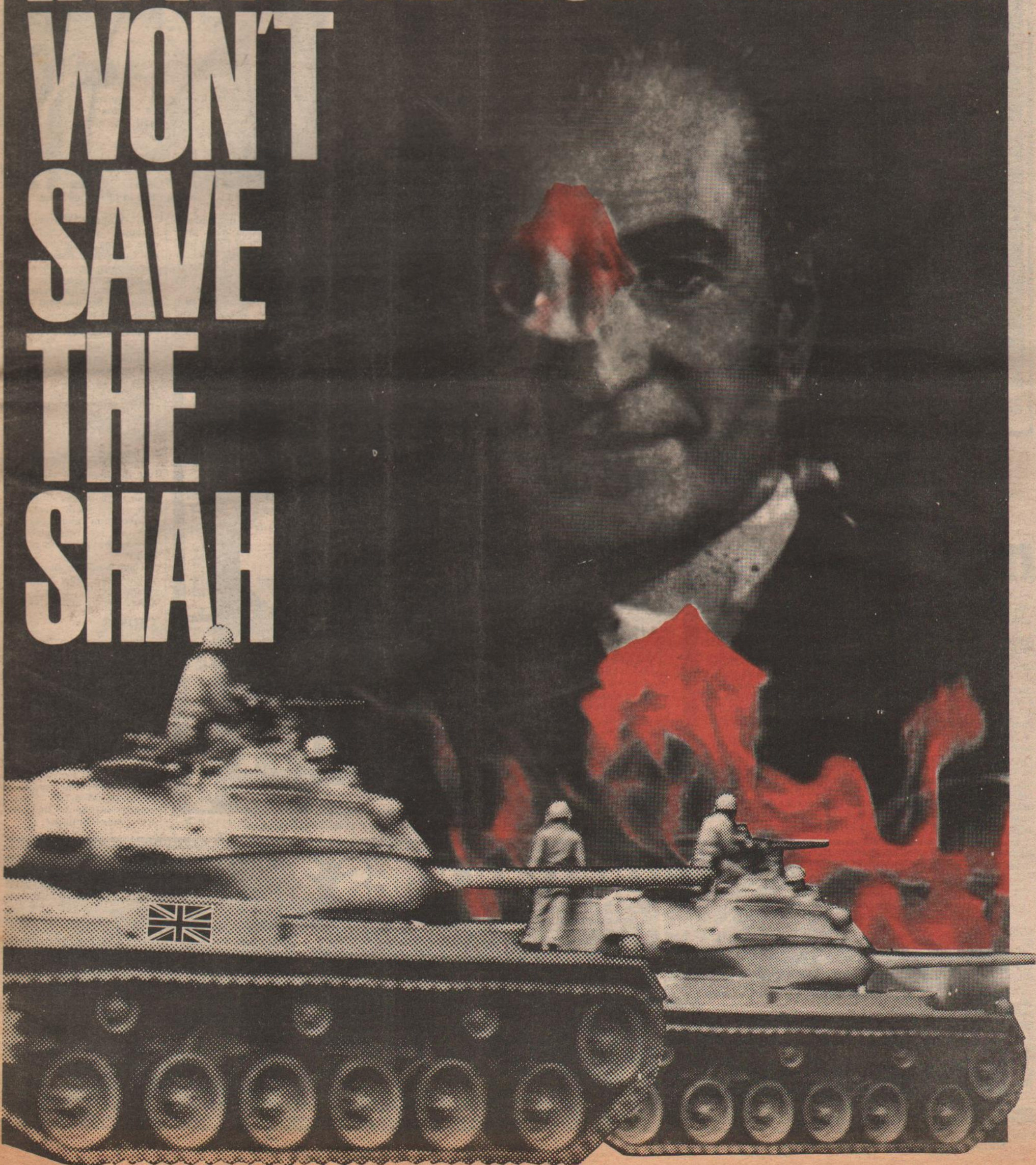


Socialist Challenge

IRAN: BRITISH TANKS

WON'T
SAVE
THE
SHAH



EDITORIAL

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The Iranian powder keg

THE SHAH is on his last legs. In his speech announcing the military government he apologised to the Iranian people for 'unlawfulness, cruelty and corruption.' The Economist said that the speech was drafted by the American Ambassador in Tehran. This small, but significant, detail shows the Shah's precarious position.

Last Sunday's Weekend World programme also assumed that the Shah would not last long. Its presenter, Brian Walden (a former right-wing Labour MP), speculated as to whether the Shah's son could at a later stage be placed on the throne.

This suggests that 'unofficial' Foreign Office buffs are accepting the inevitable. The bulk of the Shah's family has already repaired to the Swiss resort of St Moritz. It will not be long before Pahlavi joins them.

This would be a pity for he is a criminal. He should be tried by a popularly constituted tribunal and sentenced. The Russian revolutionaries executed the Czar. The Chinese made the last Emperor a gardener. There are many other choices as well.

Yet not a single British newspaper (nor for that matter The Economist) has called for free elections on the basis of universal adult franchise to elect a Constituent Assembly.

What will happen after the Shah falls is, in the best sense of the word, unpredictable. And unpredictability frightens everyone except revolutionaries and the masses in struggle.

The capitalist politician in Washington, London, Paris and Bonn is nervous. The bureaucratic boss in Moscow and Peking is also apprehensive. The Soviet Ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin, told the US Secretary of State that they had no desire to see the Shah replaced with a vacuum.

What will follow the fall of the Shah is political instability for the Iranian ruling class and its international backers. For Iranian working people a new future will appear on the horizon.

The most favourable development would be for organs of popular power to emerge and an alternative workers administration to take over Tehran. The only development that could impel the masses in such a direction would be a split in the army between the ranks and junior officers on the one hand and the colonels and generals on the other. For a dual power to be established would require armed detachments to defend and develop the institutions of the masses.

The central demand today is for the overthrow of the monarchy. This unites all segments of the masses engaged in the struggle.

But the demand for immediate elections, convocation of a Constituent Assembly, freedom to form political parties and trade unions are a vital part of our armoury. These cannot be counterposed to the mass struggle. They are part of it.

For us in Britain there is an urgent need for solidarity. The Committee Against Repression in Iran has done excellent work up till now. It now needs to develop further, broaden its base and prepare to launch a mass solidarity campaign in this country.

The proposed mass demonstration in December should be seen as the beginning of such a movement. The fall of the Shah will make it even more vital.

Redgraves vs. 'The Observer'

THE DECISION of the judge in the recent action brought by Vanessa Redgrave et al against The Observer is, by any standards, an outrage. Because those bringing the action were left-wing and belonged to the Workers Revolutionary Party, they were penalised.

Just picture the opposite. Right-wing Tories, supporters of Smith, etc., bringing a case for defamation against a newspaper. Can anyone seriously believe that if the jury decided that the paper got its facts wrong the judge would then not have awarded the damages? The unashamed class basis of this decision has shocked even The Times!

We have numerous disagreements with the WRP. We believe that they represent the worst features of sect politics in this country. Their style and method of politics was used with great effect by The Observer lawyer.

But despite the fantasy world which the WRP inhabits there can be nothing but contempt for the distributors of 'justice' in capitalist Britain. The law, in this case, is not an ass but politically vindictive.

THE FIRST WORD

Ernest Mandel on

Why the dollar is in crisis

RECENT WEEKS have seen a sharp fall in the exchange rate of the dollar, only partially curbed by the 'anti-inflation package' announced by Carter.

We asked ERNEST MANDEL, the Marxist economist and leader of the Fourth International whose book 'The Second Slump' has just been published, to explain in an interview what lies behind the dollar crisis.

There are two basic structural reasons for the persistent crisis of the dollar over more than a decade.

The first is the structural deficit in the balance of payments and especially the trade balance of the United States. This reflects the fact that American manufacturing industry has become less competitive on a world scale.

This in itself results from the consistently lower rate of increase in the productivity of labour in the United States than in the main countries of Western Europe and Japan.

OVERPRODUCTION

The second structural reason is the tendency towards overproduction in the United States — or, to put it another way, the under-utilisation of equipment and workers is significantly higher in the US than it is in Western Europe and Japan.

This means that the American government is forced to tolerate a higher rate of inflation, on a long-term scale, than its main competitors in West Germany and Japan if it is to avoid an explosion of unemployment towards or over the 10 million mark.

Hence the dilemma which the crisis of the dollar presents for the capitalist class both in America and internationally.

LONG TERM

If the combination of a persistent trade deficit and a higher rate of inflation in the US leads to a continuous decline of the exchange rate of the dollar vis-a-vis the main European currencies and the yen, this will not only have an increasingly disturbing effect on world trade and the exports of Western Europe and Japan, but could also in the long term threaten a collapse of the whole credit system.

Capitalist firms and governments outside the US now hold huge dollar balances — somewhere in the range of \$400bn. It's a question of simple arithmetic: if the decline continues without a halt, a larger and larger part of that will be thrown onto the market, and at a certain point this will lead to the collapse of

the whole credit system.

No banking system in the world could reabsorb even 10 per cent, let alone 50 per cent, of that huge mass of dollar reserves.

RECESSION

On the other hand, a serious attempt to stop the decline of the dollar would imply such restrictive measures on credit and money expansion in the US that it would precipitate a severe recession there — much severer than the recession of 1974-5.

And this would probably lead to an international recession, at least as severe as the one in 1974-5, if not more so.

The latest measures announced by Carter give the impression (we will see later what actually happens) that this time the Democratic administration means business in the struggle against inflation in the United States.



Photo: C. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

ERNEST MANDEL: 'I wouldn't like to be in their shoes'

But that would unavoidably mean a recession next year. And a recession in 1979 would spill over into 1980, and the political price for the Democratic Party in the presidential elections would be terrible.

The social price would also be heavy. Is the American working class going to accept nine or ten million unemployed without a fight? There's no indication that it will.

In Western Europe, for instance, union resistance, even against social-democratic and Communist Party leaders, has become very strong after an initial period of disorientation. This is true now in Italy, in Spain, in Britain, and many other countries.

REACTION

And in America, where the relations between the unions and the bourgeois Democratic Party aren't so deep as those between the European trade union movement and the reformist and neo-reformist labour fakers, the reaction could of course be much stronger.

So there again they have a real dilemma. A continuing decline of the dollar would mean the complete disintegration of the small amount of collaboration and coordination that has been going on between the imperialist governments.

There would be an intensification of inter-imperialist competition — a trade war, protectionism, and so on.

CRISIS

But a severe recession to stop inflation would mean a very big political and social crisis in the United States.

So the dilemma is not merely between two evils on the economic field, but between two evils on the political and social field. They're really in a tight spot — I wouldn't like to be in their shoes, I must say.

NEXT WEEK: Ernest Mandel explains why the proposed European Monetary System cannot substitute for the dollar in the immediate future.

POLICE OPPRESSION * H-BLOCK

REVOL

TOP

2

UTION

CLASH * LETTERS * SKAN

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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.

Owen defies Labour exec...again

WITH the Shah losing friends as rapidly as portraits of him are burnt in the streets of Iran one faithful friend remains faithful — David 'Dr Death' Owen. At a special meeting on Thursday Owen reaffirmed his backing for the Shah.

GEOFF BELL gives the details.

The meeting was with a deputation from the National Executive of the Labour Party, led by MPs Joan Maynard and Neil Kinnock.

It was arranged after a statement issued by the Executive on 25 September which argued, 'the continued backing given by the British Government to a regime which by any standards has an appalling record for the violation of human rights and suppression of the Labour movement is without justification'.

UNMOVED

But at the meeting Owen was unmoved by the thinking of the party.

The deputation went to the meeting to demand an end to British arms shipments to the Shah, the cancellation of the Queen's visit to Iran and a statement from Owen expressing, at the very least, 'disquiet' about the Shah's behaviour.

Each of these demands was rejected by Owen in an encounter which was described to *Socialist Challenge* as 'quite

acrimonious'.

Owen's justification for backing the tyrant was twofold. So full of his own self-importance is 'Dr Death' that he argued at the meeting that the various reforms the Shah had promised were due in no small part to his influence.

He laid great stress on what he calls this 'external pressure' — Britain and America — although he did acknowledge there was also a certain 'internal pressure' on the Shah.

Owen's other explanation of his behaviour was less novel — the 'British interests' at stake in Iran, detailed in an accompanying article on this page.

Owen was worried about what would happen to these interests if the Shah fell. Somewhat paradoxically he then went on to argue that the opposition to the Shah was 'reactionary' and that a more right-wing government would follow if the Shah fell.

Why this 'reactionary' government would want to threaten Britain's interests Owen did not explain. But when pressed Owen did finally admit he did not really know a

great deal about the opposition.

Then came Owen's only 'concession' to the deputation.

Arms shipments would not be stopped, no statement expressing 'disquiet' would be issued but if the timetable for June elections was interrupted, if the military government proved to be other than 'temporary', and if the progress of 'liberalisation' was halted, then the question of the Queen's visit might be 'reconsidered'.

But even Owen's minimal concession on the Queen's visit — due to take place in February — has a taste of dishonesty. When *Socialist Challenge*

spoke to the Foreign Office they denied all knowledge of such considerations affecting the Queen's visit.

'But', the spokesperson added, 'this really isn't our patch. We're on protocol here, better try Buckingham Palace'.

'Oh no, the visit is definitely on', said the Palace.

'Would it be called off if the elections were called off, if reforms were withdrawn?' we asked.

'Haven't heard anything about that' was the reply.

Had any discussion taken place on placing such conditions on the Queen's visit, we persisted.

'No' was the answer.

What you can do

- * Get your union branch, national union or Labour Party to affiliate to the Committee Against Repression in Iran (Box 4, 182 Upper Street, London N1) and get a CARI speaker to talk to it.
- * Get your labour movement body to adopt an Iranian political prisoner.
- * Pass a resolution demanding that Owen is booted out.
- * Organise action in your firm if it has interests in Iran (see separate article).
- * Organise local pickets of

Iranian airline offices and consulates.

* Demand that college authorities refuse to co-operate with Iranian embassy surveillance of Iranian students.

* Get labour movement organisations to support the forthcoming conference and demonstration called by CARI (further details next week).

* Set up a local branch of CARI and get local political and trade union organisations to affiliate to it.



FORTY people attended a picket of the Iran Air office in London last week. The protest started at the Foreign Office but was quickly moved on by the police.

Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

HEAR IRANIAN TROTSKYIST AT INTERNATIONAL RALLY and see film of recent events in Iran

Friday 24 November

5.30-7.30 Films from Iran, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe. Exhibitions, stalls from liberation movements and struggles around the world. Food and music available.

7.30-10.30 Main Rally:

Ernest Mandel (a leader of the Fourth International) Iranian Trotskyist
Nan Bailey (black militant from US SWP).

Greetings from veteran Trotskyists, Zimbabwe and Irish speakers.

Camden Centre, Judd Street, nr St Pancras Station WC1.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL 40th ANNIVERSARY RALLY

Why they are interested in Iran

THERE are two reasons why Dr Death is so concerned to defend his friend the Shah.

The first is strategic military interests. And military alliances mean money.

EXPORT

British arms sales to Iran amount to something like £900m a year: Chieftain tanks, Rapier missiles, British Leyland armoured cars, Vickers tank recovery vehicles and so on.

Recently the Department of Trade has granted export licences for large quantities of riot control equipment. So much for the usual excuse that the military hardware is solely for 'external' use.

The second reason for British concern over Iran and the reason for the large arms sales — apart from the money — are the growing trade between the two countries.

JOINT

Exports from Britain to Iran rose from £502.3m in 1976 to £654.7m last year. Already after the first three quarters of 1978 the total stands at £568m — 17 per cent up on the same period last year.

Many British companies have joint ventures with local

firms, along the lines of Chrysler's supply of Hunter kits to be assembled as Peykan cars.

Firms with such arrangements include Hawker Siddely, British Leyland, Massey Ferguson, Fosco, London Brick, Acrow and George Cohen 600 Group.

But the crucial British interest in Iran is oil — an issue which has provoked Western intervention.

When a radical government was elected in the early 1950s, pledged to the nationalisation of Anglo-Iranian Oil, the CIA organised a coup to put the present Shah back on the throne.



British government concern over the Iranian oil workers' strike is not, as they would have us believe, because they are worried about the possible loss of British jobs, but because it might make the Shah less amenable than he has been to imperialist demands over oil prices.

The chief British participant

in Iranian oil is our old friend British Petroleum of sanctions-busting fame.

The government-controlled company has a 40 per cent stake in the Iranian Oil Participants consortium.

Recently BP has been negotiating with Tehran over a joint venture with the state, in which the company would develop non-oil industries in exchange for privileged access to Iranian oil.

Iran is BP's biggest source of crude oil. As we pointed out last week, the probability is that much of that sanctions-busting oil which reached Ian Smith started life with another dictator: the Shah.

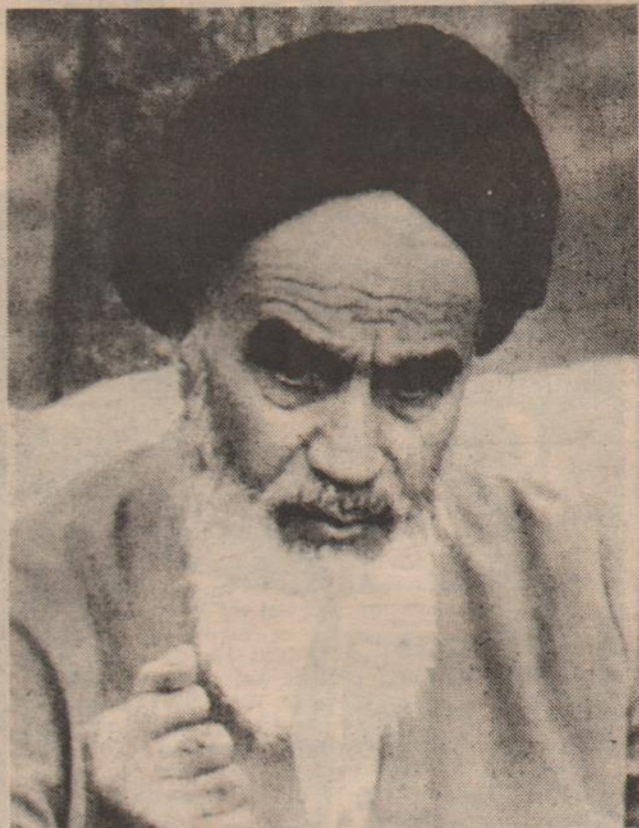
No wonder Owen searches around for 'moral' reasons for the British role in Iran.

ACTION

No wonder too that these same companies who so enthusiastically supported the Shah are now trying to curry favour with his possible successors.

* In this article and the accompanying map we mention a number of British companies with Iranian interests. If your employer is among them get your union or shop stewards committee to investigate those interests and try to organise blacking action.

Interview with Khomeini



'The entire world knows the Shah's crimes'

The Shah accuses you and the religious leaders of being obscurantists and reactionary. What do you think of it?

It is the Shah who is obscurantism itself. For 15 years, in all my statements to the Iranian people, I have always called for, insistently, the economic and social development of my country.

But the Shah, applying the policies of imperialism, has worked to keep Iran in a state of underdevelopment. His regime is dictatorial: individual liberties in Iran have been eliminated.

The Shah has arrogated to himself the three powers, prosecutor, judge and jailer. He has established a single political party. And he has made adherence to that party obligatory under pain of reprisals.

Our universities are closed half the time; our students are beaten and imprisoned several times each year.

The Shah has destroyed our economy and has squandered the oil revenue — the wealth of the future — on arms at exorbitant prices. That draws attention to the independence of Iran.

I am opposed to the Shah, particularly because his policies tied to foreign powers compromise the progress of my people.

When the Shah pretends to lead Iran 'to the frontier of a great civilisation' he lies and uses that excuse to drain the independence of the nation and shed the blood of the people.

Because of these indisputable realities the Shah tries to defame our opposition and accuses us of being obscurantists and reactionaries.

If one day we can turn it around, he will be judged on

the basis of what he has done against the economic and cultural progress of our people; the entire world knows of his crimes.

The land seized [by the Shah] would it be returned to its former owners?

Assuredly not. Those land-owners over the years had accumulated revenues without distributing them.

What do you think is the cause of the flame of riots in Iran? Why are they coming now?

The repression exercised by the Shah and by his father and the evil which has hit our people — deprived of their liberty, of their independence, of their progress and their well being, and crammed with lying promises, especially during the last 15 years — they are the origin of the demonstrations.

The deterioration in economic, social and cultural conditions and the scope of the repression have reached an insupportable degree. The recent riots were the foundations of a gigantic explosion whose consequences are incalculable.

That Constitution kept a monarchial regime. Do you envisage a monarchy or a republic?

The government that we will establish will not be a monarchy at all. That is out of the question.

Would the accession of the Shah's son to the throne be acceptable to you?

We were against the Shah's father; we are against the current Shah and against his dynasty, because the people do not want it.

The Priest and the Revolution

VIEWERS of Sunday's 'Weekend World' were treated to an incredible series of forecasts from former bookmakers' consultant and failed Labour politician Brian Walden.

Walden admitted the Shah's future was rather bleak. He went on to forecast an amazing treble: the government which follows the Shah will be unable to agree, the army will step in, the Shah's son will return triumphant to sit on the throne.

Walden explained that the Iranian masses were too religious to go communist and too influenced by the religious leaders of the Iranian opposition.

All of which reminded us of Russia in 1905. **LEON TROTSKY** writes:

The forms taken by the uprising of 9 January could not have been foreseen. Gapon, a revolutionary priest, in perplexing manner placed by history at the head of the working masses for several days, lent the events the stamp of his personality, his conceptions, his rank. This form may mislead many an observer as to the real substance of the events. The

actual meaning of the events, however, is just what social democracy foresaw.

The central figure is the proletariat. The workers start a strike, they unite, they formulate political demands, they walk out into the streets and win the enthusiastic sympathy of the entire population, they engage in

battles with the army...

The hero Gapon has not created the revolutionary energy of the Petersburg workers, he only unloosed it.

He found thousands of thinking workers and tens of thousands of others in a state of political agitation. He formed a plan which united all these masses — for the period of one day.

The masses went to speak to the Czar. They were faced by Ulan, Cossacks, guards. Gapon's plan had not prepared the workers for that. What was the result?

They seized arms wherever they could, they built barricades... They fought, though apparently they went to beg for mercy. This shows that they went not to beg but to demand.

The proletariat of Petersburg manifested a degree of political

alertness and revolutionary energy far exceeding the limits of the plan laid out by the casual leader.

Gapon's plan contained many elements of revolutionary romanticism. On 9 January the plan collapsed.

Yet the revolutionary proletariat of Petersburg is no romance; it is a living reality. So is the proletariat of other cities. An enormous wave is rolling over Russia.

It has not yet quieted down. One shock, and the proletarian crater will begin to erupt torrents of revolutionary lava.

The proletariat has arisen. It has chosen an accidental pretext and a casual leader — a self-sacrificing priest. That seemed enough to start with. It was not enough to win.



Dazzled by workers in action

THE biggest obstacle to the struggle for workers' power in Iran is the enormous, imperialist-backed apparatus of repression. The second biggest is the political problem of how to deal with that apparatus.

After the appointment of a military government and signs of unrest in the ranks of the army, **RICHARD CARVER** looks at some of the problems posed by the largest military machine in central Asia.

The military leaders of Iran are not accustomed to direct political responsibility. This doesn't mean that they won't try to play an increased part in future — remember what they said about the 'democratic' Chilean officer corps!

The majority of third world armies are highly politicised from top to bottom — from the demagogic anti-imperialism of Ethiopia to the hysterical pro-fascism of Argentina.

That is because their sole reason for existence is internal. The prospect of most of these countries fighting external wars is faint. Their war is with their own population.

Iran is slightly different. Promoted by Britain and the United States as custodian of their interests, the Shah's armed forces have more troops

and higher technology than most neo-colonial armies.

The importance of this for internal politics is that it becomes less likely that the officer caste will split, with a section going over more or less to the side of the masses. So a Portuguese situation, with all its attendant opportunities and problems, is not on the cards.

But large sections of the rank and file of the army are just as frail as their Portuguese counterparts in their allegiance to the Shah.

CONSCRIPT

A third of the army is conscript, so much of the rank and file is, literally, workers and peasants in uniform.

Already the impact of this has been felt. Soldiers have refused to fire on demonstrators. An alternation of threats and fraternisation from the protesting masses has broken their discipline and steeled their resolve against the officers.

The problem now will be to structure the discontent of the rank and file into more permanent forms.

The democratic rights of soldiers within the army becomes key, as well as their right to join with the opposition in society at large.

But alongside mass agitation for soldiers' rights must come the development of the independent power of the masses.

That is why the position of the Moslem opposition is so dangerous. They say the army is a homogeneous whole instead of a structure torn by the class struggles of society.

Instead of allying with the rank and file to smash the armed forces, the religious leaders make demands on the present army as it stands.

The first breaches in military discipline have occurred because of the violent power of the workers. The extension of the armed activity of the masses will more and more turn the rank and file against their officers.

And that increased sympathy between soldiers and their comrades outside can help develop the arsenal of the working class.

The point is that all such struggles for democratic rights in the semi-colonial world tend to move swiftly onwards towards workers' power.

This is because no other social class is able to defend these rights. In determining who will defend them — and therefore whether they are defended — the question of the

state apparatus is paramount.

That problem will be decided by the extent to which the workers use their existing struggles to develop new, more democratic forms of self-organisation which can begin to stand as an alternative state power.

That is not the whole solution. The Iranian workers have yet to develop any mass revolutionary organisation to direct the seizure of power.

But it is not fanciful to talk about any of these possibilities. The speed of the masses in action is always dazzling.

When the Shah goes, that will be only the beginning.

EXTENSIVE coverage of Iran is again the central feature of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* (Vol 16, No 43).

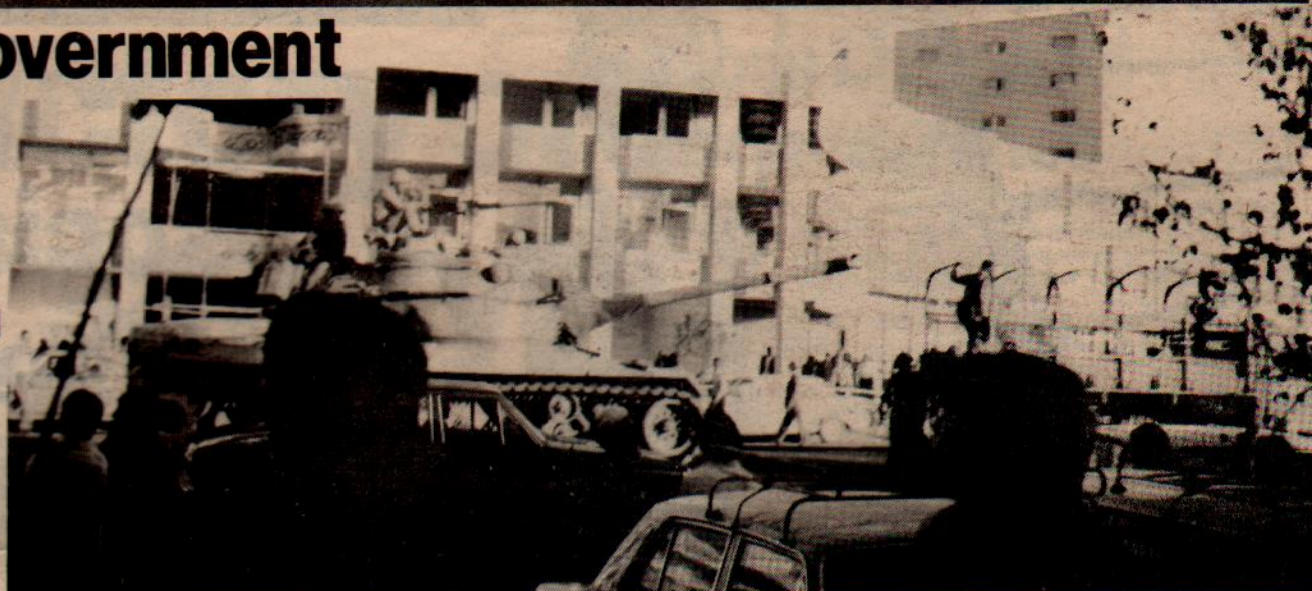
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INTERNATIONAL

Strikers still defy government

Workers test their power



IRANIAN oil workers have again defied orders to return to work. Last week they were given an ultimatum by the generals who now run the Shah's government.

They were told that if they did not return to work by Sunday they would lose their jobs and homes.

A. HAMZEH reports.

Despite these threats and last minute attempts by the Iranian authorities to confuse workers by announcing that the strike had been called off, all but a handful of workers stayed out on strike.

On Sunday, instead of returning to work, many of them went out onto the streets to demonstrate against the Shah and the generals.

With the flow of petrodollars stopped by the oil workers, much of the rest of the Iranian economy paralysed by other strikes and another explosion of street demonstrations imminent, the Shah's position looks more precarious than ever before.

There are signs that his imperialist backers are beginning to accept that his days are numbered and are seriously looking for alternatives which could salvage their interests.

COLLAPSE

After only two months in office the Shah's government of 'national reconciliation' collapsed on 6 November under the impact of widespread strikes and a massive upsurge of street demonstrations.

It had failed to reconcile

anyone, even at gunpoint.

The generals' rise to power did not represent a victory for reaction but an act of desperation.

When the Shah announced



ALL TANKED UP: the Shah's forces in action. Exclusive photograph just received from Tehran.

the formation of a military government on radio it was difficult to believe that it was the same arrogant King of Kings.

He sounded more like a desperate and demoralised man begging and grovelling to save his peacock throne.

The man who once used to boast about his torture

chambers was now repenting his sins of repression, cruelty and corruption.

The man who not so long ago had said that workers who did not work would be picked up by the tail like rats and thrown out, and used to order his men to shoot down strikers now even expressed support for the strikes!

But the masses had no time for the Shah's sob stories and his confessions of guilt. They

numbers of troops and tanks.

For a whole day there were battles on the streets of Tehran between demonstrators and troops and once more many demonstrators were gunned down.

The military government's tactic was to attempt to restore order by a combination of a crackdown and measures aimed at showing that it means to carry out reforms.

Tanks and more troops were

the journalists arrested.

Now two of the leaders of the opposition National Front have also been arrested because of a press statement in which they referred to the monarchy as being illegal.

At the same time the military authorities have begun arresting important former figures of the regime on charges of corruption and abuse of power.

Among those arrested are two of the Shah's most faithful servants: Amir-Abbass Hoveyda, who was prime minister for nearly 13 years, and General Ne'matollah Nassiri, the man who was most responsible for building up the Shah's terror machine, SAVAK.

The Shah has now even promised to set up a commission of enquiry to investigate the wealth of the royal family including the Pahlavi Foundation, his own enormous business front.

Most of the members of the Shah's family have, however, already conveniently moved out of the country with much of their wealth.

GANGSTERS

Neither of these measures are having any effect. The military government can arrest as many of the Shah's former gangsters as it likes, but while the head gangster himself continues to remain in power no one is likely to take these measures seriously.

As for the Shah setting up a

commission of inquiry into his own wealth, this can only be a joke.

Nor is the escalation of repression going to have any effect. The oil workers have already shown the way by defying the generals' ultimatum.

This decision to continue their struggle is not just a major blow to the regime but also a big boost for the struggle throughout the country.

The newspaper workers are also resisting by refusing to return to work as long as the military continue to try and control the press.

A call by opposition forces for strikes to bring the military government down is gaining support. Power workers, telecommunication workers and transport workers are all on strike for political demands.

Bazaars have remained closed as well as schools and universities. Street demonstrations have already begun in provincial towns and are likely to start up again in Tehran.

The Peacock Throne is already rocking heavily. If the oil workers' strike continues and other workers follow the lead then it may fall very quickly.

The general strike must be extended with a call for the abolition of the monarchy, an end to military government and martial law, and the setting up of a constituent assembly freely elected by universal suffrage.

Who's who in the opposition

1) The Moslem opposition

THE Moslem opposition is by far the strongest force within the opposition to the Shah's regime. It has been able to achieve this dominance not simply because of the strong hold of religion among the masses, but more because of the lack of any alternative.

While the regime has been able to crush secular political opposition by repression it has not managed either to crush or subordinate the religious establishment.

Once there was an upsurge of struggles the religious establishment was in a much more favourable position to lead them.

The political bankruptcy of the two traditional organisations — National Front and Tudeh — and their past betrayals drove many young militants towards the religious leaders.

And the support given to the Shah by the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies has done considerable damage to the left.

The Moslem movement draws its support from a wide range of social forces, from the urban poor to very wealthy bazaar merchants. What holds them together is their common adherence to Shia Islam and opposition to the Shah.

The wide range of social forces involved is also reflected in the wide range of political strands within the Moslem movement.

At one extreme are the young and highly radicalised militants whose views are in many respects socialist. At the other are the bazaar merchants whose opposition to the Shah stems from the erosion of their power and wealth by the development of modern capitalism.

The undisputed leader of the movement is Ayatollah Khomeini. He became well known for his leading role in the upsurge against the Shah in 1963. Since then he has lived in exile in Iraq and now Paris.

The Shah and Western media have presented Khomeini and the Moslem movement as a fundamentalist and reactionary force trying to drag Iran back to the Middle Ages.

But religious leaders like



DEBRIS from a looted liquor store is strewn on the street

Khomeini have been able to win mass support because they have taken up issues such as poverty and democratic rights, not because they want to return to Islamic principles.

The heterogeneous class base of the movement means that its political programme is vague, beyond calling for the Shah's overthrow and for democratic rights. They call for an Islamic republic, but are unclear on what this would mean.

Despite pressure from the more right-wing elements in the movement, Khomeini maintains a radical anti-Shah and anti-monarchist stand. He has called for disruptive strikes to bring down the military government.

But the attitude of the Moslems is most dangerous

when it comes to the military. Instead of calling on the rank and file soldiers to come to the side of the masses they call on the army to throw out the Shah.

2) National Front

THE National Front owes its fame more to history than its present day importance.

Its history goes back to the 1940s when it was formed by Dr Mossadegh, the nationalist prime minister who led the struggle for nationalisation of the oil industry in the early 1950s.

The present-day National Front is much weaker than Mossadegh's powerful organisation. It has little mass support and is organisationally very weak.

But it is the strongest of a number of bourgeois liberal organisations in Iran today.

The National Front bears all the worst characteristics of the liberal bourgeoisie of the semi-colonial countries. It lives in constant fear of the masses and throughout the mass struggles of the past year has trailed behind them.

It calls for the formation of a broad coalition government of all 'national' forces and adherence to the bourgeois constitution of 1906.

Pressure from the masses has forced the National Front to

take a more radical stand recently. For the first time it opposes the monarchy and now calls for disruptive strikes to bring down the military government.

3) Tudeh

THE Tudeh Party is Iran's pro-Moscow Communist Party. It was founded in 1942 and rapidly became the most powerful political organisation in Iran after World War II.

At its height it had 100,000 members and almost complete control of the trade union movement.

It was made illegal in 1948 but continued to operate fairly openly until the 1953 coup.

Today the Tudeh Party is very weak. It has a small base among the working class and students.

Like the National Front it has been trailing behind the mass struggle over the last year and has failed to take the lead.

It calls for the abolition of the monarchy and the setting up of a constituent assembly. Like the National Front it calls for a broad coalition government of 'national' forces.

How socialists see the fight for black liberation



BLACK PEOPLE in Britain are fighting back. From the rebel music of Steel Pulse and Aswad, to the massive strike and demonstrations against racist attacks in the East End, to their role on the Ford and Grunwick picket lines, they are serving notice that they will 'stand up for their rights'.

COLIN TALBOT explains how this struggle is also producing important political convulsions within the black communities themselves.

The formation of Blacks Against State Harassment (BASH), in which Asian and Afro-Caribbean organisations and militants have come together in a new and important coalition, is one sign of these changes.

The growth of groups like the Black Socialist Alliance and the Bradford Asian Youth Movement is further evidence of the growing sentiment for united action by blacks to fight racism.

QUESTIONS

This sharply poses questions which revolutionary socialists, despite their participation in anti-fascist and anti-racist activities, have for too long left partially or completely unanswered.

What type of black movement is needed? What sort of demands do we need to fight for to eliminate racism? What attitudes should we have to black nationalism and separatism?

It's high time we not only answered such questions but made them part and parcel of our activity.

The Bolsheviks were the first to develop a clear understanding that socialist revolution could not be a simple 'class against class' confrontation.

FESTIVALS

When Lenin spoke of revolutions being 'festivals of the oppressed', he was clearly recognising that while the oppression of the working class by the bosses was the motor force for revolution, there were many other forms of oppression which capitalism embraced.

The oppression of the colonies by imperialism, the

oppression of national minorities within states, and the oppression of women were all seen by the early communist movement as important struggles in their own right, separate but linked to the overall struggle for socialism.

Today black people in Britain are struggling against their oppression as blacks, and black workers form an important part of the fightback of the whole working class, as workers.

It is important to understand exactly what the racist oppression of black people in Britain consists of.

Some examples are obviously better known: for instance, the fact that the immigration laws mean racist discrimination in entering this country and racist harassment, including detention and deportation, for those blacks already here.

HUMILIATION

Similarly with the fact that the state, especially the cops, consistently harasses black people through laws like 'sus' and blatant frame-ups and physical assaults.

But what racism means for black people in their daily lives is less well known. The reformists, of course, believe that it's simply a question of some 'bad attitudes', the legacy of colonial pride and the great British Empire.

This is one element in the daily humiliation of black people. But it's far from the whole story. Here are some of the facts.

In council housing, the average rent for black people is the same as for whites. Yet 18 per cent of Asian and 10 per cent of Afro-Caribbean tenants have to share accommodation, compared to only 0.6 per cent of whites.

Furthermore, 62 per cent of blacks and only 25 per cent of whites live in houses built before 1940. A GLC survey in 1974/5 showed that they systematically allocate blacks to poor quality inner-city areas and reserve the better estates for whites.



Grunwick hunger strike outside TUC

In jobs the story is repeated. Unemployment as a whole rose by 138 per cent between 1974 and 1977, but for blacks it rose by 307 per cent. Black youth have suffered the worst.

Even when blacks do get jobs their wages average less than whites. Whilst 40 per cent of white men get white collar or higher jobs, only 8 per cent of Afro-Caribbeans and 20 per cent of Indians can.

Many reformists believe that education is the problem. But only 31 per cent of black male graduates get professional or managerial jobs, compared to almost 80 per cent of whites.

ASSAULTS

And on top of the racist harassment from the state and the racist discrimination in jobs, housing and education, black people now have to face the assaults of the fascist goon squads who are trying to drive them out.

Capitalism is incapable of overcoming such problems.

While the mighty USA, the

wealthiest state on earth, has failed to end racism in the 113 years since the abolition of slavery, it took the victorious Cuban revolution only a couple of years to root out the worst effects of decades of racism.

The conclusion is patently obvious — revolutionary socialism works and reformism doesn't.

Many so-called Marxists therefore adopt a 'wait until after the revolution' attitude to blacks (and women). But just because reformism doesn't

At a more 'ideological' level, any struggle by the oppressed tends to illuminate the real nature of the society we live in.

Establishing the need for a black movement doesn't answer the question of what sort of movement. The oppression which blacks face as a social group defines what sort of political basis such a movement should have — an anti-racist one.

Obviously such a movement has an anti-capitalist logic, but an explicitly anti-capitalist programme would hinder rather than help a united black movement embracing all political currents within the black masses. It would militate against unity in action against black oppression, racism.

FLEXIBILITY

In organisational terms the greatest flexibility and democracy is called for in building such a movement. Developments like BASH are obviously massive strides forward to which revolutionaries must give full support.

In addition, black people need to take the fight into the mass organisations of the working class through the formation of black caucuses.

This is especially important because racism in employment, for example, will only be fought by winning the trade unions to support for black workers.

The only way that such demands as 'affirmative action' in hiring, training, and promotion will be forced to the fore is through black self-organisation within the unions.

Black people are a small minority in Britain. This means that the construction of a united anti-racist movement which supports the black movement is crucial to any successful anti-racist struggle.

Such a movement is already developing, as is an embryonic black movement, and the potential for both has never been greater. To use a well worn slogan of the American black movement — Seize the Time!

work, that doesn't mean we should stop fighting for reforms — higher wages, for instance!

So what type of fight do we need? Because we recognise the autonomy of racism — that blacks are doubly oppressed as blacks and workers — we recognise the need both for working class unity and for an autonomous black liberation movement.

Black people have to organise to fight their oppression as blacks. As Malcolm X so clearly put it: 'There can be no black-white unity until there is first some black unity.'

Reformists and sectarians reject black self-organisation as 'splitting working class unity'. But the experience of black self-organisation in the US trade unions is that it has strengthened workers unity and militancy.

A resolute struggle by any section of the oppressed strengthens all other struggles because we are fighting the same enemy. In a very direct sense it encourages others to rebel.

WHEN 8,000 workers, most of them Bengali, struck against racist attacks in London's East End in July it symbolised the growing resistance of blacks in Britain.

The visit of Nan Bailey, a leading black militant of the US Socialist Workers Party, gives socialists here the chance to discuss the lessons of the civil rights and freedom struggle of Afro-Americans.

Come and hear Nan Bailey at the Socialist Challenge Day School on Racism and Black Liberation. It's on Sunday 3 December in London (people attending the ANL Trade Union Conference can stay over in London). Admission is open to all Socialist Challenge supporters — contact your local group for further details.

NORTH-WEST FESTIVAL

ONE of the biggest anti-racist events in Lancashire outside Manchester/Liverpool takes place on Saturday 25 November. That's the date of the NW Lancs. Festival for Racial Harmony, to be held in Preston Polytechnic Students Union.

The festival runs from 11am to 5pm, and then from 7.30 to 11pm Belt & Braces Roadshow will perform along with other bands (tickets £1 in advance for evening). There will be a creche throughout. Details, tickets, leaflets from: PO Box 21, Preston.

WOLVERHAMPTON 4

ACTION has continued in support of the four Wolverhampton anti-racists arrested during a demonstration last March. Both Birmingham and Mosely ANLs have organised leafleting and petitioning to demand that all charges be dropped.

But 'unofficial' intimidation continues. Last Thursday brick throwers attacked the home of one of the four, Dave Stevens, for the third time, although he moved to an unpublished address some months ago.

This type of harassment seems to have been too much for another of the four, David Hines, who was charged with assault and malicious wounding. He failed to turn up in court when his case came up last month.

TORY attempts to stop support for the ANL backfired on 7 November when a student union meeting at University College, London voted 3 to 1 to back the ANL and mobilise every Saturday for the Chapel Market pickets and other action against the NF.

Most union meetings are only attended by about 150 people and are dominated by the right. But this time 500 students turned up after anti-racists distributed 2,000 leaflets highlighting the issues. And the voice of the 'silent majority' soon put paid to the Tories.

THE NEW Nazi pamphlet Taking the Lid off the Anti Nazi League has resulted in a number of those who have been attacked, including Peter Hain, taking the NF to court for gross slander.

It would be of considerable aid to them if details could be received as to how and to what extent the pamphlet is being circulated. All information to SC, PO Box 50, London N1.

ANL TRADE UNION CONFERENCE

THE ANL is organising a trade union conference on 2 December at Congress House, Great Russell St, London WC1. The conference is open to 'bona fide trade union bodies and workplace organisations', and all readers should aim to get credentials. Registration (£1) from: ANL, PO Box 151, London WC2.



Photo: G.M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

Sussex victory on women's safety

'HERSTORY' has been made at Sussex University with the first ever student occupation on rape and women's safety.

What's more, it ended in complete victory, reports JAN PARKER.

It all started last year with a series of rapes on campus. Women organised speakers from the Rape Crisis Centre to dispel myths about rape, and the university was pressurised about security facilities — but nothing much came of it.

So assaults continued. Finally a woman was viciously raped and murdered in parkland adjoining the university.

Women students then decided it was time for the students union to act on behalf of all women working and studying at the university.

EMERGENCY

An emergency union meeting was called; petitions were circulated; and workers' support was forthcoming. A successful 'Reclaim the Campus' demo was organised.

We demanded floodlighting on campus, installation of an (SOS) emergency phone system, improved security patrols in liaison with the students union, and better late-night transport services.

As a show of strength we occupied the administrative building for 24 hours before a pre-arranged meeting with the authorities. Media coverage embarrassed them into conceding all our demands straight away.

But events in the occupation itself highlighted the problems women still face: intimidation and threats of physical and

sexual violence.

We are therefore calling for more self-defence classes and discussions on all aspects of women's oppression and liberation.

EXAMPLE

We're not an isolated case — all men are potential rapists. So follow our example.

In particular, we want all colleges to support the call from women at Sussex University to this weekend's NUS Women's Conference for a national 'Reclaim the Night' demo on Saturday 24 January.

More Liverpool redundancies

JUST UNDER 800 redundancies are threatened at Cammell Laird ship repair yard in Liverpool, reports JOHN NOLAN.

Full-time union official Harry Murt has responded vigorously by demanding that... a social security office be set up in the yard to deal with those who have lost their jobs!

Murt's advice came at a meeting last Thursday of Boilermakers Union members, 620 of whom are affected by the threatened redundancies.

The workers were given plenty of advice about redundancy hand-outs, but none about how to keep their jobs.

Earlier the stewards committee chairperson, Tommy Webb, had introduced the wage claim — for a meagre 5 per cent increase, plus 35 hours, an unspecified 'incentive bonus', with 'travel assistance' and 'fringe benefits'.

As the demoralised boiler-makers began to drift away from the meeting, Workers Action supporter Lol Duffy tried to speak in favour of a real fightback.

Only when Duffy managed to get to the front of the meeting did Webb acknowledge his presence. Webb then called out over the microphone for a vote on whether the proposals should be debated.

The uncounted and inconclusive show of hands was taken to indicate a 'no' vote by Webb, who then declared the meeting closed.

The day before, 1,000 joint Socialist Challenge/Socialist Worker leaflets had been handed out calling for an immediate 35-hour week, a ban on overtime, strike action against redundancies, and a workers plan for new production in the yard. A separate Workers Action bulletin made similar demands.

Grundfos women win by 'sticking together'

A MAGNIFICENT victory has been won by women striking against arbitrary speed-up at the Grundfos factory in Washington, Tyne & Wear, reports ANNE TORODE.

The women took action at the end of September after they realised that they were turning out 500 extra pumps a day for hardly any extra money.

This was the last straw in a factory with minimal safety standards where the workers were already rushed off their feet — with no tea-breaks and only half-an-hour for lunch.

In the words of Susan Starkey,

Engineering Union shop steward: 'You're a commodity that produces and that's it, you've no feelings.'

'If you get cut, bruised or battered in the process, it's just hard luck. They can replace you with someone else.'

Forty-eight women and sixteen men from the production line were eventually on strike.

But the male workers in the machine shop walked straight through the picket each morning until their union called them out.

Even then they were only out 'under protest'. As one woman on the picket line told me: 'We've shown them up because we've proved we're stronger than them.'

'We're sticking together. Some of us have no men to support us, we have single women with us, and some of them have children to think about — but they've proved

their strength.'

And by sticking together they won! Management has agreed to return to previous production levels, and the women will receive 60 per cent pay for their time out on strike.

They will also get a £20 bonus during productivity discussions with union representatives.

What is more, they have even struck a small blow against unemployment, as the firm has agreed to take on two extra labourers to help with the work!

Union officials order sackings

EIGHT print workers at the East London factory of Usher Walker Limited were sacked by management last week — on the instructions of their own union officials from the National Society of Operative Printers, Graphical and Media Personnel [NATSOPA].

MICK DRAKE reports.

The past seven months have been one of almost constant struggle to improve wages and working conditions.

The final straw came when the firm threatened 22 redundancies and then refused to pay the workers for four days when they were illegally suspended at the beginning of October. On 10 October the chapel withdrew its labour.

Usher Walker supplies Fleet Street with 30 per cent of its ink, including the Sun, Mail, Telegraph, Times, Financial Times and News of the World. Union action could quickly have made the strike bite.

OPPOSITE

But the opposite happened. Senior NATSOPA officials issued temporary NATSOPA cards to two members of the United Road Transport Union on 20 October so that they could deliver news ink to Fleet Street. They also instructed Fleet Street members to accept delivery of this scab ink.

Meanwhile Manchester NATSOPA officials entered into an agreement to allow Usher Walker's Heywood plant

to engage in extra production for the delivery of ink to its southern customers. The price: an extra £10 per week per worker.

NATSOPA then set to work on disciplinary proceedings when the Usher Walker strikers refused three times to return to work.

Temporary card holders had their cards withdrawn, probationary members were expelled, and the remaining NATSOPA members summoned to fresh disciplinary hearings.

On the morning of these, eight strikers received letters sacking them on the spot for not being members of NATSOPA. Others arrived at the 7 November hearing to find the meeting place discreetly surrounded by the police.

But all is not gloom. British Oxygen workers at the Hackney depot have refused to supply gases to the firm and are trying to get the Manchester depot to follow suit.

Picketing at the Manchester plant was renewed this week, and Hackney Trades Council will be urged to adopt the strike on Thursday.



Usher-Walker demo in Fleet Street earlier this week

Resolutions of support and donations should be rushed to: Jim Burton FOC, c/o Student Union office, Livingstone House, North East London Poly, Livingstone Road,

Stratford, London E15. And join the pickets: Fleet Street, 7-8am at Bouverie Street and Whitefriars Street; Marshgate Lane, E15, 7.45am-4pm.

Hackney Girls Project

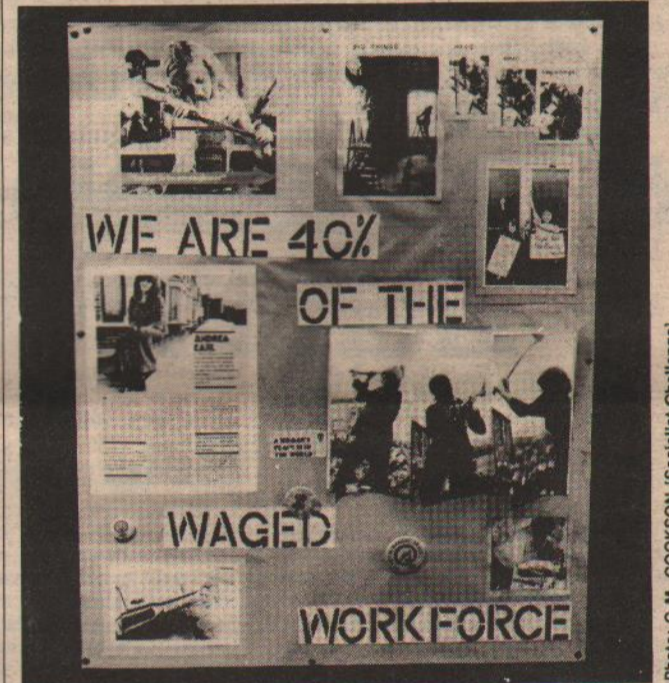


Photo: G. M. COOKSON [Socialist Challenge]

HACKNEY Girls Project has been organised by a group of local women who want more facilities and more fun for girls in Hackney.

A month long programme of varied events and activities for girls has been organised from 7 to 20 November. The series includes six evening events, a public exhibition, and lots of free, informative literature.

The first two evening events were a big success. The first, called Images of Girls, was attended by 70 girls between the ages of 14 and 17.

Two groups of girls performed plays which they had written and worked out themselves. One was about sexism in education, and the other was about girls' experiences in a mixed youth club.

The second event, called Black Girls in Society, was also well attended. About 40 girls came to see the Newsreel Collective's film Divide and Rule — Never! A lively

discussion followed.

A follow up meeting has been arranged for 30 November, when girls in the area can discuss what they would like to do next — maybe organising a girls' club.

Further events include:

16 November: Take It Like a Man Ma'am, a hilarious full length film with a brilliant dream sequence when men do the typing, shopping and vie for the attention of fat, rich business-women in sleazy bars.

22 November: 'Girls and Work' — a practical workshop run by Women in Manual Trades in plumbing, carpentry, electricity plus screen printing.

23 November: Live music by Clapperclaw — performance and music workshop by a group of women musicians. Refreshments.

All events are at Centreprise, 136 Kingsland High St., E.8. 7.30-9.30pm — girls only. Further info from: Box 3, 136 Kingsland High St., London E8.

Garners day of action

THE GARNERS Strike Committee, together with the Greater London Association of Trades Councils, has called for a day of action on Saturday 9 December.

Supporters are being asked to join the picket at the Haymarket at 12 noon, from where they will be directed to other Garners restaurants.

The strike committee now believes it has Garners management 'on the ropes' and sees recent shifts in the firm's

top level management as evidence that 'we can defeat them'.

Pickets continue every day and the strikers are especially appealing to the thousands of students in central London colleges to put down motions in their support, invite them to union meetings, and join them on the lunchtime and evening pickets. The strike committee can be contacted on 01-240 1056.

Photo: G. M. COOKSON [Socialist Challenge]

PUTTING PA

TUC says 'pass' to Jim's questions

THE LABOUR Government is literally buying time. A bribe to the Ulster Unionists of more parliamentary seats ensured their abstention on the Queen's Speech, and this, along with an undertaking on Welsh and Scottish referendums on devolution, allowed a Government majority.

'A full session's work, but nothing risky' is how one major capitalist weekly, the Economist, described the programme of legislation proposed in the speech.

Even the most radical items, aimed at retaining some of the rapidly dwindling support for Callaghan within the labour movement, only serve to promote more collaboration with the bosses — such as the proposal to extend workers' participation on the British Leyland pattern.

RICH PALSER follows the trail of Sunny Jim's strategy, and suggests how we can dispose of it.

As the Economist commented: 'There is nothing in this speech which the Government is likely to regard as a resigning matter...'

'It would need a specific no-confidence vote to precipitate a General Election at a time not of Mr Callaghan's choosing.'

But there is one issue on which Callaghan has based both the life of this Government and Labour's election strategy — incomes policy.

Callaghan and Healey have stuck up two fingers to the TUC and Labour Party conference calls for free collective bargaining. It is on this issue that the right-wing Labour Government will stand or fall.

OUTSIDE

Nothing that happens in Parliament will unseat the Government on pay policy. Whether the Callaghan regime can impose its 5 per cent limit will be decided by events outside the precinct of Westminster.

Only when this policy is clearly failing will a serious move be made to unseat Labour in Parliament; and even then the rift in the Tory Party means that there is no evident alternative to Callaghan for the capitalist class.

Is Callaghan failing? The recent vote of the Ford strikers would seem to say he is. But when the Ford workers broke the 10 per cent limit last year, and average increases for the private sector were 16 per cent, the Government was able to keep wage increases in the public sector to 10 per cent, and thus overall increases to 14.2 per cent.

This year the Ford workers seem sure to win a lot more than 5 per cent, making a repeat performance difficult. Yet the 'winter of discontent' which Public Employees' leader Alan Fisher predicted is not guaranteed to upset the Government's plan.

Despite Congress decisions, Callaghan still has the TUC's General Council behind him. They may not agree on a 5 per cent limit, but they are united in wanting the return of a Labour Government at any cost.

While Sid Weighall's call for another Congress to endorse the 5 per cent limit has been rendered impossible by the Ford and bread strikes, the TUC-Government talks look like producing a joint statement.

Callaghan does not expect these to result in endorsement of the present pay limit, but some things he already knows

he can get. First is 'responsible collective bargaining'.

This is another way of saying that where the union officials may back a fight for big wage increases in profitable companies such as Ford, the story is quite different in the likes of Leyland.

Secondly, it means that the TUC does not campaign in solidarity with workers who are confronting the 5 per cent limit. Murray has already made it plain he is not mandated to do this (unlike Labour's National Executive Committee).

Thirdly, Callaghan will want a long-term agreement on public sector wages, along the lines perhaps of Basnett's proposals for comparisons with private sector wages.

What the Prime Minister does not want, however, is to allow the public sector workers more than 5 per cent now.

Callaghan is confident about continued collaboration because he has asked two questions to which the TUC, including its 'left wing', has no answers. What is your alternative to the Government's economic policies? And who would you want in our place, the Tories?

There is one answer which the union leaders refuse to give. When Callaghan and Michael Edwards say Leyland cannot afford to pay decent wages, and therefore BL workers must allow inflation to cut their wages or face redundancy, then that just shows that industry run on an unplanned capitalist basis cannot meet the needs of the vast majority of the population.

That's why the motor industry as a whole should be nationalised, and production planned by the workers to ensure jobs, living standards, and products which are of use to society.

RIGHT TO WORK

Far from this being an argument for workers to stop defending their living standards, it is an argument for socialist measures to defend even the basic right to work.

When public sector workers are told they will be forced to accept the pay policy, whatever Ford workers win, this is not a reason for them to demand comparisons with the private sector. It is an inducement for wages to be automatically defended against inflation, through automatic increases in wages to keep pace with rising prices.



THE LAP of luxury, 1978 style — yet the union leaders have no political alternative to Callaghan's axe on living standards

When the working class is informed that it must either accept Callaghan's pro-capitalist policies or have a Tory government in office, this is not a reason for Len Murray to do nothing to aid the bread workers.

It is an argument for kicking Callaghan out of the leadership of the labour movement, along with Murray and all his supporters in the unions, and replacing them with people who do stand for the interests of working people.

If Callaghan wins the next election, as the opinion polls suggest he might, it will be because the Tories are split — not because the Prime Minister has won the enthusiasm of working class people. If he loses, it will be because his pro-capitalist policies have demoralised the working class voters.

If a Tory Government is the result, it is far better for the labour movement to confront it confident of its victories in

defending our living standards than in a state of disorganisation after five years' collaboration with Callaghan and the bosses.

Removing the 5 per centers from the leadership of the labour movement will best be achieved by strengthening the fightback.

It was the Ford strike which won the vote against the Government's policies at the Labour Party conference this autumn. It will be by spreading the struggle, by joint action now on the part of all workers with claims in, that the 5 per cent limit will be defeated and its supporters removed from positions of leadership.

That's why the task of the hour remains to demand the breaking off of all talks; for the TUC to launch solidarity action with the bread workers, and for a socialist alternative to Callaghan's policies.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE

Our alternative
WORKERS' PLANS

- * The Lucas Experience, with Lucas Combine
- * Workers' Control in Iran workers' movement
- * Closures and Workers' Control Hospital Occupation Campaign
- * And more! (Speakers in person Saturday, 24 March. At Tickets £1, from: SC Trade London N1.

Bread the High battle

'CRUMBLING' has become bread strike — that's when they think they've got over the ransom'.

With 20,000 bread shop propaganda, GEOFFREY SH workers' movement to take High Streets.

The strike by 26,000 bread workers which began on 7 November already looks like becoming the most bitter confrontation over the Government pay policy since the Fire Brigades Union was defeated nearly a year ago.

While the 'independent' bakers normally supply a third of British bread have stepped up their production (and prices) the press and the police are doing their best to help the large (and highly profitable) bread companies resist the demand for a 26 per cent rise.

ARRESTS

As at Grunwick, the cops are displaying their enthusiasm for taking on strikers, who happen once again to be among the lowest paid. Pickets have been attacked and arrested outside at least half a dozen plants.

Coupled with reports of increased scabbing — 1,108 Bakers Union members have disobeyed the strike according to the union; twice the number according to the bosses — will evidently require the active support



TAYABALI KAPASI: 'The baker's job's hard, hot, and very fast moving'

WID TO THE 5%

TRADE UNION CONFERENCE 2
ative to Callaghan:

and WORKERS' CONTROL

Phil Asquith, executive member,

with a speaker from the Iranian

ontrol, with Carl Brecker, Hounslow
ttee and treasurer of 'Fightback'

sonal capacity)
Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham.
Union Conference 2, PO Box 50,

strike: h Street

lect Street's key word to describe the
e headline writers and picture editors
sage about 'holding our stomachs to

to help relay the employers'
ERIDAN argues that it is vital for the
this battle against low pay onto the

of the workers' movement to ensure the
success of the strike.

Although the union executive did not
hold a mass meeting or a ballot before
calling the strike, it is easy to see why the
overwhelming majority of bread
workers in the large companies took to
the picket lines.

Tayabali Kapasi describes his job on
the bread line at the Sunblest bakery in
Walthamstow, East London, as 'hard,
hot, and very fast moving'. He is among
the Asians who make up 90 per cent of
the 250 workers at this factory owned by
Associated British Foods (pre-tax
profits last year, £33.7m).

Why so many Asians? Tayabali
shrugs. 'Cheap labour. White workers
don't want the job.'

His basic pay, on the nationally
agreed rates, is £41 for a 40-hour week.
The employers have offered to increase
this by a princely 5 per cent, as
demanded by the Labour Government,
with another 6 per cent depending on
strict productivity requirements. Hence
the strike.

Few workers in industry would
tolerate the shifts that Tayabali has to
put up with. He is on a six-day week that
begins at 5am on Sundays and involves
working from 7am to 7pm on Mondays
and Fridays.

For a 55-hour week he grosses about
£76, which is higher than that of many
other bread workers.

At Walthamstow, only six workers
are scabbing, and the pickets are
strenuously trying to prevent the daily
despatch of tens of thousands of loaves
produced by managers under the excuse
of supplying hospitals and prisons.

The day before I spoke to Tayabali, 80
cops had waded into the pickets and
arrested 13 stikers, four of whom
needed hospital treatment. Said branch
chairperson Baldev Dhillon: 'Four
policemen got hold of me, lifted me up
to above five feet, and then dropped me

WHAT IS IT?...

... THAT INCREASED
IN PRICE 25%
BETWEEN 1977-1978

THAT THE BRITISH
PUBLIC BUY ELEVEN
MILLION OF
EVERY DAY

THAT THE BRITISH PUBLIC
THINK HAS GONE DOWN
MORE IN QUALITY THAN
ANY OTHER FOODSTUFF

IS A PRODUCT
CONSISTING LARGELY
OF AIR AND WATER
WITH 28 CHEMICALS
ADDED - SOME
POSSIBLY HARMFUL

IS MADE IN AN INDUSTRY
WITH ONE OF THE WORST
ACCIDENT RECORDS
AND LOWEST WAGES

IS THE MOST PROFITABLE
ITEM SUPERMARKETS SELL
(FOR THE ROOM IT TAKES UP
ON THEIR SHELVES)

on the road.'

Yet the leadership of the Bakers
Union seems determined to go it alone.
They have issued no calls for assistance
from the trade union movement, not
even from the Transport Union, some
of whose members continue to deliver
bread baked by management and strike

Ford: danger of backroom deal

THE FORD strike is in its eighth week
and the Ford strikers have become the
shock troops in the battle for free
collective bargaining, writes
JONATHAN SILBERMAN.

Since Monday, all Ford factories in
Europe have been at a standstill or on
short-time working, thanks in part to
the solidarity of dockers in Britain who
have stopped all Ford shipments.

OFFER

The company was forced to double
its first offer of five per cent on basic
rates, and when the mass meetings
rejected the so-called 'final offer'
earlier this month, Ford replied that it
was prepared to discuss the unions'
opposition to the penalty clauses that
were linked to the offer.

Ron Todd, the chief union
negotiator, has replied that the unions
are only prepared to negotiate on the
full claim.

Yet just as the possibility of a strong
united and generalised offensive on pay
was emerging from other sectors of
workers, a silence has enveloped the
Ford strike.

The regular Tuesday shop stewards
meeting at Dagenham was a very quiet
affair last week. Over in less than 45
minutes, the platform simply proposed
some arrangements to tighten up on
picketing.

The press and TV, which had tried to
mobilise Ford wives against the strike,
and suggested the votes were fixed at
the mass meetings, has become silent on
Ford — turning their attention instead

breakers.

And while there is no doubting the
determination of the large majority of
bread workers, their morale can readily
be sapped by the barrage of press
propaganda and the lack of visible
support from other militants.

Tayabali says he hasn't seen anyone
from the local trades council on the
picket line, and the task of leafleting the
High Streets could only effectively be
done with outside help.

Linking up with other workers who
are against the 5 per cent is a good idea,
he considers, and he agrees that it
would be worth sending a deputation to
the Ford strikers at nearby Dagenham.

He also hopes that — unlike the bread
workers' strike over bank holiday pay
last autumn — this one won't be settled
without mass meetings to consider any
offer. A special recall delegate
conference is to be held this Saturday to
consider the progress of the strike.

Its decisions will hopefully help to
wipe the smile off the faces of the
employers' federation.

FOOTNOTE on the bread bosses'
policy of persuading us that the white
sliced loaf is the best thing since soft
toilet paper. Tayabali Kapasi, who
comes from Uganda, says: 'I've never
had bread like the stuff that goes
through the machines here.'

'It has no smell. I don't know
whether it's the chemicals that go in, or
the air. They're just turning out stuff to
fill people's stomachs. For me, it's not
real bread.'

to campaigning for the bread strikers to
return to work.

Like the mass media, the union
leaders are well aware of the 'danger' of
strikes spreading and they have done
everything in their power to stop this
happening.

At the Dagenham mass meeting,
Todd argued for the Ford claim on the
basis of the company's profits. Presumably
Transport Union members at Leyland
shouldn't get wage rises because BL's
profits are so small.

Certainly that is the thinking of the
TUC chiefs and their strategy is
embraced by the Communist Party.
Despite left-wing articles in the
Morning Star, party members at BL
have been doing their best to contain
action (see article on this page) and
those at Ford have been concerned to
play the 'special case' card.

REWARD

Body plant chairperson at Dagenham,
Sid Harraway, put their position in
a full-page interview in the London
Evening News a fortnight ago. 'What
our lads are looking for is a reward for
the success of the company,' he argued.

The Ford Workers Group has
consistently fought this 'special case'
pleading. What's needed now is a clear
drive to spread the Ford strike:

- ★ Sending flying pickets to workers
with claims pending to encourage them
to struggle alongside Ford workers.
- ★ Organising joint demonstrations
with workers already on strike.
- ★ In particular, mobilising Ford



strikers to participate in the bread
workers' picket lines.

These are the sort of measures that
are necessary. And if the Ford shop
stewards committees are to build such
action, there needs to be much greater
involvement of the rank and file in the
running of the strike.

This means regular and democratic
mass meetings where the strikers
themselves — through democratic
discussion — can decide on the conduct
of the strike. And insist on £20 on the
pay and one hour off the day, with no
strings.

*On Monday night shop stewards
learned that Ron Todd had approached
Ford for further negotiations, without
any mandate from the union side of the
Ford Joint Negotiating Committee —
let alone from shop floor workers.

At the Dagenham shop stewards
meeting on Tuesday, there was concern
that the strikers were about to see a
repeat of the 1971 settlement, when the
union leaders simply ignored the
negotiating committee.

This once again emphasises the need
for a recall of the Coventry conference,
which originally formulated the claim.

Leyland and the 'lunatic left'

WORKERS at the Dreads Lane tractor and transmission plant in
Birmingham have given BL — as Leyland is now known — the kind
of answer which is needed throughout the combine, argues BL shop
steward PAT HICKEY.

Both shifts at Dreads Lane walked out
of the factory on 3 November after
management had failed to come up
with a satisfactory response to their pay
claim. They overwhelmingly voted for
indefinite strike action until BL's offer
is improved.

The difference between the strikers'
demands and the management's reply is
large.

Dreads Lane shop stewards submitted
the claim drawn up by BL's combine
committee — £100 for track workers,
which is an increase of 30 per cent; a
35-hour week; immediate parity, and
full shift guarantee.

The company replied as they have
done to all BL workers — 5 per cent, if a
proposed grading structure was
accepted, and productivity strings. The
grading structure is to be the basis for
parity, which is meant to be achieved by
next November.

The parity payments are to be phased
in if and when productivity targets are
met. Management has spoken of a 15
per cent improvement in efficiency.
Given that BL's output is to remain the
same, this can only mean one thing — a
15 per cent reduction in jobs.

STANDSTILL

The Dreads Lane strike has already
led to a near standstill in BL with more
than 25,000 workers already laid off.

More ominous for management, the
Dreads Lane strike is a direct rebuttal to
those who claim BL's workers are not
prepared to struggle against manage-
ment's miserable offer.

Fortunately for that management,
the union leadership in BL is doing its
best to calm things down. The
Communist Party leadership at Rover
and Longbridge put resolutions to leave
any decision on BL's offer until 1
December. This was to 'allow time to
negotiate'.

But BL's boss Michael Edwardes has
made it abundantly clear that there will
be no negotiation as far as he is
concerned. Only last Thursday,
Edwardes maintained that 'not a penny
more' than 5 per cent will be offered.

But although BL's top boss has
shown his intransigence, the one thing

that could make him change his mind
— immediate and total strike action —
continues to be denounced by the union
leadership.

At the Longbridge meeting, combine
convenor Derek Robinson attacked
those who favour strike action as 'the
lunatic left'. When Socialist Challenge
spoke to Arthur Harper, the convenor
at Dreads Lane, he declared his
willingness to be part of the 'lunatic
left'.

REASON

Harper also revealed that the main
opposition to strike action at Dreads
Lane came from a Communist Party
shop steward. Yet there is good reason
for militancy. Like other BL workers,
those at Dreads Lane have seen their
wages decline steadily during the past
four years.

From being one of the highest paid
plants in Birmingham, the strikers'
wages have fallen to such an extent that
they are now paid £30 less than those
who do similar work at such factories as
Salisbury's Transmissions.

Despite such an obvious cause for
complaint, the workers at Dreads Lane
receive only threats from their union.
The Engineering Union's East District
Committee has instructed the strikers
to go back.

Secretary Ken Cure has called a
special meeting to 'resolve the
differences', but such diplomatic
intentions are not really Cure's style. In
August he threatened to fill the striking
SU toolmakers' jobs with scab labour.

But if the union leadership is trying
to smash the Dreads Lane strike, other
workers throughout Leyland are
rallying to the struggle. At the Cowley
plant, on a recommendation of their
shop stewards, a mass meeting carried a
resolution in support of Dreads Lane.

The Cowley stewards have stated
that on the first day of normal working
they intend to go one step further by
calling another mass meeting at which
they will recommend immediate strike
action in support of the full claim. It is
an example that should be followed
throughout BL.

INTERNATIONAL

Rudolf Bahro's prison letter

'My song goes around the world — what more should I want!'

'THE ALTERNATIVE', which has been called 'the most important' theoretical work to come out of the countries that have abolished capitalism since Leon Trotsky's "The Revolution Betrayed", will be published in English by New Left Books in three weeks time.

But its author, East German economist Rudolf Bahro, is in jail — sentenced to eight years in June on trumped-up charges of 'espionage' after being held since August 1977.

Bahro, however, has not given up the fight for socialist democracy. Two weeks ago the West German magazine 'Der Spiegel' published a letter sent by Bahro to a fellow prisoner in Bautzen prison. Extracts are printed below.

Thank you for your initiative and your encouragement, the more so since you are certainly aware that our political colours are apparently rather different and I would hardly support the activities which — if my assumption is correct — have brought you here.

I was and I am decidedly for the non-capitalist foundations of the German Democratic Republic, which I do not view solely or mainly from the viewpoint of my present situation.

NO HOSTILITY

Nor do I, for instance, think in terms of hostility towards the Soviet Union.

What I want to bring about is debate on the basis of that foundation, which needs a fundamentally renovated political and, above all, ideological superstructure.

It needs it also because such a renovation (as intended in Prague '68) would facilitate the

Argentina

THE British Argentina Campaign is nearly a year old, and to mark the occasion it is holding its first national conference at Liverpool University on 2 December.

The conference will be open rather than structured on a delegate basis, and the organisers hope it will be able to set up a firmer national framework for the campaign.

Registration fee is £1 and details are available from the campaign at 52 Acre Lane, London SW2. We will be carrying fuller information on the conference in the coming weeks.

anti-capitalist transformation on the other side.

I write this in order to avoid misunderstandings between us.

You are right about my condition. I am as well, physically and mentally, as one can be under the circumstances.

MONKISH

In Berlin I had to share with an economist, and was lucky with him. Only during the last month before the trial was I alone and then again grateful for that, too.

My lifestyle had already been, at least to the outside, somewhat monkish before all this. After all I had been writing my book, and also a dissertation, during the past five years (1972-77) entirely in my spare time, parallel to my very normal work in industry...

I had already in Berlin caught

Freiheit für RUDOLF BAHRO Freedom for RUDOLF BAHRO Liberté pour RUDOLF BAHRO

Komitee für die Freilassung Rudolf Bahros Postfach 3005 1000 Berlin 30

Rudolf Bahro Defence Committee c/o G. Minnerup Bellevue Road GB-Ryde, Isle of Wight

Comité pour la défense de Rudolf Bahro Groupe Information RDA 46, rue Vaugirard 75014 Paris

up with or re-read about 160 books, mainly world literature. For eight weeks now I have been learning French. At the moment I am, at last, reading the Bible from beginning to end.

My material requirements are habitually so modest that, in principle, I can make do with what I am given.

What I really miss is music (instead of that dreadful loudspeaker), i.e. chamber music of the 17th to the mid-18th century. In the case of Czech music, even a bit later. Well, and who would not miss females being here (I really am no ascetic).

All in all: I can survive the 'outstanding' seven years, halfway productively here, if it does not get worse...

Throughout the whole

committal proceedings I suffered no breakdown whatsoever and did not withdraw from any of my positions, not even the one on which the fire concentrated — my readiness to use the 'sealed train', i.e. the bourgeois mass media, to have my ideology 'transported'.

SUCCESS

I have left no doubt before the court and generally that I will continue to follow my path straightforwardly.

All in all they have helped to organise the success of my book. The DM 200,000 they came up with [Bahro's supposed payment from 'Western intelligence agencies'] was because Stern wrote that 80,000 copies had already been sold. Meanwhile there is a

paperback. Before the end of the year there will be translations into five or six languages. My song goes around the world — what more should I want!

And with regards to its impact, I had so far only known of the reaction of bourgeois circles in the Federal Republic and of some 'ultralefts'.

Is it really true that the leaders of the most important Eurocommunist parties have commented officially?

When — after all the ADN [East German news agency] lies about my trial? Have they indicated a position on the substance? Do they regard me as a communist in whose company one can be seen? I have always hoped this, but was not sure that they would

say it. 'To discuss my theses publicly' — that was precisely my demand, and that is what they are trying to save themselves from at a high price by condemning a book of a theoretical-political nature as a 'collection of information'.

I have, however, uncovered the (politico-economic) nature of socialism as it actually exists in a more thoroughgoing manner than previous attempts, have explained the inherent obstacles preventing a breakthrough to real socialism...

SYSTEM

I have attempted to analyse socialism as it really exists in the same way that Marx analysed capitalism: as a social formation, an entire system which arose inevitably, 'functions' and has to be overcome.

The idea developed in the late '60s, the decision was made on 21 August 1968. Since then I have consciously moved towards the clash.

Only as late as 1977, when the book was nearing completion, did I indirectly make contact with the West (only with the EVA publishing house, which is owned by the DGB [West German trade union federation]).

Nobody on the outside had any influence on the slightest comma. When I was ready for publicity, about one and a half months before publication, EVA organised contact for me with the accredited correspondents in the GDR of Spiegel, ZDF and ARD [two West German TV channels].

These are all the facts of the matter. Everything else is entirely my own work, which of course touches them at their most vulnerable points where discussion is impossible (no effective arguments!)

*A Symposium to introduce Bahro's ideas and discuss their implications for revolutionary politics is being organised by New Left Books for Saturday 2 December from 2pm to 5pm at the New Ambassadors Hotel, Upper Woburn Place, London WC1 [near Euston Station].

Speakers are: David Fernbach [translator of The Alternative], Monty Johnstone, Gunter Minnerup [Bahro Defence Campaign], Edward Thompson, and Raymond Williams. Admission £1.

An international congress to defend Bahro also opens in West Berlin on 16 November, and Socialist Challenge will be devoting regular coverage to this and other solidarity events over the next few weeks.

Portugal: workers resist attack on land reform

HUNDREDS of riot police of the Portuguese National Republican Guard have been sent into the Alentejo against the agricultural workers' co-operatives.

THE PORTUGUESE WORKERS CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE writes on the struggle to defend the agrarian reform.

Beginning in the week of 14 October, police in full riot gear, armed with truncheons, sub-machine guns and dogs, riding 'Shortland' armoured cars and horses, launched violent attacks on the co-operatives of Alentejo in southern Portugal.

The co-operatives were

formed in 1974-75 after a series of occupations of the huge estates belonging to absentee landlords, which began at the end of 1974.

The aim of the police attacks is to return large areas of land up to 700 hectares, livestock and farm machinery to the former landowners.

RESISTANCE

The police have everywhere been met by determined resistance from the agricultural workers. For instance on 28 October the police attacked the co-operative of St Bartholomew in the district of Evora. They were met by 3,000 agricultural workers and their

families. In the battle that followed 50 workers were injured and had to be treated in hospital.

In the co-operative 'Black Star', 40 workers were injured, including a pregnant woman who was bitten by a police dog and is in danger of miscarriage. Altogether more than 120 agricultural workers have been injured.

The attacks have been continuing, despite a wave of protest and revulsion which has spread throughout Portugal. On 24 October a general protest strike called by the Intersindical union federation was observed by workers in the Lisbon industrial belt.

In the Alentejo a general one day strike took place with demonstrations in the main towns. The most important was held in Beja, where 80,000 turned out.

PRESIDENT

The attack on the Alentejo agricultural workers, the most combative section of the working class and the most exploited under the old fascist regime, was ordered by the administration of Nobre da Costa, despite the fact that his government had been defeated in parliament on a vote of confidence.

The government is therefore acting on the sole authority of the President of the Republic,

General Ramalho Eanes.

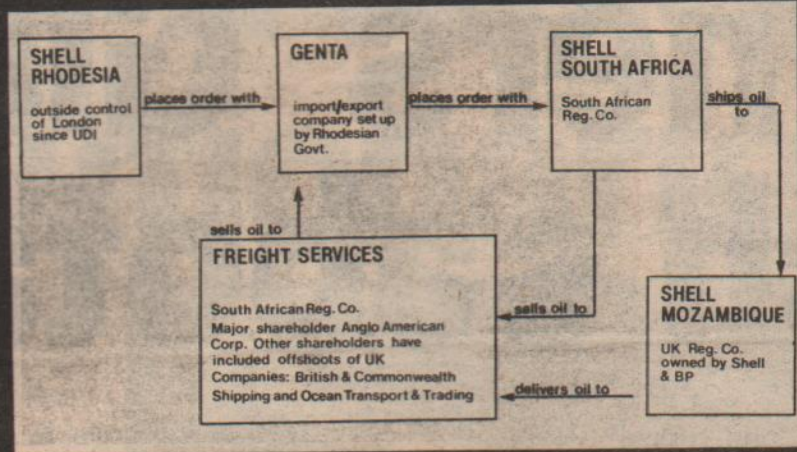
Eanes will be in London on a state visit on 14-16 November.

The Portuguese Workers Co-ordinating Committee calls on all British socialists and trade unionists to show their solidarity with the agricultural workers of Portugal by sending letters of protest to the Portuguese Embassy, 11 Belgrave Square, London SW1 and by joining a picket of Eanes at the Embassy, Thursday 16 November at 7pm. The main demands of the picket are:

- * Defend agrarian reform in Portugal!
- * Republican Guard out of the Alentejo!

We jog Sir Harold's memory

The strange case of the missing minute



LABOUR came to power in 1974 pledged to 'open government'. In the week that Brian Sedgemore got the boot and the ABC trial ended that looks like a sick joke.

But is open government ever possible under capitalism? Not on recent evidence.

RICHARD CARVER looks at two more political scandals which continue to bubble, respectively dubbed 'Oilgate' and 'Muldergate'.

OILGATE moved slightly closer to its denouement last week with the polite but pointed exchanges between former Labour ministers on who knew what about oil supplies to the Smith regime in Rhodesia.

Like Watergate itself, there is no longer any dispute that the crime took place. The 450-odd pages of the Bingham report, commissioned by the Foreign Secretary, have revealed the 'swap' arrangement whereby the major oil companies — primarily government-owned British Petroleum — used South African and Mozambican intermediaries to get oil through to the 'illegal' regime.

Ex-Prime Minister Harold Wilson repeated his ignorance of all sanctions-busting — a protestation which would carry more weight if he had made it in the slightly less rarefied atmosphere of the Labour Party conference.

But even this apparently bland statement came under attack from two people in a position to know: Michael Stewart and George Thomson, Foreign and Commonwealth Secretaries respectively in Wilson administrations of the 1960s.

One of the points of dispute concerned the minute of a meeting between Thomson and oil company executives in February 1968. At the meeting Thomson was told of the possibility of the 'swap' agreement (though not that such an agreement was already in effect).

Wilson claims that he never saw the minute because nobody noticed its importance.

Unfortunately for him a Foreign Office memo on the meeting (as well as accounts by other participants) is included in the Bingham report.

Wilson claimed in the Commons that: 'I do not believe that Lord Thomson when he heard what was said realised the implications.'

But this is how the FO memo records Thomson's introduction to the discussion:

'The Secretary of State emphasized the great political importance which HMG attached to being able to say that British oil companies were not party to the leakage of oil to Rhodesia through Lourenco Marques. The Mozambique leak was the subject of particular attacks at present. He was under no illusions about our capacity to stop the leak, but it was essential that we should be

able to refute the allegations being circulated about British involvement in this trade.'

Readers can draw their own conclusions about how important Thomson thought the issue was; how serious an operation it was to tell the world that Britain was not involved in this trade at the same time as admitting that it would continue; and whether Thomson would be able to make such decisions without consulting Wilson who, after all, conducted a highly personalised method of government.

But there is further significance to the meeting, since the oil bosses then recounted in outline the 'swap' arrangement.

They wheeled out their standard excuse for why oil supplies had to continue:

'The Shell-BP Company in the Transvaal was a South African company, with a South African manager, operating under South African law; this both obliged them to sell to any South African buyers without conditions regarding what he would do with it, and also meant that they could be compelled to fulfil contracts entered into... The South African clients would therefore continue to be able to divert oil to Rhodesia before it reached the Transvaal.'

The excuse looks less impressive when one remembers that the refinery providing BP's Rhodesian requirements was not opened until 1971 — six years after UDI and three years after this meeting with

Thomson.

It is also worth bearing in mind that the oil companies are able to break these 'binding' agreements when it suits them.

It was only in September this year that BP eventually stopped the swap arrangement for Rhodesian oil. The occasion: the publication of the Bingham report!

Sir Harold usually has an impeccable memory, so it is strange that he should not remember what the Foreign Office had to say about how his government should handle questions on whether oil was continuing to reach Ian Smith.

'In discussion it was agreed that in any statements in the House of Commons or elsewhere, Ministers would be stating the position with complete accuracy if they used a formula along these lines: "No British company is supplying POL [petrol, oil or lubricants] to Rhodesia". If asked whether POL consigned to the Transvaal by the British companies was being diverted to Rhodesia, Ministers could truthfully say something along the following lines: "We have of course looked into this possibility. We are satisfied that this is not happening".'

Wilson tells us at every opportunity about the conspiracy to undermine his authority. According to his Commons statement, part of this plot was the multinational oil companies, who told Smith before UDI that they would get oil through to him if sanctions were imposed.

Yet Wilson is less forth-

coming on the visit of a senior Foreign Office official to Smith shortly before UDI. It is widely believed that the aim of the meeting was to reassure the Rhodesian leader that Britain would not use troops against him in the event of UDI.

The crucial factor for Smith in 1965 — and for the continuation of his regime ever since — was less the knowledge that the multinationals would continue to supply him, which can hardly have been in doubt, than the fact that the British government would take a similar attitude.

Indeed there is even a reassuring continuity of personnel between the state and the oil companies. Lord Greenhill, who became head of the Foreign Office under the Wilson government in 1969, is a case in point.

From a senior formulator of Britain's foreign policy he moved, after his retirement in 1973, to become one of the government-appointed directors of BP.

And when the present government wanted top level talks with Ian Smith in 1976, whom did they call on but Greenhill? Inexplicably the Bingham team did not interview him.

The good lord has chosen the furore around sanctions busting as the moment for his retirement. Perhaps he has decided that when the soup hits the ceiling Greenhill should be far away.

S Africa action planned

AN important step towards building solidarity with the peoples of southern Africa was taken by a conference in Manchester last Saturday. JOHN HUNT reports.

The conference, entitled Connections — Britain and southern Africa, was organised by Manchester Anti-Apartheid Movement and sponsored by the North West TUC.

It decided to launch a campaign of education and action in the trade union movement in the area, to be organised by an open Anti-Apartheid Trade Union Liaison Committee. This will organise a speaking tour of plants and labour movement bodies and seek sponsorship from the NWTUC.

The tour will aim to encourage trade unionists to investigate their employers' links with southern Africa and take action to publicise these links and eventually organise boycotts.

Many worthwhile ideas were presented to the conference. Women's movement activists hope to develop a women's resources centre on southern Africa.

It was suggested that local action should be taken to build a labour movement inquiry into sanctions busting.

An issue which provoked particular debate was possible British intervention in Zimbabwe. International Marxist Group delegates argued that any attempt to send in British troops would aim to neo-colonise Zimbabwe and should be opposed.

Other speakers said that we should not oppose such an intervention if it took place on the invitation of the Patriotic Front.

The conference was a considerable success and shows what can be achieved by an open AAM conference which concentrates on planning action. It is an example which should be followed in other areas.

Africa in Struggle

*The new issue of 'Africa in Struggle', out now, features an interview with a South African revolutionary, the declaration of the 1977 All-Nigeria Socialists Conference.

Single copies are 30p, plus p&p from 328 Upper St, London N1. Individual subscriptions for three issues are £1.30 (inland), £2.00 (overseas surface) or £3.00 (overseas airmail).

Scandal rocks the Bothas

PERCY QOBOZA, editor of the 'Transvaal Post', summed up the reaction of most black South Africans to the current government scandal: 'Dr Mulder's resignation leaves me cold', he said — a reference to the Justice Minister's response to the murder of Steve Biko.

Nevertheless, the story is an eye-opener. A judicial inquiry has revealed that nearly £7m of state funds had gone to finance an apparently independent pro-government newspaper.

The money was laundered through a Swiss bank account in contravention of exchange control legislation.

John Vorster, then Prime Minister and now President, and Hendrick Van Den Bergh, then head of the secret police, both approved the arrangement.

The former Minister of Information, Connie Mulder, and former head of the Department of Information, Eschel Roodie, were involved in the project. Both have resigned in the course of the scandal.

CLAMPDOWN

But the conspiracy was uncovered in the course of a judicial investigation of lesser misappropriations of funds in the Information Department.

But Prime Minister Pieter Botha stepped in to stop the inquiry and replace it with two new committees meeting in strict secrecy.

The clampdown means that the scandal can be stopped from spreading. Those sections of the Nationalist establishment not yet contaminated will probably stay clean for the time being.

But the damage has been done. When an Afrikaner judge denounces Cabinet ministers and the State President it is difficult to brush the affair off as a communist plot.

But it is tempting to feel that Mulder's sin was less that he plotted than that he was caught. Although many government supporters may have scruples about the methods used, scruples don't count for much in ruling class politics and the stability of the governing apparatus is likely to be seen as the greater priority.

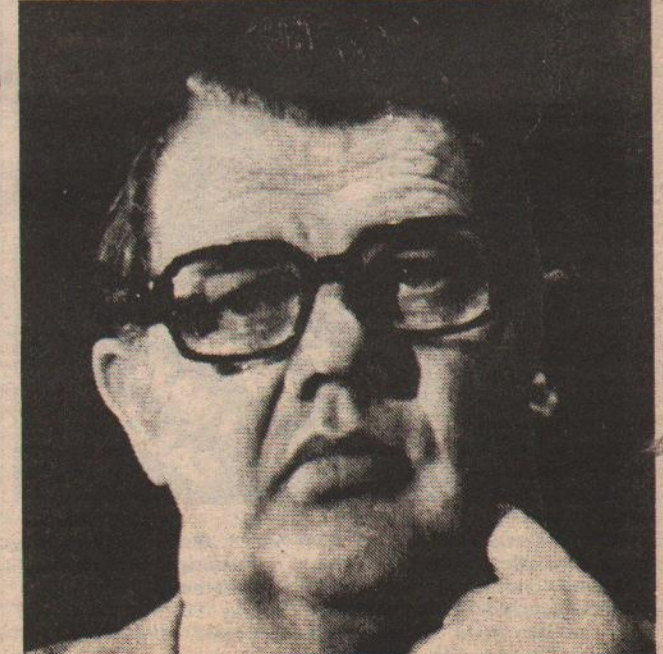
The English-speaking opposition and their multinational backers are also dependent on the stability of the state, so they too are likely to opt for the quiet life rather than press home a temporary political advantage.

The only people who can be relied upon to oppose consistently the apartheid regime are the black masses themselves.

Things like election results mean little to the blacks, who are of course not allowed to participate in them. So most watch with studied disinterest the regular battle between the Nationalists and the various opposition groups.

They note, for example, that these white oppositionists often don't even support universal suffrage and that their main backer is Harry Oppenheimer of the Anglo-American Corporation in whose gold and diamond mines hundreds of thousands of blacks sweat out their days and nights.

In these circumstances such indifference is not surprising.



MULDER: his sin was to get caught.

Can only Trotskyists be revolutionaries?

RECENT ARTICLES and letters have discussed how the classical Marxism of Lenin and Trotsky relates to the question of revolutionary strategy today.

JOHN ROSS continues this discussion by looking at whether Trotskyists consider that currents other than their own can be revolutionary.

The question of whether non-Trotskyist, or even non-Leninist, political forces could genuinely be considered revolutionary was one which Trotsky had to deal with several times in his life.

It was particularly important at the time of the founding of the Communist International in 1919-20 and in Trotsky's struggle to create the Fourth International in the 1930s.

It also has a major organisational and political conclusion. Can only Trotskyists be members of a revolutionary organisation, or can there be other genuinely revolutionary forces with whom Trotskyists should seek to unite in a common organisation?

Trotsky himself was quite clear about this, writing: 'The Fourth International will not be composed only of Bolshevik-Leninists [as the Trotskyists then called themselves].'

As he explained: 'The Bolshevik-Leninists consider themselves a faction of the International which is being built. They are completely ready to work hand in hand with other truly revolutionary factions.'

TRENDS

Trotsky knew not merely from theory but from the experience of the Bolsheviks and the Communist International that any serious revolutionary party will inevitably have different ideological and political currents and trends within it.

On an international scale, Bolshevism was the most consistently revolutionary trend in the workers movement. But that did not mean that there weren't other authentically revolutionary currents which on some questions had a more correct

position than Lenin.

For example, Rosa Luxemburg was not a Leninist but a 'Luxemburgist'. However, she was still one of the greatest of all leaders of the working class and actually right as compared to Lenin on certain questions.

As Trotsky wrote: 'If one were to take the disagreements between Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg in their entirety, then historical correctness is unconditionally on Lenin's side. But this does not exclude the fact that on certain questions and during definite periods Rosa Luxemburg was correct as against Lenin.'

NONSENSE

When Stalin attempted to use Luxemburg's mistakes to claim that she was not a revolutionary because she hadn't been a Leninist, Trotsky denounced this as nonsense: 'This great revolutionist is enrolled by Stalin into the camp of centrism.'

He explained that while Luxemburg was obviously not a Leninist, 'The disagreements [between Luxemburg and Lenin], despite their importance and at times their extreme sharpness, developed on the basis of revolutionary proletarian policies common to them both.'

Even after the degeneration of the Communist International, Trotsky held to this position. He noted, for instance: 'The so-called left faction of the Italian Communists (Prometo group of Bordigists) has its own traditions which are sharply distinguished from the traditions of the Bolshevik-Leninists.'

But although they were clearly Bordigists, and not Trotskyists, he stated that on the basis of the positions they held at that time, 'the Bordigists represent a serious revolutionary



Trotsky and Natalia Sedova in exile in 1932.

group' (Writings 1932-3, p.27).

As with most currents in the unfavourable conditions of the 1930s, the Bordigists were to move away from revolutionary positions. Nevertheless, this example clearly shows that Trotsky did not consider that only Trotskyists could be revolutionaries.

In the period of upswing of the world revolution, Trotsky's prediction about non-Trotskyist revolutionary currents has been borne out entirely. One famous case was Malcolm X. He was not by any stretch of the imagination a Trotskyist, but he was a great authentically revolutionary leader.

What Trotsky was not prepared to accept was that particular currents and

organisations were revolutionary merely because they claimed to be so.

Currents that existed at the time Trotsky wrote — the Independent Labour Party, the POUM in Spain, the London Bureau — might well claim to be revolutionary, but in reality they supported collaboration with bourgeois parties in Popular Fronts, refused to come out against Stalinist repression in the Soviet Union, capitulated before imperialist wars, and displayed the real characteristics of centrists — vacillating in the material clashes of class forces between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and its agents.

It was this situation, and this alone, which led Trotsky to state of the initial forces of the Fourth International:

'Outside of these cadres there does not exist a single revolutionary current on this planet really meriting the name.'

This was not a statement that no other forces could be revolutionary, but merely a correct statement of fact — that at that particular time no other such currents existed. Trotsky's position on the basic question was still that 'the Fourth International will not be composed only of Bolshevik-Leninists'.

That is why the Trotskyists of the International Marxist Group are, like Trotsky, 'completely ready to work hand in hand with other truly revolutionary factions' who are not themselves Trotskyists.

James P. Cannon

'Orthodox Trotskyists might be a minority'

Trotsky's position, and the prior experience of Bolshevism and Marxism, was summed up by the American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon in discussing the Marxist attitude to splits and fusions:

We should draw on all the experiences of the past, not simply the experiences of yesterday or the day before.

The idea of a monolithic International and monolithic national parties cannot draw any support from these experiences. The history of Bolshevism, from its beginning up until the October Revolution, was a history not only of splits but also of unifications and attempted unifications with the Mensheviks.

UNIFICATION

It was not until 1912 that the Bolsheviks formally constituted themselves as an independent party and no longer as a faction of the Russian Social-Democracy. And after that, it shouldn't be forgotten — because the fate of the revolution depended on it — the Bolsheviks made a unification with Trotsky and his group after the March Revolution, and also kept the door open for any signs of a revolutionary turn on the part of the left Mensheviks.

The Communist International was not built into a mass movement in its

early days simply by proclaiming the need for new parties in each country. There was a rather prolonged process of unifications and splits in the different countries before the national sections of the Comintern were firmly established.

SYNDICALISTS

The Communist Party of Germany originated with the Spartacus group of Liebknecht and Luxemburg. But this was followed two years later by a unification with the left wing of the Independent Socialist Party which gave the Communist Party of Germany for the first time a mass base.

In England, the Communist Party was established through a fusion of a number of sectarian groups, none of which had been Bolsheviks originally. In France and Italy the syndicalists were invited. In the United States, the Comintern invited the Socialist Labour Party, the IWW and the left wing of the Socialist Party to participate in the Second Congress of the Comintern...

Trotsky's method in creating the first cadres of the international Left Opposition, after his deportation to Turkey in 1929, was to draw clear lines of demarcation for the new movement; and then to build it, not only by splits, but also by unifications with other oppositional groups.



JAMES P. CANNON

And then, after the original cadres of international Trotskyism had been consolidated, Trotsky initiated a new series of discussions and negotiations with left-centrist elements in independent parties and others still remaining within the parties of the Second International.

Trotsky never envisaged the Fourth International as a monolithic, purely Trotskyist organisation, but as a broad revolutionary movement in which we, orthodox Trotskyists, might possibly, under certain conditions, and for certain periods, be a minority.

NOT MONOLITHIC

He stated this explicitly in one of his letters prior to the Founding Congress in 1938. He proposed that Chen Tu-hsiu, who at that time was in sharp conflict with our Chinese section over some important questions, should be invited to be a member of the International Executive Committee.

The internal regime of our international movement during the lifetime of Trotsky never tried to enforce monolithism...

The recognition of the Soviet Union as a workers state, and of the obligation to defend it against imperialist attack, was a central principle of our international movement all the time. This characterisation and this attitude was challenged time and again, year after year, and freely discussed without expulsions or threats of expulsion.

In the classic battle of 1939-40 with the Burnham-Shachtman faction, they were about as wrong as it was

possible for a faction to be in America under conditions of that time...

It was a red hot question for us at that time... because public opinion was being mobilised every day by all the imperialist agencies against the Soviet Union. It was particularly reprehensible for Shachtman to choose that period to wash his hands of it.

But despite this deep and terrible difference on such a burning question as one's attitude towards a revolution in existence, Trotsky did not advocate a split, not even if we should turn out to be a minority in the Convention struggle. The split followed only after the minority refused to accept the Convention decision.

This is still not the end of the story. Seven years later we conducted serious negotiations for unity with the Shachtmanites, despite the fact that they had not changed their position on the Soviet Union in the meantime.

HARD TIME

Those who may be playing with the idea of a 'monolithic' party and a monolithic International will have a hard time finding any support for it in the teachings and practice of the Old Man [Trotsky].

(Letter from Cannon to the Political Committee of the SWP, 22 May 1961, in Trotskyism versus Revisionism, ed. Cliff Slaughter, p.78-81)

'Revolution'

I AM not entirely happy about the way in which the first issue of *Revolution* was sprung on all outside the IMG. Nevertheless, it could be important in building a united revolutionary youth organisation. The open letter from the IMG printed in *Socialist Challenge* (12 October) was, however, marred by several serious flaws: it failed to explain the most important reason for independence, and a large part of it was not about youth but about organisational left unity — which, although connected, is not directly relevant.

The importance of independence is made clear on the back page of *Revolution* 1. It says: 'We think that we can teach many of these "parties" a thing or two about how they should fight for real freedom.' I was very pleased to read this, indeed this is a lesson that has been learnt from the autonomous women's movement, which has taught the whole of the left what women's oppression is.

However, the letter gives a less important reason as the only argument: an independent organisation is 'the best way to fight for the youth to grasp revolutionary Marxism'; and again, it is 'the most practical way to convince thousands of revolutionary-minded youth of the necessity of joining a revolutionary party'.

The letter also endangers the building of an independent youth organisation by confusing it with another issue, that of 'the unity of revolutionaries into a single organisation'. I am not opposed to either objective, but surely we should be supporting the unity of youth regardless of whether they are committed to the separate project of building a new organisation.

Lastly, your proposals for structures are well off the mark. Why should national organisations have representatives on the controlling body in a privileged position? If *Revolution* is to be truly independent, then surely it should be run entirely by its membership. That is not to say that some of these members will not also be members of national organisations, and they should have the same rights as any other *Revolution* supporters.

GERRY ROBERTS (North London Big Flame)

Where's your internationalism?

THE 'internationalism' of the left — specifically of the IMG, the SWP and Big Flame — on the Iranian demonstration of 14 October was conspicuously absent. After all the excellent reporting and words of support on paper, the turnout was pathetic.

There is a strong feminist section in the Committee Against Repression in Iran; they deserve all the support they can get. No one from the women's movement came.

Why not? They need support now more than ever.

MARGE BERER (London W2)

Panoramic twaddle

I REALLY must protest at the panoramic twaddle about Engels and social Darwinism, etc., that Tony Sharp has written (2 November).

Firstly, only someone who hasn't read any Kautsky would claim that the revisionists of the Second International took over the philosophy of dialectical materialism 'without question'. The illusion can be easily corrected by studying, funnily enough, *The Dialectics of Nature*.

Engel's purpose in writing the book was to attack the static conception of nature which had dominated science up to that time. He wanted to emphasise that things change, that the world is dynamic, and further, that people can change things.

Engels knew very well that, left to its own devices, capitalism would crush the working class down and down. Put that recognition back into a study of *The Dialectics of Nature* and it is impossible to blame the reformism of the Second International on Engels.

Secondly, the reformism which allows so-called socialists to sit and wait for socialism is not simply an acceptance of the inevitability of the collapse of capitalism — it is also the belief that the only outcome is socialism. And this is a revision of Marxism. And as for Engels, he said: 'On the one hand...the capitalist mode of production stands convicted of its own incapacity to further direct these productive forces. On the other, these productive forces themselves, with increasing energy, press forward to the removal of the existing contradiction, to the abolition of their quality as capital, to the practical recognition of their character as social productive forces.'

And there you have it: what is inevitable under capitalism is not socialism eventually but class struggle now. Both Marx and Engels had no doubt on that score.

Lastly, a word of advice from Engels for all readers: 'To make a science of Socialism, it had first to be placed upon a real basis.'

BOB LLOYD (Oxford)

Idealist view

WE would contend with Tony Sharp's theses on Marxism (2 November). We think that by separating humanity as a social being from the natural universe of which it is an outgrowth, Sharp arrives at an idealist view of history.

For example: since when did materialists view great historical events like the 1914-18 war as stemming from problems in the history of ideas? Yet Sharp tells us that Engels' 'determinism' was responsible for this.

The German SPD's capitulation to social chauvinism was a product of reversible material processes at work in German society at the time, not because of what Engels wrote in *Anti-Duhring* (1878). In fact Engels argued against those (Duhring,

Bernstein) who naively attempted to transpose the principles of natural science to social practice and political strategy.

In opposing the fatalism of Second International Marxism, Sharp falls into utopianism leading him to base 'science' upon pure activity. What basis for science is this? Such an attitude on the part of the Spartacusbund — committing the opposite error to the SPD majority's determinism — prevented any effective challenge to Kautsky et al.

Similarly, on the question of Soviet industrialisation, Sharp tries to deduce Stalinist terror from Trotsky in the 1930s, focussed their attention upon the conceptions of dialectical materialism held by the Soviet leaders, rather than developing a concrete analysis of the new Soviet social formation and an appropriate political strategy.

As Marx/Engels said: 'History... can be divided into the history of nature and the history of mankind. However, the two sides are not to be divided off. As long as men exist the history of nature and the history of men are mutually conditioned.' (*The German Ideology*)

Hence politics cannot be reduced to pure and unconditioned practice by individuals. Such anthropocentrism is clearly quite inadequate to the modern technological age of nuclear weapons and vast superpowers. The ideas of the Enlightenment no longer suffice in the era of advanced capitalism.

JOHN MUNSON, STEVE SMITH, RASPALSINGH (Hull)

'Doing it now'

WHILE leaving it up to readers to decide for themselves about Tony Sharp's complete misreading (2 November) of my letter (5 October), I'd still like to deal with some entirely new points which he raises.

According to Sharp, Lenin was a social Darwinist and belonged to a 'materialist' lineage which included Kautsky, Bernstein and Stalin. If this was so why, for instance, did Lenin spend several pamphlets exposing the links between Kautsky's reformist politics and vulgar materialism/economic determinism?

Sharp doesn't bother with this question, probably because he considers it too theoretical and diversionary. He has all the answers anyway — or at least the solution. It's called 'revolutionary practice' and doing it 'now'. Maybe Jerry Rubin will help out.

However, a necessary part of revolutionary practice is knowing how capitalism objectively works. It is useless talking about the revolutionary subject if no account is taken of the objective processes of history. Such an account can never be absolutely 'correct' but it is nevertheless an essential in the theoretical armoury of any revolutionary organisation.

Sharp dismisses any lessons which might be learnt from the practical use to which scientific socialism has been put in the past by revolutionary parties. As far as he is concerned, history can never be discussed with any objectivity and amounts to no more than an indistinct mistake. Thus he

equates October 1917 and Leninism with the '30s purges and Stalinism!

Sharp, too, has his lineage and no one has traced it better than the Italian Marxist Sebastiano Timpanaro who, in *On Materialism*, finds some of the origins of left idealism in the shift from positivism to idealism in late 19th century bourgeois ideology. Thus he writes:

'The most conspicuous characteristic of the shift at the end of the last century is an increasingly radical anti-objectivism. Generally, its points of departure are real and serious problems in the epistemology of the sciences, related to the need for a re-examination of the very foundations of scientific knowledge.'

'But this epistemological crisis is quickly used in order to reassert an absolute, mythological creativity and freedom belonging to man (sic!), and in order to be able to disregard both the real conditioning to which man is subject and the way to overcome it. It then becomes possible to proclaim a completely rhetorical and mystifying subjectivism-voluntarism.'

PAUL TICKELL (London SW9)

Need for education

IF IT is a Marxist principle to 'educate the masses to the level of revolutionary consciousness', then I feel that the International Marxist Group is sadly lacking in its approach.

No-one in the movement takes the time to explain political positions to outsiders; it is assumed that by talking to members you are already sympathetic. If you pluck up courage and ask, you run the risk of being put down in such a patronising way that you are made to feel a fool for not having educated yourself already.

Couldn't *Socialist Challenge* also explain positions far more fully, rather than expecting natural agreement and understanding among its readership?

Perhaps I could now describe myself as a revolutionary socialist. But I feel this is more due to my own perseverance. How many supporters have you lost along the way? You are seriously lacking in your capacity to educate and therefore build.

IGREENBAUM (Manchester)

*We will be starting a regular series of one-page educational articles later this month.

Understanding culture

GEOFFREY Sheridan, in criticising *Wedge* (26 October), sees the world parcelled up into neat little packages of politics, culture, etc., where everyone should be content to work away at their own little patch and not interfere in what he sees as exclusively the arena of 'politics'.

Socialist Challenge, along with the rest of the left press, illustrates this method of approach both by ghettoising 'culture' to a separate page of the paper and also by its narrow concept of what 'culture' is.

Michael Stewart's letter to *Wedge* 3 (which the collective recommends

should be read as a second editorial) makes a very valid point: 'So culture is the way we categorise the world, the meanings we see around us. Clearly these are fantastically important, as it is on the basis of our ideas, values, etc., and them alone that we decide to act in any situation.'

The article by David Lusted, 'The Dobson Affair': How the media constructed history... shows how the media was able to utilise existing consciousness to defuse the political issues to one of 'son betrays his father'. Lusted poses a very pertinent question when he asks how many people outside the left remember the 'Dobson Affair' and what they remember it for!

There is a need to develop our theoretical understanding of 'culture' which goes beyond the immediate campaigns of the left. *Wedge*, I believe, has made an important beginning.

DEREK BROUGH (London NW6)

Umbrella of repression

I WAS recently shown an article on so-called 'repression' in Bulgaria written by Richard Carver (12 October). As an active trade unionist and frequent visitor to that country through the Anglo-Bulgarian Trade Union Association, I must protest most strongly against the smears and innuendos it contained.

One does not expect so-called 'socialist' publications to indulge in the hysterical outbursts of the kind recently seen in the capitalist press over incidents, entirely unproven, alleged to have been the work of Bulgarian nationals. No evidence has been forthcoming to substantiate such allegations or the innuendo contained in your first paragraph on Markov.

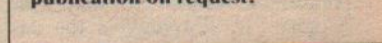
The article gives not a shred of evidence to support the statement about 'the thousands in Bulgaria's political prisons', relying instead on an Amnesty report which 'can hardly even guess at the internal repression', etc., and a pamphlet 'which suggests that Bulgaria...', etc. 'Guesses' and 'suggestions' are hardly the currency of serious people committed to the building of socialism, whether here or in Eastern European countries like Bulgaria.

While it would be foolish to deny the real problems which exist, especially given the backward historical developments until recently in many of these countries, I feel your readers will gain little insight into the nature of such problems through such irresponsible articles written by those whose aims seem closely allied with the apologists in the capitalist press.

N.M. LEES (London SW19)



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.



#23 CORMAC:-

Socialist Challenge

Joint IMG/SWP appeal

ALL OUT FOR IRISH PRISONERS, 26 NOV

THE STRUGGLE in Ireland continues.

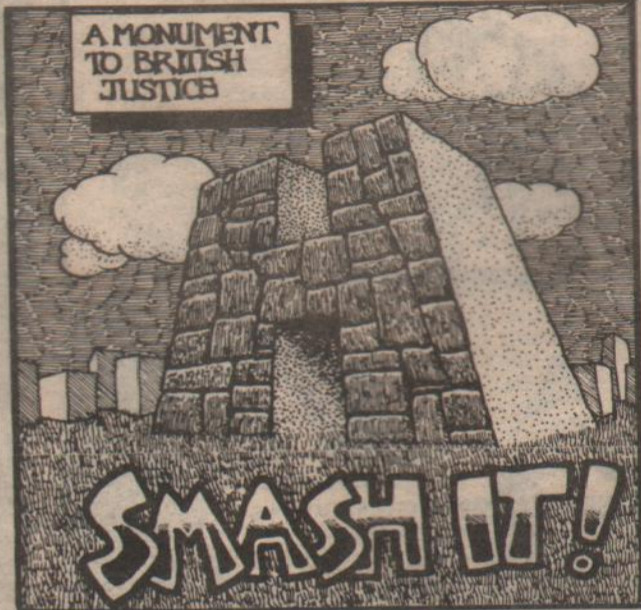
It will go on until the liberation of that country from British rule is achieved, and despite some important defeats inflicted on the anti-imperialist movement over the last ten years we are reminded regularly that its victories have counted for more in the long run.

Once again the Irish people through a variety of forms are fighting back with effect.

This can be measured in the size of the recent demonstrations organised by the Relatives Action Committees and Sinn Fein, or by the fact that the collaborators of the SDLP have once again been forced to talk about the withdrawal of British troops, or even by editorials in the British bourgeois press which seem to despair of imperialism's future in Ireland.

But if there is room for confidence, there is none for complacency.

With every victory won by



the Irish Republican and socialist forces in Ireland, the stakes are raised and the British state increases its determination that the Irish people shall win no more

concessions.

The resources that it throws against the Irish people are massive, and its ability to use them derives from the lack of a powerful movement in Britain

acting on the side of Irish freedom.

At the moment the Labour Government is concentrating those resources to try to crush the campaign for prisoner of war status being waged by the heroic young women and men incarcerated in imperialist jails in Ireland and England, and by the masses from the oppressed Catholic ghettos of the Six Counties of Occupied Ireland.

IT IS AN IMMEDIATE AND URGENT REVOLUTIONARY RESPONSIBILITY THAT THE DEFENCE OF THESE PRISONERS AND THEIR DEMANDS IS TAKEN UP IN BRITAIN.

This is important not only for the sakes of the young men in the hell-holes of H-Block — that surely is by now self-evident — but for the future course of the Irish revolution itself.

We the undersigned, on behalf of the International Marxist Group and the

TRADE UNION CONFERENCE ON ABORTION

Will you be represented?

Saturday 25 November

Caxton Hall, London SW1

Organised by National Abortion Campaign and Labour Abortion Rights Campaign

Delegate forms from NAC Office, 374 Grays Inn Rd., London WC1 (tel. 01-278 0153)

can be built on that day, and that such unity in action on this question of questions for British socialists would prove a very important step in building a mass movement of British workers and their allies for 'Troops Out Now'.

Alternatively, the important differences which divide us on other issues could be allowed to be a barrier to a united mobilisation on 26 November.

Leave aside the fact that no credit would be gained for the Irish solidarity movement by such criminal behaviour, those who stand to suffer most are not ourselves but the freedom-fighters inside and outside the jails in the Six Counties.

We can guarantee nothing as to the future of the POW status struggle, because we are not yet powerful enough, but whether it is defeated or ultimately victorious, we must not have failed to contribute everything we could to the fight against British imperialism in Ireland.

ALL OUT ON NOVEMBER 26!

Signed: Aileen O'Callaghan [for IMG Central Committee]

Jerry Fitzpatrick [for SWP Irish sub-committee]

* The PAC demo assembles at 2.30pm at Speakers Corner to march to Clerkenwell Green.

Socialist Challenge NATIONAL SALES DAY Saturday 18 November

All supporters are asked to make a special effort to help get the paper better known — see SC Events for sales details or contact your local group organiser.

And don't forget the subs drive!

Special offer:

*£2 for three months

*£5 for six months plus free 1979 diary (choice of Big Red Diary/Pan-Africa Diary)

MAKE EVERY CASUAL READER A REGULAR READER!

OUR FUND DRIVE

OUR Fund Drive is suffering. We are about £200 behind what we had achieved this time last quarter — and that was when many readers were on holiday.

This week's total was under the £100 mark. The £99.40 that came in makes a cumulative total of £823.93. So Begin's head does not roll into the basket to join Videla's

Many thanks to the Haringey Socialist Challenge supporters for a further £20 — bringing their contribution to £100 this quarter. This money was raised

through their efforts in providing food at the Marxist Symposium.

Unfortunately not many other Socialist Challenge groups have equalled these efforts. A mere seven groups have sent donations to the paper's fund drive this quarter.

If every group pledged a fiver a month to the fund drive, we'd make our target easily.

Thanks to the fact that we made last quarter's target, we will be moving to our new addressograph system for the

ABC Verdict

THE VERDICT of the Old Bailey jury that heard the ABC Official Secrets case wasn't known as went to press. But we do know that the judge has singled out ex-soldier John Berry.

Justice Mars-Jones directed that Berry be found guilty of 'obtaining information owing to his office'.

Whatever the lawyers may make of such a direction, journalists will know that press

freedom is a nonsense when their sources risk conviction in the courts.

Aubrey, Berry, and Campbell have done as much to win freedom of information in this country as Callaghan's Government has done to keep it under lock and key. ABC and their defence campaign deserve the thanks of us all.

The trimming down of the original charges is already a victory. If A, B and C now stay out of jail that will be a considerable defeat for the Attorney General and his cohorts in official secrecy.

subscriptions in a fortnight's time.

Further improvements, however, depend on what is raised this quarter. So please rush your monies in this week.

You can help us just as much if you order lottery tickets, gift tokens for 6-month subscriptions (£5), or our T-shirts and hessian bags (see What's Left column for details).

Our thanks this week to:
Haringey SC Group £20.00
Anon 5.00
SK (in memory of N. Williamson) 40.00

B Holdsworth	.40
D Wood	1.00
P Scott	3.00
Ed Mahood	10.00
Leicester reader	20.00
TOTAL	£99.40

WHY NOT try your luck in our Xmas lottery?

For 10p per ticket or £1 for a book of tickets, plus sac, you can have a chance to win one of the following: a portable 12-inch black and white TV; a case of French wine; an autographed copy of Ernest Mandel's new book, The Second Slump; a record token; or a year's subscription to Socialist Challenge, International and Socialist Woman.

The draw will take place on 18 December in our offices, and the winning number will be printed in the issue of 4 January 1979. Organised by D. Weppler of 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XQ.

SORRY ABOUT THAT WE APOLOGISE to subscribers for the delay in mailing last week's issue.

Subscription issues are posted on Wednesdays, but this was delayed last week due to illness.



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