

# Socialist Challenge



## The wages battle... VICTORY CAN BE OURS!

On Monday, 20 November I offered my resignation as full-time union official for the National Union of Public Employees. You may have read of my resignation in the newspapers or heard about it on the radio and TV.

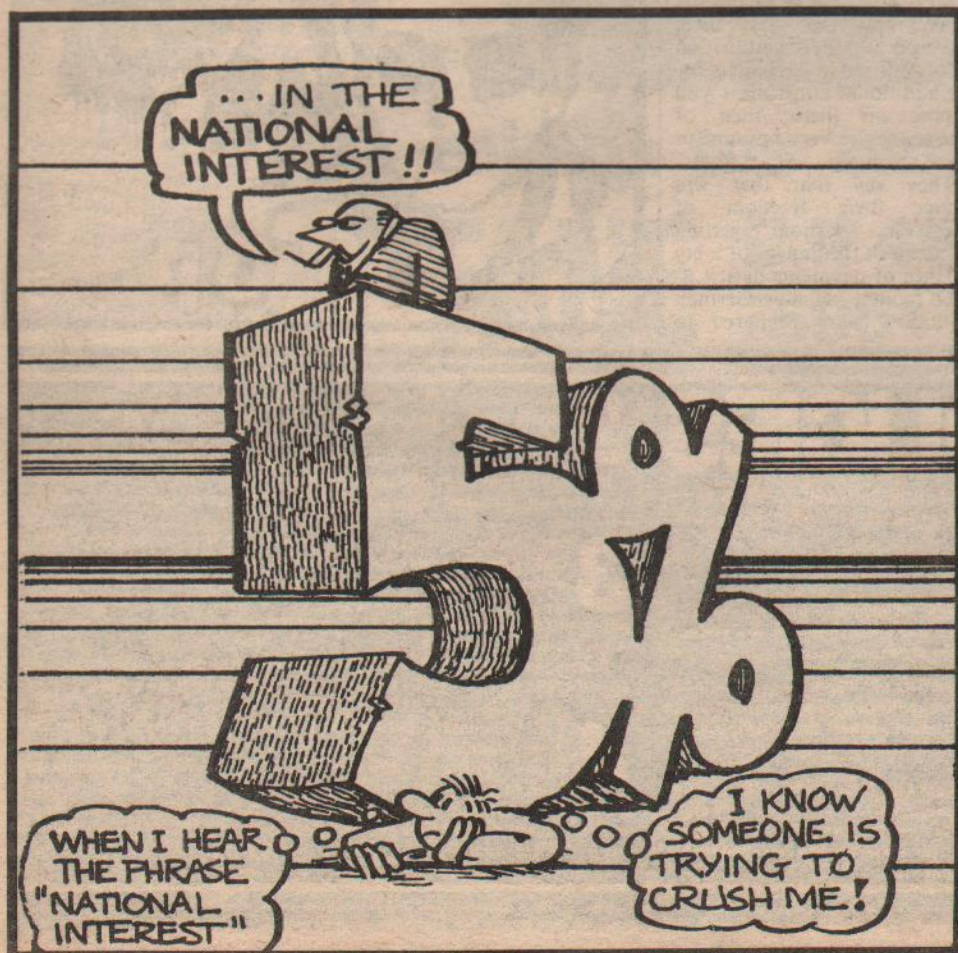
Although what prompted my resignation was the union's handling of a local dispute, the issues are, I believe, of national importance. Here is what happened. For four and a half years NUPE and the Transport and General Workers Union have been negotiating on behalf of ambulance workers in the West Midlands to obtain a financial settlement for a pay anomaly dating back before the re-organisation of the ambulance service in 1974.

**BY  
Chris Adamson,  
area officer,  
National Union of  
Public Employees.**

This betrayal by the NUPE bureaucracy is not an isolated incident. This week the leaders of the TUC plan once again to meet the Labour Government in an attempt to hammer out a deal over wage restraint. At the same time the leaders of the TUC are doing nothing to support the bakers' strike. But the bakers' strike is in accordance with the policy of the TUC and the Labour Party — for free collective bargaining and against the 5 per cent limit. It is they who represent the wishes of working people.

### UNIFICATION

Whether it be bakers, ambulance workers in the Midlands, or the Ford strikers, hundreds of thousands of trade unionists have shown their willingness to struggle for a decent wage. When the leaders of the unions are not prepared to back and organise that struggle, then they become an obstacle to it. They are not an irremovable obstacle. Action is the key. The TUC have been unable to come up with a deal so far because of the pressure from trade unionists up and down the country. After Ford's and for the bakers, let us keep up that pressure.



Management claims that it is prevented from sorting out this anomaly by government pay policy. A 'final offer' was made by management at the end of October. This 'offer' was even less than some that had been made previously. It was rejected out of hand by both the NUPE and TGWU membership, and sanctions were applied against management in pursuit of a just settlement. Escalation of this action led to a management decision to suspend all ambulance workers without pay from 17 November. In other words, a lock-out. Following this provocation the TGWU made the ambulance workers' dispute official. But after arguing for most of the day on Monday, I was informed by our divisional officer that NUPE would not give official support.

### PROTEST

I immediately offered my resignation as a full-time official. As I said in my letter of resignation: 'A truly democratic organisation reflecting the wishes of its 700,000 members could not have failed to support our membership. Failure to provide this backing reflected, I believe, a betrayal of the socialist and democratic principles which must be the fundamental basis of the labour movement.'

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Prisoners**

**Assemble 2.30pm  
Speakers Corner**

**Sunday  
26 November**

**March in UTOM contingent**

# EDITORIAL

Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.  
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## Labour and unemployment

THE Queen's Speech from the Labour government included special measures to deal with unemployment. Among them are the beefing up of state training and retraining schemes and measures to deal with short-time working.

The latter would entitle workers on short-time to a taxable 75 per cent of normal pay for each day lost up to a maximum of seven consecutive days. In what is termed 'normal' times, employers could claim back half of the cost of short-time working from a fund financed equally by an increase in their National Insurance contributions and by the Exchequer. This first 'tier' of the new scheme is not intended save any jobs. It is estimated that it will cost £230 million.

The second tier concerns what the Department of Employment calls periods of 'high unemployment' such as now. If employers can prove that they put workers on short-time as an alternative to making them redundant, then they can claim the rest of the cost back from the Exchequer. This will cost £260 million and the government hopes that it could keep up to 150,000 workers from joining the dole queues.

### ELECTION IN MIND

The scheme is clearly introduced with election year in mind. But it will win few votes, for whilst a few workers will be kept away from the dole queues—and this is not to be scoffed at—the scheme does nothing to confront structural mass unemployment, which is a permanent feature of British capitalism in crisis.

The scheme is strictly cosmetic and is in line with existing government policy. The underlying principle is collaboration with the employers to save jobs through a variety of government subsidies. By the end of the next financial year, the policy will have cost an estimated £1,000 million.

The government parades statistics claiming to show that, but for this policy, the number officially unemployed would be at least 172,000 higher than the present total of 1,430,000. However, the reality of government policy on unemployment is rather different.

Callaghan has indicated that any reduction in the working week must be 'self-financing' and be considered in the light of Phase 4. The government backed the Post Office when it refused to concede the demand of the Post Office Engineering Union for a 35-hour week.

### LEYLAND JOBS

In the car industry, Callaghan has given full backing to the plans of Michael Edwardes, who has already closed the Leyland plant at Speke in Merseyside. The Edwardes plan ultimately involves the shedding of some 30,000 jobs in Leyland—which, in turn, will mean hundreds of thousands of jobs threatened in related industries and areas. And just the mention of steel and railways reminds us that Leyland is no exception in the public sector.

Moreover, a central part of Phase 4 is for 'self-financing productivity deals'. Such deals can mean only one thing: further job loss. Industry Minister Varley's commitment to technological advance irrespective of whom it benefits can only worsen this situation.

With hundreds of thousands of unemployed building workers, the Labour Government refuses to launch a crash programme of house construction. With grossly inadequate health services, hundreds of hospitals are being closed and staff laid off. With oversized classes, schools are being closed whilst more than 50,000 teachers are unemployed.

### PLAN FOR FIGHTBACK

A trade union plan for a fightback is vital. This would not be based on collaboration with the employers through lavish subsidies. A firm declaring redundancies should not be given hand-outs but should be nationalised without compensation. By placing it under workers control, hours could be cut to save jobs. The Lucas plan has shown how socially useful products could take the place of wasteful production for profit.

The TUC voted overwhelmingly in September to include the demand for the 35-hour week in pay and hours negotiations. Implementation of this policy would be an excellent step in the right direction.

### VITAL TASK

The demand has been included in all the major claims this autumn: by Ford workers, engineers, public sector manual workers, and so on. But the Ford settlement agreed by the unions includes no reduction in hours. This kind of thing must not be allowed to happen any longer.

The fight for action on the 35-hour week—including the call for government action—is a vital task now for the left wing in the unions.

# THE FIRST WORD

## European Monetary System A stopgap solution in trouble

ERNEST MANDEL, the Marxist economist and leader of the Fourth International whose book 'The Second Slump' has just been published, explained in the first part of an interview last week why the dollar is in continual crisis.

This week he looks at the relationship between the crisis of the dollar and the German government's attempt to revitalise the European Monetary System and the currency 'snake'.

One way out of the complete collapse of the world credit system if the decline of the dollar continues would be to find a substitute reserve currency.

### SUBSTITUTE

Today not a single national currency can play that role. But a European-wide currency, given that the weight of all the European imperialisms in world trade today is much more significant than that of the United States, could perhaps substitute for the dollar for a certain period.

Of course, in the long run they would probably pay an identical price to that paid by the dollar. There would be continuous speculation with that currency, and again an intensification of inflation.

But as Lord Keynes said so correctly, in the long run they (not we) are all dead.

So there is a certain point for them in trying to find stopgap solutions which could last five, ten, fifteen years — one can't say exactly how long, because this depends essentially on the class struggle and not on what's happening in the economy looked at in isolation.

But there is a real difficulty in attaining a European currency. In reality, history has shown that you can't have a currency without a state.

### DISMAL

There have been attempts in the past. In the United States, in the 19th century, they tried to get currencies without a state — regional currencies, local currencies.

But generally such attempts have failed dismally, and it's hard to visualise the opposite procedure which the European

capitalists now want to follow: first have a currency in order to speed up the process towards a federal state in Europe.

In the best of cases, it wouldn't be a real currency; it would be a semi-currency, a pseudo-currency, a currency of account between the central banks, used just for covering foreign debts or deficits in mutual balances of payments and things of that sort.

So it would really be a very hybrid and transitory form of operation.

The other difficulty is that there are still very great differences between the main European imperialist countries as to their rate of inflation and rate of growth.

### 'SNAKE'

The Germans are in favour of an enlarged 'snake' arrangement, among other things, because they have the most stable economy and the most to lose by a collapse of world trade and a collapse of the European Common Market.

But on the other hand, the German bankers, and finance capital, are not ready to pay a very heavy price for that snake: they will only put a very small fraction of the German currency reserves into the common property of a European monetary authority.

So if you end up giving the weaker countries — France, and especially Italy and Britain — very little in exchange for the additional constraints you impose on them, then of course they're very hesitant to make the jump.

They say that that will reduce their freedom of operation, without getting them out of the danger of a big balance of payments deficit.

Of course, if the German capitalists were prepared to



ERNEST MANDEL

Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

say, 'we will put all our reserves in common', that would be a very big inducement to British capitalism because such a risk would be reduced.

But that's not what the Germans are saying at all. They are just promising small, marginal aid — loans, semi-loans — and under these

conditions the hesitations of the British and even the French capitalists are understandable.

So I think the project of German prime minister Helmut Schmidt is in trouble. In the best of cases it will only be partially realised, and there will be no substitute for the dollar in the immediate future under the given circumstances.

### Anniversary of the Fourth International

## RALLY

ERNEST MANDEL

will be one of the main platform speakers

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

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

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

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

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

Photo: ISLINGTON COMMUNITY PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT



# National Front French Connection

by RICHARD CARVER

THE National Front is a Nazi Front. What's more it is an international Nazi Front. And here is the photographic evidence.

The woman in each of the two illustrations on this page is the same person; we cannot be certain but it is probable that her charming male companion is also one and the same.

One picture is of a National Front paper sale in Chapel Market, Islington, North London.

The other is a poster produced by an international Nazi organisation, the Federation d'Action Nationale Européenne (FANE — Federation of European National Action).

The slogan at the top of the poster means: For National Socialism. National Socialism is Nazism.

## ARYANS

The exact way in which these Islington Aryans found their way onto a poster produced in France is anyone's guess. But the publication of this picture gives us a further indication of the sort of international company kept by Britain's fascists.

The French poster was photographed by the French Trotskyist paper *Rouge* alongside advertisements for last week's conference of the Front National (National Front).

One of the founders of the FANE, Hubert Kohler, became a Front National member in 1973.

The Front National is one of two major French fascist organisations (the other is the Parti des Forces Nouvelles). It is the more right-wing of the two and the one with which the British NF has historically been linked.

## UNIFORM

The acquaintance between the two organisations seems to have been forged through the annual neo-Nazi get together at Diksmuide, in Belgium — an unashamedly Hitlerian affair where the international storm-troopers will beer, march around in uniform and sing the Horst Wessel.

The political similarities between the British and French National Fronts are obvious.

Both blame their country's

## POUR LE SOCIALISME - NATIONAL



rejoins tes camarades!

**FANE B.P 48**  
**75961 Paris**

economic ills on an excess of black immigrants.

Both sponsor racist attacks, support white South Africa and hanker after the good old days of imperial splendour.

Both are utterly opposed to women's rights. The Front National recently branded France's moderately liberal abortion law as 'genocidal'.

The occasion for this last remark was the controversy over the publication of an interview with Darquier de Pellepoix, a former minister of the pro-Nazi Vichy regime.

De Pellepoix, now in exile in Spain, claims that the murder of six million Jews in Nazi Germany is a myth.

The Front National and its

leader Jean-Marie le Pen have been among his most enthusiastic defenders.

The FANE is thinking along the same lines. It has published a pamphlet entitled *Le Mensonge d'Auschwitz* (The Lie of Auschwitz).

## PHOTOGENIC

This is the latest in a line of works of profound historical scholarship which includes *Did Six Million Really Die?*, a nasty piece of pseudo-academia produced on the same press that was used to print the NF journal *Spearhead* in 1974.

The use of photogenic NF members on an international advert may signal a new phase in European co-operation.

The prospect of the European Community elections has thrown the far right into some confusion. The problem is that these groups want to work together internationally but fascism is by definition a national creed.

The 'Euroright', which groups the French PFN, the Spanish Fuerza Nueva and the Italian MSI, met in Marseilles last week to discuss a possible joint election slate.

At the same time the Front National congress was deciding that it could only have European co-operation 'based on national patriotisms'.

That seems like a doctrine which will find favour in the bunker at Great Eastern Street.

## Shah Benn

THE SCENE is a meeting at Birmingham University. The time: ten days ago. The main speaker is Tony Benn. Enter a group of Iranian students and supporters. Benn is heckled on Labour's policy on Iran. He is embarrassed. But when asked by local Socialist Challenge supporter Philip Hearse as to whether he supports Owen's statements, Benn answers 'Yes'.

At this stage there is uproar. Benn gets more and more heated. 'Yes', he shouts at one point, 'I am for the return of a Labour government.' 'So are we', shout the hecklers. 'But I am for the return of this Labour Cabinet', answers our Tony.

Ho, ho, very interesting. So our chauvinist 'lefty' star is prepared to argue against collective responsibility on the Common Market and the European Monetary System, but not on Iran.

Meanwhile Iranian students and other activists are encouraging supporters to give all Labour Ministers a warm reception wherever they go. Right on!

## Boom, boom!

THE IRISH writer Brendan Behan once observed that British democracy has a peculiar attitude to bombs — the bigger the bomb, the more respectable it is. Thus it's OK to drop an atom bomb on a Japanese town, but if you plant a five-pounder in a disused railway station you can expect to be locked up for 30 years.

A new twist to this rather odd set of values was displayed in Exeter Crown Court last week, when James Tierney was charged with possessing explosive substances. Police found three tins of sodium chlorate, a bottle of sulphuric acid, packets of sugar, batteries and flashbulbs hidden away in Tierney's flat. His diary contained the names of several Labour councillors and that of the local Labour agent.

He was found guilty. Then came the sentencing; to some surprise, Tierney was treated rather lightly and given only three years. The judge said that if he thought Tierney had intended to use the explosives against any of the names in his diary he would have received a heavier sentence. Tierney had claimed that the explosives were for Guy Fawkes day, which apparently the judge believed.

From the leniency of the sentence, readers will have gathered that, despite his name, Tierney was not a 'mad IRA bomber'. The names in the diary had all spoken out against the National Front, of which Tierney is an upstanding member.

## More power to our imagination

THE RALLY to mark the fortieth anniversary of the Fourth International will be held on Friday 24 November. The central speaker will be Ernest Mandel. We had hoped that the occasion could be made broader, and accordingly a letter was written to Tony Cliff suggesting a debate. But, as usual, not even a reply to the invitation was received.

So the rally will be used to have speakers from different parts of the world to talk about

the struggles which are going on.

Why is this item in Nfn? You may well ask. Reason: We thought it best to have a mention on several pages rather than a big splurge on one page. Imaginative? Not really, but an improvement. Cheers for now. See you on Friday, OK?

## To be continued

THE SAGA of the refusal of TASS, the Engineering Union's white-collar section, to back the Lucas Aerospace workers' plan is set to run and run.

Mike Cooley, a former president of TASS, has been threatened with the sack by Lucas because of his campaigning activities on the corporate plan. And the union executive — far from telling the company to get lost — is still wheeling and dealing.

The executive, dominated by the Broad Left, tells inquiring reporters that it supports Cooley in his official union role at the Lucas Aerospace plant in Willesden, NW London. Terrific; this was never in doubt.

Now the union has agreed to send along Chris Dark, the local full-time official, to see management.

The TASS office committee at Willesden has told him not to bother. The normal procedure is for disputes to be dealt with by the office committee, in the first instance, and the committee says the company will have to deal with them or no one at all.

The meeting is expected to be cancelled.

Chris Dark would have been a very dynamic representative. A few months ago he told the Wembley South branch of TASS: 'If Cooley is sacked for working on the plan, he will not be supported by the union.'

To be continued ...

## Strike of the Year

THE STAFF at the International Monetary Fund Offices in Washington, DC, have recently voted for a two-day strike. They were rejecting a 6 per cent increase in wages. The average wage of an IMF staff member is £20,000 a year tax free.

Our economic correspondent comments: 'This strike reveals the deep contradictions of capitalism affecting the very heart of capitalist institutions. As Ernest Mandel writes on page 1178 of *Late Capitalism*: "This is great"'

## Xmas issue

READERS are still invited to submit short stories for this year's competition. The winner will be printed in our Xmas issue dated 14 December unless none are judged to be of sufficient quality.

The judges will be Mervyn Jones, author of many novels and writer for the *New Statesman*; Emma Tennant, novelist and editor of *Bananas*; and Francis Mulhern, Marxist critic and member of the Socialist Challenge National Policy Committee.

The maximum length of stories should be 3,500 words, and the absolute deadline for arrival at our office is 29 November. Don't hold back, as we haven't received many entries yet.

## Journalists' claim

JOURNALISTS on provincial and local newspapers began a campaign of industrial action on Monday to fight low pay, writes SUE LANDAU, a member of the NUJ's North London branch.

The NUJ claim—£20 a week across the board—is to bring provincial journalists nearer to the national average wage.

Until last week the only offer from the Newspaper Society—the employers' association for the industry—was five per cent, a mere £2 to £3 a week before tax on senior reporters' pay of £60-70.

It works out even less for trainees, who start on £39. Then the bosses came out with a complicated formula for dishing out a nine per cent deal which gives the trainees the least.

The four-to-one vote for industrial action by NUJ members promises that provincial journalists are determined to pull themselves out of the low-paid bracket and confront the Government's five per cent.

## Gamers action

THE DAY of action in support of the long-running Gamers strike for union recognition is on Friday 8 December, not on the Saturday as previously reported.

Pickets of Gamers restaurants will run from noon to midnight and be co-ordinated from the Haymarket branch.

Trades council members should especially ensure that delegations come from their local affiliates as the day of action is jointly called by the Greater London Association of Trades Councils and the strike committee.

## Social Workers

SOCIAL WORKERS in over ten boroughs throughout the country are presently taking some form of industrial action over regrading claims, writes DAVE BURN of Islington NALGO.

This campaign followed a decision of the NALGO conference last year, which demanded that social workers come off the restrictive national gradings and negotiate directly with their local employers.

But the problems involved in the present campaign have been illustrated graphically in the Islington branch of NALGO during the past couple of weeks.

On 1 November, the branch in North London approached the union's centralised 'Strike Operations Committee'. We wanted official support for strike action which had been approved overwhelmingly by a ballot of the membership.

Unhappy with this request for endorsement, the 'Strike Operations Committee' said another ballot had to take place. When a second ballot produced the same result, the request for an immediate strike was again turned down.

This time branch members were told to wait until 1 December.

But when Islington social workers lobbied the NALGO headquarters last Thursday yet a further twist was added.

The lobbyists—who were taking unofficial strike action for the day—were told that before their strike date came up, the employers would come up with an acceptable offer.

Just what this offer will be and why it will be acceptable to social workers was not explained.

Attention now focuses on a conference of all strike committees due to be held next Monday. The demand for a rapid extension of strike action seems appropriate.

## Support the bakers!

# Bread barons start to sweat

THE BREAD BARONS are beginning to squeal. With the decision of the Bakers Union last weekend to organise pickets of the flour mills, two giant firms of the bread industry are now showing distinct signs of neurosis about their profits.

There is no doubting the militancy of the delegates from the Bakers Union who met at a national conference in Birmingham on Saturday.

## ACTION

The vote to continue the strike for a £10 a week increase received unanimous support.

The delegates called for flying pickets to stop the flour mills which are still supplying the two main companies the

strike is aimed at—Rank Hovis McDougall and Associated British Foods—as well as supplying the 'independent' companies which have stepped up their bread production.

The conference also voted to expel 2,000 members who refused to join the 20,000 on strike. Already 400 of those expelled have agreed to rejoin the union.

'Crumbling'—Fleet Street's



FRIENDS lend a hand on the picket line at Walthamstow.

favourite word for the strike—is a decidedly premature description.

While the big two have maintained some production, with managers and scab labour

at the ovens, they are anxious that their lucrative markets are shrinking.

The two companies lost 5 per cent of their market share as a result of the bread workers'

strike a year ago, and with the 'independents' stepping in once again, profits will take a battering.

In many areas bread is in very limited supply, and generally only white unsliced loaves are available. Such items as bread rolls and crumpets have virtually disappeared.

## SOLIDARITY

Solidarity with the strike is slowly building up. In Nottingham, for example, the trades council agreed last week to call for mass pickets of the Turners Sunblest bakery every Monday and Friday morning.

Production and delivery of 'scab' bread is still being undertaken by members of the white-collar union ASTMS and the Transport Union.

The call by TUC general secretary Len Murray for trade unionists to refuse to handle bread produced by companies which have offered a 5 per cent pay increase needs to be backed up with action from the union leaders.

This is not just a fight about pay. The Bakers Federation has made it plain that it's out to wreck the Bakers Union, and the bosses have torn up the closed shop union agreement to emphasise their point.

## SUPPORT

With the bosses, the police, and the press lined up against them, the bread workers will have the greatest difficulty winning on their own.

That's why support on the picket lines from every trades council and from union branches preparing to take on the Government's pay policy is vital.

If the bread strike is lost, the Labour leaders and the employers will be that much more confident about taking on all those workers who don't happen to have the industrial muscle of those at Ford.

Photo: MORNING STAR

Photo: JAMIE TAYLOR (Scram)



Protesters resist an excavator working on the Torness site of Britain's next nuclear power station. The demonstrators had

previously occupied the site, were removed last week, and have now returned to prevent work going ahead.

# Unexplained death in Leyland

CAR WORKERS at British Leyland's AEC plant in Southall, Middlesex, have been told their factory is to close in six months.

Lorry assembly and engine plant production will be transferred to other parts of BL.

ANDY LILLIE, an Engineering Union member at AEC, delves into the latest crisis for Leyland workers.

We've been told that the plant is not viable — although the Marathon lorry we produce is in demand.

We've been told that the plant has made a £1½ million loss so far this year — although BL plan to spend £31 million on a new assembly hall for trucks and lorries in Lancashire.

## HIDDEN

We've been told that we are to be offered substantial redundancy payments — although even this is conditional on accepting the 5 per cent offer and a 10 per cent productivity deal.

We've been told all this, but we have no way of knowing how much is being hidden from us.

One thing we do know is that unemployment is a growing problem in Southall. At 5.3 per

cent of the workforce it's the worst in outer London.

## DISAPPEAR

So if we do get the sack jobs will not be easy to find. We also know that we have seen a thousand jobs disappear at AEC over the past six years.

What adds to this crisis is that most of us who work on the shop floor are largely in the dark about what the union and its plant leadership are up to.

For instance in September, when BL announced its future plans, union officials announced they had an alternative plan. They even handed this plan to BL at a meeting in Preston.

## RUMOURS

It is rumoured that this plan could save AEC — but the

shopfloor has no way of checking on these rumours because we haven't seen the plan!

## INACTION

Whatever it says, at a mass meeting last Friday all discussion centred on the terms of the closure — almost accepting that closure was definite.

The only resolution was a call on the stewards to ascertain the full content of management's offer.

Because of such inaction, a fight-back to save the jobs will not be easy. But a fight-back is possible.

## ALTERNATIVE

It can start by demanding that all available information on AEC held by the management is handed over to the workers.

One thing we can be sure of — it is not the fault of those of us who work at AEC that the plant is in trouble.

Added to that, we need to link up with other workers at BL in other plants up and down the country to hammer

out a workers' alternative to Leyland's crisis.

In the meantime the fight for jobs at AEC can start immediately — by promising management that not one piece

of equipment will leave the plant until alternative work is guaranteed.

And by organising the workforce to ensure that such a promise is carried out.

# Drews Lane returns

THE DECISION by the Drews Lane plant of Leyland to return to work without a single concession from BL management will strengthen the company's determination to stand firm on its pay offer of 5 per cent with productivity strings attached, writes PAT HICKEY.

The mass meeting on Friday voted six to four to reject the shop stewards' recommendation to continue the strike.

It was Malcolm Jack, a member of the Communist Party and district committee delegate, who put the return to work resolution.

This allowed the company 'time to negotiate', and said that the position should be reconsidered on 1 December when other BL plants are meeting.

Jack argued for unity with other BL plants and played on the isolation of Drews Lane to win the vote. His efforts won him praise from the editorial columns of the ultra-right Birmingham Mail as 'the latest shop floor hero to stand out against the pressure of militants and call for moderation'.

The Drews Lane strike was mishandled from the beginning. The original strike decision was pushed through the mass meeting with no real effort to explain to the membership what the decision would mean.

\*BL workers at Cowley will be called back to work by the company as production at Drews Lane resumes. The Cowley workers voted at a mass meeting earlier this month to strike for their pay claim once normal production resumes.

# Ford deal — a militant advance to the rear'

'WE HAVE got to be realistic'. That's how Ron Todd explained the unions' acceptance of Ford's latest offer. It is claimed the offer will add £12 or 17 per cent to the average earnings of a production worker.

It has driven a massive hole in the pay policy, through which other sections of workers will try to pass.

The government has already agreed on sanctions against Ford. These, they hope, will act as a deterrent against other firms settling outside the pay code.

But Todd's claim for 'realism' has not met with complete approval from Ford workers. The union negotiators only voted 33 to 12 in favour of accepting the offer.

The powerful Dagenham shop stewards' committee which met on Tuesday morning endorsed the offer by the narrow margin of 97 votes for with 64 voting against and 4 abstentions.

Body plant steward Barry Graham told us: 'Todd's not realistic. It's not a clear 17 per cent rise.'

'Our claim was for £20 on

basic rates just to bring our living standards back to 1974. The company's offer is worth £6.63 on the basic rate of B grade workers — the majority of production workers at Ford.

## TREATS

'The company has made a great play in the press of supposedly dropping the attendance allowance in favour of what they call a supplementary payments allowance.'

'Words don't change things. The penalty clauses are still there in a watered down form. Particularly the threats to shop stewards organisation.'

'Every time stewards need to go to the membership over routine internal problems, such as health and safety, they will have to convince the workers that it is worth sacrificing 5 per cent of their weekly earnings for any action whatsoever.'

'Ron Todd said at our last mass meeting that Ford have never given us anything, we've always had to fight for it. Well this offer will make it more difficult to fight.'

'What's more the negotiators completely accepted the company's refusal to discuss the shorter working week.'

## CONFIDENCE

But TGWU official Mick Murphy won the day at the Dagenham stewards' meeting. He appealed to the stewards to have confidence in their negotiators and to maintain the unity that had been built up during the strike.

That meant unity behind the recommendations. As one steward said—parodying Murphy—'There's not going to be a retreat, there'll be a militant advance to the rear.'

Supporters of the left-wing Ford workers' group were intending to fight the recommendations at the mass meetings on Wednesday.

Press shop worker Rob McCrae said: 'It will be very difficult to fight. Workers are feeling real financial hardship and the union leaders are playing on this.'

'Mick Murphy said he was sure we could win more money out of the company if we were prepared to stay out until after Xmas.'

## STRONG

'But we are strong and the company is weak. This strike has cost them nearly £450m in lost production, but this offer is worth virtually no more than the offer that we rejected at the mass meetings a fortnight ago.'

'Moreover the company said that there will be no back dating. The offer will run from the day that we go back to work.'

'They've moved the settlement date from 21 October nearer to Xmas, hoping to weaken the possibility of strike action in the future.'

'This will bring Ford UK closer to the end of year settlement date in Germany, France and Spain. This is no accident.'

\*The Ford Workers Group — whose campaign during the strike has included producing bulletins, leaflets, badges, a record; organising support activities, and lobbying — is (here's the crunch) badly in need of funds.

The Group's activities have begun to win for it a real base among Ford workers, and it needs cash to help it continue. Donations to: FWG, 25 Dearmer House, London SW2.



Photo: BOB MURPHY (Socialist Challenge)

## 'We need democracy'

COLIN RYAN represents the majority of B-grade operators at Ford's Southampton plant.

Lobbying the talks at Ford's Bayswater House last Friday, he strongly criticised the union negotiators:

'They shouldn't be discussing the attendance allowance.'

'The only thing they should be discussing is the full claim decided on by the national stewards conference in Coventry.'

'The vote was taken at the Coventry conference that it should be recalled. That decision should be implemented.'

Fellow steward, CHUCK MARCZAK took up the theme that democratic control by the rank and file is vital.

'There should be regular forums where people could go and put their positions. Everyone had their opportunity to say their piece at the Southampton mass meeting.'

'If you had regular mass meetings, you wouldn't get these splinter groups fighting for secret ballots.'

'At the moment, workers are forced to get information from the press and TV. But the media's biased.'

'They shout about Bill Dodds and his return-to-work crowd, and try to get the wives against the strikers.'

'But if they understood the issues — through mass meetings — the wives wouldn't want them to go back to work.'



Photo: MORNING STAR

RON TODD [foreground] waves to Ford national convenors secretary Bernie Passingham outside Dagenham plant.

# Talking to Ford — behind closed doors

RON TODD's approach to the Ford Motor Company for renewed talks was shrouded in mystery.

It had been prompted, it was announced, by a new and important development which could not be announced to the press or the public.

This enigma was to serve a most useful function for Todd and Company. JONATHAN SILBERMAN explains.

The confusion it caused diverted attention from the fact that the last meeting of the union side of the National Negotiating Committee had decided not to approach the Company for further talks.

That meeting took place on the Monday, 8 November, following the rejection by mass meetings of Ford's so-called 'final offer'.

It decided that the unions were only prepared to discuss 'the claim we submitted on 21 August', as Todd put it. 'We are not going to discuss the ABC of the attendance allowance', said Reg Birch.

Within ten days, they were back negotiating.

Company spokesperson Reg Wheatly made it clear that the subject of the negotiations was precisely the ABC of the attendance allowance.

Then came the 'explanation' of why Todd had apparently overturned his mandate and recommenced negotiations.

## ARBITRATION

ACAS had been in touch with the company. Through the government's arbitration service, the trade union executives were trying to intervene in the strike over the heads of the Negotiating Committee.

In the 1971 Ford strike, union leaders engaged in

similar manoeuvres and eventually secured a return to work.

To avoid this happening again, to keep the negotiations firmly under their control, the negotiators had renewed talks.

The powerful Dagenham shop stewards committee met on Thursday 16 November. On hearing this explanation, they passed a resolution giving support to the action taken by their negotiators.

## ANTICS

One might be forgiven for thinking that this was just the green light the negotiators were waiting for so that — because of the stewards' fear of the antics of ACAS — they might win ratification for negotiations on a money offer way short of the full claim.

The offer, moreover, still completely fails to mention any reduction of the working week.

There is, however, some danger of a 1971-style sell-out by the union leaders.

They will be looking to play

on the increasing financial hardship suffered by the strikers, particularly as Xmas approaches.

## MASS

But the only effective way of countering such sell-out moves is by involving the mass of strikers.

They have shown that they are prepared to take action so long as they are fully aware of what's going on. From the very first day of strike action — taken completely independently of any recommendation from the union leaders — to the overwhelming decision of the mass meetings, it's been the feelings of the rank and file that have counted.

## RECALL

A recall of the national stewards conference in Coventry to make a firm recommendation to mass meetings would be a genuine answer to Todd and Co.



# Why Henry Ford came to Valencia

HENRY FORD was well aware of all the good reasons for opening a new plant in Almusafes, Valencia.

He liked to point out that it was the highest investment ever made by the company, writes ALBERTO MARTINEZ, who works there.

Ford's experts decided on Almusafes after many months of searching for the perfect site. It is in a densely populated, mainly agricultural area with very little industry. A perfect source of cheap and weakly organised labour.

The plant, built between 1975 and 1976, used high technology, with the aim of keeping the workforce small and boosting profits.

A workforce of 10,000 was producing 1,000 cars and 800 engines a day, within a month of the lines being opened.

Despite Ford's precautions, in January 1977 there was a two week strike in the plant. Management refused to comply with any of the points in our wage claim.

Initially they had agreed to some of our demands, but after a lightning visit to HQ in England they changed their minds. We stopped work, and then we were locked out.

We had mass meetings every day, and although we eventually had to return to work with very little gained, our unity was unbroken; there were no dismissals and our

shop stewards organisation was untouched.

We had not achieved much, but we were not demoralised.

We were ready for future struggles and Ford management knew this. A few months later they set out to wreck our organisation.

In May 1977 management provoked a strike for which the workers were ill prepared. Management's carefully planned provocations and lack of experience on our side made this possible.

For Ford this was a major victory. Fifty-six strikers were dismissed, most of them stewards, and our organisation was completely broken up. Since then there has been little resistance to speed-up and other penalties.

We are beginning to rebuild our forces now. In September of this year we had elections for a new Comité Dé Empresa (Works Committee) made up of 75 stewards representing all sections of the plant.

Recently, worried by the lack of parts arriving from England, Ford Valencia management tried the old tricks again. They attempted to provoke a strike to stop production — but this time they did not succeed.

Now we have to prepare for the fights of the coming year. With the likelihood of a government pay policy here the struggle of the British Ford workers is particularly interesting to us.

# BRIEF

OVER £1,500 in fines has so far been imposed on anti-racists arrested during the defence of Brick Lane. Hackney & Tower Hamlets Defence Committee and the Anti Nazi League have now come together in a joint campaign to 'defend the defenders'.

One of its first actions will be a picket of Knightsbridge Crown Court (1 Hans Crescent, SW1) next Monday, 27 November, at 10am, where Stephen Wright is appealing after being arrested on 16 July and sentenced to two months in jail.

STUDENTS from as far away as Edinburgh and London joined a thousand-strong demonstration at North Trafford College in Manchester last Friday to protest against racist fee increases from £390 to £1,502 for all overseas students in classes with less than six British students.

NAN BAILEY, a leading black militant of the US Socialist Workers Party, will be among speakers at the Socialist Challenge Day School on Racism and Black Liberation on 3 December in London. Contact your local group for details or ring Colin on 01-359 8371.

'GE1' the Special Patrol Group out of Brixton is the demand of a demonstration on Saturday 25 November called by the ANL and the All-Lambeth Anti-Racist Movement after a number of SPG 'exercises' aimed at harassing black people. Assemble Brixton Oval, 2.30pm.

THE Campaign Against the Immigration Laws (CAIL) is organising a day school on 'Immigration Laws — What They Are and How to Fight Them' on Saturday 9 December, 10.30am-5pm, at the Institute of Education, Bedford Way, London WC1. Admission £1 (50p non-earners). Details from: CAIL, c/o Box 133, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

ESSEX students ended a week-long picket of the university yesterday against rent rises of 19.8 per cent (grants only went up by 8.9 per cent). Sixty per cent of the students are on rent strike and further action is being discussed.

MORE nurseries are being demanded by the National Union of Students, which is organising a picket of the Department of Education and Science (Elizabeth House, York Road, London SE1) on 29 November at 2pm.

But events in Leeds throw doubt on the Broad Left leadership's real commitment to this issue. There they opposed calls for a half-day strike to demand the university finance the present nursery, which faces closure. Then they told a picket of the University Finance Committee that it was 'pointless trying to score political points'. Result: an 'enquiry' after Xmas.

OVER 1,600 shopfloor workers in the AUEW and EEUPTU at Weir Engineering in Glasgow have been on strike since 6 November. They are demanding a straight £12 rise; management has offered an average £9 increase including productivity proposals which would mean over 400 redundancies!

Pickets are making sure that no goods enter or leave the factory. But the white collar unions—APEX, TASS, and ASTMS—have refused to call their members out in sympathy.

# HOME NEWS

## Lock-out at 'The Times'

# 'A work-in? I'm open to discussions' says NUJ leader

## TU Conference on Abortion Not a matter of conscience

THE MINERS' union is the latest to join the long list of unions sponsoring the trade union conference on abortion this weekend.

With so many unions, nationally and locally, sponsoring the conference, it looks as though the TUC paper policy of a woman's right to choose is about to become a real issue in the labour movement, writes PENNY DUGGAN.

Over the past few years women have seen almost continuous attacks on their right to abortion.

Private Members Bills in Parliament have sought to reverse the gains women made in the '67 Abortion Act. Admittedly, there was no such Bill last year, but the list of members with the right to bring forward such Bills for the coming year includes three known anti-abortionists.

### BONNETS

Amongst them is James White, who tried to introduce restrictive legislation in the past.

But the danger does not only come from individual MPs with bees in their bonnets about abortion.



TERRY MARSLAND: 'The 1967 Act is useless without the facilities'

Callaghan's recent pronouncements on the value of family life — and those of Thatcher and co — could easily lay the basis for attacks on women's rights to go out to work and to control their fertility.

A woman's right to decide when or whether to have a child is an elementary democratic right. Although many unions have paper positions in support of a 'woman's right to choose', on the whole trade unionists still see abortion as an issue of conscience rather than as a 'class' question.

Thus at the Labour Party's

conference each year the block votes of trade unions have helped ensure that the party supports a 'free vote' of MPs on abortion — in other words, that whether or not to support this right is a question of 'conscience'.

This also goes against the meaning of the slogan 'for a woman's right to choose'. It should be up to the individual woman to decide whether to have an abortion, not MPs in Parliament. And it shouldn't be up to doctors either.

However, for women to really control their fertility it is not enough to have that right embodied in law. Terry Marsland of the Tobacco Workers Union, who will be at the conference, gets it right when she says:

'It is pointless having stirring speeches and good policies on abortion if we are not also fighting for the wherewithal to provide these services.'

### CUTBACKS

'So while defending and improving the '67 Abortion Act we have to realise this is useless without the facilities.'

'We also have to be defending and extending the National Health Service, fighting against the cutbacks, to ensure there are adequate abortion facilities, as well as the other aspects like contraception advice and provision, pregnancy care and childcare.'

Many women are already aware of the importance of these issues. But the unsympathetic response of many male trade unionists to issues of women's rights often makes women reluctant to raise them in their union branches.

Women's caucuses in the unions have helped build women's strength and solidarity, and forced male trade unionists to take 'women's issues' seriously.

The trade union conference on abortion can be a real step forward in this process, especially if all the delegates are prepared to go back to their branches and workplaces to win support for activities to win a woman's right to choose.

THE CHANCES of the 'top people's' paper appearing next Thursday are now remote. Along with the 'Sunday Times' and three supplements, management aims to stop publication by locking-out their 4,300 employees until a quarter of them agree to quit for good.

The unions are being asked to sign draconian agreements on the introduction of new technology which would severely weaken shopfloor organisation.

JAKE ECCLESTONE, father of the journalists' chapel on 'The Times' and vice president of the NUJ, told GEOFFREY SHERIDAN about the issues involved and how the fightback is shaping up.

THE TIMES Newspapers plan has a very simple motive: more profit. In the first nine months of this year TNL, which owns The Times, the Sunday Times, and the three supplements, made a profit of £3.1m.

New technology, if brought in on management's terms, will reduce staffing, particularly in the composing rooms where copy is now set into metal by linotype operators.

### COMPUTER

The scheme involves the introduction of direct input by journalists, which would mean that a reporter types his or her copy into a central computer store.

This can then be recalled by sub-editors, and automatically set in photo-composition machines, thus eliminating the linotype operators.

The main jobs that will be hit are those done by members of the National Graphical Association, the main craft union. On the advertising side management hopes to make an enormous saving by eliminating NGA jobs.

The tele-ad staff who deal with the small ads would be able to set them directly through the computer, which can also cost them and arrange the accounts.

The company is taking the opportunity presented by the bust up over new technology to eliminate what it considers overstaffing in other areas. This mainly affects NATSOPA jobs in the machine room, and SOGAT in the publishing [despatch] room.

### TALKS

The present position is that the NGA has broken off all talks. It will not negotiate with management unless the threat to close the two national papers and the supplements on 30 November is lifted.

We are following the NUJ's national policy, which is not to negotiate on direct input until the NGA has negotiated on its own jobs.

Personally, I'm in favour of new technology, but not of taking other people's jobs unless they have agreed to pull out.

I'm also very much in favour of a joint committee between the various unions and chapels

in the industry over many years.

Without more liaison and trust, management will pick us off more easily. But for me to propose joint action would be a bit impertinent when we're not the ones primarily threatened and when the journalists have always been in a privileged position; always seen as management's soft option.

Fortunately, the NUJ chapel at The Times has never been more united and determined.

### UNANIMOUS

We had a two-hour chapel meeting last week attended by about 220 members, which is the largest meeting we've ever had. Three motions were passed virtually unanimously, including an instruction that no journalist should sign any new technology agreement put to them individually by management.

There has been a suggestion, from the NUJ's deputy general secretary among others, that in the event of closure we should all work-in under an elected board of management.

Of course, I am quite willing to think about this and to discuss it with anyone, but at the moment there are more pressing things to get on with.

There is clearly great potential in the new technology. In theory it should make it possible for any group to have top quality printing done cheaply, but I'm sceptical that this will come about.

### CAPITAL

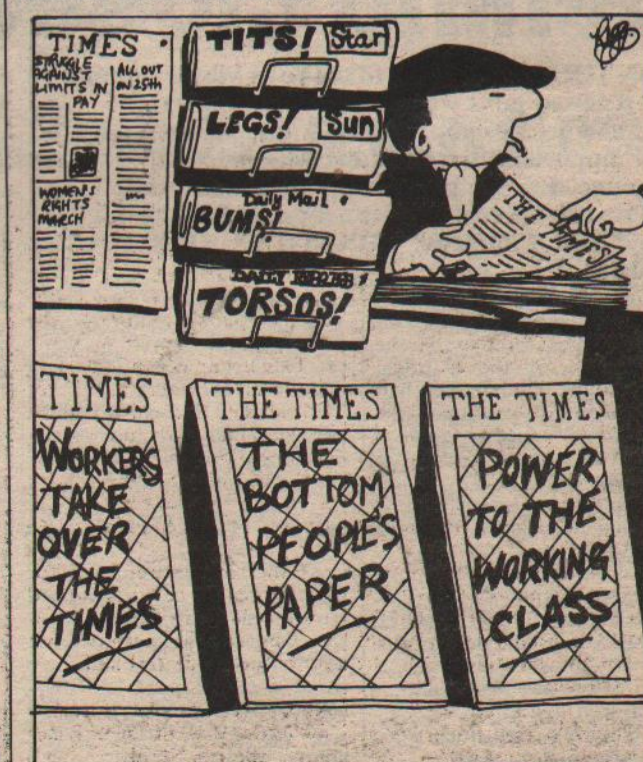
The capital required is so enormous that to really open up the press would require something like a national printing corporation as proposed by the Labour Party.



JAKE ECCLESTONE: 'Great potential in new technology'

at Times Newspapers. It's one of our great weaknesses that we don't have such a body, though the other unions don't seem to be very enthusiastic about setting one up.

This means there is not much likelihood of joint action, although it may develop. This wariness of each other among the unions is the product of elitist and hierarchical attitudes





# IN DEFENCE OF REPUBLICANISM

by  
**Paul Foot**

THIRTEEN YEARS AGO, in his introduction to a collection of essays and reviews called *Writers and Politics*, Conor Cruise O'Brien issued a solemn warning to Western liberals:

'To those outside the rich countries who are sickened by the word "liberalism", the liberal voice par excellence is that of Mr Adlai Stevenson — the voice that explained to the world that the United States had nothing to do with the Bay of Pigs invasion; the voice that justified the exclusion of China from the United Nations on moral grounds; the voice that expounded the humanitarian reasons for supporting Belgian policy in the Congo.

'From this viewpoint Mr Stevenson's face, with his shiftily earnest advocate's expression, is the ingratiating moral mask which a toughly acquisitive society wears before the world it robs: "Liberalism" is the ideology of the rich, the elevation into universal values of the codes which favoured the emergence, and favour the continuance of capitalist society.'

Yes, Conor Cruise O'Brien mused, he himself was liberal. He did owe a commitment to 'freedom of speech and of the press, academic freedom, independent judgement and independent judges'. Indeed, he felt he owed it to these freedoms to 'chip away' at what he called the 'mendacity' — the hypocrisy and sycophancy — behind which Western liberalism often hid.

In this collection of essays there is one example of that 'chipping away'. It was written in 1967 as an introduction to a book on the Vietnam War. It is a sarcastic, furious attack on the American bombing of Vietnam.

Dr O'Brien denounces the exercise as 'state terrorism'. No mucking about then with a 'definition' of terrorism. No problem then about what is 'illegitimate violence' (of guerrillas) and 'legitimate force' (of the state). The bombing of Vietnam was 'terrorism', justifiable on intellectual grounds only by professors who kept their jobs because children were being blown to bits in Vietnam.

I cannot imagine why this essay was included in this book. It was written in 1967, long before any of the others. It is part of the 'old O'Brien', the outspoken radical of the 1960s.

Everything else in this book is part of the 'new O'Brien', the responsible politician of the 1970s. In all of them he turns his mind to political violence — not, as in the Vietnamese essay, to political violence carried out by states and governments, but to political violence which is directed against what he calls 'democratic states'.

'Democratic states', Conor Cruise O'Brien argues, have the right to defend themselves against 'violent conspiracies' against them from within. Further, these 'violent conspiracies threaten us with a reversion to barbarism'.

The truth is that this book does not seek to lay down general rules or principles about political violence. It is,



Photo: DEREK SPEIRS (IFL)

almost entirely, about political violence in one place, and from one source: in Ireland, and from the IRA.

Members of the IRA are interested on 'in blood'. They have, his argument goes on, been chiefly responsible for inflaming Protestant and British army feeling against the Catholics in the North of Ireland. And they are, by the same token, the chief barrier to a peaceful settlement in Northern Ireland.

'An agreement', he writes, 'might be possible — if the IRA were to disappear from the scene' (his emphasis).

How can they be got off the scene? Why, the Doctor replies, by being tough with them. They are men of blood, and therefore only understand the language of blood. They have nothing to negotiate, so why negotiate with them; nothing to say on television except to incite people to murder, so why allow them on the television?

At times, Dr O'Brien sounds like a colonel at a Tory Party conference in a debate on muggers. 'There's only one thing these bastards understand...'

The colonel, however, is usually satisfied with the crack of a whip. Dr O'Brien asks for more — for imprisonment without trial or after a mockery of a trial; for phoney courts and phoney convictions; for army

terror squads; for anything which will remove the IRA and thus pave the way to a solution of the Irish question.

Dr O'Brien is so busy IRA-bashing that he almost forgets to tell us what he thinks about the central political questions in Ireland. Is he, for instance, in favour of partition? His answer appears to be 'yes', since again and again he reminds us that 'a majority of people in Northern Ireland do not want a united Ireland'.

But where does that argument end? The majority of the people of Fermanagh, for instance, do want a united Ireland. So do the majority of people in Tyrone, in County Derry, and probably even in County Armagh.

In short, there are only two counties in the whole of Ireland — Antrim and Down — where a clear majority want to be part of the United Kingdom. Even in these two counties, which include Belfast, there is a huge minority that wants the opposite.

The majority of the people in the Falls Road, for instance, or in Andersonstown want a united Ireland. Who ever asked all these people what they wanted?

Dr O'Brien will, of course, remember (though he doesn't bother to

remind anyone in any of these lectures or essays) that Northern Ireland was born against the will of an elected government as the direct result of a 'violent conspiracy'.

This one was led by the Tory 'democrat' Carson, who defied the Liberal government's declaration for Home Rule for all Ireland. Carson armed the Protestants, and encouraged British army officers not to obey the instructions of their elected government.

Carson won. The British government was eventually persuaded to parcel off a section of North East Ulster, lumping in Fermanagh and Tyrone with the Protestant counties just to make it 'viable', and to hand it over to the Protestants as 'a Protestant state for a Protestant people'.

The whole squalid deal was welcomed and subsidised by British businessmen whose wealth in Ireland at that time was mainly in the North.

James Connolly once warned that if partition was accepted there would be a 'carnival of reaction' in North and South until Ireland was united again. The prediction has come grimly true.

The single purpose of Northern Ireland was Protestant ascendancy. The *raison d'être* of the state was that Protestants were better treated than

Catholics. All 'democracy' in that state, therefore, has always been, and always will be a farce.

The Protestant majority elected its governments and its councils to discriminate against the Catholic minority. All the organs of that state — the police, the 'B' Specials, the law courts, the civil service — were organised for the same purpose.

All hope for a non-sectarian labour movement was, inevitably in such a state, doomed.

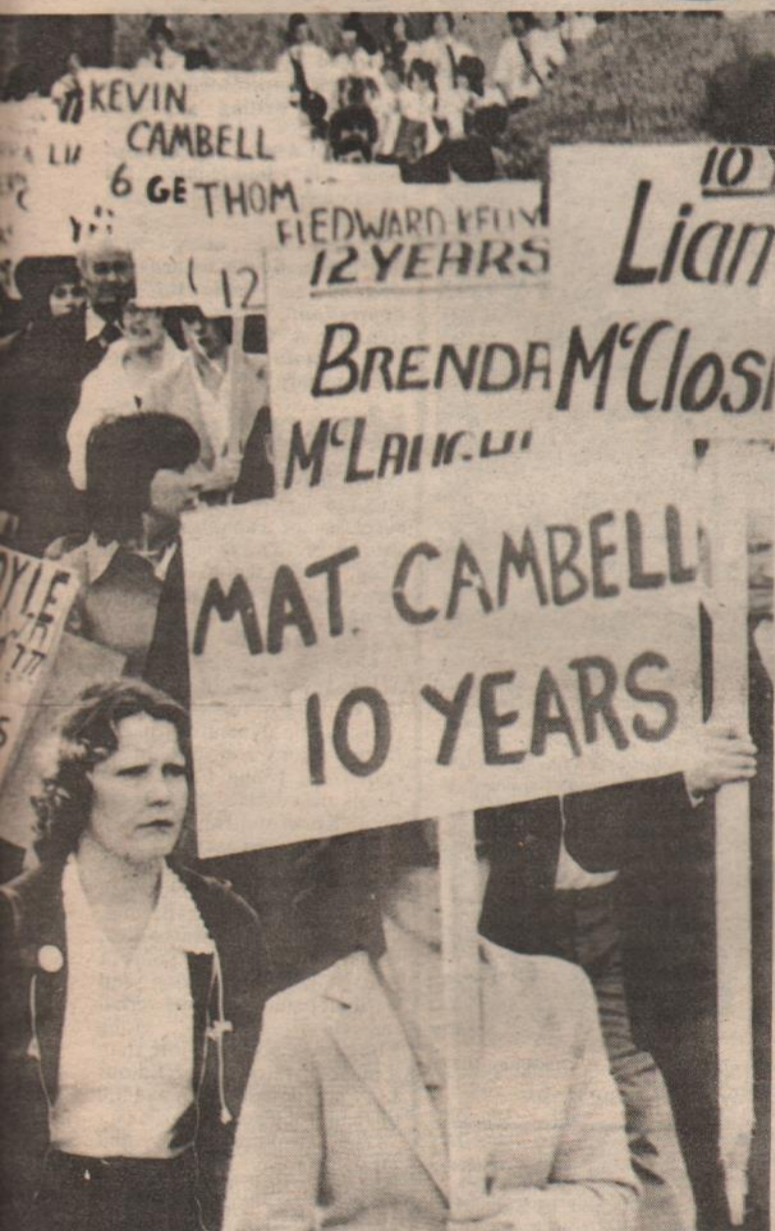
Ten years ago, in the wake of the May events in France and the rising of the people of Czechoslovakia, a new, more powerful civil rights movement was launched in Northern Ireland. The Protestants reacted as they always had. They sought to crush the movement by violence.

Civil rights marchers were bludgeoned at Burntollet. Protestant police in Catholic Derry organised a series of midnight terror raids. The 'B' Specials armed themselves for a decisive blow.

In the summer of 1969, a great wave of violence shook Belfast. It was, as Lord Justice Scarman reported in a prodigious inquiry, entirely Protestant violence. It was directed at Catholic civilians. And it foreshadowed something approaching genocide for the Catholic community.



# OF IRISH ANISM



In the event a pogrom was stopped by the arrival of the British troops. Many Catholics, as Dr O'Brien rightly recalls, welcomed the troops as saviours.

But the troops, and the government who sent them, were quickly confronted with a bald alternative. Should they dismantle the Protestant ascendancy, or should they maintain it? Almost instinctively, they maintained it — at the expense of the Catholic communities.

When, some years later, gradually and gingerly the British government tried to defuse the Protestant ascendancy, it exploded in their faces. The 'power-sharing executive' was shattered by a Protestant strike in 1974.

Ever since, the British 'democracy' has ruled Northern Ireland directly — directly, that is, in the interests of the Protestant ascendancy. The British troops have played out their time-honoured role of crushing Republican resistance. Through all this, sectarianism and violence in Northern Ireland have not diminished one whit.

The whole of this revolting exercise has been carried out against a propaganda chorus which has united the rulers of Britain, of Northern

Ireland, and, in effect, of Southern Ireland.

The chorus proclaims that it is not they who are responsible for the mess they have created, but the IRA, the 'gunmen', the 'men of violence'. This chorus has now been joined, to the delight of the other singers, by Conor Cruise O'Brien.

In his 'reflections' there is hardly a word of four hundred years of British government-inspired violence in Ireland; hardly a word of fifty years of violence by a Protestant government against Catholics in Ireland. Instead, he directs all his wit, sarcasm and majestic language against the IRA.

Yet at each stage in the story of Ireland the IRA enters the stage not as the initiator of violence and oppression but as the response to it.

In the most recent phase, dealt with by Dr O'Brien, the IRA did not, as he pretends, arise in Belfast by some magical or mystical means to destroy the gains of the civil rights movement. It grew in strength and influence in 1970 and 1971 as the British troops made it clear that their sentiment and bias was not in favour of the oppressed minority but against it.

Dr O'Brien's wordy philosophising about 'justifiable' state force and 'unjustifiable' IRA violence allows him

to duck the crucial question, the question which has to be asked in all such circumstances: which is the violence of the oppressed and which the violence of the oppressor?

Those who answer 'it does not matter; it is equally to blame' — those who describe the IRA or any other 'terrorists' as though they were brutish animals without cause or explanation — are guilty of precisely that 'mendacity' with which rich and powerful corporations and governments shrug off their responsibilities for oppression and discrimination.

It is worse even than mendacity. IRA-bashing of the type in which Dr O'Brien indulges turns the reader or the observer away from any possible solution to Ireland's problems.

I wonder if Dr O'Brien really believes that, if the IRA were battered out of existence, the problems in the North of Ireland would be any nearer solution. The truth is the opposite.

The Protestant extremists would see the destruction of the IRA as another victory in a long series of victories. They would demand not less from a 'settlement' but more. And if peace and democracy were restored to the province, it would be on terms even more disastrous for the minority than before.

There is no solution to Northern Ireland while Northern Ireland exists as a separate state. Its existence as a separate state carries with it an automatic Protestant ascendancy, and with it eternal civil strife.

The Protestant ascendancy depends for its survival on British support. It is the British presence, and the confidence that the British troops will, in the last resort, always protect their Protestant state which wins for the Protestant ascendancy the unanimity of the Protestant people of the North.

If the British prop were withdrawn from that ascendancy, the Protestant extremists would lose their automatic grip on the loyalties of the Protestant people. The Protestants would be faced for the first time with the prospect of fighting, unaided even by a Carson, a bitter war — a war which they might well lose.

In those circumstances there is at any rate some hope that the masses of Protestant working people would break away from their extremists, and would respond to a call for a different sort of Ireland than the rotten parishes which have been held out to them for centuries by both churches.

But by now I have left Conor Cruise O'Brien far behind. His business is no longer to expose the mendacity of Ministers. He is the mendacious Minister himself.

His liberalism is now the 'ideology of the rich, the elevation into universal values which favoured the emergence and favour the continuance of capitalist society'. He has become the Adlai Stevenson of his generation.

In some relief, I turn his book over, and I think I can detect in the glamorous photograph of Dr O'Brien on the back cover the haunting reflection of 'Mr Stevenson's face, with its shiftily earnest advocate's expression'.

**\*Herod: Reflections on Political Violence** by Conor Cruise O'Brien (Hutchinson). This review first appeared in *Books and Bookmen* (sic).

## Coming to London soon RUC — its new technology of repression

WHEN British troops first went in to the North of Ireland the story was that they were going to bring 'British democracy'.

Instead the reverse has happened. The standards of 'justice' long practised in the North of Ireland have come to Great Britain in forms such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

GEOFF BELL looks at the latest developments in the technology of repression in the North of Ireland. They could be in your area soon.

Last month the Royal Ulster Constabulary raided the files of Northern Ireland's social security department.

They took details of families receiving unemployment or social security benefits. The details, said the RUC, were to be fed into their new computer.

This is only the latest stage in the growing 'computerisation' of the Irish war. Over a million people — practically the entire working population — are filed in computers operated by the security forces.

The British Army have been operating four main computer systems for a number of years.

In one system well over half a million personal files are held. They contain the subject's age, description, jobs, habits, and details of every recorded movement. There are cross references to the person's relatives and friends.

### RECORDS

The second system operated by the Army contains street records. These list the name, occupation, and political outlook of each person living in the houses in question.

This computer even contains the names of local dogs. The theory is that someone's identity can be checked by asking them the name of a dog in the street where the suspect claims to live!

Another computer section holds records of vehicle numbers, the colour and make of the car, and a code establishing how the vehicle could be checked at a road block. The file contains the car-owner's religion.

The final computer section used by the Army is the VCP (Vehicle Check Point) Index which lists all cars stopped at road blocks.

With these four computers now joined by information on claimants fed into the new RUC computer, anyone with access to these systems now has on record the name, occupation, employment record, address, political view, religion, pastimes and friends of the majority of the population in the North of Ireland.

### ANTI-RIOT

That is how near the British Army and the RUC have brought 1984 to the Six Counties.

As well as the sophisticated thought police, other recent developments in the organisation of the RUC have reinforced the more traditional practices of the North of Ireland's police.

With the growth of mass protest in the streets of Belfast, Derry and elsewhere, a special anti-riot squad has been established.

Showing a lack of originality, this force is known as the Special Patrol Group. Like its London counterpart, its personnel are hand-picked and trained on para-military lines.

In its armoury the SPG has riot helmets, visors, shields, batons, gas masks, plastic bullet guns, Walther pistols, pump action shotguns, Sterling submachine guns and American M1 carbines.

It is known that the RUC SPG has had training sessions in England and, like the London SPG, in Army bases in Germany.

The arming of the RUC is in direct defiance of the recommendations of the Hunt Report on the RUC, which was



SIR KENNETH NEWMAN.

established in the wake of the RUC riots in 1968-9.

Hunt recommended the disarming of the RUC, the disbandment of the B Specials, and the encouragement of Catholics to join the police.

Ten years later there are still less than 10 per cent of Catholics in the RUC; and while the B Specials have gone, they have been replaced by the Ulster Defence Regiment, hundreds of whose members and ex-members have been convicted of Loyalist terrorist offences.

### DISBAND

The first Chief Constable after Hunt, Sir Arthur Young, also tried to disband the RUC Reserve Force, which had led the armed assault on the Catholic ghettos of Belfast in August 1969. The name 'Reserve Force' has gone. But the SPG is the same group under a different name.

The hope of the British Government is that the RUC will eventually take over the role of the British Army. It is for this reason they are being trained and equipped as the Army itself has been.

Certainly the head of the RUC, Chief Constable Kenneth Newman, has qualifications for 'anti-terrorism'.

He began his police career in the Palestine Police Force, just after the Second World War. As a profile in the *Observer* put it recently, 'after a short spell of clearing demonstrators from the Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem, he went to the Special Branch'.

### TIPPED

From Palestine, Newman went to London and as Chief Superintendent in the Metropolitan Police he oversaw the police attacks on the anti-Vietnam war demonstrators in 1968.

Today Newman is widely tipped as the next Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.

Whether he will bring with him the 'questioning' techniques of the infamous Castlereagh barracks, the Sterling submachine guns of the RUC, or the computer techniques learned from the British Army remains to be seen.

But if you are on a file at your local social security office, start worrying.

# Joan Maynard on the Shah's 'reforms' 'Too little and too late'

JOAN MAYNARD, the Labour MP for Sheffield Brightside, was a member of the Labour National Executive Committee delegation that protested to the Foreign Secretary last week over government policy on Iran.

She talked to GEOFF BELL about what is wrong with that policy and what the labour movement should be doing about it.

How would you describe the government's present policy on Iran?

The government appears to think that the Iranian regime is a stabilising force in that part of the world. If that was true once, and it may have been true once, it certainly isn't true any longer; and even if it were true it is not the kind of stabilising force which I as a socialist would wish to be supporting.

The view that I have is the view that the party has: if the Western powers had not supported the Shah, we would not now have the military regime in power. We probably would have a more progressive and democratic government in Iran.

I think it is one of the most repressive regimes in the world, and that's saying something, for there are some repressive ones — Indonesia, Chile, Argentina — but nevertheless I don't think you would be able to find anything more repressive than the Shah's regime.

Owen has said that if the Shah falls there will either be a right-wing takeover or a communist takeover.

His argument is that he's afraid that if the Shah goes there will be something even more right-wing than the Shah. I must say that's hard to

visualise, but he argues that this might very well lead to a communist development and takeover.

Well, I don't share his views, but even if it that was likely to happen I still don't think I could bring myself to support the Shah and supply him with arms and tanks which he has been using against the people there. I very much hope that the Queen won't go to add further respectability.

I can only say that in this place (parliament), one is very often lobbied by Iranian students who are in all kinds of trouble with the Iranian authorities; or they have got people in some part of the world who are going to be deported back to Iran and executed.

So I and some other MPs have tried to help, sometimes successfully.

How much support in the House of Commons would you say your views have?

I would think it has quite a lot of support, but I don't honestly know.

In the 20s or 30s?

Oh, I think it would be more than the 30s. Some of the MPs who are described as 'middle of the road' wouldn't want to support a regime like the Shah's.

Then, in the party itself the



Troops confront students at the gates of Tehran University.

policy is against the Shah. We passed a resolution at the NEC against the regime and against Owen's World at One broadcast when Owen said that because we have supplied the Shah with arms that was a reason for backing the Shah.

We in the NEC felt that rather this was a reason for using our muscle in that he was dependent on us.

When we went to see Owen he made a great point of how much trade we did with Iran and the oil and so on. Well the oil hasn't been coming through recently because of the strike.

But if we do so much trade with Iran presumably they are dependent on us as well as we being dependent on them. It cuts both ways.

Owen has said that pressure from him and the USA is responsible for some of the 'reforms' which have taken place in Iran.

Well, any reforms that there have been have been negligible and I think they have been too

little and too late — that's borne out by the rioting which has gone on.

There haven't just been a few people against the Shah, there's been massive opposition which does I think support the view that any reforms which he may have brought about were, as I say, too little and too late.

What should people outside parliament be doing over Iran, in the Labour Party, in the unions?

In the labour movement we should be discussing the question of Iran whenever possible, because I think the question of foreign policy is very important.

If we support a repressive regime abroad, sooner or later we will have one at home. This is why, for example, our policy in Ireland is very important and should be raised.

So we should try and discuss Iran whenever we can, as well as signing petitions and that

sort of thing. We should also try and raise the issue in the unions. Pressure from the unions, could I think be very important.

**Iranian Trotskyist speaks on building the party in Iran.**  
Rally to celebrate 40th Anniversary of the Fourth International.  
**Exhibition and film on Iran.**  
5.30pm Film and Exhibition  
7.30pm Rally.  
**Friday 24 November**  
Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, London NW1.

**MANCHESTER**  
**Socialist Challenge Public Meeting**  
**Iran and Revolution**  
Speakers: Iranian revolutionary Tariq Ali (editor Socialist Challenge)  
7.30pm. UMIST Students Union, Manchester.  
Wednesday 6 December.

**LEEDS**  
**Socialist Challenge Public Meeting**  
**Iran and Revolution**  
Speakers: Iranian revolutionary  
8.00pm, Leeds Trade Club, Saville Mount, Leeds.  
Thursday 7 December.

## Soviet gays

'YOU are the first homosexual we have met; in the Soviet Union there are none, and even if there were any it would be necessary to eliminate them.'

This is what the KGB told Angelo Pezzana, a militant of the Italian gay movement, when he did a one-person demonstration in Moscow this year. That such a claim could be made illustrates the complete social oppression of gay men and lesbians in the Soviet Union.

The Czarist laws against male homosexuality were abolished in 1917, but reintroduced in an even more savage form by Stalin in 1934 as part of the strengthening of the 'socialist family'.

The law has also been used to victimise political activists such as the film director Paradjanov.

The brutality with which homosexuals are treated in the labour camps has been described by Gennady Trifonov, a poet imprisoned for four years for writing gay love poems.

Lack of democracy has also made it impossible for traditional prejudice to be combated.

Pickets are being held internationally this Saturday to demand an end to this oppression: Soviet Embassy, Kensington Palace Gardens, 2pm. (note change from previous ad)

## Hong Kong

'YOU have to be realistic and not ignore the economic successes of capitalism when they occur.' The speaker is Chi Feng, a representative of the New China press agency in Hong Kong.

This particular piece of 'revisionism' is not just academic, for Chi, on behalf of the Chinese bureaucracy, was praising the dynamism of the British colony and some of its equally charming South East Asian neighbours: Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan!

Chi also remarked that a 're-evaluation of the violent anti-colonial riots which shook the colony in 1967' was needed.

Apparently the disturbances, which marked the low point of Anglo-Chinese relations and the high point of Maoist verbal radicalism towards Hong Kong, were nothing more than a manoeuvre of the perfidious Lin Piao, designed to make life difficult for Chou En-lai.

The demonstrations and local Maoist leaders were misled by this pro-imperialist running dog. So the whole affair was just a terrible misunderstanding!

**LABOUR BREAK ALL LINKS WITH THE SHAH!**

**STOP ARMS SALES!**

**DOWN WITH THE SHAH!**

**OWEN OUT!**

**Demonstration: 17 December, 1.00pm, Speakers Corner, London.**

**Organised by the Committee Against Repression in Iran.**

# Zia digs Bhutto's grave

JUST to add to the Shah of Iran's problems—as if he needed it—the situation in neighbouring Pakistan threatens further to destabilise imperialism's interests in the region.

TARIQ ALI looks at the growing crisis of the military regime as the Supreme Court continues its deliberations on the fate of former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

If Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is now regarded by the downtrodden peasants and workers as a hero then the entire credit for this achievement should go to General Zia-ul-Haq and his band of civilian sycophants who now run the country.

The authors of the third Martial Law have transformed the country into a political concentration camp and a cultural desert. The most influential of the right-wing politicians who sit in Zia's Cabinet are members of the neo-fascist Jamaat-i-Islami. It

is they who determine social and cultural policies.

## INTIMIDATION

On the economic front denationalisations of essential industries are being set in motion and the jobs of thousands of workers are under threat. The condition of the peasants is worse than it has been for two decades.

If one adds the imprisonment and flogging of journalists, public executions, mass political arrests, the killing of 50 workers on strike in the

industrial township of Multan, and the use of religion as an instrument of intimidation and oppression, then one gets a picture of Zia's Pakistan.

## FORGOTTEN

But all these measures have only made Bhutto into a hero once again. His flagrant abuse of democratic rights, his autocratic behaviour, and the vindictive style of his regime are all being rapidly forgotten.

The Jamaat-i-Islami are spreading new rumours to discredit him. One of these states that Bhutto's mother was of Hindu stock.

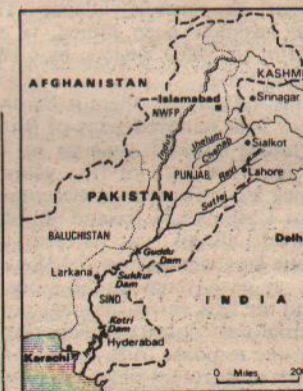
A friend just back from Karachi describes a conversation with a peasant woman: 'After I had exhausted all the regime's other allegations against Bhutto I said "But they're saying his mother was a Hindu."

"So what", she replied, "what do you think the Prophet Mohammed's mother was? A Muslim?"

Zia is busy digging the grave of Pakistan. Bhutto's execution will spark off centrifugal tendencies with the three smaller provinces of Baluchistan, Sind and the Frontier beginning to shift their loyalties.

Recently the Baluchi nationalists observed 'Baluchistan National Day'. A moderate Baluchi leader, Bizenjo, was shocked by the government response to his rather mild statement that there were four nationalities in Pakistan. The government claims that there is only one.

Bhutto's execution could fuse the national struggle with the growing social and political discontent. Outside forces could then move in to ensure a



'new stability', which would mark the end of Pakistan.

The problem for the moment is that the Shah of Iran, who could have played a 'stabilising role' is fighting for his own political life. And any Indian intervention would be counter-productive.

The United States should logically be trying to keep Bhutto alive. But to do so means getting rid of Zia and the group of generals around him.

In other words any political operation today would be a somewhat risky enterprise.

A new Pakistani postage stamp proclaims the motto: 'Protect Wild Life'. It is a fitting symbol of the priorities of military Pakistan.

Human lives are expendable, but wild life is not.

This is the way the savage instincts of the generals and their semi-fascist friends are suitably expressed.

**Defend democratic rights in Pakistan**  
**Release all political prisoners**  
**End martial law**

**All night vigil outside Pakistan Embassy, 35 Lowndes Square, London SW1, starting at 5.30pm, Saturday 25 November.**

**Organised by Action for a Democratic Pakistan.**

# INTERNATIONAL

## Diary of struggle in Iran

# 'Brother soldiers, why do you kill your brothers?'

WHAT is it actually like to take part in the history-making events in Iran?

This article is a political diary kept for a week in October by an inhabitant of Gorgan, a town of about 50,000 some 200 miles north east of Tehran.

There have been bigger demonstrations in Gorgan before and since — on 5 November 70,000 marched in the town — but this account gives some idea of the daily life and political consciousness of the residents of this small Iranian town.

Monday, 23 October

THE POLICE attack the students of Vaseghi High School in Villa Street (an all female school) for no reason at all. They attack the students with clubs and water hoses, injuring thirteen.

The high-school principal intervenes, telling the police that they have no business there and that they should get lost. The principal also tells the students that they should all leave the school and go home for their own safety.

The students leave — yelling, shouting, some crying. But they go to Iranshare High School in Kakh Street (all male). The students from both schools then assemble in the school-yard. There are about 2,000 in all.

The police attack this gathering also. The students respond by throwing rocks and bricks. They win. The police have to back down and leave. Four more students, two female and two male, are injured.

### VOLCANO

At about three or four in the afternoon the news gets around town that one of the students has died in the hospital.

At night about 6,000 persons gather at the Grand Mosque of the city. Everyone is angry as hell. The crowd seems like one big volcano.

Everyone says, 'We are going to sit here until they give us the body'. At times in the past the government has murdered protesters and refused to turn their bodies over to relatives.

A delegation is formed to call the SAVAK, the police, and the gendarmerie to find out the fate of Maryam Borna — the person that people think has been killed — and to inform them of the crowd's decision to sit at the mosque until they learn what has happened to Maryam.

The government agencies do not give clear answers. They say contradictory things as to the whereabouts of Maryam.

### HOSPITAL

By this time Maryam's sister has come to the mosque. She says her sister was injured with a club and taken to a hospital for treatment.

But she has been looking for her since noon. It is now 7.30pm and she has looked everywhere, but there is no trace of Maryam.

Maryam's sister says that one of the employees of the hospital told her that a body was taken to the morgue. It could very well have been Maryam's body.

This news is announced over the mosque loud-speaker. People start crying hysterically. A delegation of religious leaders is formed to go and confirm this report. The delegation leaves and people stay in the mosque to await the results.

They are restless, angry, disgusted, and full of hatred for this regime because of all of the



Demonstrators topple a statue of the Shah; the man himself will be next.

things that it does to people.

The delegation returns at about 1.30am. They say Maryam was injured and taken to the hospital.

She has just been released and is at her aunt's house. No one has died; the rumour was wrong.

But people are still very angry. They decide to call a demonstration for tomorrow to protest police brutality.

Tuesday, 24 October

The demonstrators begin to march at about 9.20 in the morning. There are 30,000 of them.

Every class and layer of society is represented — students, teachers, people from the bazaars, the religious establishment, and many peasants from nearby villages.

The demonstrators chant, 'Brother soldiers, why do you kill your brother?'; 'Army, you are innocent; your officers are butchers'; and 'How long will you remain in the sleep of unawareness?' Of course, the favourite chant is 'Death to the Shah'.

### RALLY

Another popular slogan is, 'The Shah has recently turned Moslem, he bathed in the blood of the youth' — a reference to Black Friday (the 8 September massacre in Tehran).

The procession marches for a long time. Then everyone assembles in a large open space for a rally.

Mr Housain Jabary, an intellectual, speaks. He says: 'The reason we have gathered here is to show the ruling regime our hatred and disgust for them and their police in this city.'

He says that what we want is freedom of political prisoners, full political liberties, and the putting into power of persons who are committed to the people.

I think by this he means National Front leaders; from what he says, he seems like a National Front member or sympathiser.

People respond by shouting, 'That's right, that's right', after each demand is mentioned.

The procession begins to move again. Before it gets to the Moulin Rouge Cinema, a group of twenty to thirty persons has begun to attack the cinema and nearby cafes.

The cinema is set on fire, and smoke is rising from it as the march arrives.

Then a portion of the crowd — about 500 persons, mostly youths around the age of fifteen — follow the lead of the small group, separate from the march, and begin to go around the town burning movie houses, liquor stores, banks, and so on.

A friend of mine who lives near the SAVAK headquarters in the city and could see everything from his window told me later that this group of 500 was led by the 20 to 30 persons to the SAVAK

headquarters to burn it down too. They led everyone inside the building and then fled themselves.

One person who was among the group of youths and was injured there told me that when they walked inside the SAVAK headquarters the doors were closed all of a sudden.

### WOUNDED

Someone fired a pistol. Then, from the second floor, SAVAK agents began firing down the stairways onto the youths. Thirteen persons were wounded. Fortunately, all of them survived.

Later people in the city who were neighbours of SAVAK agents told everyone that the twenty or thirty persons who began the burning were members of the SAVAK.

Wednesday, 25 October

Today a group of strangers from outside the city, mostly ignorant peasants hired by the Resistance Corps (the right-wing vigilante squad formed earlier in the year) came to the city and began burning buildings.

They burned down many buildings, but the worst thing they did was to burn the homes of two Armenians, Mr Avasaniyan and Mr Sokasiyan.

People were very disgusted with this action. It was discussed everywhere, and everyone was very angry especially because the arson-

ists were trying to make it look as though the opponents of the Shah had done this.

Thursday, 26 October

Almost nothing happened today, except that a group of fifty to sixty persons, in all probability paid by the government — no one is enthusiastic about marching for the Shah — march through the town chanting, 'Long live the Shah'.

Friday, 27 October

A group of 2,000 to 3,000 club-swinging workers from Hojarb Yazdani invaded the city, riding on trucks and tractors. They were looking for a confrontation with the people. But people very prudently avoided confrontations at all cost.

One of these club swingers was caught alone by the people, however. After they pressured him, he said that he had been paid 75 toman (US\$11) to participate.

In any event, they really made fools of themselves in front of everyone.

Saturday, 28 October

Another demonstration has been called. Again some 30,000 persons pour out. The demonstration is very spirited, and again people from all classes of society participate. The demonstrators march about three kilometers from Golshan Mosque to Jorjan Garage.

When they pass in front of Armenian shops, they chant, 'Armenian brothers, SAVAK has burned your house'. This is a very popular chant, because everyone is disgusted with what the SAVAK has done.

They are also chanting, 'We want freedom in the real sense of the word, for everyone.'

The speakers say that the people are opposed to burning down buildings, that in fact such acts are done by known SAVAK agents.

They dissociate the Shah's opponents from such barbaric acts as burning the homes of the two Armenians. (The city of Gorgan has about 1,000 to 2,000 Armenians.)

★ This article has been reprinted from the latest issue of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* (Vol 16, No 44). This magazine provides indispensable coverage of the events in Iran — far beyond what is possible in the space of *Socialist Challenge*.

Among other things this week's issue includes a major analysis of the unfolding revolution in Iran by two prominent Iranian Trotskyists. Single copies are 30p plus p&p. Subscriptions: £9 for one year (48 issues), £5 for six months (24 issues), or £2.50 for an introductory offer of 10 issues.

Write now to *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. All cheques/POs should be made out to *Intercontinental Press*.

### Liverpool

'IT IS a disgrace that the Labour Government should identify more with the desire of US and British big business to exploit Iran's oil resources than with the Iranian workers' struggles for decent conditions and democratic rights.'

This is part of a resolution passed by Liverpool Trades Council last week, with copies to the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary and to the Labour Party NEC.

The motion, proposed by a shipping branch of the clerical union ASTMS, demanded an end to arms sales to Iran, an end to the British operations of SAVAK, the Iranian secret police, and solidarity with the struggles of Iranian workers.

The meeting noted that arms sales to the Shah might be going through Liverpool and it was agreed to approach the docks shop stewards' committee.

### Journalists' Campaign

THE National Union of Journalists is to launch a campaign about the repression of journalists in Iran.

With the formation of the military government a fortnight ago, the army occupied the main newspapers and arrested 42 journalists.

Iranian journalists who have visited the NUJ in London have expressed a determination not to work on papers until military control and censorship have been removed.

NUJ President Denis MacShane has sent a telegram to the Shah, protesting in particular the arrest of the leader of the Iranian Journalists' Union:

'On behalf of 30,000 members of National Union of Journalists I ask you to release all imprisoned journalists especially Mohammed Khonsari and to stop military intervention and censorship in newspapers.'

'During the current crisis Iran needs unimpeded accurate information above all else.'

### 17 Dec. demo

THE Committee Against Repression in Iran has called a national demonstration on Iran for 17 December in London.

Already the call has been supported by the Communist Party and the International Marxist Group and several Labour MPs. A number of trade union leaders are expected to add their names in the next few days.

The protest will combine opposition to British government policy on Iran with solidarity with the Iranian workers' struggle to get rid of the Shah.

Socialist Challenge supporters should be discussing what they can do locally to build the demonstration.

There may still be time to get labour movement bodies to sponsor the demonstration and of course we should be fighting for affiliation to CARI.

Try to organise local public meetings, preferably in conjunction with other political organisations, with CARI speakers to build support for the demonstration. Already such a meeting is planned for 4 December at the Camden Centre, Euston Road, London.

Try to use any such meeting to launch a local branch of CARI. CARI is planning to have a conference in the new year to help launch itself as a broader movement of solidarity with the Iranian people. The more it can grow in the localities now, the easier that task will be.

Southern Africa

# Taking solidarity into the factories

UNION activists from north west factories dealing with South Africa have drawn up campaign proposals as a result of the North West TUC/Anti-Apartheid conference in Manchester two weeks ago.

**JOHN PARKINSON**, secretary of Preston Trades Council, reports.

The oil sanctions farce has put the cat among the pigeons with the disclosure that Labour cabinet ministers have covered up for shipments to the Smith regime in Zimbabwe.

Most delegates at the conference had a clear answer to this fiasco and to David

Owen and his modern-day gunboat diplomacy: boycott.

Let's take the responsibility for ending the Smith regime out of Owen's hands. The refusal of the unions at International Computers Limited to build computers for southern Africa does just that.

The Anti-Apartheid Movement Trade Union Liaison Committee set up from the conference is planning a tour in the new year to build the campaign for a boycott.

The tour, involving representatives of South African trade unions and liberation movements together with ICL

union representatives, will be seeking sponsorship from the TUC in the north west.

With the help of local trades councils we hope to spend two or three days in each town touring the factories.

Already the North West APEX GEC combine has agreed to invite the South African Congress of Trade Unions into the plants as a follow-up to the investigation begun by the Joint Staffs Committee in Preston.

Another move in the campaign will be made by the delegates from Blackpool and Preston Trades Councils.

The import of uranium oxide

from the Rossing mine in Namibia appears to be by Edmundsen's of Morecambe.

The movement of this uranium is directly contrary to Labour Party conference policy but was a subject ignored by Energy Minister Benn on his recent visit to the area.

Militants worried by the South African actions of Dr Death Owen and his comrade Benn would be well advised to turn up to the first meeting of the Trade Union Liaison Committee at the Socialist Challenge Centre, 14 Piccadilly, Manchester, at 7.30pm on Monday 27 November.



Robert Havemann explains

## Why we must know the truth about Bahro

ONE leading East German oppositionist defends another.

**ROBERT HAVEMANN**, who issued this statement in defence of the jailed oppositionist Rudolf Bahro, once shared a cell in a Nazi prison camp with Erich Honecker, the first secretary of the East German party.

Havemann has since been expelled from the party from his commitment to socialist democracy, prevented from publishing and subjected to continual harassment.

When Rudolf Bahro was arrested last summer, it appeared obvious that it was for the publication of his book *The Alternative* by the publishing house of the DGB.

For this reason there were many protests including from leading representatives of West European Communist Parties, amongst others from the chairman of the Spanish CP, Santiago Carrillo.

The item in *Neues Deutschland* of 1 July 1978 on Rudolf Bahro's sentence of eight years prison by the City Court of Berlin, however, seems to indicate that this was not the case.

Bahro's book and his sharp criticism of socialism as it actually exists as well as his other publications on these matters are not mentioned by a single word in the *Neues Deutschland* report.

I conclude from this, first of all, the politically important fact that the court saw no indictable offence in these publications by Bahro.

It has thus followed Article 27 in the constitution of the

GDR which says that every citizen has the right to articulate his opinions freely and publicly, and that this right is not limited by any employment situation and that no one shall be discriminated against if he makes use of this right.

Since the politically as well as scientifically very important book by Bahro has met with a very lively interest everywhere here and abroad, it will understandably appear strange and give rise to misinterpretations if we are now told that this eminent Marxist theoretician had committed treason and worked for foreign intelligence agencies. That is an astonishing contradiction.

I therefore believe that the public has a right to hear more about the trial of Rudolf Bahro and his proven crimes. It also has to be asked why the public was only informed of the trial after the proceedings are already over.

The sentence has not yet become effective. Has there been an appeal and by whom? Did Bahro plead guilty to the charges?

Who was his defence counsel, and how did the defence plead? Would it not be in the interest of the GDR to publish the trial's transcript, at least the most important parts?

If Rudolf Bahro's case was that of an agent in the service of foreign intelligence, as it appears from the report in *Neues Deutschland*, it would not be worth much attention, if — and that is what is special about it — Bahro was not the author of a very important book, a book in which a Marxist and Communist directs his unsparing criticism at precisely the political system whose court has now sentenced him.

This is the reason why the German and international public have to demand precise and complete information in Bahro's case, about the entire proceedings of the trial.

Only then will it be possible to make rational judgments on Bahro's sentence.

## Argentina: a political prisoner speaks

20 MARCH 1976 3 o'clock in the morning. An army patrol led by secret police occupy our apartment block in Buenos Aires.

Maurizio, Celia, Beatriz and myself are handcuffed and blindfolded. Beatriz's two kids are separated and carried out crying.

They knock us about and ask us where the guns and lists of militants are kept. Finding nothing they take us to a lorry. Our neighbours aren't allowed to put their heads out of the window under threat of the soldiers opening fire...

Then a journey round and round the streets to the Commissariat. The soldiers help themselves to the money in our wallets...

We are brought to the rooms where the torture is carried out. First they tried to make us talk by having us hear the screams of our comrades. They make us strip completely. Then the officers stamp on our toes while others paw us about obscenely.

We are stretched out and tightly bound so that the electric torture is more effective. A cushion is placed over our heads to drown any

noise. The torture begins.

One man controls the power, others ask questions and beat us while another applied the electric rod to the most sensitive parts of our body. Testicles, stomach, nipples, anus, temples, ears and teeth.

While they do this they turn up the nearby television or record player very loud. We were tortured together so that at all times we could hear each other's pain...

The group of women comrades were forcefully taken to the baths and made to wash and perfume themselves. Once ready the army officers and police took them to another place and raped them.

All this continued for two months. Then they took us to a cell and for the first time the bandages are removed.

We get a meal every two or three days which is laced with laxatives and drugs. We are very weak and can only lean against the wall, not even being able to get to the bathroom.

Some nights we had horrendous nightmares that bring us close to death. This took place at the Commissariat

Ballestar Regional de la Perla Buenos Aires. On 11 August '76 they take us to the Villa Devoto prison.

This is an extract from the signed testimony of Eduardo P., a Uruguayan Trotskyist recently released after more than two years in Argentinian jails.

His only crime was to defend the interests of his fellow textile workers and to be sympathetic to the socialist ideas of the Argentinian Socialist Workers Party (PST). His brother is still in jail.

The best way we have of helping to end the barbarity of Videla's Argentina is to build a solidarity movement here rooted in the labour movement. This movement can do two things — get political prisoners out of jail and isolate the Junta economically, politically and diplomatically.

For a year the British Argentina Campaign has steadily increased people's awareness about the real situation in Argentina. There were meetings everywhere during the World Cup and pickets of the Pumas' rugby tour.



Drawn by Eduardo in prison

The first adoptions of prisoners by trade unions are trickling in and affiliations and official support from unions and political organisations are increasing. AUEW-TASS, Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, Tobacco Workers, and Liverpool and Sheffield shop stewards have affiliated and materially supported us. The Labour Party NEC has policy now closely corresponding to our demands.

The first national open conference of the BAC is an attempt to establish a national network of activists on Argentina Solidarity. We want anybody who has been active around Argentina or who wants to get involved to come along.

★ Registration/Info: 52 Acre Lane, Brixton, London SW2.

★ Venue: Liverpool University, Brownlow Hill. 2 Dec, 12-6pm. Transport from London ring 229 1750.

## Austrian voters react against nuclear plan

IN A referendum on whether Austria should continue its nuclear programme a 50.5 per cent majority has stopped the Zwentendorf nuclear power reactor.

**RAIMUND LOEW** reports. Zwentendorf has already been in operation for a year. The result is a blow to the social democratic government, the union leaders and most of industry who all campaigned for a yes vote.

The construction of the atomic power plant in Zwentendorf was decided by the bourgeois government in 1968. Bruno Kreisky's social democratic government, which came into power in 1970, continued on the same lines.

It was only the defeat of the Swedish social democrats in 1976 because of their nuclear policy and the upsurge of the anti-nuclear movement in West

Germany which provoked a widespread discussion.

Last year anti-nuclear committees sprang up all over the country and have joined to form a nationwide anti-nuclear movement, which has organised demonstrations of up to 10,000 in Vienna and Zwentendorf.

The social democrats tried to get a common decision of all parliamentary parties in favour of Zwentendorf, so as to neutralise this movement.

But at the beginning of the summer negotiations with the conservative Populist Party broke down and Kreisky announced the referendum.

The government's expectations of victory turned out to be misplaced for two reasons: the bourgeois opposition came out against Zwentendorf in a demagogic way and the social democrat and union leadership

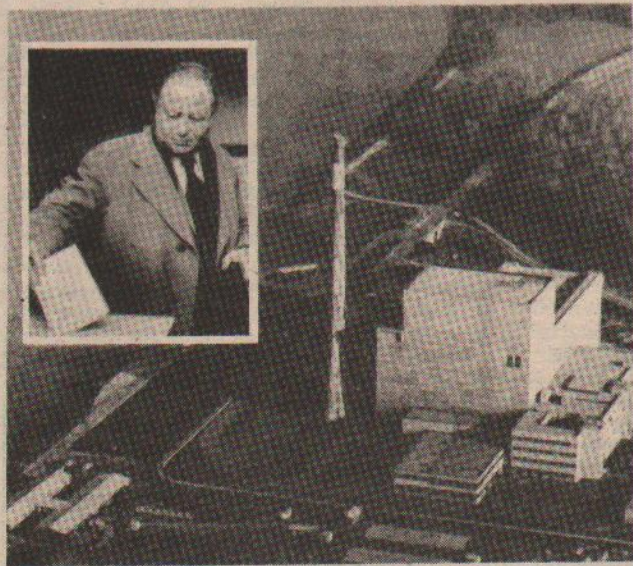
did not manage to mobilise the traditional social democratic voters for the yes camp.

But in its traditional industrial strongholds the government failed to mobilise all its potential supporters for a yes vote and the opponents of Zwentendorf won.

The government has landed itself in its biggest ever crisis and the last of a series of setbacks in recent months.

The party has tried to recoup by centring attention on its still popular chairperson, Bruno Kreisky. A National Committee after the defeat gave him absolute power without reference to the leading body of the party.

But it seems doubtful that this can change the fact that the prospects of the social democrats winning the next election are receding.



Zwentendorf atomic power station and (inset) Chancellor Kreisky casts his vote.



# Marxist theory and the British labour movement

In the new year 'Socialist Challenge' will be devoting a regular page to Marxist education. As an introduction we are running a series of articles, of which this is the first, on why revolutionaries need to study Marxist theory.



The historical attitude of the majority of the British labour movement to Marxist theory was established very early in its formation. Thus Ben Tillett, a future leader of the Transport and General Workers Union went out of his way to condemn 'hair brained chatters and magpies of Continental Revolutionists' at the founding conference of the Independent Labour Party in 1893.

## PRACTICALITY

Instead he praised as a model the practicality of 'the trade unionists of this country, a body of men well organised, who paid their money, and were Socialists at their work every day and not merely on the platform, who did not shout for blood-red revolution, and when it came to revolution, sneaked under the nearest bed'.(1)

This basic idea that theory is 'unrealistic', and that what is needed is 'to be practical' was continued into the early Labour Party itself. A questionnaire sent out to Labour and 'Lib-Lab' MPs in 1906 revealed that only two out of the 45 who replied had studied any works of socialist theory at all.(2)

For once Ramsay MacDonald, leader of the Labour Party at that time, spoke the truth when he said that Marxist theory 'had little to do with the Labour Party and nothing to do with its policy'.(3)

This attitude was not confined only to reformists, however. It also affected even the early revolutionary Communist Party. Harry Wicks, a member of the CP in the 1920s, has described the situation well:

'The British Communist Party was not rich in theoretical Marxism. In fact, the British movement as a whole for generations was devoid of theory, one could almost say contemptuous of it. What Deutscher termed the 'classical Marxism', those debates that occupied Social Democracy before 1914, scarcely found an echo in this country.

'So not surprisingly, the Communist Party which was formed in the halcyon days following the October revolution was equally indifferent to Marxist theory, it was to an extent insular in outlook, and devoted itself to giving a left-wing militant edge to trade union struggle'.(4)

This situation aided the easy conquest by Stalinism of the British Communist Party. Hugo Dewar has described the process very clearly:

'The party was almost exclusively proletarian in character (too much so, in fact; with the added disadvantage of "anti-intellectualism"); its members had reached their appreciation of the social order more through their experience of working-class life and labour, than from theory.

'This was their strength, but also their weakness. Constant pre-occupation with agitational activity

on a hundred and one issues left little time for study and discussion of political issues that were being fought out in Russia (against Stalin)...the need for such information and discussion was recognised by only a handful; for the rest, with their markedly anti-intellectual bias, theoretical discussion tended to be regarded as time-wasting, holding up the action.

'There were, of course, good grounds for regarding intellectuals with suspicion, their record in the parliamentary labour movement offered damning evidence of opportunism and careerism. But wariness is one thing, almost total rejection quite another, making it all too easy for the professional functionaries to stifle awkward discussion of policy.

'This anti-intellectualism of the CPGB, translating itself into impatience with critical discussion, was probably the main reason why opposition to bureaucratisation found so little response among the rank and file'.(5)

## CAPITAL T

This basic attitude continues into most of the revolutionary left in Britain even today. Continual jibes about 'abstract theory', 'if you are fed up with theory with a capital T', and so on dot most left-wing publications.

When it comes to practical activity, groupings which proclaim strict adherence to Marxism on paper act in fact according to rules of thumb, hunches, *realpolitik*, the gangster-like methods of labour bureaucrats, etc.

Even genuine revolutionaries often use phrases such as, 'of course that's all right in theory but we must be realistic', 'that might work in theory but in practice of course', etc.

The idea that 'practicality' and theory are *counterposed*, that on the one hand there is theory and on the other 'realism', has so deeply penetrated the labour movement that even those who are most opposed to it find it hard to shake off.

This does not mean that everyone considered that *nothing* could be learnt from Marxism. What was (and is) held was that although *individual* things could be learnt from Marx, and the 'spirit' of his championing of the oppressed could be praised, the Marxist theoretical framework as a *whole* nevertheless had to be rejected as 'dogma'.

## TRIBUTE

In fact, 'anti-dogmatism' is still one of the key words used by British reformism to avoid adopting any coherent set of ideas whatever. The young Aneurin Bevan, for example, paid generous tribute to the 'spirit' of Marx's *Communist Manifesto*:

'The largeness of its conception, its profound philosophy and its sure grasp of history, its aphorisms and its satire; all these make it a classic of literature, while the note of passionate revolt which pulses through it, no less than its critical appraisal of the forces of revolt,

make it for all rebels an inspiration and a weapon.'

But he was careful to add that of course the Manifesto was irrelevant for 'practical' purposes:

'The (Communist) Manifesto is today tactically valueless, except insofar as persistent stress on first principles is of tactical importance'.(6)

## TRADITION

In this framework Marxism is seen merely as one part of a 'socialist tradition' containing many other 'valid' currents — Keir Hardie, Christianity, labourism, libertarianism, 'common sense', etc. The labour historian E.P. Thompson has summed up this view in the argument that it is necessary to see Marxism 'Less as a self-sufficient system, more as a creative influence within a wider socialist tradition'.(7)

And Thompson too states that pragmatism, a rejection of any consistent theory and instead a 'practical rule of thumb' approach 'has served the British people a great deal better than most Marxists have been prepared to admit'.(8)

Now if the answer is to 'blend' Marxism with some other approach, then of course virtually any different mixture can exist according to taste. The Labour right can reject the ideas of Marxism outright while the Labour left adds a stronger mixture of Marxism to the other brew — provided, of course, that it never completely contaminates the pot.

Michael Foot spelt out how Bevan, in his most left-wing period, attempted to apply this synthesis of Marxism and 'British traditions':

'The Marxist theory of the state was inescapable, but the liberal criticism of it would re-emerge. Somehow a synthesis must be devised...Britain, and perhaps only Britain could set the example. Here the British democratic tradition, deriving from the Levellers and the Chartists, was grafted onto Bevan's Marxism'.(9)

Finally, to conclude our survey of the 'conventional wisdom' of the majority of the British labour movement, we may note that this last quotation sums up another part of the Great British Tradition in its attitude to Marxist theory. This is its national insularity.

Thus Ben Tillett didn't merely confine himself to attacking theory in general but specifically went out of his way to denounce *Continental* Revolutionists. This coupling together of 'theoretician' and 'foreign' as terms of abuse runs right through the history of the British labour movement.

## INSULARITY

Since Labour reformism spent a greater part of its history accepting the oppression of hundreds of millions of people by the British Empire, and since then has supported countless imperialist aggressions in such places as Vietnam and Ireland, such national insularity is scarcely surprising.

After all, if you're prepared to

attack and enslave 'foreigners' with guns and armies you're scarcely likely to be very receptive to their ideas.

This insular national tradition has penetrated so deeply into the labour movement that it profoundly affects even those attempting to be revolutionaries. The very first leader of a Marxist organisation in Britain, H.M. Hyndman, supported a battleship building programme, was anti-semitic, and championed the war against Germany in 1914.

His first Marxist book, *England for All*, which was also the first well-known Marxist work by anyone in this country, also set the same pattern. While all the theoretical chapters were adapted from Marx's *Capital*, Hyndman did not mention the originator of the ideas by name on the grounds that if it was known that they were by a foreigner then people would not accept them!

Hyndman, of course, was a particularly gross example of the strength of national insularity. Nevertheless, most organisations attempting to be revolutionary since have followed the same pattern, if in a less crude fashion.

Even today attacks on 'Third Worldism', 'being enthusiastic about revolutions abroad but not paying attention to the bread and butter issues in Britain' abound through the left press.

## BREAD

As if the chief danger in a country with an imperialist past and present such as Britain was an excess of internationalism in the working class or the danger of a mass third worldist current in the TGWU!

In reality, 1 per cent of the problems facing the British working class derive from excessive internationalism and 99 per cent from concentration exclusively on 'bread and butter questions'.

This, then, is the overwhelming majority tradition of the British working class movement: indifference to theory and its counterposition to 'practical' questions; national insularity in relation to international developments and ideas.

What we will examine in other articles in this series is what produced this tradition and whether it can cope with the very real practical tasks the working class movement and socialists have to face.



BEN TILLETT (top left)  
RAMSAY MACDONALD (centre)  
ANEURIN BEVAN (left)

1. Pelling, *Origins of the Labour Party*, p.118.
2. Milliband, *Parliamentary Socialism*, p.33.
3. *Ibid.*, p.32.
4. Wicks, 'British Trotskyism in the 1930s' in *International*, Vol 1, No 4, p.26.
5. Dewar, *Communist Politics in Britain*, p.36.
6. Quoted in Foot, *Aneurin Bevan*, Vol 1, p.32.
7. Edward Thompson and John Saville, 'A Communist Salute', in *The Left in Britain 1956-1968*, ed. Widgey, p.90.
8. E.P. Thompson and John Saville in *The New Reasoner*, Vol 1, No 1.
9. Foot, *Aneurin Bevan*, Vol 2, p.22.



## UNDER REVIEW

### Racism in education

# Bringing blacks' history into schools

THE ROLE of institutional racism in maintaining the oppression and super-exploitation of the national minorities in Britain has received inadequate attention by the left.

In particular, the importance of the racism ingrained in the British education system has still to be seriously challenged by anti-racist forces, writes TUNDE ANTHONY, a member of the Black Socialists Alliance.

The schooling experience of the majority of black youths leaves them bereft of self-confidence and lacking any qualification.

This condition of denial and oppression then becomes part of the rationale used to justify the high unemployment, menial work, and low wages that characterise the position of blacks in this country.

The publication of *The West Indian Experience in British Schools* by Raymond Giles comes at a time when a number of education authorities are voicing some concern about the under-achievement of black youths in school.

#### TURGID

While the book largely consists of turgidly written accounts of the author's interviews with teachers and questionnaires they completed, it does inadvertently provide a glimpse of what the black child experiences.

For example, in relating the dominant characteristic of West Indian students, one headmaster explains that physiologically they grow to maturity more quickly. 'They are strong boys physically, have a lot of energy, and tend to be talkative.'

The headmaster points out that nine of the boys in the third-year football team are West Indian.

A more direct impression can be gained from those few pages

in which Giles relays his conversation with a class of black girls at one school. It suggests the pressures on them to suppress their cultures.

When told by a number of black girls who spoke standard English that the whole class could speak Creole dialect, Giles questioned this, and one girl replied: 'Of course, that is why you thought we were English, because we did not speak that way.' The author adds: 'All said they only spoke standard English to be polite. When they went into a class and talked dialect some teachers thought they were being rude...'

The book concludes with recommendations which centre on the need for the cultural re-identification of black children and youth, and particularly for the introduction of black studies programmes.

Unfortunately Giles does not discuss what orientation black studies should take. They can and have been treated in both positive and negative ways.

Many aspects of the experience of blacks in the education system are not mentioned in the book. For instance, the environment in which the youths interact serves to reinforce the negativism of the content of their education.

Blacks find themselves in ESN ('educationally sub-normal') schools or in the bottom streams of the 'normal' schools. While the student population is multi-racial —



sometimes with a majority of black pupils — the teaching staff is always overwhelmingly white.

#### SUSPENDED

Giles does not consider the physical victimisation of black pupils by either racist or merely inadequate teachers; the disproportionate number of black kids and youths who are suspended from school, or are sent to 'special' schools.

The education system serves to maintain the status quo, and it is one in which blacks are racially oppressed and economically super-exploited.

'We should reject the solution of the West Indian Standing Conference, among others, who call for all-black schools. This would mean dilapidated, materially resourceless, ghetto schools — gigantic dustbins.'

The experience of segregated schooling in America should teach us some lessons.

We have to fight for an educational system and curriculum which meet the needs of black children and other national minorities. In particular, this has to offer them an understanding of their true history, and the realities of the present social system.

#### SYSTEM

Racism, as it manifests itself in every aspect of the school system, must be fought.

Demands must be made on the state to implement a programme of affirmative action in education; a concerted effort made to increase the proportion of black teachers, especially in those schools with a high proportion of black students.

*'The West Indian Experience in British Schools: Multi-Racial Education and Social Disadvantage in London'*, by Raymond Giles. Heinemann Educational, £2.20.

## Asian women The sisterhood that's lost in Britain

ASIAN WOMEN in Britain are not only female, black and predominantly working class, they also belong to particularly patriarchal cultures.

Amrit Wilson uses extensive interviews with Asian women to describe their oppression. She says: 'I wanted to show that Asian women are quite capable of speaking for themselves'.

KATHY BOR reviews *'Finding a Voice'*.

Amrit Wilson traces back the oppression of Asian women to the total division of labour — mirrored, not caused by religion — in feudal Indo-Pakistan.

There, because 'a woman's chief economic role is as a

producer of labour power (her sons), she is not considered of any real economic value before she is married'. Having sons to farm the land is vital.

This is not adequate as an explanation of the origins of the division of labour, and the

roots of patriarchy in this context are not explored.

However, the author succinctly presents the Asian woman as 'the link between economic survival and the meaning of life, economic security and emotional security.'

'Her role is at the heart, the core of the civilisation. That is why she is kept in place, if necessary by the most brutal oppression.'

#### ISOLATION

A consequence of this situation is very strong sisterhood between women. On the transfer to the isolation of British society, this sisterhood is lost, but the oppression remains and in the face of hostile, 'immoral' society it may well increase.

What's more, the woman is often thrown in total emotional dependence on her husband.

'What young mothers suffer from more than almost anything else is having constant responsibility for their children. In Bangladesh, children under the age of five or six are looked after by the whole family.'

Nevertheless, many have taken jobs — but in the workplace, the women's inability to speak English,

ignorance of their rights, and the indifference for the most part of the trade unions means that the women are thoroughly exploited. Their experience in being involved in workplace struggles, as at Grunwick, can transform this picture. 'Now many of them can stand up in front of the gate and talk back to the managing director. If he swears, swear back at him.'

Younger Asian women first introduced to British society at school usually find their customs ignored, crushed or ridiculed by staff, pupils, and the curriculum. Cultural differences and racist attitudes distance Asian and British girls:

'They usually talk about their boyfriends; we haven't got any to talk about.'

'If they talk about their homes, their homes are completely different from ours... We have to explain every single thing. We eat with our fingers. They think that's dirty and disgusting.'

For Asian parents, especially Muslims, the fact that their daughters must go to school is difficult to accept — particularly when the uniform is, to them, so immodest.

If a girl should want to continue her education, or move away from home, she is likely to encounter very strong opposition. Changes are

coming, slowly. Wilson mentions centres which are being set up by and for Asian women.

Her position as an Asian feminist is obviously particularly valuable in this book — and necessary since the women, conscious of ignorance and racism, would not have spoken to a white woman (never mind a man) in the same way.

It is not just a conflict of cultures which creates problems. If the women break out of their specific chains, what is there to meet them but racism, or the constant threat of it?

The author sees beyond the day-to-day insults and attacks of petty racists and the National Front. In a forceful chapter on immigration, she puts her finger on the more damaging and hidden racism of the state.

#### COLD

The book is well worth reading because it concerns a little discussed subject; does so in an unsentimental, insightful way, and because it reminds us (as if we needed reminding) how cold, narrow, bureaucratic, individualistic, and racist this society is.

*'Finding a Voice'* by Amrit Wilson, is published by Virago Press at £2.95.



Photo: MICHAEL ANN MULLEN

## That Ford song

REMEMBER 'You'll never get to heaven in an old Ford car, because an old Ford car won't get that far'? Well, times have changed. Instead of a campfire singalong we now have a Ford song to strike by, courtesy of the Ford Workers' Group.

The song, which we published on 26 October, is now available on record, with 'Johnny Strika' on the B side. The Group, members of which wrote and performed both songs, say:

'The idea of our record is to

put our case across to the general public and to other groups of workers, just as we have done with our leaflets, public meetings and so on.

'We are hoping that sympathetic radio and TV broadcasters will take up our record, and we intend to carry on singing in public places for as long as the strike goes on.'

'The Ford Workers on Strike' record, £1 plus 9½p stamp, from: Ford Workers' Group, 25 Dearmer House, London SW2.

# Socialist Challenge

## ABC trial

# 'We have to renew the nerve of outrage'

THE ABC secrets trial started and ended as a complete farce. All the most serious charges were dropped and the final sentences were derisory.

The issues raised by the trial, however, involve the whole question of fundamental democratic rights in British society.

We reprint below a few extracts from the introduction by E.P. THOMPSON to the '1978 Review of Security and the State', compiled by State Research and to be published on 30 November by Julian Friedmann Books (£12).

A historian knows that the governed can very rarely manufacture cases exactly to their own requirements—the governors are in charge of that. But it is, exactly, around particular cases that the motives and methods of the governors become disclosed.

and Hosenball, and of Aubrey, Berry and Campbell, are of first significance, and concern us all.

Beyond this, and as part of the campaign to educate the

public, there is a strong case for new affirmative laws ...

The difficulty is, first, that when any affirmative measure, such as a Freedom of Information Act, is being drafted, the entire invisible establishment of 'public servants' is alerted, and immense pains will be taken to offer some innocuous concessions (to journalists, etc.) while at the same time actually strengthening the hard-core security provisions, which are then offered with a new legitimacy...

If we are alert enough, such manoeuvres may be spotted and exposed, but then the second difficulty arises ... That is, if some Freedom of Information Act commands that there shall be public access

to this and that category of document, then the state within the state will simply seal off this information in new ways ...

We have to renew the nerve of outrage and we have to alert the public conscience. For ways of doing this we may turn to our history for many precedents ...

We should certainly campaign for a Freedom of Information Act ... But we should be under no illusions about it ...

Whenever the governors of Britain have assumed to know better than the British people what it was in their 'best interests' to believe, to read and

to know, one proper response has been to defy the law ...

We must therefore educate the public conscience to the point where, on every side, their spies are surrounded by our 'spies'.

If a copy-typist or a filing clerk falls upon offensive material, if a university assistant registrar or a civil servant knows that illegitimate invigilation is taking place, then this information must be 'blown'.

What is legitimate and what is illegitimate will always be a difficult question; but I am saying that increasingly British people must become jurors in their own case.

If the secrets of power are 'blown', then fellow-citizens

will be exposed to danger. The British security services will react more vengefully than their American counterparts to any attempt to disclose their operations.

Home Secretaries will loyally lisp through the briefs that their masters give them. Judges will hurry to the side of the state. A section of the press will slaver after 'exemplary' sentences.

This means that, if we support the right to public information, we must be very serious indeed about coming to the defence of those who may expose themselves in this cause

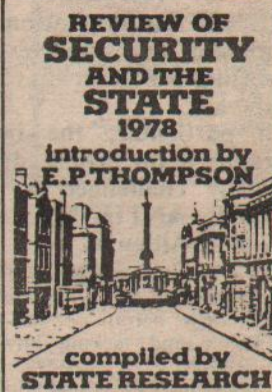


Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM (IFL)

LOOK AT this picture closely. On the surface the man pictured above appears to be an ordinary, rank-and-file (oops!) militant. But a more careful study reveals that the polo-neck sweater is worn to conceal a massive paunch and drooping chest. The way the paper is held further aids this process.

He is wearing a 'No Cuts' badge. It refers to his eating and drinking. He is Bernard Regan, a well-known militant in the National Union of Teachers, and he needs a diet.

If you would like to sponsor him in this, drop us a note. The ideal amount would be a £ for every pound Bernie loses, but decide for yourself. We need the money, Bernie needs to diet. Other militants in a similar state can also be aided, as can smokers. Our editor hates smoking (and is the fittest person in the office).

## OUR FUND DRIVE

WE'RE now more than half way through this quarter. Our target is £2,500 by the end of December. Yet we still haven't reached £1,000, and so Begin's head avoids the fate of Videla's for another week.

So we could soon be in serious difficulties. Without meeting our Fund Drive target each quarter the paper has to make up the total from other sources—and at the expense of maintaining the paper as it is.

So we must make a special appeal to all supporters and readers to rush their monies in this week.

The £97 received this week brings the total to £920.83. But if each reader followed the example of readers at Education Television in Battersea last week we'd feel a lot more confident about meeting our target.

A quick whip-round at work there brought in the fine sum of £25. Many thanks to the

comrades who contributed.

Since then a couple of other supporters have indicated that they too will respond to our special appeal by taking collections at colleges and workplaces. Why don't you?

No-smoking sponsorship money continues to trickle into our offices. In past months many supporters have come up with ingenious and novel ways to raise money through sponsored events. It's time to start thinking of a few more!

Our thanks this week to:

Anon	£10
Barb Passingham	£7
F Mulliner	£5
B Voss	£1
Martin Eady	£5
Non-smoking sponsors	£10
P & C Sikorski	£25
SE London reader	£2
JB & PB	£2
ETV Battersea	£25
Bob Purdie 'In memory of Neil W'	£5

TOTAL £97

WHY NOT try your luck in our Xmas lottery?

For 10p per ticket or £1 for a book of tickets, plus sae, 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 N12XQ.



VIDELA  
500

BEGIN  
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SHAH  
OF IRAN  
1500

PINOCHET  
2000

SMITH  
2500

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