

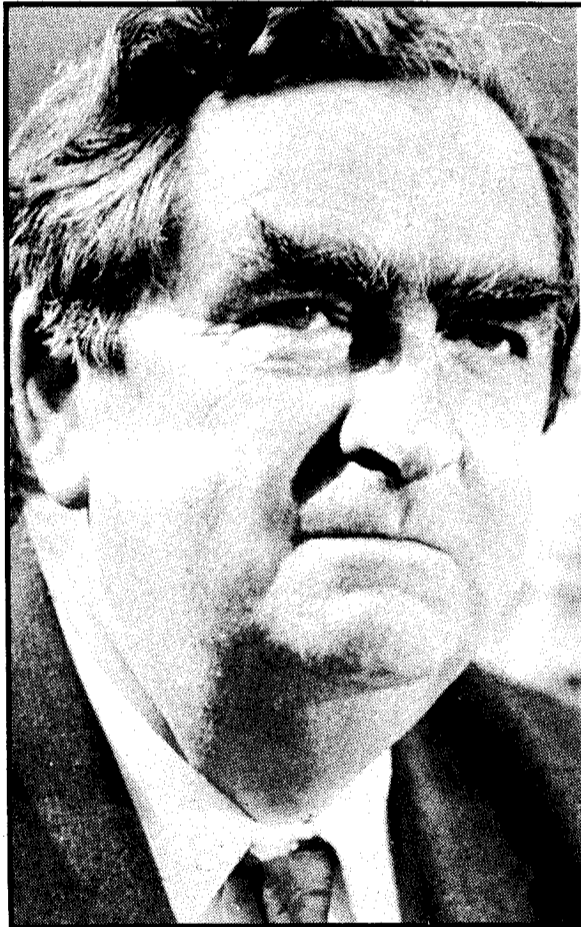
Socialist Challenge

MARCH FOR JOBS
JOBS NOT BOMBS
B'HAM 19 SEP

THE REAL FACE OF THE LABOUR RIGHT



So farewell then, Michael O'Halloran



THE battle to unseat O'Halloran and his cronies from their positions of power in the Islington Labour Party has been a long one.

Having failed with every dirty trick and manoeuvre to retain support in the local Labour Party it was inevitable that they would look elsewhere to further their careers and pursue their right wing policies. At last Tuesday's press conference the latest ploy of these SDP councillors was to absurdly claim that the local party had been taken over by International Marxist Group infiltrators.

Rates

But the battle is still not over. The SDP now have 22 councillors in Islington, the Tories have two and Labour 28. But the SDP claim that 3 or 4 more Labour councillors are considering switching to the SDP, which would give them a majority on the Council.

And there is a lesson for the left in all this. The main issue which the new SDP councillors promised to campaign around was rate rises. The Islington supplementary rate rise this October, which includes a component for the GLC and ILEA, works out at £70 over six months, or almost £3 a week for an average working class household.

The Labour left in Islington and elsewhere has to drop its suicidal policy of supporting rate rises or a number of Labour councils in London may fall to the SDP next May.

See editorial on page 2 on *Labour Councils Under Attack*

IN a fanfare of publicity the Social Democratic Party have captured another former Labour MP and stand poised to win control of their first Borough Council, in Islington.

They claim that the Labour Party has 'fallen into the hands of the extremists nationally and locally', and that there is 'no chance of them winning back control'.

This is a lie. What has really happened is that Labour Party members, sickened by years of right-wing policies and domination of the Labour Party, are seeking change.

They are fighting for new socialist policies and to democratise the Party so that these policies will be carried out.

This process of democratic change had advanced a long way in Islington. Michael O'Halloran was certain not to be re-selected as

MP for Islington North, and many of the councillors who resigned had failed to be renominated as councillors for next year's local elections.

They defected because they could no longer foist their policies by fair means or foul on the Labour Party, and because of the growing support for socialist policies inside the Party.

Islington is the shape of things to come. Labour's right wing will use every trick in the book to sabotage the moves towards democracy and socialist policies. They are not prepared to be accountable to Labour Party members or to support policies democratically decided upon by the Party conference.

Labour's right wing leader, Denis Healey, will no doubt use the splitters to try and blackmail the Party into dropping demands for democracy and socialist policies. With 3 million unemployed and the disastrous experience of the last Labour government fresh in their minds working people are not likely to heed Healey's appeal.

The truth is that on the right wing of the Par-

ty, particularly in Parliament, there are many who agree politically with the SDP. For them, staying in the Labour Party is just a tactic to push through their 'moderate' pro-capitalist views.

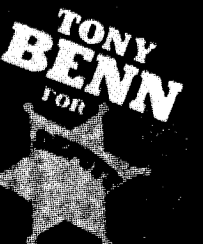
But everyone knows that these people will not be prepared to co-exist with a Labour Party dominated by the left. Those who shouted loud and long about 'unity' during the days of right-wing control are only too ready to bolt when the left looks like winning.

Tony Benn said last week that Thatcher fights hard for her class, so Labour should fight hard for its class. That's what the Healeys and Hattersleys of this world can't stomach.

Labour activists should refuse to bow down to blackmail from splitters and potential splitters. If the right wing want to stay in the party they have to recognise that they have no god-given right to high office or to veto the democratic and socialist aspirations of the labour movement.

Those aspirations must be carried through — without the right wing if necessary.

TONY BENN FOR DEPUTY



Labour Councils under attack

LAST week's announcement by Environment Secretary Michael Heseltine that he will introduce new legislation in the next parliamentary session to curb local authority spending marks a new stage in the Tories' war against Labour councils. Having failed to 'persuade' local authorities to implement drastic austerity measures Heseltine now plans to plug all the legal gaps which Labour councils have used to avoid cuts and rent rises.

Socialist Challenge stands with all those in the labour movement fighting against Heseltine's attempts to slash social spending and to shackle local government.

But the new Heseltine Bill will have the merit of making the debate inside the labour movement that much simpler. All the halfway-house positions on fighting the Tories' cutbacks will be removed. It will leave total capitulation to the Tories, or an all-out fight against them as the only two serious options.

In the past weeks, two local Labour authorities have tried to steer a 'middle' course. Coventry council held a referendum asking local people if they would 'prefer' rate rises or cuts in services. The option of opposing both was not even put. Not surprisingly only 25 per cent bothered to vote and the rate-payers' lobby won out.

The Lothian Labour group, under fierce pressure from Scottish Secretary George Younger, finally agreed to £24m of cuts — only to be told that this so-called 'compromise' was not enough either and that £30m of cuts was needed.

In both Coventry and Lothian whatever their best intentions, the Labour councils have been left doing the Tories' job for them. Elsewhere Labour councils have avoided making service cuts through gigantic rate rises — some more than 100 per cent.

In London the GLC rate supplement to pay for the cut in transport fares will mean rate rises of £2.5 a week for hundreds of thousands of people. It is a guaranteed vote-loser in next May's local elections.

As local Labour parties discuss their manifestos for next May one thing should be crystal clear to them. A manifesto full of pious promises is of no use to anyone. Manifesto commitments can only be paid for by smashing the government's cash limits.

All other solutions such as 'compromise' cuts or rate rises represent doing the Tories' job for them and discrediting Labour councils into the bargain. As the left makes advances inside the Labour Party it has to avoid like the plague becoming identified with massive rate rises. This approach is an attack on working class living standards, in the same way as rent rises and cuts in services.

The job of Labour councils is not to implement the Tories' anti-working class policies but to mobilise working people against them. That task cannot be implemented if the council is busy levying rate rises or making cuts. This point has to be at the centre of the current debate within the labour movement on the selection of councillors and the manifesto for next year's local elections.



and of referendums

New Leyland threats to workers' rights

By Bill Peters

LAST THURSDAY, 3 September, at a works conference held in the Cowley Assembly Plant, BL management again refused to recognise Alan Thornett in any senior capacity should he be re-elected in the elections due in December.

Alan Thornett, well known as a member of the Workers Socialist League and as part of the militant leadership in the Assembly Plant, has remained victimised for over seven years now.

In April 1974, BL refused to recognise him in any trade union capacity. After a month-long strike they restored his recognition as a sectional shop steward, but continued to refuse to recognise him as deputy convenor.

For the past four years he has been repeatedly elected deputy convenor by secret ballot of the workers in the plant. Each time BL has refused to recognise the results of the ballot.

Last year, BL personnel director Geoffrey Armstrong gave an undertaking at national conference that BL would recognise Thornett should he be elected in December 1981, providing they had not been able to establish a legitimate case against him in the meanwhile.

He gave an undertaking that complaints would be dealt with as they arose, and no dossier would be compiled.

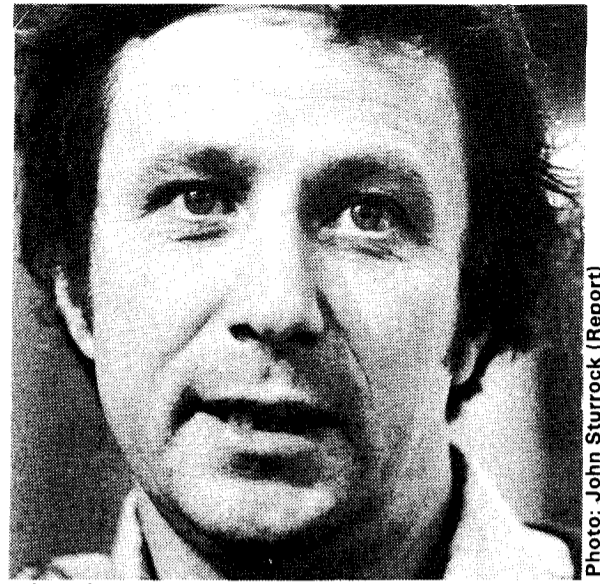
Now, a dossier has been compiled — and issues brought in which create dangerous precedents for the trade union movement.

BL are quoting as a major part of their case two incidents which happened outside of working hours and are therefore nothing whatever to do with BL.

The first is Alan Thornett's presence on the picket line at Adwest Engineering in Reading on 14 July 1980 — during the works annual holiday. After that picket Thornett was convicted of obstructing the highway.

The second incident, also last year, took place late on a Friday night after a meeting of Oxford Trades Council.

Thornett was convicted of giving a black eye to Mick Soans, the then



Alan Thornett

Photo: John Sturrock (Report)



Photo: Laurence Sparham (IFL)

Leyland workers under attack from Edwardes again

president of the Trades Council. An argument had arisen after Soans, a leading member of the Communist Party, called Thornett a 'scab'.

The other part of BL's case is 13 strikes which have taken place in the transport department, where Alan Thornett is one of the shop stewards, since October 1980.

These particular

allegations will be dealt with at a separate conference because the AUEW is involved. But management have made no effort to substantiate the allegations except to say that they 'hold the accredited representatives responsible'.

TGWU Oxford district secretary David Buckle, leading the trade union delegation at the works conference, told management that what employees do in their own time has got nothing to do with BL. Their position was totally unacceptable and a failure to agree was registered.

The issue will now be the subject of a national conference.

Making the activities of employees outside of

working hours subject matter for the BL disciplinary procedure is a very serious development indeed, particularly since BL is the pace-setter for wide sections of the employees.

BL and their South African chairman now want to control the private lives of their employees in Britain as they are able to do successfully in plants in India and in the South African apartheid state.

The management of the Cowley Assembly Plant want to go back to the days when the plant was run by Billy Morris — who had workers in the office for displaying Labour Party posters in their windows, or sacked them for joining a union.

Tony Benn: 'rekindling a socialist South Wales'

By Helen Slyomovics, Cardiff North CLP

AT A packed meeting called by the Wales Labour Co-ordinating Committee (LCC), Tony Benn relaunched his campaign for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party.

Attacking the Tory press he explained to the 1000-strong audience that newspaper owners were not press barons for nothing and were frightened at the real possibility of a Labour government with socialist policies that would end their wealth and status.

In outlining the policies on which he stands Benn reaffirmed his commitment to the abolition of the House of Lords, unilateral nuclear disarmament, withdrawal from the EEC, and a return to full employment.

'We have to unite the party around socialist policies and not individuals,' he said, noting the movement the Labour Party is making to the left.

But it was his comments on the role of the army that drew some of the strongest applause from miners, steelworkers and labour movement militants. 'Our troops are in Ireland and should be

withdrawn,' he stated whilst also commenting that it was the army teaching the police to use plastic bullets.

The strength and responsiveness of the audience showed that though the labour movement in Wales has been slow to mobilise around the leadership battle due to the stranglehold of the bureaucracy, this mobilisation is now becoming more powerful. A united movement around Benn's policies is now possible.

This was reflected in the contributions made by other speakers — Terry Thomas from the NUM executive, Ann Clwyd the Wales Euro MP, Wayne David, secretary of the Wales LCC who chaired the meeting, and Derek Gregory, Wales LCC chairperson, who criticised the Wales MPs who oppose Benn.

Gregory, who has himself been victimised by the Wales labour bureaucracy, stated: 'We have to rekindle a socialist South Wales.' In supporting Benn's campaign so strongly the Wales LCC is setting itself that task.

Now it should organise discussions with its supporters to consider how the LCC can become the campaigning left that can achieve these aims.

Socialist Challenge

If you would like to be put in touch with Socialist Challenge supporters in your area or would like more information fill in the form below

Name.....

Address.....

Age.....

Union/CLP (if any).....

Send to: Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

More union support for Benn

By Paul Smith

THINGS are looking ever gloomier for poor Joe Gormley, president of the National Union of Mineworkers, and arch right wing fix-it merchant.

Joe faces the prospect of having to hand over the NUM presidency to Arthur Scargill next March, and now admits that 'I do not think that there is anybody who can stop Mr Benn becoming the leader of the Labour Party eventually'.

Gormley's statement followed the decision of the NUM executive to back down from choosing whom to support in the Labour deputy leadership contest, and instead to ballot branch meetings.

Doubtless the majority of the executive would have preferred a vote for Healey; the branch ballot system favours a vote for Benn.

Despite this NUM decision, the Healey camp are becoming increasingly optimistic — in public at least. Last Friday Healey boldly announced that he

was 'certain' of winning the deputy leadership, while more preposterously his camp announced that they had a 'mole' in the Benn camp, who had revealed that Benn's supporters were expecting Healey to win.

This story sounds a little KGBish for those who want to defend us from the Bennite East European conspiracy. And their celebrations are a little premature.

In fact the most pessimistic reading of the line up of trade union votes gives Benn a first round score of 1.2 million. This is based on the Transport and General Workers supporting John Silkin in the first round.

If Benn picks up the TGWU vote in the second round it will give him 42½ per cent of the union section of the electoral college. With the overwhelming majority of MPs going Healey's way and an even greater proportion of the constituency parties supporting Benn, the result will be very close.

This is far from confirming the project of GMWU national official Warburton of 'trying to ensure a decisive ma-

majority' for Healey. Behind the last minute flood of statements and counter-statements is the growing realisation that Healey and his right-wing backers can only lose.

Warburton has pointed out that 'in the interests of the party and the future' (read: 'the right wing') it has to be a fairly convincing win for Healey. But this is the least likely result.

Only a series of blatant bureaucratic stitch-ups have prevented the union leaderships giving expression to the immense rank and file pressure in favour of Benn.

Clive Jenkins of ASTMS and Alan Fisher of NUPE were both called to order by their national conferences when they tried to prevent any expression of support for Benn.

There was a near-riot at the biennial conference of the TGWU to get the decision in the hands of the conference. Whatever else happens, the Benn campaign has lit the fires of the fight for union democracy.

The Good, the Bad, and who?

By Brian Heron

NEITHER Denis Healey nor John Silkin were at the launch party of the new Labour Party magazine *New Socialist*. Despite their absence, or maybe because of it, the journal got off to a good start.

The initial print run was nearly 40,000, and with the ailing circulation of *Labour Weekly* and *Tribune* the ex house journal of the Labour left, its prospects look bright.

New Socialist is obviously aimed at the most dynamic and growing section of the Labour Party — the Bennite Left. It wants to expand that constituency by taking in the controversies of women's liberation, the disarmament campaign and other radical movements.

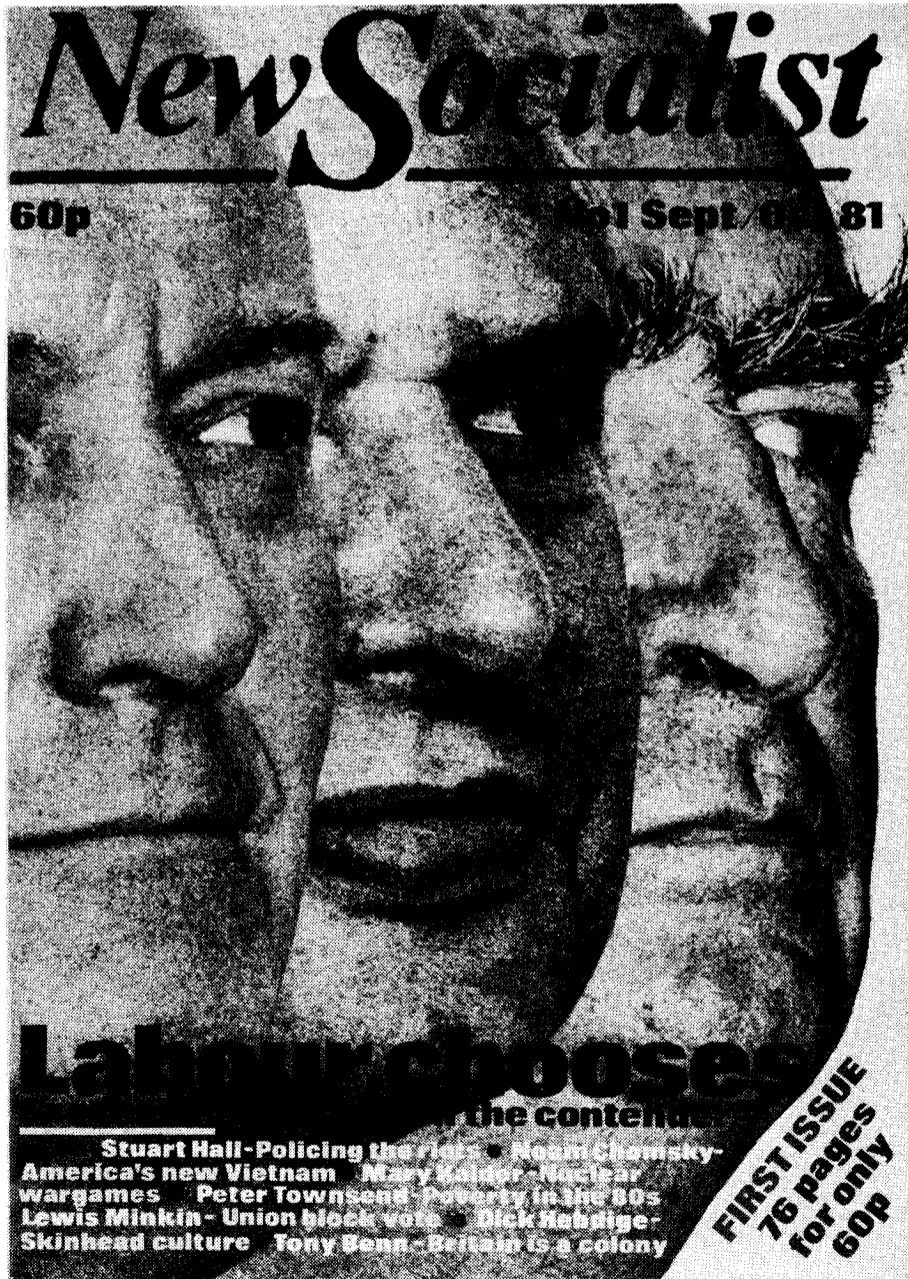
It is perhaps not surprising therefore that the first edition has a bit of everything, from the sociology of skinheads, to Poland, to how the 'socialist republic' controlled by Sheffield City Council is fighting the cuts.

Bones

The centrepiece of the magazine's first issue however is the interview with the three candidates for Labour's deputy leadership. Their answers show, beyond doubt, why every working class person has so much interest in the present battle in the Labour Party.

What is at stake is the political soul of the labour movement.

Healey makes no bones about the fact that he is the direct successor to Callaghan and Wilson. In response to the question how to rebuild Britain's economy and restore full employment, Healey replies with all the old formulas now enthusiastically



New Socialist: theory hits the Labour Party

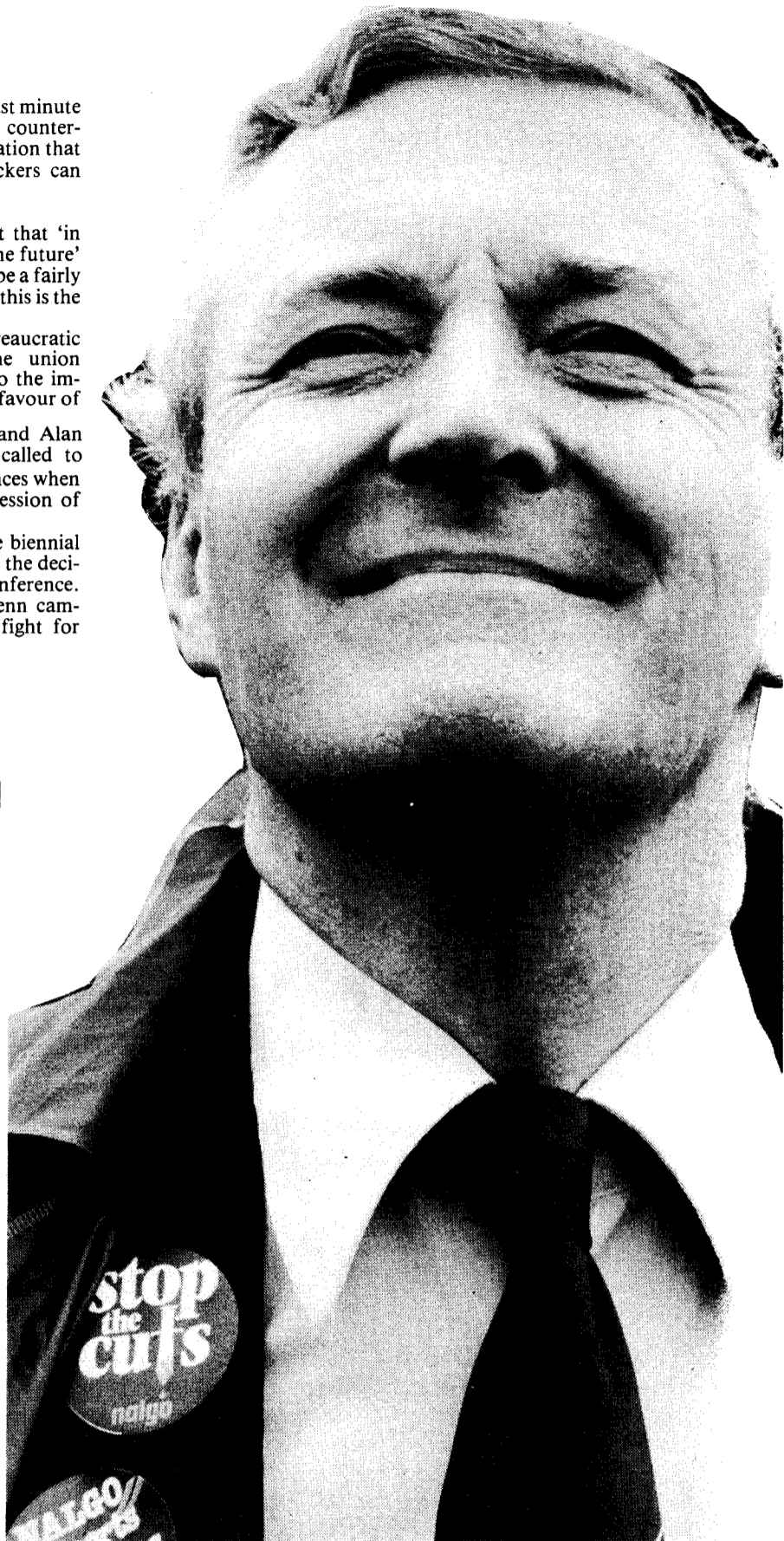
defended by the Social Democrats.

His models are Japan, Austria, Norway and the Netherlands. Their policies he says have been based on 'demand management, a national strategy for industry and social consensus'. He

might have added incomes policy, and at least in the case of Japan a rate of exploitation of the workforce that means an average worker turns in 3,000 effective work hours per year compared with 1,733 hours in Britain.

Even this limp pro-

gramme of class collaboration is subject to the hawkish whims of the IMF, as the last Labour government showed. But should the IMF require a mid-term correction in favour of another savage dose of deflation and mass unemployment — why



'I think I'm going to win'

Denis has a proven track record in this department too.

Silkin's left credentials (designed to let uncomfortable union bureaucrats off the hook of the Benn/Healey choice) rest on his apparent commitment to planning agreements, import and exchange controls.

But he is obviously uncomfortable in the policy realm. His appeal, he feels, rests on his acceptability to everybody. His candidacy was certainly acceptable to Healey, opposition to whom Silkin's stand was designed to split.

Benn's response remains his normal mixture of the Alternative Economic Strategy, unilateral nuclear disarmament and the fight for democracy inside and outside of the labour movement.

Benn's proposals create such hysteria among the ruling class and in the millionaire press not because of any red-blooded socialism but for three clear reasons apparent in the interview.

In the first place Benn's commitment to

the struggle for democracy and accountability in the labour movement places a powerful weapon in the hands of the ranks to deal with their right-wing leaders — the very same leaders on whom the survival of British capitalism depends.

Reform

Second, Benn presents a combined package, involving radical reform of the political system as well as a programme for the economy.

The implication is not lost on hundreds and thousands of workers —

the political system serves the ruling class whoever is in power.

Most important, and despite the fact that Benn's policies by no means add up to a socialist programme, his fight has come to represent the prospects of radical change in the system. It encourages a battle with capitalism.

Benn says he is in favour of 'freeing ourselves from the stranglehold that capital has upon our industry and our life'. Success against the right wing in the Labour Party will remove a sizeable obstacle to making that freedom a reality.

New Socialist Debate

Labour's Alternative Strategy

Speakers: Ken Cure, AUEW executive, Roy Hattersley, shadow Home Secretary, Pat Hickey, former deputy convenor Rover, Adam Sharples, Labour Party research officer, Audrey Wise, LP parliamentary candidate

Sat 12 September 7.15pm, Admission 40p

Assembly Rooms, Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham

'Green Berets' in Honduras

By Fred Murphy

Members of the U.S. Special Forces ('Green Berets') are now in Honduras, which is ruled by a military dictatorship and borders on El Salvador.

The Green Berets are stationed in at least one of the camps along the Honduras-El Salvador border where Salvadoran refugees have gathered.

Most of the more than 40,000 Salvadoran refugees in Honduras fled the Salvadoran junta's terror campaign, which has taken more than 20,000 lives. Many were among the victims of search-and-destroy operations carried out by the junta against villages that sympathise with the revolutionary forces in El Salvador.

In early August it became known that Washington had sent twenty-one 'military instructors' to Honduras.

Border

Raymond Bonner of the *New York Times* spoke with one of these instructors — US Special Forces Captain Michael Sheehan — at the Lar Virtud, Honduras, refugee camp near the Salvadoran border:

'Captain Sheehan was accompanied by two senior enlisted men with extensive experience in Vietnam. All three wore camouflage jungle uniforms and carried M-16 automatic rifles.

'They said they were from a Special Forces battalion based in Panama and that they and five other American soldiers from the same unit had been assigned to help the Honduran army patrol the border. Their primary objective, they said, was to control the Salvadoran refugees streaming in to escape the upheaval in their country...

'Captain Sheehan said that the (US) National Security Council had approved the use of Special Forces units in Honduras in support of the military effort against Salvadoran guerrillas. A Special Forces unit would soon be based in Lar Virtud, he said.' (*New York Times*, 9 August).

Vigilance

Captain Sheehan also spoke with a reporter from the Pacifica radio network of the United States. 'This border is like a sieve', Sheehan told Pacifica. 'The god-damn guerrillas go in and out as they please. This has got to stop.'

Concerning the refugees, Sheehan declared that 'the majority of them are helping the guerrillas. They should all be cordoned off.'

Sheehan's ominous statements served to corroborate earlier warnings by Charles-Henry Bazoche, Honduras director of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees. In a 21 July letter to the Honduran government, Bazoche complained that Salvadoran refugees were being kept 'under constant vigilance and military control. It gives the impression that they are prisoners.'

SUPPORT THE STRUGGLES OF THE CHILEAN AND SALVADORAN PEOPLE

National demonstration

Sunday 20 September 2.30 pm

Speakers include Michael Foot, Arthur Scargill, Alex Kitson, Madame Allende, representative of the FDR, Ken Livingstone and Ron Hayward.

Despite the police ban on marches, this demonstration will go ahead as a rally. Socialist Challenge urges all its readers to turn out to support the struggles of the Latin American workers.

Organised by the Chile and El Salvador solidarity campaigns.

El Salvador: guerrillas on the offensive again

By Phil Hearse

LAST WEEK the El Salvador defence minister José Guillermo Garcia held a press conference to announce that 'we are in total control of the country'.

As he spoke the lights went out, when the guerrillas of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) blew up another power pylon in the San Salvador region.

The destruction of power supplies by the guerrillas is part of a nationally co-ordinated campaign of sabotage which is crippling the economy. This sabotage campaign is just one part of a new offensive being waged on all the major military fronts by the FMLN.

The success of the present offensive has come as a sharp blow to the Duarte junta and its US backers, especially since they were confident that the failure of the guerrillas' January offensive to overthrow the government had turned the tide in their favour.

The United States is beginning to realise that despite its huge inflow of arms and advisors, the war is going very badly for them and their Salvadoran allies.

Last month the FMLN launched a big offensive on the 'Eastern Front' capturing the north-eastern town of Perquin and staging attacks throughout the Morazan region.

Morale

Over the past six months, government spokespeople have admitted, army losses have totalled 1,350 casualties, including 350 killed — in other words the government forces have suffered 12 per cent casualties in half a year, a bitter blow to their morale.

Another worrying feature for the government is the increasing accuracy

of the guerrillas' ground fire which is putting military helicopters repeatedly out of service.

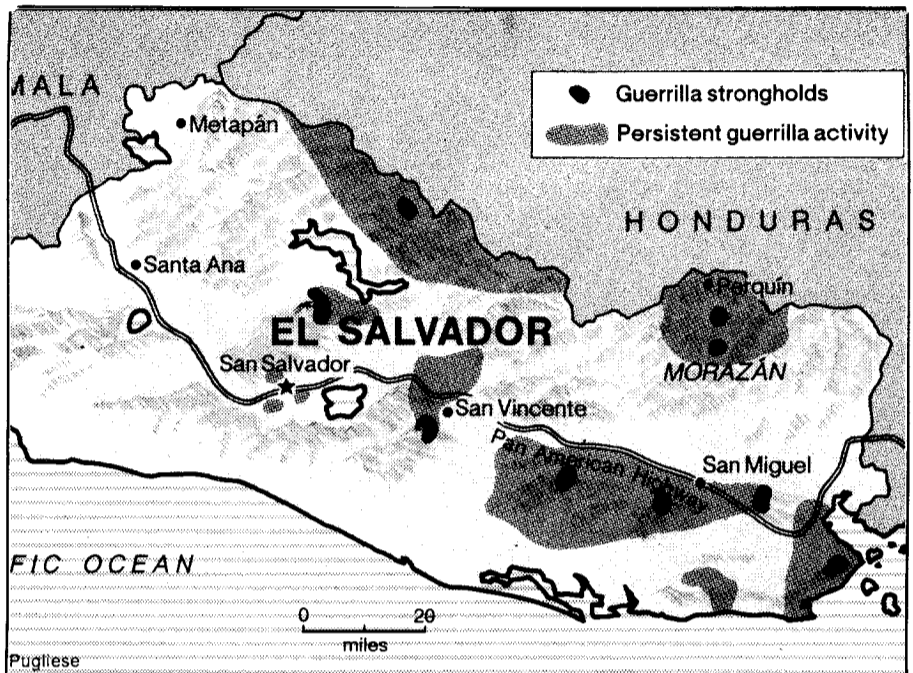
Tactics

While the government forces are doing badly militarily, the sabotage campaign has damaged the economy considerably. 75 per cent of the country has been without power at one time or another, and one business in three has had to close down for a period. The shrimp fishing and fish canning industries have virtually ground to a halt.

The government's response has been two-fold. Attempting a re-run of Vietnam tactics, its forces have been engaged in large scale cleanup operations, making broad sweeps of the country with helicopters and infantry divisions. Just as in Vietnam, these operations have very limited success against guerrilla forces which simply melt away.

Meanwhile there has been a sharp increase in the repression in the towns. The legal aid office of the Catholic archdiocese of San Salvador claims that 536 civilians

American strategy in crisis



Above map shows conservative estimate of FMLN activity. Fighting has been reported in many other areas over the past month.

were murdered by paramilitary forces in May, and that 8,736 have been killed in 1981.

Corpses

The night-time murders have taken on a grisly new feature; over the past couple of months hundreds of headless corpses have been found, the result of the activities of the government 'death squads'.

The new 'weapon' of the dead squads is the electric chain saw.

While the military and economic crisis gets worse for the Duarte junta, it has suffered a severe political reverse in last week's joint statement of the Mexican and French governments recognising the opposition forces as the legitimate political representatives of the Salvadoran people.

All these features are leading to sharp conflicts within the country's ruling circles. The main private enterprise grouping, the Productive Alliance (AP) has been leading a campaign by ultra-rightist political forces against the government. They have accused Duarte of being 'little better than a marxist tyrant'(!).

Right wing plots

against the regime among employers and army officers are nothing new, but speculation is now rife about whether the Duarte junta will survive until the planned elections in 1982, or whether the Christian Democrats in the junta will be replaced by a military government.

The United States and its international allies are at the present time still backing the project of holding elections in an attempt to give legitimacy to continued right-wing government.

But the head of the electoral commission Jorge Bustamante recently admitted that people in rural areas — some 60 per cent of the population — are unlikely to be able to vote. Of course, the political co-ordination of the opposition, the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) would be banned from participation in these elections.

Elections

Even if the elections go ahead, it is most unlikely that they will constitute a successful political manoeuvre. Elections will neither de-mobilise the resistance or isolate the FDR-FMLN internationally.

Overshadowing all the political developments will be what happens in the military struggle. Despite the support for the revolutionary oppositions in the towns, the course of the war is now becoming one of classical rural guerrilla warfare.

Control

While the government forces continue to control the major towns, the countryside is increasingly in the hands of the guerrillas. The United States risks becoming ever-more deeply involved in a Vietnam style conflict.

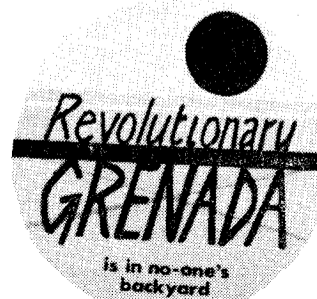
Its military advisors are attempting to impose all the techniques of the Vietnam war — 'strategic hamlets', 'search and destroy' operations, and helicopter attacks.

But these techniques are coming up against the fundamental problem of counter-insurgency techniques, that it is impossible to win a war militarily when the guerrillas have already won politically. It has now become impossible for the government to win, even if American aid and arms for the junta will delay the revolutionaries' victory.



Guerrillas hit another pylon

Support revolutionary Grenada



AS solidarity activities are stepped up in response to USA military action in the Caribbean, this new badge has won a design contest being run by Flypress and Badger Ltd.

Entries in this monthly contest are judged by the Flypress collective on their radical political content, graphic design merit, technical standard of artwork. The winner receives 1,000 free badges.

You can enter your badge by writing for an entry form to Flypress and Badger, 52 Acre Lane, London SW2 or phone 01-274 5181.

The four colour Grenada badge can be bought for 20p each and a stamped self-addressed envelope to The British Grenadian Friendship Society c/o 4 Windus Walk, London N16.

By a supporter of the Namibia Support Committee

AS WE GO TO PRESS, the latest reports of apartheid South Africa's invasion of Southern Angola (Operation Protea) indicate that a motorised column is pushing north in the sparsely populated south east province of Kuando Kubango, heading for Mavinga, 200 miles from the border.

This considerably extends the range of the attack. Fighting between the Angolan army (FAPLA) and the South Africans is still continuing in the South West Kunene province over 350 miles away.

Contrary to South African claims of a 'hot pursuit' raid after SWAPO guerrillas, it is now clear that Pretoria set out consciously to harass and weaken the Angolan government, bombing at least six towns and several villages.

Sending huge armoured convoys of British centurion tanks after SWAPO fighters is pointless. As the Angolan Ambassador said in London last week 'You can't catch flies with vinegar'. Whether or not the American administration likes it, Namibia will be independent with SWAPO in power. You can't stop the wind blowing with your hands.

The Western powers, however, are collectively pursuing a more complex and lethal strategy to counter and reverse the gains made by the liberation movements and the black working class in Angola, Namibia and South Africa.

Profits

They are dependent on the enormous super profits made in Southern Africa, and the vast array of strategic minerals (including the capitalist world's money commodity — gold) dug out of the soil and rock by cheap black labour power.

The British, US, German, French, South African and other capitalist powers are being forced into maintaining the system through a two-pronged strategy.

On the one hand, they rely upon the coercive use of their regional policeman — the South African white supremacist state (which they ensure now has as much military equipment as the French armed forces). On the other hand, they use every trick in the book such as: economic aid, weaknesses in the black nationalist leadership, shortages in their material supplies, as well as the diplomatic secrecy, spying, bribery and terror operations picked up from years of experience in creating neo-colonial states across Africa to attempt to bludgeon SWAPO, the MPLA and their allies into compromising.

Tactics

There are important differences in tactics within the imperialist camp. But the overall strategy remains that of holding down the African working class and their peasant allies.

At the centre of the present confrontation is the Namibian revolution — the hotpoint of Southern Africa and crucial to developments in the whole sub-continent.

While the imperialists, including South Africa realise that they can entertain no 'solution' without accommodating SWAPO, the prospect of a straight-forward SWAPO victory is intolerable. It would

give a huge boost to the struggle in South Africa, possibly leading to a white Nationalist Party split.

In Zimbabwe, the former white regime could bomb and machine-gun the liberation movement, and bribe their rear-base allies into submission, subsequently grafting the black nationalist leaders onto the old Rhodesian state structure.

Depend

But Namibia has lacked the equivalent white colonial state to do this. SWAPO's Angolan allies cannot be bribed through dependence on South African trade routes and finance. Military destabilisation is the only means of trying to drive a wedge between this rear base and the liberation movement.

South Africa's Muzorewa equivalents in Namibia are dependent on a foreign army, police and civil service, who take orders from Pretoria; and the Namibians have been so brutally and extensively proletarianised that Pretoria has had to rely on openly installing tribal puppets into its 'Council of Ministers' and 'National Assembly', organised through the 'Democratic Turnhalle Alliance' (DTA), as a pseudo 'opposition' to bargain with SWAPO.

Measure

Although the racists are frantically trying to build the basis of a neo-colonial state (army, police etc. with pretensions of multiracialism), they've started six decades too late. In addition, the ideological and political allegiance they can count on is not sufficient to do the job fast enough.

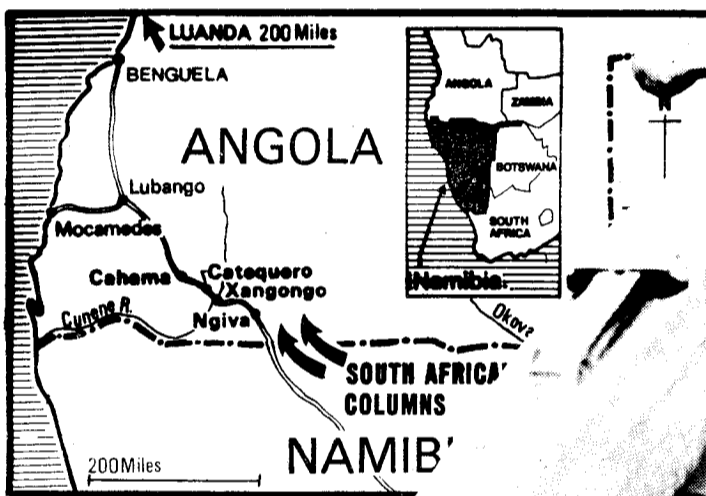
They have had to undertake harsh measures against SWAPO sympathisers in the process of conscription to the so-called national army, and have terrorised workers' compounds known to back the People's Liberation Army of Namibia.

Pretoria is pleading for time to consolidate its coercive hold. But the imperialist 'Contact Group' of Britain, USA, France, West Germany and Canada, who are directing 'independence talks' and handling the weapons, oil and finance to Pretoria while crippling the UN with vetoes, are exasperated with their 'diplomatic' part of the bargain.

Coerce

The contradictions surrounding Namibia are now so intense (even Denis Healey and the TUC are

South African attack aimed at Namibian revolution



calling for comprehensive sanctions against South Africa) that a new imperialist offensive has had to be launched.

The 'coercive' part of the strategy has been extended to the open South African military invasion of Angola, while the 'diplomatic' battle has been extended by the Contact Group, now under Reaganite leadership, to demands for a renegotiation of the UN independence plan for Namibia.

Those in the Western capitals who supported the David Owen-Andy Young plan of 1978, which would allow the Namibians a UN-supervised vote to a constituent assembly after withdrawal of the South African army, have been left behind. Reagan and Thatcher have revived the Kissinger-Haig plan of 1976.

This plan involves drawing up the essential elements of a capitalist Namibian constitution to impose on the constituent assembly from Washington, London and Pretoria; ensure that independent Namibia does not accommodate the ANC, or any other 'anti-South African forces'; and to ensure that SWAPO's UN recognition is severed prior to elections to block protests that might issue from the UN in the event of South African polling booth trickery.

Not only is the Namibian right to self-determination under attack, but that of Angola as well.

The Reaganites want prior guarantees of a Cuban troop withdrawal from Angola before the racist occupation army is withdrawn from Namibia. They have also given South Africa instructions

to use Jonas Savimbi's terrorist group, UNITA, which is now run as a wing of the South African army, as a whipping stick against Angola.

Buffer

Hence it is no surprise that Pretoria is trying to create a 'buffer zone' in Southern Angola so that Savimbi can claim support under the obsolete UNITA banner and South Africa can announce concurrently that their Namibian DTA puppets will assume governmental 'power'.

This DTA constitutional farce naturally precludes authority over defence, foreign policy and constitutional matters, and will do nothing to end or moderate the intensifying detention, abduction, pillage, rape and murder by the racist oc-

cupation of Namibia.

The British state's role in this brutal offensive has been totally obscured by the capitalist and even the left press, which have chosen to hammer Reagan almost exclusively (with the surprising exception of the Daily Mirror!). It is British centurion tanks, British-supplied oil and British finance which are being used to butcher Namibians and Angolans, to say nothing of Mozambicans and South Africans.

The British Labour leadership has played a despicable role in this, as they did over Zimbabwe. In the Namibian case they have flouted World Court and Labour Party conference decisions prohibiting the trade.

Not only are Callaghan, Owen and Healey guilty, but even Tony Benn signed the

Namibian uranium contracts which help finance South Africa's war.

The Namibia Support Committee, which has been working to raise this question in the British labour movement for eleven years, is asking for support for a fund-raising benefit on Saturday 19 September at Islington Town Hall, Upper St, at 7.30 pm. Bands include Split Rivitt, Tropicana and the Enchanters, and the NSC is hoping Owen Carron MP and SWAPO will speak at the event.

Tickets £3.00 in advance, £3.50 at door from NSC, 188 North Gower St, London NW1 2NB, phone 388 5539. A vigil will be held outside the US Embassy in protest against the US veto to endorse the raids into Angola from 6 pm on Thursday 10 September until 9 am on Friday 11 September.

Free the Bradford 12

From the Bradford 12 support group — London

A NEW offensive has been launched against black people. Black political activists are being brought up on phony charges and railroaded into prison.

Twelve young Asians, members of the United Black Youth League in Bradford, have been charged with conspiracy to cause grievous bodily harm and conspiracy to damage property.

The maximum sentence is life imprisonment. With two exceptions they have been refused bail since 30 July when they were arrested. They are pleading not guilty.

The Bradford 12 are accused of planning to use petrol bombs against skinheads, police and large stores. The West Yorkshire police claim that they found 38 milk bottles filled with petrol on 17 July on a demolition site in Horton.

On 30 July two of the defendants, Tarlochan Gata-Aura and Tariq Mehmood Ali were arrested in dawn raids.

Their homes were searched and documents were taken away including the minute book of the United Black Youth League. The rest of the defendants were picked up in the next 24 hours.

During the next two days they were not allowed to see their solicitors and were continuously interrogated.

The police claim that they have 'voluntary statements' which they plan to use in the prosecution.

The West Yorkshire police have a record of fabricated 'voluntary statements'.

In 1978 George Lindo, a black worker, was convicted on the basis of a voluntary statement. This conviction was

quashed when it was revealed that the statement was in fact written by a police officer and signed by George Lindo under duress.

In the same year, Geoffrey Elliott, a white man was alleged to have given a detailed 'voluntary statement' to the Bradford police admitting to rape. This statement was subsequently discredited when another man admitted to the crime.

The real issue behind the charges against the Bradford 12 is not 'conspiracy'.

It is the right of the black community to defend itself when police protection is not available.

Most weekends Bradford is invaded by the National Front. Homes, businesses and places of worship in and around Bradford have been firebombed. Attacks on the streets are commonplace.

For example, on the 24 July two Asian-owned houses were gutted in a vicious arson attack, two white men were charged but released on bail; on 14 July an Asian schoolboy was attacked with a petrol bomb by a gang



National picket of the Director of Public Prosecutions

DPP office
4/12 Queen Anne's Gate
London SW1

Monday, 14 September
from 10.30 onwards

of about 40 white youths shouting racist slogans and giving the Nazi salute.

Only two were charged and then only with assault and stealing petrol for their bomb.

In Bradford police inaction over fascist attacks has gone together with direct police harassment of black people. Surveillance has been particularly intense over the last 18 months.

Watched

Participants at a black conference discovered that they were being watched and photographed by a police officer.

Since the arrests, relatives and friends of the defendants (living as far away as London) have faced interrogation and harassment.

On the 23 August the West Indian community centre in Bradford's Textile Hall, the regular meeting place of the Bradford 12 defence committee was firebombed and gutted.

The police are treating it as an accident.

The case of the Bradford 12 comes in the wake of paramilitary repression of black communities in Liverpool, Manchester and Brixton.

The climate is being prepared where charges such as conspiracy can be brought against black people — charges which require much lower standards of proof and allow the defendants' politics to be used as evidence against them.

The twelve youths' real

crime in the eyes of the state has been first to successfully expose police racism and secondly to fight the Immigration Laws.

They had campaigned for Jaswinder Kaur who was facing deportation because her marriage broke down and for Anwar Ditta who earlier this year won her five year battle with the Home Office to have her children with her in Britain.

As Anwar says: 'We all know that it is because they have been active in these campaigns that they have been charged with this rubbish. But it is not going to work. Black people are not going to take it.'

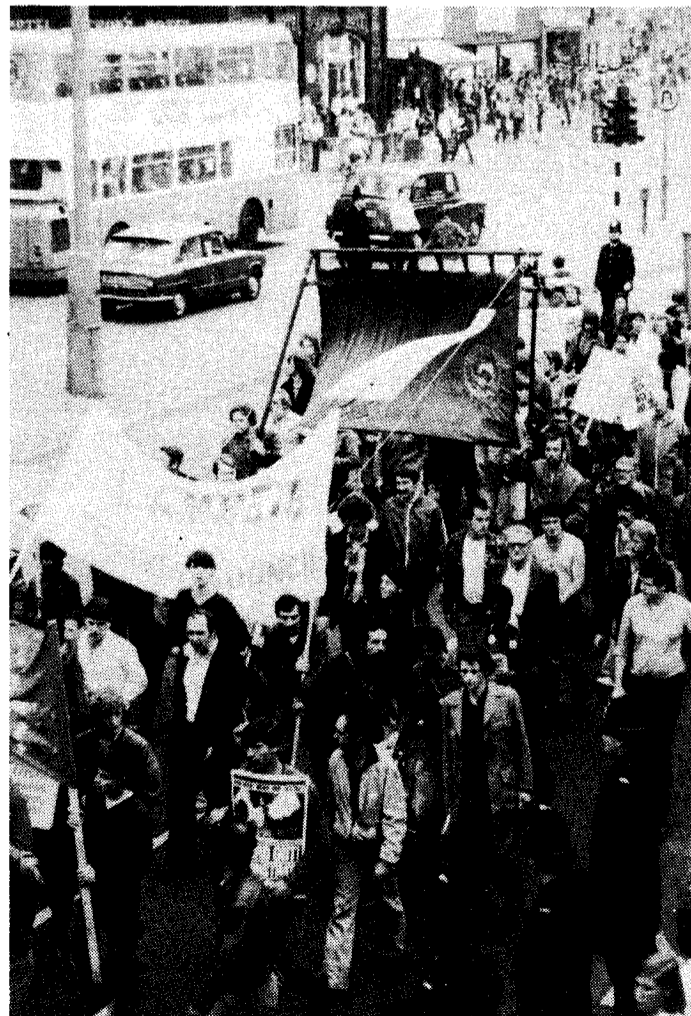
Exposed

In addition some of the Bradford 12 exposed the lies of the West Yorkshire police by campaigning for Gary Pemberton, a black worker who was convicted on false charges but freed on appeal largely as a result of the campaign.

Can the Bradford 12, framed by the police, charged with conspiracy and facing life imprisonment, expect a fair trial? Can they expect justice from a repressive and racist judicial system? which has been used for years to criminalise black people? This trial must be stopped!

**Drop the charges!
Charge the fascists!
Free the Bradford 12!**

For further information contact the Bradford 12 Support Group (London) c/o 54 High Street, Southall, Middlesex



Liverpool 8 demonstration — action needed to defend Bradford 12

NEW INSIGHTS

THE explosion that took place in Bristol a year ago and was followed by those in Brixton, Southall and other British cities have led to investigations, reports and recommendations from a variety of sources.

Toni Gorton looks at three publications that give insights into questions of inner city problems, new moves on policing and civil liberties.

Slumbering volcano?

Report of an enquiry into the origins of the eruption in St Paul's Bristol on 2 April 1980

This report provides a model by which other communities can set up enquiries into such events as Bristol 1980 or Brixton 1981.

It details the moves which the Bristol Trades Union Council undertook in setting up an investigation into the St Paul's uprising.

Ian Mikardo MP chaired the team which included Professor Dummett, chairperson of the Blair Peach Enquiry, Bill Keys of the Society of Graphic and Allied Trades, a number of representatives of the West Indian Parents and Friends and other groups.

The Director of Education and the Police Authority refused invitations to participate.

Four main areas are covered in the report; environment and housing; employment and unemployment; education; and community relations.

The report states: 'In examining why unemployment is higher among young blacks than among young whites, the evidence shows that the blacks are more disadvantaged by the change in employment patterns because a higher proportion of them work in the traditional industries which are shrinking and a lower proportion in the commercial sector which is expanding...'

'Another significant factor disadvantaging young blacks is direct discrimination.'

On the trade unions: 'the trade unions are also at fault in not having adopted a more positive role in the development of an effective equal opportunities policy.'

Discrimination is faced by black youth in getting into the Youth Opportunities Programmes and the failure of the YOP to deal with general youth unemployment.

The conclusions of the Enquiry are wide-sweeping in their scope. But on the employment prospects it warns 'All the current economic indicators predict that the present indefensible level of unemployment will continue to rise, especially among young people, and if the economic policies of the Government remain unchanged we can offer little hope of employment improvements in the Enquiry area. Against this background our recommendations can be no more than palliatives.'

Copies of this report are available from Ron Thomas, 64 Morris Rd, Bristol 7. Send 50p plus 15p postage, make cheques payable to Bristol TUC.

Civil disorder and civil liberties

Evidence to the Scarman Enquiry from the National Council for Civil Liberties

The NCCL decided to submit evidence to the Scarman enquiry despite the call for a boycott because it afforded 'the opportunity to make detailed comments about policing in inner cities and the threat that repressive solutions, affecting fundamental civil liberties, might be sought.'

Its recommendations include: a review by the government of racist immigration laws; that CS gas, water cannon and dogs should not be used in controlling street disorder.

The report points to the totally ineffective methods for dealing with complaints against the police and the lack of accountability of the police to the community.

The 46 page pamphlet is available from bookshops or direct from NCCL, 186 Kings Cross Rd, London WC1X 9DN at £1 post free.

State research: bulletin no 25

August/September 1981

State Research produces a bulletin every two months giving information from public sources on developments in state policy, particularly in the fields of the law, policing, internal security, espionage and the military.

It also examines the link between these fields and business, the Right and paramilitary organisations.

This issue gives a run-down on the 'July riots' and believes that they represent a watershed in British policing.

It reveals that police resources in Brixton were so stretched that a military liaison officer was drafted 'into Brixton police station in case troops had to be called in.'

Other areas covered include: immigration raids on factories, police computers, racist attacks and new moves on riot control.

Available from State Research, 9 Poland Street, London W1 tel 01-734 5831. £5 per annum for individuals, £8 for community, voluntary groups and trade unions.

Policing in the eighties: A critical conference in Cardiff on 25-28 September.

Limited free accommodation and reduced rail fares available for early bookings.

Registration fee £5. Further details from Penny Smith, Conference Administrator, Faculty of Law, University College, PO Box 78, Cardiff (tel 0222-44211 ext 2558).

Public meetings

US plans to invade Grenada

speaker

Fennis Augustin, High Commissioner of Grenada

Friday 11 September at 7pm

Abeng Centre

Gresham Rd, London SW9

Saturday 12 September at 6.30

70 Grange Park, Leyton E10

Steve Biko

Memorial Service

Saturday 12 September

St Matthew's Meeting Place,

Brixton Hill, London SW2

Bazaar, jumble sale, exhibitions, food 9.30am-3pm.
Memorial service 3-5pm, speakers from the Black Consciousness movement of Azania, Pan Africanist Congress of Azania and Steve Biko Youth Organisation.

Black workers' conference

Saturday 12 September
Digbeth Civic Hall
Birmingham

The fight against racism

Brent Labour Party
Young Socialists
public meeting

SPEAKERS from Liverpool 8, Brixton, Southall, Bradford defence committees and the Asian Labour Party Alliance

Wednesday 16 September

7.30 at the Devon Room,
Anson Hall, Anson Road,
Cricklewood, London NW2

'Everywhere Boyd and Duffy go, we'll go too'

By Pete Clifford

MANCHESTER Labour MPs, Charles Morris and Bob Litherland, are among many in the labour movement who have condemned moves by engineering union leaders to stifle support for the Laurence Scott strikers.

The strike against factory closure, now in its twentieth week, has received growing support. Almost 70 MPs have written personally endorsing the strike and over ninety branches and districts of the engineering union are known to have sent protest resolutions to their executive.

Restore

The campaign is to demand restoration of official backing, which was withdrawn in July following an unsatisfactory deal between the union leaders and the employers which did not guarantee keeping the factory open.

Shake

In spite of not having official backing, the total workforce are determined to carry on for as long as necessary. Tom McNeil, strike committee representative, explained:

'We're out to keep our jobs. We've launched a campaign in the labour movement to win backing. This has started to shake Boyd and Duffy. So now they've done a job on the Labour Chief Whip, feeding him with incorrect information regarding the dispute and consequently all Labour MPs have been instructed to fall into line.

'But they're not. We're getting new letters of

solidarity each day from MPs. Now we've written to the Chief Whip requesting he circulates our reply to all Labour MPs. I think it's a disgrace the way that Boyd and Duffy seek to control Labour MPs, we're not prepared to accept it.

'We've spoken to those who backed us originally such as Charles Morris and Tony Benn, their support is still there.'

Lower

Under increasing pressure Boyd and Duffy are stooping even lower to sabotage the dispute. In a three page letter to all two and a half thousand AUEW branch secretaries they've condemned 'misleading material purporting to inform our members of circumstances relating to the EC decision.'

With the rank of the union starting to challenge their breaking of the rule book, the union leaders in this letter have tried to shift the argument away from the rules. Boyd and Duffy now explain the withdrawal of support because of the workforce accepting their redundancy pay cheques.

Senior steward Billy Partlan explained the true story: 'Our divisional organiser John Tocher phoned us from the Confed national conference in Ayr and told us when the

cheques came that we should not put them in a trust fund or send them back, but put them in our own banks.

Back

'Dougie Daniels, our district secretary, even arranged a meeting with the union solicitor who told us to bank the cheques. For Boyd and Duffy it's a case of heads you lose and tails you lose.'

The stewards committee have now mailed a reply to all the union branches. In spite of these problems the dispute is still very much there.

Denis Barry, the convenor, is confident that the management will not be able to move anything out of the factory. A 24-hour picket is being mounted with delegations being encouraged from other workplaces.

Next

TASS steward Phil Penning explained their next step: 'We don't intend to let Boyd and Duffy get away with it. Everywhere they go we'll be there too. We'll have a team at the TUC all week and a lobby on the Thursday. We'll be at the Birmingham demo, at the Labour Party conference and we're hoping to get on Tony Benn's election platform.'



Donations and messages of support still required. Send to: 20 Roundcroft, Romiley, Cheshire.



Laurence Scott workers lobbying the national meeting of the Confed unions last Thursday. Prior to the meeting the TGWU had been persuaded to withdraw official support. The meeting voted to endorse the AUEW leadership's line

of no support. Despite this the number of resolutions from AUEW branches (see box for model resolution) is increasing every day. Inset: Denis Barry, convenor

Model resolution for AUEW branches

The following resolution has been sent by the LSE workers to every AUEW branch in the country.

In view of the unanimous support for the Laurence Scott dispute from the 28 July 1981 Manchester North District Committee of the AUEW and the rules of the union with regard to procedure of deciding on the official status of disputes (Rule 14, Paragraph 16), this branch deplores any attempt by the executive to terminate this dispute against the clear wishes of the workforce expressed at two mass meetings (14 July and 23 July) and calls on the National Executive to maintain official backing for this fight for jobs. (For forwarding with your branch stamp and signature to the AUEW National Executive).

Raw eggs

At the meeting of the confed unions, Ken Cure, main architect of the sell out explained that the confed could not officially recognise the dispute because the workforce had accepted the redundancies by banking the redundancy pay which the LSE management had unilaterally handed out.

Yet it was the union's own solicitor who advised that no implication of this sort would ensue. No wonder he was the recipient of a number of raw eggs as he emerged from the meeting.

Railworkers: Unity for what?

By Hazel MacPherson, NUR Paddington No1

THE TWO major unions in British Rail, the 180,000 strong national Union of Railwaymen (NUR) and the 27,000 strong drivers union ASLEF have formed a federation which is intended to lead to a single union for all railworkers.

The Tory press have seen this proposed merger as an aid to implementing the productivity demands placed alongside the recent wages settlement.

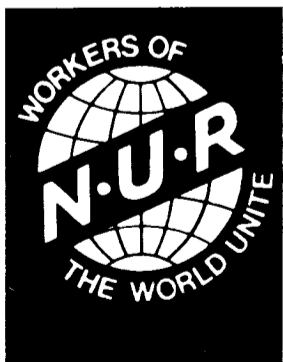
A key element in this productivity plan is the new grade of 'trainman' which will draw in workers covered presently by both unions. This creation of this new grade along with other measures intended to intensify the work railworkers do, will virtually wipe out platform staff. As many as 30,000 jobs are up for grabs.

Militants in the rail unions should welcome this federation — but as a way forging unity to resist

the productivity strings. Such unity will not come automatically.

The main cause of disunity has not been the existence of the two unions, but the way that divisions are fostered through the individual unions themselves. Inside the NUR, each grade is organised separately from each other.

Crucial to resisting the Rail Board's offensive will be uniting the different grades of railworker —



and then eventually with the miners and steelworkers who, with the NUR, make up the triple alliance.

The willingness of railworkers to forge this type of fighting alliance was seen in the preparations for the threatened rail strike. Sidney Weighell, general secretary of the NUR, admitted this when he explained to the press



The age of the train means more work and less jobs for railworkers

that the union 'had organised for war but sued for peace'.

What he failed to distinguish was that the ranks had organised for war and he had sued for peace. It is clear that the forging of unity and the building of the triple alliance will have to be taken out of his hands.

The newly formed Broad Left alliance of railworkers could play a key role in achieving this and encouraging the formation of an alternative leadership. To begin to play this role it has to put itself at the head of a massive campaign against these productivity measures.

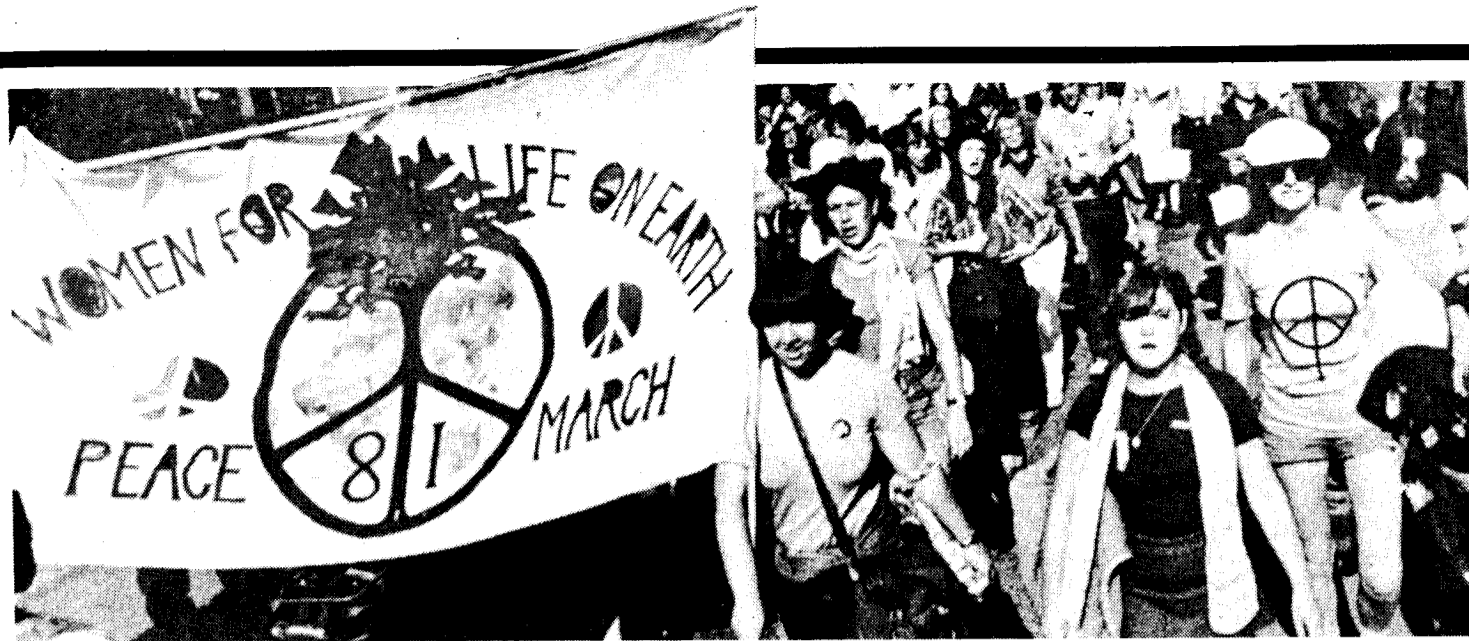
When local struggles

erupt, as they must, there is a massive job of building solidarity and unity with all other railworkers — and reaching out to the miners and steelworkers for support.

Unfortunately, to date, the actions of the Broad Left have not been very auspicious. The forthcoming regional con-

ference will have the opportunity to discuss a fighting action programme.

The conference has been postponed twice now, just at a time when it is most needed — in the aftermath of the pay deal. Let's hope when it finally meets it can get on the right tracks.



Women's Cruise protest

WHY REAGAN WANTS THE NEUTRON BOMB

By Will Reissner printed from Intercontinental Press

ON 10 AUGUST US Secretary of Defence Caspar Weinberger publicly acknowledged that the Pentagon is now producing neutron bombs. Neutron bombs — often described as the ultimate capitalist weapon — differ from other nuclear weapons in that they produce far higher levels of deadly short-lived radiation and lower levels of blast and heat, killing people while doing minimal damage to property.

Weinberger was evasive about when the decision to proceed with the neutron bomb had been reached. But *New York Times* reporter Richard Halloran wrote on 11 August that other officials, including spokesmen in the White House said that 'the decision was made last Thursday...'

A glance at the calendar explains Weinberger's reluctance to pinpoint the date of the decision to go ahead with the weapons. Thursday, 6 August, was the thirty-sixth anniversary of the US atomic bombing of Hiroshima, the first time nuclear weapons were used.

To date, the US military, which dropped a second bomb on Nagasaki three days later, remains the only force ever to have used nuclear weapons against people.

About 140,000 people died in Hiroshima and 70,000 in Nagasaki in the immediate aftermath of the US atomic bombings. A recent book, *The Physical, Medical, and Social Effects of the Atomic Bombings*, reports that the death toll in those cities rose by another 130,000 in the next five years from the effects of radiation.

Dying

Hundreds of thousands of others were severely injured, many permanently, and to this day people are still dying from illnesses or injuries that can be traced to the effects of the atomic blasts.

The initial decision to manufacture neutron bombs was made by President Carter, who argued that their limited blast made them ideal for use in Europe. But the intense opposition in Europe, who recognised that they would be the victims of a 'limited atomic war', forced Carter to back down.

Instead of moving to full-scale manufacture of the weapons and their storage in Europe, Carter ordered the

Washington claims that it needs the neutron bomb to offset the Warsaw Pact's numerical superiority in tanks in Europe.

Without the neutron bomb, the Pentagon argues, the forces of NATO in Western Europe could be overrun by a massive

As long as the US military had an overwhelming nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union, life was much easier for the Pentagon's planners.

US troops could intervene around the world, while warning the Soviets that any military response to such interventions

Under President Carter, an arms buildup was initiated that aimed to reestablish overwhelming US nuclear superiority. On 25 July 1980, Carter signed Presidential Directive 59, which ordered the Pentagon to develop plans and strategies for fighting and winning nuclear wars.

The underlying thesis of PD 59 was that the Pentagon should fight and win such wars by staging a first strike nuclear attack against the Soviet Union that would wipe out the bulk of the USSR's nuclear forces on the ground, while holding enough US weapons in reserve to be able to incinerate the USSR if it retaliated with any weapons that had escaped destruction in the first strike.

Strategy

But in order to implement PD 59, the Pentagon needed a whole series of new weapons systems accurate enough to knock out small targets like Soviet missile silos and command bunkers.

It had already developed two such systems — the Trident I submarine missile and the Minuteman III ground-launched missile. In addition, new underwater detection systems had been invented, enabling the US Navy to pinpoint the location of Soviet nuclear submarines and wipe them out in a preemptive strike.

But to implement its first strike strategy, the Pentagon needs four additional weapons systems: the MX Blockbuster missile, a highly accurate nuclear weapons capable of destroying underground command posts as well as missile silos; the Trident II submarine missile; the Pershing II missile; and the Cruise missile.

Of these four new weapons systems, the new Trident submarines are already being deployed, and the Pershing II and Cruise missiles are scheduled to be deployed in Western Europe, from which they could hit targets in the Soviet Union in as little as four minutes.

Through its massive nuclear buildup, which is expected to cost at least \$200 billion over the next five years, Washington hopes to return to the good old days when it could threaten the



Pentagon in 1978 to produce all the components of the neutron bomb and to store the parts in the United States, where they could be quickly assembled and deployed in Europe if the need arose.

The Reagan administration's 6 August decision was to begin assembling neutron artillery shells and missile warheads from the parts produced under Carter's orders.

Soviet tank invasion.

But the neutron bomb is only one small part of a massive US nuclear buildup aimed against the Soviet Union.

The stated purpose of this buildup is to enable the US military to reestablish, by the end of this decade, the absolute and overwhelming nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union that it held until the mid-1960s.

could result in the nuclear annihilation of the USSR.

While today US nuclear forces remain larger and more effective than their Soviet counterparts, the growth of Soviet nuclear forces since the mid-1960s means the Pentagon is no longer able to threaten the Soviet Union with nuclear attack without risking mutual annihilation.



Soviet Union with nuclear annihilation and thus gain a free hand for its interventionist policies around the world.

So the neutron bomb is part of a whole series of new weapons being added to the Pentagon's arsenal.

While the Pentagon claims that the neutron bomb is needed to counter a Soviet tank invasion of Western Europe, obviously it would be equally effective in neutralising Soviet tank forces during a NATO invasion of Eastern Europe.

Planners

In the Pentagon's view, the neutron bomb is not restricted to use on the plains of Europe. In fact the Middle East is a more likely arena for the neutron bomb, as some Pentagon officials themselves have acknowledged.

Pentagon planners have given considerable thought to how US forces could seize Middle Eastern oil fields in the event of a revolution that topples a regime allied to the US, or as part of a US-backed inva-

By Jenny Flintoft

LAST SATURDAY four feminists chained themselves to the railings at Greenham Common airforce base in Berkshire, one of the proposed Cruise missile sites. They intend to remain there until their demand for a televised debate between themselves and government representatives is met.

Endanger

They want to use such a debate to demonstrate how Cruise missiles will endanger the ordinary people of Britain.

This action was a culmination of a 120-mile march by 40 women. Calling themselves the 'Womens March for Life' they walked, some with babies,

from Cardiff, taking ten days.

At Newbury (4 miles from Greenham Common) they were joined by CND groups from different parts of Britain, and a rally was held outside the base with speeches from the marchers.

Front line

The first speaker, organiser Anne Pettitt, said: 'The people of Britain have never been consulted over the nuclear policy which has made them a front line target in any nuclear conflict.'

'We will not accept the sacrificial role forced on us by the "nuclear allies", nor this squandering of resources, while the needs of millions of people throughout the world cry out to be met. There are 103 missile

sites in Britain — we are calling on our sisters everywhere to follow these women's example'.

Other marchers spoke of their total opposition to the kind of society in which nuclear war is possible. One woman read from a letter from the Soviet Peace Committee and the Soviet Womens Committee.

Ignorance

'Don't believe the propaganda you hear that the Soviet Union is about to attack Britain. We didn't pull ourselves out of ignorance and oppression to invade and kill yet the Soviet Union is ringed by US missiles.'

Pat Arrowsmith from CND suggested anti-weapons propaganda among British troops and US forces in Britain. She went on to say: 'CND

must avoid its mistakes of 20 years ago. We ignore winning the labour movement to our cause at our peril. We must take nuclear disarmament into all the organisations that we belong to.'

First strike

'Many people still think that weapons like Cruise missiles are weapons of defence. But we have no defence against nuclear war. Cruise missiles are essentially first strike weapons, they are weapons of aggression. America intends to make Europe the theatre of a nuclear war to defeat Russia.'

'If every woman in Britain has to chain herself to railings and every man has to sit down in the road, we shall stop Cruise missiles.'



Foot backs multi-lateralism and Brynmor John

At a packed meeting last week in London's Caxton Hall, Michael Foot spoke together with EP Thompson on nuclear disarmament. The discussion at the meeting only confirmed the ambiguity on unilateral disarmament which Michael Foot now personifies.

While re-affirming his opposition to the hugely expensive Trident missile system, Foot refused to say categorically that Cruise missiles would be sent back to the United States by a Labour government.

Instead, he argued, they might need to be used as a bargaining counter in negotiations to get the Soviet Union to remove their SS-20 missiles from Eastern Europe. At the same time, Michael Foot strongly defended the appointment of Brynmor John, a firm anti-unilateralist, as Labour's defence spokesperson despite 'personal disagreements' which he had with John over defence policy.

Foot might also have said 'despite Brynmor John's complete opposition to Labour Party defence policy'. The strength of unilateralist feeling in the party is summed up by the resolutions to this year's party conference.

Around 90 resolutions call for unilateral nuclear disarmament, 15 for British withdrawal from NATO, and only 4 support a multilateralist position. Of these, one comes from Frank Chapple's EETPU and one from Michael Foot's constituency party in Ebbw Vale.

Michael Foot is still trying to compromise with the anti-unilateralist right wing. His latest statements add extra urgency to a massive turnout on the demonstration in Brighton called by Sussex Alliance for Nuclear Disarmament on Sunday 27 September, the eve of the Labour conference. The demonstration is being backed nationally by CND. CND's national demonstration takes place in London on Saturday 24 October.

tion. This is one of the reasons that the Carter administration established the Rapid Deployment Force.

Protected

The neutron bomb also plays an important role in the Pentagon's plans for any takeover of Middle Eastern oil fields.

An 11 August report in the *New York Times* on possible uses of the neutron bomb pointed out that the blast from a neutron bomb is intended to kill soldiers in tanks or other protected areas without destroying as many buildings or other structures, such as oil rigs, in surrounding areas as standard nuclear explosives.

The neutron bomb could also be used against liberation forces waging guerrilla warfare in some future Vietnam. Even if US military forces were unsure of the precise location of guerrilla bases, a few neutron artillery shells lobbed into the general area would wipe out the guerrillas along with the rest of the population — while allow-

ing US troops to move into the area in a short time.

The neutron bomb is not a weapon of deterrence, built in hope that it will never be used.

Caspar Weinberger himself said that the neutron bomb is a valuable addition to our forces, which 'we shall probably want to use.'

The Pentagon has been busily drawing up plans for fighting a 'limited' nuclear war in Europe. This is part of the administration's plan, in the words of *New York Times* reporter Richard Halloran, to build a capacity to fight nuclear wars that range from a limited strike through a protracted conflict to an all-out exchange.

Pershing II

Central to the Pentagon's plans for waging limited nuclear war in Europe are two decisions: the NATO agreement to place 572 US-controlled Pershing II and Cruise nuclear missiles in Western Europe; and decision to proceed with the building of the neutron bomb.

In the Pentagon's view, Washington would have the option of fighting a 'limited' nuclear war by launching only its Europe-based nuclear missiles against the Soviet Union and using the neutron bomb against Soviet troops.

Macabre

According to this game plan, the Soviet Union would in theory also respond in a 'limited' way, destroying Europe while refraining from launching any missiles against the United States itself. In turn, the Pentagon would not send any US based missiles against the Soviet Union.

This macabre scenario of limited nuclear war is the subject of intense discussion in NATO planning groups and in the Pentagon.

Naturally the prospect of a 'limited' nuclear war in which Europe is totally destroyed holds little attraction for working people on that continent.

As a result there has been tremendous opposition on both the missile deployment plan and the plans to build the

neutron bomb and stockpile it in Europe.

But Reagan and Weinberger stoutly maintain that opposition to these weapons systems is simply the result of Soviet propaganda and disinformation campaigns.

At a 13 August press conference, President Reagan insisted that 'we have information that the Soviet Union spent about \$100 million in Western Europe alone a few years ago, when the announcement was first made of the invention of the neutron warhead. And I don't know how much they're spending now, but they're starting the same kind of propaganda drive.'

Ignorance

Weinberger chimed in that opposition to the neutron weapons in Europe is largely a tribute to the effectiveness of the Soviet propaganda campaign against this weapon.

In an 11 August article by Weinberger in the *Washington Post*, the defense secretary argued that those who believe the neutron bomb is immoral

fall prey to the abundant misinformation about neutron weapons, some of it innocently based on ignorance of the facts, but most of it 'deliberately disseminated by a well-orchestrated propaganda campaign based in Moscow.'

Opposition

Europe, Weinberger claims, has been the centre of a Soviet propaganda campaign that began in the last administration and that exploited both European fear and an unfortunate impression of American indecisiveness.

The Reagan administration's decision to move forward with production of the neutron bomb is certain to increase European opposition to NATO plans to install the 572 Pershing II and Cruise missiles in Western Europe.

In face of tremendous popular opposition to the missiles, the various NATO governments claimed that the decision to install the missiles would be coupled with arms control talks with the Soviet

Union that would actually lead to a reduction of nuclear weapons in Europe and render the deployment decision unnecessary.

Since then, however, the Reagan administration's obvious lack of interest in arms control talks has destroyed the credibility of this argument.

In a sombre assessment of the impact of Weinberger's neutron bomb announcement, the *Washington Post* noted in an 11 August editorial that 'the president has gotten himself into a whole new predicament by his decision on the neutron bomb... Mr. Reagan has also handed Europe's burgeoning left, not to speak of the Soviet Union, a powerful propaganda club to use against the United States...'

The *Post* concluded that 'Already, the critical alliance effort to deploy new missiles... was an uphill struggle. Prudence dictated that Mr. Reagan reserve a move on the neutron bomb until he had climbed that hill. Instead, he chose to make it steeper. He may be moving NATO toward a fateful crisis.'

Where you can buy Socialist Challenge

Scotland

ABERDEEN: SC available at Boomtown books, King St. For more info ring Bill 896 284.
DUNDEE: SC available from Dundee City Square outside Boots, Thur 4-5.30pm, Fri 4-5.30pm, Sat 11-4pm.
EDINBURGH: SC sold Thur 4.15-5.15pm Bus Station, St. Andrews Square and bottom of Waverly steps 4.30-5.30; Sat 11.30-2pm East End, Princes St. Also available from 1st May Books, or Better Books, Forrest Rd. More info on local activity from SC c/o Box 6, 1st May Bookshop, Candlemaker Row.
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OXFORD: SC sold Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.

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SHEFFIELD: SC on sale Thursday, Pond St, 4.30-6pm; Saturday, Fargate 10.30-12.30pm.

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BRENT: SC sold Willesden Junction Thur 4.30pm.
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DURHAM: Durham City Co-op Bookshop, 85a New Elvet.
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MILTON KEYNES: Oakleaf Books, 109 Church Street, Wolverton.
OXFORD: EOA Books, 34 Cowley Rd.
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LIVERPOOL: News from Nowhere, 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool L1
LONDON: Central Books, 37 Grays Inn Rd; Colletts, Charing Cross Rd, WC2; Paperback Books, Brixton and Charlotte St; Kilburn Bookshop, Kilburn High Road, NW6; The Bookplace, Peckham High St, SE15; Books Plus, Lewisham; Balham Food Co-op; Housmans, 5 Caledonian Rd, N1; Compendium, Camden Town NW1; Owl, Kentish Town; New Beacon, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, N1; Bookmarks, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; Centerprise, 126 Kingsland High St, E8; Dillons, QMC; Page One, E15; The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, N1; Reading Matters, Wood Green next to Sainsbury's.
YORK: Community Books, Walmgate.

count on bulk orders. Write to: Revolution Youth, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.
TURKEY: Solidarity Campaign Week of Action to mark first anniversary of military coup. Saturday 12 September 11am. Picket of Downing St. 'Save the life of Dogan Taftan'; 2pm Rally Against Dictatorship. NUFTO Hall, Jockey Fields, London WC1. Speakers from labour and solidarity movements.
'INNER Cities in Revolt', 'Fighting Unemployment', 'Local Government in Crisis' — three theme conference organised by Lewisham Fightback, 26-27 September, Lee Centre, 1 Aisilbie Road, SE12. Contact Eric Goodyer 01-692 7826.

IMG notices

IRISH fraction Saturday 26 September. Venue and details to follow.
RAIL fraction Sunday 20 September in London.
ENGINEERING fraction Sunday 20 September in Birmingham.
POEU fraction Sunday 20 September in London.

POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE: National meeting of representatives of IMG/RY branches in local Youth Revolt defence committees.

Socialist Challenge News



Activists' guide to the autumn

There can be little doubt that the threat of a major US-inspired war has grown closer in the last two months. Reagan's provocations in the Mediterranean, the stepping up of threats in Central America and the Caribbean and the unashamed White House backing of the South African invasion of Angola are winding up pressures in the Third World to fever pitch.

In West Germany 10 October will be the date for the largest demonstration in West Germany since the war. And on 24 October the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament will be holding its own demonstration against the remilitarisation.

One of the campaign's objectives this year is to make sure that the demonstration has a weighty representation of Labour Party and trade union bodies. So make sure that your branch banner is there, but most importantly bring marchers from your workplace.

Poland

As Solidarity meets in its first congress this week, rumours are again growing of a massive invasion of Poland by the Soviet Union to halt the process of assertion of workers democracy by the Polish workers. 'Hands off Workers Poland!' the campaign in the labour movement which has already organised demonstrations and rallies to build a campaign against

intervention is urging its supporters to be on guard, particularly over the next month.

There has been the most startling contrast between the concern and mass interest provoked by the heroic action of the hunger strikers in the H Blocks and the victories won by the campaign in Ireland abroad and the lack of such a response in Britain.

That starts to change at the Labour Party conference at the end of September where out of 48 motions on Ireland 43 express the aim for British troops to be withdrawn from Ireland.

Ireland

Owen Carron, newly elected MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone, aims to visit the conference to present the view of the prisoners, and the conference will see a shift, however small, away from the shameful bipartisan policy on Ireland.

The need for a systematic campaign in the labour movement now becomes urgent. The Labour Committee on Ireland will be joining with other solidarity organisations in organising a Labour Movement conference on 28 November to which they are urging all labour movement bodies to send representatives.

The aftermath of the youth uprisings of the summer has thrown two questions into sharp relief.

Unemployment is another issue. All indicators continue to point to a mounting rate of unemployment over the next period.

Firstly the police and courts are pursuing those arrested during and after with ferocity. The consistent work of defence campaigns, particularly in gaining labour movement support for those arrested, will continue, although yet another police ban has meant that a demonstration planned in Southall on 20 September has now been cancelled.

The Labour Party continues its campaign with the demonstration in Birmingham on Saturday 19 September. Pride of place should be given to the inspiring lead of the Laurence Scott workers still fighting for their jobs against the opposition of the Tories, their boss and the leadership of their unions.

Jobs

The TUC, after the jolt it received from the People's March for Jobs, has organised a campaign for the autumn against youth unemployment. A train will carry unemployed youth around the country speaking at rallies, organising and demonstrating, culminating in a mass rally on 28 November.

The Tories will also hear the voice of unemployed youth loud and clear on 16 October at the Tory Party conference

when a mass demonstration of unemployed, organised by the Right to Work Campaign takes place in Brighton.

All eyes will be on the results of the elections for the deputy leaderships of the Labour Party for signs of the direction of the labour movement for the next decade. Voting is still going on in the branches of the Labour Party and

trade unions. Rallies with Tony Benn on the platform will be taking place in every part of Britain this month. Be there!

Finally don't forget Socialist Challenge will be giving full coverage to all these events. We want your views on them and we want to get our views across to the widest number of those involved. So ... read it, write for it, sell it:

Relatives of Hunger strikers visit Britain 17-20 September

Relatives of prisoners in the H Blocks (including hunger strikers) will visit London, accompanied by Owen Carron MP during the period 17-20 September inclusive.

The mass delegation is being organised by the National H Block/Armagh Committee in Ireland and is sponsored by the H Block/Armagh Committee in London.

Maura McCrory, a spokesperson for the relatives, states that this 100-strong delegation is coming to Britain in order to impress on the British people and the international community the unity of the prisoners' relatives behind the hunger strike and to demonstrate in a forceful way their full and united support for the five demands of the prisoners.

A Rally to launch the delegation will take place in the London Irish Centre at 7.30pm on 17 Sept. (Murray St, Camden Town NW1)

Speakers include Owen Carron MP and relatives of the hunger-strikers. The rally will precede a social where there will be an opportunity to meet Owen Carron and the relatives of the protesting prisoners.

Handicapped babies: parents should decide

I AGREE with Yvonne Taylor in Socialist Challenge (27 Aug) when she argues that many of the problems facing handicapped children today are a product of callous and hypocritical attitudes in capitalist society. As socialists we have to fight for better conditions and lives for handicapped people.

However, it seems to me that this is not really the point in question. What is being debated in the press at the moment is whether parents or doctors or both have the right to decide to take away the life support of severely malformed babies.

In an opportunist fashion the anti-abortionists have taken this up and argue that the decision to take away a life support machine is murder (in the same way that they argue abortion is). I disagree with this and I think that in general we should defend parents and doctors who are attacked for taking such decisions.

The article is wrong to argue that in this instance the baby's rights are more important; no one has rights in the abstract; a new born baby cannot establish such a choice in practice on this particular question. Somebody has to make a choice though and I think it should be the parents.

This choice does not give parents absolute rights over children or powers of life and death in general. But the point is that this is a decision which effects the lives of the parents and especially the mother and they are the only people qualified to take it.

It is typical of SPUC and LIFE that they have no concern whatever on the quality of life of children or parents but again talk about life in abstract.

This issue is not so much an issue of rights as one of who decides? For that reason it is difficult and dangerous to draw out general principles in relation to it since it is specific I do think, however, that Socialist Challenge should defend the doctor currently on trial and the parents from attack.

J Arkwright
East London.

Letters letters LETTERS



Control the police

I AGREE with Toni Gorton in her article in Socialist Challenge (27 Aug): we should control the police, not collaborate with them.

I would have thought that most socialists would have given a small cheer when John Alderson, Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall, broke ranks to criticise the government's response to the youth uprisings, but we should promptly reject the proposals for community policing that he advances as an alternative.

Community policing is the iron fist in the velvet glove. For 51 weeks of the year you get the spying, the infiltration into the

schools, the 'low profile' that has been the scene in Handsworth for the last few years. But when it comes to the crunch the gloves are off and the truncheons are out. No reader of Socialist Challenge will forget the picture of Pauline Roe sitting with her head smashed open on a Handsworth street.

What's the alternative? Well socialists want to get rid of the police not reform them, but we are not strong enough to do that. Instead we have to take every measure that tends to expose the role of the police and weaken their ability to attack the working class.

That's why we should be in

favour of the type of measures taken by the Greater London Council which seek to scrutinise the police, hire and fire senior officers, disband all elite groups like the Special Patrol Group and the immigrant snatch squad.

The debate about whether we should have trade unions in the police (or more to the point whether we should have police in the trade unions) can wait for other letters, but most would agree that democratic rights should be introduced into the police force.

So a loud 'no': to community policing and 'yes' to control.

G Roberts
London SW14

Typists lead 'heroic' struggle

THE Liverpool NALGO typists' strike, now entering its tenth week, is the only current struggle over pay in the country, said John Deason, National Secretary of the Right to Work Campaign at a meeting in Liverpool on Thursday, September 3, describing it as a 'heroic struggle'.

May Sutton, a member of the strike committee, explained that the typists were fighting against low pay, as defined by the TUC. Some of them have worked for the City Council for thirty years and still earn less than £50 a week.

Many are single parents or supporters of families.

The 400 strikers are growing more militant as the strike goes on longer. While the dispute has been referred to ACAS, Sir Trevor Jones, Liberal leader of the City Council

has asked the typists to return to work in exchange for negotiations.

The typists' response has been to extend their picketing and to send delegations to London and the TUC to publicise their case. Meanwhile, some sixty senior council officers have resigned from NALGO in order to break the strike.

Council manual workers have backed the typists by demanding bonus payments that have been held

Anger is no substitute

SOCIALISTS have a responsibility to reach as wide an audience as possible, particularly now. Socialist Challenge is seeking to win new readers but I am worried that we may be putting obstacles in the path to our politics.

Selling the paper outside Metal Box factory some months ago, one worker vocally scorned the paper because, as he said, it's biased. My comrade instantly replied, 'Of course it's biased... in favour of the working class.'

I was impressed both by the speed of her reply and by its sentiment, but now I'm not sure. I think the man has a point.

Socialist journalists have a harder task than their bourgeois counterparts. Not only do socialists have to provide facts and counter the media's distortions, but they also have to provide arguments which can be used by

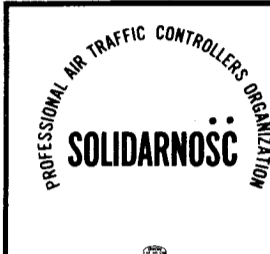
militants.

A lot of the time we fail in these three areas because we rely only on our anger to settle an issue. Most of the paper smacks of righteousness, and unreasoned bias in favour of the working class. We do not have a monopoly on anger and it is no substitute for clear analysis and argument.

Emotive words may help and pad out a paragraph but they do not aid understanding. The crimes of capitalism are stark enough to withstand stark reporting. Or, as Lenin preferred to say, — facts have hard heads.

I don't need someone else to be angry, shocked, indignant or horrified for me. I can do it all for myself.

Rob Jones
London E9



THE LESSONS OF POLAND 1

I HAVE just returned from a visit to the United States where I attended several meetings of the air traffic controllers' union (PATCO) in Miami. I was struck by their determination and the strength of their collective leadership.

They have mass meetings every night of over 250 controllers and their families. The controllers remain confident, despite the attacks they have received from the government (they've all been sacked and a number have been jailed) and their lack of strike experience (they've never had a national strike before).

One of the features of this strike which particularly stands out is their identification with the workers of Poland. On the picket line at Oberlin, Ohio, some strikers carried a placard saying: 'I would rather be a controller in Poland.'

At a picket near Chicago, the Polish flag is flying. And the union in Miami has produced a badge which says 'PATCO - Solidarnosc'.

MARK TURNBULL
Liverpool

THE LESSONS OF POLAND 2

ANYONE who saw the television programme last Sunday about Polish TV will have been struck by the sheer hypocrisy of the British interviewer. Self-righteously he kept demanding why Polish TV news did not cover demonstrations against food shortages and price rises. Fair enough, perhaps.

But it's a pity no British journalist asks the question: 'Why don't British TV and the newspapers cover demonstrations in Britain in support of the H Block prisoners and hunger strikers?' British workers, particularly media workers, have a lot to learn from their Polish counterparts.

JILL BELL
NW London

We're not giving in to fascist threat

Three months ago Sheila Malone, a staff member at the Other Bookshop, was viciously attacked and hospitalised by fascists. Socialist Challenge, which runs the shop, launched a special fund to pay for a convalescent holiday for Sheila and improve security to safeguard other counter staff.

The response has been marvellous: we want to give a big thank you to the many who have donated. We're not giving in to fascist intimidation, and this money is going to make sure we can stand up to them.

So far over £700 has been raised, enough to send Sheila on holiday and to begin extensive security work in the shop. The lay-

out has been completely transformed to protect staff — and as an added bonus it has given us much more space in the shop.

We've installed alarms, an intercom system and a direct passage through from the office to the counter. We now want to install closed circuit television, and although the building is guarded nightly, we will

put in a night alarm system as back-up.

We also hope to expand the service our shop is giving the left and the labour movement. Cash for this is coming from our £100,000 expansion fund, from which £2,000 has been allocated to expand stock.

We want to feature books and pamphlets of special interest to the labour movement, including areas such as black liberation.

Both these funds are still being held open. Donations to the Sheila Malone fund should be made out to 'The Sheila

Malone fund', and to our £100,000 drive to 'Socialist Challenge'. Thanks again to everyone!

This week our quarterly fund drive raised £955.

Thanks to:	
Lewisham	£166.00
Aberdeen	92.00
Nottingham	63.00
Bristol	50.00
Hackney	100.00
MB (Scotland)	25.00
Middlesbrough	35.00
Liverpool	60.00
Glasgow	108.00
Bolsover	3.00
Haringey	27.00
Birmingham	151.00
Southwark	67.00
TOTAL	£955.00



By Joe Singleton

'Polish Disease' spreads

THE threat of a spread of the 'Polish disease' is a nightmare which haunts the stalinist bureaucracies of Eastern Europe. As was reported in Socialist Challenge (20 August) the Husak regime in Czechoslovakia, put in power after the Soviets invaded that country in 1968, is preparing a massive show-trial of 19 supporters of Charter 77, the Czech human rights movement.

Interests and demands, their criticisms voiced at various times, during personal discussions, at meetings, in factories and elsewhere.'

The majority of those arrested are prominent cultural intellectuals and academics. The Husak regime is well aware of the important role played by the Polish intellectuals around KOR (Committee to Defend the Workers) in the events leading up to Gdansk 1980.

In East Germany also the regime is reacting harshly against any demonstration of support among East German

workers for Poland's Solidarity.

According to a recent report of the West Berlin based Human Rights Working Group there has been intense discussion in the factories and work-places of East Germany in recent months around the question of the democratisation of the state-controlled union in the GDR, the Free German Trade Union (FDGB).

In the past two months alone the report says that seven workers have been arrested in four big industrial plants in Eastern Germany for publicly expressing their support for Solidarity.

These arrests took place at the Carl-Zeiss-Jena works in Thuringen, the Union machine-tool factory in Gera, at the steelworks Maxhutte in Unterwellenborg and at the Wilhelm Pieck chemical workers in Rudolstadt.

Another worker by the name of Detlef Abramson was imprisoned last autumn for ten months after he stated publicly that the East Germans should do as the Poles had done.

In January of this year a doctor by the name of Wilhelm Koch was imprisoned by the East German authorities for 4 years for having contributed the sum of 10,000 marks to Solidarity.

(Based on information from Palach Press and Labour Focus on Eastern Europe).

One year of Solidarity

By Davy Jones

AS THE TUC meets in Blackpool, the world's second largest independent union movement held its first national congress in the shipyard city of Gdansk, Poland. Some 912 delegates representing just under 9½m members of Solidarity have been taking stock of the past year's historic events, and planning the extension of the gains of Solidarity's revolution.

The congress took place against a background of deteriorating relations between Solidarity and the government: a union printer was arrested in Katowice for publishing 'anti-Soviet caricatures' and the official inquiry into last March's police violence in Bydgoszcz reported that it could not find those responsible.

conclusion, in a country which claims to be communist, is simple: the workers should run the economy themselves.

Network

The movement for workers' self-management began last March when seventeen of the largest industrial workplaces, like the Lenin Shipyards in Gdansk, the Huta Katowice steelworks in Upper Silesia, and the Ursus tractor plant in Warsaw, formed the Network.

This body drew up proposals for self-management through the establishment of workers' councils, which were approved by the 208,000 Solidarity members in the enterprises.

In July an even broader body called the Working Group was set up after a conference in Lublin of workers' councils, self-management committees and Solidarity committees from fourteen regions. The Working Group decided to co-ordinate its efforts with the Network to promote discussion and organisation of workers' self-management.

In July the recent Communist Party congress approved setting out a Bill in the Polish parliament on workers' self-management. These mild proposals would effectively leave power in the hands of the government as the workers' representatives would only participate in, not control, aspects of the



Gdansk shipyard workers are amongst those supporting the movement for workers' self-management

The continual barrage of slanders against Solidarity in all the official media, as well as the government's attempts to censor the union's own journals, creates a permanent source of conflict.

More serious however is the dispute between Solidarity and the government over workers' self-management. On the anniversary of last summer's historic Gdansk agreement the authorities raised the price of bread by 400 per cent.

Co-opt

The government uses the enormous economic crisis to demoralise the Polish workers into a sense of hopelessness, while attempting to co-opt the Solidarity leadership into schemes of joint responsibility and management of the economy.

There is no doubt that sectors of the masses are tired after the tumultuous struggles of the past year and in danger of becoming disillusioned with Solidarity's ongoing conflicts with the government. At the same time the debate within Solidarity on the economic crisis has hastened a broad politicisation of the activists.

They realise that the economic crisis is not their fault. They know about the appalling economic mismanagement over the years and the corruption of the bureaucrats. The

see them reduced to powerlessness as the bureaucracy tightened their grip. This time the workers want such councils to have real institutionalised powers.

The draft Bill on self-management drawn up by the Network envisages real power lying with the shopfloor workers whose democratic assemblies

where a compromise solution was worked out. In a few cases the workers have won the right to nominate their own director — in the Warsaw Polytechnic chemical factory and the Falbet prefabricated housing plant.

Now workers at the Huta Katowice Steelworks are organising a referendum on the acceptability of their director.

The government sees the demand of worker-elected directors as a direct threat to its 'nomenklatura' system whereby all important posts in Poland are given to people on a party-approved list. It would represent a serious inroad into its already seriously threatened monopoly of political power.

Powerful

But the movement for workers' self-management is growing more powerful — Some 206 of the largest enterprises in the Warsaw



management of the enterprise, whose director would remain appointed by the authorities.

But the workers have seen these so-called workers' councils before. After the 1956 uprising as many as 80 per cent of the Warsaw enterprises set up workers' councils, only to

Turkey Solidarity Events
Saturday 12 September
First anniversary
of the fascist coup in Turkey
 3-4pm
Picket of the Turkish Embassy
 43 Belgrave Square, London SW1
Organised by the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey

Sunday 13 September
International day against fascism
 5pm Rally
Chairperson — Ernie Roberts MP, Speakers — Ken Livingstone GLC Leader, Bob Wright, AUEW Asst Gen Sec; Eric Hughes, UCATT NW Region Sec; Roberto Vargas, FDR; Cllr Phillip Bray, Sec Hazel Grove CLP; speakers from Chile and Turkey.

7pm Solidarity Concert
with Pueblo (Chile), Raul Valencia (Chile) and Melike Demirag (Turkey)
 Admission £1.50

The rally and solidarity concert take place in the Camden Centre, Bedford Way, London WC1 Organised by Chilean Anti-Fascist Committee, Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey and the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign

An eyewitness report Turkey - one year of dictatorship

ON 8 February 1980 the workers in the massive state-run spinning complex of Taris in Izmir, Turkey went on strike against their employers' attempts to sack dozens of trade union militants and replace them with known fascists.

The Turkish police were joined by the army in laying siege to the plant for three weeks, sparking off an uprising among the shanty-dwellers and working class of Izmir. Demonstrations and street battles were finally ended by 10,000 armed troops accompanied by tanks and helicopters.

On 28 May this year, nine months after the military coup and fifteen months after the uprising, 187 workers from Taris were sentenced by military tribunal to between 2 and 29 years imprisonment for their part in the mass resistance.

This week is the first anniversary of the coup. Socialist Challenge asked a Turkish socialist recently returned from Turkey her assessment of one year of dictatorship.

Can you tell us about the situation immediately prior to the coup?

When the Generals seized power on 12 September 1980 50,000 workers were on strike and another 100,000 were due to come out. Between 15 and 20 people were being killed in political violence daily — mostly youthful victims of right-wing terror.

Turkish industry was running at about 30-35 per cent of capacity, and the Turkish parliament had been unable to elect a Head of State for six months.

It was up to the army, the only state institution that had remained remotely stable, to step in — as it had twice before in Turkey, from 1960-61 and 1971-73 — to guarantee the future for capitalism.

Parliament was dissolved, all political parties banned, workers on strike ordered back to work.

An estimated 15,000 people were arrested as NATO's largest army took swift control of one of NATO's most important countries.

What is the significance of the coup in Turkey for working people in other countries?

The coup in Turkey dramatically changed the international balance of forces in the Middle East. Turkey was the country with the largest socialist organisations, the most militant and developed working class, the most politicised Kurdish movement in the region.

Support for the coup from the Western governments was immediate — the 'sick man of NATO' had been cured (for the time being), and the powerful Turkish working class movement was defeated.

After the revolution in Iran, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the permanent instability of the other countries in the Middle East, Uncle Sam is surely rubbing his hands with glee at the early swift successes of the Generals in Turkey. Here is a cop for NATO's southern flank.

Just why was resistance to the coup so slight?

The Turkish left was rumoured to be better armed than the Turkish army but the large left groups were bitterly divided among themselves.

Overwhelmingly composed of radicalised youth, these organisations lacked any real links with the working class, while politically they tended to

substitute armed guerrilla struggle for mass activity.

A large section of Turkish society was weary of the increasing violence on the streets and accepted the coup as inevitable, even welcomed it.

The Turkish working class was tied by its reformist leaders.

But Bulent Ecevit's social-democratic government from 1977-79 had completely politically disarmed the Turkish working class.

Social democracy just isn't an alternative in a dependent economy up to its neck in debts to imperialism.

So what is the character of the present regime?

The regime is a military dictatorship — of a particularly barbaric kind. Already there are around 100,000 political prisoners, eight youths have been executed while hundreds more have been sentenced to death. They have silenced all opposition.

It is a dictatorship which dances to the tune of Turkey's big capitalists who, in their turn, are only junior partners to Western capital.

Workers organisation has been replaced by a 'High Referee Committee' which has already imposed vicious wage cuts while the bank interest rate is a staggering 60 per cent.

At the same time the economy is being 'opened' and currency restrictions lifted to try and attract foreign investors.

What about the future of the junta?

Prospects for the junta are mixed. On the one hand, they have achieved political stability with relative ease; on the other hand their economic goal is to defray Turkey's enormous debts to imperialism — and this will be difficult.

Austerity measures alone won't solve their economic crisis — working people have to eat and will be sure to resist further wage cutting.



Turkish police in action

And in the long term?

In one month the process of 'democratisation' begins with the convention of something called a constituent assembly.

This will consist of 160 members plus the five-man junta — forty of these are picked directly by the junta while the rest are selected by them from lists of 'trustworthy and capable' persons to be presented by the governor of each region.

Undoubtedly the intention is to construct a panoply of harsh and restrictive legislation which will guarantee that any new civilian regime will be nothing but firm administrators of repressive state institutions.

What can the labour movement in the European countries do to help bring down the junta?

If the dictatorship goes, it wants to go under circum-

Friday 11 September
Picket of Turkish Ambassador's Residence and Chilean Embassy (with Chile Anti-Fascist Committee), Devonshire Street, NW1. 5.30-7.30pm

Saturday 12 September
Picket of Downing Street 'Save the life of Dogan Tarkan' 11am
Rally Against Dictatorship NUFTO Hall, Jockey Fields, London WC1 2pm

stances of its own choosing leaving its mark permanently and prominently on any future regime.

Repressive institutions do not go away, they are kicked out by the class struggle.

The Turkish working class has a long struggle ahead of it. It is up to us outside Turkey to assist it by developing the broadest possible international campaign of solidarity to

isolate the junta. Despite the bloody record of the dictatorship, the applause for Turkey's safe return to the Free World still echoes in editorials across Europe.

The Turkey Solidarity Campaign is organising a week of anniversary of the coup. The campaign can be contacted at BM Box 5965, London WC1.

Ireland - a new initiative

By Loretta Loach

THE Labour Committee on Ireland and the Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland are planning a major labour movement conference on the theme of 'Ireland — Time for Tory policies to go'.

Scheduled to take place in London on 28 November its aim is to widen the debate on Ireland within the labour movement and to urge that the Labour Party and trade unions have a positive role to play in solving the problems of the British presence in Ireland.

There have been similar developments in the trade union movement in the last six months. The Scottish TUC sharply opposed the Tory government's attitude to the hunger strike and the Association of Trades Councils urged the granting of the five demands as the only solution to the H Block crisis.

Over 50 resolutions on Northern Ireland have been laid before this year's Labour Party conference. The overwhelming majority of these are critical of the line pursued by the Labour leadership and call for a positive com-

mitment to the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. This conference provides an important opportunity to carry the debate on Ireland into the wider trade union and Labour movement.

It will be addressed by leading Irish and British trade unionists.

Labour movement conference on Ireland
Saturday 28 November
The Theatre
309 Regent St,
London W1

I agree to sponsor the conference.....
Delegates attending conference.....
Status.....
Address.....

Return to: Labour Movement Conference on Ireland Organising Committee, 1 North End Rd, London W14.

We urge you to get delegated from your TU branch/CLP. Sponsors for the conference so far include Joan Maynard MP, Clive Soley MP, Denis Canavan MP, Ernie Roberts MP, Bob Parry MP, Stuart Holland MP, Stan Thorne MP, Sid Bidwell MP, Richard Balfe MEP, Peter Hain LCC (personal capacity).

British troops should get out



British troops should get out

The fight for nurseries

By Judith Arkwright

THE fight for adequate childcare provision is a fundamental one in the fight for women's rights. Until it is accepted that women should not necessarily have to bear full responsibility for children, then our right to work and our right to participate as free and equal people in society will never be realised.

But childcare in this country is still a luxury for the few and, like everything else, it's getting worse under the Tories.

Only 38 per cent of under fives in the United Kingdom receive some sort of day care. But much of that provision — nursery classes, pre-school play groups — is part time and doesn't cover a normal working day.

Less than one in a hundred under fives have places in local authority day nurseries. Private nurseries cater for the 10 per cent who can afford it. Registered and unregistered childminders provide the bulk of the full day care for the under fives.

Lack

Of course it has not always been as bad as that. Just after the Second World War when women's labour was required by the state there were 903 borough nurseries in Britain, compared to 453 in 1970. How cynical that the lives of women and children can be chopped and changed in this way to suit the needs of an elite.

The appalling lack of childcare provision forces women back into the home to take over what should be a collective responsibility. It forces them to take part time or low paid jobs which fit in with nursery hours. The fight for nurseries is vital for women, children, and for

the quality of life of everyone.

The Labour Party is currently working on a document which sets out the different childcare facilities needed. It is vital that the campaign is stepped up both against the Tories and to commit a future Labour government.

There are many areas for discussion.

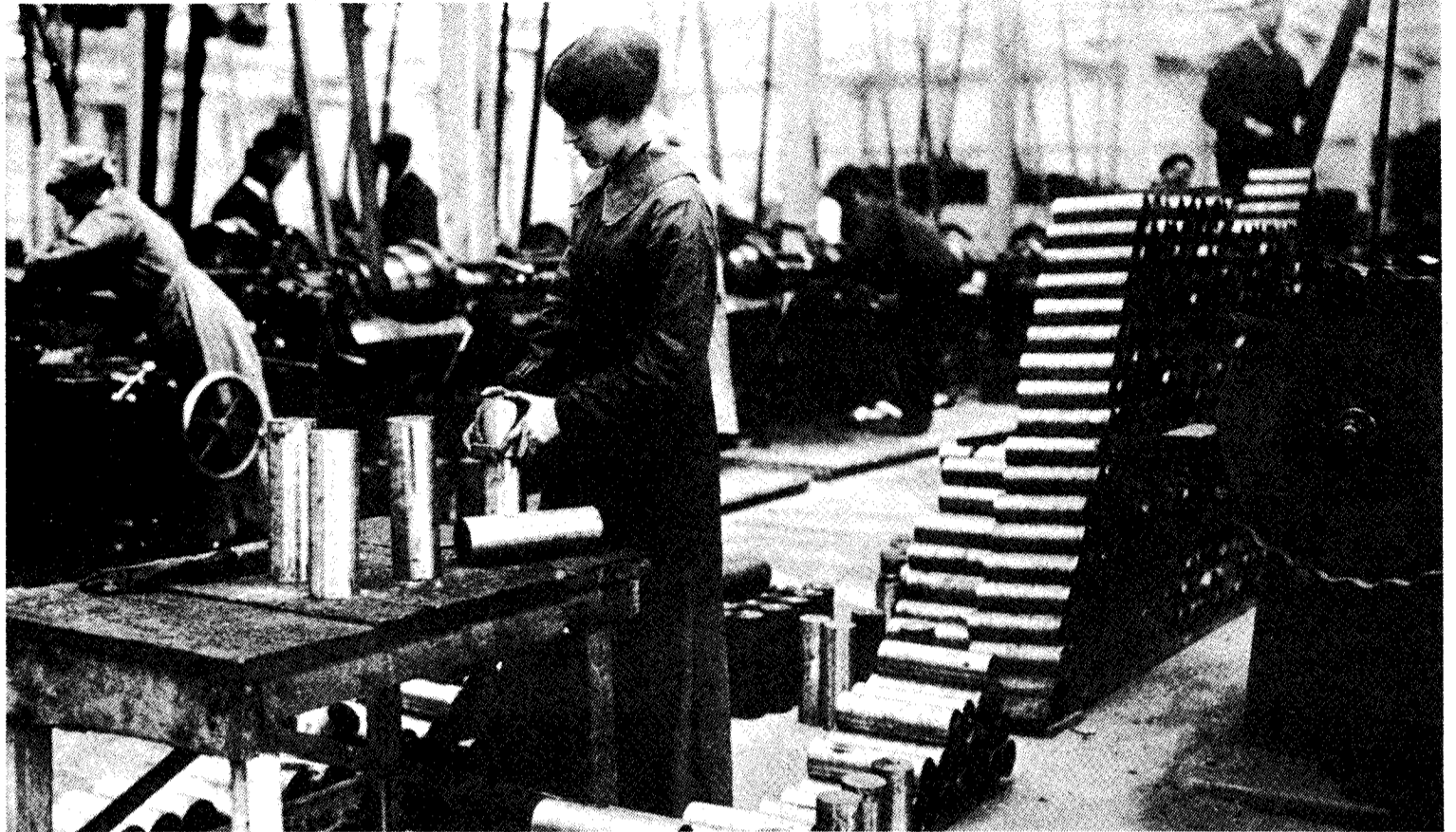
Childminders provide the most common form of childcare outside the home and whilst provision is so inadequate elsewhere we should demand that all child minders are registered and recognise that many women prefer the individual attention the child receives.

But this kind of provision, of course, lets the welfare state off the hook and is not necessarily adequate.

Workplace nurseries are another option which are becoming more popular. These are not a new idea. In the textile towns in the north they used to be a feature of factory premises for a traditionally female workforce.

Goal

Although expensive, many women prefer such facilities. The convenience, however, may be outweighed by the fact that when a parent loses her/his job, the nursery place goes too. It could be



When women's labour is in the 'national' interest, nursery places are forthcoming

a weapon in the hands of the employer.

Our ultimate goal has to be for the provision of state run free nurseries to meet the demand. One year ago, and for the first time in this country, a national campaign was launched to fight for this aim.

The campaign is significant because it brings together disparate local campaigns and with its national focus is able to take the issue up with all the major trade unions. For further information contact National Childcare Campaign at 17 Victoria Park Square, London E2.

The National Child Care Campaign is organised around the following demands:

- Local Nursery Centres which would make full time provision involving both care and education and which should develop facilities for the local community such as after school provision, toy libraries, drop in centres.
- Every Nursery Centre should be democratically controlled, giving staff, parents, local people and local groups the chance to participate fully in the management and running of the centre. They would employ and provide opportunities for training for local parents, thus offering those who want it an alternative community-based employment.
- We support the unionisation of child care

- workers, the implementation of equal pay and the provision of training facilities for all child care workers with the aim of breaking down the theoretical division between nursery and nursery education, and to encourage older people and men to enter this field where they have been excluded.
- We stand in complete opposition to the rundown and closure of the present totally inadequate provision.
- We offer our support and advice to campaigns, parents and staff in fighting these cuts and urge the trades unions involved to support their action, such as occupations of threatened nurseries, defending staff ratios with appropriate direct action, including strikes to defend their members jobs and our own much needed services.

Abortion rights on trial

By Marijke Colle

A SERIES of trials have begun in Belgium against anyone who attempts to help women obtain abortions.

The law in Belgium is a vicious one. Anyone who performs abortions, gives information to women or aids them in any way in obtaining an abortion can receive up to five years imprisonment.

About 40,000 Belgian women a year obtain abortions. Of these it is calculated that a possible 20,000 are either back street abortions or are extremely costly operations performed by exploitative doctors.

But some reactionary forces in the establishment have suddenly decided that the implementation of the law is too lax. The public prosecutor announced his attention to put on trial about 30 or more doctors, counsellors and even people who have merely spoken in public in favour of abortion.

These trials, which began on Wednesday of last week will of course create a precedent in the interpretation of the law.

Such a vicious reaction on the part of the establishment to the simple need for women to ex-

ercise control over their own bodies and exercise choice in their lives, may even prove a bit extreme for the Catholic church which hasn't made up its mind yet where it stands on the trials.

The attack has met with a massive response from the pro-choice movement. The first trial in Brussels was picketed by about 1,000 women, trade unionists and Socialist Party members demanding an end to the trials and for abortion to be taken completely out of the realm of the law and treated like any other operation.

This picket successfully frightened away a small group of fascists who had come along to support the prosecution.

Catholicism is very strong in Belgium and half the workforce is organised in the Catholic trade union. The pro-choice movement which is supported by the socialist trade unions is careful to point out that it is not imposing abortions on other people — it is merely say-



Demonstration outside the Brussels court

impose itself on the thousands of women who need and want abortions and are forced to the back streets.

The issue is provoking a crisis for the government. The Social Democrats support the demands of the pro-choice

movement but they claim to be hamstrung by their coalition with the Christian Democrats. Unfortunately for them the issue has been brought to a head and women will now continue to keep up the pressure for an answer to their demands and for the defeat of the reactionary

initiative. One prominent professor in Brussels university has written to the public prosecutor asking to be prosecuted himself because he believes and practices a woman's right to choose. Of course they are frightened to touch him

because he is so well respected. The pro-choice movement is planning a big demonstration in early October which is backed by the trade unions and the Socialist Party. It is very important that the workers movement show that it understands it is an issue

for all of us and if we defeat this offensive it will be a big victory for women in Belgium and everywhere else where women are under attack. Please send messages and telegrams of support to: Marianne Swartenbroeckx, Rue Africaine 74, 1050 Brussels, Belgium.

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Leon Trotsky - the Balkan wars 1912-13

DON DAVIS reviews a new collection of writings by Leon Trotsky.

The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky - The Balkan Wars 1912-1913. Edited by George Weissman and Duncan Williams. Published by Monad Press NY. Price £4.95. Available in left wing bookshops here, in about six weeks.

THE Balkan Wars of 1912-13 are little known today. But they left 500,000 casualties, redrew the map of south eastern Europe, and provided a bloody prelude to World War I.

By 1912, the centuries-long Turkish domination of what is now Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania, Greece, and Romania was coming to an end. The Ottoman Empire, decaying from within, was challenged by the imperialist powers of Europe and the young Balkan nations.

In the First Balkan War, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece banded together to drive Turkish forces out of the Balkan Peninsula. However, the war quickly turned into mutual looting and pillage by the oligarchies of the different Balkan states.



Leon Trotsky

Egged on by Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia, the ruling classes of each state sought to increase their holdings and territory at the expense of the others.

The young Balkan capitalist classes were too weak and dependent on the great powers to undertake the land reform, in-

dustrialisation, and other reforms needed to modernise the backward, agrarian Balkans. Instead, they contented themselves with ripping each other off at the cost of the lives of thousands of workers and peasants.

The big European powers eventually imposed a settlement on the Balkans that perpetuated landlordism, agrarian backwardness, and oppression of many different nationality groups, as well as instability.

Within less than eighteen months, the great powers themselves went to war, dragging the Balkans and all of Europe into the biggest bloodbath of history up to that time.

Leon Trotsky, still in his early thirties but already well known in the European socialist movement, arrived in the Balkans in October 1912 as the correspondent of the liberal Kiev daily newspaper *Kievskaya Mysl*.

The central leader of the 1905 uprising of Russian workers in Petrograd, Trotsky had escaped from Russia in 1906. He settled in Vienna, where he supported his family and his own socialist newspaper by writing for other newspapers.

The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky: The Balkan Wars, 1912-13, is a collection of the

dispatches he wrote from the Balkans, mostly for *Kievskaya Mysl*.

Most Russian newspapers cheered on the Balkan countries in their war against the Turks, sensationalising Turkish atrocities while suppressing similar atrocities against Turks and other Muslims living in the Balkans. This reflected the designs of the Tsar who, having been defeated in Asia in the Russo-Japanese war of 1905, was looking to Turkey and the Balkans as a possible arena for expansion.

Federation

Trotsky, along with the young Balkan socialist parties with whom he was in contact, took a different view. While opposing Russian intervention into the affairs of the Balkans, he argued that the underlying social problems of the region could be solved only by a united Balkan federation.

Each nationality group would run its own affairs while uniting in a federation large enough to allow the development of modern industry and strong enough to withstand imperialist penetration.

Unlike many contemporary war correspondents who take

their articles from government press releases, Trotsky, battled with the Bulgarian censor to get out his accounts of the massacres of Muslim villages in the First Balkan War. And he sharply attacked Russian liberals who, in their zeal to justify the war against Turkey, condoned the censorship.

In describing these events, Trotsky demonstrates the writing style which helped gain him fame in the Russian socialist movement.

He brings to life heroic fighters, profiteering politicians, prisoners of war, combat veterans, and socialist leaders such as his friend Christian Rakovsky.

The book is not a comprehensive history, but a collection of many short articles. Instead of reading it cover-to-cover, the reader can pick out articles of special interest, like those on the Turkish Revolution of 1908-09 or the Persian (Iranian) Revolution of 1905-06.

Nearly 100 pages of notes, maps, a glossary, and an index help make the events understandable. And the combination of Trotsky's vivid writing and Marx's analysis make the collection readable and enlightening.

Reproduced from *The Militant*, USA.

Asbestos - working with death

By W Kearney, (Transport Union)
Reprinted from *Building Worker*.

DRAMATIC introduction isn't it? You may agree after reading my story.

Ceiling contractors work on the fringes of the building industry. Don't get me wrong - their work is far more important than carpet laying. Where the similarity comes in is like in a lot of finishing trades, they can come into a building which has taken two years to build, proceed with their ceiling installation, usually in highly skilled sub-contract gangs, and be in and out in four to eight weeks.

Competition between ceiling contractors is tough. They work to basic capitalist lines, their objective being high productivity while paying the least labour costs possible. The money racket and labour rip-off are a story on their own, deserving a page or even a book to tell.

There is another aspect of this trade that overrides the wrong side: the terrible health hazards faced by every ceiling fixer. Hazards that demand urgent, very urgent, action.

Fixers new to the trade, fixers who have been at the game for the last 10 years - beware! For fixers like myself, who started in the 50s and early 60s, are now paying a terrible price.

From 1973 the first cases started to show. Workmates of mine, with whom I have made contact since becoming ill, have all fallen victim to prolonged ill-health, a complete finish to their working

lives and early death. This is the legacy we have, and which a lot more will inherit.

In the never ending search for big money, there is total disregard and basic ignorance of health risks. The emphasis on how many metres, how much a metre, the more metres done the more pay (less 10 per cent retention, of course!)

No mention of what type of material, what type of insulation and definitely no mention of safety arrangements - decent scaffolding, face masks and so on.

Many of the fixers who started in the early 50s, when suspended ceilings as a specific trade got off the ground, were ex-chippies, attracted by the ability to increase their earnings.

A lot, if not most, were ordinary lads taken on first as helpers and mates. They then became fixers themselves, always finding

plenty of work in a fast growing allied trade.

Suspended ceilings with their acoustic, thermal, values, decorative finish hiding unsightly services above, became favourite with architects. Architects delighted to accommodate building regulations.

One of the strongest regulations was fire protection: if you fitted a fire rated ceiling you could be in for a huge drop in insurance premiums.

The favourite fire rated ceiling was asbestos - screwed up or laid in. That is, drilled by hand, and screwed, all at head level, to a metal grid frame.

Dust

The laid in version was more simple: the fixer just handled the asbestos tiles and laid it into grid frames, always showering himself with dust. Then with dust still rising and trapped above, he would then proceed to reach above ceiling to secure tiles with clips.

Both these applications, involved cutting, sawing and filing of asbestos sheets. Most of it was done in confined areas (usually all buildings had windows in). Beams were also cased, walls as well, tons and tons of asbestos were used.

Not all ceilings were



UCATT - the building workers' union - did it do enough?

asbestos. Some were mineral tiles very dusty, very irritating. On top of this, that is the back of the ceiling, were rolls of rockwool not always laid conveniently but cut into sections then pushed, shoved, and squeezed in between grid frames and into position.

No words can describe the discomfort of the terrible, terrible dust.

Most self-employed subbies at the game for a fair period, use kids as helpers, especially to do the cutting, and fibre glossing. Young, unaware kids going home itchy, dusty and coughing.

Let's total up where the ceiling game and factory lining has got me and my exwork mates. Myself first. Thirty-six, married two kids, been at ceilings 15 years: now an invalid, with chronic chest trouble and digestive problems.

My kids and wife are young. Now more than

ever they need a breadwinner. But they have none. Husband and father cannot and never more, will provide.

Agony of body has been my experience. But worse still looking at my wife and kids, are the agonies of mind.

I have to look at a wife that I cannot make love to; one part of the illness.

Life is, for me, as good as over. No pints of beer; no spiced foods or curries; no tea; no coffee; no bacon and eggs. No smoke filled rooms in pubs and cinemas. Only memories of a job that I curse I ever laid eyes on.

I decided recently to inquire into ex-work mates. Out of four, one is dead at 58. The other three, all under 60, are seriously ill men. But the story does not even end with us.

What about those labourers who swept the floors. After us, the scaffolders who stripped the

ceiling scaffolding; the other trades working beside us; sparks, joiners, heating ventilation engineers.

What of them.

What about the buildings themselves? Asbestos does not last forever. These ceilings above peoples heads guide airflows, tiles have to be removed regularly for service repairs above ceilings.

Shops, schools, hospitals, offices, it's everywhere. God help the people who work in the premises when in time the asbestos begins to deteriorate.

Fixers are now falling victim. They still will until proper safety precautions are taken.

As I have mentioned, you do not have to be a fixer to suffer the risks. Every trade on the building site, working near or in conjunction with ceiling contractors, should protest and demand strict safety pre-

cautions.

Ceiling contractors and their fixers must be put in place not only for their own good but for the good of every innocent tradesman on site. They have totally reneged on their responsibility in the health and safety line.

Their rat race, money grabbing approach must be halted. The materials they use on site must be queried and treated as highly dangerous to every trade on site.

This will not only help construction workers, particularly the fixer at present, but will impose and even prevent environmental hazards to completely innocent people in the future.

Building Worker paper of the rank and file in the construction industry can be obtained for 25p p&p from 223 Queens Road, Peckham, London SE15 2NG.

Socialist Challenge

Chemstar explosion

'The nightmare come true'

By
Tessa van
Gelderen

THE explosion at a Manchester chemical plant last Sunday night confirmed the fears and the terror of all those who have to live under such threats. One person killed, another seriously injured, and a village is all too aware that it's been 'lucky', such is the enormity of living with dangerous chemicals.

It is unfortunately the old, old story, as old as the profit motive itself.

Of course, there's always an outcry, after the damage is done and people's homes and lives lie in ruins. Aberfan, Flixborough, Seveso in northern Italy have all become definitions for tragedies.

But they are tragedies that could so easily have been avoided if human needs had been put before a few people's greed.

The managing director of Chemstar, George Molyneux, said he expected the plant to reopen eventually although he admitted local people did not like the factory being there.

Too right they don't. As local Conservation Society chairperson, Frank Swallow, put it, 'This is just the nightmare that has come true. If they try to reopen the place, it will be over my dead body. All the villagers feel the same.'

There should be full support for a public inquiry into the Chemstar explosion. But we know the answers already. As the *Sunday Times* put it as long ago as 1976, 'The grim equation: people plus chemicals equal risk.'

That risk is unacceptable. But as more and more workers are threatened with the dole, even the little gains that have been made on the health and safety front will become eroded. Even one person's death is a tragedy when it can so easily be avoided.

As Labour MP, Tom Pendry, who has called for an inquiry into the disaster, said, 'If it had not been for the vigilance of the fire service and if there had been a wind instead of a dead calm, there could have been a terrible tragedy.'

The Secretary of State had earlier overruled an order by the local council to immediately remove the chemical drums which local people had been concerned about.

Chemstar had previously taken over the site from a printing firm but no planning permission was needed because once the site has been allocated for 'general industrial use', there is no need for any other permission to be sought.

This potentially horrendous situation exists up and down the country, in many instances not even known to the local community.

The *Guardian* last Tuesday explained: 'Thousands of firms own factories and warehouses in Britain with chemical stores close by or in the middle of large centres of population, but no one knows officially where they are...'

'Regulations were drawn up four years ago but their introduction has met strong opposition from industry.'

ANGOLA-SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS OUT NOW!

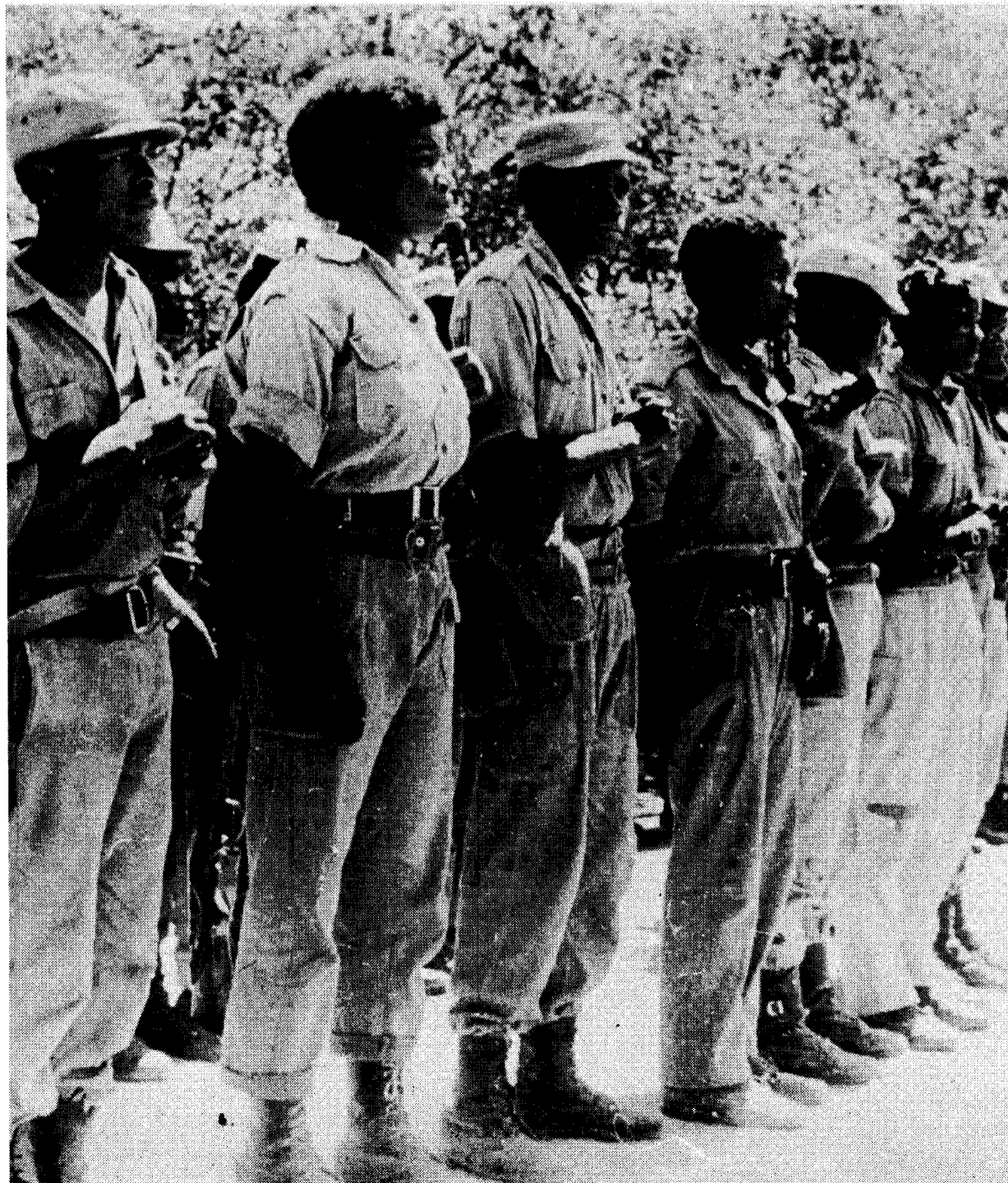
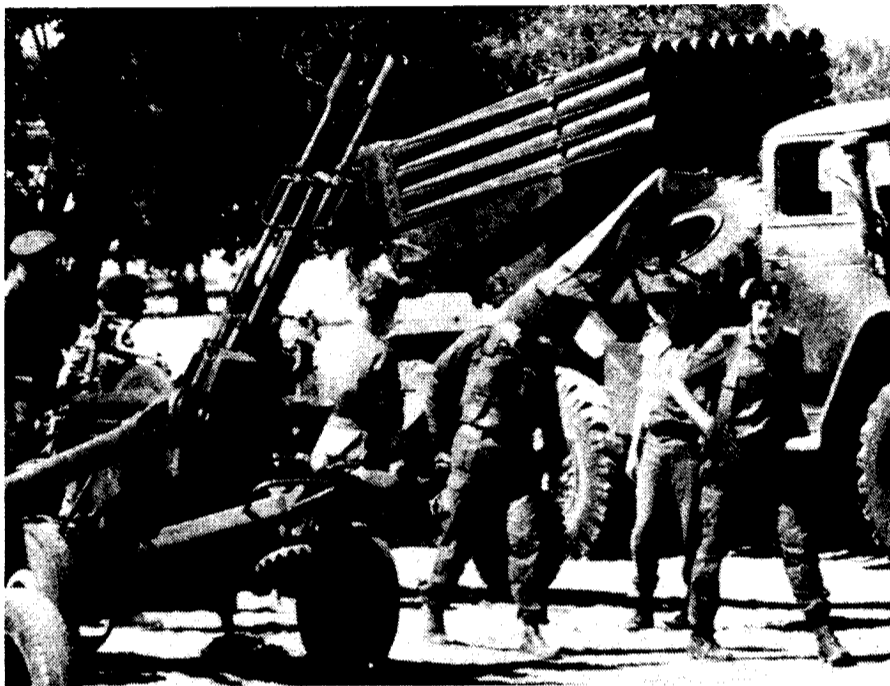
DURING the last week South African 'defence' forces have been following up their invasion of Angola with widespread air attacks.

While the South African army has been forced into conflict with the Angolan forces, the main aim of the South African attack is clearly to flatten the towns and disperse and terrorise the population of southern Angola. As we reported last week, towns as far away from the Namibian border as Porto Alexandre (250 miles), Cahama (160 miles) and Tchibemba (250 miles) have been bombed. The South Africans are hitting everyone and everything that moves.

The pretence that the South Africans are engaged in a 'hot pursuit' of SWAPO guerrillas fighting in Namibia is so transparent that no one seriously believes it. In reality the South Africans are trying to create a massive 'buffer zone' in a devastated and de-militarised southern Angola, making it easier to control their Namibian colony.

More than ever, the British labour movement needs to be mobilised in solidarity with the struggle in Namibia and against the new cold warriors in the White House and Pentagon.

Struggle in Namibia — see page 5



SWAPO troops on parade



Flixborough in 1974 — the unacceptable face

Socialist Challenge

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SWAPO

What this represents politically is obvious. The South Africans have decided to abandon even the pretence of going along with the attempts of the Western nations to negotiate a 'settlement' in Namibia.

More and more they have come to realise that no serious settlement can be made which does not eventually put the nationalist movement SWAPO in power. While a new strategy is worked out, the South Africans will use bloody butchery to defend their possession of Namibia, which is legally a UN protectorate.

For South Africa and all the Western powers which give them overt or covert support, the need to keep a firm grip on Namibia stems from vital strategic interests. The super-exploited black workers of Namibia provide a huge proportion of the West's gold supplies and a host of other minerals, including diamonds.

Reich

Western capitalism is not about to give up those resources to a nationalist regime.

The South African reich has been encouraged to carry out its murderous work in southern Angola by the attitude of the Reagan administration, which has given a wink and a nod to the South Africans and not even bothered with a ritual or cosmetic condemnation.