

Socialist Challenge

STOP THE MISSILES

DEMO LONDON

OCT 24



Ken Livingstone is right

BRITISH TROOPS OUT!

THE SIMPLE TRUTH ABOUT the Chelsea bomb was given by GLC leader Ken Livingstone on Monday night. 'As long as we are in Ireland, people will be letting off bombs in London,' he said. 'We are in a colonial power holding down a colonial people. Violence will recur time and time again as long as we are in Northern Ireland.'

At 11pm last Thursday, two masked men burst into a social club in the Ardoyne district of Belfast and randomly fired a hail of bullets. Their target was anyone they could hit, for they assumed all in the club would be Catholic.

For these gunmen any Catholic victim would have done. In the event, they killed Laurence Kennedy, a Belfast councillor and member of the Anti-H Block Campaign.

Margaret Thatcher did not issue any statement describing Kennedy's killers as 'sub human'. The British media did not pour out moral indignation at the attack on the Ardoyne club. That is hardly surprising.

After all, Laurence Kennedy was, for the British establishment, just another Irish rebel, and his killers shared with Margaret Thatcher and most of the British media the view that the North of Ireland should, at all costs be kept British.

But for Thatcher and the media the attack by the Provisional IRA on the coach-load of British soldiers in Chelsea on Saturday was 'sub-human'. Such condemnations, in contrast to the silence over the killing of Laurence Kennedy, is one aspect of the hypocrisy so evident after the Chelsea bomb.

A second aspect is that anyone with the



Laurence Kennedy
Laurence Kennedy, a Belfast city councillor who, last Thursday became the latest victim of Loyalist terror gangs in Belfast. The previous week the Ulster Freedom Fighters had threatened to launch a new campaign of sectarian assassinations. The UFF is the Ulster Defence Association under another name. But British governments have repeatedly refused to ban the UDA.

slightest knowledge of the Irish situation knew full well that something similar was bound to happen once the Tory government had set about starving the hunger strikers to death.

To anyone not acquainted with Irish reality that might appear a harsh and callous reaction, but what it shows is how deep the hatred against Britain now is in the wake of the hunger strikes.

And it is Thatcher's determination to kill those hunger strikers which is the third aspect of her hypocrisy over the Chelsea bomb.

The Tory leader oversaw the slow and agonising death of ten Irish political prisoners, she even tried to glory in permitting those deaths as part of her self-styled image as the 'Iron Lady'.

It ill-befits her to now lament what happened at Chelsea: she has done much worse and she must have known that by doing worse the IRA would hit back.

Undoubtedly, in Britain, the Chelsea bomb will make the task of building a movement for troop withdrawal in Britain more difficult.

The world-wide sympathy the Republican movement attracted during the hunger strike may also now recede.

The harshest critics of the IRA in Ireland's nationalist community such as the Irish government, the Catholic Church and the Social Democratic and Labour Party have also been given added fuel by the Chelsea bomb.

In that respect the tactical wisdom of the IRA's action can be called into question.

But no socialist should be associated with the one-sided, hypocritical condemnation which has greeted the Chelsea bomb. Instead we should be saying, now more than ever, Britain should get out of Ireland. That is the only way the killings, whether in Ireland or in Britain, will end.

Tory knives are out

AS THE TORY FAITHFUL gather in Blackpool, the knives are out. No party is capable of more vicious and vitriolic in-fighting than the Tories — especially when they are in trouble. Usually they manage to conceal their stab-in-the-back technique behind gushing displays of enthusiasm for the leader, and fervent assurances of loyalty and unanimity.

But now things have gone too far for many of the Tory faithful. It's not so much that they are overwhelmed with sorrow at the plight of the unemployed, despite Edward Heath's statements about its moral 'unacceptability'.

Rather the Tories are faced with a big loss of confidence among the business community and the increasing certainty of massive electoral defeat in 1983 or 1984.

An article in last Monday's *Times*, usually a good friend of Thatcher and her party, argued that there was now virtually nothing that could be done by the Tories to win the next election. So the genteel discussions in high places are turning into open warfare.

Most amazing is Heath's suggestion that 'someone' and 'these people' (euphemism for Conservative Central Office) organised a smear campaign against him, putting MPs and journalists up to 'dirty tricks' in an attempt to discredit him.

Reality

The latest figures will show that unemployment has gone officially over three million for the first time. In reality it is closer to 4 million. Living standards have declined, again according to official figures, something like three per cent since the Tories were elected.

What more and more Tories are coming to realise is that *Thatcherism* has failed. Casting anxious glances over their shoulders at the threat of the Social Democratic Party, they are thrashing around in despair. Conservative Party conferences are generally well stage-managed. It is likely that the rank and file will back up Thatcher and Central Office this week, with a well-orchestrated 'endorsement' of her policies.

But the Tory crisis will go on, despite the skills of the party managers. As the Tory 'wets' sharpen their knives and Thatcher stumbles, the labour movement must prepare to put the boot in, by stepping up the fight against unemployment.



STOP THE

THOUSANDS and thousands of young people, trade unionists, Labour Party members, women activists and peace campaigners are headed for London on 24 October.

That's the day of the mighty Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament demonstration.

CND national office report that at least 24, yes twenty four, trains are bringing people to the march from as far apart as Penzance and Scotland.

And hundreds of coaches are descending on London from every corner of the country.

The march against the missiles had been backed by the Labour Party and nine national trade unions including the miners and the transport union.

Speakers at the rally include Tony Benn, EP Thompson, Bruce Kent from CND, Mike Cooley, recently victimised chairperson of Lucas Combine Committee, and Annajoy David from Youth CND's paper *Second Generation*.

On the march there will be a joint Youth CND/Student CND contingent expected to be up to 20,000 strong.

The big march starts at 11.30am Victoria Embankment for a march to Hyde Park.

Make sure you're there!

Why unilateral nuclear disarmament must also mean

Britain out of NATO

By Rich Palser, Treasurer of Sheffield CND

THE constitution of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) calls for 'The unilateral abandonment by Britain of nuclear weapons, nuclear bases and nuclear alliances,' in other words withdrawal from NATO.

Unlike the CND policy on unilateral abandonment of nuclear weapons and bases however, its policy for withdrawal from NATO has not been widely adopted. It was not adopted by the Liberal or Labour Party conferences, nor by the TUC.

This is not so surprising when you consider that CND itself does not consistently campaign for withdrawal from NATO.

For example, in his CND pamphlet *Questions and Answers* Labour MP Frank Allaun argues that Canada has renounced nuclear weapons and still remains in NATO, as do Holland and Belgium, despite their rejection of NATO policy to site the new Cruise nuclear missiles in Europe.

In a recent article in *New Socialist* Mary Kaldor, a prominent figure in CND and the disarmament movement, questions whether we

should not be campaigning for a 'non-nuclear NATO'.

I believe that the disarmament movement and CND in particular should not only stick to its position of Britain out of NATO, but should actively campaign to win its adoption wherever the unilateral abandonment of nuclear weapons has been adopted — particularly in the Labour Party and trade unions.

NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is a military alliance which was formed

in 1949 for the purposes of 'mutual aid in the event of foreign incursion'. There was never any doubt as to where the 'foreign incursion' would come from — the Soviet Union and eastern bloc countries.

But this 'mutual aid' is not the same thing as 'defence of democracy'. NATO has been quite happy to welcome to its ranks such countries as Portugal when under a fascist dictatorship, Greece when under military rule, and Turkey under its present repressive military regime.

NATO has also collaborated with such regimes as Spain under Franco, Iran under the Shah, and South Africa under the white racist regime.

Nor was NATO established to ward off a threatened invasion of western Europe by the Soviet Union. The capitalist powers were far more concerned in those days over Stalin's failure to hold back the Yugoslavian and Chinese Communist Parties from taking power.

These revolutions had greatly stimulated national liberation movements throughout the 'third world', and threatened to overturn the 'spheres of influence' agreed between Stalin and the major capitalist powers at the end of the Second World War.

Strategy

NATO was part of the world-wide system of alliances established by the United States aimed at maintaining capitalism and US dominance throughout the world.

From its foundation nuclear weapons were a fundamental part of NATO strategy. The use of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 was not carried out, as we are told today, to bring the war to an end with the minimum loss of life.

Rather it aimed to end the war prior to the involvement of the Soviet Union in a second front after the collapse of Germany, to show the world that the US not only had the bomb but was also prepared to use it.

When NATO was formed the US left the Soviet Union under no illusions that behind NATO's conventional forces lurked the American nuclear bomb.

The British 1958 White Paper on Defence spelt this out when it said: 'The democratic western nations will never start a war against Russia. But it must be well understood that if Russia were to launch a major attack on them, even with conventional forces only, they would have to hit back with strategic nuclear weapons'.

Flexible

There has been a change in NATO strategy in the 1970s. This is not a change from a non-nuclear strategy to a nuclear strategy, it has always combined a conventional and nuclear strategy. But from responding to a conventional attack with strategic nuclear forces, NATO has now moved to responding to a conventional attack with a 'flexible response'.

That flexible response may mean tactical nuclear weapons (possibly before long the neutron bomb), or it might mean trying to get in a 'first strike' to knock out the Soviet missile systems (using Cruise, Trident and MX missiles).

Last week's decision by Reagan to put the new MX missiles in the old 'sitting target' Minuteman silos only confirms the US's 'first strike' attitude.

As one senior official put it: 'The NATO doctrine is that we will fight with conventional weapons until we are losing, then we will fight with tactical nuclear weapons until we are losing, then we will blow up the world'.

Lies

NATO also tells lies. For example in 1978 NATO decided on a long term armaments programme which included real increases in spending by member countries of three per cent per year. To justify this, at a time when Soviet military spending had remained stable for years, meant cooking the books.

In a speech to the Italian Senate a former Deputy Supreme Commander of NATO nuclear forces, Senator Nino Pasti, had this to say:

'The truth is that NATO forces, both conventional and nuclear, are stronger than those of the Warsaw Pact countries. During the last ten years the Soviet military budget has remained stable. My colleagues were unhappy about this situation because they could not justify increases in their own expenditure.'

Massive anti-missile rally in Germany

OVER 300,000 people joined the largest demonstration yet against NATO's plans for modernising its European nuclear arsenal in Bonn last Saturday.

It was the largest march in West Germany since the War, with thousands of young people, trade unionists and peace campaigners.

The march was called to oppose the siting of Pershing 2 and Cruise missiles in West Germany in two years, but there was also a clear anti-US imperialism sentiment among the demonstrators who chanted anti-Reagan slogans.

Speakers came from the parties of the government coalition, peace groups and an executive member of the IG metal union, defying a directive from the union federation. There was also a contingent of fifty soldiers in uniform showing their solidarity with the aims of the march. The marchers ended with an appeal for a turnout in next week-end's march in London: let's not let them down!



MISSILES

STOP THE MISSILES



'So they invented a pricing system...It is easy to see how the figures were inflated to show higher Soviet expenditure'.

The NATO summit of September saw promises that new evidence of a Soviet arms build up would be published. If the final result bears any resemblance to the US state department report (since admitted to be a complete fraud) on Soviet arms sales to freedom fighters in El Salvador, then we can take it with more than a pinch of salt.

NATO has to build up the image of the 'red threat', of Russian expansionism, in order to present the western capitalist countries as acting in self-defence when building up their military forces.

But the real story of interference in other countries' affairs lies not so much with the Soviet invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, still less the Russian troops in Afghanistan, but with the 215 times that the USA has used a military intervention for political ends between 1946 and 1970.

Reagan

The current build up in arms has more to do with the collapse of the regime of the Shah of Iran, the trusted representative of US interests in the Gulf, than the so-called 'new' missiles which the US have known about since the 1970s.

That is why Caspar Weinberger and the Reagan administration would like to see NATO playing a part in policing the Gulf in defence of Western dominance. That is why alongside the move to a 'first strike capacity' in nuclear weapons the US would like NATO countries to participate in the 'Rapid Deployment Force'.

In short there are two objectives behind the US/NATO build up in both conventional and nuclear armaments. First, to maintain a position of

superiority over Soviet forces, and to discourage even limited aid given by the Soviet Union to struggles for national liberation throughout the world.

Secondly, to con workers in America and Western Europe into accepting more Vietnam-type ventures on the part of the US and the major capitalist powers.

Highlight

All this said, can we ban the bomb and stay in NATO? We believe that NATO's nuclear strategy cannot be separated from its conventional strategy. The two go hand in hand. It is NATO's whole strategy we have to reject, in particular its assumption of a 'Russian threat'.

When the Tories argue that you cannot support unilateral disarmament and stay in NATO they are right. It would be quite hypocritical to get rid of all nuclear weapons from Britain only to stay in a military alliance based upon US possession of nuclear weapons.

The fact that Canada has renounced nuclear weapons while still in NATO counts for nothing as Canada still accepts 'protection' by US

warheads rather than Canadian ones.

Nor does the fact that Norway and Denmark don't have nuclear weapons on their soil stop them participating in plans for using nuclear weapons.

Consistent unilateralism means Britain out of NATO.

Faced with a witch-hunt against CND for trying to 'undermine western defences and NATO', it seems to many an easy option to argue for a non-nuclear NATO.

This is even more attractive when figures like Nino Pasti in Italy, whilst remaining fully committed to NATO, argue against NATO's latest escalation in the nuclear arms race.

That such members of the establishment, people who previously framed NATO's nuclear strategy, should now speak out against the logical outcome of their own policies is something to be welcomed. It is a contradiction in their position which we should not fail to exploit.

But we should not make this contradiction a part of our own position. Far from defeating the Reagans of this world that would play right into NATO's hands.

This page tells you the truth about the destruction that would hit Islington if a single three-megaton bomb (equivalent to the explosive power of three million tons of TNT) was exploded over Piccadilly Circus.

30 MILES SHOPPERS IN LUTON BURNT BEFORE THEY EVEN BLINK

4 MILES THE ARCHWAY BRIDGE MELTS MANY HOUSES DESTROYED BY BLAST AND FIRES 20-50% POPULATION KILLED INSTANTLY

3 MILES DRAYTON PK-BUSES MELT AND 400 MPH FIRESTORM FLATTENS BUILDINGS AT LEAST 50% DIE PEOPLE IN BASEMENTS ROASTED

2 MILES COMPLETE DESTRUCTION 10,000,000°C FIREBALL WIPES OUT MOST OF THE POPULATION WITHIN ONE SECOND

September last year. The Home Office's war plan dress rehearsal 'Square Leg' projects that as part of the 'attack' involving over one hundred nuclear weapons, five bombs drop around London...

PLANES AT HEATHROW EXPLODE CAR TYRES BURST INTO FLAMES

15 MILES

TARGET-ISLINGTON A BOMB'S EYE VIEW



165,000-ISLINGTON POPULATION 90,000 KILLED INSTANTLY THE MAJORITY OF THOSE WHO SURVIVE THE BLAST, SHOCK AND FIRE WOULD DIE IN THE AFTERMATH

Source: Home Defence College Nuclear Weapons Data Sheet

This broadsheet is jointly produced by Islington Labour Council and Islington CND. Similar maps have been produced by a number of local councils.

Meanwhile, in Spain...

By Frank McBride

SPAIN'S conservative government is rushing to join NATO, despite the obvious opposition of a large majority of the population.

All the workers' parties from the Socialist Party leftwards are campaigning against the move. For the Socialist Party it is the first serious opposition to the government since last February's attempted coup.

The government first raised entry into NATO in February but they have only now begun a debate on the question in Parliament. And it is in Parliament, through legalistic and procedural manoeuvres that they plan to force the issue. Not surprisingly they have rejected all calls for a referendum.

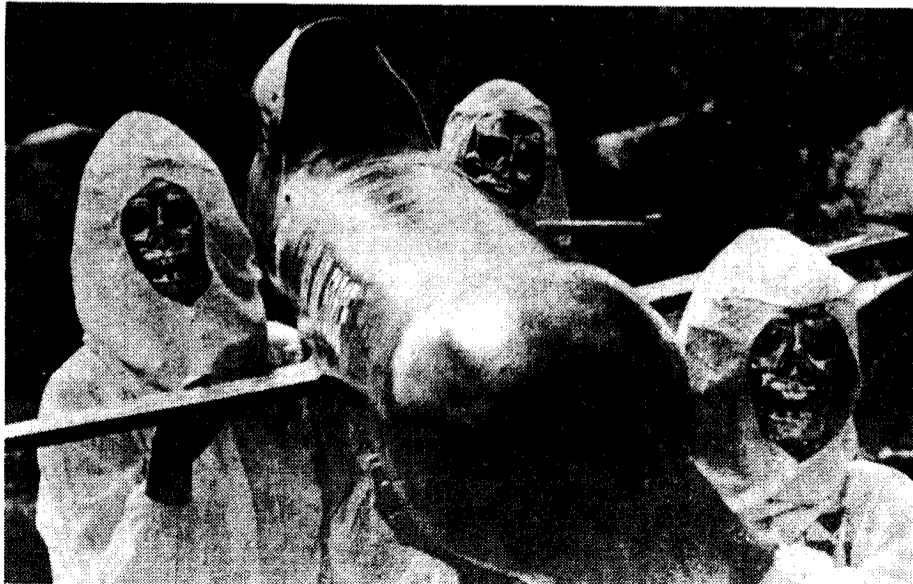
Many believe that once inside NATO

the Socialist Party will join their European counterparts in supporting NATO. Certain their slogans don't oppose the NATO alliance as such.

Some hope that Spain can remain 'nuclear-free' despite being in NATO, while others feel that being in NATO might keep the military's minds off other pastimes like hatching coups in Spain!

Only the revolutionaries, particularly the Revolutionary Communist League (Spanish section of the Fourth International) are calling for opposition to NATO as a war-mongering institution, and opposition to all American bases in Spain.

It will need more mass actions like the recent 50,000 strong march in Madrid to prevent Spain joining the other capitalist countries in Europe in the NATO alliance.

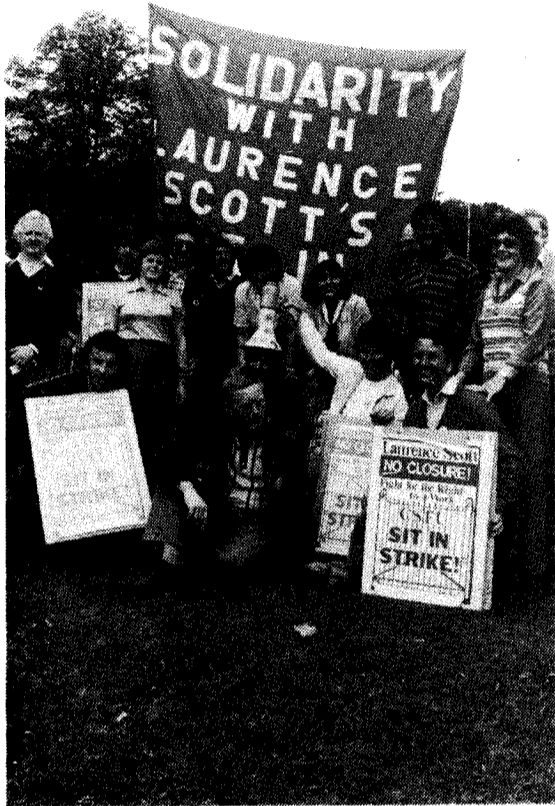


Women's peace marchers en route from Cardiff to the US Airforce base at Greenham Common, Berkshire. The women have since set up a peace camp outside the base.

'WE have called a national solidarity conference in Manchester to mobilise national support for our fight for jobs and union democracy.

A victory at Scott's would be a boost in the fight for jobs by the whole movement against the disastrous policies of this government'

Dennis Barry
Convenor, Laurence Scott



Laurence Scott NATIONAL SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE

Invited speakers

Tony Benn, MP; Charles Morris, MP (Gorton); Ron Halverson, National Committee of the AUEW; Eric Clarke, General Secretary Scottish NUM; Lee Jeans.

Saturday 14 November
10am - 5pm

Application for credentials

Please send us credentials for.....delegates. We enclose a cheque/postal order for £.....@ £2 per delegate.

Delegates will be accepted on the basis of four from Joint Shop Stewards Committees and two from all other bona fide labour movement bodies.

An agenda and more information will be sent with delegates credentials. There will be as much time as possible allocated to contributions from the floor with priority given to those in dispute.

Name of organisation.....

Union or Labour Party.....

Workplace.....

Name of secretary.....

Address.....

Telephone.....

Please return to: W J Partlan, 15 Lines Road, Droylesden, Manchester

Creche facilities will be provided if requested up to one week before the conference.

Laurence Scott Snipe runs gauntlet

By Pete Clifford

ARTHUR Snipe, managing director of Mining Supplies of Doncaster, opened his shareholders' annual general meeting on 7 October with an apology for the gauntlet of pickets outside.

At the entrance were strikers from Laurence Scott, Manchester who'd been out for 24 weeks to fight the closure of their factory.

The APEX steward Joan Taylor explained the shareholders' attitude: 'They thought it was a bit of a joke.'

'One of them didn't seem to understand why we called Snipe the JR of Doncaster.'

Snipe's latest venture has been to squander hundreds of thousands of pounds on buying race horses, while he sends 650 workers down the road at Manchester.

Cheek

That alone explains why he's been likened to the Texan millionaire JR.

Elaine Cross, TASS steward actually got to speak to Snipe as he went in. 'I told him it's time he did a decent day's work and gave us our jobs back.'

'He had the cheek to say he would work us into the ground.'

A shareholder, echoing union leaders Boyd and Duffy, seemed to think the strikers were all members of an extremist group.

Engineering steward, Frank Stubbs put that right by explaining to the confused shareholder that 'the only group he was a member of was his local bowls club.'

But behind the shareholders brave talk was the harsh reality that Mining Supplies shares have dropped from £1.80 to £1.02 each and their British market is facing

problems.

John Malony, the transport union's steward was able to corner a much harassed Snipe at the end of the meeting.

John told Snipe 'We're not mindless militants, we're working class people who've built up Laurence Scott all our lives.'

A more conciliatory Snipe claimed not to be unapproachable saying 'It's been a long time' and agreeing to talk with the stewards.

Convenor Denis Barry's attitude is, 'We'll talk, but the pressure from our supporters has got to be stepped up.'

That Snipe has his supporters was confirmed as the pickets left Doncaster, to be accompanied in full escort by some of Her Majesty's police force.

Donations and messages of support should be sent to 20 Roundcroft, Romiley, Cheshire.

LSE boss re-opens talks

LAST Friday 9 October, LSE stewards were summoned to informal discussions with Arthur Snipe, managing director of Laurence Scott.

The talks lasted two and a half hours and, subject to Snipe's consultation with his banker, formal talks will re-open next week.

This new development in the six month old dispute is an incredible step forward and a real slap in the face for national union leaders, Boyd and Duffy, who withdrew official backing on the basis that there would be no further advances.

Another step forward was taken Monday 12 October when the AUEW Final Appeals Court, meeting in Eastbourne, placed Laurence Scott on the agenda for Thursday.

Boyd and Duffy had made the LSE strike unofficial in July after the final date for inclusion in the court's agenda had passed.

It is very promising that the Appeal Court have decided to discuss the LSE case.

If official backing is re-instated it will mean strike pay is again available and secondary picketing can be resumed.



Trade unionists from GEC support the LSE picket lines

By Dave Hardy

ON FRIDAY 16 October British Leyland car workers at mass meetings will decide on whether or not to take strike action following the derisory offer of a 3.8 per cent wage increase from BL management.

The unions' joint negotiating committee which represents the 58,000 car workers employed by BL has recommended strike action as the only way to secure the demand for a £20 across the board wage increase.

Senior shop stewards have endorsed this call for national strike action from 1 November and the mood in the major plants, particularly Cowley and Longbridge, is that now

the unions' strength inside plants such as those in BL.

And it is the Tories who take the political decision to spend billions of £s on nuclear missiles rather than paying decent wages and on creating jobs.

However, the most important issue will be to ensure that the rank and file does not let the national officials such as Grenville Hawley, national secretary of the automotive group of the transport union, sell us out by agreeing to a compromise settlement just before or as the strike starts.

The lesson that the BL workforce has learn-

ed over the past three years struggle is that they can rely only on their own strength and the broad support of the labour movement when it comes to a fight with the management.

The next Region Five Broad Left of the Transport and General Workers Union will be on Saturday 7 November in Birmingham and the National Broad Left meeting will take place 8 November in York.

For further information please write TGWU Broad Left c/o 29 Florence Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham.

Staffa workers in court

'If there's any law to save our jobs then apply it'

By Toni Gorton

ENGINEERING workers at Staffa Products Ltd in East London who are occupying their factory to save jobs were ordered to quit the site by the High Court — or face forceable eviction by the police.

The 390 engineering workers and staff at the Leyton plant are fighting a decision by the firm's US-based owners, Brown and Sharpe, to close the plant with a loss of over 300 jobs.

The company, which manufactures hydraulic equipment, received a grant of £4.5m from government to move the plant to Plymouth.

In an attempt to stave off the move the workers approached the Greater London Council for aid and the GLC offered to match the government offer. The company rejected it.

On 29 September the engineering workers occupied the plant, followed by the staff side.

Subsequently the local official for ASTMS directed his members to withdraw from the sit-in, so now the 140 staff workers are on 24-hour picket duty outside the gate.

At the hearing on 7 October, many of the 305

workers named on the High Court writ were in court to hear the convenor of the stewards' committee, Dave Green, speak on their behalf.

He deplored the use of the courts in a dispute between management and workers.

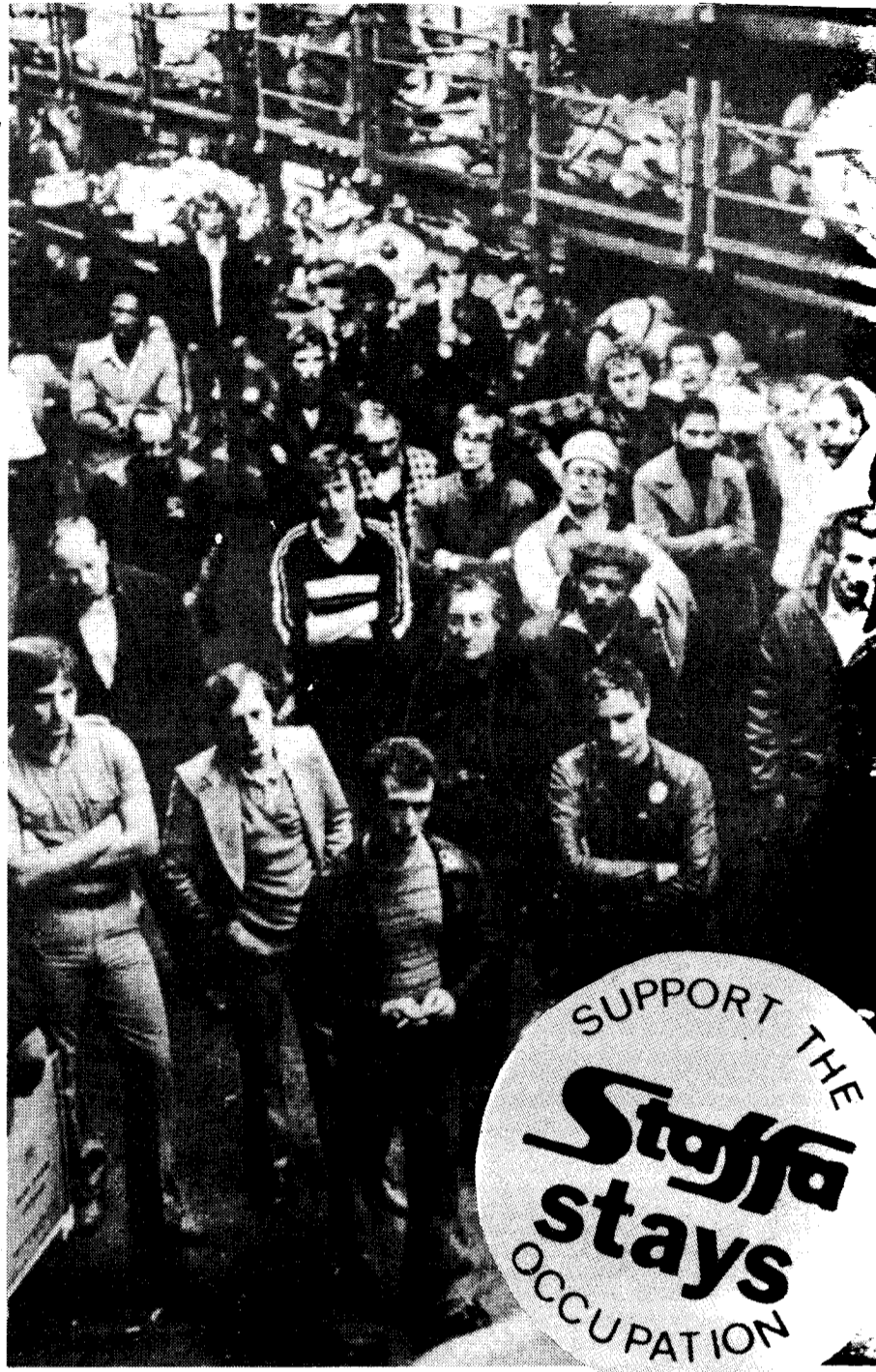
He said, 'We are fighting for our jobs, and we are taking better care of the factory than the bosses did when they were in control.'

When asked by the judge about a point in the proceedings Green replied, 'If there's any law in the land to make management save our jobs, then please apply it.' This was warmly applauded. The judge answered, 'There are none.' Green then said, 'Well then make one up.'

Despite ASTMS taking its members out of the sit-in and despite the concern that many workers feel about the to-ing and fro-ing in the courts — where they were not at first legally represented — morale is high.

They feel very confident that they are going to win.

The company's new site in Plymouth won't be ready for two years and in the meantime they can't get the products manufactured anywhere else but Leyton.



Staffa workers at one of their weekly mass meetings



New discoveries

Socialist Challenge last week reported that Staffa workers had uncovered detailed plans — that cost their bosses £10,000 — to undermine any opposition to the move to Plymouth.

In new finds, they have discovered that the bosses had planned to take one 'key worker' with them to Plymouth, not because of his work skills but solely on the basis of his proven 'anti-union' record.

A 'Report on Staffa Products Relocation Study' drafted 30 March 1981, spells out the nuts and bolts of how the company will save over £1m a year in labour costs by making the move to Plymouth.

It says *A fundamental element of the proposed relocation is a significant reduction in Employee Costs due to:* 1) Fewer people being employed after the move, producing or supporting the same level of output and shipments due to improved efficiency. 2) Lower labour rates which will apply in the Plymouth area.

It details:
Savings at Plymouth
Hourly rated employees
204 x 52 (3.38 - 2.82) per hour x 39 hours x 1.172 (employee benefits) = £271,500 per annum

Staff
140 x (7000 - 6360) per annum x 1.188 (employee benefits) = £106,400 per annum
Total savings due to labour rates = £271,500 + £106,400 = £377,900

Total employee savings associated with move (at 1981 rates) is therefore due to reduced numbers = £684,400 per annum and due to lower rates = £377,900.

Total is £1,062,300.

Send all messages of support, donations and telegrams to Chris Newson, AUEW Strike Committee, 39 Somers Road, Walthamstow E17.

£10 raised from children at Hackney school

By Toni Gorton

'I THINK the kids are looking at the jobs situation deeper than we are,' says Jim Cripps, on the finance committee of the Staffa occupation.

'We're just thinking about our jobs here, they're thinking about the whole thing when they grow up and leave school.'

'That's why we got £10 from 8-12 year olds at William Patton Junior School in Stoke New-

ington, Hackney.'

He told Socialist Challenge that the sit-in had already received over £1500 in its first few days.

Collections are being taken at local firms and at labour movement meetings.

One Socialist Chall-

enge supporter on the buses has been instrumental in getting a Staffa speaker along to the monthly conference of union delegates from all the London garages, representing some 30,000 workers.

The Right to Work Campaign has thrown itself energetically into collecting and getting speakers into the unions.

£16 was given by one person from the Merchant Navy and Airlines Officers Association.

Socialist Challenge supporters in east London have been working hard to get the word out about the occupation and the raise money.

Here's what a few of them have to say about it.

Jo O'Brien, Grove Green Labour Party, Leyton:

'There's a lot of feeling in Leyton about the closure of the factory.'

'People know about it, which explains the big collection of £18 from the 15 people at my ward meeting.'

'Our local MP, Bryan Magee, who's constituency Staffa is in, gave £1'.

Steve Harper, delegate to the London North District of the engineering union AUEW:

'Over the last period there have been a whole number of redundancies in different engineering factories where people have just accepted redundancy payments.'

'The Staffa people have made a stand and are giving a clear lead to all other workers.'

'The next big step is to compel the National Executive Committee to make the sit-in official and pay out strike benefit.'

'Engineers throughout London and the country should make sure that the sit-in's a success and doesn't crumble for lack of labour movement support.'

Frank Gorton, Metal Box Clapton, AUEW:

'The £46 we raised for the £46 collection was Staffa from a bunch of engineers who are concerned that the next redundancy number will be theirs.'

'I hope to be able to use my position as trade union/Labour Party liaison officer for

Hackney North and Stoke Newington Labour Party to get support for Staffa throughout Hackney.'

'Hackney North Labour Party and its MP, Ernie Roberts who is sponsored by the AUEW, have already pledged their support.'

John Duveen, a National Union of Teachers, representative at Hackney Downs School:

'There's total support for the sit-in. We collected £72 at the union meeting from 12 people and we're still collecting.'

'Staffa represents one third of all engineering jobs in this area, if it closes that's a big blow to the future of our young people looking for jobs.'

Michael Brown, Ford Dagenham, TGWU:

'I started collecting on Friday. One bloke said that his dad who had worked at Staffa had been given leave to go home to Pakistan. He came back a week late and was promptly sacked.'

'The bloke said it sounded like the leopard hadn't changed its spots.'

What you can do to support the Staffa sit-in

- Arrange a speaker for your Labour Party, union or community organisation
- Pass resolutions of support especially directed to the national executive committees of ASTMS and AUEW
- Take collections wherever possible using the official collection sheets with the union stamp
- Plan fundraising events
- Sell badges — Staffa stays — order from Chris Newson AUEW strike committee, 39 Somers Road, Walthamstow, London E17. 20p each & 15p postage. No reduced rates for bulk orders. Cash with order. Quote Socialist Challenge

Staffa workers aim to have a mass rally in London on Wednesday 21 October in Benthall Green. Ernie Roberts, MP and John Deason of the Right to Work Campaign have been invited to speak.

'We went on the attack from Day One... and we won'

STUART Leath and **Tony Wheeler** have been out on strike with 1,500 others at Automotive Products, Leamington Spa.

Valerie Coultas Talked to them at the weekend. They expect to return to work on Tuesday having forced the company to withdraw its threat of 200 sackings.

Tony: What we've got is a guarantee of non-compulsory redundancies here and in any of the AP plants in the UK.

On Monday the stewards will recommend acceptance of management's offer.

Stuart: The main reason the company puts forward compulsory redundancies was because voluntary redundancy was drying up.

But management had to back down because it couldn't face all the other plants coming out in support of us.

Tony: One of the reasons we've been able to save the jobs is because of the company's trading position in engineering components.

It doesn't keep a buffer of stock to offset disputes. It's in a much more competitive situation where customers expect AP to trade on time. AP's customers are in a similar situation.

So we knew they were vulnerable to strike action from us.

I joined the plant in 1968. Between '69 and '74 we went through four redundancy exercises at AP and during that time

we build up on the plant a joint approach among all three staff unions — ACTTS/TGWU, AUEW/TASS, and ASTMS.

In 1975 we were threatened with major redundancies. We visited every AP plant talking to the unions at mass meetings. They pledged support to defend jobs. This was the birth of the combine as we know it.

Stuart: Over the last six years we've kept affirming the position on jobs. Time and time again we said 'one day we'll have to go out the gate'.

Tony: In 1975 the mere threat of a strike made the company withdraw. They've never felt confident to take us on about compulsory redundancies in the last six years.

Last year for instance, the trading situation of the company was even more unfavourable than this.

We were on a four day week. But they still didn't feel confident.

We'd had to back track on pay, staff levels, replacements, and this made some of them think they'd damaged the union enough so that this year we'd not fight back.

Now it looks as if one of the managers, David



On the picket line at Automotive Products Ltd

we'll get rid of the dossers Wright, will have to eat his words.

Stuart: Our combine which is really strong is not

recognised by the company or controlled by the union officials, although some of our local officials have been quite sympathetic during this

dispute.

It is a lay body and we organise the rank and file.

Tony: But we consciously shut them out at the beginning because we

don't trust union officials.

We did have some problems with the shop floor going into work while we were on strike.

Over the last ten years

we've tried to talk to the shop floor. Every time management has made an offer we've asked them to sit down with us.

We understand there's growing sympathy at other plants for cooperation.

Stuart: But inside our plant the convenor sets one group of workers against the other. On Tuesday the District Committee of the engineering union was going to support the strike but the convenor here argued against it, saying it would make things difficult for his members.

He does enough at set times to get re-elected but as yet there isn't an alternative to replace him.

The Charter Group that involves staff and shop floor workers is trying to build that alternative.

When he was up for re-election we put in a bulletin arguing it was time for a change.

But the company security people came in and tore up the bulletin.

We had put in five bulletins attacking the company before that and no one had batted an eye.

The strike was successful because we acted so quickly. The company was surprised. They expected us to wait for names to be named but we said 'we'll go on the attack from Day One,' 24 hour notice and we were out.

Once the names are out the battle's half lost.

So we went on the attack and we won.

Can militants change the NUR into a fighting union?

By Brian Grogan

MILITANT railworkers in the National Union of Railwaymen will be meeting this Sunday 18 October to organise the fightback against the productivity offensive of the British Rail bosses and to work out the first steps in democratising the NUR.

This is the first national meeting of the Broad Left in the NUR since its launch and the big question is will it be able to respond to the challenge confronting it?

In order to transform the NUR into a fighting union the Broad Left will be debating resolutions to put to the NUR Rules Revision Conference next year.

Turning back the bosses' productivity offensive will be decisive and to do this militants will have to deal with a variety of issues.

In response we reprint here a section of a new pamphlet written by Socialist Challenge railworkers which will be published soon.

Policies for fighting productivity

In order to effectively fight productivity we need an independent strategy of our own — a strategy that would begin to find solutions that are in railworkers' interests.

The minimum requirements of such a strategy would include the following policies;

a) Rail union backing for a massive programme of public investment with no strings attached.

b) An end to the selling off of the profitable sections of BR. The rail unions must lead the call for re-nationalisation without compensation of all privatised sectors.

c) The rail unions must lead the fight against all job loss and closures.

d) Railworkers' wages must be immediately raised to the 1975 level.

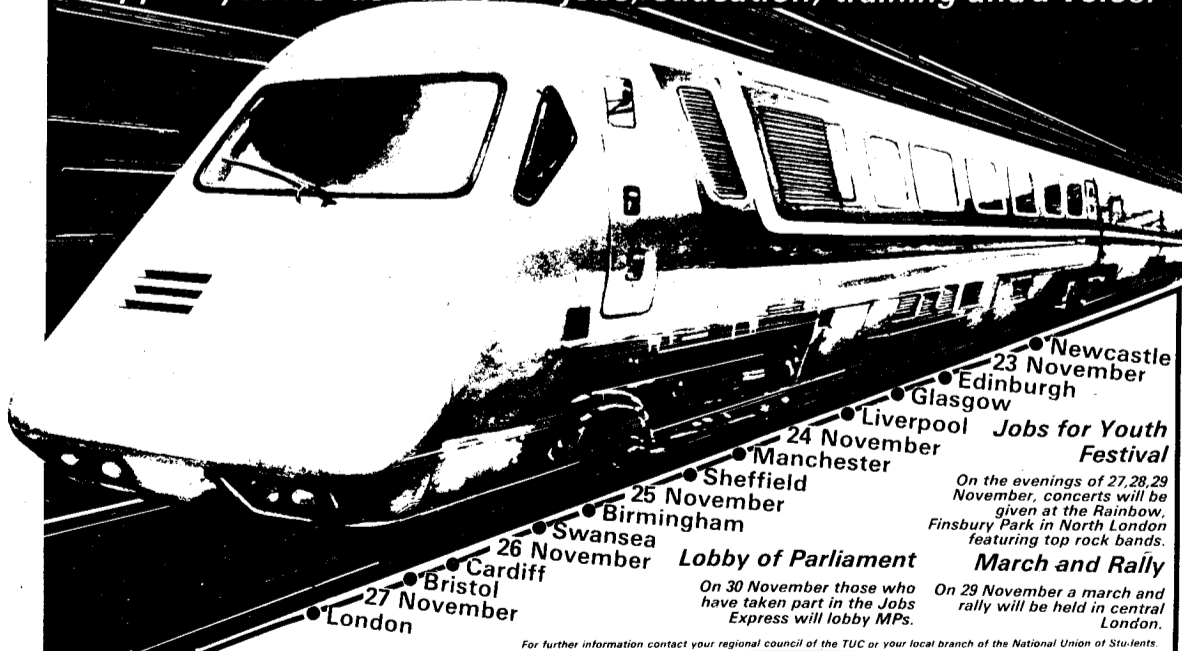
We need union leaderships that are prepared to fight for these policies, using the example, of the miners and taking industrial action in pursuit of them; this would include the mobilisation of the full strength of the Triple Alliance of rail, steel and mines.

This is precisely what the debate inside the Labour Party is about. Will a future Labour government adopt a 'common approach' with the banks and the bosses or would it defend independent policies, formulated at conference in the interests of the working class?

This is why the left wing inside the rail unions supported Tony Benn in the deputy leadership battle — we need a Labour Party leadership that is prepared to fight to implement such policies.

MEET THE JOBS EXPRESS

Support youths' demands for jobs, education, training and a voice.



For Fighting Rail Unions

We believe that it is necessary to form a broad based left wing movement committed to fighting for these sorts of policies inside the rail unions themselves. Such a movement is not a new idea.

In 1934 the Railway Vigilance movement was set up in response to the stagnation of rates of pay and working conditions

that had been steadily worsening since the victory of the 1919 national rail strike which had established National Conditions of Service.

The movement's greatest strength was that it included all railworkers regardless of which union they belonged to.

The foundations for such a movement today

could be laid by campaigning for the policies we have already outlined in opposition to the productivity exercises.

Such a movement would also need to support and defend the democratic gains made inside the Labour Party and to campaign inside the rail unions for the continuation of that process.

It would also have to support the forging of links at rank and file level between the unions of the Triple Alliance.

A broad-based left wing movement founded on these policies would be able to unite all railworkers who wish to be members of fighting rail unions.

Sadat- why there was dancing in the streets

By Geoff Bell

THE meaning of Anwar el-Sadat was there for all to see as they buried him on Saturday.

Those who mourned him were the gangsters, the rich and the powerful of Western capitalism — Richard Nixon, Lord Carrington, the new, self-styled Shah of Iran, Prince Charles, Menahem Begin and many others of their ilk.

Those who were not there were the ordinary citizens of the country which Sadat ruled. As the *Sunday Times* reported, 'All Egypt, the nation in which by the time of his death he was no longer a hero, remained as steadfastly indifferent to his internment as they had to his passing.'

Those who celebrated the burial were the Arab masses who poured into the streets in their various cities.

The British media reported these scenes in their usual style. According to Fleet Street, Sadat was 'The man who died for peace', or 'A martyr to peace', or 'Sadat: the man who cried out to the world: "Lay down your arms".'

This canonisation was contrasted with pictures of Arab masses as they danced and waved their arms in celebration. The message such reporting was trying to put across was as obvious as it was racist: Sadat was the man who managed to rise above the senseless passions of the ignorant, fanatical Arabs.

What is the real reason for the celebrations? The 1980 Report of Amnesty International provides a clue: 'In Egypt, there are repeated arrests mainly of left-wing opponents of government policies who are held under security legislation for several weeks or months before being provisionally released ... the arrest and imprisonment of people whom Amnesty International regards as prisoners of conscience still takes place under legislation introduced under the state of emergency which has been in force for many years.'

'At the end of April 1980 a new law, "the law on the Protection of Values from Shameful Conduct" was approved ... Many of its provisions appear to impose further restrictions on the rights of freedom of opinion and expression.'

'In Tora Prison disciplinary measures include being strapped to a device called al-

Aroussa, the doll, a wooden cross-like pillory with a locking device to keep the head bent forward over the horizontal bar of the cross. In this position the prisoner is beaten on the back and legs.'

Such is one aspect of the Egypt of Sadat, who, in his autobiography in 1978, wrote: 'I have never been lured by any worldly temptations, nor did I ever build my happiness at the expense of others. In every decision I made, in every action I took, I have been directed by my firm belief in the dignity of man and his right to freedom, to peace and to equality.' With honesty like that it is hardly surprising that Richard Nixon attended Sadat's funeral.

The repression by which Sadat ruled was growing at the time of his death. At the beginning of September this year over 1,000 oppositionists were arrested in the course of three hours. It was no coincidence that this purge came just two weeks after the start of another summit between Begin and Sadat. For it was this 'peace process' which more than anything led to Sadat's unpopularity.

The Camp David accords of September 1978 had agreed on the phased withdrawal of Israeli troops from occupied Sinai, and the 'resolution of the Palestinian problem in all its aspects'.

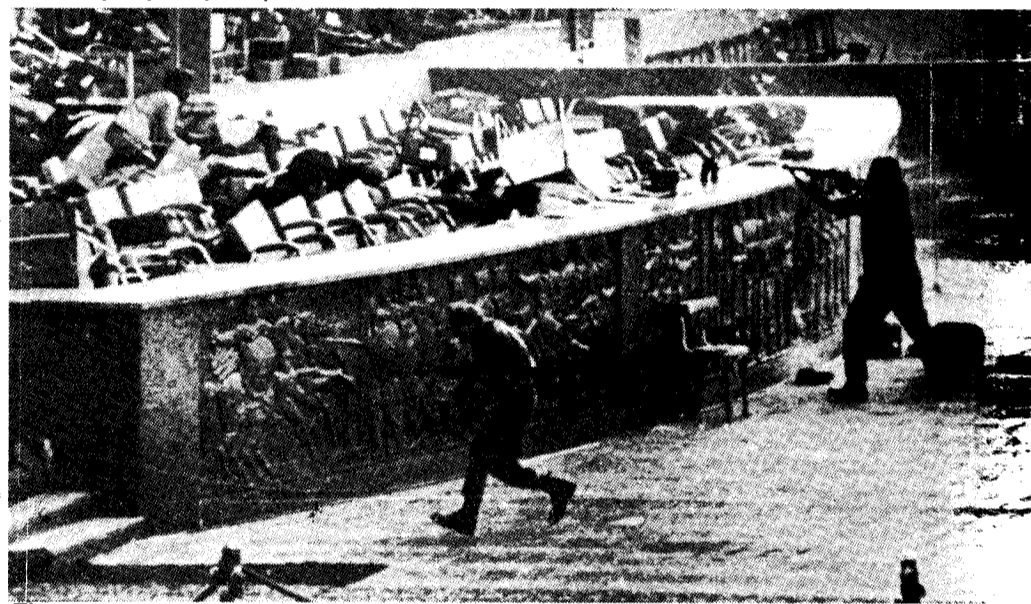
The first had been proceeding on course when Sadat was killed. But this was to the advantage of Egypt alone, in that it was the return of territory lost by Egypt in the 1967 war. Sinai was only a by-product of the Middle East conflict. Its cause was, and remains, Israel's occupation of the Palestinian homeland. And in this area the goals outlined at Camp David were as far away last week as they were in September 1978.

In some respects they were further away. Within the last three years tens of thousands of Israeli citizens have been moved into the occupied territories; duly elected Palestinian mayors have been shot by Zionist gangs, and deported by Israeli authorities. Palestinians in refugee camps in Lebanon and elsewhere have been bombed by Israel.

Yet Sadat clung desperately to the illusion that he could still solve the Middle East problem, although whether he really believed this is another matter. Those who expressed his and Begin's protestations of good intention ranged



The company they keep: Sadat and the Shah of Iran



The moment of reckoning for Sadat

far and wide. They even included Israeli foreign minister Moshe Dayan who resigned because of his government's refusal to make any concessions towards the Palestinians.

It was something of an anomaly that even Dayan appeared more appreciative of the rights

of the Palestinians than he did.

That is why the Arab masses rejoiced during Sadat's funeral. In his autobiography he had promised 'freedom and peace'. His regime had never delivered either when he was shot, and never would have.

Does Egypt need another Nasser?

By Tessa van Gelderen

BEFORE Sadat took over, when Nasser was in power, Egypt represented the way forward for hundreds of thousands of Arabs in the Middle East.

Nasserism was the representative of anti-imperialism in the region. It opposed the control of the economy by imperialism, large landowners and the Arab bourgeoisie.

Under Nasser the Suez Canal was nationalised, foreign capital expelled and there was large scale expansion of the state sector — large armies, nationalised industries, expanding bureaucracies.

This apparent undermining of the ruling class, along with the agrarian reform, the nationalisation of the banks and so on, was enthusiastically welcomed by the Arab masses masses.

In fact, these measures, accompanied by social reforms, did lead to an improvement in the conditions of certain sections of the labour force, and did raise many Egyptians out of the most grinding poverty.

But the Egyptian middle class still held power as

bureaucrats and parasites, despite the nationalisation of the major sectors of the economy. In practice, Nasserite policy systematically stifled the independent activities of the Egyptian working class and its allies.

In the first two years of Nasser's rule — after a military coup against the Farouk monarchy — all political forces that had taken an active part in the Egyptian anti-imperialist movement were suppressed.

Even at moments of great national danger, such as 1956 and the Suez canal crisis, and 1967 and the six day war, the regime jailed and suppressed any opposition.

Nasserism always had two contradictory tendencies within it. One was the mass of the population both urban and rural, whose main interest lay in the total destruction of the system.

The other was those who derived from the mid-

dle class, and those members of the state apparatus and the army, who had been stymied under the old regime by its anti-national structure and the obstruction of Egyptian capitalist development.

Their aim was to seize power 'from above', without involving the masses, and free national capitalism from Anglo-French imperialist constraints.

This contradictory nature of Nasserism was highlighted by the defeat of Egypt in the six day war with Israel in June 1967. Incapable of competing technologically with the Zionist state armed by imperialism, the Nasserite regime was unable to arm and mobilise the masses to defeat Israel.

After the June 1967 defeat, Egypt, like the other Arab regimes which had previously posed as anti-imperialist, moved to the right. Nasser's successor, in 1970, Anwar el-Sadat, took that process further.

The new regime assumed a more virulent and repressive form, but its class oppression, oppor-

tunism and anti-communism had been inherent in Nasserism. Under the Sadat regime, the bourgeoisie was restored. The Nasserite bureaucracy was eliminated and the regime set about progressively dismantling the nationalisation measures affecting the interests of the Egyptian bourgeoisie.

Yet, despite the shift to the right there was radicalisation of the masses. The October 1973 war was staged to stop this new wave of rising struggles.

It was perhaps therefore fitting that Sadat met his end celebrating Egypt's offensive against Israel eight years earlier.

The Sadat government had set itself the task of the removal of political tensions in the area. It was this prerequisite for any future development of the capitalist economy that was to dominate the years of the Sadat regime.

For this reason Egypt, under Sadat, broke decisively with the Soviet Union and instead looked towards American imperialism.

Yet despite kowtowing to US and Zionist policies

poor Sadat has recently been out of favour with the new administration under Reagan. The US had begun to reassess its relations with Egypt, just before Sadat's assassination.

There were doubts whether Egypt could any longer play the role it had in carrying out American policy in the area.

Instead, Israel was seen to be a greater military and political asset, while the oil-rich Saudis were in a much better position than Egypt to pay the top prices for American military aid.

The US aims for direct deployment of their forces in the region — air, ground and naval. Egypt lacked the stability to make such provisions.

Sadat was well aware of this change in American policy. That was why he was anxious to deal with any opposition internally as quickly and as repressively as possible.

The failure of Sadat is further proof that the national interests of one Arab country cannot be put before the interests of the Arab masses throughout the Middle East.



The company they keep: Nasser and Nikita Khrushchov

Anwar el-Sadat, never made any pretence that he was on the side of the Palestinians. What he did manage to do was to convince many people that an agreement between Israel and Egypt could bring peace to the troubled

region. But an agreement that is not in the interests of the Arab masses, and the Palestinians in particular, can never bring peace. Only the eventual successful outcome of their struggle can achieve that.

By Phil Hearse

OVER THE PAST WEEK things have been happening in British politics which would have seemed inconceivable even five years ago. The Social Democratic Party has been holding its 'rolling conference' in Perth, Bradford and London, while defections by Labour MPs to the SDP are almost a daily occurrence.

At the same time, the Conservative leadership is under fierce attack from within its own ranks — something virtually unprecedented a Tory government in office.

Add to this the turmoil inside the Labour Party, and the argument that the 'mould of British politics is breaking' seems plausible. How did the parties come to be in this state, and what will be the outcome? Will the SDP establish itself as the 'natural party of government' as its leaders claim?

Boom

To grasp the meaning of what has happened in British politics, we must look first at the pattern established after the second world war, and the forces which inevitably undermined the apparent stability of the political system.

After 1945 Britain participated in the unprecedented boom of the world capitalist economy. As Andrew Gamble has pointed out in *Britain in Decline* this boom created many illusions, because while Britain grew richer at an unprecedented rate, its relative decline against the other major capitalist powers was greater than at any time in its history.

Loss

The basis was laid for all the contradictions of British capitalism — its failure to modernise its productive system and state apparatus to cope with the loss of empire, and to compete as just another manufacturing nation — to explode at a higher level in the future.

The British ruling class complacently rode the boom of the 50s and 60s, apparently oblivious to the disastrous results which would accompany the end of the boom and the onset of a long period of world recession (See Mandel's *Long Waves in the History of Capitalism*).

Work

The complacency of bourgeois theorists during this period was well expressed at the political level. Convinced that another 1929-style economic crisis was ruled out, they dreamt up the notion that 'welfare capitalism' could work indefinitely, that everyone would become more 'middle class' and class contradictions would gradually disappear.

Inside the labour movement, the 'revisionist' theorists — Tony Crosland, Douglas Jay and so on — explained that the 'Future of Socialism' lay not in the pursuit of class interests and the creation of socialism but in 'humanising' capitalism.

Battle

Their ideological offensive resulted in the battle in the early 1960s to remove 'Clause 4' (nationalisation of major industry) of the Labour Party constitution — a battle championed by Hugh

Gaitskell but defeated by the Labour left.

The result of the boom was the *dominance of the centre*, the convergence of the leaderships of the Labour and Tory parties. The Tories under leaders like Eden and MacMillan became convinced that the *integration* of the labour bureaucracy, and hence the working class, through limited reforms and concessions was by far the best strategy.

Lack

The 1964 general election was the turning point of post-war British politics in which all these old certainties began to disappear. Britain's decline was evident, as was its lack of clout against its major competitors.

Harold Wilson's Labour government came to power after 13 years of Tory government on the basis of a programme of *modernisation*, not class politics — the so-called 'white heat of technological revolution'. Labour's election slogan summed it up well — 'Let's go with Labour and we'll get things *done*'.

Dropped

The *Economist*, which today demands the smashing of the Labour Party, gave its backing to Labour as did other influential bourgeois journals.

But Labour's modernisation programme failed, mainly because the '64-70 government proved incapable of dealing with the power of the working class, the indispensable precondition for raising the rate of profit in British industry, providing the basis for modernisation.

When 'In Place of Strife' was dropped in 1969 because of union opposition, any attempt to deal with the organised strength of the workers' movement was over.

Broken

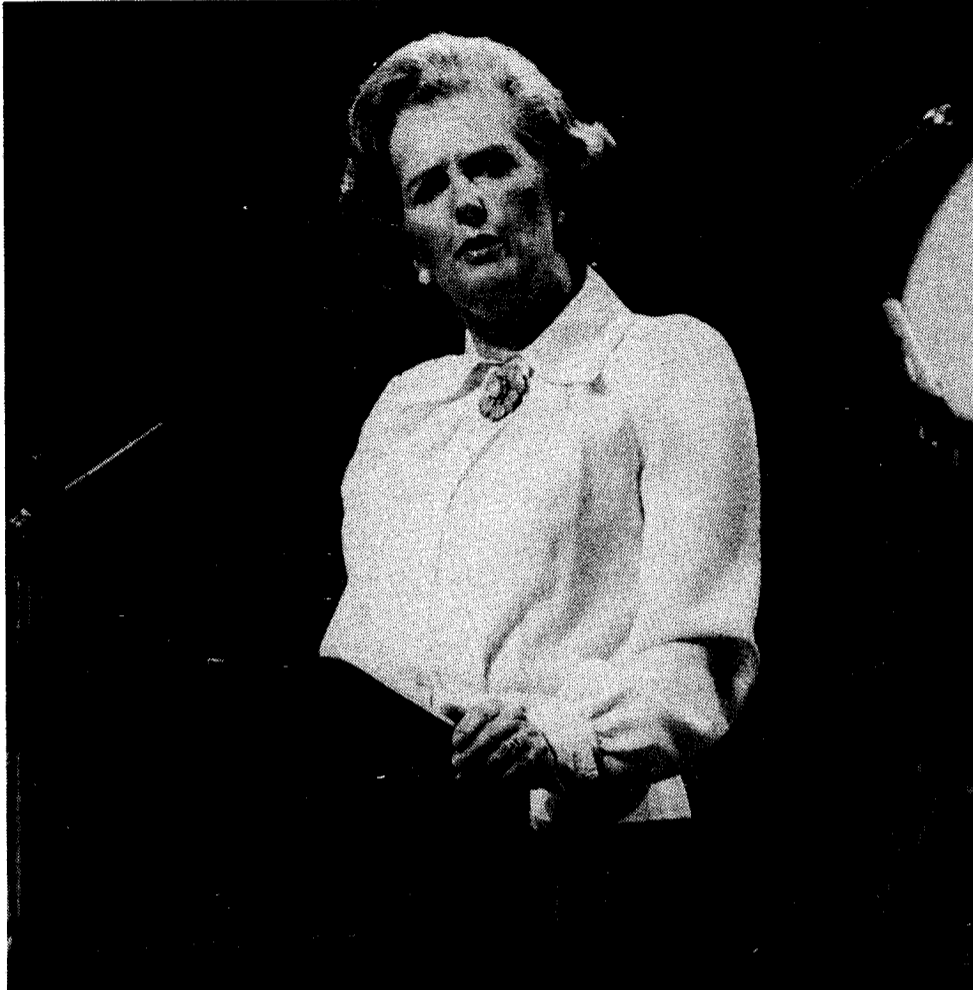
The two-party centre consensus was broken by the emergence of Thatcherism. This was a decisive move by a section of bourgeois opinion to transform the relationship of forces in society to the detriment of the working class.

Priority

The programme of Thatcherism included a rejection of state intervention in industry, a return to the priority of market forces, a shake out of 'overmanning', deflationary economic policies, (ie. cutting jobs), and an all-out assault on 'wasteful' social spending. The priority of Thatcherism was to be a war on 'inflation'. Safe money was the key to economic problems.

The problem, is that Thatcherism has failed. Inflation has started to go

'Teddy Benn'



CONSERVATIVE THE NEXT GOVERNMENT.

Despite the slogan, one thing is certain: the Tories won't be forming the next government. More and more the Conservatives are beginning to fear the

emergence of the SDP. Above centre, Professor Chilean government; below, Alan Walters, hard-line monetarist advisor to the cabinet office: he was formerly advising the SDP. Rumour

up again, while the effects of monetarist policies on manufacturing industry and employment have been drastic. Enter the Tory dissidents.

Edward Heath's disaffection with Thatcher's leadership dates from his defeat in the first ever Tory leadership election in 1976. Her election was masterminded by the hard right of the party — people like Robert Moss, Ian 'social security scroungers' Sproat, and Jock Bruce-Gardyne.

Her pretorian guard included a fair sprinkling of the loony right — Rhodes Boyson, Norman Tebbit and their ilk. Hard-nosed

monetarists like Leon Brittan and Nigel Lawson seized control of the Treasury.

All of this was deeply offensive to many in the Tory hierarchy; but Thatcher had correctly judged the mood of the party in the country, and its majority in parliament. The party hierarchy remained, for the first time in many years, the prisoner of its own base.

But the Tories are nothing if not pragmatic. The ultimate crime is failure. The Tory 'wets' are regrouping, ready for a sustained attack. While Gilmour and Heath — christened 'Teddy Benn'

by Edward Du Cann — and some junior MPs spearhead the attack, Thatcher must know that there are dozens of secret 'wets', both in the cabinet and in the higher reaches of the party, who will join a rebellion which promises success.

The manifesto of the opposition, written by the so-called 'Blue Chips', is deeply revealing. Two concerns shine out. First, they are deeply worried by the prospect of electoral annihilation, and by the government's image.

Second, they are deeply fearful that sections of the ruling class, those associated with manufac-

turing capital, will turn to the Social Democratic Party. Thus they propose an immense reflation of the economy.

Some quotes will indicate their line of thinking. 'We (ie. the Tory government) talk in terms of almost primitive laissez faire, and thereby collect the credit for every bankruptcy that occurs. We talk, too often, as if we consider the unemployment figures to be fraudulent, or the recipients of social security not to be our fellow citizens for whom we have a duty to care — and thereby collect the odium of responsibility for the recession, and the hatred

of those whom we have in fact struggled to protect at a time of falling national output.'

The Tory party, the say, has achieved a reputation as 'industrial hit men and social reactionaries'. They propose instead a programme of investment led by the government, in house building, telecommunications, school equipment, road building and so on. They also argue for a return to a more 'caring' approach in social policy.

This desire on the part of many Tories to re-occupy the centre ground of British politics also stems from their increasing

the Blue Chips and the SDP



ent. Above right, Christopher conference in Blackpool that another six Tory MPs Office started a campaign of 'dirty tricks' against her, the first Tory to defect to the are about to defect. Now Edward Heath is sug- gesting that Thatcher's acolytes in the Tory Central

Second, Roy Jenkins' vote in the Warrington by-election, showed that many of the SDP's votes come from previous Tory or Liberal voters, not so many from ex-Labour voters.

Third, the gains which can be established for the SDP by firmly adopting the 'centre' option are probably greater than that which can be achieved immediately by the 'left' option.

Smash

Attempts to smash up the Labour Party will be bitterly resisted every inch of the way, and stand no chance of success without first splitting a section of the unions from the Labour Party — which is a most unlikely variant.

This is where the *Economist* gets it wrong. A Bennite 'rump' with the Labour right detached would not be a 'rump' while it maintained its links with the unions. It would still be the mass party of the working class.

There is a further major strategic issue at stake for the SDP. The future prospects of the SDP-Liberal alliance depend on the possibility of so damaging both major parties that the alliance will have enough weight — either in government or holding the balance of power — to impose proportional representation after the next election.

Epoch

This is exactly what the *Economist*-style Tories don't want, because they know that such a development would probably put them out of office for the foreseeable future, and guarantee an epoch of coalition government.

The opinion polls seem to indicate that the SDP is on the crest of a wave of popular support. Interestingly enough, accounts from within the SDP itself (such as that by David Marquand in the latest *London Review of Books*) indicate the adhesion of a large number of people from the middle classes who have never previously been involved in politics.

Depth

This represents the mirror-image of the impact of Bennism on sections of the intellectual and white collar strata. It amounts to confirmation of the growing *politicisation* of British society, a politicisation long overdue in light of the depth of the social and economic crisis.

Until it is tested in government, the SDP is likely to grow both from the right and the left. But the same forces which gave rise to the SDP will be its undoing. The SDP will never survive its first period of government.

Phoney

Despite its phoney 'radicalism' and credit-card flashiness, its programme is precisely the 'welfare' programme established in the beginning of the 1960s. The SDP is part of the death agony of the 'civilised', 'humane' centre of British politics and not its saviour.

concern about the growing popularity of the Social Democratic Party.

Already there are rumours, that six Tory MPs are about to defect to the SDP after the party conference. This creates a major problem of tactics for the Social Democrats themselves — is the SDP to be a genuine 'centre' party like the French Giscardians, or is it to be explicitly a party of the left, which attempts to replace the Labour Party and destroy it as the major left wing force?

The *Economist* had no doubts on this score. In a recent editorial in its 24 September issue, it calls

for the SDP to reject the 'centrist' temptation and set itself the task of smashing up the Labour Party by splitting local councils (as it has done with dramatic success for example in Islington), attacking Constituency Labour Parties one by one, and making a grab for the Labour right by presenting itself as the natural continuation of the 'old' Labour Party.

The reason why the *Economist* should prefer this variant is not too difficult to discover. As an avowedly Tory journal with major support in ruling class circles, which has backed Thatcher to the

hilt, sees the problem in British politics not as the polarisation of right and left, but as Labour's move to the left alone.

It therefore wishes to destroy the Labour Party as the major alternative to the Tories without at the same time wrecking the Conservative Party.

Thus its call to the SDP to place itself on the left, and to the whole Labour right to join the SDP, amounts to saying: 'Please smash up the Labour Party and the bourgeoisie will reward you accordingly.'

The *Economist* is quite explicit. The SDP for them represents an opportunity to make the major party of

the left break its links with organised labour. This in itself is very revealing: the problem with the Labour Party, which makes it 'unsafe' as the natural alternative to the Tories, is not just Bennite radicalism, but the combination of this with Labour's powerful organic links with the unions.

If the SDP were to adopt this strategy it would play the same role as the short-lived 1954 split from the Labour Party. The *Economist* wants to keep Labour out of government.

Which way the SDP

eventually goes depends on the relative weight of the contradictory trends present in this proto-party. Already, because of the defections of councillors and MPs from Labour, the party has a strong array of machine politicians and career bureaucrats who have previously based themselves on the organised workers' movement.

It would be a mistake to think that these people have no base in the working class, or are inseparable from it. The SDP is a party of the working class, and its success depends on the relative weight of the contradictory trends present in this proto-party. Already, because of the defections of councillors and MPs from Labour, the party has a strong array of machine politicians and career bureaucrats who have previously based themselves on the organised workers' movement.

class votes.

But the simple strategy of attempting to replace the Labour Party as the major party of the left comes up against numerous objections.

First, and by no means least important, is the present social composition of the 66,000 people who have signed up for the SDP. All the commentators remarked that the SDP attracted a large number of people from the middle classes who have never previously been involved in politics. The SDP is a party of the working class, and its success depends on the relative weight of the contradictory trends present in this proto-party. Already, because of the defections of councillors and MPs from Labour, the party has a strong array of machine politicians and career bureaucrats who have previously based themselves on the organised workers' movement.

Where you can buy Socialist Challenge

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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. Andrew's Square and bottom of Waverley 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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SOUTHERN AFRICA: Current imperialist strategy in SA — an open discussion on 17 Oct, 3-6pm, 281 Liverpool Rd, N1 (corner of Barnsbury St) organised by SOFAS (Socialist Forum on Southern Africa Solidarity).

SPARTACIST League/Communist Faction speaking tour: Afghanistan, Poland, Angola, The Cold War Connection, Speaker Lawrie Harney, SL CC, formerly Communist Faction of IMG, Fri 16 Oct 7pm Conway Hall. For info: ring 278-2232.

SHEFFIELD: SC on sale Thursday, Pond St, 4.30-6pm; Saturday, Fargate 10.30-12.30pm.
STAFFORD: SC on Sale Market Sq Sat lunch-time.
STOCKPORT: SC sold every Saturday, 1pm, Mersey Way. Can be delivered weekly: phone 483 8909 (evening), 236 4905 (day).
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WOLVERHAMPTON: SC sales on Thur/Fri at Poly Students Union from noon-2pm and British Rail 4.30-6pm; and Saturday near Beattie's town centre from 11am-2pm.
YORK: on sale every Thursday, dole office Clifford Street, 9.30-11; University Vanburgh College 12-2; Saturday at Cony Street 11-1.

London

BRENT: SC sold Willesden Junction Thur 4.30pm.
EALING: SC sold Thur, Ealing Broadway tube, 4.30-5.30pm.
ENFIELD: SC at Nelsons newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.
HACKNEY: SC on sale on estates throughout Hackney, at public meetings, and local factories. Contact us c/o PO Box 36, 136 Kingstand High St, London E8 2NF or phone Megan or John at 359 8288.
HILLINGDON: SC sold Fri, 4.30-5.30 at Uxbridge tube station; Sat 10.30-12.00 outside Woolworths, Uxbridge shopping centre.
KILBURN: SC sales every Sat, 10am in Kilburn Square, and Thursday 8.30am at Queens Park tube.
LAMBETH: SC available from Village Books, Streatham; Tetric Books, Clapham; Paperback Centre, Brixton; Oval tube kiosk. Also sold Thur and Fri evenings and Thur mornings outside Brixton tube.
NEWHAM: SC sold Sat 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Mkt, Upton Park.
PADDINGTON: SC sold at Portobello Rd market Sat at noon.
WEMBLEY: SC sales Fri 6-6.45am at North Wembley BR Station.

Bookshops

BANGOR: Rainbows, Hollyhead Road, Upper Bangor, Gwynedd.
BRADFORD: Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Sandgate.
BRIGHTON: The Public House, Little Preston St.
BRISTOL: Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Bristol 6.
BIRMINGHAM: Other Bookshop, 137 Digbeth, Birmingham.
DURHAM: Durham City Co-op Bookshop, 85a New Elvet.
ILFORD: South Essex Bookshop, 335 Ley Street.
MILTON KEYNES: Oakleaf Books, 109 Church Street, Wolverton.
OXFORD: EOA Books, 34 Cowley Rd.
LEICESTER: Blackthorn Books, 70 High St, Leicester, and V Karia, 53A London Rd, Leicester.
LIVERPOOL: News from Nowhere, 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool L1.
LONDON: Central Books, 37 Grays Inn Rd; Collets, 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; Centreprise, 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.

Socialist Challenge

RAIL: national meeting of supporters in rail, Sat 7 Nov, 1.30pm at centre.

STUDENT FRACTION: Sunday 18 October 10-4pm at national centre. Documents and details from Ann/Richard/Andy at Revolution office.

DEMONSTRATE

Victory to the Hunger Strikers!

Assemble 1pm, Sat 17 October
Brixton Library, Coldharbour Lane/Brixton Rd
March to Embankment for rally
Speakers include: Ken Livingstone
Called by South London Hunger Strike Action Committee



Socialist Challenge News

£16,500 — our target for socialism

By Alan Freeman
OUR new quarterly fund drive begins this week with a target of £16,500. So far we've already received £1,705. We have to reach our new target by Xmas, especially as over the previous three months we fell over £5,000 short.

- Last quarter we asked for a total of £16,500 as follows:
- £1,900 for our campaigns around women's liberation
 - £3,800 for the fight for socialist policies in the unions
 - £950 for our fight for socialist policies in the Labour Party
 - £950 for our anti-missile work
 - £2,400 for our other campaigns
 - £6,500 to subsidise the paper

On the way did we spend the money we raised? Well, despite Roy Hattersley's complaints, we didn't quite get Benn elected. But the best testimony to our contribution was the fact that every second delegate to the Labour Party conference was wearing our 'Benn for Deputy' badge.

Socialist Challenge has been up front in fighting for Benn — and we're the one paper on the left that has been taking the democracy and policy fight into the unions.

We spent £300 at the Labour Party conference alone. That allowed us to put a daily electro-stencilled bulletin into the conference hall, to build activity around a woman's right to work, to promote the Labour Movement Conference on Ireland, the 24 October CND demonstration, to support the Polish workers — advertised by one of our Solidarnosc T-shirts on

Eric Heffer's ample chest — and to organise a 150-person strong meeting in support of the LSE workers, now in their sixth month of struggle.

We played a central role in building the highly successful Northern Carnival against the Missiles in August. This intervention alone cost us £220. Ireland has been high on the list of our campaigns. At the rally for free speech organised by Belfast councillors, on the initiative of the comrades from Peoples Democracy, we spent over £200 in helping to get Labour councillors over from Britain, including one who was arrested for her support to the Irish struggle.

Youth

We helped Revolution Youth produce a special broadsheet in reaction to the youth rebellion, of which over 5,000 copies hit the streets within days of the outbreak to explain the Tories' responsibility for the crisis and to mobilise for the defence of police victims, costing £150.

This quarter we want to do as much and more. We intend to devote proper resources to supporting the Polish and Central American workers in struggle, and plan to co-sponsor a big rally for their defence in December, with Revolution Youth on the occasion of their second conference.



We will need £16,500 in all:

- £1,900 for our work in support of women's rights
- £3,750 to organise for socialist policies in the unions and Labour Party
- £900 to build action against the missiles
- £2,450 for our work on Ireland, racism, Poland and Central America
- £6,500 to subsidise the production of the paper

That's £5,500 each month. We start with £1,705. Send us your money for socialism, and start planning your fund-raising events now!



INPREKOR — first number of a Polish edition of Inprekor, is now being distributed by supporters of the Fourth International in Poland. Photocopies available from Socialist Challenge for 75p.

Any local supporters or branches interested in starting Polish solidarity work, write to Polish Solidarity, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

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

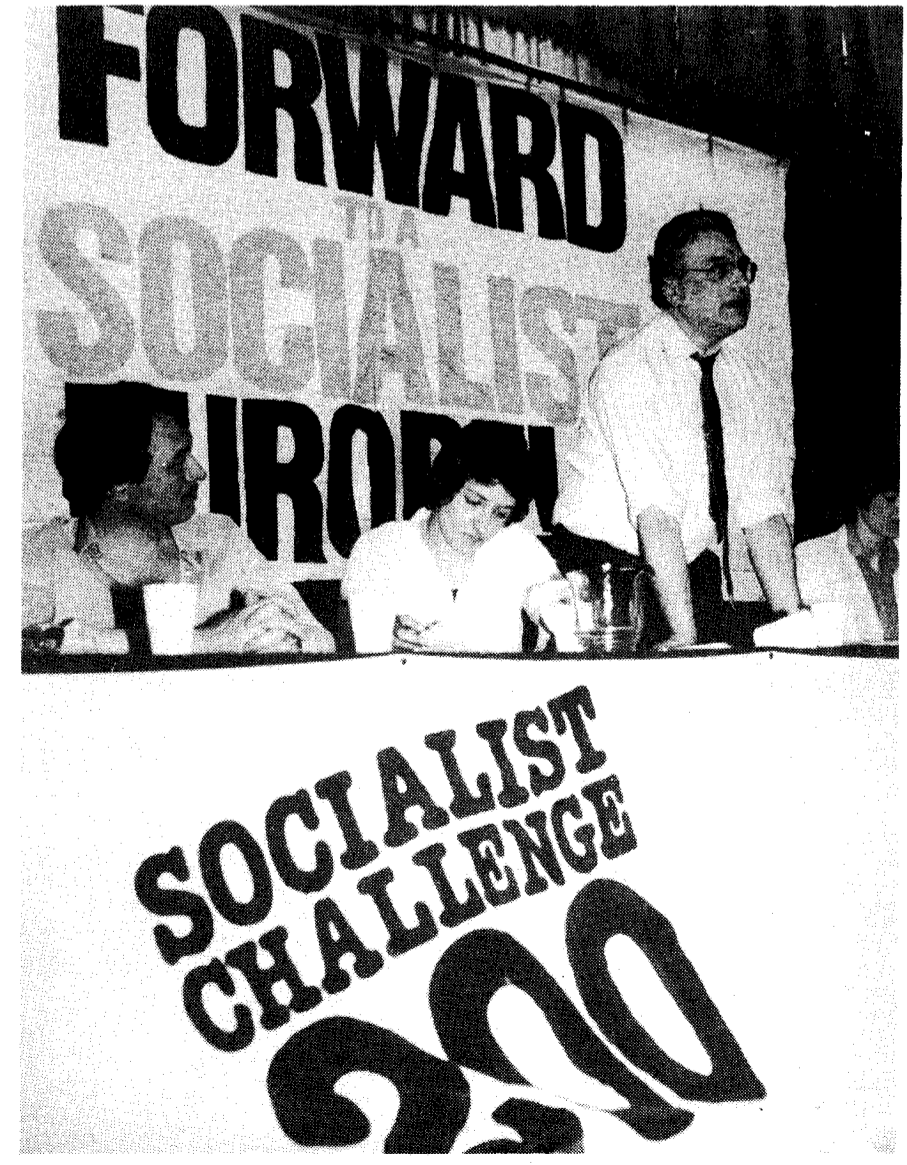
Name.....

Address.....

Age.....

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

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



Letters letters LETTERS

Iran - a counter-revolutionary regime

It is indeed a tragedy that it should have taken the murder of untold numbers of Iranian revolutionaries for Socialist Challenge to take a critical position towards the Khomeini regime (editorial statement, 8 October). Even now it hesitates to call things by their right name — the Khomeini regime is condemned because it 'has proved chronically incapable of stabilising the economy since the overthrow of the Shah'.

What needs saying, and saying very clearly, is that it is a counter-revolutionary regime and has been so since it came to power after the overthrow of the Shah.

The CIA would, undoubtedly, like to have a government in power which is more compliant to American imperialism but they would find it difficult to get a more right-wing government. To Khomeini, even capitalism is the work of the Great Satan but he does not want to go forward to socialism but backward to a mediaeval Islamic state.

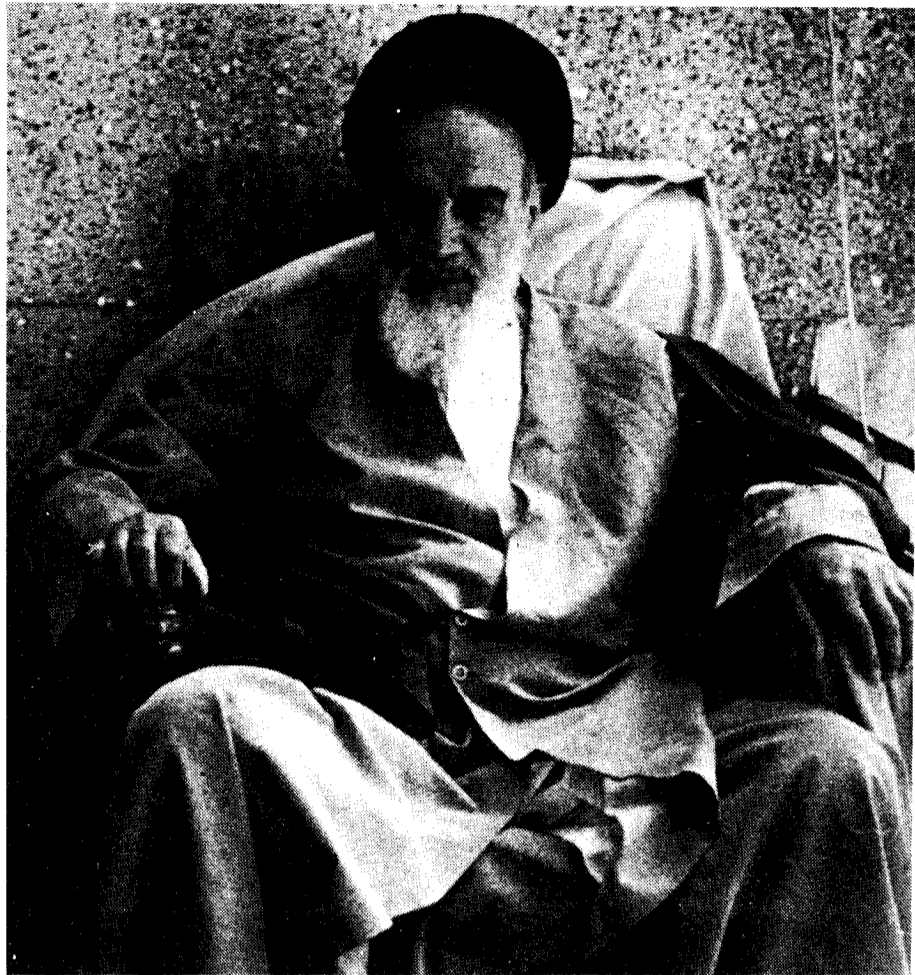
That is counter-revolution by whatever name you want to call it. And, whatever the subjective desires of the Mullahs, objectively they are preparing the way for renewed imperialist intervention.

Instead of calling, as the editorial now does, for an independent class line, 'the creation of organisations which mobilise the workers, but which break with bourgeois politicians of every stripe....', the USEC Resolution of 28 July, 1980 stated, 'large numbers of Persian (sic) masses view Khomeini as a

political leader who symbolise their hatred for the Shah and his dictatorship ... Through this Shi-ite Islam became and remains the vehicle for the movements and struggles for all their social and economic demands.'

Should we not, as Marxists, have known what the editorial now states, that this regime would be incapable of fulfilling the historic needs of the Iranian masses. Should we not, as Lenin did in his April Thesis after the February Revolution in Russia, have made it clear to the Iranian workers and peasants that this was not their revolution and set about to build a party which could give the political lead which the task of preparing this revolution required?

'The history of a revolution is for us first of all a history of the forcible entrance of the masses into the realm of rulership over their own destiny' (Trotsky, Preface to History of the Russian Revolution). This ABC of revolutionary



Marxism was completely forgotten in previous SC analysis of the Iranian Revolution.

Instead of mobilising the Iranian masses for the overthrow of the regime of Khomeini/Bani-Sadr; instead of supporting the Kurds in their struggle for self-determination, the sections of the FI called

for the defence of this monstrous regime against the equally obnoxious Hussein dictatorship of Iraq.

Khomeini, however, knew where the real threat to his regime came from and it was not from Baghdad or even Washington. A large section of his army — and it is largely the same

army which served the Shah — has been engaged in genocidal war against the people of Kurdistan. His 'revolutionary guards' have killed more Iranian, Kurdish and other revolutionaries than they have Iraqi soldiers!

It is the elementary duty of Marxists now to seek the greatest unity of all the

revolutionary forces in Iran, and especially with the Kurdish freedom fighters and the Mujahadin, even where we do not agree with the methods they employ.

Individual acts of terrorism are not our weapons but we are on the same side as the terrorists. We must win them to proletarian revolutionary politics through united front actions against the terrorism of the regime and for its overthrow.

We must convince the Mujahadin that they must break with the Bani-Sadr but we must support the demand for a constituent assembly, chosen through free elections, while at the same time strengthening the potential organs of workers' and peasants' power, the Shorahs.

Our programme must include the immediate and unconditional right to self-determination for all the oppressed nationalities in Iran; no support for the war between the two Bonapartist states Iran and Iraq; fraternisation on the front; turn the war on both sides of the border into a civil war!

CHARLIE VAN GELDEREN, NW LONDON

We reply: We strongly disagree with Charlie's letter which totally underestimates the anti-imperialist dynamic opened up by the Iranian revolution. Further, no section of the FI ever gave political support to the Khomeini regime

Chile, Cuba and the masses

JONATHAN Silberman's letter informed Socialist Challenge readers of the steps which Fidel Castro took to try and influence Allende's leadership of the Chilean struggle, stressing the need for an independent, mass, armed mobilisation of the workers movement to overthrow the state.

But I feel that Jonathan's uncritical presentation of Castro's remarks on Chile and the revolutionary prospects in Central and Latin America leads to ambiguity.

Castro was undoubtedly correct to press for mass, armed movements of the working class. But although such movements can overthrow existing states, we have to be very precise in analysing to what degree such movements are capable



of achieving proletarian democracy and a proletarian economy.

For example, the movement which overthrew the Shah was a mass movement and it was armed. Its main problem was the lack of revolutionary leader-

ship, be it a party or a mass organisation. The present state of Iran speaks as eloquent testimony to these facts.

The Cuban revolution was a revolution in the sense that the state was overthrown, imper-

ialism was defeated, and subsequent big gains were made for the workers and the oppressed.

But it wasn't a proletarian, socialist revolution. The mass mobilisation of the working class did not

Union democracy

I THINK that last week's letters about the need for democracy in left wing unions were 100 per cent right. Socialists should always fight for full democracy and honesty, whether it appears to work against us or not.

A TGWU branch secretary in this area has privately admitted that he voted for Benn on behalf of his branch without consulting his members. This man has become cynical. However good his policies may be, how can he hold the respect of his members? They may not find out he has fiddled the vote, but they are bound to find out his attitude. After

all, if you are not scrupulously honest with your members, it means you don't trust them.

Of course when the right wing get caught fiddling, the scandal is soon forgotten. But the whole trade union movement is still suffering from the right wing backlash in the EETPU after the left was caught ballot rigging. And when it comes to vote-rigging, the right wing could beat us hands down at that game any day.

Socialist Challenge should campaign for more democracy and accountability in all unions, left and right.

OLIVER NEW SOUTHALL

obtain full class autonomy, consequently it didn't throw up organs of workers power.

The Cuban leadership is not proletarian internationalist. The workers state of Cuba is one with bureaucratic deformations, and its leadership places itself within the camp of Stalinist ideology, albeit its left wing.

Similarly, the leader-

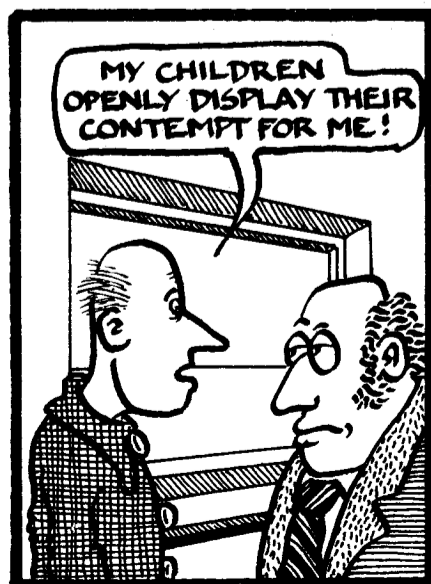
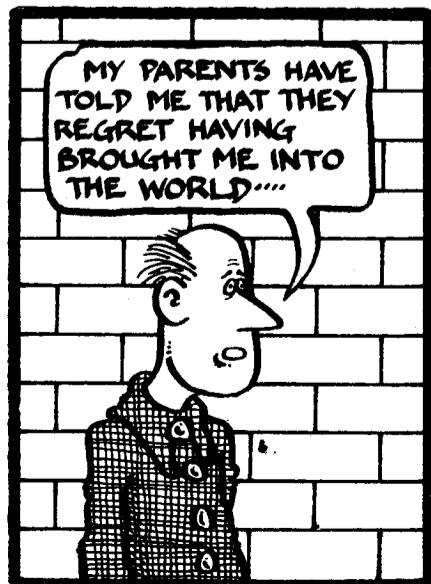
ship of the Nicaraguan and El Salvadorean movements are petty-bourgeois in character.

So, a successful armed mass workers movement may be able to overthrow the existing state, but without a Leninist party, a programme based on the interests of the working class and proletarian democracy, these revolutions cannot solve the

economic, social and political problems which humanity faces. They are, in a sense, 'deformed' revolutions.

If all we needed was armed, independent uprising there would be no need for the International Marxist Group and the Fourth International. However it isn't and there is!

STEVEN ARCHER, LEEDS





● Bobby Sands ● Francis Hughes ● Ray McCreesh ● Patsy O'Hara ● Joe McDonnell ● Martin Hurson ● Kevin Lynch ● Kieran Doherty ● Tom McElwee ● Micky Devine

Irish prisoners: 'We claim a massive political victory'

Why did the Irish political prisoners call off their hunger strike? What lessons have they drawn from their struggle? Did they win or lose? Socialist Challenge gives the prisoners' views in an edited version of the statement they made when the end of the hunger strike was announced.

We, the protesting Republican prisoners in the H Blocks, being faced with the reality of sustained family intervention, are forced by this circumstance over which we have little control at the moment, to end the hunger strike.

On 1 March 1981, Bobby Sands embarked on hunger strike. On 8 April 1981, 30,492 people in the Fermanagh/South Tyrone constituency elected him as their MP.

By doing so they recognised him as a political prisoner and demanded that the British government respect the mandate given by them and by the entire nationalist community on the streets, by implementing the five demands.

The British government, caught in the hypocrisy of their own 'democracy jargon' ignored the people's wishes and mandate.

Murder

On 5 May 1981 Bobby Sands died on hunger strike, murdered by British callousness and vindictiveness.

Frank Hughes, Raymond McCreesh and Patsy O'Hara were soon to follow Bobby to the grave and still the British government remained steadfastly and inhumanely inflexible.

On 11 June, nine prisoners stood in the Southern general election. Of these, Paddy Agnew topped the poll in Louth and Kieran Doherty was elected for the Cavan/Monaghan constituencies. In the other seven areas the prisoners polled exceedingly well, considering the lack of organisation and the short period of time there was to organise the election campaign.

Action

Soon Kieran Doherty, Kevin Lynch and Tomas McElwee were to be murdered by Britain.

The British government, having been exposed for the hypocrites they are at the first Fermanagh/South Tyrone by-election, had instigated and passed legislation which erased our right to participate in elections and this done they fixed the by-election for Bobby Sands' seat for 20 August.

By this time a new active, treacherous and vigorous campaign was under way to bring the strike. This campaign was orchestrated by

clerics who received approval from the Catholic Church. On occasions, other individuals were also involved. Attempts were made to discredit we prisoners and the National H Block Committee.

More damaging was the promotion of the 'hopeless' syndrome. The projection of this 'hopeless' syndrome, plus the private lobbying of relatives to effect intervention when strikers were going into a coma, was proving to be a serious threat to the continuation of the hunger-strike.

On 20 August, 1981, Owen Carron was elected with an increased majority as proxy political prisoner MP for Fermanagh/South Tyrone. Even so, the British Premier Thatcher again spurned this mandate for we prisoners. With encouragement from Dr FitzGerald she went further by refusing even to meet with him to discuss the continuing spiral and gruesome spectre of death.

On 20 August, Mickey Devine was the 10th hunger-striker to die.

Mounting pressure and clerical-inspired demoralisation led to further intervention and at present five strikers have been taken off their fast.

We accept that it is almost a physical and psychological impossibility to recommence a hunger strike after intervention. Also, two men ended their fast to avoid a premature, non-hunger striking death.

The situation exists at present that a considerable majority of present hunger strikers' families have indicated that they will intervene and under these circumstances we feel that the hunger strike must, for tactical reasons, be suspended.

One of the primary lessons from this second hunger strike is that the nationalist community is politically inconsequential and impotent in the context of the Six County statelet.

Despite the electoral successes, despite the hundreds of thousands at hunger-strikers' funerals despite massive and unprecedented displays of community support and solidarity, the British government adhered rigidly to the precept that 'might is right' and set about hammering home the point that nothing has really changed since the fall of Stormont or from the inception of this state.

Border

That is that nationalist Ireland must always be subjected to the British and Loyalist veto.

On the same theme, the lesson of Fermanagh/South Tyrone is that the self-exalted 'British democracy' is an expediency manufactured — again, from the setting up of the border, the 'first and biggest gerrymander' — to preserve a continued British presence in Ireland.

When defeated by their own rules at the polls, the British government's concept of democracy altered and the rules were changed to suit them. When they are defeated even by their own rules they ignore the democratically-expressed voice of the electorate and thus undermine the entire principle and purpose of using their 'democratic' processes to effect social or political change.

The logical conclusion of this analysis is that nationalist pacifism in the Northern Ireland context dooms the nationalist population to subservience, perpetuates partition and thwarts the quest for a just and lasting peace in Ireland.

Another facet of this hunger strike was to expertly expose the true face of the present Irish establishment, consisting of the Catholic Church, the Dublin government and the SDLP.

From the outset, the SDLP hierarchy opposed the hunger strike even though they offered no alternative course of action. We contend that their position has at all times been established by political consideration rather than the Christian values of truth and justice. Their stance has been extremely immoral and misleading.

We believe that the Dublin bloc of Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour are accessories to the legalised murder of 10 true and committed Irishmen who died heroically in the long tradition of Republican resistance to British occupation, oppression and injustice in Ireland.

They are accessories to murder by virtue of the fact that they sat idly by and thus encouraged the British to continue with the death policy.

At no time did any of these three parties unequivocally or even tacitly support our demands even though our five demands are implemented in their entirety in jails in Southern Ireland.

There was only one positively injurious action available to the SDLP which would help to save lives in the H Blocks and that was to isolate the British administration by withdrawing from the council chambers.

This they consistently refused to do, preferring instead to cling tenaciously to their role of imperialist lickspittle. Rather than take action to secure an honourable solution and

save lives, they occupied their time trying to make political gains by attacking those who did genuinely endeavour to end the issue honourably, namely the National H Block/Armagh Committee and those councillors who answered our call to withdraw from the council.

There were several reasons given by our comrades for going on hunger strike. One was because we had no choice and no other means of securing a principled solution to the four-year protest.

Another, and of fundamental importance, was to advance the Irish people's right to liberty. We believe that the age-old struggle for Irish self-determination and freedom has been immeasurably advanced by this hunger strike and therefore we claim a massive political victory.

The hunger strikers by their selfless have politicised a very substantial section of the Irish nation and exposed the shallow, unprincipled nature of the Irish partitionist bloc.

Beacon

Our comrades have lit with their very lives an eternal beacon which will inspire this nation and people to end and crush oppression forever, and this nation can be proud that it produced such a quality of manhood.

We pay a special tribute to the families of our dead comrades. You have suffered greatly and with immense dignity. Your loved ones, our comrades and friends, were and would be very proud of you for standing by them. No tribute is too great.

Also, we give a special mention to those families who could not bear to watch their loved ones die in pain and agony. We prisoners understand the pressure you were under and stand by you.

We thank the National H Block/Armagh Committee, the H Block/Movement, the nationalist people of Ireland, and all those who championed our cause abroad. We are indebted to you and ask you to continue your good work on our behalf.

Lastly, we reaffirm our commitment to the achievement of the five demands by whatever means we believe necessary and expedient. We rule nothing out.



saoirse

IRISH FREEDOM FESTIVAL

**MUSIC★THEATRICAL EVENTS★POEMS
★SONGS★FILMS★SLIDE SHOWS★
VIDEOS★TALKS★EXHIBITIONS★STALLS**

Afternoon session 1pm to 6.30pm

<p>Exhibition posters, photographs, photos, messages, graphics, and cartoons.</p> <p>Contributors include: Conrad Akerson, Jeff Perry, Peter Kennedy, Niall O'Brien, Duncan Smith, Brian Ansell, Conroy, the Power Collective, London Women's Armagh Group, Informants on Ireland.</p> <p>Plus:</p> <p>Display of crafts display of crafts made by Irish political prisoners in British jails, presented by Conroy, Ansell, and 'Bringing it all back home' an exhibition by the H-Block Music Photographs Workshop.</p>	<p>Slide shows include: Wall painting, from Belfast and Derry, 17 years of Irish resistance posters, History of Britain in Ireland.</p> <p>Films & videos include: Ireland's Hunger Strike, The Black Hunger Strike, Cavan, January 1981 (TV).</p> <p>Talks include: Anti Irish, Irish and Catholics by Dr. John Kirkaldy. The Architecture of Resistance in Derry by Peter Melones. Plus poems by Pat Ansell-math.</p> <p>Readings given by: Kenny Griffin, Maggie Steed, Aisling Farrell and others, or poems, letters and stories about Irish prison protest, including writings by the late Bobby Sands, MP and other hunger strikers. With prison protest songs.</p>
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Evening session 6.30-11pm

Lark rock and Irish music from **TRAITORS GAIT THE AFRICAN DAWN** — arranged poetry read with African music.

Also featuring Roland Muldoon Plus videos and slides.

Tickets: £1.25 per session, or £2 for both sessions. Unwaged: 75p per session, or £1.20 for both sessions. Credit: 1pm to 4pm Food & Bar.

SATURDAY 17 OCTOBER 1-11PM
**CAXTON HOUSE, ST JOHN'S WAY,
LONDON N19 (ARCHWAY TUBE)**

Organized by the Irish Freedom Festival Committee

freedom festival

Irish Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland, Box 100, 12 Rue Place, London NW1 6DA

Liverpool typists' strike escalates

By Mark Hackett,
Vice President Bury NALGO

FOUR hundred typists, secretaries and machine operators employed by Liverpool City Council have been on strike now for three months. The strikers — all women and members of the local government workers union, NALGO — are pursuing a claim for salary regrading and more training.

Liberal Council leader, Trevor Jones, has refused to negotiate with NALGO over the claim or even to go to arbitration.

He has disciplined other NALGO members for following official instructions not to break the strike causing mass walk-outs among their fellow workers.

Pay

The City Council is being run by a five-member Emergency Committee, for the first time since the war, made up of Liberal and Tory Councillors. Labour Councillors, who support the claim, are refusing to attend.

After more than twelve weeks on £20 a week strike pay — now increased by NALGO — the great majority of the strikers are still out. More determined than ever to win, they have compelled the NALGO

leadership to support their fight by escalating the action.

Rent cashiers and pay clerks have been called out, Parks Department gardeners and grave diggers are threatening strike action and some have already come out. On 9 October 1,000 NALGO members walked out for part of the day after the suspension of 60 of their fellow workers. Further suspensions and strikes are expected.

Fight

Liverpool City Council has been controlled largely by the Liberals for the last ten years and provides a foretaste of the sort of policies we could expect from any future Liberal/Social Democrat government.

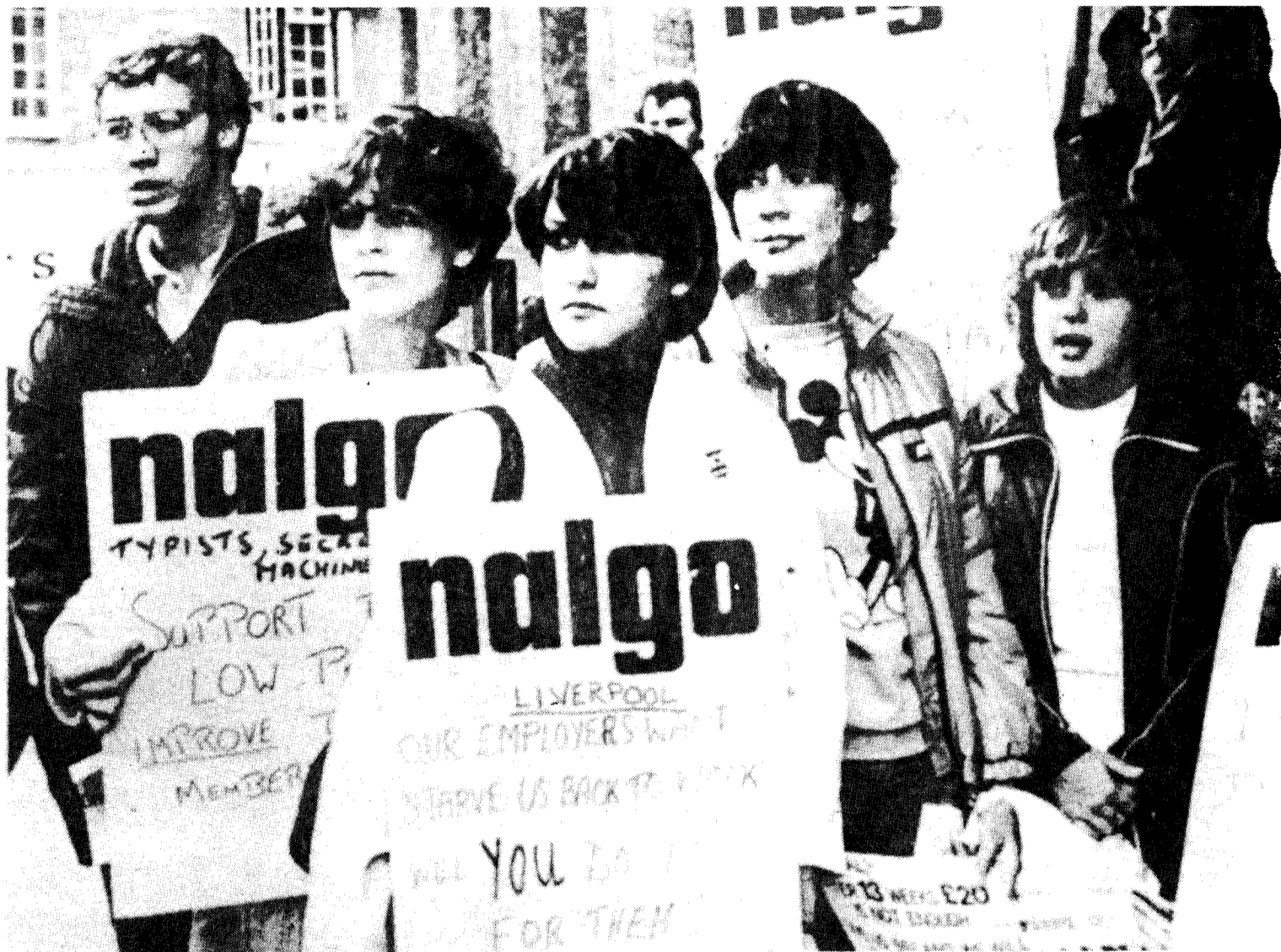


Photo: Socialist Worker

The real face of the Liberal Party leaders in Liverpool is no different from that of the Tories once they are in office. Out of the window go community involvement, care of the environment

and the pledge that 'we are opposed to the sterile politics of confrontation'. In comes anti-trade unionism and the iron fist. Liberal leader Trevor Jones was knighted by Thatcher and has lived up

to the honour by behaving like a Victorian employer of Liverpool's long gone heyday. No doubt with the full support of Environment Minister Michael Heseltine, he is determined to break the trade unions

representing the City Council's 30,000 employees who make up Liverpool's largest and potentially most powerful workforce. There has been precious little fighting on

Merseyside to save jobs, let alone to fight low pay. Now these women are showing the way. Send messages, donations, to: NALGO, City of Liverpool Branch Duchy Chambers, 24 Sir Thomas St, Liverpool L1. Tel 051-236 1944.

Effects of the strike so far

NO NORMAL COUNCIL OR COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETINGS. An Emergency Committee decides Council policy. This is boycotted by the Labour Councillors.

NO HOUSES are being let or allocated and no rent has been collected from council tenants, involving a loss in income of between £1million and £2.5 million per week.

NO ARCHITECTURAL plans are being approved and no buildings can be started.

IN EDUCATION, the re-organisation of Catholic schools has been postponed and there is no administration of GCE or RSA examinations. No new supplies are going to school including oil, no repairs are being carried out. No grants for fares or clothing for school children are being administered. Student grants are not being sent out.

IN THE TREASURERS DEPARTMENT, no payments to contractors are being made through the normal channels. The Director



of Finance resigned from NALGO and set up a private bank account with £1m in order to pay the largest creditors.

30,000 pay role amendments are not made each week and one million errors have accumulated on the programme. Nearly £¼m in DHSS sickness benefits has not been claimed. No rates demands have been sent out.

Cash flow problems could cost the Council between £¼m and £1m

in interest charges.

IN THE SOLICITORS DEPARTMENT, searches of planning records have stopped or will stop, all private house sales have been stopped. The authority is not making any new contracts and is not buying or selling any land or property.

OVER 200 SENIOR PRINCIPAL AND CHIEF OFFICERS have resigned from NALGO over the strike. 400 new members have joined the union!

Strike diary

25 October 1980 NALGO lodges claim with Liverpool City Council for job regarding and improved training opportunities on behalf of typists and machine operators.

March 1981 The Personnel Committee turns down the claim.

28 May 1981 Typists, secretaries and machine operators begin a work to rule. Almost immediately, the City Council suspends 23 typists.

30 June Negotiations have continued fruitlessly throughout June and the Council makes it clear that they will concede nothing.

6 July All out strike of 400 typists secretaries and machine operators begins. No normal Council, Committee or Sub Committee meetings have taken place since.

4 August The National Joint Whitley Council instruct the City Council to reopen negotiations after strikers ask for negotiations at a national level.

7 August NALGO meet Trevor Jones, the council leader, who makes a final offer: £156 annual increment to 63 of the 450 typists. The dispute is referred to the arbitration and conciliation service (ACAS) who suggest both parties go to arbitration. The typists agree but the council refuses.

12 September Geof Griffiths of the City Solicitors Department is suspended for refusing to co-operate with management strike breakers who had resigned from NALGO, 1500 NALGO members walk

out for the day closing most of the local authorities' major offices. Previously, Mail Delivery Messengers, Mr Hesford and Mr Tyron, had been suspended for not crossing picket lines.

18 October Another 1500 NALGO members walk out in support of Joe Walsh at the City Treasurers Department who has been suspended.

21 September Special Council Meeting called. The Labour Group move that an improved offer is made and negotiations reopened. This is voted down by the Tories and Liberals with one Labour Councillor abstaining.

A special NALGO mass meeting votes by 637 to 450 to escalate the action by balloting Rent/Rate cashiers about strike action.

Shortly after, NALGO National Emergency Committee increase strike pay from £20 per week to 55 per cent gross earnings.

8/9 October NALGO pulls out the Rent Cashiers and Payroll Clerks and over 1000 manual workers are not paid that week. The manual workers immediately occupy the Rates Offices.

Nine administration staff in the Planning and Architecture Department; twenty three members of the Audit Section of the Treasurers Department and thirty members of the City Solicitors Department are suspended. 1000 NALGO members walk out in protest.

Strike action is escalating as Parks Department Gardeners and Grave Diggers threaten strike action and come out.

St Mary's Hospital will stay OK!

St Mary's hospital in Harrow Road, North Kensington is, like many hospitals under Tory plans, due for the chop. But the staff are fighting back.

They have been campaigning against closure since 1978. Despite this, Gerard Vaughan, Health minister, has ordered that these cuts be implemented and is planning to close down the Casualty Department between 19 October and 2 November, to allow the beds to be emptied, after which they will be dismantled for ever.

The hospital is a major acute hospital, serving the deprived inner-city areas of Paddington and North Kensington. The Defence Committee set up to save St Mary's has appealed to the labour movement:

'The staff of the hospital have responded to this immediate threat by declaring an occupation and are determined to work in to maintain services. The ambulance drivers believe that far too many casualty departments have closed already and that life is endangered by these cuts.

'They have therefore declared their intentions to defy the administrators' instruction and will continue to bring patients to the hospital after 19 October for as long as the staff can provide adequate medical and nursing cover.'

The Hospital Defence Committee and the Occupation Committee have called for a demonstration of mass support for the action of the staff and ambulance crews outside the main gates of the hospital from 7am on Monday 19 October for the whole day. Get your workplace, union branch, trades council, Labour Party, tenants and women's organisation and so on to be there.

In the meantime, the occupation which has official backing from NUPE, TGWU, COHSE and ASTMS, is mounting a continuous picket outside the hospital.

As the Defence Committee says in its appeal: 'This campaign can be a real focus for fighting the cuts on an all-London basis.'

For further details contact: Defence Committee c/o TGWU Office, St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Rd, London W9. Tel: 286 4884 X372



Free the Bradford 12

On 30/31 July officers of the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police Force carried out a series of raids in Bradford's black community.

Twelve youths have now been charged with crimes that could result in sentences of life imprisonment.

A campaign has been launched throughout Britain to free the Bradford 12. All SC supporters are urged to join in.

South West London supporters of the Bradford 12 are holding a public meeting on Friday 16 October.

As their press release states: 'There has been very little information about this case down here. It must be publicised throughout the country since it brings into relief the lack of determination on the part of the police or

the prosecuting authorities to bring any conspiracy charges against racists who are known to have organised repeated attacks against black people and left wing organisations in the past five years.'

The meeting in Wandsworth is at 7.30pm at the Millan Centre, 59 Trinity Road, London SW17. A national public meeting is being held on Friday 23

Free the Bradford 12

Friday 23 October 7pm

London School of Economics
Houghton St, WC1
Old Theatre

Speakers from Bradford, London Support Group, Anwar Ditta, London Immigration Group, Indian Workers Association (Great Britain)

Change of date!

Picket of the Immigration Appeals Tribunal
In the case of Nasareen Akhtar
Thanet House, Strand WC2
23 October at 11am

October (full details above) and a benefit is being organised on Friday 6 November at Assembly Hall, SOAS, Malet St,

London WC1 at 6.30pm. For further information contact the London Support Group, c/o 54 High St, Southall, Tel: 01-571 4290.

Stop Press: The Shirley Graham Defence Campaign will be holding a picket outside the Home office on Thursday 15 October from 11am-1pm.

Shirley Graham is under threat of deportation. She has lived in Britain since 1974 and has left and entered the country on several occasions and had been given 'indefinite leave to remain'.

In August this year, after a short trip abroad, Shirley Graham was detained at the airport and held without warning.

Despite being a diabetic, there was a delay in giving her medical treatment. Her condition deteriorated and she underwent major surgery three weeks ago.

Although Shirley Graham has now been released from detention, no reasons have been given either to her or her solicitor as to why she cannot stay in Britain.

As the Shirley Graham Defence Campaign says, 'Her only "crime" appears to be that she is black. Shirley, along with hundreds more black people, is being harassed and subjected to a disguised policy of "forced repatriation". She must be free to choose where she lives.'

For further details contact: Shirley Graham Defence Campaign, c/o 285 Romford Rd, Forest Gate, London E7. Tel: 01-555 3331

Labour GLC sell out on council houses

By Piers Corbyn

THE LABOUR group on the Greater London Council agreed on Tuesday of last week to carry out Tory schemes of selling off new and rehabilitated vacant council flats.

The three sites affected by this are Elgin Avenue, Paddington, Kilner House, Lambeth and St Paul's Court, Hammersmith. The Labour GLC has already sent out eviction notices to the 70 homeless people, including 10 children, presently squatting in the Elgin Avenue flats.

Despite rumours to the contrary, the Labour group has not come under pressure from any High Court ruling. Instead, on the basis of 'legal advice', the Councillors are as anxious to drop any promises made to the electorate when they are faced with possible surcharges, as they were on the issues of lowering the price of school dinners.

Yet the squatters themselves are prepared to fight. They will defy the High Court eviction order and are launching a 'campaign of harassment' to prevent the sale of the flats.

Ken Livingstone, Labour GLC leader has said many times that the GLC cannot win any confrontation with the Tory government without the support of the labour movement. But it has to win that support by showing that it is prepared to stand up and fight for its election pledges.

'Our first efforts to buy malathion,' he said, 'were made in Mexico, with the firm Lucaba, owned by Mexican and US interests. When they found out it was for us, they refused to sell it. Later, learning of the willingness of the Bayer company to sell to us, we entered into negotiations with them to buy twenty tons.'

'Bayer had to get agreement from Lucaba because the Bayer product had some Lucaba components. Lucaba refused. This was in the most difficult moment, at the beginning, when we didn't have the chemical products we needed to fight the explosive epidemic facing us.'

Finally the Cubans had to bring malathion from Europe, by plane, at a cost of \$5,000 per ton for transportation only, three-and-a-half times what the malathion costs.

Cuba charges US with germ warfare

THE CUBAN foreign minister launched a sharp attack on the Reagan administration last week. Speaking at the General Assembly of the United Nations, Malmierca accused the US of bacteriological warfare. One hundred and fifty-six people, 99 of them children, have now died of the dengue fever epidemic that started in Cuba in May of this year writes JONATHAN SILBERMAN

Dengue fever is carried by the Aedes Aegypti mosquito. As long ago as 1959, the US Army revealed that their Bacteriological Warfare Centre had carried out experiments in Florida with the Aedes Aegypti. The experiment involved releasing a swarm of 600,000 mosquitoes and tracking them.

Up to date information on US policy in this area is difficult to come by, of course. A 1969 Senate committee report, however, acknowledged that the American government had spent £175 million on

chemical and biological warfare research that year alone.

An earlier Senate report listed some of the biological weapons in the US arsenal. These included bacteria, viruses, fungi and toxins — agents for causing anthrax, dysentery, cholera, diphtheria, typhus, yellow fever, dengue and botulism. Also in the arsenal were animal afflictions such as brucellosis, aftosa, porcine cholera, African swine fever, and insects and bacteria for use in attacking plants.

Coincidentally, in the last two years, Cuba has

also been the victim of African swine fever, sugar cane rust and tobacco blue mold. Many Cubans believe that these plagues have been introduced by the CIA.

Cuban leader, Fidel Castro, took up the same theme of CIA-inspired attacks of this kind at a speech in the Cuban province of Matanzas at the end of July. Castro made special mention of 'Operation Mongoose', a giant undertaking launched by President John F Kennedy at the beginning of 1962 less than a year after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of the island.

The Cuban leader explained how the United States blockade on Cuba — which it has maintained for twenty years now — made it very difficult for Cuba to get hold of the necessary insecticides to combat the epidemic.

Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)



A message for Labour GLC

Photo: Raymond Morris

Chilean fascism dissected

By Paul Lawson

THE MILITARY COUP in Chile was one of the most important events for the international labour movement since the second world war. The experience of the Allende government and its outcome still provides an essential

Purists will say that the Chilean regime isn't fascist, since fascism was a specific form of political movement, which mobilised the petty bourgeoisie and lumpen proletariat in a mass movement to crush the workers.

But if we use that definition, then fascism only ever came to power in Germany and Italy — in Spain, like Chile, it was the army which was the crucial instrument of counter-revolution.

Fascist

Moreover, given the disastrous consequences for the bourgeoisie of the classic fascist experiment, it seems unlikely to be repeated. If we use however the definition of fascism as the complete crushing of the workers movement by armed force, then Chile is fascism.

Morna Macleod of the Chile Human Rights Committee went to Chile in 1980, and has produced a useful account of the social and economic consequences of eight years of Pinochet's rule.*

Luxury

Morna Macleod quickly discovered in her visit who had benefited from the coup. She reports: '(Santiago's) bustling modern centre could be that of a European city with hundreds of smart shops displaying every possible modern convenience; electrical appliances, ranging from colour TVs to sophisticated food processors, from electrical toothbrushes to the latest German, Japanese and American tape recorders and hi-fi systems; clothes from the most fashionable Parisian designers; shoes imported from Italy, cheese, patés and other delicacies from France, chocolates and whisky from Britain. New shopping arcades are crammed with every kind of imported luxury far beyond the reach of most Chileans, for whom even basic items are too expensive.'

Slums

But the picture for the working people and the poor is very different: 'Once outside the city centre the disparity between the few rich and the majority who are poor become strikingly visible ... the rambling expanses of the *poblaciones*, the poor quarters, and the shanty town slums. Here there is an immediate feeling of desolation, abandonment and isolation — the slum



Inside a Chilean prison camp

dwellers rarely make the trip to the brightly-lit centre, since they have no money to buy anything on display, and feel anyway that they do not belong there.'

The imposition of fascism is not just the imposition of a different political order, but the restructuring of the economy at the expense of the workers. This has been given a particular twist by Chile's situation as still an essentially dependent country vis-a-vis imperialism, and the pursuit of Milton Friedman's monetarist policies.

Capital

Under Allende, there was an attempt to create a strong national economy, to try to break the cycle of dependence.

Under the new regime the accepted notion is that Chile should produce those goods which it 'naturally' produces — that is to say primary products like copper and fruit. This of course just reproduces the vicious circle of dependence.

As a consequence of this prevailing economic doctrine import tariffs have been drastically reduced, and thus imports have flooded in. What has not flooded in is investment capital.

The return to the notion of Chile as a producer of primary products of course fits in with the interests of the multinationals and imperialism. Morna Macleod has some interesting observations

reference point in debates on socialist strategy.

But the experience in Chile since the coup is also of vital importance. It gives us crucial insights into the economic and social consequences of modern day fascism.

on the contending factions inside the government.

Chilean popular opinion divides them between the 'blancos' (soft-liners) who represent the powerful Chilean enterprises and the multinationals, and the 'duros' (hard-liners), who are the more fascist-minded elements in the army. While the power of the regime rests of the military repression, in policy terms it is clearly the 'blancos' who have the up-

per hand.

The abandonment of the project of trying to create a strong national industry — which in any case would involve a break with imperialism and the multinationals — creates a sharper social cleavage. The bourgeoisie remains essentially a *comprador* bourgeoisie; the flashy shops in the centre of Santiago are a rake off from imperialism's super-profits, destined for a tiny elite.



Aftermath of the coup

Another consequence of this 'new course' for the economy is a sharp attack on the working class, with high unemployment and falling living standards. This is graphically illustrated by the government's Minimum Employment Plan (PEM).

People working on this scheme are supposed to work two or three days a week while looking for a full-time employment. For this they receive about £15 per month. In fact employers take full advantage of this opportunity to employ cheap labour.

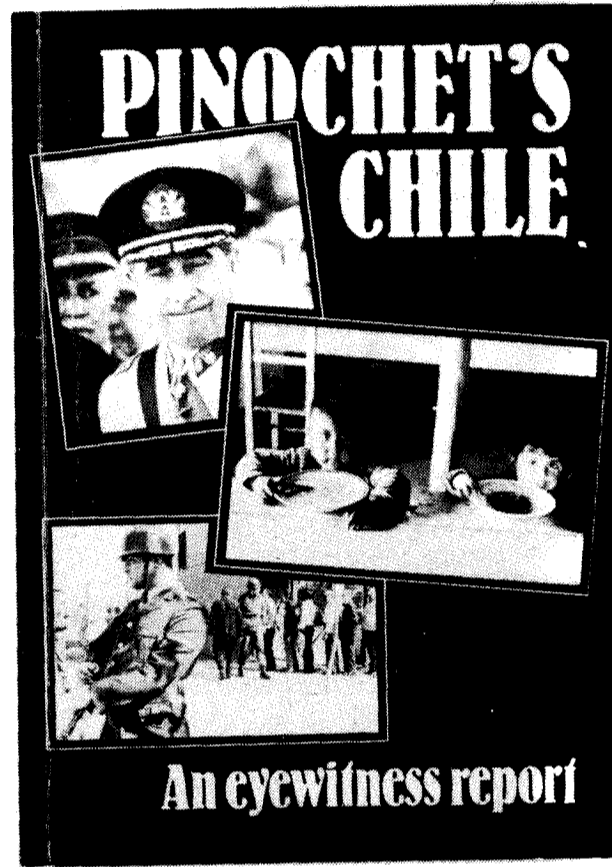
Taxis

A second consequence is the increasing number of people who try to scrape a living through some sort of street trading. Morna Macleod notes: 'these range from sweet-sellers and street vendors, to taxi drivers; I have never seen so many taxis in my life as in Santiago. It was explained to me that one third were traditional taxi drivers, one third were secret police and the other third were workers who had been given redundancy money and had bought old cars to use as taxis ...'

Torture

As ever, the social consequences of Pinochet's regime are secured through the use of massive repression. In the late 1970s the regime became concerned about their international image. In 1978 and 1979 an improvement in the human rights situation was recorded.

Subsequently, the regime has returned to its old ways with a vengeance. Thus the activities of plain



Front cover of 'Pinochet's Chile' — an eyewitness report.

clothes security forces, who kidnap people from cars with no number plates and the sickening catalogue of torture and assassination are all recorded by Morna Macleod.

But her eye-witness report is also a record of continuing resistance. Several trade union groups continue to exist, despite the repression, the largest being the National Trade

Union Coordinating Committee (CNS). While she was in Chile, Morna Macleod attended a 800-strong women's conference organised by the CNS. Despite everything, the opposition continues to develop.

'Pinochet's Chile — an eyewitness report' is available from the Chile Committee for Human Rights, 266 Pentonville Rd, London N1 9JY.

As a result, he loses his job. In the end, we see him washing windows and studying math in his spare time.

He has stayed pure by refusing to submit to the existing system of bribery and corruption in Polish society.

Throughout the film he ponders over 'fate' and 'chance' in the life of the individual. Was his father's climbing accident 'fate'? Was it 'fate' that, while Witold was washing windows, the building collapsed and killed a child playing underneath? This is where the film ends.

Interesting considerations, perhaps, in early 1980 when the film was made. But unfortunately, after the spectacular events we've seen in Poland since 1980, it's difficult to get excited about Witold's outbursts of indignation as his boss accepts a few zloties on the side.

And after a year of Solidarnosc, it's difficult to care about this morally sound, privileged skilled worker as he battles bravely against unscrupulous privileged skilled workers.

Incidentally, the *only queue shown in the film is the queue of people waiting to see a faith healer. Is this really Polish society?*

Zanussi's Constant Factor

By Pam Singer

IF ZANUSSI'S film *The Constant Factor* had been shown two years ago, it might have seemed more relevant. But after a year of virtually uninterrupted political revolution in Poland, the film's concerns are not very gripping.

The Constant Factor is about Witold, an ingenuous young man who manages to retain his personal integrity and 'inner peace' by resisting the petty corruption surrounding him at work and in the hospital where his mother is dying.

His job as a skilled electrician takes him to the west and to India, where he is shocked to find his boss and his co-workers fiddling. As he condemns their dishonest practices, he becomes more and more isolated. He has the opportunity to expose his boss to higher authorities, but transcends these vengeful feelings and destroys the incriminating evidence.

He is finally framed for allegedly smuggling illegal currency when he is about to fulfil his life-long ambition to climb the Himalayas, an expedition which had killed his father many years previously.

Socialist Challenge

Six years for 'riot' youth

SEVENTEEN year old Robert Gittings has gone to jail for six years. What did he do to deserve this rather long 'short sharp shock'? He allegedly threw a petrol bomb in last summer's Moss Side riots. Robert claimed in court that he took no part in the riot.

This vicious sentence handed down by the Manchester Crown Court is harsher than many sentences for those convicted of manslaughter! At a press conference after the hearing Robert's father said that his son showed clear signs of having been beaten up after his arrest — a black eye, and cuts and bruises on his head and face. Robert said the police did it.

Another Moss Side resident, Jennifer Boulton, spoke in defence of Robert. She claimed that Robert was speaking to her and a neighbour prior to his arrest, when police hit him with a truncheon, abused him and dragged him away. But Robert was

young and in the Moss Side area, so the judge pronounced him guilty.

On the same day as Robert Gittings was sent to jail for six years for a crime he didn't commit, the Greater Manchester Council's committee of inquiry into the Moss Side riots, called for an official inquiry into 'police over-reaction' to the riots.

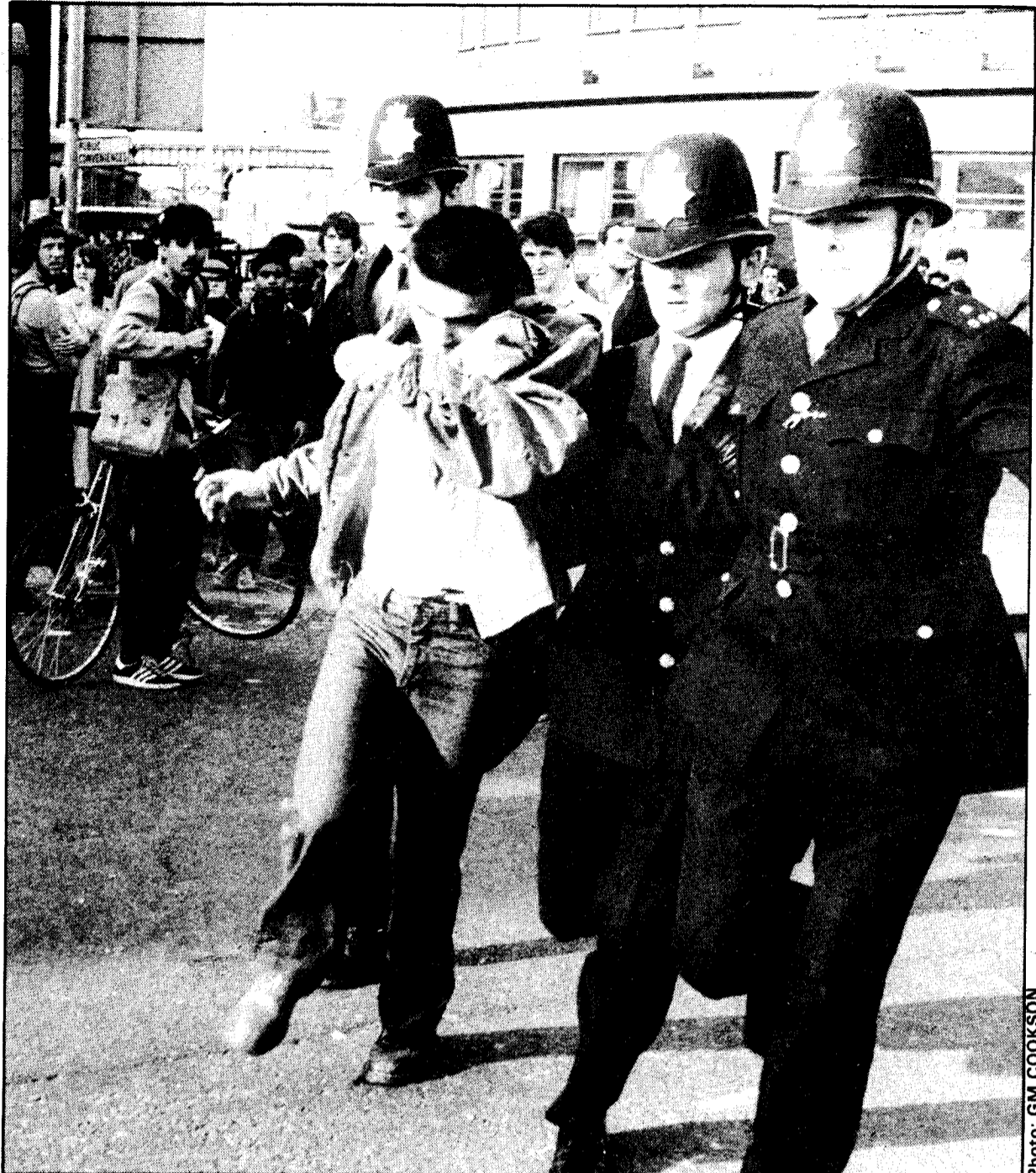
But it's not just the police who have 'over-reacted' to the riots. At Bradford Crown Court last week Judge Raymond Dean claimed that the behaviour and words of Bradford magistrates had put indirect pressure on defendants to plead guilty in order to be released from custody.

Tarlochan Gat-Aura from Bradford had a £75 fine for using threatening behaviour set aside after he claimed that he had only pleaded guilty because he felt sure that otherwise he would be kept in custody.

Countless other defendants from the summer riots have made similar claims of being pressured into pleading guilty for crimes they never committed. This is the first time that the courts have recognised the justice of their complaint.

More than a thousand mainly young people were rounded up in police swoops up and down the country after last summer's riots. Some, like the Bradford 12, face possible life sentences on conspiracy charges.

It is time for the labour movement to make its voice heard in defence of these victims of police repression and vengeance.



He's young — he'll do to make up the numbers'

Photo: GM COOKSON



Manchester policeman clubs youth to the ground during the summer 'riot'

PICKET
 Caspar Weinberger, US secretary of state for 'Defence'
(the man who chose Hiroshima Day to announce the Neutron Bomb)
Thur 22 October 12.30-2.30
 Chatham House, St James Square SW1
Organised by London Region CND

Socialist Challenge

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Danger! DHSS racists at work

MRS VARACHIA came to Britain two years ago after she was widowed. She has every right to be in this country. But the DHSS in their racist wisdom decided eight months ago to stop her benefits payment. The reason: Mrs Varachia's inability to speak English hinders her chances of finding a job.

Yet a DHSS spokesperson has pointed out that many people newly arrived from Vietnam had qualified for social security benefits, often with no knowledge of English. But there is political capital to be made out of the Vietnamese, fleeing from a God-forsaken 'communist' country.

There is also, unfortunately, political capital to be made out of the sufferings of Mrs Varachia. If the DHSS, as lapdogs to the Tories, can imply that black people who come to live in this country are 'scroungers', then many people who have no job, cannot afford to pay the rent and clothe their children, will have someone to blame.

But the real blame lies with the Tories and their racist laws. Mrs Varchia should be supported in her attempts to get her benefits restored. As her community relations officer in Gloucester said:

'Unless it is reversed it will be applied to all nationalities living all over Britain.'

A racist tale (2)

The Department of Health and Social Security certainly know where to hit people where it hurts. Not content with stopping benefits of those who are most in need of them, it is now piloting a scheme to ensure that any one with a black face or who has a foreign name, is checked on their eligibility before they can receive NHS treatment.

Under this 'survey', presently being conducted in 12 hospitals, everyone wanting hospital treatment, even road crash victims, pregnant women and psychiatric patients, will first be expected to answer a whole list of questions pertaining to nationality, length of time in the country and so on.

Assuming they manage to live long enough to answer all the questions the consultant will then decide if treatment is 'urgent' — defined as treatment within four weeks.

If this scheme is introduced on a national scale, some 17 million people in out-patient and casualty departments would be questioned every year.

Well, it's one way to deal with the shortages of hospital beds after the Tory cuts.