, Sheffield. Do come!

Further information: Felicity Jones, tel. Sheffield 307421.

STA Conference

THE achievements and future policies of the Socialist Teachers Alliance will be debated at its third AGM on 14/15 October.

The possibilities for left unity in the National Union of Teachers, and the role of the STA's journal, Socialist Teacher, will be a major item of discussion.

To provide as wide a forum of debate as possible, the conference will include workshops on anti-racism, women, salaries, politics of education, youth, and cuts.

All Socialist Challenge supporters who are teachers or students are urged to attend this conference. Although voting will be confined to STA members, non-members will be able to contribute to the discussions.

The conference will take place at Starcross School, Risinghill St., London N1. For further details contact John Bangs, 25 Blissett St., London SE10.

THREE YEARS AGO workers in the Lucas Combine — a company involved in the production of Concorde — drew up what they called a Corporate Plan. Like workers elsewhere in British industry, these highly skilled workers were facing the prospect of large redundancies.

The Plan proposed over 150 alternative products which could be produced in the Lucas plants. The workers say they are fighting for the right to work - the right to work on what they call 'socially useful products'.

WORKERS PLANS—CAN

The Lucas Plan Not just a nice idea

THE LUCAS Combine has attempted massive cutbacks in its workforce over the past eight years.

At first it was quite successful. Between 1970 and 1975, management chopped the workforce in the Aerospace and Defence divisions from 18,000 to under 12,000. But since 1975, its job cutting has come to a halt. HILARY WAINWRIGHT elaborates.

The factories should meet the enormous social needs which production for profit leaves unmet. And it is this which has helped to generate the will to resist redundancies.

This is a new approach to the problem, although there are some previous examples elsewhere. Italian workers at Fiat went on strike in the 1950s, for instance, to demand that the company produce tractors rather than luxury cars. But Lucas is a pilot case in Britain.

The Lucas Plan is based on an explicit critique of capitalism. Its authors reject the standard bourgeois explanations for redundancy — the mysteries of the balance of payments, foreign competition, too many foreign workers, and so on.

The Lucas stewards say that redundancy is completely unnecessary. It arises not through lack of 'demand' for goods, but because free enterprise doesn't find it profitable to meet the real needs and demands of society. Instead it casts workers and machines aside as 'redundant'.

Despite this, the revolutionary left has been slow in organising support for the Corporate Plan. It has not generalised the idea to other places where more traditional trade union strategies have obviously failed.

Yet it seldom makes explicit the objections and doubts behind its lack of enthusiasm. These objections should be voiced. What are they? And is there any truth in them?

First, it is sometimes suggested that demands for alternative products lead to class collaboration. This would be true if the workers accepted management objectives and constraints — the company's profit rates. In such a case, the Plan would be little more than a glorified suggestion scheme.

But the Lucas workers have explicitly drawn up their proposals on the basis of unmet social needs which they have the skill and machinery to fulfil. The proposals, more often than not, clash directly with the priorities of the company.

CONSULTATION

In addition, the combine committee has refused to be drawn into consultation schemes — in which management and unions merely exchange ideas and information as though they had something in common.

This was the first response of management. But the Lucas workers have insisted that the Plan should be subject to collective bargaining.

The stewards believe that their mobilisation and campaigning around the Plan has made management reluctant to try out certain individual proposals which it thinks could be made profitable, for fear of handing the workers a victory and opening a Pandora's box.

ANTI-SOCIAL

The stewards also recognise that the Plan depends on government spending to meet social needs. Consequently purely company-wide organisation is not sufficient. The building of a political movement is a necessary extension of combine committee activity.

The second objection is that workers plans are a diversion from the main socialist objective of social ownership under workers control. However, the fight for workers plans is one of the best ways of strengthening the fight for social ownership and workers control.

The attempts of the capitalists and financiers to resist plans drawn up by workers on the basis of social need clearly reveal the anti-social nature of private ownership.

They make a far more powerful case for social ownership and workers

control than campaigns for nationalisation based solely on defence of trade union rights, or the right to work, and they draw on a potentially greater reservoir of support.

Experience also shows that struggles for nationalisation and workers control are not a sufficient basis for building strong workers organisations or a struggle against private enterprise.

After the experience in the mines, in steel, and on the railways — and lately in shipbuilding and at British Leyland — the demand for nationalisation, and with it the idea of socialism, has lost much of its power to inspire mass action.

The attempt to differentiate 'what socialists mean by nationalisation' from capitalist nationalisation by adding 'under workers control' often appears an empty abstraction.

Workers' plans, however, give real meaning to the idea of social ownership and workers control. For workers control in the nationalised sector would then have a definite purpose.

Instead of being simply a defensive measure, workers control would aim to reorganise industry to meet social needs on the basis of a clear plan.

Campaigning today around workers plans also helps to build up the organisations able to impose workers control and planning 'from below' in the socialised industry of the future.

And this brings us to the third objection: that workers plans are simply interesting toys drawn up by a few experts and put forward in the name of a workers organisation whose members don't really know what's going on, and perhaps don't really care. Of course there is always a danger of

phony workers plans. But at Lucas, the workers themselves were drawn into the process of drawing up the Corporate Plan.

In fact the 180 professional bodies and institutions to which they first appealed for help in drawing up the Plan gave almost no help at all. Virtually all the ideas came from the workers at Lucas.

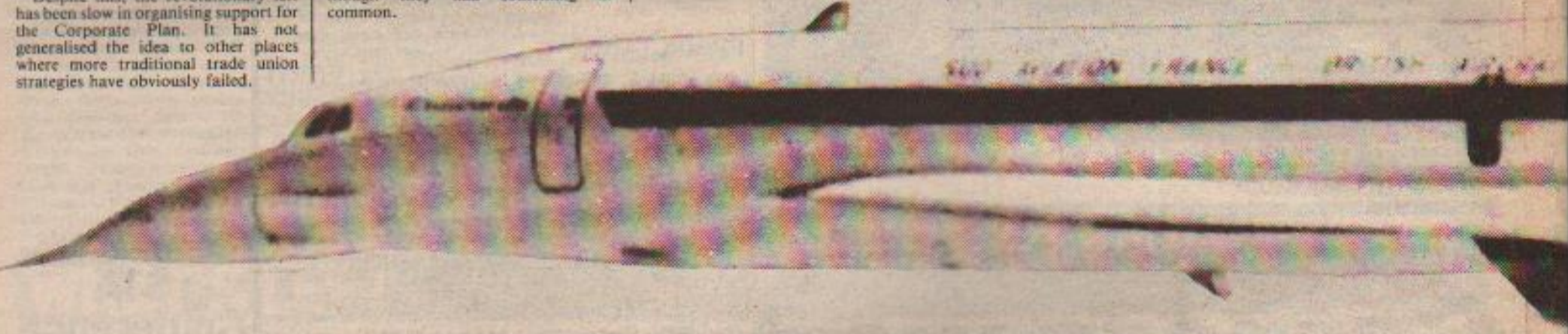
This was vital in building the determination to resist redundancies and convincing the workers that there is a future to fight for.

The discussions and questionnaires at the plants led workers to question the constraints of the market, the crisis, and government policies from their own experience.

They had experience of needs among

LUCAS PLAN PROPOSALS:

1. Telechiric machines — electro-mechanical extensions to the human body, remotely controlled by the operator, for use in dangerous environments, extending rather than reducing the role of human skills.
2. Transport systems — lightweight road/rail vehicles; hybrid internal combustion/battery-powered vehicles, combining the best characteristics of both; airships.
3. Braking systems — safe systems for both road and rail vehicles.
4. Alternative energy sources — wind generators; solar collectors, producing electrical output or direct heating; these and heat pumps could provide low cost heating for council houses.
5. Medical equipment — portable life systems for ambulances; kidney machines; aids for the disabled; sight-substituting aids for the blind.



A national workers plan A future for all

IN GERMANY in 1932 the labour movement was facing a catastrophe. There were over four million unemployed, with many more on short time.

Big banks had failed, small businesses were ruined, foreign loans were cut off. To the workers, there seemed to be no way out.

A year later, Hitler came to power. He had found a solution to unemployment. It was to destroy socialism and the trade unions and re-tool German industry for war.

Offered no other alternative, the country followed him. But as DAVE BAILEY explains, Trotsky argued a different course as early as 1930.

Trotsky urged the German labour movement to draw up a plan for German industry on the basis of co-operation with Russia. The idea was

to set German factories to work supplying the needs of Soviet farmers for machinery and equipment. In this way the unemployed would

see an alternative to Hitler, and would join in the overthrow of German capitalism.

Britain is not facing fascism today. But there are up to two million unemployed. And, as everyone is beginning to recognise, this is 'structural unemployment'. In other words, it won't go away by tinkering with taxes or other fiscal measures.

Economists predict it will get much worse — some say five million by 1990. The labour movement has obviously got to solve this problem before a catastrophe does begin to loom over the horizon.

There is now a growing movement in Britain for the 35-hour week — without

loss of pay and with no productivity strings attached. Dozens of unions have accepted this demand.

The Labour Government, the British TUC, and the European TUC all favour the 35-hour week as a national measure. Some sections of workers, such as the Post Office Engineers, have fought for it in their industry as a reply to the redundancies they face from new technology.

This shows the beginnings of a fight back. Obviously groups like the Post Office Engineers must not be left to fight on their own.

The labour movement has got to force the government to redeem its promises and implement a 35-hour week for all workers — right across the board. And do it now — not in the distant future when it may be too late.

Nevertheless, workers are going to ask certain obvious questions right from the start. For it's obvious that a national 35-hour week would have a different significance for different groups of workers.

After all, the hallmark of capitalism is anarchy. Redundancies are not

created at the same rate.

In some sectors, workers are still doing overtime. For them, 35 hours, by adjusting the basic rate, is a way of boosting their overtime earnings.

In sectors where there is as yet little or no threat of redundancy, the 35-hour week might be a welcome advance in the social sense — giving workers that extra leisure which Steve Potter wrote about recently in *Socialist Challenge*.

Elsewhere, workers are on short time. What's the use of a 35-hour week when we're on a three day week, they will ask. Or in an open-hearth steelmaking plant in Scotland which is being completely shut down in favour of a new oxygen-using plant in Scunthorpe or South Wales.

Or, for that matter, in the telephone exchanges, where some workers feel they would need something like a twenty-five hour week in order to cope with the new computerised systems. In these cases, 35 hours is a shot in the dark.

Finally, what about the workers already on the dole? How — where — can they be re-employed?

They believe that the Corporate Plan can be an effective way of challenging redundancy. And a number of other combine committees are thinking of following their example.

So do workers plans really help the fight against redundancy? If so, why? Do they provide a way of fighting back against the capitalist crisis and the policies of the Labour leadership? And are they a step towards socialism?

HILARY WAINWRIGHT and DAVE BAILEY look at the problems.

THEY BEAT THE DOLE?

6. Auxiliary power units — interchangeably driven by petrol, diesel or methane, and able to operate as a compressor or generator.
7. Micro-processors — electronic devices for continuously monitoring and controlling the operation of large machines.
8. Ballscrews — used for converting rotating to linear motion or vice versa, with wide applications to machine tools and other products in the plant.
9. Oceanic equipment — for use in the exploration and extraction of natural gas, collection of mineral-bearing nodules from the sea bed, and submarine agriculture.
10. Alternatives to management's systematic effort to deskill jobs, fragment them into narrower and narrower functions, and ever increase the speed at which they are performed.
11. Proposals for paid training and retraining.

their families and friends which had no market expression, and they were encouraged by the stewards to think of ways their skills and capacities could contribute to meeting those needs. This was a process of political education focused around the practical objectives of the Plan.

Of course, we are not saying that a struggle against redundancy is impossible without such a plan. And even those who draw up the best plan in the world might not fight when it comes to the crunch.

A fight to occupy factories and openly confront the policies of the Labour government (not just those of the company) is absolutely necessary. But what we do believe is that workers planning powerfully aids the fight against redundancy.

But any successes at Lucas are precarious so long as they struggle alone. The company has recently threatened to sack Mike Cooley, a leading figure in the campaign. His defence is crucial.

The best defence of the Lucas workers is to spread their ideas elsewhere. At the same time, workers in the public sector — in the health service, for instance — should demand that the government buy the products in the Corporate Plan.

Let the Lucas workers have the last word: 'It is certainly not the assumption of this Corporate Plan that Lucas Aerospace can be transformed into a trail-blazer to change this situation in isolation. There can be no islands of responsibility and concern in the sea of irresponsibility and depravity.

'Our intentions are much more modest, namely to make a start to question these (existing) assumptions and to make a small contribution to demonstrating that workers are prepared to press for the right to work on products which actually help to solve human problems, rather than create them.'

There's been no shortage of management determination. At Hemel Hempstead, at least 160 redundancies were threatened in 1975.

At Marston Green in Birmingham later that year, two out of three workers faced the dole after the loss of a government defence contract. The axe was also hanging over a London plant because Lucas decided to sell the British kidney machine division as unprofitable.

In February 1977, the company announced that 1,100 sackings were

likely by August 1977 at Burnley, Birmingham and Liverpool sites.

Yet every single one of these redundancies was blocked.

These successes in the fight for jobs run counter to the national trend. Jobs have been sold at Speke, Plessey, in shipbuilding, steel, and many other

'As structural unemployment began to affect us, we looked around at the manner in which other groups of workers were attempting to resist it.

'We had in Lucas already been engaged in partial sit-ins, in preventing the transfer of work from one site to another, and a host of other industrial tactics which had been developed over the past five years.

'But we realised that the morale of a work-force very quickly declines if they can see that society, for whatever reason, does not want the products that they make. We therefore evolved the idea of a campaign for the right to work on socially useful products.'

Mike Cooley, 'Design, Technology and Production for Social Needs', in *The Right to Useful Work* (Edited by Ken Coates, IWC), p.198.

industries. These setbacks bear witness to the problems facing the fight for the right to work.

The marches to Brighton and London have been getting support from an impressive list of shop stewards committees, and there has been no end of sympathy for young school leavers and others on the dole.

But there has been little of the will needed to save jobs when it really counted. What makes Lucas different?

Rank-and-file trade unionism has been strong at Lucas. Since 1969 the stewards have been building up a strong combine committee. It has united shop floor and office workers, fought successful battles on wages and pensions, organised sit-ins, and built up mass commitment through a regular combine newspaper.

But strong rank-and-file trade union organisation is not the explanation. After all, the combine committee at British Leyland used to be one of the most militant. Yet it failed to fight the Edwardes closures.

The strength of the combine committee at Lucas is political. It recognised that a new strategy was necessary. Deep recession, massive

cutbacks in social expenditure by a Labour government, and the high capital intensity of new investment make this essential.

That strategy has revolved round the Corporate Plan, which has shown workers that there could be an alternative to redundancies.

Management and government almost always back up job-cutting plans by telling workers about a lack of markets for their products. This is difficult to counter, and produces a sense of fatalism and powerlessness, or else demands for import controls and protectionism.

The Corporate Plan demands alternative products. It argues that if there is no longer a demand for existing products, such as Concorde, then the plant should be turned over to producing something else.



In order that the 35-hour week might contribute to achieving full employment — and full employment is the real issue here — the labour movement has got to look more seriously at the Lucas Plan.

What the Lucas combine committee have come up with at a company level is in some ways similar to what Trotsky put forward at the level of the whole economy.

The only solution to unemployment is to use economic resources to meet social needs rather than profit. This

principle ought to be the basis of a plan for the economy as a whole, of which plans like the Lucas one could be a part.

But can such a plan be drawn up by the labour movement? Well, some of the elements of such a national plan already exist. They suggest themselves almost spontaneously to any class-conscious worker.

Trotsky took the needs of a struggling Soviet agriculture as his starting point. We can start with the needs of the people living in decaying Britain.

commissions, charge them with entering into liaison with the trade unions and economic organs of the [Russian] Soviets.

'On the basis of the German trade unions, the factory councils, and other labour organisations, create a central planning commission which has the job of liaison with the Gosplan of the USSR. Draw into this work German engineers, organisers, economists.'

Leon Trotsky, *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany* (Pathfinder), pp 247/320.

The workers at Vickers on Tyneside, would not be sorry to see the last Chieftain tank rolling off their assembly lines — if their talents could be used for more constructive work such as building cheap domestic heating systems.

At Lucas, after years of building Concorde — a monument to the conspicuous consumption and waste of capitalism — the workers discovered that NHS patients were dying for want of kidney machines, which Lucas found it unprofitable to continue producing.

Construction workers argue that there are nearly 200,000 unemployed building workers, while the workers of big cities are left to suffer from chronic housing shortages (although they suffer from no shortage of expensive office blocks). And yet there are no end of people telling us that kicking black people out of the country is the only way to make room for the homeless.

Again, bus workers know that if fares were reduced (instead of being constantly raised) more people would use public transport, relieving traffic congestion and creating more jobs.

Workers planning is not necessarily a matter of alternative products. It doesn't depend on highly skilled workers, or on a bunch of boffins in Whitehall. It is a product of the class consciousness of thousands of ordinary workers.

If the trade unions and consumers (e.g. health workers in the hospitals, families awaiting rehousing) decided to draw up plans for the economy based on social needs and not profit, what a staggering indictment of capitalism would emerge!

Whether through alternative products, expansion of existing production under different pricing policies, or transfer of workers from one sector to another, there would be no difficulty at all in turning the plans into concrete proposals at every level — regional, sectional and national.

The combine committees in major industries could begin the work of drawing up these plans straight away. This should be the labour movement's response to the crisis of structural unemployment.

The working out of a national plan would immediately put the bosses and

the Tories on the defensive. Private enterprise would stand clearly revealed as the real obstacle to full employment.

It would give more confidence to workers in resisting redundancy, and it would strengthen the fight for a 35-hour week. But above all, contrary to the TUC's present 'plan' based on import controls and the export of unemployment abroad, a plan based on social needs would raise the question of getting rid of capitalism.

Of course, industry can never be planned on this basis without a real workers government and a revolutionary uprising of the working class. But a national campaign by the labour movement around a workers plan would help to raise the struggle as a whole to a new level and towards a new goal.

Trotsky believed his plan was the basis for the seizure of state power by the German workers. Nobody can say whether the socialist revolution in Britain today will take place over the issue of full employment.

What we can say is that a workers plan can help to make socialism a living issue once again.

INTERNATIONAL

Crossroads — the elimination of a people

P.W. BOTHA's succession to the South African premiership will mean little to the people of Crossroads, the shanty town outside Cape Town. If anything things will get worse since Botha is known as a hardliner on the squatting issue.

GEORGE CUNVIN reports on the people who are waiting for the bulldozers to come and demolish their homes.

Crossroads is only the latest of a number of such 'squatter' townships which the authorities are determined to eliminate.

DEMOLISHED

In winter 1977, the large squatter communities of Modderdam, Werkgenot and Unibell were demolished. Armed police with dogs supervised the destruction of nearly 4,000 homes. More than 30,000 people were put to flight.

Before the decision in June to demolish Crossroads, the largest black squatter community in the Cape Peninsula, its inhabitants were subject to an official campaign of harassment, starting in March 1975 with eviction orders, and including such things as the suspension of sanitary services, and the forced expulsion of wives.

The people of Crossroads were not so easily intimidated. On 7 June 200 women marched to the offices of the Bantu (Plural) Affairs Administration Board in Goodwood and told them bluntly: 'We are not moving'.

FICTION

The white authorities argue that many of the squatters and especially the wives of men who have permits to work in the Peninsula, are illegal immigrants — even though many of them were born in Cape Town — and should go back to their 'homelands' in the Bantustans.

They thus perpetuate the legal fiction that the black workers in the industrial areas of South Africa are foreigners, the 'gastarbeiters' of the 'White'



Republic.

There is more behind the current policy of mass demolition than simply a brutal desire to drive the black people out of 'white' areas.

For over three years more than 200,000 black people have been living in the squatter settlements of the Cape Peninsula. The current policy is a specifically post-Soweto phenomenon.

POTENTIAL

These large conurbations of black workers pose a potential threat to white supremacy. Squatting, in fact, is a primary form of resistance to the web of labour influx regulations (pass laws, migrant labour policy, 'homeland' citizenship, etc.) which rigidly determine their lives as workers in South Africa's system of racial capitalism.

Above all, the apartheid regime fears growing solidarity between the increasingly militant black workers and the coloured workers who form the majority of the Western Cape's labour force.

As a spokesperson for the Cape Divisional Council expressed it, places like Crossroads make it 'difficult to control the influx of persons and these unstable conditions could be a serious hazard in times of unrest'.

Save Mahlangu and the Soweto 11

THE trial is now under way in South Africa of Sechaba Dan Montsitsi and 10 other leaders of the Soweto school students struggle, writes JOHN HUNT.

They have been held for 18 months without being allowed to see friends or family, and subjected to the worst tortures of the uniformed sadists of the South African police.

The charges relate to their part in the Soweto uprising; the maximum penalty is death.

Yet the state prosecutor says that it might not be possible to attribute particular acts to particular people. But, he says,

the 11 are still responsible for what took place.

At the same time African National Congress militant Solomon Mahlangu faces death for his part in armed struggle against the regime.

On 11 October at 1pm the Anti-Apartheid Movement will be picketing the South African Embassy in Trafalgar Square over both cases. We call on all our readers working in central London to join the picket.

Just as importantly supporters should get messages of protest from labour movement bodies.

Dr Owen's deadly prescription

A BRITISH infantry battalion and a Royal Marine commando are standing by to go into action as part of a 'United Nations peace-keeping force' 'anywhere in the world' at seven days notice. JOHN HUNT reports.

That was David Owen's message to the UN General Assembly last week. You don't have to be a strategic genius to guess where he meant — Zimbabwe.

You can go a bit further and guess what plan Owen has at the back of his mind. It goes something like this: a 'round table' is set up.

A deal is arranged between Patriotic Front leader Nkomo and Prime Minister Smith, arranging a transition to a verbally radical, but in reality neo-colonial, Nkomo regime.

In the process, Owen probably hopes, a section of the leadership of ZANU — the other component of the Patriotic Front — will come into the deal.

A 'United Nations' force will move in to supervise the



JOSHUA NKOMO

transition. The crack Cuban-trained troops Nkomo has had in reserve in Zambia will move in and, with the support of the UN, smash those sections of the Patriotic Front who reject the deal.

Of course it might not work

RHODESIA: THE BREAK-DOWN



out that well for Owen. But he wants British troops in Zimbabwe for one purpose only: to install a government that does not challenge British interests in the region.

The failure of the Morning Star to comment on Owen's

speech suggests that it is not going to be easy to mount a campaign of unequivocal opposition to British military and political intervention.

Those who find it 'dogmatic' and 'divisive' to oppose the presence of the British army in Ireland may yet find a UN force in Zimbabwe a 'progressive' phenomenon, especially if the Soviet Union were to go along with the idea, which it probably would.

The best way to oppose Owen's designs is to give unconditional support to those now fighting imperialism: ZANU and ZAPU — for as long as they continue the struggle.

Power must pass into the hands of the Zimbabweans themselves — not into those of UN 'administrators'.

Socialist Challenge supporters will be marching on the 21 October Anti-Apartheid Movement demo [1.30, Hyde Park, London], and will be calling for a contingent on it opposing any imperialist intervention in Zimbabwe. Join us!

Jovial Jim and cunning Kenneth

TV VIEWERS on 24 September were treated to the sight of jovial Jim embracing his friend Kenneth [Kaunda] and proclaiming what the latter called the 'Kano Accord', writes JOHN BLAIR.

This involved, said Kaunda, a commitment by the British to renewed attempts at a multi-party conference on a Zimbabwe settlement: 'I think you will be seeing that in a few weeks time'.

Meanwhile the supposedly burning issue of British oil companies sanctions busting activities was, according to the Financial Times, 29 September, 'hardly raised'.

The Zambian President's new joviality was in marked contrast to his attitude a few days previously. At a press conference on 18 September he had threatened 'certain steps' would be taken against Britain within a week.

RECORD

The UK government's record on sanctions was, he said, 'much worse than Watergate'.

Such about-turns by Kaunda are nothing new. On 1 September for instance, he described rumours that a meeting had taken place in Lusaka between Smith and Nkomo as 'dreams'.

Two days later, after a confrontation with the other 'Front Line Presidents', he admitted it had indeed occurred with Zambian government/Lonrho sponsorship on 21 August.

Most press commentary explains Kaunda's changing attitudes as resulting from his personal friendship with Nkomo whose elevation to the Zimbabwean presidency is his main consideration. This is superficial.

INTERESTS

In fact his manoeuvres reflect the interests of Zambia's

ruling 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie' which is organised politically through the country's sole political party, the United National Independence Party (UNIP).

ASSETS

Because, at independence in 1964, all important economic resources were in the hands of foreign companies or local whites and Asians, this group began life with political leadership its only asset.

It used this to acquire a privileged status of its own through highly paid office in government and parastatals (created by partial nationalisations effected in collaboration with foreign capital), corruption in allocation of state resources, grants, licences, etc.

Especially at the lower levels, UNIP's holding direct political power remains essential for this group's economic position.

With elections due before the end of the year such considerations become paramount. A four year economic recession has fuelled the threat to its control.

IMPECCABLE

Real wages have declined drastically, employment has dropped, social services have deteriorated, transportation is crippled, farming bankrupted through a lack of supplies.

Copper accounts for 92 per cent of all exports. Its price is now the same as in 1965. Import prices have increased 150 per cent since then.

No doubts exist that the imperialist powers are unanimous in support of Kaunda. His track record is impeccable: support for UNITA in the

Angolan Civil War; deportation and killing of ZANU guerrillas when they threatened 'detente' in 1975; consistent invocations of the threat of 'foreign ideologies' (read 'Marxism') in Africa.

In addition they fear the alternatives. Kapwepwe, the ex-Vice President who was bureaucratically excluded from even contesting the nomination for UNIP's single presidential candidate, has called for reopening the Rhodesian border, expansion of trade

Kapwepwe's clients sought their share of the spoils. Above all the expectations of the masses would be roused to unquenchable levels.

There has not yet been any announcement of the economic arrangements made at Kano. They will surely involve more of the credits already flowing to increasing amounts over the past two years from the West.

A Zimbabwean 'settlement' would be the clincher for Kaunda. It would enable him to parade as the liberator of



KENNETH KAUNDA seeking a Zimbabwe 'settlement', there and with South Africa and an end to support for 'ungrateful' freedom fighters.

Superficially this seems to accord with Western desires for a rapid 'normalisation' of the Southern African situation. In fact it would only worsen their problems.

Nkomo would be homeless, civil war in Zimbabwe near certain. Turnoil would be created inside Zambia as

southern Africa while promising the earth economically as a result of relations to be established with the new state.

The urgent need to preserve the Kaunda-insured alliance with Zambia's ruling class will be an important reason for the urgency with which the imperialists will pursue the Rhodesian issue in the coming weeks.

END MARTIAL LAW IN IRAN!

DEMONSTRATION Saturday 14 October

Rally at Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park 1.30 p.m.

March to the Iranian Embassy

Organised by the Committee Against Repression in Iran (CARI)

'Wild Geese' and the mercenary ethic

'Here I can shoot blacks legally'

by TIM BROWN

'THE Wild Geese is on its way. The biggest, most star-studded movie ever made in South Africa opens all over the country on Wednesday.' — South African TV Times.

So goes the trailer to *The Wild Geese*, the film that attempts to glorify one of the most vicious and systematic murder and torture machines known this century, and one which has proved more durable than European fascism...South African apartheid.

The film takes its title from the Wild Geese Club in Johannesburg, set up and run by Colonel 'Mad Mike' Hoare — best remembered for his part in the 1964 massacre at Stanleyville in Zaire of 80,000 Simba tribespeople, which ushered President Mobutu to power.

IDEAL

Doubtless this qualified Hoare to be employed by the film's producer Eisan Lloyd, as technical adviser.

Let's take a closer look at 'the ideal mercenary' by examining some of the Wild Geese Club members.

Danny: 'The South African soldier is one of the world's best fighters. You could put a thousand franc note down in the jungle and one of our boys would run through a thousand rebels to get at it.'

Jack Carton-Barber, Hoare's old sergeant major and currently chairperson of the Club: 'We're having only gentlemen. Soldiers and gentlemen. We're doing a job that's all. But if we were to fight the IRA, I'd go in a hurry. Wouldn't you?'

'The IRA are bastards. We were exterminators, that's what

we were. We killed rats and cockroaches (reference to the Simbas). They're (IRA) no more than that. They're vermin.'

Fifty per cent of the white troops in the Rhodesian forces are mercenaries — some of them came via the Wild Geese Club.

Here is Walter Compton, a 27-year-old Australian who had 18 months in Vietnam with the Australian forces:

'Put it this way. If I shot a black in Australia or New Zealand or anywhere else in the world, they'd put me inside jail for 20 years. Here I can do it legally.'

One Rhodesian helicopter gunner mercenary finds killing a sexual drug: 'He will see a man running in the field and open up with his machine gun. The slugs are chopping up the rice...over the man's head at first...then lower, but too far behind. Now the gunner has the range, and is coming up on the man's heels...the moment the man blew up, the gunner had an erection.'

Already a significant number of the Rhodesian mercenaries are British. The British government know this and Roy Mason has stated, 'In certain cases, assistance is given to friendly foreign governments in the recruitment of retired service personnel on a contract basis.'

Field Marshal Lord Carver, who was designated to take over a proposed interim Rhodesian government, has bodyguards hired from a

company called KMS.

This company is noted for its right-wing connections and an ability to pluck its employees straight out of the army's elite regiments — for example Carver's bodyguard, ex-SAS Major Andrew Nightingale.

In South Africa, the mercenaries are the natural offspring of white apartheid. The relationship between the two was amply illustrated when Euan Lloyd, the film's producer, placed a large advert in the *Johannesburg Sunday Times* thanking the South African Government, police and officers of the South African Defence Force for their assistance.

The film has enjoyed considerable promotional advertising from the SADF, being used to sell Defence Bonds. The bonds are used to finance the war in Namibia. It is in these bonds that Barclays Bank invested £6m.

The same theatre where the World Premiere of *The Wild Geese* was held was later used for a charity showing of the film...the proceeds going to the South African Defence Fund, which spends most of its energy improving the facilities of South African military bases in Namibia.

TORTURE

In 1976 Bill Anderson, a white conscript, deserted from the SADF and spilled the beans on their torture — more officially known as 'methods of operation'.

'In mid-September '75, we started being trained as 'COIN-OP' i.e. counter insurgency operations. This completed, we were sent 20km

north of the border with Angola, where we guarded the Cunene Dam until mid-February '76.

'We detained cattle thieves who were suspected MPLA/SWAPO agents. I saw three of them beaten by my battalion commander with his stick, and I saw one of them subjected to water torture. A rag was placed on his face and water poured on continuously until he suffocated.'

'One soldier who had been ordered to take three suspects down to the river and shoot them cut the ear off one dead prisoner and sent the ear home in a meths bottle. He cut off the scrotum and tried to cure it for his gear lever, but it rotted.'

When Euan Lloyd seeks to glorify the mercenaries in glossy movies of virile machismo, stories of courage, colour and drama, stuck together with several million dollars and slick shooting, he disguises the shadowy hands behind the mercenaries and white apartheid.

★ This article was written with the aid of the London South African War Resisters Group. The group consists of military refugees who aim to provide a support base for the growing number of South African youth who are resisting their forced involvement in the South African military system.

They can be contacted either by writing to: BM Box 2190, London WC1V 6XX, or by phoning 01-806 2809.

In particular they can give you leaflets and advice on organising pickets of Wild Geese which is now on national release.

Don't Feed the Wild Geese!



American mercenaries in Zimbabwe — still hunkering after the days of the slave-owning Confederacy.

Peru strike suspended

THE month-long suspension of the Peruvian miners' strike is nearly over. The miners union announced the suspension on 8 September under heavy military repression and the threat of sackings.

Martial law had been declared in five mining areas on 22 August and extended to five

provinces on the 29th. Troops were sent in, union offices ransacked and union officials arrested.

On 5 September the union's executive proposed to a national delegates' assembly that the strike be suspended, but militant workers from the state-owned Centromin mines swayed the union.

The following day troops and police attacked an encampment of miners and their families who had marched to the capital of Lima, shipping them back to the mining districts. This was the final blow and two days later the suspension was announced.

WEAKENED

Lack of support from other union federations weakened the miners in the face of this repression. Leaders of the Communist Party-controlled General Confederation of Peruvian Workers (CGTP) said that a general strike in solidarity with the miners 'could have caused the overthrow of the government and its replacement by a Chile-type fascist regime.'

CGTP bureaucrats stopped miners' leader Victor Cuadros from speaking at a rally in Lima on 2 September. Most of the crowd marched off to another square to hear Cuadros and other left-wing leaders.

DEMANDS

The strike's main demands are for the reinstatement of miners sacked in the July 1977 general strike and for the repeal of anti-working class legislation.

Give the Pumas the old up and under

THE 'Pumas' might sound a pretty inoffensive bunch, but in fact they represent the latest sporting link between Britain and the Argentinian military dictatorship. **RICHARD CARVER reports.**

After the World Cup campaign, it is hardly necessary to spell out why the junta is among the most obnoxious of regimes and how sporting recognition only shores it up.

The World Cup showed that sport is not an effective way of 'building bridges'. Although repression eased off slightly while foreign journalists were around, more than 500 oppositionists have since been arrested.

It might seem surprising that South Americans should play such a stiff upper lipped game

as rugby.

But for decades Britain was the main imperialist power in Argentina and it has left behind it an Anglicised upper crust which enjoys such healthy pursuits as tea-drinking and polo.

That clique has long since decayed and been replaced by US imperialism. But British economic interests persist. The company with the biggest holdings is British American Tobacco — chairperson Sir Richard 'bribing wogs' Dobson.

Despite clear Labour Party and TUC condemnation of the junta, the Labour Government has said nothing on Argentinian human rights violations and continues to remain on good terms in the hope of arms

sales to the Generals.

The British Argentina Campaign is calling for protests to reject that policy of collaboration. It suggests pickets of the matches and letters of protest to the Rugby Football Association and the Foreign Secretary.

In Oxford there has already been a successful picket of one of the tour matches. The *Guardian* estimated the number of pickets at 103.

- Matches still to be played:
- 4 Oct, Headingley, Leeds, 7.30pm.
- 7 Oct, Moseley, Birmingham, 3.00pm.
- 10 Oct, Gloucester, 7.00pm.
- 14 Oct, Twickenham, 2.45pm.
- 17 Oct, Llanelli, 7.00pm.
- 21 Oct, Dublin, 3.00pm.

Single copies cost 30p plus 10p p&p, but why not save money by subscribing: £9 for one year (48 issues), £5 for 6 months (24 issues), or £2.50 for an introductory offer of 10 issues. Please make out cheques/POs to 'Intercontinental Press' and send to: IP/1, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.



Intercontinental Press

THE SECOND part of an overview by Ernest Harsch on the Ethiopian revolution so far is the main feature in this week's issue of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* [Vol. 16, No. 37].

Other articles cover the

Camp David summit, the massacres carried out by Somoza in Nicaragua, the suspension of the miners' strike in Peru, the austerity measures in Colombia, and the background to the recent coup in Mauritania.

TEN YEARS

THE LAST ten years have seen the most intense and sustained struggle against British imperialism in Ireland since the War of Independence (1919-21). And, despite the increased repression and Roy Mason's boasts about 'a return to normality' the anti-imperialist forces have made enormous gains in the last ten years in the North of Ireland.

Sinn Fein, the Workers Party and the Communist Party of Ireland are fond of complaining that we are worse off now than in 1968, but that only illustrates their concern with incidental details rather than the essentials of the problem.

Judged by the yardstick of whether British imperialism's grip in the North of Ireland is stronger or weaker and by the strength of the anti-imperialist forces, the gains have been dramatic.

There were few places in the world in the mid-1960s where the ruling class seemed more secure than in the North of Ireland.

The Unionist Party had ruled virtually unchallenged for over 40 years and their formula of guaranteeing Protestant privilege in an area carefully drawn to ensure a Protestant majority seemed unbeatable. They looked set to rule for another 40 years.

The IRA campaign had petered out miserably and the British Army, though always present, hardly ever had to intervene. The Catholic minority were so demoralised that most of the seats of the local parliament were not even contested. The rest of the world barely knew that Northern Ireland existed.

That has all changed since 1968. The police attacks on the 5 October march in Derry unleashed a torrent of pent-up anger and frustration from the Catholic minority which found expression in a mass protest movement.

Subsequently measures like the intervention of the British Army in August 1969 and internment in 1971 only sharpened the anger of the Catholics and produced a formidable military campaign with considerable popular support.

The whole movement, political and military, reached its peak after Bloody Sunday, January 1972, when 14 peaceful demonstrators were shot dead by the British Army.

The original demands of the movement were reformist — for civil rights — but in fact they struck at the very foundation of the state, the system of Protestant privilege which enables the Unionist bourgeoisie to keep the support of the Protestant masses.

And the constant pressure of the mass movement stripped away layers of mystification which had disguised the real nature of the Northern problem.

Thus, by shaking the old Unionist regime to its core, the civil rights movement forced the British Army to intervene openly on the streets, revealing the power behind the Stormont facade.

The continuing agitation quickly exploded the myth that the British Army was an impartial force, holding the ring between Catholics and Protestants as the troops were used more and more obviously against the Catholics.

There was clarification in another direction when the Dublin government's lack of response to the attacks on Catholic ghettos in 1969, internment in 1971 and Bloody Sunday in 1972 shattered the Northern Catholics' illusions in the Southern politicians and taught them to expect no succour from Dublin governments in the future.

The greatest demystification of all came with the suspension of the Stormont parliament in 1972 when it became clear that the final obstacle to equality for Catholics in the Six Counties was not the bigoted Unionist administration but the British connection itself.

For it became obvious that the British too relied on the Protestant masses to keep their control over the North of Ireland and would not dismantle the system of Protestant privilege.

But the suspension of Stormont

TEN YEARS STRUGGLE

THIS WEEK sees the tenth anniversary of the civil rights march in Derry (5 October) which sparked off an explosion of discontent in the North of Ireland and led to the continuing crisis there. It is also the tenth anniversary of the founding of Peoples Democracy, an organisation which provided much of the driving force of the early civil rights movement.

PD began as a radical student organisation heavily influenced by the ideas of the 'new left' and 'movement' of 1968. But PD has since developed into a revolutionary Marxist organisation and is currently in the process of fusing with

analyses and strategies which have been advanced in connection with the Northern crisis.

The collapse of the O'Neill reforms in 1968/9 and the much more elaborate Sunningdale structure in 1974 demonstrated conclusively the inherently sectarian nature of the Northern state and the impossibility of reforming it.

The intervention and role of the British Army and the Dublin government's collaboration with it confirmed the central importance of imperialism in the conflict and the all-Ireland nature of its control.

As for the anti-imperialist forces, despite periods of attrition and weariness they have grown immensely stronger over the last decade. Compared with the apathy and lack of self-confidence of the Catholic minority in the 1960s tens of thousands have been deeply politicised in the last ten years.

The most profound experience was the establishment of No-Go areas in the ghettos of Belfast and Derry in August 1969 and 1971. In Derry in particular the RUC and British Army were totally excluded from the Bogside and Creggan areas for an entire year with entry and exit controlled by armed members of the IRA.

Unfortunately little effort was made to take advantage of the political opportunities this provided, but nonetheless, like the soviets in Russia in 1905, the No-Go areas have set an example which can be followed and developed when the struggle reaches a similar pitch again.

The course of the conflict has also thrown up many new organisations, engaged in anti-imperialist struggle, notably the Provisional IRA and the Irish Republican Socialist Party and, in a country where even the Communist Party was notoriously weak and groups to the left of it virtually non-existent, revolutionary Marxist organisations like the PD and MSR have established a long record of active involvement and have been able at certain points to play an important, even decisive role in the struggle.

Moreover a high proportion of the agitation of the last decade has been carried on through united front organisations and the practice, if not the theory of united fronts is highly developed in the Six Counties.

The experience of the struggle has had two other important effects. It has produced a profound, if somewhat spasmodic response in the South of Ireland — most clearly demonstrated by the immense crowd which burned the British Embassy in Dublin after Bloody Sunday — showing the potential support which exists there for the anti-imperialist struggle.

And the very progress of events has exposed the fallacy of many of the non-Marxist or pseudo-Marxist

analyses and strategies which have been advanced in connection with the Northern crisis.

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At one point or another the Two Nations theory, economic views of the relations between Protestant and Catholic workers and romantic illusions about the nature of loyalist paramilitary groups intervened to confuse the anti-imperialist movement.

But time and experience have largely dispelled the confusions. The Two Nations theorists (the view that Ireland has two 'nations', one Protestant, one Catholic), whether bourgeois apologists like Conor Cruise O'Brien or so-called Marxist like the British and Irish Communist Organisation, have discredited both themselves and their theory by taking it to its logical conclusion.

The former liberal Cruise O'Brien ended up helping to establish a police state in the twenty-six counties while the BICO have come to the conclusion that imperialism has played a progressive role in history and that not only the Ulster Protestants but the Zionists in Israel have the right to self-determination.

The economic view that the national question was irrelevant in the North of Ireland and that the problem could be solved simply by ignoring the national question and appealing to Protestant and Catholic workers on a class basis has been discredited by events.

Even government surveys have



ARS OF GGLE

the Movement for a Socialist Republic, the Irish section of the Fourth International.

MICHAEL FARRELL was a participant in the 5 October march in Derry, a founder member of the PD and a prominent figure in the early civil rights movement. He remains an active member of PDMSR and is the author of 'Northern Ireland, The Orange State' [Photo Press]. He writes of ten years of struggle in the North of Ireland.

clearly demonstrated the relative privilege of Protestant workers over Catholics and the Protestant workers' own insistence on raising the national question has frustrated attempts to fudge the issue.

It has been made abundantly clear that, while some limited co-operation can be achieved on 'class' issues, the fundamental problem of the sectarian division of the working class can only be resolved by smashing the state structure which fosters and entrenches sectarianism.

Those have been some of the gains of the last ten years, but the struggle has of course been uneven. Most of the gains were made in the first five years.

The lowest point of this demoralisation was the winter of 1976 with the formation of the Peace Movement which was aimed specifically at cutting off Catholic support for the anti-imperialist struggle.

If ever a reformist solution might have worked it was then. But there was no reformist solution.

Gradually, during 1977, popular



discontent built up again, directed against the use of torture in RUC interrogation centres and the withdrawal of political status from Republican prisoners in the new H-Blocks at Long Kesh.

The discontent was manifested in two ways; primarily and most importantly through the establishment of Relatives Action Committees supporting the prisoners by a return to street protests.

It was also reflected among the parliamentary politicians. Sensitive to any change in grass roots feelings some members of the Social Democratic and Labour Party and the old Nationalist Party split away to form the Irish Independence Party which supported political status for the prisoners and called explicitly for a British withdrawal.

In the South the tide was also

Charlie boy

WHEN Prince Charles visited Aberdeen last Sunday he received a rude shock. A 40 strong picket turned out as Charlie watched a military march past during his 'dedication' of a barracks of the Territorial Army.

The picket was organised by the Aberdeen Irish Solidarity Campaign and banner called for 'Troops Out Now' and the granting of political status for Irish political prisoners.

turning. In the winter of 1976/77 the coalition government in Dublin over-reached itself. They introduced a state of emergency allowing for detention without charge for seven days; a 'heavy squad' of the Irish police began systematically beating up Republican suspects.

This provoked a wave of anger and in a general election in June 1977 the coalition was heavily defeated with the two leading proponents of pro-British policy in the cabinet, Cruise O'Brien and Justice Minister Cooney, losing their seats.

After the election there was another development which may have considerable long term significance. Left-wingers in the Irish Labour Party, which had participated in the coalition, split to form the Socialist Labour Party.

The SLP has attracted a number of industrial workers and it recently adopted a policy statement on the national question which, though still somewhat tinged by economism, is strongly anti-imperialist.

Another sign of the growing fight-back, and again one which may have considerable long term significance was the establishment of the Trade Union Campaign Against Repression in mid 1977.

TUCAR was formed in the South and has most of its strength there but earlier this year it led some major workers protests in the North over the death of trade unionist Brian Maguire, who was killed during RUC interrogation.

The size and strength of this new upsurge of resistance, as well as some of its limitations, were graphically demonstrated by an anti-repression conference called by the Relatives Action Committee in Coalisland, Co Tyrone, at the beginning of this year.

To the surprise of the organisers the conference produced the largest gathering of local activists since the peak of the resistance struggle in 1971-2. The attendance also covered a very broad based political spectrum from the Provisionals to the ILP and even individual members of the Official Republicans and the SDLP.

The Coalisland conference showed the potential of a new mass movement against imperialism but it was probably somewhat premature and it failed to build a new united front structure to lead the new surge forward.

The Provisionals in particular were anxious to assert the primacy of the military campaign above all other forms of struggle and failed to see the importance of broadening the political base of the resistance.

But the impetus of the struggle was not lost and a march from Coalisland to Dungannon at the end of August attracted one of the biggest crowds to participate in a protest march since 1973.

The position today looks encouraging. The harsh realities of the Northern problem have burst the bubble of the peace movement which

has effectively collapsed.

The loyalist paramilitary groups are declining, and the splinters of the Unionist monolith have failed to regain their former cohesion and strength.

Public support in Britain for withdrawing the troops seems to be growing, and public opinion in the South is reasserting its support for Irish unity. And of course there is the new upsurge of protest in the North.

Victory is by no means round the corner, however, and it will not be achieved simply by a continuation of the IRA's current military campaign. That campaign has become isolated from the political struggle, too much an end in itself, following its own logic instead of serving as just one tactic in an overall political struggle.

The most urgent priority is to widen the base of the political struggle, enabling it to use more effectively the weapons of a mass movement and even of a majority of the population.

The potential is there. The Coalisland conference showed that the bulk of the anti-Unionist population of the Six Counties can be won to support a united front campaign against repression and for the withdrawal of British troops.

Even then they would still be a minority, but the results of the 1977 election in the South and the development of TUCAR and the SLP show that the mass of the Southern population, especially the working class, can be won to a policy of active support for the Northern struggle, even if such support involves clashing with the Southern government, as it will.

A mass movement on an all-Ireland scale would make possible the use of the most effective weapon of mass struggle — industrial action.

Already Belfast docks members of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union have set an important example this month by striking to secure the release of one of their members detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Industrial action in the 26 counties can strike a serious blow to Britain since the South is now a major location for British and US investment.

Another area where the building of mass political opposition to British policy in Ireland is vitally important is in Britain itself.

It is hardly necessary to stress that a British defeat in Ireland is in the interests of the British working class and that, as Lenin said, 'a blow delivered against British imperialist bourgeois rule by a rebellion in Ireland is of a hundred times greater political significance than a blow of equal weight in Asia or in Africa.'

But while placing stress on mass actions rather than physical force it needs to be added that the struggle against British imperialism in Ireland is unlikely to be won by non-violent means.

This is a serious struggle for the imperialists and they are using and will use considerable force to hold onto the North of Ireland.

Finally, a great many mistakes have been made in the course of the last ten years, and many blind alleys and cul de sacs have been explored (by PD and MSR as well as all the other organisations).

Some of those mistakes could have been avoided if any organisation had been able to give clear direction to the struggle based on a thorough grasp of classical Marxism and the experience of the Marxist movement in other countries, and other struggles.

Clear Marxist direction is essential. PD and the MSR hope that by our fusion which aims at combining our own experience of all phases of the current struggle with the rich experience of the international Marxist movement, we will be able to give some of that vital guidance to the movement as a whole.

**NOEL JENKINSON
MEMORIAL
MEETING
FRIDAY OCTOBER 13 7.30pm
CONWAY HALL**



PHOTO: DEREK SIGERS (PHL)

COMMENT

BBC and ANL

IN THE wake of the controversy surrounding the 'No Plugs for NF Thugs' campaign to stop the NF getting airtime for Nazi propaganda, it was interesting to see the evening TV news coverage of the ANL carnival — and the striking difference between the early evening BBC-1 report and the ITN report a few minutes later.

I was at the carnival, and I thought the ITN report fair — putting the attendance at over 80,000 (which there was no doubt about) and making no attempt to disguise a healthy distaste for the NF and its march to St. Eastern St. For once there was no equation between the NF and the anti-fascists, so often treated as rivals in some private game which is of no concern to ordinary, sensible, normal people.

The BBC 1 news, on the other hand, reported the NF march first, and made it look as if the ANL carnival had been arranged solely to disrupt this (in fact the reverse was true: the NF's march was a calculated but unsuccessful attempt to disrupt the carnival).

The BBC put the carnival attendance at a mere 20,000 — well below even the police's traditionally low estimate, and completely ridiculous to anyone who saw the size of the crowd. In short, the BBC's report was a deliberate put-down of the ANL, and the usual equation was drawn.

Perhaps the real reason the BBC so often tries to equate the NF with anti-fascist movements as rival 'extremists' has nothing to do with any supposed moral equation between, on the one hand, a bunch of hate-breathing bigots and National Socialist ideologues and, on the other hand, a movement of people who are prepared to be noisy in the defence of certain principles, such as the brother-and-sisterhood of the human race.

The real reason is that both are, to a degree, a threat to the establishment — an establishment that is no better epitomised, and no more jealously guarded, than by the BBC itself.

LOUIS MACKAY [London N8]

*A slightly longer version of this letter was sent to the Guardian but has not so far been published.

Put brakes on mistakes!

ON THE 'Pull the plugs on NF thugs' campaign: the fact that there is much racism among workers means that many are confused on the issue. They may be only slightly influenced by NF ideas. If it appears that the left is trying to overcome their confusion by force, we will never convince them.

Their rights were won through prolonged struggle, and those who appear to attack these rights will be condemned by their own actions. Neither the left nor the right are immune from this rule.

By denying the NF the right to impart its message we are denying the workers the right to receive it, and to engage in open and unfettered debate. The fact that these rights are limited under capitalism means that revolutionaries have the obligation to be the most consistent, persistent defenders and extenders of these rights. Every argument we use, whether for state or workers censorship, can be used against us.

But who gains from this? The state is able to intervene and stifle political debate with less fuss and the NF is seen as the defender of democracy, or at least the victim of censorship.

While it is true that, during civil war, democracy is a luxury, that is not the situation at present. If the NF breaks the law we must demand elementary justice and protection. If the police and state cannot provide this then we use this in our fight for proletarian democracy.

Above all, the revolutionary fights racism by championing the democratic rights alien to the whole concept of racism, and by motivating the



independent mobilisation of the working class, by building the autonomous black movement, and by persistent propaganda and agitation.

We should picket meetings, paper sales, and have mass mobilisations against NF marches, but we must never pursue policies which alienate us from the unconvinced workers and hurl them towards the NF camp.

It seems to me that the present campaign is being pursued for two purposes. Firstly to gain prestige among the vanguard as to our and their fighting capacity, and secondly in order to raise the consciousness of workers on the race issue. Not counting those who imagine the Front to be physically smashable.

If we are serious we should be fighting within the ANL to turn it into a democratic-political campaign, which means precisely fighting politically the rabid ultra-left liberalism of the present leadership. Less will mean our passive acceptance of the confusion of young rebellious workers on the issues of democracy and the nature of consciousness-raising versus substitutionism.

PAUL ANDREWS [London SE22]

THE LENGTH of letters printed will usually be kept down to 400 words in order to encourage as wide a range of contributions as possible. All letters may be cut at the Editor's discretion. Unsigned letters will not normally be published, although we will withhold real names from publication on request.

Science and Marxism

CARL GARDNER's letter (14 September) about science and 'classical Marxism' is pure bluff. He ascribes to Marx, Engels and others absolute, monolithic conception of science. Such absolutism is rarely found in their work: they were more than tentative in giving a scientific basis to historical materialism.

This basis had more in common with the natural sciences than the physical ones (Marx intended dedicating *Capital* to Darwin). For this reason alone, historical materialism cannot be categorised as absolute and mechanistic — and hence 'undermined' by 'post-Einsteinian physics'.

Gardner should stop equating 'classical Marxism' with Stalinism and perhaps re-read Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy where scientific absolutism is dealt with — for example:

'Science... mounts from lower to ever higher levels of knowledge without ever reaching, by discovering so-called absolute truth, a point at which it can proceed no further... Just as the bourgeoisie by large-scale industry, competition and the world market dissolves in practice all stable time-honoured institutions, so this dialectical philosophy dissolves all conceptions of final absolute truth and of absolute states of humanity corresponding to it.'

PAUL TICKELL [London SW9]

Personal and political

THE QUESTION of the 'personal and the political' is a phrase currently bandied around a lot in some sections of the left. The debate on 'The Party and the Women's Movement' on the last morning of the Marxist Symposium (17 September) offered us an insight into how the practice may not conform to the theory.

In her introduction Bea Campbell referred to her 'traumatic' relationship with the Communist Party. It was a statement of a 'personal' character unusual from a committed member of a left group in a large open gathering.

Now here, I thought, is an opportunity for the discussion to open out, for there to be more than an 'objective account' of the formal relationship between the party and the women's movement, for there even to be some dialogue between the subjective and the objective.

In fact what happened was, I suppose, utterly predictable. Not one

but two people (one a speaker from the platform) latched onto this brief insight into someone's emotional life with almost unadulterated glee.

'Of course she was traumatised', they said, 'who wouldn't be in the Communist Party, etc.' Now I understand what these people mean when they talk about the 'personal and the political'; they mean exploiting personal 'weakness' for political advantage.

I utterly reject the strategies and theorisations of the CP. I am entirely in favour of winning militants from the CP who begin to see the reformism which is starting them in the face. But there is surely no shortage of political arguments with which to do it.

This incident marked the clear subordination of the 'personal' to the 'political'. Bea Campbell's subjective experience of her relationship to the CP (in which, incidentally, I am sure she is not alone, not only in the CP but in all other left organisations) was considered less important than the opportunity it offered to criticise the CP's politics.

The implications of this form of prioritisation are clear. It will completely stifle any honest attempts by committed revolutionaries to explore, understand and even produce tentative solutions to the contradictions which are inherent in our lives as revolutionaries.

From this emerges the impoverishment of Marxist theory as well as the declination in the ranks of revolutionaries. It is time that all the verbiage about the 'personal and the political' became a serious and integrated part of our practice.

ROGER ETKIND [London]

Hope for pope?

RICHARD Carver's article (17 August) on the death of Paul VI is deplorable on two counts. First, it is written in an unnecessarily abusive and insensitive manner calculated to offend those socialists and progressives working within the Catholic Church and to reinforce the arguments of those doctrinaire traditionalists in the Catholic Church (of whom people like Carver are the mirror-image) who argue that Catholics and socialists can never work together for common aims.

Secondly, and more importantly, the article betrays an astonishing insularity and indifference to the global significance of the Catholic Church, to the struggles among the different political tendencies within the Church, and to the manner in which socialists should relate to these trends.

The papal succession is not a question of finding one 'senile old celibate' to replace another but a struggle for the leadership of the largest and one of the most powerful organisations in the world, a factor of crucial significance in the revolutionary process in Italy, Spain, and Latin America, as well as having immense ideological significance throughout the world.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that Paul VI did not, as Carver's article

suggests, represent the reactionary right within the Catholic Church. Paul VI's period in office was, as anyone who has taken the trouble to find out will know, a period characterised by significant liberal reforms strongly opposed by the extreme right, led by the former fascist Archbishop Lefebvre.

If socialists are to link up with and strengthen the radical anti-capitalist tendencies in the Catholic Church, especially in connection with the vital question of women's rights, which is at the centre of the ideological crisis in the Church, we shall need to develop an analysis and a strategy which go beyond the mere abuse and bigotry which appear to represent Socialist Challenge's posture towards the Catholic Church.

T DAWSON [Bradford]

NUS and student teachers

I REFER to your article on the National Union of Students (14 September) and especially your comments on the Broad Left's failure to defend the teacher training places with their policy of 'alternative uses'.

While you are correct in maintaining that this sort of line is 'excellent for gaining respectability with the government', you fail to make any reference to the refusal of the majority of student teachers to be conned any more by the NUS leadership's mendacious campaign to force us to die quietly. The largest area of NUS, that of London, has never adopted 'alternative uses', despite repeated efforts by the Broad Left.

Before 'alternative uses' came into being, the Broad Left were in effective control of the teacher education sector in London — then ULIESA, now TESLSO. They have not won an election for a single executive position since their adoption of 'alternative uses'.

The Teacher Education National Conference decisively rejected 'alternative uses' this September, and referred back the section of the TENC report that dealt with the college closures 'campaign'.

We are now organising within London and nationally as far as the student teachers within NUS are concerned a campaign against all cuts and closures and for restoration of 114,000 initial teacher training places. We look to the working people of this country, whether in industry, education, or other public services, for mutual support to smash the government policies of cuts and unemployment.

ROLLO SHERIDAN (TESLSO Convenor, TENC 1977-78)

Socialist Challenge is organising a one-day school for local correspondents on 28 October. This will be vital in gearing up the paper and its supporters for the struggles leading up to the general election campaign; full details next week.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE EVENTS

NORTH WEST

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

GREATER MANCHESTER Socialist Challenge. School students who support the paper and would like to get involved in anti-fascist activity, please contact Chris (1273 5947, day) or Steve (226 4267, evening), or write to Manchester SC Centre, 14 Piccadilly.

SALFORD Socialist Challenge supporters can be contacted at the Manchester Socialist Challenge offices. Tel 051-236 2352 or, by writing to Manchester Socialist Challenge Centre, c/o 14 Piccadilly, Manchester with a view to forming a Salford Socialist Challenge group.

SOUTH MANCHESTER Socialist Challenge group meets every other Thursday at the Albert Inn off Wincleslow Rd. Help sell Socialist Challenge between 11.30am and 1pm at Moss Side shopping centre or Longsight Market, Dickenson Rd.

LEIGH Socialist Challenge group will be holding regular meetings shortly. For details ring Roy at Atherton 88 2830.

NORTH EAST

NEWCASTLE Socialist Challenge local supporters are active! If you want to join them, phone Pete on (0932) 29657.

DURHAM Socialist Challenge Supporters Group. For details contact: Dave Brown, 3 Pioneer Cottages, Low Pullington, Durham.

MIDDLESBROUGH Socialist Challenge Group. Inaugural meeting: Steve Polter (Editorial Board) at the offices of Socialist Challenge, Weds. 11 Oct. 7.30pm, AUEW Hall, Borough Road.

LONDON HARROW Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly, details from Box 50, London N1 2XP.

WALTHAM FOREST paper sales every Saturday, 11am-noon outside the coat of office, Hice St, Walthamstow, London E17.

TOWER HAMLETS Socialist Chal-

enge Group meets fortnightly. For details phone 247 2717.

SW LONDON Socialist Challenge Group meets fortnightly at 8am at Capham Library (Capham Common North Side) (Capham Common tube). Next meeting, Weds. 18 Oct.

HACKNEY Socialist Challenge Group meets every other Wednesday at 7.30pm in the Bruma pub, Mare St. Next meeting 18 October.

CAMDEN Socialist Challenge Group: The Ford strike and the Labour government, with a worker from Ford Dagenham and CIS speaker. Weds. 11 Oct. 7.30pm, Neighbourhood Centre, 12 Greenland Rd, NW1.

HARINGEY Socialist Challenge Group discussion meeting: 'Repression in Iran — why Britain backs the Shah'. Thurs. 12 Oct. 7.30pm, West Green Community Centre, Stanley Rd (off West Green Rd), N15. Tube: Turnpike Lane.

NE LONDON POLY Socialist Challenge Society: Tang Ai speak on the liberation struggle in southern Africa and the fight against racism in Britain. Thurs. 12 Oct. 4.30pm, Room 0260, Barking Precinct.

LONDON fund-raising film-show: Europe After the Rain, Mick Gold's highly praised documentary on the Surrealist movement. Friday 13 Oct. 7.30pm, at London Film Makers Co-op, 42 Gloucester Ave, NW1. Adm. 80p (50p concessions).

WALTHAMSTOW readers can buy Socialist Challenge regularly from Sheridan's Newsagents, 85 Hoe St, E17.

SOUTH WEST SOUTHAMPTON Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday from 10am-1pm above bar, Post Office, Bargate.

PORTSMOUTH Socialist Challenge sales. Saturdays, 11.30am-1pm, Commercial Road Precinct.

BRISTOL Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday, 11am-1pm in the 'Hole in the Ground', Haymarket.

YORKSHIRE DEWSBURY Socialist Challenge sales regularly on Saturday mornings in Westgate at the Nat. Westminster Bank, 12.30-2.00pm.

HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge sales regularly Saturdays 11am-1pm in the Piazza.

YORK Socialist Challenge is on sale at the York Community Bookshop, 73 Walmgate or from sellers on Thursdays (12.30-1.45) at York University, Vanbrugh College; Saturdays (11.30-3.30) at Cony Street.

MIDLANDS For details of activities of local supporters throughout the Midlands contact the Socialist Challenge Centre, 76b Digbeth High Street, Birmingham: (021) 643 9209.

LEAMINGTON Socialist Challenge Group public meeting: The coming election and the British left. Speaker: Tony Alt. Tues. 10 October 8pm, Ball Place Community Centre, Leamington.

SOUTH EAST BRIGHTON Socialist Challenge sales regularly on Saturdays at the Open Market, London Road, from 11am-1pm.

COLCHESTER Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly. For details phone Steve on Wivenhoe 2549.

BATH Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday 2pm-3.30pm outside Mac Flowers, Ring Bath 20293 or 29971 for further details of activities.

ISLE OF WIGHT readers can buy Socialist Challenge from the Oz Shop, 44 Union St., Ryde.

SCOTLAND For information about the paper or its supporters' activities throughout Scotland please contact Socialist Challenge Books, 64 Queen St, Glasgow. Open Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday afternoons. Phone for alternative arrangements: (221) 7421. Wide range of Fourth International publications.

EDINBURGH Socialist Challenge supporters group meets regularly. Phone George at 031-346 0466 for details.

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

UNDER REVIEW

Red Rock Revue

How we learned to be less self-conscious

RED ROCK REVUE is the response of those members of the Belt and Braces touring political theatre company most involved on the music side to the summer of '78.

The company's shows have always been created in response to questions arising out of the prevailing political climate writes EILEEN POLLOCK, a performer in the revue and author of 'Not so Green as its Cabbage', a B&B musical on Ireland.

Our productions have come from our own political experience, and from informal discussions with labour movement activists up and down the country in the course of the company's touring.

The subjects have been diverse: wage restraint, changing Army recruitment techniques, the Lucas Aerospace corporate plan, the alienation of old people, the fight back against the multinationals...

Although music has played a large part in the majority of these productions, and the band has toured in its own right as a music unit on several occasions in the past, as well as making some records, it is only recently that we have felt able to move forward.

With the appearance of a music movement which has so forcefully created for itself a place in the political arena, the band has felt itself able to resolve some of the contradictions inherent in being a political band which has evolved in the context of

theatre. Previously, the band could not help but be conscious of the ambiguity of our situation — people of the rock generation anxious to challenge the forms of rock music in an attempt to harness it to the expression of questions of real political concern to working class people.

AGGRESSIVE

The contradictions were many, and many still remain: using the aggressiveness of rock music to present aggressive political ideas, while attempting to do battle with the sexism inherent in rock music and rock music's usual disregard for words...

The contradiction in terms of audiences, some of whom demanded the politics and accepted the rock music, alien though it might have been to them, because it was the band's way of expressing its politics; and some of whom were primarily excited by the very

fact that rock music was being used in this way.

These, among other contradictions, often led to a self-consciousness on the part of the company.

Belt and Braces may have come nearer than most to resolving some of the problems. But the battle is very far from being won, and the company's long-term artistic policy constantly revolves around the struggle to evolve an integrated, un-self-conscious political music-theatre.

The emergence of a political music scene has to some extent released the band from its self-consciousness about the combining of musical skills and political awareness.

This side of the company's work is taking its place within the political music movement, regardless of the fact that it still defies easy categorisation, being neither punk, nor reggae, nor jazz nor completely rock. It is only describable as Belt and Braces Band, with its slides and its lights and its theatricals, its two technicians and seven performers, including what could well be Britain's first political DJ!

The band hopes that Red Rock Revue will be a continually evolving show, capable of responding to whatever is happening at the time, capable of being changed, updated, continually expanded and improved.



EILEEN POLLOCK on the road to Carnival 2 with Belt and Braces Red Rock Revue.

RED ROCK REVUE: UPCOMING VENUES

6 October, 7.30pm, Oldham Parish Hall, Egeon Street, Oldham, Lancs. 7 October, 7.30pm, Free Trade Hall, Manchester. 8 Oct., 8pm, City Poly Students Union, Fairhall House, Whitechapel High Street, London E1. 9 Oct., 7.30pm, Ealing Technical College Students Union, 12 Oct., 8pm,

Greenwich Young Peoples Theatre, Stage Centre, Burnage Road, Plumstead, London SE11. 13 Oct., 7.30pm, Jacksons Lane Community Centre, 271 Archway, London N4. 15 Oct., 8pm, Hall Moon Theatre, Alle Street, London E1. 16-18 Oct., 8pm, Sherman Theatre Studio, Senhennydd Road, Cardiff. 20 Oct., 8pm, New Ambassador Hotel, Upper Woburn Place, London WC1.

12 Oct., evening, Dock Pond Field, Parkston, Essex. 24 Oct., Coventry. Contact John Fisher 0925 2895. 27 Oct., Deptford. Contact Alan or Angie Price 01-581 4578.

For touring in November and December and further details about the show, contact Belt & Braces, 22 Vickers Road, London NW5 4NL. Tel 01-267 8722.

'Grease' is here

Rub in the Brylcreem, get out the combs

WEARING suitably dark glasses and plenty of Brylcreem, MICK GOSLING insinuated himself into a crowd of 14-year-olds and greased his way into the opening night of 'Grease' in downtown Hackney.

That's the great thing about Grease. It's aimed at an audience too young to know what nostalgia is. Yet they screamed, cheered, and sang along and loved the biggest hype since Brian Clough claimed Nottingham Forest could play football.

The storyline of Grease is eminently forgettable. In fact it is difficult to spot.

It's how Danny 'two step' Travolta discovers true love one summer sometime in the 1950s with Sandy (Olivia Newton John), but due to the pressure of his peer group (the T-Birds) has to pretend not to. It all reaches a happy

conclusion when Sandy abandons her white ankle socks and calf-length dresses for an interesting leather outfit and thus finally makes herself a suitable partner for 'Mr Man' himself.

In between it's song and adolescent smut.

OBSESSED

If American Graffiti and 'That'll Be The Day' tried to say something about 'growing up' in the early days of rock and roll, Grease has no such pretensions.

Not even at the level of casting. Most of the male

adolescents sport five o'clock shadows at 8 in the morning.

They are completely obsessed with whether girls 'put out'.

Their attitude to women is summed up in the phrase: 'But what do you do with them for the other 23 1/4 hours?'

The girls, by contrast, are interested in 'romance' — with the exception of a 'bad' one who nearly gets into 'trouble'. This boringly familiar cliché of boy-girl relations inspires the standard lyrics of the film viz:

Sandy: 'He got friendly, holding my hand.'

Danny: 'She got friendly down in the sand.'

This sort of stuff is laid on with a trowel throughout the film, complete with eye-rolling and hip-swivelling from John

Travolta which would put to shame Rudolf Valentino and Elvis Presley respectively.

In fact it is so overdone, complete with the best backhanded comb movements I've ever seen, that you can't help hoping that it must be farce.

The high (or low) spot of the film is when three jokers decide to take national television for a ride while it's filming the school's annual dance as a typical American institution. As Travolta and friend circle in the spotlight following their dance competition victory, the three take a bow — with jacks over head but, alas, trousers not over bums.

Meanwhile, the proud parents watch at home...

Grease is a piece of unashamed commercialism. It will slip away as quickly as it arrived. And while you've been wasting your time reading this review the film's distributors will have netted another few hundred thousand.

In those days a socialist challenge was hard to come by. But it's not today...



OUR NEW POSTER, with thanks to the Flemish artist Pieter Bruegel. It's intended mainly for college and work notice boards, but we don't mind if it's flyposted! Contact Steve Brignull [01-359 8371] for copies.

- Some of the places where you can buy Socialist Challenge on the 14 October: National Sales Day
- BATH: outside Mac Fisheries, 2-3.30pm.
 - BIRKENHEAD: Shopping Precinct, outside WH Smith shop, 11am-3pm.
 - BRIGHTON: Open Market, London Road, 11am-1pm.
 - BRISTOL: Hole in the Grocer, Haymarket, 11am-1pm.
 - CAMDEN: Inverness Street Market, 11am-3pm.
 - CARDIFF: Outside Boots, Queens Street Precinct, 11am onwards.
 - Huddersfield: The Piazza, 11am-3pm.
 - HULL: The Droge, Wharfedale Gate, 12-2pm.
 - LEAMINGTON: at the Coventry Carnival.
 - GREATER MANCHESTER AREA: Oldham market, Moss Side Shopping Centre, Longsight Market, Chaffin Precinct, Central Reference Library, Creetham Hill, Bury Precinct, Seaford Precinct, Bolton Precinct, Abraham Moss College of Further Education, South Trafford College of Further Education, University of Manchester, University of Salford, UMIST, Manchester Poly, Deesbury College, Bolton Institute of Technology.
 - MIDDLESBROUGH: outside Cleveland Centre, opp. Woolworths, 11am-1pm.
 - PORTSMOUTH: Commercial Road Precinct, 11.30am-1pm.
 - READING: outside Boots, Broad Street, 11am-3pm.
 - SOUTHAMPTON: Post Office, Bargate, 10am-1pm.
 - WARRINGTON: Min Street, 11am-1pm.
 - WOLVERHAMPTON: Outside the Mander Centre/Golden Egg, 11am-2pm.

Nine days to shake the world

THERE ARE only nine days left before our first ever National Sales Day on 14 October, writes our new distribution manager, STEVE BRIGNULL. And if Manchester supporters are anything to go by, the Sales Day should be very successful.

At a regional meeting of Socialist Challenge group organisers in the North-West last weekend, Manchester supporters reported that local plans for mass sales are underway in about 20 venues in the Greater Manchester area.

'The success of the day', said local sales organiser, Vicky Anderson, 'will depend largely on the confidence of the sellers in promoting and explaining the paper's policies to new buyers. We've discussed some

ways in Manchester of overcoming the lack of confidence many comrades feel when they are doing mass sales'.

The National Sales Day is not a one-off event. It is the first step in a three-month campaign to boost the paid sales of the paper by 50 per cent.

Many groups have increased their orders already. Once again, Manchester has taken a big leap in its order, which is now up by about 125 per cent!

Cardiff supporters are off to Newport on 14 October to try to win new readers. They have increased their order by 40 per cent on a regular basis, and half again for the Sales Day.

Along with the increase in street sales, we hope to push up our subscription income by 70 per cent in the next three months. Every person who buys a paper on 14 October will be asked to consider our special sub offer of three months for £2.

If you have any problems getting the paper on a regular basis, why not consider this offer? Or, for £5, you can get efficient delivery for six months, plus a choice of either the Big Red Dairy or Pan Africa Dairy.

Finally, we hope that the next three months will see a big increase in the number of shops stocking Socialist Challenge.

North-West supporters have discussed how a full day could be usefully used just making enquiries from every bookshop — including placing customers' special orders in WH Smith shops — to get the paper stocked.

And our new promotion poster — one of many now being planned — will be up in as many shops and colleges as will take them. A poster suitable for fly-posting will be out next week.

If you don't already sell the paper, why not join the sellers on 14 October. They will be in the following places:

Socialist Challenge

Labour Party Conference

THE UNACCEPTABLE FOOT OF CAPITALISM

'A POLITICAL PARTY should protect its base; that is the condition for success in all other manoeuvres and forays. And who will contest the platitude?

'The strange answer is that for months past, even years, many of the most eminent supposed well-wishers of the Labour Party have recommended an exactly opposite strategy, and occasionally the Labour leadership has seemed tempted to adopt it...

'But I repeat: this was the strategy of defeat in 1970. Labour's base is the trade union movement interlocked with the dedicated phalanx of party workers who kept democracy alive in the constituencies'.

MICHAEL FOOT, 30 April 1972.

Before the memory fades completely, let us remember how Michael Foot once postured. How he denounced the late leader of the Labour Party, Hugh Gaitskell, as a 'counter-revolutionary'.

How he marched with the Campaign Against Nuclear Disarmament; campaigned against the American war in Vietnam. How he led the Tribune group, and was once expelled from the Parliamentary Labour Party for being too left-wing.

Foot's favourite theme throughout his political life has been the need for the Labour leadership to pay heed to its 'base'.

DISASTER

He used to stress that defying the wishes of the party rank and file led inevitably to political disaster and defeat.

Such is the past of Michael Foot. Today it is a history which is fading. And at the

same speed as the lost jobs of steelworkers in Foot's Ebbw Vale constituency.

But last Monday at the Labour Party conference when Foot wound up on behalf of Callaghan in the debate on the 5 per cent limit, it was difficult to feel much anger.

SICK

It is little more than a sick reminder of times long past that as late as March 1972 Foot considered: 'The jobless total of 600,000 when Labour lost office was already intolerable'.

Of course, charges of selling-out past principles, of hypocrisy, of somersaulting once office is attained, are not restricted to Michael Foot. But where Foot has a special responsibility is in relation to the present state of the Labour Party.

He is now one of the main leaders of a Labour government which has so eminently 'failed to protect its base'.



And that is not the fault of the rank and file members of the party, or of its supporters on the factory floor. They have been incredibly patient with Foot and his colleagues in government over the past four years. Too patient.

But now, with the election on the horizon, the self-evident truth can no longer be hidden.

Labour hasn't a cat in hell's chance of winning the next election while it pursues the 5 per cent norm, fails to tackle unemployment, and rejects the advice of Labour activists in favour of that of the International Monetary Fund.

The average Labour activist will feel no enthusiasm for arguing Heath-type policies on the doorstep.

WAR

The traditional Labour voter will feel little compulsion to vote for a party that wages war on free collective bargaining.

That is why — contrary to what Foot, Healey and the ruling class press argued — the decision of the Labour Party conference to throw out the 5 per cent does not destroy Labour's election chances.

If that vote is followed up by the Labour Party waging the

campaign against 5 per cent that it is now pledged to; and if those who still consider themselves left Labourites put themselves at the head of that campaign, an election victory is still possible.

PROBLEM

The only problem is that it may have all come too late. Had, for example, the Tribonites launched such a campaign at the start of Phase One; had they fought for a socialist economic strategy; had they attacked the Labour government, then today the Labour party would be in a much healthier state.

Such a campaign would have inevitably overthrown the policies of Callaghan, Healey and Foot.

The Labour left has argued that it has had difficulties because the government was a minority one.

Well, who is the minority in the labour movement? Callaghan, Healey, and Foot — or the 57,000 Ford workers, and the four million votes at the Labour Party conference?

Goodbye, Michael Foot. We can't say it's been a pleasure knowing you. But it's certainly been an experience.

IRELAND 1968-78
Demonstration, 7 October

BARNSELEY, Rock Street, 12.30
Called by the United Troops Out Movement,
Bring the war home to Mason's constituency!

OUR FUND DRIVE

WE MADE IT! With the help of £500 from a comrade who wishes to remain anonymous, we reached £2,743. For the first time since the paper's quarterly target was increased from £1,800 to £2,500, we've gone well over the top.

What's more, we haven't yet added in the bankers' orders, which add up to £754 this quarter. So we are now in a position to think about improving the paper.

As a first step, we will be

making sure that our subscribers get more efficient delivery of their copies. We plan to move towards a metal plate addressing system, which will avoid the often illegible writing that comes with our present paper plate method.

Although this involves a cost of over £200, it will mean fewer missing copies for subscribers and many hours of work saved at this end.

We are also investigating a change to pre-paid postage —

avoiding the time spent presently stamping each issue. Finally, we hope to adopt a new and highly efficient billing system to ensure that a record is kept of every paper which leaves our offices.

All this will put us on a firmer financial footing once the results of the new subscriptions and the improved sales begin to roll into our offices. We're counting on you... especially beginning with the National Sales Day on 14 October.

There's clearly an audience for our paper — we just need to reach it. For example, at the Ford plant in Dagenham last Friday, despite the torrential rains, over 50 copies were sold to Ford workers.

The efforts of Socialist Challenge groups are vital. For here's where the real future of the paper lies.

However, last weekend's meeting of North-West Socialist Challenge group organisers showed that many of our

oldest groups have floundered — although new ones are springing up in places like Oldham.

So the increased income we're relying on from improved sales will also be put towards servicing these groups: providing more promotion material; organising speakers and film tours; holding regular regional meetings of group organisers; helping out with local fund-raising, and so on.

On that last note, Manchester supporters are planning a Guy Fawkes bonfire to raise funds. Are you?

This week, we've had one more member of the Fourth International marking each year of his membership with a

donation of £15. Thanks to Tony Southall.

Our thanks this week to:

Anon, Oxford	£100
Hackney IMG	£100
(from Carnival 2 food stall)	
Steven Marks	£25
Chris Scott Paul	£5
B. Frieson	£5
Anon	£3
J. Spragg	£2
I.D. Miles	£3
D. Silverstone	£3
Anon	£5
P. Lalley	£2
Cardiff supporter	£1.25
Tony Southall	£15
Anon	£20
J. Irvine	£5
Anon	£500

GRAND TOTAL £2,741.46

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

Domestic: 6 months, £5; 12 months, £10

Abroad: Airmail, £16.50. Surface, £10 per annum.

Name _____

Address _____

I enclose a donation for the Fighting Fund of _____

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

Complete and return to:

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

Xmas lottery

WHY NOT try your luck in the Socialist Challenge Xmas lottery.

For 10p per ticket or £1 for a book of tickets, plus s.a.e., you can have a chance to win one of many prizes including: a portable 12" black and white television; a case of French wine for the holding season; an autographed copy of Ernest Mandel's forthcoming book, The Second Slump; a record

token; and a year's subscription to three publications: Socialist Challenge, International, and Socialist Woman.

The lottery will be drawn on 18 December in the Socialist Challenge offices, and the winning ticket number will be printed in the 4 January 1979 issue of the paper. Organised by D. Weppler of 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP.