

# Socialist Challenge

**Ford  
and  
British  
Oxygen  
smash  
5% norm**

# NOW LET'S KILL THE PAY POLICY



Photo: G. M. COOKSON [Socialist Challenge]

# EDITORIAL

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## Callaghan in Wonderland

THE DECISION of the managements at Ford and British Oxygen to disregard the government's 5 per cent norm reflects the change in the political situation in Britain as more and more workers reject the austerity policies of Callaghan.

What will the Labour leader do now? All the indications are that even partial victories at Ford and BOC could open the floodgates. Will Callaghan and Healey proceed to smash public sector strikes, as they defeated the Fire Brigades Union last winter? This is certainly what Healey threatened in a TV interview. Callaghan promised further unemployment.

Of course Labour could impose sanctions. But Ford and BOC are not piddling little firms. Sanctions against BOC would be unacceptable to the British capitalist class as a whole because of the effect on the economy. It is worth recalling that the only real sanctions imposed by the Labour government have been against employers breaching pay guidelines. Contrast this with the lax approach to sanctions against the white settler regime in Zimbabwe!

What is beyond dispute is that a repeat of the FBU performance will ensure Labour's defeat at the polls. So the Labour leaders confront a severe dilemma. They realise that capitalist interests will be damaged without a pay policy. The only way of inflicting one, however, is to unleash a frontal assault on the trade unions. This will lead to certain defeat at the polls.

The trade union leaders will naturally help as much as they can. But they cannot totally disregard feelings at the base. Moss Evans tries to soften the blow by saying: 'We have our job to do and the government has theirs.' What this means is: we have to defend our living standards and the government has to introduce unemployment, cuts in social expenditure, etc. And never the twain shall meet!

The whole point is that defending the interests of trade unionists today cannot simply be confined to demanding higher wages. It has to involve a struggle against the overall priorities of capitalism. The TUC will not do this, however. It regards itself as a pillar of the system.

How can we shake this pillar? By organising the broadest possible alliance of class struggle forces in the trade unions. Here lies the urgent necessity to convoke an emergency joint conference of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions and the Rank and File Organising Committee to discuss the way forward for the working class today. The vote against the 5 per cent policy at the recent Labour Party conference lays the basis for involving the Labour Party on every level in such a conference.

The struggle of the Ford workers has come at a crucially important time for the British working class. For four years we had experienced a number of defeats and demoralising sell-outs. The Ford insurrection has laid the basis for transforming the situation.

It is quite likely that the government will try and smash the claims of public sector employees to demonstrate that its iron fist has not gone rusty. Thus a joint LCDTU/R&F conference to launch a fight in the labour movement against the reactionary social and economic policies of the Labour government is now a crucial task.

## Hua in London

THE CHINESE Foreign Minister, Huang Hua, is in Britain this week. Rumours that he will be attending the Tory Party conference in Brighton have been strenuously denied by the Chinese Embassy, though a meeting with Thatcher is likely.

The main reason for Hua's visit is to cement links with capitalist Europe, develop further trade links, encourage tourism, etc. The cold warriors in Britain will be delighted by the visit, and we doubt whether the cause of Chinese dissidents and 'human rights' will feature prominently in the British press. For the Chinese support NATO, and that makes them immune from criticism as far as Fleet Street and the Foreign Office are concerned.

It would appear that no press conference is being organised by the Chinese Embassy or the Foreign Office for the distinguished visitor from China. We were certainly intending to go in order to ask questions which no Fleet Street paper would have posed:

Why is Pinochet due to visit China later this month?  
Are executions of oppositionists still continuing in a number of Chinese cities?

How many political prisoners are there in China? Are the Chinese Trotskyists and a number of former Red Guard leaders going to be publicly tried?

Why has the Chinese government been defending the rights of expropriated Chinese capitalists in Southern Vietnam? Does it think these expropriations were 'unfair'? If so, why did it not protest when its Cambodian comrades-in-arms simply butchered large groups of Chinese merchants?

Does the Chinese government still believe that Britain needs a Tory government?

We will now have to wait for another opportunity before these and other questions can be posed.

# FORD WEEK THREE

## Public employees' wage claim

# Now that the government has said No

WHEN the government and the TUC get together for chummy little talks, they will doubtless consider deeply the 'problem' of the low paid.

RICH PALSER looks at the wages strategy of the Public Employees' Union, the major union representing the local government manual workers, whose present basic pay is £42.80.

The National Union of Public Employees set out its policy in a document passed at its last conference called 'Union Wages Strategy 1978-79'. It outlines in detail the problem of low pay for NUPE members.

Since 1970 the gap between the average earnings for local authority manual workers and those of all workers has increased from £5.60 to £12.06.

The report points out that previous attempts to get rid of low pay through productivity schemes, particularly as championed by the 1960s Prices and Incomes Board, has failed to close the gap in earnings. 'A principal cause of this low paid position is the existence of low basic rates' says the report, and concludes that the only solution is a decent basic minimum wage — of £60.

### 35HOURS

Secondly, it argues that a 35 hour week, without loss of pay, is 'essential if the trend of losses in job opportunities in the public services is to be reversed'.

These two planks of NUPE's wages strategy have now been incorporated into a joint claim with the G&MWU and T&GWU.

Fourteen pages of detailed analysis are needed to arrive at this conclusion. Only on its final page does the report outline 'the campaign'.

This comes down to three main points.

One, building mass support amongst NUPE's membership for the campaign, through leaflets, posters, and a series of mass meetings prior to negotiations.

### SUPPORT

Two, building support in the wider labour movement, and getting motions to TUC and Labour Party conference

in support of the campaign.

Three, building support among the public, and linking the elimination of low pay to the alternative economic strategy supported by NUPE.

### ACTION

All these steps are of course essential preparation. But preparation for what? Having got the membership fully behind the claim, what are they being called upon to do? Having got resolutions through branches and stewards committees of workers in other industries, what else are they being asked to do? When it comes to the crunch and the government refuses to meet the claim, what next?

This is not answered in the document, mainly because the union leadership hoped that it would never come to the crunch

— that the government would be persuaded to 'change course'. Now that it is clear they will not, the union leadership has asked area and divisional committees to draw up contingency plans. So what should those plans contain?

Firstly, it's clear that the local authority manual workers' claim sets the pattern for ancillaries, nurses, water workers and the various other claims pending in the public sector.

United action by all those workers behind the local authority claim is the best way to win a decent settlement for all.

Secondly, it's clear that even Ford workers need the solidarity of other workers to win, and for the public sector that is doubly the case. That support will not be won unless public sector workers are being seen to be taking strike action on their own behalf.

### SOLIDARITY

But having taken that action, members need to go out in flying pickets and win

solidarity action from other workers.

When the nurses last went on strike they were able to win solidarity action from Doncaster busworkers, Liverpool and Manchester dockers, Midlands engineering workers, and the South Wales miners.

Thirdly, the nurses were able to do this because they were organised so as to involve the whole of the rank and file membership during the strike.

Action Committees involving members of all the unions in one area were able to organise teams of flying pickets, and all the creativity of the membership was put to good effect in finding better tactics to win the strike.

Pay Action Committees are needed now in every area, made up of representatives of all workers affected by the claim.

Without these steps all the posters and leaflets and all the Low Pay Rallies will be wasted, because they will not be turned into an active fight against low pay and against the government.



NUPE Low Pay Rally in London on 24 September was hardly built at all, and the clash of dates with the Carnival cut numbers to little more than a hundred.

Photo: MORNING STAR

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.

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## OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

\* To begin to fight for the creation of a unified and democratic revolutionary socialist organisation which can, through an application of united front tactics, begin to be seen as an alternative by thousands of workers engaged in struggles. Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

**2** Our socialism will be infinitely more democratic than what exists in Britain today, with full rights for all political parties and currents that do not take up arms against the socialist state. The Stalinist models of 'socialism' in the USSR and Eastern Europe have discredited socialism in the eyes of 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-communist' 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.

## Ford worker's wife

# 'I say I'm employed by Ford — they pay my wages every week'

**JULIE ALEXANDER** is determined that the wives of Ford workers should be actively supporting the strike. The car bosses and the press barons are fond of playing on the hardship strikes cause to families. Julie is quite clear who causes the hardship in her family.

Her husband, Alex, has worked on the assembly line at Langley in Buckinghamshire for 2½ years. Both are active in the Ford [UK] Workers Combine.

Julie spoke to JUDE WOODWARD.

“Going on strike does mean hardship for the families. From a woman's point of view, my first reaction was one of fear — not knowing what was going to happen or how long it will go on for. But my attitude is that we suffer a bit now to get what we want; not just give up as times are hard.

Once we've claimed off the DHSS we'll have £36.95 to live on, with three kids to care for. But I don't think that the men should even consider striking unless they are going to stay out until they win.

My involvement really started over a year ago when the men at Langley were laid off. I joined the picket line then, which was demanding 80 per cent lay off pay — that's still part of the current claim.

We set up the Ford Langley Action Committee, but we ran into trouble almost straight away.

### UNDERGROUND

The union said it would kick out anyone who was in any body that wasn't part of the union. And as Langley is a closed shop that would have meant the sack. So then we had to go underground.

There was an incident on the picket line then. I was up there with one or two of the men and the shop steward said I had to leave as I wasn't a Ford worker.

I said that I was and when he laughed and asked me where in the plant I worked I just pointed out that I work at home, cooking, cleaning and working really hard — for Ford, in my opinion.

At that time they tried to say that I wasn't really the wife of anyone working at Ford. They got some of the other wives up there with a leaflet saying: 'Beware of the "universities" wives on the picket line'.

### COMMITTEE

Alex got up at a union meeting and said that I was his wife, which put a stop to that.

They were really scared by having even one wife up there. If masses of us women came



out and marched to Downing Street in support of the strike then they'd be absolutely terrified.

You see, Ford and the government are hoping that the men will be forced back to work by the wives — it's happened before.

I want to set up a wives' committee. I approached the stewards about it, but all they say is wait until next week. But I'm not interested in next week — there'll be no money by then. There's no money now.

My hardest job is getting through to the men. I can't approach the wives directly; I

don't know where they are. All I know is that they are there behind all the men.

In our leaflets we say that wives are invited. We hope that the men will leave the leaflets lying around at home and the women will see that they are invited.

There aren't many wives on the picket line at Langley. But I know that many of them are enthusiastic and want to support the strike. I gave up my job when the strike started so I could devote all my time to supporting the strike.

One of the problems is that many of the workers at Langley

are Asian. A friend of ours, a very militant person in the union and right behind the strike, when I suggested to him that his wife came along he was quite shocked and said No.

He's Asian and he thinks that women just don't do that kind of thing.

Last year we went to Amsterdam and met a Ford family. They get better wages — which go up all the time — lay off pay, better holidays.

They've still got problems there, like health and safety, which is very bad. But it's not good here either.

Alex has been nearly killed



Photo: G. M. COOKSON [Socialist Challenge]

twice at work. Once when an enormous truck toppled over off the line — almost on top of him.

Six thousands pounds — that's the value they put on a person's life in there. It's nothing, and you only get it if the man signs the bit of paper saying his wife should be the beneficiary.

Lots of them don't because they feel that it's a bit jinxed.

Lots of the women are really concerned about health and safety. Ford doesn't care at all. Many of the young men get chest infections and the management doesn't even try and find out why.

I know a bloke who's worked for Ford for 20 years and he's been off now for nine months dying of cancer. He gets £12 a week sick pay.

And no one from Ford management has even contacted him to see how he's getting on. That's gratitude for you after 20 years work.

It's hard work at Ford. They blackmail you. If you don't do overtime when they ask you — because your wife's just had a baby or something — then they never ask you again.

### PERMANENT

Most of the men are on permanent shifts. One of the most common complaints I hear from the wives that I know — including myself — is that the men sleep all evening.

Since the strike, at least Alex is awake in the evenings — we have conversations and argue about politics, but that's better than him just going to sleep.

The women are suffering because of Ford. When the men come in in the evening most of

the wives get a battering. I think that's Ford's fault.

Many of the women don't like admitting it — women don't — but it's really common. I know what it's all about. It's happened to me before.

I'm involved in Women's Aid. I help run a refuge for battered wives in Slough. It opened six months ago.

### MILITANT

I've always been a very militant person, when there's something to fight about. I was militant at school. Once I even brought the school out on strike.

As you get older, being married, settled down and at home you get isolated. You have to go out and find others who think and feel the same as you do. That's what I've done now — at Ford and at Women's Aid.

Finally, on the strike, I think that next week or the week after the unions are going to start talking again. When this happens the women have really got to come out in force and show that they want their men to stay out on strike.

They're depending on the women to get the men back to work. But we'll show them that we're right behind the strike.

We can't depend on the union or the stewards. The stewards are right behind the union — not right behind the strike as such.

I've said to the men on the picket line, 'It's up to you, you're the ones who pay your dues every week. You are the union — they just represent you'.



# Ford's prod deal — what they have in mind

UNION LEADERS involved in the Ford strike have publicly stated that there will be no talks in the dispute until management agree to negotiate without reference to the government's pay norm.

By this they mean they will not enter into talks on productivity until, but only until, the 5 per cent law is ignored.

But Socialist Challenge can reveal that union leaders have already reached agreement in principle with Ford on one aspect of productivity — how it will apply to staff workers at Ford.

A month ago Ford management and the unions representing staff members signed a ten point agreement on the introduction of new technology.

A clause in the agreement stated that improved efficiency would be reflected in the company's offer in the new round of wage negotiations. In other words, a straight and simple productivity deal.

The unions involved are on the Joint Staff National

Negotiating Committee. These white-collar unions include the TASS section of the Engineering Union, ASTMS, and the ACTSS section of the Transport Union.

## JOBLOSS

The agreement these unions have signed reveals the nature of productivity deals — a massive job loss with no reduction in the working week. At first sight the proposals

## EXCLUSIVE EXPOSURE

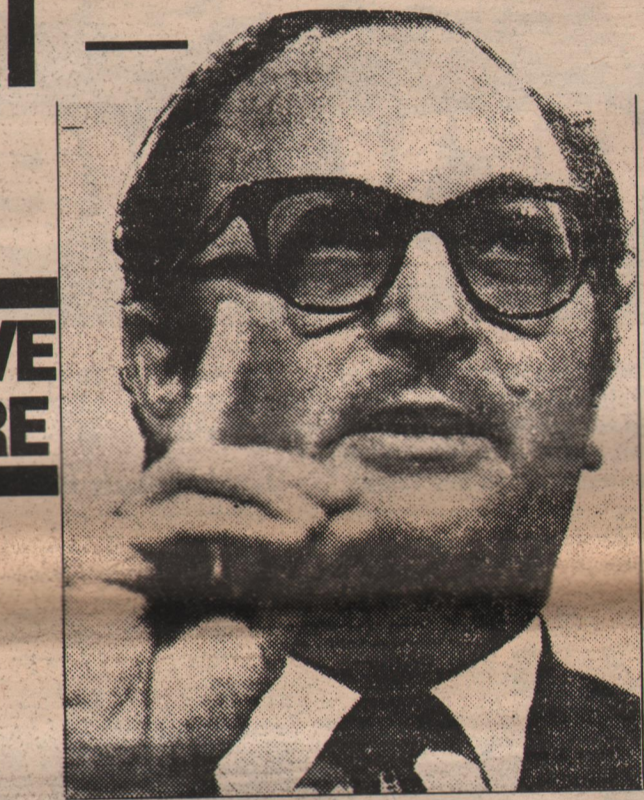
seem like something out of the next century.

## TAPES

They come under the heading of the 'electric office', in which there will be no paper work, all information will be stored on tapes, communication between offices will be by visual display units (which means a keyboard and TV screen in each office) and 'word processing' machines will do away with a colossal amount of secretarial work.

On-line computers will be introduced. In time these will be capable of being extended to monitor everything, including the flow of stock, labour performance and quality control.

Computer-aided design equipment will herald in an era



of technical drawing by computer.

Such new technology could, if used correctly, benefit the entire Ford workforce. But the agreement sanctioned by the unions envisages few benefits for its members.

It is true that there is a 'no redundancy clause' in the proposals, but there is

agreement on 'natural wastage'. Similarly, while there is provision for retraining and upgrading of staff on the new machinery, there is to be no reduction in the working week.

In short, the 'new technology' will be of no lasting benefit to the unions concerned. Eventually 50 to 60 per cent of staff jobs will go.

Need this necessarily be the case? Certainly not.

If applied correctly, new technology can be of immense benefit to working people. It can eliminate boring, repetitive work, it can cut the working week.

But this is not what the unions at Ford have fought for. Instead they have agreed to a productivity deal which will amount to a massive reduction in available jobs; and — inevitably — more profits for Ford Motor Company.

## Productivity Kills

'EVERY day in the US 65 carworkers drop dead at their jobs on the factory floor', reports the CIS Anti Report on Ford.

'On average some 16,000 of them die in the plants every year, of whom half have had heart attacks.'

'These figures do not include the results of accidents at work on these lines. Added to which are the 63,000 workers with disabling diseases, the 1,700,000 with lost or impaired hearing...

'In May 1972, a worker at a Ford engine plant in Ohio fell to his death through the foundry roof. He was the fourth worker killed at that plant during the first half of 1972.'

'The US Occupation, Safety and Health Administration ruled that the company was at fault in three of the four deaths. Ford was fined \$200 for the fourth worker's death.'

# Why Ford changed its mind

DESPITE speed up, attacks on discipline and so on, the productivity of the British Ford workers has not increased at the rate of Ford workers in other countries.

The Select Committee report on the British motor industry published in 1975 identified lack of investment as the chief cause of low productivity.

It believed that 'until investment substantially increases the capital stock, productivity in the British motor industry will not be able to equal productivity abroad.'

A report produced by the Government's 'Think-Tank', the Central Policy Review Staff, looked to other causes of low productivity — in particular, work practices and discipline.

Moreover, the report concluded that 'if the industry is to become viable there is no

alternative but to cut capacity by at least 400,000 units', at the same time as pointing to 'overmanning in the British car industry'.

Taken together, these reports give real insight into what Ford management are after in their productivity deal.

\*A deal based on national targets with local targets to be worked out accordingly. Local line speeds determined on this basis with less rank-and-file control.

\*Introduction of new technology, including the new Bridgend plant being built in South Wales, and the introduction of micro-processing, especially on the staff side.

\*A major assault against absenteeism, unofficial strike action, and union prerogatives; tightening of discipline.

The result: harder work, greater health hazards, weaker union organisation and job loss.

## The price the Germans pay

FORD love to drone on about the higher productivity of German workers. But what price do the German workers pay?

The following is the accident rate for Ford Germany compared to Ford UK:

Year	Germany	Ford UK
1977	23.8	10.9
1976	27.1	14.3
1975	32.5	11.0

DESPITE the appalling safety record of the whole British motor industry, Ford compares unfavourably with the other companies.

Company	Number of industrial accidents per 10,000 employees that resulted in the employee being off-work for at least one day in 1974 were as follows:
Vauxhall	142
Chrysler [UK]	110
British Leyland [off for 3 days]	138
Ford Motor Company	228

# They won't be phoney this time

JOHN MILLER, a national negotiating officer of the Transport and General Workers Union, blew the gaff last Thursday.

Speaking on Thames Television, he admitted that many of the productivity deals he had negotiated in the past pay round were 'phoney', designed to do no more than get around the government's 10 per cent limit.

Miller claimed that deals negotiated by the giant BP and ICI companies were among those which fell into this category.

Miller was confirming what many trade unionists and shop floor workers already know. Indeed, the Labour government was also perfectly aware that many productivity deals were a complete sham — designed to save the face of the government and its 10 per cent, Phase 3 norm.

That is why the government will be doing all it can to make sure that this time around 'self-financing' productivity deals will only win its approval if they are exactly that.

This is obvious from the government's secret guidelines on the 5 per cent pay policy,

circulated to civil servants and recently exposed in *The Times*.

These guidelines are not only a hardening-up, or, as the document puts it, a 'clarification' of last year's rules.

They stress that when productivity is increased the extra profits should not all go to those who are responsible for the increased production — the shopfloor workers: 'so far as possible unit costs should be reduced... a reasonable share of the benefits must go to the enterprise'.

The document continues by saying that increased profits alone — as at Ford — are no

justification for a rise over 5 per cent: 'Financial indicators, such as added value of profits, or intermediate indicators are not an acceptable basis for a (productivity) scheme.'

Another guideline stresses that a promise to increase productivity is by itself insufficient to qualify for a wage increase, and that only after any increase in productivity will payment be sanctioned:

'It must be demonstrated to be self-financing before any payments are made, and payments should continue only if regular checks confirm that it is self-financing.'

In other words, hand in hand with productivity deals will go a significant increase in management policing of workload, line speed, time-keeping, etc.

The message, then, is one of government determination that any significant increase in workers' wages will not come from the bosses' profits but the workers' sweat.

This time there will be no phoney productivity deals. Which is why this time they must be resisted.

# FORD WEEK THREE

## Remember 1971

# Don't trust the 'honest brokers'

THE DECISION of the Ford bosses to negotiate without specific reference to the 5 per cent limit gives the victory in the first battle of the Ford war to the workers.

But the eventual outcome of the war is still undecided. The spotlight now falls on the union leaderships. The million dollar question is — can they be trusted?

The most famous phrase coined by Henry Ford I is 'history is bunk'. Perhaps the founder of Ford Motor Company said that because he didn't want workers to learn from their history and the past experience of their struggles.

Workers in Ford UK today have a lot to learn — especially about their union leadership — from the 1971 Ford strike.

### MILITANT

Then, as now, the strike was precipitated by a militant rank-and-file walk out in response to an insulting offer from the bosses.

There was enthusiastic support for the strike right the way up to the end of the ninth week.

But then stepped the union leadership, in the shape of Hugh Scanlon and Jack Jones. Above the head of the National Joint Negotiating Committee they agreed to settle for an extra 9p an hour.

At the start of the strike management had offered 8p an hour. Nine weeks on strike for a penny!

The NJNC backed the deal after an initial wrangle. Part of this was an unprecedented use of a secret ballot, in which less than 50 per cent of the workforce voted.

The result was that the deal was accepted. Yet just one week before, workers at Basildon — one of the weakest plants — had voted overwhelmingly to stay out.

The mass meeting had ended with chief negotiator Moss Evans being carried shoulder high by the workers.

So why the apparent change of feeling within a week? There are two explanations: one involves the union leadership, the other the way the strike was organised.

The role that union leaderships set themselves is one of 'negotiation', whether in 1971, 1951, or 1978. Today the union leaderships at Ford have already won all they really ever wanted to win — the right to negotiate freely.

For compromise and concession are the stock in trade of the union leadership. They never really challenge the status quo, because in a sense they are part of the status quo, part of the capitalist order of things.

They see themselves as the 'honest brokers' between the workers on the shop floor and the management, and on occasions like today a third interest is thrown in — the government's.

In 1971 the union leadership could, in their own terms, point to a 'victory'. Even though that victory was no more than 1p, it was still a victory because it had been obtained, as they saw it, through 'negotiation'.

In 1971 the rank-and-file Ford workers were in no position to resist this deal. It was the great 'stay at home' strike.

The workers were not involved in the struggle. Only at the last minute did the best of the rank-and-file leadership



MOSS EVANS—snatched defeat from jaws of victory in 1971

realise the problem.

But by then the calling of mass meetings was too late. The workers, sitting at home away from their brothers and sisters, had already been 'got at' by the mass media.

### BALLOT

The calling of the secret ballot by the union leadership sealed the fate of the struggle. The discussion on the merits

of the offer which would have been possible had there been mass meetings throughout the strike was never held.

A repeat of 1971 can be avoided today. It is true that so far in this strike there has not been the active involvement of the rank-and-file that there should have been.

For instance, Ford workers who are not part of the 'official picket' are turned away at the Dagenham picket line. There have been no mass meetings

# Convenor scandal How not to win a strike

THE FORD workers have received some magnificent support from the trade union movement. Dockers throughout the country are refusing to handle Ford cars, and many workplaces are already taking collections for the strikers.

Millions of workers know that victory in the Ford strike would be a victory for the entire workers movement. It would bury the 5 per cent law.

But apparently one leading Ford striker does not see things in that light.

John Davis is assistant convenor at the Dagenham plant. He says he is solidly behind the claim for £20 now.

But Davis is also a Barking Councillor, and when he wears that hat he is not so fond of representing workers' interests.

He is currently opposing a bonus claim by council building workers. The claim would amount to a maximum of £10 a week, but the figure would be lower for many workers and some wouldn't benefit at all.

The building workers are now on strike in support of their

demands, and John Davis, as vice-chairperson of the building works committee, has placed himself firmly on the wrong side of the picket line.

### SCABS

He has gone on record as opposing any concession to the strikers, and there is a suspicion that Barking council has even brought in scab labour to undertake repairs.

The only defence Davis has offered is that 'you can't compare a giant multi-national company with Barking Council.'

True or not, you can compare building workers with Ford workers — both have suffered a decline in real wages in the last couple of years, and both are right to struggle to reverse that.

John Davis should do the building workers and the Ford workers a favour — and decide which side of the class divide he wants to stand.

since the strike began.

But it is by no means too late to halt this process. Whatever Evans and Duffy 'negotiate', rank-and-file workers at Ford need to insist that it is they who will decide, and it is they who will direct the struggle.

### CONFERENCE

After all, whatever Evans and Duffy agree to won't make one iota of difference to their

pay!

Specifically, as far as the present dispute is concerned, the Coventry stewards conference should be recalled.

The conference in June which formulated the claim provided for its recall to discuss any offer Ford make. The stewards would then be in a position to put their opinions to plant by plant mass meetings.

This time the union bosses must not be allowed to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

# Ford-New Zealand style

FORD is a multinational with factories and operations worldwide.

GRAEME COOKSON worked in the Seaview plant in New Zealand. He describes what it was like.

The plant is situated in Petone, a working class district on the north side of Wellington harbour. Built during the depression, it is New Zealand's oldest car assembly plant.

Two things strike you on entering the plant: the constant noise and the greyness.

### LINE

I was put on the trim line with the job of putting on the pedals.

If my line can be taken as an average, the workforce was made up of about 70 per cent Maori and Pacific Islanders. Out of the total about 40 per cent were women.

On Mondays and Tuesdays we had compulsory overtime, which meant working from 8am to 8pm, with half hour

breaks for lunch and dinner. These were the only times that we saw the outside.

To save on lighting the roof was made mainly of glass. During the long, hot summer this turned the line into a greenhouse. Temperatures rose into the eighties, and tempers rose too.

Ford management just saw the workforce as something to be beaten into shape.

The gap between workers and management was enormous, and deliberately emphasised. The general manager didn't walk through the plant — he travelled round in a bright yellow electric golf cart.

In June 1974 the wage negotiations were due. The union demands were rejected, and so we slowed down production. This was followed by meetings, further rejections and further cuts in production.

By late August it was clear that Ford was out to break the union. A few weeks later dismissal notices were issued.

On the assembly lines we

discussed what to do. We agreed to stop work and reject the dismissals. There was a mass tearing up of the notices.

Next morning we were locked out.

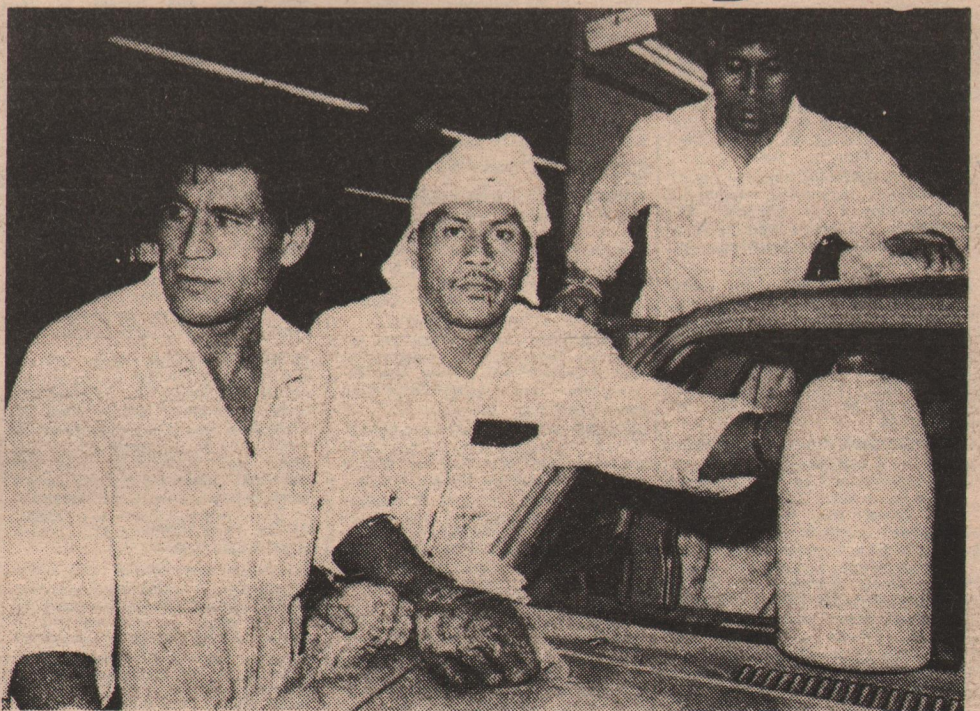
The management hoped that there would be a press witch-hunt against us, which would probably have happened if it hadn't been for chance.

The prime minister died at the same time and so the Ford lock-out became second rate news.

### INTACT

Three weeks later we were back — wage negotiations hadn't advanced much but at least the union was still intact.

The union had to be strong and very militant, not just for the sake of wages and better conditions, but because its own existence was threatened by Ford. Management were ready to exploit any weakness to destroy the union completely.



Tongan workers — Islander community is mass cheap labour reserve for firms like Ford

Photo: BOB MURPHY (Socialist Challenge)



# HOME NEWS

## Appeal to all revolutionaries

# For a united youth organisation!

THE FOLLOWING letter has been sent by the International Marxist Group to 'Rebel', the Socialist Workers Party, the Socialist Youth League, the Workers Socialist League, the International Communist League, and Big Flame. The text is being circulated to all 'Revolution' supporters groups.

The success of Carnival 2 clearly demonstrated that tens of thousands of young people are prepared to take part in the struggle against racism and fascism.

Furthermore, the marked interest in the various political events at the Carnival — the stalls, newspapers and marquees — indicates that thousands of youth, through their involvement in the ANL, as well as their experience at work, on the dole, at college or at school, want to go further and take part in building a revolutionary alternative to the policies of the Labour government.

A small example of this increasing interest in revolutionary politics was the sales of the new youth paper **Revolution**. Three thousand copies were sold at and going to and from the Carnival. In addition, the entire print run of 5,500 was sold out within five days!

ism is through their own experiences, in their own organisation.

In other words, we believe that the building of such a youth organisation and respect for its independent character is the most practical way to convince thousands of revolutionary-minded youth of the necessity of joining and building a revolutionary Marxist party as a political alternative to reformism.

### OBSTACLE

In our view historical experience has further demonstrated that such a Marxist party will not be built simply through individual recruitment, but, on the contrary, through a process of splits and fusions in the existing organisations and, above all, the mass reformist parties.

In Britain today the fragmentation of the 'far left' is, in our view, a major obstacle to building such a Marxist party. For this reason the IMG has consistently fought, over the past two years, for the unity of revolutionaries into a single organisation on the basis of a clear revolutionary programme and a democratic centralist system of organisation.

Within such an organisation we would, of course, continue to argue for all of our political positions and affiliation to the Fourth International.

Amongst the youth, we believe that the necessity and



Photo: MARK RUSHER (IFL)

possibility of creating a single revolutionary pole is all the more immediate. This is because of the possibility of now winning thousands of young people to revolutionary Marxism and the youth's thoroughly healthy hostility to all varieties of sectarianism.

Thus we think it both possible, and necessary, for our respective organisations to put the building of a united revolutionary youth organisation amongst our highest practical priorities.

In order to test out our capacity to reach principled political agreement, and advance along this road, we propose collaboration of our respective young members and supporters in producing a revolutionary youth paper whose explicit aim would be the construction of such a unified youth organisation.

We would propose that the paper's independent character be guaranteed by editorial control being in the hands of regular meetings/conferences

of its supporters, starting with a national meeting, in December, to regularise the paper and establish policies and democratic structures.

Without prejudicing this meeting's decisions, we give notice that we would propose the platform printed in **Revolution** No 1 as an initial basis for discussion, and a structure based on equal representation of national political organisations and regional representation of supporters groups.

In summary, we therefore

propose:

1. Discussion of these points and any others you may wish between now and December.
2. To give equal space to the views of our respective organisations (as well as local groups) on questions of policies and structure in the December issue of **Revolution**.
3. A period of joint work between our respective organisations and supporters groups of **Rebel**, **Red Youth** and **Revolution** between now and December.

### BROADER

**Revolution** is a paper launched by the IMG. We believe that its success demonstrates that the influence of revolutionary ideas amongst the youth is far broader than the influence of any particular 'far left' organisation.

Our aim in launching **Revolution** is the building of an independent revolutionary youth organisation. Independent because we are convinced that the best way for the youth to grasp revolutionary Marx-

## Trade union conference Putting abortion policy into practice

THE TUC conference a month ago passed an excellent resolution on abortion, calling for a massive increase in health service out-patient clinics, where women can have an early, safe abortion close to home.

It also endorsed the call for a TUC demonstration against the next attack on the Abortion Act.

Fine words. But — what next?

A trade union delegate conference on abortion will be held on 25 November to work out how to put the TUC policy into practice.

Delegates will be looking at action proposals for the coming

year, planning new campaigns, and sharing ideas and experience in special workshops.

The conference, called by the National Abortion Campaign and the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign, has been sponsored by five national

unions, twelve trades councils, and many union branches.

The National Union of Public Employees, which has a high percentage of women members, including many nurses and hospital workers, is one of those that have sponsored the conference at national level. Alan Fisher, the union's general secretary, will be among the speakers.

Ironically enough, the conference has caused a row in one of the unions that played a vital role in the early formulation of the new TUC policy.

The National Union of Journalists has an excellent policy — on paper. But when its national executive was asked to sponsor the conference, they turned it down — by one vote.

### FURIOUS

The membership were furious. A spate of articles appeared condemning the NEC for standing NUJ policy on its head. The union's Equality Working Party insisted that branches and chapels should be circulated about the confer-

ence.

Sixteen NUJ branches and chapels are now sending delegates to the conference, and three branches are sending representatives to the planning meetings.

The white collar union ASTMS was another involved in formulating the TUC women's conference abortion policy. Yet their NEC originally decided not to sponsor the November conference.

The ASTMS National Women's Advisory Committee were outraged, and pulled out all the stops to reverse the decision. They won, and an executive member will be among the conference speakers.

Having paper policy on 'women's issues' is no longer

enough. Nearly 3½ million women are trade union members now. That's 30 per cent of the trade union movement. And they expect their interests to be fought for.

The conference looks like being a great success. Make sure your union branch or trades council is sending delegates.

### INFORMATION

You can get delegate forms and more detailed information, as well as speakers kits on abortion, from the Conference Organising Committee, c/o NAC, 374 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1 (please note the new address). Cheques should be made payable to 'Trade Union Conference Fund'.



Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

MASS pickets of Garners branches in Whitcomb Street and the Haymarket followed a rally last Saturday sponsored by the Transport Union.

Pickets linked arms at Whitcomb Street and shouted 'mass pickets every night' before police moved in, making nine arrests. The strike committee is to set up a defence fund. A conference is also being planned, and further mass pickets will be called.

## Industry comes to school

PLANS to hold city-wide exams for all secondary school students in the first and third year have been announced by Coventry local education authority. WILLIAM THOMPSON reports.

This announcement, the first by a major LEA, comes in the wake of discussions started by the setting up of the Assessment of Performance Unit (APU).

The idea is to put pressure on progressive teaching activities, to promote streaming, and to gear education more closely to the needs of industry.

It is ironic that Coventry should be the first LEA to introduce 'blanket' testing locally. Coventry was also chosen previously for a pioneering study by someone called Worthy into 'the educational needs of industry'.

This veered between unbelievably detailed lists of every item that could possibly be required by any branch of industry and a

totally banal attempt to distil out the collective requirements of all industries.

So the problem for industry is not really one of 'standards' or curricular content — it is about attitude.

The scheme involves two rounds of exams, of which the second will actually be set by a board including local industrialists. It's supposed to be some sort of proficiency test.

In other words, the rat race between kids to avoid the dole queue is now brought down to third form level.

The introduction of this scheme must be vigorously opposed. The executive meeting of the National Union of Teachers on 23/24 September

declared 'its determination to resist the imposition of an externally determined curriculum in schools and deplored the lack of proper consultation by the authority with the Coventry Teachers Association'.

The only way this can mean anything is if a policy of strict non-cooperation is adopted. But the fight against the scheme must also be linked to the development of alternative educational objectives which express the interests of the working class.

The Socialist Teachers Alliance AGM this weekend will be an opportunity to discuss some of the problems involved.

STA conference: 14/15 October at Starcross School, Risinghill St., London N1. Non-members welcome.

**I**T WAS IN February 1976 that I told my friends in Sparkhill that I had applied for a job at Rover. 'You must be joking', they said. 'They don't recruit blacks'. A fair point. Traditionally, car workers in the Midlands enjoy a higher standard of living than workers in the component supply industry, and the majority of black workers are in the supply industry.

Among blacks in Birmingham, Leyland is widely regarded as a racist employer. Richard Dobson, the former company chairperson, whose comments about 'wogs' were exposed by *Socialist Challenge*, wasn't alone. At Longbridge until last year, black workers were barred from better-paid jobs by a wiring test, and the Castle Bromwich plant has been refusing to employ black workers.

The Commission for Racial Equality is currently investigating a complaint about this discrimination, and the connivance of the Engineering Union in carrying it out. Rumours have also spread in the black community that to get a job at the Washwood Heath plant, you must pay a hundred or two hundred pounds to a local trade union official. But I want to concentrate on the Rover, where I was one of the few blacks who did manage to get a job.

The Rover plant was set up after the war, in Solihull, a suburban area known for its conservatism. The wages are high, second only to Jaguar throughout British Leyland. The plant is divided into three parts — Rover SD1, Land Rover and Range Rover. A closed shop operates, and the largest union is the Transport and General.

Some of the blacks working there still remember the '50s and '60s, when they were no more than a handful. Ken, a West Indian, was taken on in 1957 as a conveyor hand.



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ANTI FASCIST  
ANTI NAZI  
CALENDAR  
1979**

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# AT WORK AGAINST RACISM

**'One day came down the line adorned with NF stickers'**

**'At first they called me "black cunt" or "black bastard" and often make jokes about blacks. I explained that these jokes were racist.**

**'They respected this, but for a time the breaks got very boring as they didn't know any other jokes...**

**'There was a mass meeting of 2,000 workers at Rover over our pay claim. In opposition to the convenor, I moved a**

**resolution for action.**

**'The next speaker attacked my speech, saying I could not afford to stay on the dole. My friends backed me.'**

**RAGHIB AHSAN, a shop steward at the Solihull, describes his encounters and confrontations with racists and fascists at work.**

Lloyd, also a West Indian, was recruited as a trucker in 1971. Both were doing 'indirect' jobs, and so were paid less than those working directly on the assembly line. Ten years ago, a direct worker earned about £25 a week — £14 more than a conveyor hand. By the early '70s more than half of the conveyor hands and truckers

were black; there were hardly any on assembly.

In 1970, the joint shop stewards committee debated the possible transfer of conveyor hands and truckers to the track (assembly line). The motion was defeated. Afterwards some of the stewards remarked that they had opposed the motion because they wanted to keep blacks off the track.

The company started a programme of expansion for the new Rover in 1975; the labour force was to be increased from under a thousand to 4,000. With the Race Relations Act going through parliament, some black workers were recruited. There was considerable bitterness in the black community against the TGWU, which forwarded to the company the names of those wanting jobs, and passed on a relatively lower proportion of the blacks who applied.

I started work in March 1976 on a drilling machine in the old Rover plant; somewhat apprehensively. But the first person I met was a friendly guy — the branch secretary, who I later found out was in the CP. On the second day, my mate was approached by a bloke from the panel shop who said: 'We're giving jobs to foreigners when our own people are unemployed'.

It so happened my friend's mother is Italian. He responded: 'Not to talk like that in future'. That afternoon, when I went to wash my hands, I saw the same bloke in the washing room with an NF badge on. Such was my introduction to Ray Sandom, chairperson of the Birmingham NF. His son worked in the Land Rover, also an active Front member who has stood in elections.

A few weeks later I was handed a ballot paper for the election of a health and safety representative. One of the candidates was Ray Sandom, and an old hand said that he was a good bloke and we must

vote for him. I argued that he was a fascist, that fascists are against the trade unions and the working class, and explained the connection of the NF with the Nazis.

But the old hands were insistent that he was a good bloke. It seems that Sandom used to talk a lot about health and safety. Sandom wasn't elected, but the Front used the campaign to widen their support and build their credibility.

In the following weeks I discovered by what other means the fascists were growing. Sandom used to sell NF badges, pens with nude pictures, and pants with 'NF' on them. His opening remarks to a newcomer used to be: 'Have you heard about blacks rioting in...' and go on to spread his poison.

The constant joking that put down blacks and reinforced the white workers' notion of superiority made Sandom's job easier. I had experienced some of this 'harmless' joking myself.

At lunch and tea I used to sit at our pitch with seven of my workmates, all of them white. At first they used to call me 'black cunt' or 'black bastard' and often made jokes about blacks. I explained to them that these comments were racist. They laughed, and said they were only telling jokes. I told them I didn't like to listen to any racist jokes, either about blacks or Irish.

They respected this and stopped making racist comment in my presence, but for a time the breaks got very boring as they didn't know any other jokes!

My job was at a fair distance from the track, where I was frightened because of the inevitable racist abuse. Sandom started coming regularly to my shop and talked about blacks with one of the old hands. When I couldn't stand it any longer, I threatened him and informed my foreman that I wouldn't work if Sandom came

to my shop in future. I couldn't get much joy from the shop steward, but all my workmates supported me and the foreman stopped Sandom. That was the first encouraging step for me.

I got elected shop steward. The older hands moved out and my workmates, all aged under 30, stopped making racist jokes and turned their wit on the fascists instead.

That summer there was a mass meeting of 2,000 workers over our pay claim. In opposition to the convenor, I moved a resolution for action. As I left the platform, the next speaker attacked my speech by saying I had six wives and could not afford to stay on the dole!

My friends had to hold me back.

It is not surprising that at the end of '75, the fascists had been able to win total control of the Rover-based TGWU 5/909 branch — despite the fact that the joint shop stewards committee was controlled by the CP and the Militant tendency, and that a leaflet had been distributed by the joint shop stewards confed against the National Front.

Prior to the branch elections, there had been an unofficial strike in Rover against the carrying out of a time study. The handling of the strike by the senior stewards and the eventual defeat created apathy among the rank and file. The Front had had a free hand to exploit this apathy on the shop floor, and opposing forces put up virtually no resistance.

As a result, the fascists won important union positions, though as it turned out they were unable to bring their people to the regular branch meetings and soon lost practical control.

My turn came to be transferred to the new SDI plant, and I was given a job on line 2. Immediately I heard talk going on about the activity of the fascists on line 1, where they were building up support and

had got three stewards elected. Not long after I was again elected shop steward, on the basis of being a good trade unionist and despite, rather than because of being black. Still, I did represent 60 whites as well as 10 blacks and I could sense a feeling of identity among the blacks.

At the shop stewards meetings I found that a few shop stewards were wearing NF badges. Another sign of their activity were the fascist posters, mostly anti-black, put up around line 3. For a time cars on line 2 were coming down the track with NF stickers on them, but the black workers said they would refuse to handle these cars and it quickly stopped.

I had been continually approaching all the progressive elements for a joint campaign against the fascists which would take up these shop floor issues, but nothing effective was organised.

The branch and shop stewards committees did consistently support anti-racist demonstrations, and buy anti-racist leaflets to distribute on the shop floor, and both bodies organised special meetings with outside speakers. But only the converted responded.

In the absence of links with shop floor struggles, leaflets usually go straight in the dustbin and meetings are ignored.

In the tin smith area, the Front had established a cell that was meeting regularly at lunchtimes to listen to NF music and speeches, and in the final lines area they were going round openly wearing NF badges and stickers.

However as the NF=Nazis message began to get home and the Anti Nazi League was gaining ground people became reluctant to identify too closely with the NF. The blacks were feeling more secure and the NF was on the verge of being isolated from popular opinion. It was these developments in the national situation that laid



**cars**

**own**

**ers'**

**ying I had six wives  
ends had to hold me**

**Rover car plant in  
ontations with**

the basis for the first  
breakthrough for the anti-  
fascist forces in Rover.

One day one of my Indian  
friends, Kim, looked a bit  
depressed. He told me that  
there was a sticker saying  
'Hang the blacks' underneath  
track 3. The white workers who  
stay near the sticker refused to  
let it be taken down. The  
foreman said he couldn't do  
anything. This happened a few  
days after the first ANL  
carnival.

A handful of white workers  
were angry about the sticker,  
and this encouraged the black  
workers who were ready to  
leave their jobs and remove the  
sticker themselves; but this  
would have the let the shop  
stewards committee off the  
hook.

All the black shop stewards,  
six of us, attended the  
lunch-time meeting — the first  
seeds of unity among the  
blacks. We proposed that the  
executive committee of the  
shop stewards should immedi-  
ately remove all fascist and  
racist literature and stickers,  
and that any worker seen  
distributing these should be  
warned and subsequently  
disciplined, up to expulsion  
from the union. We also  
warned that, if necessary, the  
black workers were prepared to  
take action themselves.

For the first time, I heard real  
fighting speeches against  
fascism. The senior shop  
steward put an end to the  
argument that all extremist  
literature should be banned by  
explaining that the left always  
supports the working class  
while the fascists will betray it.  
The resolution was carried  
unanimously.

That afternoon, as the  
stewards reported back, the  
fascists grew frightened and all  
the racist stickers suddenly  
disappeared — and have not  
been seen since. This step  
forward for the anti-racist fight  
was only made possible by the  
action of the black workers  
when they took the initiative at  
the shop stewards committee,

and also by the effect of the  
national anti-fascist mobili-  
sations, which had made both  
blacks and whites feel that the  
NF had to be opposed.

In the past few months I have  
come across the following  
incidents.

\*Vic, West Indian, was  
transferred to a job where he  
was working as part of a team  
of four. The three other white  
workers started a work to rule,  
without giving any reason, and  
forced Vic to move to another  
job. The shop steward did not  
intervene, although he was  
asked to.

\*Nawaz, a Pakistani, com-  
plained to me that his shop  
steward was not giving him his  
fair share of overtime. In Rover  
the management decides how  
many should work, and the  
steward decides who should  
work. Fearing racism, he felt  
unable to confront his steward  
or to take the matter to the  
stewards' executive. I saw the  
deputy senior steward and he  
brought the steward into line.

\*One morning Jahangir, a  
Pakistani, came to see me and  
said that he had been sacked.  
Apparently he had been  
working for a month in the  
Land Rover on the night shift.  
His mates, all white, had told  
him not to give full production  
for the first month of training,  
and it is usual to follow the  
advice of older hands.

But Jahangir had been told  
by the foreman and supervisor  
that he was sacked for not  
doing enough work. His shop  
steward refused to help him and  
his workmates would not back  
him. The normal practice in  
Rover is that if a new worker  
cannot fully cope with the job  
after the first month, the  
training period is extended to  
up to the three months and then  
given a different job to try.

I sent Jahangir to see a senior  
steward who is a member of the  
Militant tendency; this steward  
got him reinstated, but with a  
drop in his wages of £14 a week.  
This would never have been  
accepted for a white worker.

\*A Pakistani, Mohammed,  
working in Land Rover, was  
sacked for being two weeks late  
returning from a trip home,  
even though he had sent a sick  
note from Pakistan to cover his  
absence.

At a meeting with the senior  
steward, management main-  
tained its stand but offered the  
man a job starting two weeks  
later in SDI, and they advised  
him to accept this offer. Mohammed  
did so, and lost four months' service,  
two weeks' wages and was put on  
a different job. No white worker  
would have been sacked while  
on sick leave, and no shop  
steward would have accepted it.

When I found out, I took it  
up with the same senior steward  
as before, but over the past five  
months he has made little  
headway in getting Mohammed  
his rights.

The fascists in SDI are on the  
run because of action by the  
shop stewards committee. But  
in Land Rover and Range  
Rover their posters and stickers  
are still openly displayed.

Our stewards' committee  
was pushed by a threat from the  
blacks and by the general  
radicalisation nationally. How-  
ever, black workers are still  
meeting with racism on a day-  
to-day basis, from the shop  
stewards as well as from the  
management. Recently, a  
well-known fascist has been  
elected shop steward in the tin  
smith area, and the left leaders  
have kept quiet.

My experience shows how  
deep racism runs in the white  
working class, even among the  
more radical elements, and how  
real progress in the anti-racist  
struggle will only be made when  
blacks unite.

## 'Only little boys...'

'TWENTY YEARS ago only  
little boys used to wear  
badges...'

'Considering the CP's role in  
the fight against Mosley in the  
'30s, it was like the pot calling the  
kettle black.'

The profound thoughts of  
Ken Lever, president of the  
Civil and Public Services  
Association.

He was meeting with

members at the Holloway  
unemployment benefit office in  
North London who had been  
told by management to stop  
wearing certain ANL badges  
and to remove anti-NF posters  
from the union noticeboard.

The benefit office workers  
were warned on 4 October that  
they would be suspended if they  
continued to display any  
material mentioning the name

of a political party — in this  
case the Front.

Lever and CPSA deputy  
general secretary Alistair  
Graham told local branch  
members that the unions'  
general purposes committee  
would recommend that there  
should be no support for  
anyone suspended.

The CPSA officially backs  
the ANL.



'We'll get The Other Bookshop', National Front members chanted at Chapel Street market last weekend.

## Front opens second front

CHAPEL STREET Market in  
Islington is becoming the  
second major front in the  
confrontation between fascists  
and their opponents in  
London, writes CANDY  
ATHERTON.

Last Saturday, 70 anti-  
fascists were present. They left  
at noon. Almost immediately  
after their departure, 50 Nazi  
thugs occupied the area around  
the Angel selling their wares.

The few remaining anti-  
fascists were physically assaul-

ted to chants of: 'We'll get The  
Other Bookshop'. The book-  
shop, in the same building as  
Socialist Challenge, is a quarter  
mile away.

After a quick phone round  
to Islington Campaign Against  
Racism and Fascism and ANL  
supporters, a new group of  
anti-fascists arrived, consider-  
ably aided by 20 SWP members  
arriving from the Garners  
Steak House pickets.

In the scuffles, an anti-  
fascist was arrested and a picket

of Upper Street police station  
was mounted to demand his  
release. The week before three  
anti-fascists had been arrested.  
Last Sunday two members of  
the Islington Labour Party  
were physically attacked near  
Angel tube station after police  
had refused to let them sell near  
Chapel Street Market itself.

The local ANL and ICARF  
have appealed for the biggest  
possible turnout next Saturday  
and Sunday. It should be noted  
that the fascists are coming in  
coaches.

## 'Ullo, 'ullo

FASCISTS in the police force?  
That's what Renee Short, MP  
for Wolverhampton North-  
east, said in her speech at the  
Labour Party conference last  
week.

Anti-fascists in Tameside  
have been wondering. Tame-  
side CARF catalogues the  
following experiences.

\*3 October. A brick sails  
through the window of a  
supporter with an anti-semitic  
leaflet pasted to it. The police  
say that since the damage  
caused was less than £20 they  
are unlikely to take action.

\*17 September. In its  
campaign to stop the NF  
playing in the Hyde and District  
Football League, Tameside  
CARF organises a march on to  
the pitch.

Two campaign supporters  
are kicked to the ground by  
Front members in the presence  
of police officers. The latter  
refuse to intervene.

Two officers of the campaign  
are arrested and face serious  
charges. No fascists are  
arrested, in spite of photo-  
graphs showing them in action.

\*3 and 10 September. Two

Tameside CARF members are  
assaulted. One of the assailants  
is identified by a dozen  
witnesses. The police take no  
action.

The campaign says: 'We  
fully endorse the views  
expressed at the Labour Party  
conference that all too often the  
police are siding with the  
fascists.'

It adds: 'We demand the  
dropping of charges against  
officers of this campaign and  
we demand police action  
against the real perpetrators of  
violence, the NF Nazis.'

## Sorry, ref

THIRTY COVENTRY Anti  
Nazi League supporters leaf-  
leted the Coventry City football  
match against Ipswich last  
Saturday, writes ANNA  
REESE.

Nearly 300 badges were sold,  
and 5,000 leaflets distributed.

The responses from the  
youth on the terraces was really  
good. Comments included:  
'It's about time something was  
done here'.

A group — Sky Blues  
Against the Nazis — will be set  
up in Coventry as a result of

Saturday's events.

\*GEOFF BELL, MYRA  
TREVELYAN, and MARTIN  
METEYARD add: Unpopular  
decisions by football referees  
are no longer greeted by  
references to the referee's  
alleged parentage — at least not  
at Highbury.

At the game between Arsenal  
and Aston Villa last Saturday,  
the referee was none too  
popular when he took the name  
of Arsenal player Willie  
Young.

The chant from the crowd  
was: 'You're a Nazi referee...'

## NF in blood

A MAN described as a  
psychopath led a gang of four  
East Enders on a three-year  
orgy of violence which involved  
more than 300 attacks on  
Asians and vagrants, the Old  
Bailey was told on Monday.

One vagrant, Alfred Shaf-  
toe, was murdered. Shaftoe  
had bottles thrown at him and  
was kicked, before his killers  
dropped a heavy gas cylinder  
on his face, rendering him  
completely unrecognisable.

The words 'National Front'  
were then scrawled on a wall  
with a piece of cloth that had  
been soaked in his blood.

The gang leader, Frederick  
Challis, 19, was sent to a  
security hospital 'without limit  
of time'. Carl Palmer, 19, was  
sentenced to life imprisonment.

Palmer told the court: 'We  
thought Pakistanis should not  
be in this country.'

## No NF copy at the Guardian

CLERICAL workers at the  
Guardian have voted to refuse  
to handle any editorial or  
advertising material from far-  
right organisations, reports  
GEOFFREY SHERIDAN.

The decision, taken at a  
meeting of the newspaper's  
NATSOPA clerical chapel, will  
mean that secretaries, messen-  
gers, and copy takers will  
boycott any phone calls or mail  
from the National Front,  
British Movement, or the  
National Party.

This has strong backing from  
the chapel, which voted 60 for  
the decision, 2 against, with 5  
abstentions.

As Bevonne Trust, mother of  
the chapel, said at the meeting:  
'It's a way of saying to people,  
"You've affiliated to the ANL  
— now put yourself on the  
line".'  
having critical coverage of the  
fascists', she added, 'but we  
want to make it as difficult as  
possible for them to get  
through.'

A similar decision has been  
taken by copy takers at the  
Press Association. Their job is  
to type out press statements and  
articles that are phoned  
through.

\*Thirty workers at London  
Weekend Television attended a  
meeting to launch an LWT  
branch of the Anti Nazi  
League.

## No deportations

THE BRADFORD Asian  
Youth Movement has called a  
demonstration against depor-  
tation and the racist immigra-  
tion laws. They are calling on  
supporters throughout the  
country to make this a national  
mobilisation.

The demo will take place on  
Saturday 21 October. It will

start at 2pm from Salt Street,  
Carlisle Road [off Liberty  
cinema], Bradford and will  
march to the town centre.

A coach will be leaving  
London at 7.45am. Further  
info from the Black Socialist  
Alliance c/o Box 24, 182 Upper  
Street, London N1.

Wolverhampton Anti-Racist Defence Campaign  
MASS PICKET of COMMITTAL PROCEEDINGS  
Friday, 20 Oct, 10am Wolverhampton Town Hall  
Drop the charges against the four arrested  
on anti-racist demo!

Photo: Islington Community Photographic Project

# IRELAND

## Long Kesh Letter

# 'We're full of fight'

IT'S AGES since I've written. I've told you before how one gets in here at times, but I'll not bore you with any more excuses.

My form isn't that bad, reminds me of the notes on an accordion — high and low; although I did have a good summer, relatively speaking.

Boredom is about the biggest snag in here. After so long everything seems played out, and once enjoyable occupations and ways of passing the time are no longer such.

The result is that for long periods you get totally browned off. It is indeed a hard slog, especially for a moaner and complainer like myself.

### PREDICTION

A lot has happened since I last wrote. Old Henry Heaney died. I wrote often about him in *Socialist Challenge* and my predictions inevitably came true. They were treating him for ulcers in the stomach while it was really cancer.

But then, what do you expect in Long Kesh; suffering, torture and keys take priority over health, justice, freedom and people.

There is a growing air of success in relation to H Block. Doubters like myself who once thought people wouldn't rally to the cause of the prisoners have been gladly proven wrong.

The volume of protest and support from the people has completely overawed us, and particularly those in the block. We never expected it to be so successful, and that success has given us great hope and heart for the future, for our aims and ideals.

The years 1976-1978 were crucial years. The struggle for national liberation was 'winded' — had lost sight of the ultimate goal and was generally misdirected through such things as elitism and sectarianism.

### ROOTS

Now the grass roots are involved again on the streets and sectarianism is no longer an issue.

The numbers at the Relatives Action Committee protests and marches is very heartening, and people who were always sympathetic are no longer afraid to air their opinions by attending marches and protests — despite the severe harassment by the RUC and the Bri Army.

For too long we in prison relied exclusively on purely military achievements to give us hope and bolster morale, but now we think in terms of military potential and volume of protest. Both are in a healthy state at present.

Last night marked the second anniversary of Kieran Nugent's 'on the blanket' protest. Although the H Block is about

half a mile from us in the political status cages, we heard constant noise from the block all day.

At 8pm last night the five cages of Republicans with status climbed onto the roofs and acknowledged the anniversary and actions of the prisoners in H Block by singing and making a great noise towards them.

### SOLACE

It must surely have brought comfort and solace to those who have been isolated for so long; who must have experienced great loneliness and who have had no contact with the outside world.

In previous letters I have mentioned how those 'on the blanket' are regularly moved from block to block, or wing to wing, for 'security' reasons.

The prisoners are also regularly searched. This takes the form of being tipped upside down and a close inspection of the anus.

So much for the TV and paper adverts for prison officers: 'I'm proud of my husband and he needs your help'. My wife certainly wouldn't be proud of me if I spent my time inspecting anuses and cleaning up after tortured men and women.

### ROUTINE

I often wonder if the screws ever tell their wives and families of their true daily routine. Somehow I doubt if they do. Only last week a girl up seeing her boyfriend in here was refused entry because she wouldn't take off her sanitary towel for inspection.

This harassment of visitors must also be — as the advert says — 'essential for a better community', or maybe even, as it also says, 'a job to be proud of'.

I think ordinary human beings could find something better to be proud of. But then again, would an ordinary human being take a job in prison service in the North of Ireland?

During these last few days I have been privy to a few letters from H Block, from ex-political status men caught after escaping or attempting to.

I had imagined they'd have felt very low morale-wise. But to my surprise they were full of fight and their morale was a lot greater than it was when they were in the cages.

In fact, they seemed more concerned about our situation than their own, and throughout their letters it was easy to detect an air of hope of eventual success. It left me with little doubt that they will continue their protests to the bitter end.

Their determination is faultless.  
Yours  
Tiofaudh Ar La



## Ten years on Marching stronger than ever

THE TENTH anniversary of the birth of the civil rights struggle in the North of Ireland was commemorated in ways which show that life gets harder for British imperialism.

In Derry the route of the original 400-strong march was followed this time by a demonstration of 10-15,000 and a further 5,000 walking along the pavement, making it one of the largest in recent years and confirming the new life which exists in the street movement in the ghettos.

Ian Paisley's much publicised 'religious service', which was also designed to commemorate the tactics of the

reactionary forces in the early days, by contrast, lasted only 15 minutes and paled into insignificance in comparison.

A day earlier, as many as 600 people brought the war home to Roy Mason's constituency in Barnsley and raised the demand that the 'NUM kick out Mason'; a reference to the fact that the Minister responsible for the imprisonment and torture of Irish people is still sponsored as an MP by the Miners Union.

Local people received the march sympathetically, and a counter-mobilisation by the National Front crawled away pathetically when faced with

the unexpected size of the United Troops Out Movement's protest.

That demonstration won't be the end of Roy Mason's embarrassment on his 'home ground'.

Brendan Gallagher, father of Willie, the now famous victim of the Diplock Courts, announced that he would be standing against Mason in the General Election and would harry him at every Labour Party meeting about his son and about Ireland generally.

The growth of the opposition to Britain's presence in Ireland was also confirmed by another, altogether surprising source

this weekend.

Even though the Peace People elected ex-Faulknerite Unionist Peter MacLachlan as leader at their conference, they simultaneously urged the British government to reconsider its attitude to the status of the 370 Republican 'blanket' prisoners, and heard from Conor Cruise O'Brien that they urgently needed to turn their attention to British public opinion because of growing trends towards the 'premature and ill thought-out solution of Troops Out'.

All in all it was a very bad weekend for Mr. Roy Mason. May he have many more like it.

## Solidarity news

### Glasgow

Over 90 people attended a successful Socialist Unity rally on 26 September in support of political status for Irish political prisoners.

Chris Bamberg of Socialist Unity pointed out that SU would be standing in the Queens Park constituency of Glasgow in the general election to break the 'wall of silence on Ireland'.

### Edinburgh

Two known Special Branch officers invaded a peaceful public meeting in Edinburgh on 27 September. The meeting, which attracted over 50 people, was organised by Edinburgh Irish Solidarity Campaign and Socialist Unity to call for political status.

The Special Branch made a noisy entrance, took notes, and made an equally noisy departure.

### Swansea

A one day conference on 'self-determination for Ireland' was held in Swansea on 30 September. It was organised by members of the United Troops Out Movement and Cyfeillion Iwerddon (Friends of Ireland) and attracted 30 people.

The conference unanimously agreed to build for the Prisoners Aid Committee demonstration in London on 26 November and to build support for the International Tribunal on Britain's presence in Ireland whose preliminary hearing is due to take place next month. The meeting also agreed to plan a series of anti-recruitment actions.

The organising committee will be organising a meeting at the forthcoming conference of Plaid Cymru, at which a detailed motion on Ireland is expected to be debated. Included in this motion is a

call for political status, an end to censorship on Ireland, and the convening of talks 'where all the people of Northern Ireland should be represented, including Irish Republicans, with a view to the immediate withdrawal of British troops'.

### IRSP appeal

The London Support Group of the Irish Republican Socialist Party have appealed for witnesses to the arrest of three of their members at the all-party rally against racialism in Trafalgar Square on 10 September.

The three accused, Jimmy Scanlon, Tony McNeill, and Corn Powell, were carrying a banner on the conditions in H Block. Will anyone who saw these arrests please contact the IRSP at Box 6, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

### Filmtour

The anti-recruitment film *Home Soldier Home* will be showing in the Midlands from 12 to 24 October. Dates include:

12 October, Worcester Labour Club Rooms, New St., Worcester, 8pm; 13 Oct., Lozells Social Development Club, Finch Rd, Lozells, 4.30pm and 7.30pm; 14 Oct., Friends Meeting House, Bull St., B'ham, 11.45am; Blackhorse Pub, Stratford Rd, Sparkbrook, 7.30pm; 16 Oct., Students Union, Univ. of B'ham, 1pm; Women's showing, Gay Centre, 9 Bordesley St, B'ham 5, 8pm; 17 Oct., Martineau Teachers Centre, Bristol Rd, Edgbaston, 8pm; 18 Oct., Matthew Coulton Tech, B'ham, 1pm; Lancaster Poly, Room MO 22, 8pm; 19 Oct., Wolverhampton Poly Students Union, 1pm; Bath Place Community Venture, Leamington Spa, 7.30pm; 20 Oct., Leicester Poly, Students Union, 12.30pm; Leicester Univ., Perry G building, 7.30pm; 23 Oct., Aston Univ. Students Union, 8pm; 24 Oct., Warwick Univ. Students Union, lunchtime.

# INTERNATIONAL

## African socialists call for solidarity

# Zimbabwe—don't let the racists have the last word

**WITHIN the next six months the Smith regime in Zimbabwe will collapse, starting a social upheaval which will have a tremendous impact on British politics, writes the AFRICA IN STRUGGLE GROUP.**

There will be a debate as to whether British troops and political 'advisers' should be sent in as part of a United Nations force to supervise the transition to 'majority rule'.

The Labour leadership and the Tory Party are likely to say yes. Foreign Secretary Owen has promised British troops for a UN 'peace-keeping' force.

### RACISTS

Thatcher has given an indication of her views by attacking Labour over Zaire for 'standing by while other powers intervened to protect European lives and property'.

An equally terrifying prospect is that the Zimbabwe issue will be exploited by racist forces in Britain.

Both the Tories and the Labour leadership will justify intervention in Zimbabwe on the basis of protecting white lives.

The media will pour forth a stream of atrocity stories aimed at discrediting the freedom fighters. The National Front will mount a massive campaign of solidarity with its racist co-thinkers.

The danger is that the impact of the Zimbabwean crisis on British society will benefit the NF and Tories.

Worse, that the war will come home with racist murders, as Nazis attempt to avenge their defeated 'racial comrades'.

All this has implications for those working in solidarity with the southern African struggle.

We have urgently to build a movement of massive and militant opposition to any intervention of imperialist, and especially British, forces in Zimbabwe.

The British army would do in Zimbabwe what it does every day in the north of Ireland: set out to murder, maim, torture and politically defeat the anti-imperialists. And the armies of other capitalist countries would be no different.

We must defend the right of the Zimbabwean people to decide their own future, without imperialist troops and politicians sitting on their backs.

A first step towards that will be to build the demonstration called by the Anti-Apartheid Movement for 21 October (1.30, Hyde Park, London). On that demo Socialist Challenge supporters will be calling for a contingent in opposition to imperialist intervention in Zimbabwe.

### CONTACT

Anti Nazi League and anti-racist groups are going to have to start taking up the racists' views on southern Africa. It is especially important for them to make contact with young blacks who are spontaneously identifying with the southern African struggle.

We need anti-racist literature to take up Zimbabwe; to give platforms to the Zimbabwean liberation movements; to

organise Rock Against Racism gigs explaining what's going on in southern Africa; and to raise money for the freedom fighters.

Pickets of the pro-white mercenary film *Wild Geese*, now on general release, are a good chance to explain the links between racism in Britain and Southern Africa.

We must put forward a positive alternative to the racists — a campaign which says 'Solidarity with all those fighting racism and imperialism'.

### SUPPORT

At present that means — despite our many criticisms of them — unconditional support for the nationalist movements ZANU and ZAPU for as long as they continue the anti-imperialist struggle. We have to campaign energetically for solidarity and material aid for these organisations.

Building a solidarity campaign confronts militants with the problem of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. On the one hand it takes the right side on the major questions in southern Africa, has tremendous labour movement support and contains most militants active on southern Africa.

On the other hand it has a number of drawbacks, for which its Communist Party leadership is responsible: a pressure politics approach rather than national campaigns to build mass action; bureaucratic structure; sectarian bias in favour of ZAPU and ANC (South Africa) — the organisations closest to the Moscow line.

These errors are not insuperable and militants should work in the AAM. But it



Whitemercenary lordsit over local population in Zimbabwe

is also clear that the AAM cannot respond rapidly and effectively to events in southern Africa.

So work in the AAM should be combined with a big push for actions on southern Africa to be taken by trade union, anti-racist, women's and student organisations.

We have to bear in mind that in the long run the struggle in South Africa will be decisive

for the whole continent, so activity on Zimbabwe and against the South African occupation of Namibia will have to be combined with work on South Africa.

Here there is a range of issues to be taken up. The struggles of ICL and British Leyland workers against their companies' economic links with South Africa must be supported by the trade union movement; the women's movement could initiate activities over the oppression of women in southern Africa.

The trial of the Soweto student leaders and the imminent hanging of ANC member Solomon Mahlangu need to be fought, especially by

students and youth.

There needs to be a campaign to defend the South Africa War Resisters, South African military refugees seeking political asylum in Britain.

For Socialist Challenge supporters the next steps will be the AAM demo and then the North West TUC-sponsored conference, 'Connections — Britain and Southern Africa' in Manchester on 11 November.

Any type of organisation can send delegates to this conference, which will address a wide range of issues: work in the trade unions; youth and Soweto; women in South Africa; media etc.

Details from Manchester AAM, 59 Tintern Ave., Manchester.

# Bulgaria—the umbrella of repression

**GEORGI Markov was murdered with such finesse that they still don't know how it was done. The thousands in Bulgaria's political prisons are only too aware of what has hit them.**

**RICHARD CARVER reports.**

Bulgaria is perhaps the least familiar of all the East European countries. All most British people can remember about it is Arthur Scargill's comment after a holiday there: 'If this is socialism, you can keep it'.

They might also remember that it was Bulgaria which co-operated with the West German state in tracking down left-wing German oppositionists earlier this year.

But now the cloak and umbrella operations of the secret police have propelled this remote Black Sea country into the headlines.

Georgi Markov, the dead oppositionist, was a former friend of Bulgarian party chief and head of state Torod Jivkov. The whisper is that Markov's tales of the peccadillos of the Sofia bureaucracy — which entertained the masses courtesy of the BBC — didn't exactly go down a bomb in official circles.

If the overseas operations of

the Bulgarian state would tax the imagination of a Borgia or an Ian Fleming, its domestic image is more mundane.

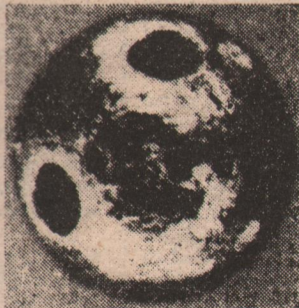
According to a 1977 report Amnesty International says it can hardly even guess at the extent of internal repression: in labour camps, prisons, and psychiatric hospitals.

A pamphlet recently published in Paris suggests that Bulgaria has a higher number of political prisoners per head of the population than any East European country other than the USSR.

### GULAG

The extent of the Bulgarian Gulag can be judged by the facilities available for those who are less than enthusiastic about life under 'socialism': about a dozen prisons and well over twice as many labour camps, and this in a country with a population about the same as Greater London's.

But a ruling caste which has



The tiny poisoned ball that killed Georgi Markov

to resort to such measures can never be a stable one. The Communist Party apparatus has its internal problems — divided between the uncritical friends of the Kremlin and those who are worried by a possible annexation of the country to become the 16th 'Soviet Socialist Republic'.

And then, in March, came the first coherent public expression of opposition, when 14 intellectuals published 'Declaration 78'.

Bulgaria has never seen anything like Charter 77 but, as the name implies, this document was modelled on the Czechoslovak example. But it went far further politically.

The six points of the declaration relate to basic civil rights; the right of freedom of movement; the establishment of a better relationship between prices and wages and a rise in state benefits; the creation of independent trade unions; the abolition of privilege; and the publication of the declaration in all the daily papers.

Discontent has spread to other sections of society. In summer 1977 miners at Pernik went on strike and reports later filtered out of working class discontent at bureaucratic attempts to impose a new system of wage payment.

Not all the manifestations of opposition to bureaucratic rule are so positive. For example there are reports of a resurgence of religion (and pro-monarchist sentiments) in a country with a long and healthy atheist tradition.

Whatever its more dramatic aspects, Markov's death may yet rebound if it makes workers in the West more aware of the crimes of the Bulgarian bureaucrats.

The important thing now is to make sure that it is not the right wing which makes the running, but the defenders of the Bulgarian working class.



**DEMONSTRATE!  
SAT. 21 OCTOBER  
ASSEMBLE: 1.30PM SPEAKERS CORNER  
MARCH TO TRAFALGAR SQUARE**

# Interview with The are

**THE CRISIS** in Iran shows few signs of abating. Last week four more students were shot dead in a street demonstration. They had been solidarising with the teachers strike which is currently taking place.

The following interview with Iranian Trotskyists provides further background to the events which are shaking the throne of the murderer who governs the country.

**What is the situation in Iran since the imposition of martial law? Has the mass movement suffered a serious defeat or simply a temporary set back?**

The imposition of martial law has not been a serious defeat for the mass movement but a temporary set back from which the masses will without any doubt recover very quickly. There are two important reasons for this.

First, the crisis facing the Shah's regime is much deeper than any it has had to face before, and the imposition of martial law has neither solved nor even opened the way to a solution to this crisis.

Secondly, the regime did not launch its counter-attack at a time when the masses were themselves becoming disillusioned and demoralised, but on the contrary when the mass movement was on the upsurge and the masses were becoming increasingly radicalised and beginning to see their enormous strength.

Thus the violent massacres of 'Black Friday' on 8 September, which left several thousand demonstrators dead, did not bring about a demoralisation but deepened the anger and hatred of the masses towards the regime.

The situation has, of course, been calmer since the declaration of martial law, but that is only because the masses have made a tactical retreat to consider how they can deal with the new situation. It is also very important to note that struggles haven't ceased altogether.

Despite threats from the army, the funeral of those killed on Black Friday turned into a 40,000-strong demonstration against the Shah.

There have been other important demonstrations and clashes with the police and army, particularly in towns where martial law hasn't been imposed. And there has been a widespread wave of strikes, particularly among public sector employees.

The regime's attitude is also very significant. It has been playing a carrot-and-stick game. It has brought soldiers onto the streets and made undisguised threats, but at the same time it has had to claim that it intends to carry on with its 'liberalisation' programme.

The regime has even made the

ridiculous claim that it has had to impose martial law in order to safeguard its 'liberalisation' plans!

**You mentioned the crisis facing the regime. What is the nature of this crisis?**

What makes the present situation particularly grave for the regime is that it is simultaneously faced with a serious economic crisis on the one hand, and an unprecedented political crisis and mass radicalisation on the other.

The present economic decline began about two years ago. Contrary to claims made by bourgeois economists and frequently repeated on the left, the basic cause of the present crisis is neither the decline in real oil revenues nor the incompetence and inefficiency of the regime.

The crisis has its roots in the inherent structural problems of Iranian capitalism. Of course, the fall in oil revenues and government incompetence have greatly aggravated the situation.

In the 20 years which preceded the present crisis, and particularly since the mid-1960s, the Iranian economy went through a period of almost uninterrupted expansion. A series of economic reforms, notably the land reforms, were carried out to enable capitalist development and partial industrialisations.

These reforms were fully backed by imperialism, which has increasingly had to encourage partial industrialisation of semi-colonial countries, such as Iran, in order to satisfy its own need to export means of production.

But industrialisation of the type which occurred in Iran has serious limitations. It is heavily concentrated in the production of consumer goods. Development of industries producing means of production, which played such a major role in the development of capitalism and expansion of the home market in the advanced capitalist countries, was insignificant.

As a result, there were serious limitations on the extent to which the home market could be developed, and industries were soon faced with over-production and falling profits.

Iranian capitalism has been faced with such a crisis in the past two years. Many previously highly profitable industries have either ceased to be

profitable or have experienced a rapid decline in profits.

For example, out of several car assembly firms which experienced rapid expansion in the late 1960s and early 1970s only the largest, Iran National, is making a profit at the moment and the rest are almost on the verge of bankruptcy.

Private investment has now almost ceased completely and there has been a steady flight of capital abroad. The situation in the agricultural sector has been even worse and much of the land has even been abandoned by the peasantry.

Oil revenues could have delayed the crisis, but in practice they created as many problems as they solved: inflation soared, corruption and wastage reached astronomical figures and they generally added to the country's economic chaos.

Now oil revenues are declining in real terms and — given the regime's heavy commitment to arms expenditure and the fact that it will be forced to increase social expenditure in an attempt to ease mass discontent — the possibilities of bailing out industries are severely limited.

The regime attempted to solve the crisis by attacking the working class, the petit-bourgeoisie and the middle classes.

An austerity plan was introduced: anti-working class plans, such as a code of discipline for workers and worker identity cards, were brought in to limit the strength of the working class, which despite the lack of all elementary democratic rights had been able to win major economic demands; and the attacks on the petit-bourgeoisie were stepped up and middle-class salaries were limited.

These plans failed to solve the economic crisis. Instead they provoked a fight back by these various social groups.

Behind these developments was the widespread and growing popular discontent in the country, which had built up over years to create a highly explosive situation.

Years of brutal political repression; a growing gap between rich and poor; obscene manifestations of corruption and decadence; and problems such as shortages of housing, essential necessities, schools and hospitals — about which the government didn't even seem to care — contributed to bringing about this explosive mixture.

The oil boom helped to aggravate the situation, because the influx of money into the country and the Shah's extravagant promises of a 'Great Civilisation' gave rise to expectations which the regime could not fulfil.

**How has the mass movement developed over the past year?**

The development of the mass opposition to the regime in the past year can be divided into three phases. The first began in the summer of 1977, when various intellectual and professional groups began making demands for greater freedom through open letters.

This led to the organisation of a number of public meetings by the writers the following autumn and then a series of student demonstrations and strikes. Once the regime saw that these protests were going beyond open letters and leading to widespread protests in the universities it began a crackdown.

The next phase began in January, when the protests extended beyond intellectual circles. This was sparked off by a massacre of demonstrators in Qom at the beginning of this year. What followed was the famous 40-day cycle of protests.

The characteristic of this phase was widespread street demonstrations involving a wide range of social groups: workers, students, the urban and to some extent the rural poor, and the petit-bourgeoisie.

The third phase came in the later part of the summer, after a period of relative lull. This time the mobilisations were much larger and better organised. The aim of the demos had become much more clearly directed at the overthrow of the Shah.

The masses became far more confident of their strength and were prepared to directly take on the regime's forces in street battles. For the first time, Tehran, Iran's capital, became the centre of the mass movement.

**What social forces were involved in these struggles?**

Large sections of almost every oppressed social group in Iranian society have been drawn into struggle

over the past year. They all have different motivations for their involvement, but what has united them is that they have all been confronted with the same problem in their struggles to defend their particular interests: lack of democratic rights.

Large sections of the masses have gone beyond this and understood that they will have to overthrow the Shah's regime if they are to secure democratic rights and if they are to be able to defend their interests.

The social layer which has taken the lead in these struggles and dominated the movement politically is the petit-bourgeoisie. In recent years the petit-bourgeoisie has been under constant attack.

It was in a far more favourable position to fight back than other social groups because of its close links to the religious establishment and so it has taken the lead drawing other social layers behind it.

**What are the political forces which have emerged?**

First a number of bourgeois opposition groupings. These range from the extreme right-wing Pan-Iranist Party, through to various bourgeois liberal groups.

None of these groups amounts to more than small cliques at present. None has any significant support in the ruling class. They do not have any mass support and totally lack any kind of political organisation.

The most significant bourgeois liberal group is the National Front. It has often been presented as a major opposition group in the press, probably because of its historical link to Mossadegh's National Front.

But the present-day National Front is nothing more than a caricature of the mass organisation which Mossadegh led in the early 1950s. It bears the worst characteristics of the bankruptcy and cowardice of bourgeois liberal currents in semi-colonial countries.

It is terrified of the masses and places all its hopes in Jimmy Carter eventually coming to its aid. Its policy can be summed up in one phrase: adherence to the bourgeois Constitution of 1906.

It has raised a number of important demands, such as the release of

Anniversary of the Fourth International

## RALLY

Speakers include:

**Ernest Mandel**

(United Secretariat Fourth International)

**Willie Mae Reid**

(leading black woman militant of American SWP)

Stalls, exhibitions, speakers on Zimbabwe, Ireland, Iran, Latin America, international youth struggles.

**Friday 24 November, Camden Town Hall, London.**



## In Iranian Trotskyists

# dictator's days numbered



political prisoners, abolition of SAVAK, and even trade union rights for workers. But it has done absolutely nothing to mobilise around these demands.

The left in Iran is still extremely weak, both organisationally and politically. It is very difficult to assess the strength of the left organisations because of their clandestinity, but it seems that the organisation which has made the greatest gains on the left is the Tudeh (Communist) Party.

Until recently, the Tudeh Party called for a 'united front against the Shah's personal dictatorship'. It called on sections of the ruling class to join this front. Under pressure from the mass movement it now has a more radical pose, calling for an overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of a constituent assembly.

Like the National Front, the Tudeh Party has done little to mobilise the masses.

Other left organisations seem to be of little significance and have certainly not played a visible role in recent events.

Even the left-wing guerrilla organisations, which had considerable support among the students and youth before the recent events, have more or less disappeared from the scene. Their problem has been that they have completely failed to give any coherent answer to the issues facing the mass movement.

Thus the Moslems effectively dominate the whole opposition. They are extremely well organised and have set up organisational structures which in some respects resemble those of left-wing parties, and command enormous mass support.

Furthermore, the more radical wing of the Moslem movement has shown no hesitations about going out and mobilising the masses. The massive demonstrations of the first week of September, which were organised by the Moslems, showed their impressive organisational ability and mass support.

Despite their strength and good organisation, the Moslems have had a very vague political programme. The radical wing of the movement, which has the greatest support, has called for the overthrow of the Shah and the formation of an Islamic government.

The moderate wing has simply called for adherence to the 1906 Constitution, emphasising provisions in the constitution for legislation to be vetted by the clergy.

### Why have the Moslems been able to achieve such a dominant position in these struggles?

The Moslem clergy were in a far more favourable position to take a leading role simply because repression had destroyed all other organised political forces of significance. The religious establishment was the only organised force which had neither been destroyed nor subordinated to the regime.

It had its own independent source of finance in the form of religious dues which many people paid to the Ayatollahs. The mosques were the only places of free assembly which had not been closed down, and the pulpit the only place where some freedom of speech remained.

Secondly, the leading role played by the petit-bourgeoisie in these struggles is important. There are very strong links between the petit-bourgeoisie and the clergy. The clergy draws much of its support from the petit-bourgeoisie, and the clergy has traditionally played the role of the political and ideological voice of the petit-bourgeoisie.

So when the petit-bourgeoisie took a lead in the fight against the Shah it was quite natural that it should use the religious establishment to organise this struggle.

Of course, in the final analysis, what this question comes down to is the crisis of proletarian leadership. In the absence of a revolutionary proletarian leadership, the Moslems — as the political force which has shown the greatest consistency in the struggle against the Shah — have been able to draw the masses towards them.

The support given to the Shah by the Soviet and particularly the Chinese bureaucracies has also helped to strengthen the Moslems at the expense of the left.

It should be emphasised that this overwhelming hegemony of Moslem forces in the leadership of the movement does not mean that the movement is religious in the sense that has frequently been presented in the British media. The major issues around which the masses have been mobilised have nothing to do with religion.

This does not mean that the political dangers of this Moslem influence should be disregarded.

Apart from the more obvious dangers arising from the religious nature of the leadership and its ideology, the populist type of ideas which the Moslems have propagated have done considerable damage by confusing and blurring the class nature of the Shah's regime and of the struggle against it.

The attitude of the Moslems towards women will also be a serious problem for women's liberation in Iran.

### What are the future prospects for the struggle against the Shah's dictatorship?

What is clear is that the mass struggle is continuing. In the last year, millions of Iranians have become politicised. A country which had become politically dead as a result of repression has suddenly sprung to life.

The fear, apathy and demoralisation caused by years of ruthless dictatorship has completely gone. The masses have seen their strength on the streets and have gained an enormous confidence. At the same time they have gained considerable experience of struggle.

These are some of the gains that the Shah will find very difficult to take away from the masses. It will take more than a few Black Fridays to destroy their newly-found confidence and determination.

The regime itself is faced with serious problems. Politically it has been totally unable to rally any support to launch a political counter-attack. The Rastakhiz Party, which the regime tried to build up as a political

base for itself, has disintegrated and effectively ceased to exist.

For the first time since the coup, there has even been heated speeches against the regime in the Parliament, which is composed of hand-picked members.

The regime's apparatus of repression is still intact, but even that is beginning to show cracks under the impact of the crisis. A certain amount of demoralisation seems to have set into the ranks of SAVAK, Iran's gестапо. Even in the army, the regime's last power base, there has been a certain amount of dissent.

The regime really has its back against the wall. If it makes concessions it will be opening the flood gates. If it doesn't, another very explosive situation is likely to develop rapidly. Added to this is the fact that the economic crisis will almost certainly deepen in the coming period.

The present political uncertainty and the disruption caused by the upheavals and martial law can only have an adverse effect on the economy.

Without doubt, the effect of the economic crisis and the country's radicalised atmosphere will be an upsurge of working class and peasant struggles, which could radically change the character of the mass movement by taking the initiative away from the petit-bourgeoisie. A rapid development of a pre-revolutionary situation is by no means out of the question.

There are enormous problems ahead, the most important being the lack of a revolutionary proletarian leadership, and more generally the weakness of the left and the hegemony of the Moslems within the movement.

### What tasks are revolutionaries faced with in Iran today?

The mass struggle in Iran has reached a stage in which millions of people have understood the necessity to overthrow the Shah, which is the central issue facing the struggle in the coming period. Iranian revolutionaries must call for the overthrow of the Pahlavi monarchy; its replacement by a republic, and the establishment of a constituent assembly freely elected through universal suffrage.

At the same time revolutionaries must develop an action programme dealing with the important issues and problems facing the Iranian working class and other oppressed groups within Iranian society, and work to win over the masses to such a programme.

This action programme, among other things, should deal with such questions as the nationalisation without compensation and under workers control of large industries and banks; the national question and the right of self-determination for Iran's oppressed nationalities; the liberation of women; and the peasant question.

The most important task facing revolutionaries is to begin to build a revolutionary party through their intervention in the struggles and through an ideological struggle against the political currents leading the struggle at present.

# COMMENT



# AFTER CARNIVAL 2

## Demoralising

I WOULD like to raise some points not covered in your article defending the ANL's decision not to divert Carnival 2 from Brockwell Park to Brick Lane (28 September).

I agree completely that it would have been a serious error to have carried out such a mass diversion. However, what you have ignored or are totally unaware of is the seriousness of the demoralising experience some of us suffered who went to Brockwell Park and answered the call made at the eleventh hour to go to Brick Lane.

We represented a whole layer of people who through the activities of the ANL realised the importance of defending Brick Lane. We went to Brockwell Park continually worrying about whether Brick Lane was adequately defended and believing that there was some co-ordination between the Carnival and Brick Lane which would allow us to be called in an organised way to Brick Lane should its defence have been necessary.

Ideally we should have been given the political choice of going to Brick Lane right from the start. The reason I did not was precisely because it would have been irresponsible to wander in a disorganised rabble round the East End looking for the National Front. However it would have been an entirely different matter to have gone as an organised group with clear political objectives.

This would have prevented the disorganised rush to Brick Lane, where we were met with a barrage of abuse by some of the anti-fascists who had been there all day. The end result is that the growing political layer developing out of involvement in the ANL's activities is a breeding ground for precisely the type of sectarian attacks against the ANL which your article is trying to defend it from.

It is not enough to say, 'Let us accept that with proper organisation and co-ordination more people

should have been sent to the East End', and then go on to say that even if 5,000 had been mobilised, 'at the end of the day the 5,000 would have gone home. Who defends Brick Lane when they leave?'

This counterposes anti-fascist mobilisation to self-defence by the black community and leads straight up a blind alley. True, the relationship is not simple — but it is the crucial problem to be overcome.

JENNYFROST [London E15]

## Serious mistake

IN THE opinion of some comrades in Leicester, your failure to call for a full mobilisation in the East End on the day of Carnival 2 was a serious mistake.

Contrary to your editorial of 21 September, the NF march was not a 'rumour' but a well-known fact at least two weeks beforehand. A Socialist Challenge leaflet on the day promised a mobilisation of 2,000 from Brixton. But less than 1,000 arrived in the East End in good time, and most of these had made their way directly; those who did decide to leave Brixton had to make their way by tube because transport was not provided by the ANL.

The ANL obviously had no intention of responding to the real fascist threat, and Socialist Challenge in fact tailed the most backward and even treacherous elements of the ANL leadership. Of course, as Mick

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.

Gosling says (28 September), the fascist march was a provocation — but so was their march last year through Lewisham, to which we responded, in marked contrast, correctly.

The ANL must affirm its commitment to mass mobilisation against the fascists by action and not just words and music. At the very least, we should expect Socialist Challenge to take an independent line from the liberals and centrists when the need arises. With such a leadership, 20,000 might have been mobilised straight from Hyde Park.

Rather than striking off a few to go to the East End, we should have mobilised for Brick Lane and struck off comrades to make our interventions at the Carnival.

BERTLAMB [Leicester]

## Political defeat

AS A sympathiser with your paper, and an activist in the Anti Nazi League in Leeds, can I comment on your coverage of the Carnival/Brick Lane events (28 September).

First, your description of those who went to defend Brick Lane rather than to the Carnival as 'sectarian groups' is not very helpful in clarifying the important political differences that exist within the anti-fascist movement.

Secondly, you say it is wrong 'that the NF decides where, when and on what political terrain we should choose to combat them', but what is the anti-fascist movement if not a response to fascist organisations? We do act, in ways we consider applicable, according to what the fascists do simply because we are part of an anti-fascist movement. That, after all, is what the recent opposition to the NF in Brick Lane has been.

Thirdly, you are wrong to criticise

'the sectarian groups' for not deciding 'whether their objective was the defence of Brick Lane or an attack on the NF march' exactly because this decision, and others about alternative forms of opposition, would in part be resolved by the presence or otherwise of ANL members there.

The numbers were all important in that 10,000 people could have stopped the Front and avoided the defeat 1,500 of us suffered waiting for a Front march we could only have heckled had it ever passed by us — which it did not.

Of course it was correct that the Carnival went on, but at the same time it was a major political defeat that there were so few of us in Brick Lane. It is time that all those within the ANL asked the question: where next? Carnivals certainly have an important role to play, but there is more to fighting fascism than that alone.

JERRY LOCKSPEISER [Leeds]

## Smash NF on streets

'THE ANL has just started a new group called "Racists Against the Nazis".' This isn't a joke originating from ultra-left 'sectarians against the ANL', as Socialist Challenge (28 September) appeared to label all those criticising the ANL. No, it came from Labour Party activists with an excellent anti-racist record, many of whom regard the ANL's handling of the events around Carnival 2 as 'disgusting—the NF had a free rein'.

Let's be serious. The left has the duty of organising to smash the NF on the streets. Yet:

1. The ANL failed to organise a serious mobilisation from part of the Hyde Park rally to go to Brick Lane and/or the new NF HQ in Great Eastern Street. There were at least 10,000 anti-fascists willing to go

(certainly not more than two-thirds of the 50,000 were primarily interested in the music!).

2. The ANL failed to organise even adequate phone link-ups with what was going on in the East End.

3. The ANL 'mobilisation' over the loudspeaker at 4.30 from Brockwell Park was an ill-organised cover-up for its failure. Many hundreds of people left the Carnival as a result, arrived as directed at Liverpool Street station at 5.30pm, to find no-one there to direct them.

They wandered round in groups and found themselves to be prime targets of the SPG and bands of fascists dispersing from their rally. There were a number of arrests at Liverpool Street and harassment by the police and the NF at other tube stations.

The Carnival provided an opportunity to mobilise thousands of people to help consolidate the work done by the Bengalis and other anti-racists in the East End over the summer; instead we have divisions and demoralisation (could this be what the NF wanted, rather than a diversion?).

The far left must do far more than mobilise for ANL carnivals to fight racism. Its first task is to defend those arrested at Brick Lane on 24 September and to mobilise again for Brick Lane 'Sunday after Sunday'.

We have to educate the youth drawn to these carnivals in a practical way on the question of 'no platform for fascists', on the racist nature of immigration controls and the whole sphere of state racism. The ANL must be democratically restructured around a fighting programme, and if that means goodbye to the Federation of Conservative Students and their ilk, to various clergy, and to Paul Holborow, that's just too bad.

RICHARD COLLINS [London]

## Need for training

THERE IS a danger that a debate will break out in the ANL along the following lines: how many people should have been drafted to Brick Lane instead of the Carnival? This would be a false debate.

The debate which does need having is one of strategy. One essential aspect of this will be whether or not the ANL should aim towards becoming a combative movement against the NF and other racists. If the answer to this is yes, then surely the left within the ANL should begin now to train at least a core of its own members in the arts of self-defence, crowd-formation, safety and legal precautions, etc.

A movement with little experience in street-fighting would be foolish indeed to engage in a face-to-face with 3,000 cops for some time to come. But start its training it must, otherwise its words are simply bombast.

JOHN WATTS [London N6]

# 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 (273 5947, day) or Steve (226 4287, evening), or write to Manchester SC Centre, 14 Piccadilly.

**SALFORD Socialist Challenge** supporters can be contacted at the Manchester Socialist Challenge offices, Tel 061-236 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 Thursday at the Albert Inn off Wilmslow 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 on Atherton 88 2830.

**NW REGION Socialist Challenge** Group organisers meet next on Sunday 12 November at Manchester Socialist Challenge Centre, 14 Piccadilly.

2-6pm. Agenda includes: report back from National Policy Committee; sales and subscription drive progress report; a North-West bulletin.

### NORTH EAST

**NEWCASTLE Socialist Challenge** local supporters are active! If you want to join them, phone Pete on (0632) 29057.

**DURHAM Socialist Challenge** Supporters Group. For details contact: Dave Brown, 2 Pioneer Cottages, Low Pittington, Durham.

**MIDDLESBROUGH Socialist Challenge** sales on Saturdays outside entrance to Cleveland Centre (opp. Woolworths), 11am to 1pm. Paper also available from Harrison's (newsagent), Linthorpe Rd.

### LONDON

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

**WALTHAM FOREST** paper sales every Saturday, 11am-noon outside the post office, Hoe St, Walthamstow, London E17.

**TOWER HAMLETS Socialist Challenge** Group meets fortnightly. For details phone 247 2717.

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

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

**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: Tariq Ali speak on 'The liberation struggle in southern Africa and the fight against racism in Britain'. Thurs. 12 Oct, 4.30pm, Room 0060, 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 claimants).

**WALTHAMSTOW** readers can buy Socialist Challenge regularly from Sheridan's Newsagents, 86 Hoe St, E17.

**LONDON REGION Socialist Challenge** Group organisers meet next on Monday 23 October, 7.30pm, 328 Upper Street, London N1. Agenda will include progress reports of local efforts on 14 October National Sales Day.

**LEYTON** readers can buy Socialist Challenge from Patel's Newsagents, 326 Lea Bridge Road, E10.

**SW LONDON Socialist Challenge** Group meets fortnightly at 8pm at Clapham Library, Clapham Common North Side (Clapham Common tube). Next meeting, Weds. 18 Oct: 'US Foreign Policy' (speaker Brian Slocock).

**SW LONDON** sales every Saturday, 11am-1pm, at Capham Junction (Northcote Rd), Brixton tube, Clapham Common tube, Balham tube. Also obtainable from bookstalls outside Oval tube, Herne Hill BR.

### SOUTH WEST

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

**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.

**BATH Socialist Challenge** sales every Saturday 2pm-3.30pm outside Mac-Fisheries. Ring Bath 20290 or 29971 for further details of activities.

**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 Coney 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.

### 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 2949.

**NORWICH Socialist Challenge** sales every Saturday in Davey Place (opp. market), and bookstall Thursdays at

UEA. Supporters meet regularly — details from sellers.

### 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 arrangement (221 7481). Wide range of Fourth International publications.

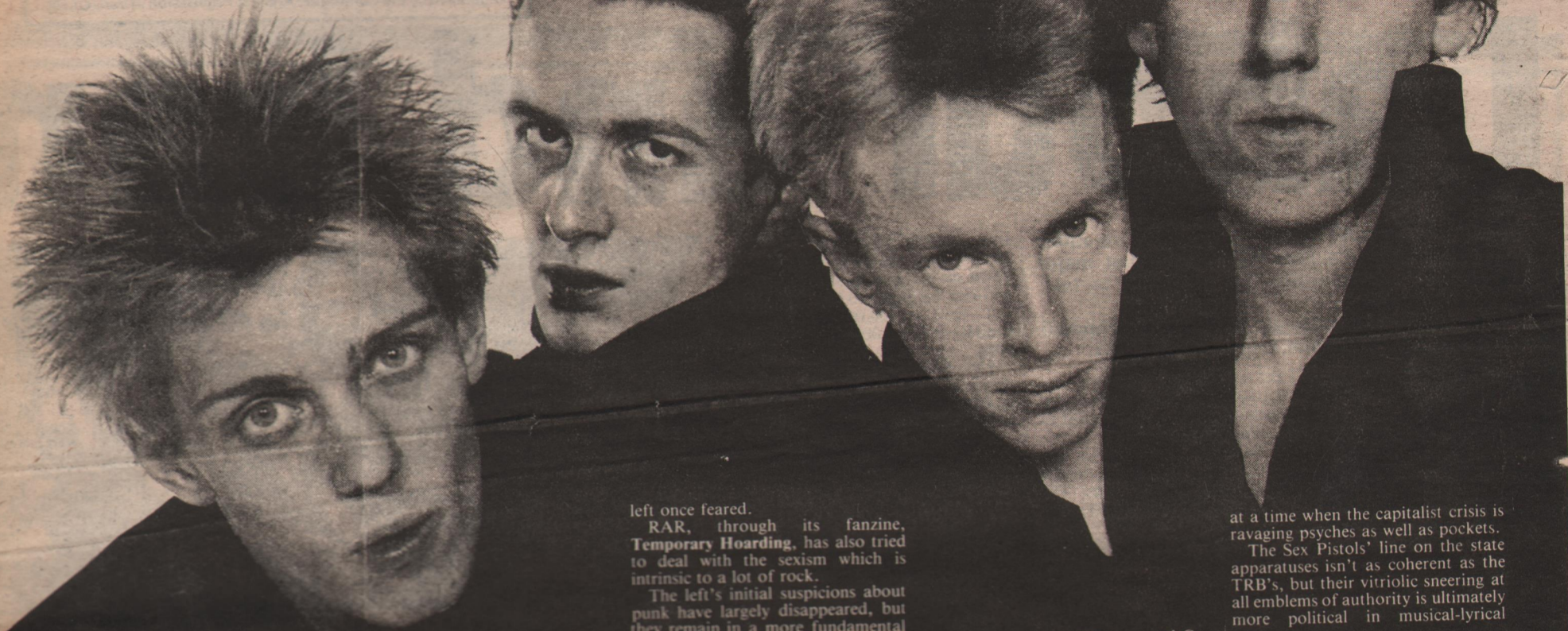
**EDINBURGH Socialist Challenge** supporters group meets regularly. Phone George at 031-346 0466 for details.

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

**SOCIALIST CHALLENGE** now has a stock of attractive hessian bags with two designs; in black, fight racism; in red, women's liberation symbol. Cost: £1 from our offices or £1.25 by mail (including p&p).

'FIGHT RACISM' T-shirts. Good quality white cotton with red design. Cap sleeve or regular short sleeve. Medium or large (sizes are on the small side, if in doubt order a large). £1.50 from our offices, or £1.75 inc. p&p.

# Mass culture and Rock



## THE KIDS AREN'T DAFT

By Paul Tickell

A feature of 'broad' left mobilisation in the 1960s was their propagandist use of elements of mass culture. In the early '60s, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament identified itself with trad jazz, folk music and beat poetry.

In the mid-'60s, the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, in keeping with its more militant base, opted for forms which were less conservative and which had even more of a mass appeal.

These included protest song and rock music, such as Dylan gone electric, and Country Joe and the Fish.

In 1978, the Anti Nazi League/Rock Against Racism carnivals have shown parallels with CND and VSC.

Like VSC, the League is an alliance of the revolutionary left with social democrats and reformists. Where it differs is in the organisational prominence of one particular left group, the Socialist Workers Party, and in the base which the League has gained among young sections of the working class.

Whether these differences will lead to a greater political impact than the movements of the '60s will depend on the political development of ANL and on the efficacy of the united front tactic.

It will also (secondarily) depend — and this is what I want to discuss — on the ANL's and the left's approach to

mass culture in general and to rock music in particular.

Much of the League's base can be traced back to the drastic effects which the current recession and unemployment have had on youth.

Youth's cultural response to these effects — punk/new wave and, a somewhat different story, reggae — have been seized on by ANL and RAR for the purpose of mobilisation.

Not that punk is a simple reflection of the crisis: it would have had to be 'invented', given the clapped-out bands of the '70s and the need for the rock business to generate new styles and fads; that is to say, more commodities.

Punk's incorporation as a (small) part of the capitalist leisure industry means that it can never be — as some of its populist apologists would like it to be — an undiluted expression of young working class consciousness.

Besides, there are other middle class aspects to punk apart from the obvious business and entrepreneurial one.

For example, ex-art college students, like some of the Clash and Malcolm McLaren, the Sex Pistols manager, who drew on their knowledge of Dada and other avant-gardes to create punk clothes and graphics.

Before ANL/RAR really got going, the left was suspicious of punk and sometimes greeted it with the cries of 'shock-horror' to be found in the tabloids. Record companies reacted similarly, until they spotted a possible profit. This profitable 'boom' occurred, but never on a large scale.

This was not because of the negativity and recalcitrance of punk, though that was a factor, but because the economic crisis meant the lack of an affluent enough working class market to ensure a boom, as it had done, say in the early '60s with beat music. These suspicions on the left about punk can be located in the confused nature of punk itself.

Many of its roots were working class, so it suffered from the ideological confusions which the working class goes through in a time of crisis.

Within the range of one band alone, the Sex Pistols, the wish to violate and shock has produced a nihilism which can signify either anti-capitalist rebelliousness ('EMI', 'God Save the Queen') or, partly due to Rotten quitting the band and less typically, flirtations with Nazism ('The Biggest Blow').

It is to the credit of ANL/RAR that they have helped to clarify these confusions and show that punk isn't the young anthem of fascism, as the

left once feared.

RAR, through its fanzine, *Temporary Hoarding*, has also tried to deal with the sexism which is intrinsic to a lot of rock.

The left's initial suspicions about punk have largely disappeared, but they remain in a more fundamental way in its attitude towards mass culture. In spite of the left's connection with mass culture in the '60s, the relationship was always an uneasy one.

The reasons for this are those that Enzensberger gives in *Raids and Reconstructions*, where he attacks the technological Luddites on the left who see mass culture and the media, because they aren't straightforwardly neutral, as 'dirty'.

Enzensberger goes on to say that only struggle guarantees progressive tendencies in these areas, whereas the left's rightful caution has often turned into a rejection of mass culture in favour of what it sees as the 'authentic' working class or even peasant culture of the past.

Take, for instance, an interview with the Hackney and Islington Music Workshop in last month's *Big Flame*. The workshop wants to find a contemporary equivalent for the folk songs of the past, and in so doing alter audience-performer relations.

These aims are regressive and nostalgic for the purposes of left cultural propaganda, because the very mobilising power of the media, and specifically rock music, has already changed these relations: the opportunity of audience participation through dance, for example, and the increase in audience numbers because of electrification/amplification.

Failing to come to terms with these changes is as good as a refusal to get through to much of the working class.

Although the purism of the music workshop and similar groups has been by-passed by ANL/RAR, it survives in other mutations even among those committed to a propagandist use of rock.

A letter by David Widgery in *Socialist Worker* (26 August) is a good example of the sort of purism I mean. He wrote that music fans cannot be 'anti-black 'cos it's at the roots, black music they're digging'.

'Black music' as an assertion of black cultural identity is an important political concept, but it's sentimental and inaccurate as a ('roots') historical one, especially given the role, albeit secondary, played by white American country music and church hymns in the formation of what turned out to be rock.

Even in 'roots' reggae there are strong non-black influences — the bible, identification with the Hollywood gangster.

Widgery's nostalgia for a pure 'roots' patronises blacks and rock music, and smoothes over the heterogeneous make-up of mass culture. No wonder, then, that Linton Kwesi Johnson, reggae poet and member of the *Race Today* collective, calls the SWP 'liberal racists' and curses RAR. I don't agree with Johnson but he has some justification

in the light of what Widgery and Co write.

Purism never gets to grips with the contradictions in mass culture. This is more than evident when the rebellious stance of certain bands brings them a measure of success and their erstwhile fans on the left yell 'sell-out!'.

This sell-out is inevitable: from the very beginning when bands start out by playing small venues, they are automatically involved in the capitalist leisure industry.

But this is both bad and good: bad because the business process and success usually defuse the rebellious message of much rock; good, because the same process brings a bigger audience.

For example, whatever the threat which mass popularity presents to the Tom Robinson Band's determination to never compromise, it's to be welcomed that 'Glad to be Gay' enters the charts and is heard by people who otherwise wouldn't come into contact with the politics which are expressed in the song.

Mention of the TRB brings up a final point about purism. I don't for a minute question the band's sincerity, their work for ANL/RAR, and the importance of Tom himself 'coming out' in a business where gays are normally packaged as high camp.

However, the 'correct' politics of the TRB and the sloganeering of bands like Sham '69 have been latched onto by the left at the expense of bands who are political in a less self-advertised way. Compare, for instance, the TRB to the Sex Pistols as they were before Rotten left.

TRB's songs are the stuff of left editorials, but they are tame next to the wedge of sound and thought-provoking lyrics of Pistol songs which which reveal what it's like to be alive

at a time when the capitalist crisis is ravaging psyches as well as pockets.

The Sex Pistols' line on the state apparatuses isn't as coherent as the TRB's, but their vitriolic sneering at all emblems of authority is ultimately more political in musical-lyrical terms.

In reggae similar comparisons could be made: Peter Tosh's rather abstracted political statements are not as telling as Linton Johnson's in *Poet and the Roots*, who adapts vivid fragmentary images about being black in 1978 to the raw dub style of *Big Youth*.

The politics of any music can be in part to do with its style/form, a consideration which escapes the review in *Socialist Worker* (12 August 1978) of the Steel Pulse album: 'Not an album for dub freaks... or drum rockers... but the music doesn't have to be extra hard, it's those lyrics'.

Purists like their politics in one place — the lyrics. They'd willingly fit revolutionary words to 'Land of Hope and Glory'!

I've not raised these points to snipe at ANL/RAR and the SWP. But because rock, being an important factor in their mobilisations, is more than just the icing on the cake.

Rock won't change history, but it can prompt and anticipate change.

It has helped bring many young working class people into a situation where — this is what propaganda is for — they may be politicised. There is less chance of this happening if the many different contradictions in the cultural force which drew them there are glossed over.

**'THE 'KIDS' aren't daft and are less likely to be united if those exhorting unity to combat racism and fascism don't really understand a secondary but important side to this unity: rock music and mass culture.'**

## EUROPE AFTER THE RAIN



**EUROPE After the Rain** — Mick Gold's highly-praised documentary on Dada and Surrealism, produced for the Hayward exhibition earlier this year.

Through contemporary newsreels, dramatisation and detailed accounts of paintings, the film summarises the work of some of the major surrealist painters, including Arp, Ernst, Breton and Dali.

Using the artists' own words, the 88 minute film examines the place of the movements not only in the development of modern art, but also in the history of ideas.

Presented by Camden Socialist Challenge Group: Friday 13 October, 7.30pm at the London Film Makers' Co-op, 42 Gloucester Avenue, NW1. Adm 80p [50p wageless].

Hire inquiries to Concord Films Council Ltd., Nacton, Ipswich, Suffolk. Tel: 0473 76012.

# Socialist Challenge

**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)

## Sympathy for the devil

# Labour and Iran

**THE DEMONSTRATION** called by the Committee Against Repression in Iran will be the first major national mobilisation against the massacres to take place in this country.

It should be supported by all those who are opposed to the brutal Pahlavi regime, argues TARIQ ALI.

Tony Benn used the Tribune meeting at the Labour Party conference to raise the question of Iran. He took a sideswipe at the Chinese leader Hua for visiting Iran at a time when massacres were taking place. He pointed out that this was, in his view, an atrocious act. We agree.

### SHODDY

The question arises: what about the Labour government?

The record of this government's deals with the Iranian dictator is shoddy and disgusting.

David Owen's recent attempt to justify the Iranian regime on the grounds that 'the concept of Shah is deeply rooted in Iranian history' borders on racism.

Callaghan's message of 'sympathy' to the Shah reflects

the close links between the Labour government and the dictator. This is not limited to Callaghan and Owen.

Barbara Castle's advice was sought on how to organise a health service in Iran. The results of this can be seen in the Iranian film *The Cycle* (currently showing at the Paris Pullman and the Phoenix in London), which is a savage indictment of the medical system and a lot else besides in that country.

Tony Benn, too, has visited the Shah on 'official business'. Did he raise the question of political prisoners or democratic rights? We doubt it.

A recent report in the *New Statesman* revealed that the Department of Trade has recently granted export licences for the export of the following items to Iran: 8,000 anti-riot

guns; 26,000 CS gas cartridges; 20,000 mini smoke grenades; 2,000 smoke grenades; 20,000 anti-riot helmets; 20,000 anti-riot shields; 20,000 baton rounds and 5,000 anti-riot guns.

The Shah has asked for delivery of the rubber bullets and anti-riot guns to be speeded up. Wonder why!

These items are to combat what is known as 'internal subversion', i.e. the masses. An urgent campaign to stop the shipment of these and other weapons (such as Chieftain tanks) is urgently needed in the labour movement.

At the very least left-wing MPs should demand a debate on Iran when parliament reassembles.

The demonstration on 14 October needs the support of all those who are in favour of restoring democratic rights in Iran.

**\*The dictator's days are numbered. Iranian Trotskyists discuss the future of the Shah's regime. Turn to pages 12 & 13.**



Tending the wounded in massacre in Iran.

## OUR FUND DRIVE

OVER A HUNDRED pounds arrived in our offices this week to put the new fund drive off on a good start and to make sure that the guillotine cuts off the head of several of the most hated reactionaries throughout the world.

The first week's total is £102.77

Our Leicester stamp expert has forwarded a cheque for £20 'for the excellent packets of stamps' collected by Socialist Challenge supporters.

This week another large envelope arrived from a supporter which undoubtedly will bring in an equally impressive amount.

We have also had an offer we hope our supporters won't refuse. It goes like this: a comrade who was another founding member of the 1938 British section of the Fourth International has guaranteed that for every £100 we receive over the next four weeks, he will donate a fiver.

If the amount goes over £500, he'll give £10 for each £100 up to £1,000. That means that if we do manage to get in £1,000 in a month — not at all impossible — then we will be able to notch up an extra £75 from this source.

The 'stop smoking' campaign has gathered momentum at our offices and we are beginning to see the results as the sponsors pay up. We now have three more non-smokers at our offices and more sponsorship money to arrive.

Our thanks this week to:

Other Bookshop collecting tin	£13.27
MB	£15
Manchester supporter	£20
T. Monksfield	£1
J. Hammond	£2.50
C. Craib	£1
Stamp money	£20
Non-smoking sponsors	£12
Watford supporters	£6
Ed Mahood	£10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£102.77</b>

**SOCIALIST CHALLENGE** seeks a full-time worker to become our fund-raiser. We've got lots of ideas, but we need a competent committed worker to put them into practice!

To begin late November. Wages not brilliant, but great scope for initiative.



VIDELA

**500**

BEGIN

**1000**

SHAH OF IRAN

**1500**

PINOCHET

**2000**

SMITH

**2500**



## 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.