

Socialist Challenge

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special
strikers price

Arthur Scargill:

ON TO VICTORY!



Photo: G.M. COOKSON [Socialist Challenge]

'The Tory government thought they were going to teach the whole working class movement a political and economic lesson.

But the Tories are the ones that are being taught a political and economic lesson by the labour movement. If the steelworkers win we all win. Onward to victory.'

SEE
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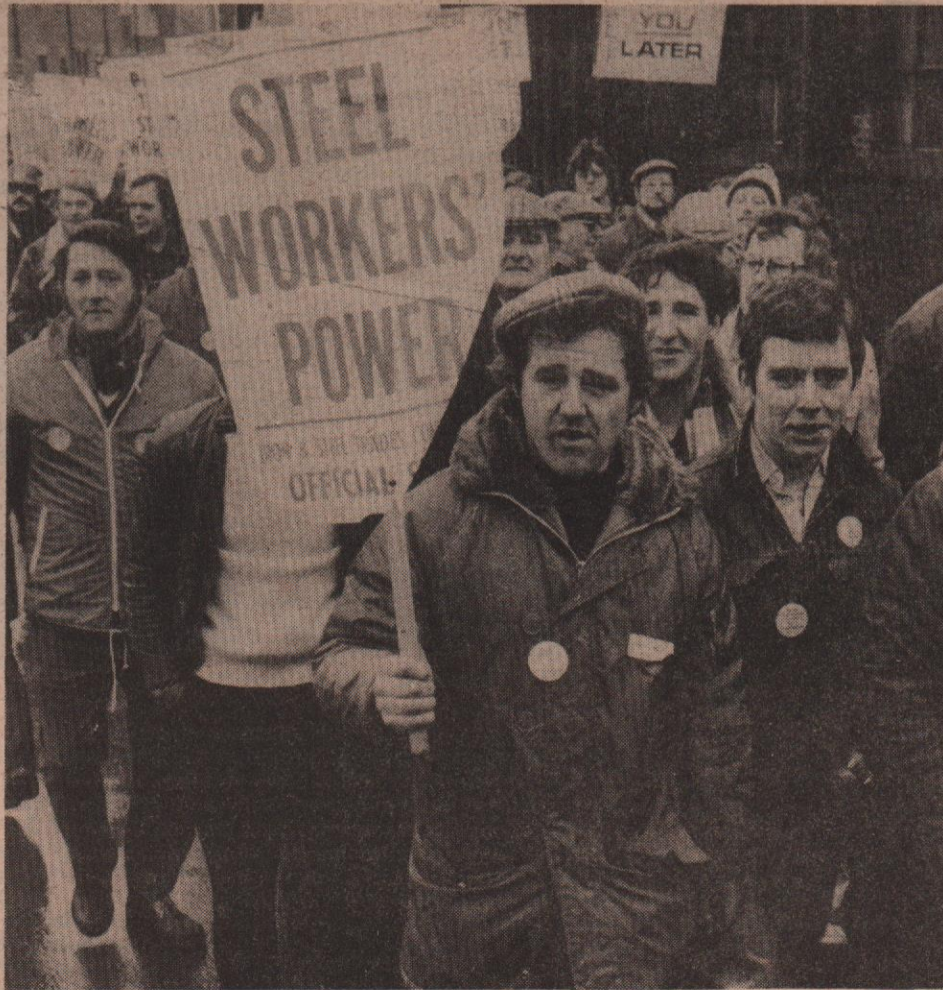


Photo: G.M. COOKSON [Socialist Challenge]

TWO thousand steelworkers marched through Sheffield on Monday chanting 'What do we want? Thatcher Out'. The message from the rally was that the Tory government had bitten off more than it could chew. Speaker after speaker, including Bill Sirs, denounced the government and expressed their support for the strike. Arthur Scargill, the Yorkshire miners' leader, received thunderous applause.

**STRIKE FOR
JOBS
IN WALES**

**MONDAY
28 JANUARY**

**Demonstration
1.00pm
Sophia Gardens,
Cardiff**

KICK OUT THE TORIES

OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

- To begin to fight for the creation of a unified and democratic revolutionary socialist organisation which can, through an application of united front tactics, begin to be seen as an alternative by thousands of workers engaged in struggles.

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

2 Our socialism will be infinitely more democratic than what exists in Britain today, with full rights for all political parties and currents that do not take up arms against the socialist state. The Stalinist models of 'socialism' in the USSR and Eastern Europe have discredited socialism in the eyes of millions of workers throughout the world. We are opposed to them and will offer full support to all those fighting for socialist democracy.

3 The interests of workers and capitalists are irreconcilable on a world scale. Capitalism has not only created a world market, it has created world politics. Thus we fight for working class unity on an international scale. This unity will in the long run be decisive in defeating both the imperialist regimes in the West and the brutal dictatorships they sustain in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

In Britain it implies demanding the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and letting the Irish people determine their own future.

4 The Communist parties in Europe are in crisis. Neither the 'Eurocommunist' nor the pro-Moscow wings have any meaningful strategy for the overthrow of the capitalist state. New revolutionary socialist parties are more necessary than ever before. Conditions today are more favourable than over the preceding three decades. But such parties can only be built by rejecting sectarianism and seeing internal democracy not as a luxury but as a vital necessity. This means the right to organise factions and tendencies.

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EDITORIAL

Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper St, London N1. Editorial: 01-359 8180/9. Distribution and advertising 01-359 8371.

Moscow Olympics - the name of the game

PRESIDENT CARTER has called for a boycott of the Olympic Games in Moscow unless Soviet troops are withdrawn from Afghanistan within a month. It is an appeal which will meet with much instinctive popular support — including in the workers movement. It also has the backing of a number of East European dissidents. So why should socialists — even those opposed to the Soviet invasion and the rule of the Moscow bureaucracy — firmly reject such a call?

Carter's appeal has nothing to do with human rights, self-determination, or any other issue of concern to working people. He himself more or less admitted it in his TV broadcast, describing the invasion as an 'unprecedented act, a threat to a vital area of the world where the interests of our country and our allies are deeply embedded'. In other words, boycott the Olympic Games to defend the interests of US imperialism.

If any further proof were needed that this is what is intended, just think back a bit to 1968. Then the Olympics were held in Mexico. On the eve of the Games the pro-imperialist regime shot down hundreds of protesting students in cold blood. No-one at the White House batted an eyelid.

And then there are the Tory canvassers of a Moscow boycott. Many of them are simultaneously

the most ardent supporters of the British Lions rugby tour to South Africa — a country where the politics of apartheid determine every single aspect of the way sport is run. It is this Tory government, too, which seeks to punish Moscow at the same time as it re-establishes diplomatic relations with Pinochet in Chile — a classic product of an imperialist intervention in another country's affairs.

Carter's boycott call is part of a new US war drive whose main target is not the USSR at all — Carter still proclaims his commitment to detente with the Kremlin bureaucracy — but the emerging new revolutions which threaten capitalism's control of the world market. The problem for Carter, Thatcher and their cronies is not lack of striking power. It is the deeply suspicious attitude of working people in the West to the prospect of further military adventures by their rulers in the wake of Vietnam. They must be softened up to accept new interventions which can put a stop to anti-imperialist upsurges such as those in Iran, Nicaragua, and elsewhere. In this sense, the lack of international protest at the despatch of British troops to police the elections in Zimbabwe is a promising sign for the imperialists.

It is a sign of the bankruptcy of the Soviet

bureaucracy that their invasion of Afghanistan has been the single biggest boost to this political drive to roll back the worldwide struggle of working people. But to go along with any suggestion of a boycott of the Moscow Olympics would simply reinforce the imperialist campaign against our class.

Equally there are those who say that both the Olympic Games and the Lions tour should go ahead because sport should have nothing to do with politics. We disagree. The Lions tour should be stopped. We take this position because our efforts must be directed towards extending working class solidarity, both with the emerging anti-imperialist struggles throughout the world and with the workers of the Soviet Union itself. Our alternative to the Moscow bureaucracy has nothing to do with that of Carter. We argue for socialist democracy because that is the most effective way of defending the gains and interests of the world working class against whoever threatens them.

That is why we don't merely say that the Olympics should go ahead in Moscow; we want to organise a campaign against the repressive conditions — through labour movement delegations and the like — which can help to improve the situation of the opposition. This is the best way of exposing the demagoguery of Carter and Thatcher and rolling back their war drive.

Tory aims still intact

By Geoffrey Sheridan

SHOULD you hear a chuckle emanating from the Palace of Westminster as the steel strike enters its fourth week, there is a good chance that its perpetrator is James Callaghan, architect of Labour's election defeat.

The requirement for the British Steel Corporation to break even this year — a demand which the steel industry in no West European country could hope to meet — was first presented by Callaghan's government. From that stems the 2 per cent pay offer to the steelworkers and the 52,000 redundancies required by August.

The Tory government was a willing recipient of the plans for steel hatched by the Department of Industry under its former minister, Eric Varley, and the steel unions were among those the Tories considered they could take on and beat — as listed in the schedule drawn up by Nicholas Ridley when the Tories were in opposition.

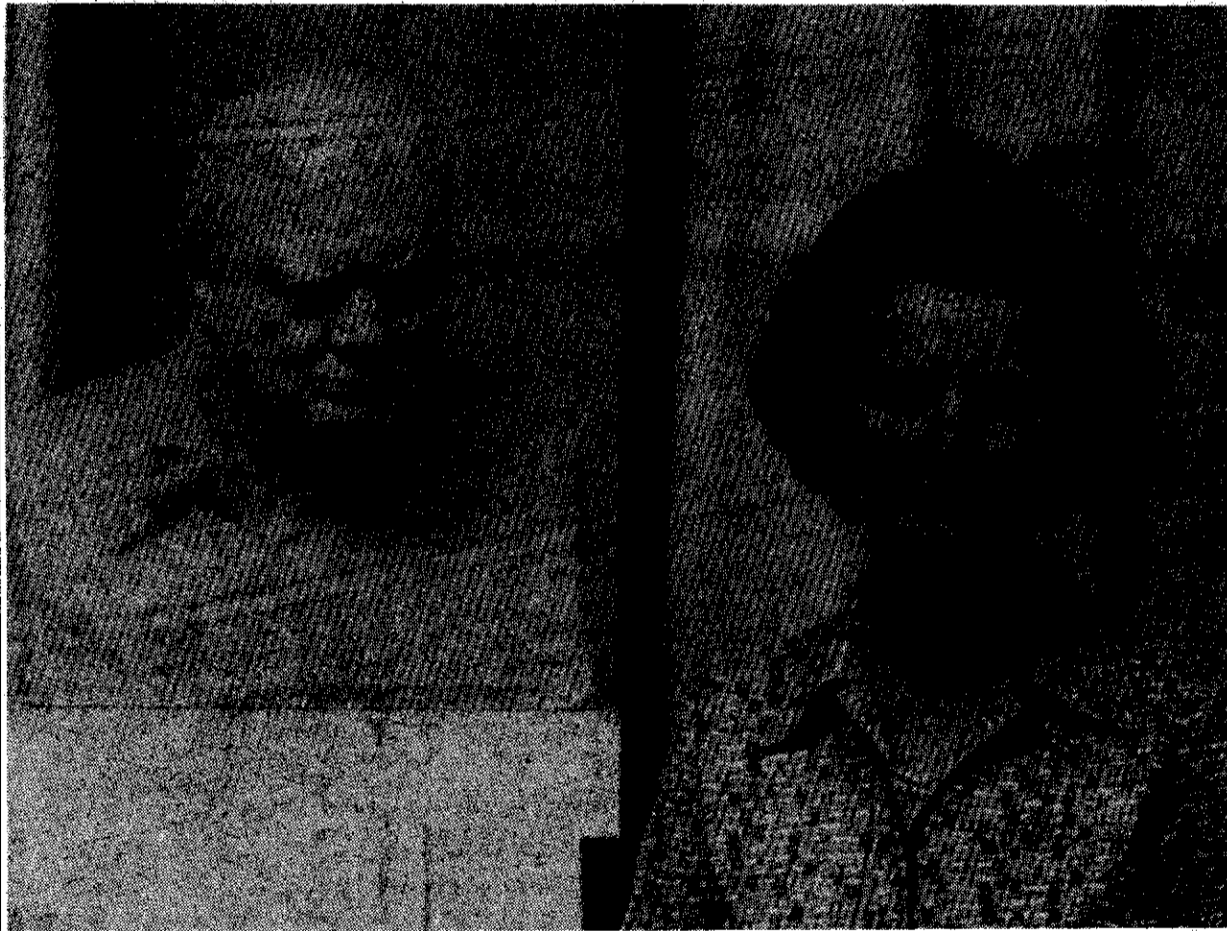
Showdown

Last week the EEC's social affairs commissioner pointed out that the government hadn't bothered to apply for 'relief funds to help cushion the redundancies', which suggests that the Tories were eager for a showdown.

The militancy of the steelworkers has no doubt begun to change their minds about that. The last thing that Thatcher wants is for the pay strike to spill over into a struggle against the closures in steel, with the kind of indefinite strike action that the miners and railwayworkers in South Wales are demanding.

If the TUC can hold back that action, as it is seeking to do, the Tories are likely to look for some way to juggle the steel corporation's balance sheets and hope that the leaders of the ISTC and the Blast-furnacemen can sell their members a slightly increased pay offer. But as the days go by and the steel blockade bites deeper into the economy, the juggling act becomes increasingly difficult.

A victory for the steelworkers on pay could dent the Tories' strategy, but not shatter it. With cash limits at the heart of their plan to put the squeeze on earnings and jobs in the nationalised industries and the public sector, there remain millions of workers in the Tories' 'weak' category, not least those at BL, where



the unions are presently balloting on a pay offer.

Margaret Thatcher is determined to win her spurs as the leader of the most right-wing British government this side of World War Two. The farce of 'non-intervention' in the steel strike was accompanied last week by a slight intervention in the fuel industry, with the proposal that gas prices will be pegged to inflation plus 10 per cent — a formula which workers would do well to apply to wage claims.

Still on the stocks, of course, is James Prior's Employment Bill, which aims to outlaw closed shops and effective picketing. The latest rumour is that the proposals will include giving employers a free hand to sack strikers. The steelworkers are showing how effective pickets can be mounted — in spite of their union leadership — and we may yet see a concerted effort by the police to confront that.

The steel strike does have the potential to setback the Tory government to the point of its departure. Rank and file leaders in the strike openly talk of it leading to generalis-

ed strike action. That clearly needs to be the objective of our arguments and actions. The disparate days of action being called by the official leadership of the labour movement parallel the piecemeal way in which the government hopes to carve up the working class.

The steelworkers and the South Wales miners and railwayworkers have opened the way to a shove that the government will not be able to resist.

Next weekend, potentially one of the most powerful bodies of the labour movement is meeting. The Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions will discuss the response to the Tories.

Delegates will be arguing that the steelworkers' strike should be joined by national strike action to stop all closures and job loss — in the steel industry, the railways, and British Leyland. Militants will be pushing for this action as the first step in a movement to kick out the Tories.

Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions

Saturday 26 January, 10.30am,
Friends Meeting House,
Euston Road, London
Credentials from Jim Hiles, 137 Wanstead Park
Road, Ilford, Essex.

STRIKE NEWS

North sea oil-drilling may have to stop

By Des Tierney
NORTH Sea oil is the most recent target of the steel strike in Scotland. Strike leaders have declared that they will prevent all steel movements on the East coast of Scotland, which would disrupt drilling operation and production in the North Sea. Pat Shevlin, spokesperson for the Scottish strike committee, explained the effects: 'Workers in oil platform production yards at Nigg Bay and Ardersier have already been told not to allow steel movement in or out of their yards. If we can stop even one shipment going out to the rigs they would have to stop their drilling. That will cost them thousands of pounds per hour.'

Steelworkers in Scotland see any manufacturing industries that use steel as legitimate targets. All the major employers in central Scotland are feeling the effects — General Motors, Talbot, British Leyland, Caterpillar and Honeywell.

'Our view,' said Pat Shevlin, 'has been that the steelworkers have supported everyone else wholeheartedly in recent years, the most recent example being the lorry drivers who didn't even need to picket us. We are now asking for the same level of support from the people in these factories.'

The boss of the Confederation of British Industry in Scotland, John Davidson, has predicted 'widespread redundancies, lower investment, fewer jobs and thinner pay packets' because of the effectiveness of the flying pickets.

Davidson said it could take five or six years to claw back lost markets.

Arthur Bell, the divisional officer for the ISTC, responded to Davidson's threat by urging strikers to get down on flying pickets at a meeting called by the STUC last Tuesday. 'While we are anxious to stop the flow of steel supplied in Scotland, we are concerned about the effects of picketing on manufacturing industry,' he said.

That strikers in Scotland view the agreement sceptically is demonstrated by their actions in relation to North Sea oil.

The steelworkers are on strike to win a 20 per cent wage claim. The more support other workers give them the more bite the strike will have and the quicker they will win.

Solidarity is vital, although the STUC seems to be reluctant to organise it. This should not deter the steelworkers themselves — through demonstrations, rallies and public meetings — putting their point of view across to other workers affected by the steel strike in Scotland.

Bob Scholey skulks into Teesside

BSC chief executive Bob Scholey has been visiting Teesside to try to persuade steel strikers there to accept a local productivity deal.

The Teesside strike committee claim that Bob Scholey 'skulked' into Teesside too afraid to confront the steel workers with his offer: 'He again made the ill-fated Saul offer, which is clearly an attempt to divide the national membership of the ISTC. He is really naive if he believes this ploy will work.'

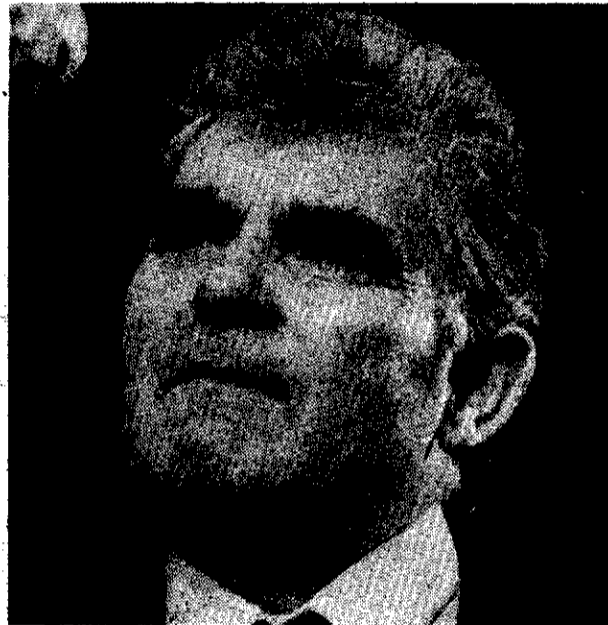
The offer, say the steelworkers, would only benefit two out of three employers — 'the other third will be dismissed to pay for the offer to the other two.'



Audience at Sheffield rally gives Scargill rapturous response when he says: 'You're invincible!'



ARTHUR SCARGILL



BILL SIRS

Scargill: I plead guilty to interfering in the steel strike

TWO thousand workers marched in Sheffield on Monday in solidarity with steel strikers to a rally at the City Hall.

The demonstrators were in a militant mood, steelworkers, building workers and miners chanted: 'What do we want? 20 per cent with no strings', 'Tories out', and some steelworkers in the Transport and General Workers Union urged a general strike to get rid of the Tories.

Arthur Scargill took the stage at the rally at City Hall to thunderous applause:

'I bring you greetings from 66,000 Yorkshire miners (applause). This dispute is a political dispute between the steelworkers and the government. The Tories calculated this strike as an attack on one of the weakest links in the labour movement. They wanted to give a political and economic lesson to the whole working class movement.'

'Listening to the mad monk on Weekend World you can see that the Tories are not only bent on destroying the steel industry but all nationalised industries. And here's a lesson for future Labour governments. Let's stop taking over lame ducks in industry and take over all their white swans instead. Had the last Labour government taken the correct socialist policies the movement wouldn't be in the difficulties it is today.'

'I'm glad these Labour MPs (Stan Crowther, Joan Maynard, Martin Flannery) here today have opposed incomes policy. Let's oppose them under all governments, not just Tory governments.'

'Steel is subsidised throughout Europe with a hidden subsidy on coal. British steel should also be subsidised.'

Everyone else has got 20 per cent — the miners, the Ford workers, industrial civil servants. Steelworkers shouldn't settle for less than 20 per cent with no strings.

'I've been accused of interfering in the steel strike. I plead guilty (massive applause). They say refrain from secondary picketing. What they mean is refrain from effective picketing. They can introduce whatever laws they like but we'll picket whatever targets are necessary to win this strike.'

'The lessons of our struggles against the last Tory government is that solidarity is the key to victory. The miners would never have won without support. If the steel workers win against the Tories it's a victory for all of us. You can count on the support of the Yorkshire miners. Onward to victory.'

BILL SIRS, fresh from his chat with Maggie Thatcher, spoke after Scargill had received his standing ovation.

'The government thought we were a soft touch. We didn't want to fight but we had to. Meetings like this are not going to have an impact. Negotiations are not going to win as they did under Labour. We need an all-out war to win.'

'But if you go into battle you need your troops behind you. We've had problems here. We've no intention of accepting the present offer. But neither are we arguing for more money than that which has already been offered. We just want a fair share.'

'Let's get around the negotiating table (cries of "not less than 20%"). If we get round the negotiating table, I'll be satisfied (more cries of "not less than 20%").'

Scunthorpe Strikes

A HUNDRED trades unionists from Scunthorpe attended a day conference on the steel strike on Saturday. The conference was organised by the Scunthorpe Steel Action Committee, with speakers including strike leaders from Scunthorpe and Corby.

Steelworkers explained the need to link the strike over pay with the fight against closures in the steel industry.

Stan Sheridan, from the Rotherham strike committee, said: 'The strike is against the government and its whole economic policies. Pay and jobs must be linked. Youth need jobs.'

'This will be the last fight in steel,' he continued. 'If we close we'll never be able to fight again.'

'A general strike is near 100 per cent certain. If other trade unions see Sir Keith Joseph putting the boot into Bill Sirs, they'll respond. It's not just jobs in steel. There are a quarter of a million associated jobs at stake.'

'If the closures go ahead,' Sheridan added, 'there could be three-million unemployed by the end of the year. Sirs has been a moderating influence throughout the strike, but the lads are learning on a daily basis. The union will never be the same again.'

Women face the sack at Lesneys

LESNEY products, the 'Matchbox' toy firm, are making nearly 2,000 workers redundant. One-sixth of the 7,500 workforce in Britain are being given the push, plus about 800 part time workers. Most of the production is done by women and for every man sacked three women will go.

Annie Spike, shop steward on the evening shift at the Eastways, Hackney site, says: 'People have just accepted it, it's like being back in the Twenties, they're told they're no good. But the women are Lesney's profit.'

The redundancies appear to have been accepted by the workforce without any struggle. Many workers have put their names down for voluntary redundancies, although the payments won't be very great, and there is already 10 per cent unemployment in Hackney. What it shows is the weakness of the unions in Lesney's. That's why Annie Spike is in favour of the closed shop:

'It's very important, everyone has to stick together. Why should the others not in the union get the benefits. If they realised what union meant, united we stand, divided we fall.'

Annie has fought hard to get her shift unionised and to get her members better conditions. But if the full-time workers aren't going to fight there is little that the women working part-time can do. And Annie isn't confident of much support from the local labour movement, with the exception of Hackney BOC.

'If people could afford it', she says, 'we should just take over Lesney's, like Meccano.' The real question is: can Lesney's workforce, the local labour movement and the whole working class afford not to fight against any loss of jobs and against the anti-working policies of this Tory government?



ANNIE SPIKE

SUPPORT THE STEEL STRIKE

STRIKE NEWS

SOUTH Wales is fighting for its survival. The steel corporation's plan for 11,000 redundancies at Port Talbot and Llanwern steel works threatens the future of the region.

Thousands of miners, railway and associated workers will also lose their jobs as the whole of Welsh industry contracts after the closures. The profits demanded by the Tories can only be achieved at the expense of Welsh jobs.

Port Talbot and Llanwern are giant modern integrated steel plants. Both have only recently been completed. Now they are due to be placed in mothballs waiting for an upturn in the economy when there will be more demand.

The decision to only partially close these plants is aimed at reducing steel-making capacity in South Wales by half. This 'slimming' means that steel would continue to be produced at Port Talbot and then be transferred 60 miles to the finishing mills at Llanwern. The present mills at Port Talbot would close along with the steel-making section at Llanwern. In short, the way would be opened to close plants.

Heart

The steel industry is the heart of the local economy. The planned closures would mean the immediate loss of 7,500 mining jobs; with BSC's plan to double its imports of American coking coal another 7,500 mining jobs will go.

Half the present pits in South Wales will close, and there are no alternative jobs for redundant miners. And then there's rail. The mining and steel industries account for 65 per cent of British Rail's freight in South Wales, and the Tories already want to cut 40,000 jobs nationally.

Add all the figures together and the total is staggering. The official estimate is 45,000 redundancies. The Welsh NUM considers that the total would be nearer 60,000. Either way, the result would be the devastation of South Wales. As Don Hayward of the Welsh NUM puts it: 'This is catastrophic. The situation is now more serious than 1926 or the '30s.'

The Welsh TUC initially called for strike action on 21 January, but has now called a one-day strike for 28 January after pressure from the TUC to postpone indefinite strike action to 10 March.

Talking

The reason is clear enough. The TUC would like to wait until the present steel strike is over before it discusses closures with the government.

There is a growing awareness among steel workers that the wages fight is also about jobs, and that the militancy shown in the past few weeks is far more effective than talking with the Tories.

All out 28 January

South Wales fights for survival

By Pat Kane
in Swansea

'I've firmly supported the Wales TUC strike,' says Bob Taylor, who works in the hot mills at Port Talbot. 'I was very disappointed when it was called off.'

'I think they will keep putting it off because the TUC in London doesn't want it. It's a pity, because it's about time someone did something about jobs.' If the closures go through, Bob Taylor won't have a job to go back to.

Ballot

Unlike the TUC and the ISTC leadership, the South Wales NUM is willing to defend jobs. They have been campaigning for a Welsh general strike against the BSC plan. Don Hayward says that 'all-out strike action is now inevitable.'

Local NUM officials have organised pit-head meetings and a miners' ballot produced an 8-1 majority in favour of strike action. The one-day strike action on Monday is seen by miners as only the start of a movement towards a general strike to stop the closures.

If the NUM and transport workers joined the steel strike it would bring the whole of Welsh industry to a standstill. But there is all the difference between calling for a strike and organising it. The methods of the NUM have to be extended to every factory and union branch.

Glyn Jones of the Swansea Trades Council Executive Committee thinks that it's time that the rest of the trade union movement discusses the strike. He says:



15,000 mining jobs are at stake in South Wales if steel closures go ahead and coking coal contract is concluded by the steel bosses.

'We have to get an immediate recall of the Welsh TUC to organise for a general strike to stop the closures. It should be open to delegates from shop stewards' committees and workplace union branches. The trade union leaders have been discussing this for months. It's time the rank and file's voice was heard.'

'This is the way to get action, through the involvement of the whole trade union movement. The BSC aren't sitting around waiting. They have given a deadline of 31 March for the unions to agree to the redundancy proposal. We have to get the strike organised now. It's possible to bring it forward.'

The trade union leaders are setting very firm limits for this strike. They simply want a postponement of the closures for two years, an end to the proposed increases in coking coal imports, a subsidy for Welsh coal to make it competitive and enquiry into the running of the BSC.

We have to point out that the present crisis of the BSC has very little to do with the productivity of steel workers. The BSC should be forced to save every job and the working week reduced to enable the existing work to be shared. The government should guarantee the wages of every South Wales worker. Interest payments of BSC loans should be cancelled immediately. Last year that came to £200m.

These are the type of policies that can unite miners and steelworkers and overcome the divisions being created by the Tories and the BSC.

The aim of strike action should be to get at the heart of the problems facing the Welsh working class — the unemployment policies of the Tory government. The management of BSC are simply carrying out the orders of the government. It was Thatcher that insisted that the BSC break even this year while imposing strict cash limits.

It is the existence of this government that has to be challenged not simply its individual policies.

Mandate

Callaghan and the other Labour leaders say that the Tories have a democratic mandate for their policies. But they have no mandate from Swansea or Cardiff, Liverpool, Newcastle or Glasgow for their policies. These towns didn't vote Tory and neither did the vast majority of workers who are suffering from threats to their very future.

There is a very real possibility of a general strike in South Wales. The determination of the miners, the example of the steel workers, terrify the union leaders in London as much as they do the Tory establishment.

By extending the Welsh TUC's struggle to all those areas which are willing to fight back we can turn this into a real movement throughout the country to kick out the Tories. But we have to remember there is a long way from the call for the general strike to it actually happening. Over the next weeks we have to educate, agitate and organise to turn that call into action.

Internationalism...

By Clive Turnbull

THE latest issue of *Steelworkers' Banner*, published by the ISTC, has a page of solidarity messages from trade unions around the world. Union after union spells out their support for the steelworkers' struggle in Britain.

From the CGT, the largest union in France: 'Having learnt of the British steel dispute we salute the workers struggling for a guarantee of their standard of living as we, too, are involved in a struggle against austerity and re-structuring.'

'You have our active solidarity and we are at your disposal to help and are ready to concert action in the interests of French and British steelworkers.'

And from the United States: 'The United Steelworkers of America wish you every success in your struggle to win an honourable and decent wage settlement in the face of the enormous increases in cost of living which — in the absence of substantial wage increases — will destroy the standard of living of your membership.'

'Be assured that efforts to prevent the export of off-shore steel to Britain and to seek the support of the transport unions in preventing any such shipments have our full co-operation and support.'

Similar telegrams were sent to the

ISTC by unions in West Germany, Japan, Italy, Portugal, Mexico, Spain and Brazil.

In every country in the West, steelworkers are facing the same problem of plant closure, job loss, and attacks on living standards.

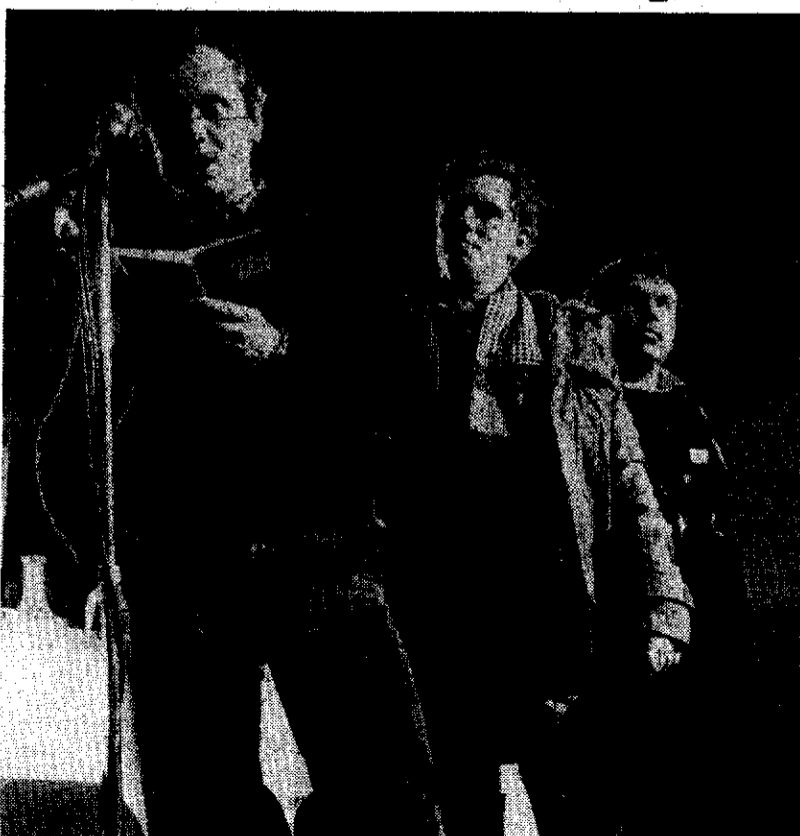
The type of solidarity that has been given to the fight of British steelworkers shows clearly that there is the basis of an international campaign to defend the jobs and living standards of all steelworkers.

Unfortunately, the demand for import controls raised by the Labour left and the Communist Party cuts across such a struggle. It is at best a utopian idea, which presupposes that the British steel industry can exist in isolation, producing only for the British market, and not be similarly barred from foreign markets.

But the main danger of the call for import controls is that it shifts the fight from the real enemy. The crisis in the steel industry is not the fault of German, Japanese, or French workers. They face the same problems in their countries as steelworkers confront in Britain.

The fight is with the employers and with governments like the Tories in Britain. They are the ones who have to be beaten in this steel strike. And they are the ones who have to be beaten in every future battle on jobs, wages and conditions.

... not import controls



WEST GERMAN steel workers bring donation to Sheffield rally on Monday. Import controls strategy could break up this kind of solidarity.

From KAF (Swedish section of the Fourth International)

ALL movement of steel intended for Britain is being blocked by Swedish trade unions.

The dockers responded within a week of the strike's start, refusing from 8 January to load British-bound ships with steel. Also included were ships bound for Holland with steel which would then be transported on to Britain.

On 15 January a similar ban was imposed by transport drivers, and this week unions representing metal workers, seafarers, shopworkers and works managers are expected to follow suit. Normally 15 per cent of all steel produced in Sweden ends up in Britain.

The British strike is having another effect too. Closure plans have been announced here which will make at least 2,500 steelworkers redundant. The British strikers' militancy, which is shown on our TV screens every day, is increasing the determination of those in Sweden to take the same course.

Photo: G.M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

MAKE SURE THE TORIES LOSE

STRIKE NEWS

Labour left's unworkable plan

Saving the steel industry without tears

By Geoffrey Sheridan

THE Labour left has an unenviable task. While the Callaghan-Healey wing of the Labour Party merely dresses up policies which seek to bolster profits at the expense of working class living standards — Labour's left would have us believe that it can solve capitalism's crisis without harming anyone.

This is the spirit in which Labour MP Michael Meacher, chairperson of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, has put forward his solution for the steel industry.

In an article published in the *Guardian* on 8 January, Meacher argues that 'there is nothing inevitable about contraction or run-down in the industry'.

That is an important starting point, because — unlike practically every other industry in Britain — steel is undergoing a substantial modernisation programme, which could bring it into line with the most advanced production methods that present-day technology has to offer.

The Tories' requirement for closure and mass redundancies are based on a problem that is being experienced throughout the West — a glut of steel. But that problem of over-production is unique to capitalism. It arises not from fulfillment of demand for steel, but the system's inability to match production capacity with potential demand.

Decline

Meacher spells out the decline in the main domestic markets for steel. Over the half decade to 1978, production in motor vehicle manufacture fell by 39 per cent, industrial plant and steelwork by 38 per cent, shipbuilding and marine engineering by 58 per cent, and construction by 59 per cent.

Reversing the decline in these industries would dramatically change the prospects for steel, and it is this task that Meacher sets himself. The difficulty is that he does not advocate the one course that could secure this objective: workers' plans for the steel-making and steel-using industries, imposed by workers' control over production and distribution.

The Treasury, he says, forecasts a fall of 2 per cent in the gross domestic product in 1980-1, which would accompany BSC's plan for a cutback of almost a third in steel production.

Meacher argues that there would be an expansion of 'perhaps 5 per cent' in steel with a growth rate of 2 per cent in the British economy, lifting steel production from the projected 15m tonnes to nearly 22.5m tonnes.

Estimates

Meacher proposes to stimulate the economy by 'demand management', which simply consists of higher expenditure in the public sector coupled with 'tax cuts in the private sector' (presumably cuts in in-

BSC interest mounts

'If a measure of industrial performance is required, it is the return before interest which is paid which is relevant; interest payments to the government, the banks and other lenders are simply the way in which the surplus earned is distributed.' — *Financial Times*, 2 January 1980.

And the pre-interest figures of the British Steel Corporation's profit and loss account?

BSC losses [and interest] — £millions		
Trading Profit/Loss	Interest Payments	= Loss Declared
1976: - 297.9	- 107.6	= - 405.5
1977: + 140.7	- 167.7	= - 27.7
1978: - 257.6	- 197.4	= - 455.0
1979: - 119.7	- 207.7	= - 327.4

Over the past four years, the steel corporation has declared a loss of £1.215m. But of this, over half — a total of £680m — was handed to the moneylenders in interest payments.

come tax and VAT). This, he estimates, would boost production all round.

Unfortunately, capitalists have a nasty habit of not obliging. With the present depressed level of profits, for example, they are just as likely to absorb increased demand by hiking up prices than to expand production.

In particular, the expansion would be required in industries which have long needed a complete overhaul in the shape of massive investment in new plant and machinery. It is this investment which capitalists have resolutely refused to carry out.

Even when the Labour government handed grants of £3 billion a year to industrialists, annual investment in new plant and machinery in manufacturing never rose above £4 billion. The reason is simply that British-owned capital earns twice as much from profits extracted overseas than from investments here.

Growth

The financiers would consider it even safer to invest abroad with the boost to inflation contributed by Meacher's proposal to increase public expenditure.

Import controls are an inevitable part of Meacher's plan, aimed at directing most of the growth in demand to Britain. Although he has adopted a variant put forward by Cambridge economists — of holding the growth in manufactures to about half of what it would otherwise reach — this would still force the purchase of relatively more expensive domestic goods and have the effect of exporting unemployment.

Even if Meacher's version of import controls did not provoke moves to block British exports, the recession in the West ensures that there could be no expansion of these exports.

Meacher begins his article: 'What



CORBY Closure of the steel works will bring devastation to the town.

Photo: SOCIALIST CHALLENGE

loss and closures in steel: refusing to pay the interest charges which account for over half of BSC's losses over the past four years; and nationalisation of the profitable private steel sector, which supplies a quarter of the steel used in Britain.

There is a valuable step the Labour left could take in seeking to match up steel-making capacity with the wide-ranging needs for the product. That is to hold a conference of representatives from the workforce of the steel-making and using industries, both in Britain and overseas.

Dictates

Such a conference, by beginning to elaborate the needs of the working class in relation to steel, would give an impetus to the struggles necessary to confront the dictates of capital.

Among these are a shorter working week and sharing of the available work in the steel industry, in order to protect jobs and plants.

Determining and allocating steel production to meet working class needs could only be achieved by workers' control and that, of course, would require a head-on confrontation not simply with the present government but with all those who stand in the way of socialism.

Pay now, say Scottish teachers

By Desmond Tierney

ALMOST 1,600 teachers in Dundee are due to strike on Thursday 24 January in protest at the decision of the Tory controlled Tayside council to sack 130 primary school teachers on fixed term contracts.

The strike has been called by the national executive of the Educational Institute of Scotland, and it will close schools throughout Dundee.

The background to the sackings is the council's plans to slash £1.2m from its education budget.

Pressure is also building up for immediate settlement of the 1979 wage claim, which was referred to the Clegg Commission. Unofficial action has been taken at one large Glasgow school.

Commenting on the Glasgow teachers' walk-out, Keir Bloomer, chief pay negotiator for the Scottish teachers' union, said: 'There is an obvious danger. There could be a chain reaction. Now our task will be to keep other teachers from taking similar unofficial action.'

Such leadership has provoked Scottish teachers to organise a conference to discuss how best they can prepare to fight the Tories.

Sponsored by Rank and File and many individual union members, the conference will discuss how the Tory policies will affect teachers and the education system. Hopefully it will take decisions on what policies the union should pursue against the Tories and how these should be fought for in the union.

The 'Scottish Teachers and the Tories' conference is on Saturday, 2 February, 11am-5pm, at City Halls, Candleriggs, Glasgow. Information from: Allan Armstrong, 28 Merton Place, Edinburgh.

*Teachers in the London borough of Ealing struck on Wednesday for a half-day over the council's plan to sell to the Church of England Twyford comprehensive school.

In Nottingham, two thousand National Union of Teachers' members were called out on Wednesday over the suspension of a nursery teacher, disciplined for protesting at nursery cuts.

South Yorks builds for 18 February

'SOCIALIST republic of South Yorkshire' reads the best-selling badge produced by Barnsley Trades Council. While the establishment of the republic may be a little way off, the fight in the area against the cuts in social spending is ahead of most parts of Britain.

A one day all-out strike is planned for 18 February, called by the South Yorkshire Association of Trades Councils, which is now distributing 100,000 leaflets to mobilise support.

The proposal for the action is endorsed by Sheffield District AUEW, Yorkshire NUM, the Manchester region of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, and other trade union bodies in the North-west.

George Caborn, secretary of the Engineering Union's Sheffield district, explains that the day of action is part of the TUC's campaign for social and economic advance, as decided at last year's Congress.

'The call for strike action,' Caborn says, 'could obviously only be a recommendation. We are now going back to factory and public meetings to see what support we can get on jobs and services.'

A major role in the campaign in South Yorkshire has been played by Barnsley Trades Council. In the opinion of its secretary, Mike Stokes, the 18 February action is part of building up of the fight against the Tories.

In Barnsley, that fight is also having to deal with the right wing in the Labour Party, which has drawn up proposals for cuts in line with the government's requirement.

Barnsley-councillor Alan Schofield, who has attacked this move, has been threatened with the withdrawal of the Labour whip.

Mike Stokes expressed his political perspective as the fight for a Labour government committed to socialism. 'If it's capitalism with a conscience that you want,' he adds, 'it may as well be a Liberal government. That's why we're going all-out for 18 February.'

SUPPORT THE STEEL STRIKE

Jimmy Kelly — what the pathologist said

By Tony Meehan

TEN DAYS ago members of the Jimmy Kelly Action Committee travelled to Westminster to distribute to MPs copies of the post mortem performed on Jimmy Kelly by Dr John Torry. Sir Harold Wilson, MP for Huyton, agreed to table a motion calling for a public inquiry and said after reading Dr Torry's report that he was confident other MPs would support him.

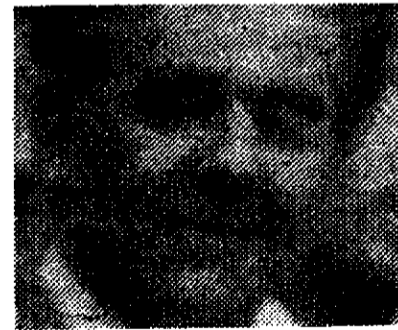
Socialist Challenge obtained a copy of this extraordinary report last week.

The pathologist gives as a major contributory factor to the cause of death, 'multiple injuries'. These included a shattered jaw, which in the opinion of the pathologist is most probably explained by, 'a blow or kick to the jaw'. Other injuries included a fractured vertebra and a bruised testicle, 'indicating a blow to or squeezing of that testicle'. A policeman has apparently admitted to squeezing Kelly's testicle. But the pathologist is of the opinion that the bruise was more like to have caused by a blow from the fist or knee.

In addition to these injuries there were numerous other bruises and abrasions which were so extensive that it was unlikely that they could have been caused by Kelly rolling over on the ground. The pathologist concludes that Jimmy Kelly, who was in very poor health died either of shock — the result of his beating — or anoxia, chiefly as a result of his broken jaw.

The police story is that Kelly was found unconscious on waste ground. This story is contested by a number of eye witnesses who allege that a police car knocked him down and that the officers then proceeded to beat him up. The police have to explain, among other things, why they needed to use handcuffs on an unconscious man and how he received the injuries he did.

The police's best chances of getting away with it blew up in their faces when a half-empty bottle of whiskey, allegedly found in Kelly's



pocket thereby 'proving' drunkenness was found to have several sets of fingerprints on it, none of which were the deceased's.

After a number of demonstrations in Huyton, some of which were 1,000 strong, the Jimmy Kelly Action Committee is now resting its hopes on either a public inquiry or the coroner's court to establish the truth behind Jimmy Kelly's death. Tommy Banks, chairperson of the Action Committee told *Socialist Challenge* that they were launching an appeal to raise £14,000 to pay for the services of a QC in the coroner's court.

Donations to: Molly Curran, 58 Barkbeth Rd, Huyton, near Liverpool.



Photo: Pete Coleman

THE WILD BUNCH

THESE are just a few members of the wildest bunch around whose motto is 'kill now — ask questions later'.

In the last ten years 245 people have died while under their 'protection'. The most famous were Jimmy Kelly in Merseyside, Liddle Towers in Durham, Edward Platt in

Manchester, James McGeown in Glasgow.

In enforcing their own version of 'law and order' the Wild Bunch have also killed Blair Peach in Southall and Tony Castro in London. Castro was unfortunate enough to get in the way of the Wild Bunch while gang

members were taking part in payroll snatch at the London offices of the Daily Mirror last year.

Tony Meehan tells of the gang's most famous slaying, — the death of Jimmy Kelly — Geoff Bell asks is there a 'Mr Big' behind the Wild Bunch?

Not just a case of rotten apples

AN EDITORIAL in *The Times* was headed, 'The Police Protest Too Much'. There followed an article which mildly reprimanded the leading lights in the police for their tendency to attack even their mildest critics with accusations of plotting to overthrow society.

'The police must learn to be less sensitive to honest criticism', said *The Times*.

It was an exceptional editorial because, as the historian EP Thompson has written, *The Times* could normally be subtitled 'The Organ of the Police Federation'.

But now *The Times* has dared to offer a few words of reproach to the upholders of law and order. That voice has been added to many others from the establishment, even the *Daily Telegraph* has called for an inquiry into the murder of Jimmy Kelly.

Dabbling

The criticism has been fuelled not just by the death of Kelly and others but by the reports of 'Operation Countryman'. This inquiry into police corruption has revealed that London cops are no longer satisfied with dabbling in the porn and drug market but are now organising armed hold-ups and the killing of anyone who gets in their way.

The concern of these critics is always amicable, 'They are basically

friends not enemies', said the top people's paper. 'But', *The Times* went on, 'the police in their present mood are in some danger of alienating their support.'

For the ruling class the worry is that the image of the friendly, neutral bobby on the beat is being questioned. Which means people might begin to wonder what exactly constitutes 'law and order'.

Police chiefs themselves have been prone to blowing the gaff of late. For instance the former boss of the London police, Robert Mark, has written how his cops had to 'deal with 72,750 burglaries, 2,680 robberies and 450 demonstrations' in 1973. The running together of these three categories suggests that in Mark's view they are of a similar seriousness and they are all 'crimes'.

Such an attitude is reflected in a story Peter Hain tells of how when the police were trying to frame him for a bank robbery, one of his interrogators told him: 'You have caused a lot of trouble with your activities and protests and we are going to make sure this charge sticks on you.'

For many police a political protest is just another form of criminality; for some it is the worst form. Manchester's police chief, James Anderton, said recently that the greatest threat to 'law and order' came from 'seditionists'. Robert Mark has written that the Shrewsbury pickets 'committed the worst of all crimes, worse even than murder'.

There is a temptation to dismiss Anderton and Mark as a couple of particularly right-wing lunatics,

unrepresentative of the police as a whole. Similarly, those responsible for the death of Kelly and other murders could be explained away as simply a few 'rotten apples'.

But there are problems with such assumptions. In 1978, there were 2,154 complaints referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions alleging police assault, and 2,230 complaints of assault submitted to the Police Complaints Board under section 2(1) of the Police Act, 1976. Yet in not one of these cases were disciplinary charges made.

Similarly, the DPP has said there will be no prosecution of Kelly's killers, Blair Peach's murderers also seem likely to get off scott free, as have those responsible for Liddle Towers' death.

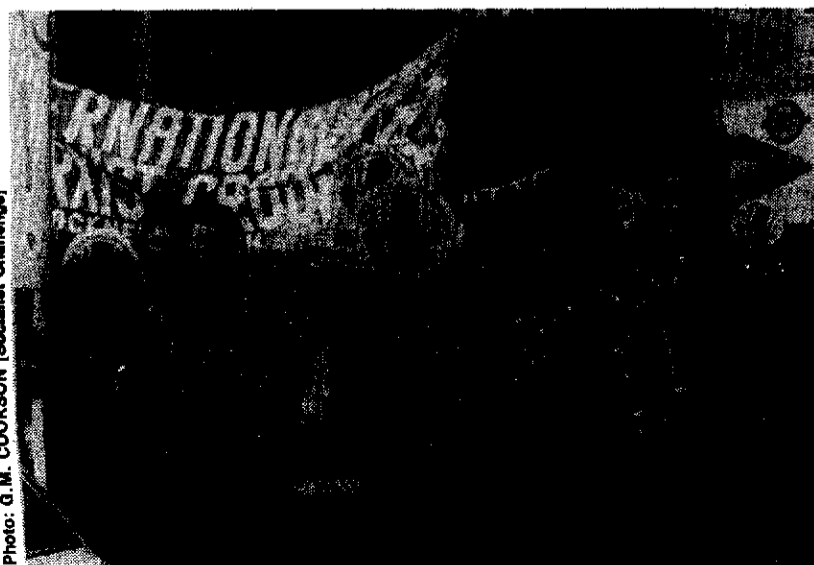
All of which disputes the 'rotten apples' argument. The conspiracy to pervert justice starts with the ordinary copper but involves the Police Complaints Board, the DPP and ultimately the government itself.

Nutcases

Anderton and Mark may be right-wing nutcases, but they were appointed by the Home Secretary — Labour and Tory. The murky, crooked world of the police may now be beginning to be exposed, yet Thatcher's only response has been to massively increase expenditure on her 'law and order'.

In this way, the views of Anderton and Thatcher are the same. Both recognise that in the next couple of years there will be a rise of social discontent, and social protest; both argue that their 'law and order' priority is to restrain that discontent and defeat that protest.

To gain information to help them in these tasks the police are willing to go to considerable lengths. For instance each week the London Metropolitan Police obtain, by subscription, nine copies of *Socialist Challenge*. Just what do they need nine copies for? We worry about that.



AS part of the Southall week of action, 400 people marched to and picketed Pentonville prison on Sunday. This is where a number of those convicted in Southall's racist trials have been held. Among the banners on the Pentonville picket was that of the Kings Cross branch of the rail union ASLEF.

THE OTHER BOOKSHOP

On Another Man's Wound, by Ernie O'Malley — Anvil, £2.50
The Singing Flame, by Ernie O'Malley — Anvil, £2.50
On Our Backs — Sexual Attitudes in a Changing Ireland, by Rosita Sweetman — Pan, £1

328 Upper Street, London N1 2XQ (Tel. 01-226 0571)

Abortion—the horror of the 'backstreet'

I STARTED training to be a nurse in 1961 at a large and prestigious teaching hospital in the Midlands. In the School of Nursing there was no mention of contraception, let alone abortion. But we gradually became aware that women who had had abortions were being looked after in the hospital and some of us even worked on a ward known as 'Dentals, Mentals and Confidentials', where women who'd had backstreet abortions were admitted.

My first strong personal memory of abortion was when I was working on a ward where kidney machines had just come into use. One night they admitted a woman, married with children, who had tried to abort herself by pushing a jar up into her vagina. She was critically ill and had damaged her kidneys.

The full reality of 'backstreet' abortion began to come home to us more through our personal lives than through our work, however. Three of my close friends had abortions during this time. Jan finally aborted on night duty after swallowing laxatives, hormone pills and other assorted tablets which we had access to from the drug cupboards. She just went into the ward toilet and bled and bled.

The second incident still scares me when I think of it. Like Jan, Kathy also shared a flat with me. It was my 21st birthday party. She looked very white and we thought that her make-up white makeup was very tasteful. During the following evening she was taken to hospital with appendicitis.

When we were told she had had an abortion and nearly died. Her doctor had injected her with venous embolism, a powerful toxic drug. Kathy was expelled from the hospital and made to finish her training in a non-teaching hospital. The dentist married a famous personality.

The third friend's experience made me aware of the 'system' for the first time. Liz did not tell anyone she was pregnant until she was over 12 weeks. She had a history of depression and attempted suicide and was very unhappy in nursing. We encouraged her to go to one of the gynaecologists, but the consultant refused her an abortion.

Her situation became a nightmare, and she ended up as a patient in the psychiatric unit. She tried to commit suicide twice and finally one evening she was transferred to a psychiatric hospital, having been sectioned under the Mental Health Act.

THESE few sentences, graphically describing the horror facing young women before the passage of the 1967 Abortion Act, are taken from an interesting new pamphlet published by the Brent Campaign Against Corrie.

It is a very useful addition to the available literature on abortion and fertility control, making its starting point the question of how women feel about pregnancy and abortion. Through women describing in their own words both good and bad ex-

periences it makes a powerful case against Corrie and for a woman's right to choose.

The numerous other issues, apart from the right to abortion, that are needed for women to have a real choice are also touched on — good contraception, housing, financial independence and so on.

The pamphlet is called **Mixed Feelings** and costs 30p (not including postage) from Brent Against Corrie; c/o Brent Women's Centre, 138 Minet Avenue, London NW10.

Bring Anwar's children home

By Jude Woodward

MARY DITTA is two years old and lives in Rochdale. She has two brothers and a sister in Pakistan whom she has never met. If the British immigration authorities have their way she never will meet them.

Mary's mother, Anwar, was born and grew up in Britain, but as a young girl she returned to Pakistan, where she married and had her first three children. After returning to Britain in 1975, she and her husband wanted their older children, aged 9, 7 and 6, to join them.

Despite all the evidence of birth

certificates, passports and so on, the British immigration authorities refuse to accept that the children are Anwar's sons and daughter and will not let them come to Britain.

This kind of arbitrary decision, wrecking the lives of whole families, will continue as long as the racist immigration laws exist. The whole legal climate leaves the onus of proof on the individuals concerned and not on the immigration authorities.

Not only do these authorities enforce the very letter of the law, whatever suffering is involved, but they seem to feel justified in making decisions which contravene the law. The British working class has shown itself willing to acquiesce in the



Photo JOHN STURROCK (Report)

The East End takes on Corrie

ONLY TWO weeks left to stop Corrie. Only two weeks to prevent this Tory government perpetrating a crime against women. Only two weeks to stop thousands of women being condemned once more to the horrors of the backstreets. Only two weeks before women not just in Britain, but worldwide, suffer a tremendous setback in the struggle for the right to control their fertility.

From now until the third reading of Corrie's Bill on 8 February has to be a period of con-

tinuous activity drawing every last bit of support into the struggle to prevent this defeat. The labour movement, the women's movement, students, youth, political organisations, the broad pro-abortion opinion that exists in this country all have to be mobilised.

On this page we look at the activities being planned by the Campaign Against Corrie in Tower Hamlets — part of East London — and begin to assess the effects on the area if the Corrie Bill is passed.

By Marie Stopes

THE Mile End day-care abortion clinic is unique in Britain. Professor Peter Huntingford, who runs the clinic, supports 'a woman's right to choose' and the rest of the staff were specially chosen because of their commitment to this principle.

The testimony of women who use the clinic reveals that here is one clinic performing safe, day-care abortion on the NHS in a sympathetic and supportive atmosphere.

But if the Corrie anti-abortion Bill becomes law this clinic will have

to close.

The East End has been the focus of many campaigns, not least that to win free contraception and abortion rights. Sylvia Pankhurst and the East London Federation of Suffragettes were the precursors of many campaigns to win women's rights, particularly control over fertility.

The Marie Stopes clinic was opened in East London in 1928, the year that women won equal voting rights. However, the motivation for bringing contraception to areas like Tower Hamlets has not been simply a question of women's rights. Too often it has been a matter of reactionary ideas that working class women breed too much. This was an element in Marie Stopes' East End activities.

Similarly, today, the drug Depo Provera — a powerful injectible contraceptive with a huge range of side effects — is prescribed in areas like Tower Hamlets to control the size of working class and particularly Asian families.

Anti-DP campaigners in the area, notably Dr Wendy Savage, decided to look more closely at the use of the drug. She found that less than 20 per cent of women on the drug had been properly informed of its side effects.

In the '20s, back street abortionists were a common feature of the East End slums. Ian Mikardo, a local Labour MP, commented at a recent meeting in Tower Hamlets that when he was a boy there were four backstreet abortionists in his street of 30 houses. The frequent occurrence of blood-poisoning, air embolism, gangrene, and death are testimony to the desperation women faced, unable

to afford the services of the East End abortionists. The East End has been the focus of many campaigns, not least that to win free contraception and abortion rights. Sylvia Pankhurst and the East London Federation of Suffragettes were the precursors of many campaigns to win women's rights, particularly control over fertility.

Many casualty departments in London hospitals were so familiar with the effects of the backstreet abortionists that casualty beds were set aside especially to deal with these cases.

It was during the passage of the White anti-abortion Bill in 1975 that Peter Huntingford started his campaign for a day-care abortion clinic at the Mile End Hospital. In June 1977 the clinic was finally opened.

'Our clinic was set up on the basis that abortion should be a woman's right to choose', Huntingford says. 'The present law enables us to do that, and I am proud and happy that we can provide such a service.'

On demand

Twenty abortions per week are performed at the clinic, which serves a population of 120,000, and women can usually get an abortion within a week. As a result, 40 per cent of women who attend the clinic receive their termination before nine weeks of pregnancy.

The Mile End clinic is the only one in the country which aims to provide abortion on demand. Of all abortions performed at the clinic, 95 per cent are for social reasons and would be outlawed by the Corrie Bill.

The Mile End clinic will no longer be viable if the Bill's proposals become law. But we also have to defend the clinic against cuts in the NHS, which will also erode this service. This is why as many people as possible in the London area should come on the demonstration on Saturday 26 January, assembling at 1pm at the London Hospital, Whitechapel High St, London E1 (tube: Whitechapel).

And this is also the reason why we need the biggest possible lobby of Parliament on 5 February against the Corrie Bill. We want more and more Mile End clinics across the country, not fewer and fewer.

Breakthrough

The development of the Mensesinger cap — better known as the Dutch cap — was a breakthrough in providing a form of contraception that women controlled. Marie Stopes, the early pro-contraception campaigner, was particularly active in bringing this form of contraception to East London women.

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Activities on 2 February

- Northern area: demo, meet 11am, Forth St, Newcastle.
- Nottingham: NAC demo.
- Brighton: NAC demo.
- Leeds: lobby of Stan Cohen MP and a bazaar.
- Bedford: NAC street meeting, Church Sq.
- Birmingham: NAC demo, Victoria Sq, 12.30pm.
- Sheffield: demonstration.
- Islington: NAC motorcade.
- North-west: 11am, All Saints, Manchester.
- Scotland: demo, backed by STUC, Glasgow.

Activities during week of action

- Tower Hamlets: 26 Jan, demo from London Hospital, 1.30pm, all London mobilisation.
- NUS: demo 5 Feb, 12pm, Malet St, London WC1 to lobby of Parliament.
- Leeds: cuts demo, 28 Jan, NAC contingent.
- Brighton: all night vigil on 1 Feb.
- Leeds: NAC local demo on 5 Feb.
- Plymouth: torchlight procession on 5 Feb.
- Leeds: women's torchlight procession and all night vigil at Leeds Infirmary on 7 Feb.

On 5 Feb the rally will continue from 5-8pm in the Grand Committee Room, House of Commons.

mistreatment of blacks, so the immigration authorities feel they are above rebuke.

The Campaign Against the Immigration Laws is determined to change these attitudes.

As a start there is a picket of the Home Office on 1 February, to 'Bring Anwar's children home'. A big mobilisation from the labour movement for that picket could not only stop abuses of the law, and bring three young children home, but it could also take us a step nearer getting rid of these racist laws altogether.

Picket the Home Office, 1 February, 12-3pm (opposite St James'), bring banners.

DEFEND THE MILE END CLINIC

Join the demonstration Saturday 26th January 1pm at the London Hospital followed by a rally at the Mile End Hospital

Selections from the Left

★ Morning Star

RECENT events in Afghanistan raise fundamental questions of political principle.

Ever since its foundation our party has struggled for the interests of the working people and for peace, in solidarity with all struggles throughout the world for democracy, national liberation and Socialism. We take our stand on that basis.

But we express our disagreement with the intervention of the Soviet Union's armed forces in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and call for their withdrawal.

And we will oppose with all our strength the efforts of the British and US governments to exploit the situation to increase international tension, step up the arms race, and create new bases in Asia and the Middle East for imperialist adventures.

Morning Star, 15 January

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

WASHINGTON never said a word to protest Daoud's vicious repression, nor lifted a finger to improve social conditions in Afghanistan. But it immediately set out to strangle the gains of the Afghan masses. Just two months after the revolution, Carter cut off all economic aid programs to Afghanistan. American officials tried to block loans destined to help develop that country.

Washington's hostile reaction was not limited to economics.

Unable to launch a direct military intervention because of the deep sentiments of American working people against another Vietnam-type war, Washington has sought to carry out its operations through intermediaries. In this case it has mainly been through the US dominated military dictatorship in Pakistan. The Pakistani government provides bases for the right-wing guerrillas, money to buy arms, military training, and free access across the Afghanistan border.

With this powerful array of international forces ranged against the revolution, the Afghan government turned to the Soviet Union for aid. Money and advisers were provided. When it looked like the imperialist-backed forces might pull off a bloody Chile-style counter-revolution right on its southern border, Soviet troops came in. So the issue is not Soviet intervention, but a growing US intervention — aimed at taking back the gains won by the Afghan masses — that finally forced the Soviet government to respond. If the Afghan and Soviet forces are successful in defeating the reactionary right-wing offensive, the Afghan people will be in a much better position to achieve their aspirations.

The Soviet move in Afghanistan has also put a big crimp in Washington's war drive against Iran, making it harder for Carter to drag us into another Vietnam there. It has gained time for the masses in Nicaragua to advance their struggles with less danger of US intervention. It is a sharp blow to the US rulers' efforts to hold back popular revolutionary upheavals throughout the world.

The real threat to peace and to the interests of American workers and farmers comes from Washington, not Moscow. The real threat is Carter's campaign to aid the right-wing Afghan guerrillas, to beef up the Pakistani dictatorship, to establish military bases in the Middle East and Africa, and to squander more billions on the war budget.

Militant (US), 18 January



SOVIET action in Afghanistan is in direct opposition to the UN resolution which it sponsored (on hegemonism — SC). There must be a clear condemnation of Soviet action and a demand that all Russian troops are withdrawn from Afghanistan immediately.

Inevitably, the cold war warriors in the West have decided to exploit what Russia has done in Afghanistan as a means of slowing down the process of detente. The SALT II agreement is now in serious danger and opposition to the new nuclear missiles in Western Europe is seriously blunted. For Margaret Thatcher, the Soviet action comes as manna from heaven: it is proof of her accusations about Russian expansionism.

Tribune, 4 January

SOCIALIST PRESS

TROTSKYISTS thus in no way advocate the export of 'socialism' by armed invasion of the Red Army. We condemn the invasion of Afghanistan, which involves trampling under foot the national rights of the peoples of Afghanistan, and which will blacken the name of Communism in the eyes of the multi-millioned Muslim masses of the East, impeding the struggle for socialist revolution.

But in the situation that has arisen we are not indifferent on the question of the defence of the nationalised property relations of the Soviet Union. We stand unconditionally for the defence of the USSR against imperialist attack, from whatever quarter. Now that the Stalinist invasion has taken place, therefore, we must assess what would be the impact of an immediate withdrawal of Red Army troops.

Such a policy would in our view open up a vacuum of power in Afghanistan into which would step the imperialists, under the guise of support for the anti-communist guerrilla forces.

The establishment of a pro-imperialist regime in Afghanistan would represent a severe danger to the Soviet Union and to the masses of the East and Middle East. Nor would it in any way advance the struggles of the Afghan peoples for self-determination — a right they have been denied for centuries by the imperialists.

For this reason we do not demand the immediate withdrawal of the invading troops. We give critical support to military actions by the Soviet army against imperialist aggression. But politically we must at the same time develop a programme which meets the needs of the Afghan workers, peasants and nomads.

Socialist Press, 9 January

Socialist Worker

DESPITE our doubts about the origins of the 'Islamic guerrillas' socialists can have only one response to this: RUSSIAN TROOPS — GET OUT OF AFGHANISTAN!

Socialist Worker, 12 January

Labour Weekly

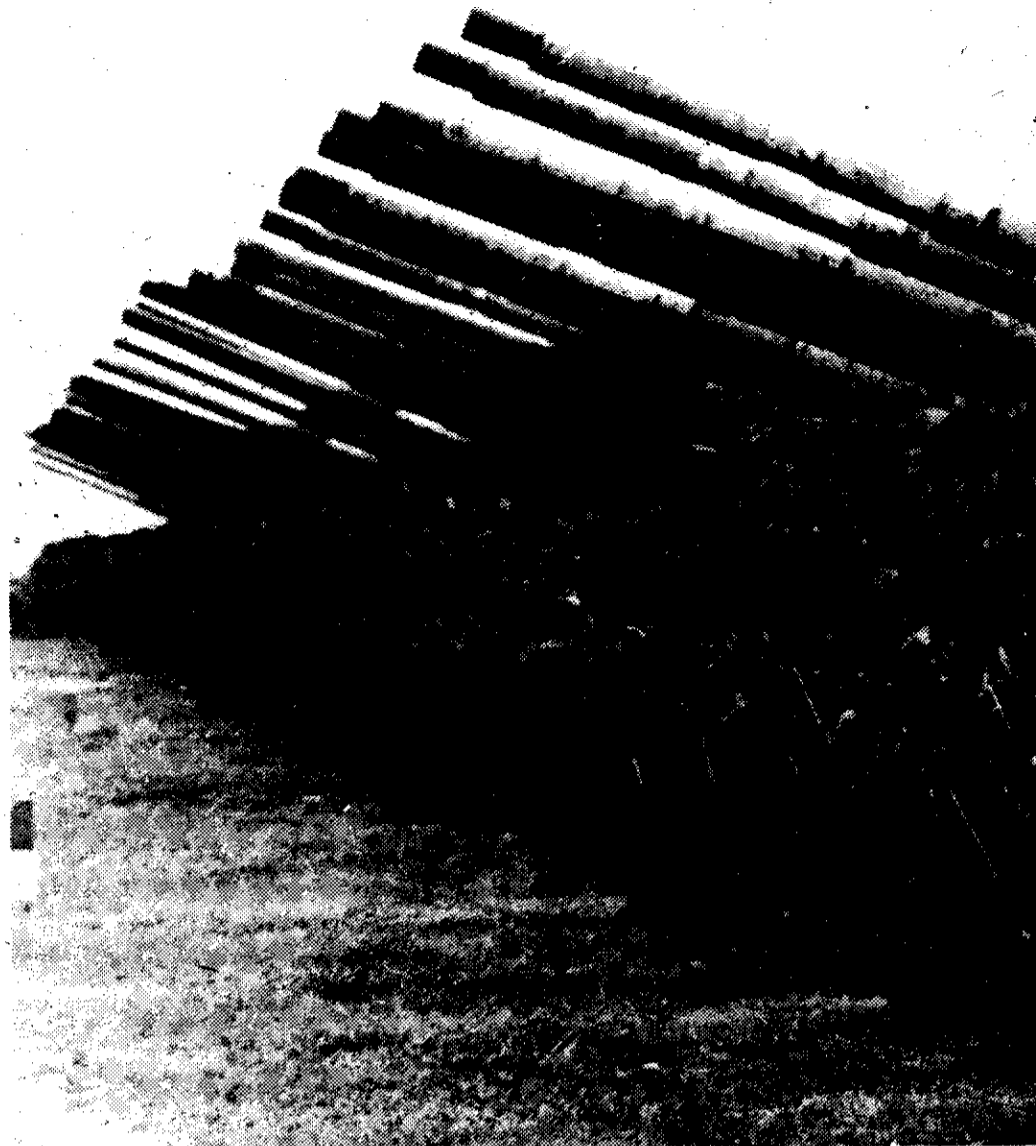
THE country was unique in the world in being a non-Communist state where the Russians were the main military and economic partners: this had lasted since 1955 when the Eisenhower administration cut back aid in order to appease Pakistan and was confirmed in 1961 when Kennedy refused an urgent Afghan request for economic aid. If anyone 'lost' Afghanistan to the Russians it was Dwight D and JFK.

To compare the intervention into Afghanistan with that in Hungary or Czechoslovakia is tendentious. In the Afghan case the Amin regime was universally loathed and already 100 per cent dependent on the Russians, and the scale of foreign counter-revolutionary influence was, even if less than the Russians claimed, substantial.

There has been much talk of the Russians advancing on the oil of the Persian Gulf: but the Russians, for all their problems, remain the world's largest oil producers, at a rate of 12.4 million barrels a day, and the availability of warm water ports, whilst obviously convenient, is hardly as serious a goal in the era of intercontinental missiles as it was in the days of Peter the Great.

The Russians may have had the misfortune to intervene in Afghanistan in a US election year, but neither the ill-informed hysteria this has generated, nor the force of Islamic counter-revolution in Afghanistan itself, appear likely to force them off the course they have chosen.

Fred Halliday, Labour Weekly, 11 January



THE real war threat — NATO weaponry on parade

WHICH V CARTER?

THE OUTCOME of the present crisis triggered by the events in Afghanistan will determine the course of world politics for the next decade.

The response of the workers' movement to the crisis, in particular, will decide whether the war drive launched by the American imperialists succeeds in its aims of preparing the ground, both domestically and internationally, for intervention against the gains of the oppressed and exploited throughout the world.

Socialist Challenge for its part had no hesitation in condemning this war drive, and opposing the Soviet Army's intervention into Afghanistan as a boost for that war drive.

An article by Tariq Ali in the 3 January issue of the paper put this position, going on to call for the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops. An editorial published on 17 January disagreed with this latter point, arguing that this would be tantamount to calling for the victory of the Islamic rightist guerrillas.

The situation had changed since the invasion, the editorial argued, because of the way imperialism now had the opportunity to openly boost the rightists through General Zia's regime in Pakistan. The continued presence of the Soviet army

was now necessary to defeat that threat.

At the same time the editorial did not disagree with Tariq Ali's assessment that the purpose of the Russian invasion was to install a pliable bourgeois government and not to overthrow capitalism.

On this page we print a number of the responses of the labour movement press to the crisis, both in Britain and internationally.

The first casualty outside Afghanistan seems to be the united front 'Eurocommunism'. The Spanish CP daily Mundo Obrero was trenchant in opposition to the Soviet action:



Whatever happened to the Iranian embassy hostages?

By John Leadbetter

THE first anniversary of the Shah's flight into exile passed almost unnoticed in Iran last week. The matter of the Shah's extradition, and the fate of the hostages held in the US Embassy, seem to have temporarily receded into the background with the run-up to the presidential elections on 25 January and developments in neighbouring Afghanistan.

Finance Minister Bani-sadr, a leading contender for the position of president, used the opportunity of an election rally in Abadan, in the oil-producing region of Khuzestan, to denounce the entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan and to stress the urgent need for national unity in the face of Soviet 'expansionism'. Referring to the diverse nationalities which make up Iran's population, he asserted that 'we have been living a common life for centuries and have a common culture'.

Such statements reflect official awareness of the explosive nature of the national question. Abadan is a city with a high proportion of Arabs among its population. Last year, in response to peaceful demonstrations demanding an end to discrimination against Arabs, the Arab quarters of the city were shelled by gun-boats from the river, and many militants were arrested and executed. Admiral Madani, who was governor-general at the time and in charge of operations, is another candidate in the presidential elections.

While Bani-sadr pontificates about 'common culture', pro-Khomeini forces are involved in a virtual civil war against Iran's largest national grouping, the Azerbaijanis. Eleven members of the Muslim Peoples Republican Party (MPRP) were arrested and executed ten days ago after a pre-dawn attack on the party's headquarters in Tabriz by Islamic Guards. Azerbaijani militants responded by organising mass demonstrations through the city; many shops and factories closed in protest against the attacks.

Like the Kurds and the Arabs before them, the Azerbaijanis are protesting against the inadequate provisions made in the Islamic constitution for recognition of the rights of all the nationalities in Iran. But unlike the Kurds and Arabs, the Azerbaijanis — who live not only in the province of Azerbaijan, but are found in all the major Iranian cities, often occupying prominent positions in the bazaars and the factories — cannot be contained in a merely regional sense. A few days after the executions in Tabriz, about forty Azeris were arrested in other cities, including Qom and Mashad. Among them were a small number of army officers.

House arrest

The religious leader of the Azerbaijanis, Ayatollah Shariat-madari, has been under virtual house arrest in Qom for the last few weeks, and has been forced to dissociate himself publicly from the MPRP. Such actions are unlikely to defuse the situation for long, however. This is no religious disagreement, but a confrontation between an aggressive but unstable central state power and a powerful bourgeois nationalist grouping concerned to gain recognition for its political rights within the 'republic'.

Whoever wins in the presidential elections — if they take place at all — there can be no avoiding a reckoning on this and other questions involving the desire of the bourgeoisie to have some say and control over the economic future of Iran, which at present remains muddled and bleak.

The outcome of the elections will not produce any gain for Iranian workers and peasants either, whatever their nationality. Until they begin to organise and fight for their demands in organisationally independent bodies, there can be no solution to the problems of unemployment and inflation which face them.

WAY TO STOP S OFFENSIVE

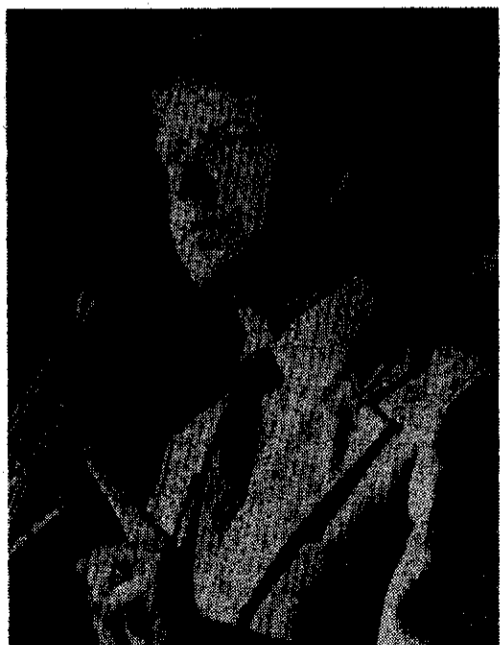
'We say "No!" to the intervention of the Soviet military forces in Afghanistan.'

This view was echoed by the Italian Communist Party. Neither party however has so far called for the withdrawal of the troops. The motives of these parties are transparent. They have fallen behind their ruling classes' rush to align themselves with Carter.

The reaction of the French Communist Party was less predictable. After George Marchais's visit to Moscow, caution turned into full-blooded endorsement of the Soviet invasion. Once again however, this response is in line with the trepidation with which the French ruling class views any boycott measures against the Soviet Union because of their impact on the French economy.

The British Communist Party followed sister parties in the Spanish state and Italy in an unambiguous statement by Jack Woddis to the Communist Party leadership.

Labour Weekly, the official organ of the Labour Party, carried a number of different views. James Callaghan was quoted at length, but the editorial reflected the line of the Tribune Group of MPs, bemoaning that the invasion made detente more difficult to argue for. But the paper also carried an implicitly strong defence of the Russian invasion by Fred Halliday, a journalist and member of the *New Left Review* editorial board.



CARTER's war drive is aimed at workers movement.

On the far left in Britain, *Socialist Worker* after a period of caution called for 'Troops Out'. The stiffening of their attitude on the question could be traced in the successive articles of Ian Birchall who, starting from a dovish reproach to the Soviet forces, hawkishly said in the 19 January issue:

'That's why international socialists have always argued that the main enemy is

at home.

'For the Afghans, that means the Russian army.

'For us, it means Thatcher.'

Other British far left papers in general opposed this view.

In the Fourth International, both French and Spanish sections opposed the invasion, but refused to call for the withdrawal of troops. *Combate*, the paper of the LCR of the Spanish state, spoke for both organisations when it said the the Soviet troops must stay to defeat the rightist troops, 'not a day more or less'.

The cothinkers of the Fourth International in the United States of America, the Socialist Workers Party, came out strongly against their own government's war drive, giving support to the Soviet invasion after quoting much evidence that the imperialists had provided powerful aid for the rightist forces to make it a launching off point for intervention against the USSR.

The debate over what attitude British socialists should take to the events in Afghanistan should not, however, be an obstacle to opposing the British imperialists' contribution to the Carter offensive against the anti-imperialist movement.

That's why we should argue that not a penny or a gun should be provided for Carter's war drive. And in particular that no aid should be given to the blood-stained regime of General Zia in Pakistan.

Amnesty says 10,000 prisoners held in Zimbabwe

Soames keeps freedom fighters under lock and key

By Roy Alexander

IN ZIMBABWE today, under British rule, there are more than 10,000 political prisoners, many of whom have little chance of seeing the light of day before the 'free elections' are held next month. Meanwhile the security forces continue to use the state of emergency and martial law — just renewed by British Governor Lord Soames — to add to the numbers of those in prison on political grounds.

These are some of the damning facts to emerge from a recent visit to Zimbabwe by a representative of Amnesty International, a highly-respected international organisation concerned with the fate of political prisoners.

The Amnesty representative was refused permission to visit political prisoners, but he did have lengthy talks with officials of the British administration. He found an appalling degree of ignorance and lack of concern with the fate of those who had suffered under the old administration.

The views of Soames' officials were almost entirely based upon what they had been told by Rhodesian government officials. They had made no efforts to ascertain the facts for themselves, and continued to rely upon the Rhodesians for implementing their policies.

For example, since 1975 many Zimbabwean political dissidents have been executed in secret under martial law. The families of many of those rounded-up by the security forces don't know whether they are alive or dead. Amnesty found that the British had no details on this situation and officials refused to take steps to make the information publicly available.

Similarly, the thousands of political prisoners are having their cases 'reviewed' — but by officials of the old Rhodesian administration! And it has been reported that the behaviour of political prisoners while in custody is being taken into account in deciding whether to release them or not.

Amnesty points out that, under martial law, powers of arrest were very widespread — for example, white farmers mobilised to assist the army could often arrest anyone they suspected of sympathising with the guerillas. It is therefore difficult to be certain how many people are being held without trial under martial law.

Official figures (and these are only 'estimates') claim 5,000, but Amnesty thinks it could well be more. Similarly, the number of those who have been convicted of political crimes — often by martial law kangaroo courts — is not clear, but Amnesty puts it between 3,000 and 6,000.

For the most determined fighters of Rhodesian racism, those who have suffered the most from the struggle (some of them have been in prison for more than 10 years), the Lancaster House agreement is thus no more than a piece of paper. Their scandalous treatment by Soames — who undoubtedly does not want such 'dangerous' people roaming free while he is having his election — merely underlines the reactionary role of the British government.

Britain should get out of Zimbabwe and stop hindering the Zimbabwean people in their struggle to destroy racism, free themselves from the atrocities of the past, and build a new life for themselves.



ABEL MUZOREWA imprisoned thousands, who are still in jail

'If the Nicaraguans can do it, so can we'

By Dave Kellaway

MARIANELLA Vilas is one of three lawyers in El Salvador who defend left wing political prisoners. Over the last few months she has received several anonymous letters.

The first informed her she was being 'tried' for 'subversion' in a 'patriotic' court. The second said she had been sentenced to death and the third that the sentence would be carried out. All letters were from the White Warriors Union (UGB), a fascist execution squad which is rather more professional than our own National Front.

Marianella, a representative of the Commission for Human Rights in El Salvador, was recently in Europe to stress the need for continued solidarity with popular struggles after the 'cosmetic' palace coup of 17 October — ordered by Washington in a desperate attempt to head off another Nicaragua.

Junta

Already the new regime is in crisis. On 3 January all the civilian members of the junta and the bulk of the government resigned after the armed forces refused to take a public position in favour of 'democratisation'. Marianella explains.

This so-called 'reformist regime' hasn't carried out any of its promises and is not accepted by the majority of the people.

It has passed decrees on amnesty for political prisoners, agrarian reform, minimum wage structure and dissolution of the fascist paramilitaries. But 23 political prisoners have not been affected since the previous regime defined them as 'common criminals', and 350 prisoners aren't covered because they are held without recognition in unofficial secret prisons.

The law on land reform merely instructs anybody buying or selling land to inform the government. In the teeth of right-wing demonstrations by the landowners' organisations none of the promises on this central

problem has been met. The peasants continue to occupy land and the coffee workers have taken over the fields because the proprietors have not paid the \$5.80 minimum a day demanded by a new law.

As for disbanding the fascists, we believe that there is an unspoken agreement between the regime and fascist groups. The government pays a political price for repressing the left directly — far better to let the right do this clandestinely!

The famous purge of the armed forces has resulted in only a few administrative changes. Torture is continuing, 208 were killed in the two weeks after the coup and today people are still disappearing and corpses appearing.

The reformist parties — Christian Democracy, Social Democracy, and the Communist Party — rushed to support the new regime after the coup. On the other side the BPR (Revolutionary Peoples Block) the FAPU (United Peoples Front), the February Leagues and the Trotskyists

have all opposed it. These revolutionary organisations do have mass support and can take initiatives against the line of the reformists.

Many people must have read about the armed actions of the left organisations immediately after the coup. These had a negative side because they miscalculated the real social relation of forces, which did not permit an insurrection at that time. But there was a positive side because the government repression showed that the regime represented continuity.

Although there is a well organised vanguard, the majority of the masses react spontaneously one way or the other — following the reformists or the revolutionaries at different times. We need to maintain clear opposition to the regime but patiently construct mass organisation and the revolutionary forces without wasting people in adventurist actions. The extreme right are looking for a coup if there is a provocation from the left.

But one thing is sure. All the Salvadorian masses are with the

struggle of the Nicaraguans and above all with the Sandinistas. We aren't so pleased with the Nicaraguan government's recognition of the colonels, but we make a distinction between the practical attitude of the Sandinistas and the government. The Sandinistas are with the popular organisations.

No one in Central America can talk about a revolutionary process being restricted to just one country. It's a Central American, regional problem. The Yanquis understand this and so do most of us.

For us the victory in Nicaragua makes our struggle even more urgent. Historically our level of organisation has been more developed than theirs; so if they can do it, we certainly can too.

And for that we don't just want moral sympathy but solidarity. The best sort is when workers in British companies that have links with El Salvador take action in their factory

to support their fellow workers in our country. At the moment the very minimum we need is publicity about the real situation and the continuity of the military regime.

More information from: Nicaraguan Coordinating Committee, 20 Compton Terrace, London N1. Latin American Bureau, 1 Cambridge Terrace, London N1.

Iranian women's film

A FILM of the 20,000-strong Iranian women's demonstration taken by French feminists will be shown twice in London in the next ten days: on Friday 25 January, 8pm, at the Women's Arts Alliance, 10 Cambridge Terrace Mews, Chester Gate, NW1; and on Saturday 2 February, 7pm, at St Ann's Hall, Venn Street, Clapham, SW4.

British officials try to outdo Pinochet

From the Chile Solidarity Campaign

WHILE Hugo was a prisoner of President Pinochet in Chile, between 1973 and 1977, his one consolation was regular visits from his family. Now, a free man in exile in England, he is being denied that right — by British immigration officials.

When Hugo's brother, Claudio, came over to see him a fortnight ago, he was stopped by immigration authorities at Dover. They wanted to know all about him, and about Hugo — what he did, what political activities he was involved in. Claudio was strip-searched, not once but four times, by different officials. Then they phoned Hugo to ask how he was going to support his brother during the visit. At no time was Claudio allowed to speak to Hugo — the right of any detainee.

Finally, they decided that Claudio had 'no visible means of support', and could be planning to stay in Britain as an illegal immigrant — despite his return ticket and his stated intentions, and the fact that the rest of the family, his parents and other brothers, are living in France. So they bundled him onto the last departing ferry of the night — a car ferry with no proper accommodation for passengers. For good measure, they stamped his travel documents with a warning cross.

Hugo, like the rest of us, is left wondering at the state of 'law and order' where individual officials have the power to unite or divide families entirely at their personal whim. What kind of petty dictators are we allowing to rule?

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE EVENTS

Support the steel workers — Kick out the Tories
A series of meetings
BIRMINGHAM, Thurs 24 Jan, 7.30pm, Digbeth Civic Hall. Speakers: Tariq Ali; Pat Hickey (Senior steward Rover Solihull) and local speakers.
LIVERPOOL, Thurs 24 Jan, phone Liverpool 728 7007 for venue and time. Speakers: Raghib Ahsan (BI worker Rover Solihull) and local speakers.
CARDIFF, Wed 30 Jan, phone Cardiff 394755 for details. Speakers: Pat Kane (Socialist Challenge editorial board) plus local speakers.
NEWPORT, Thurs 31 Jan, phone Cardiff 394755 for details. Raghib Ahsan plus local speakers.
PORT TALBOT/SWANSEA, Mon 28 Jan, Dynevor School, Swansea. Speaker Jacob Moneta (former editor of Metall, German steel union journal).
SHEFFIELD, Tues 29 Jan, venue Station Hotel, The Wicker, Sheffield. Speakers: Jacob Moneta, Tariq Ali, Ron Thompson.

CARDIFF SOCIALIST CHALLENGE FORUM. Abortion, women's rights and socialism. Speaker: Penny Duggan (IMC) and speaker from Cardiff Abortion Campaign in a personal capacity Fri 1 Feb, the Moorland pub, Splott Rd, Cardiff, 7.30pm.

CARDIFF: SC sales Newport Town Centre outside Woolworths 11-12.30; Cardiff British Home Stores 11-12.30. Also available from 108 Books, Salisbury Road, Cardiff.
ABERDEEN: SC sold Saturdays outside C&A — for more info ring phone Colin, 574068.
BATH: SC on sale at 1985 Books, London Road, and Saturdays 2pm-3pm outside the Roman Baths. Phone 20298 for more details.
BRADFORD: SC available from Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.
BIRMINGHAM: SC on sale at The Ramp, Fri 4.30-5.30; Sat 10-4. For more info phone 643 9209.
BRIGHTON: For more info phone Nick, 605052.
BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. For more info contact Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Road, Montpellier, Bristol 6.
COVENTRY: SC available from Wedge Bookshop. For more info about local activities phone 461138.
DUNDEE: SC available from Dundee City Square outside Boots, every Thursday 4.5-30pm, Friday 4.5-30pm, Saturday 11-4pm.
HUDDERSFIELD: SC supporters sell papers every Saturday 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.
LAMBETH: SC now available at kiosk Brixton tube, Oval tube, Herne Hill British Rail and Tetric Books Clapham.
SWINDON: SC on sale 11-1 every Sat., Regent St (Brunel Centre).
TESSHIDE: SC sales at Newsfare shops in Cleveland Centre and in Laitshorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and at Greens Bookstall, upstairs in Spencer Market, Stockton High Street.
TOWER HAMLETS: SC supporters sell papers every Friday 5pm Wainey Mkt, Sat 11-12.30pm Whitechapel tube, Sunday 10.30-12.00 Brick Lane.

OUR BLOOD spattered our pavements and barricades-eight years ago because of the denial of the nationalist minority's basic human rights since the creation of the Six County statelet in 1921.

Only a few years earlier that same minority had taken to the streets to demand equality in votes, jobs and housing. In the months that followed that first serious baton charge against civil rights marchers, on 5 October 1968 in Derry, the RUC and Loyalist thugs endeavoured to smash the resistance of the nationalist community in what became known as the battles of the Bogside and the Falls (Belfast). After armed police were beaten back during three days of street conflict, mainly by stones and petrol bombs, the British government sent in troops to 'aid the civil authority'.

In August 1971 the Stormont junta, which was a one party statelet since 1921, introduced its most repressive of weapons — internment without charge or trial. As reports of torture leaked from internment camps, the many-sided protest movement became even more determined and active. By the end of December a group of trade unionists from different parts of the occupied statelet, in conjunction with the left-wing People's Democracy group, planned to defy the ban on demonstrations.

Outflanked

This call led to some 4,000 people on Christmas Day taking to the snow-drifted roads from Belfast to Long Kesh concentration camp some ten miles away. The British army had been outflanked and all their preparations to halt the march proved abortive. There was a sense of jubilation in the nationalist ghettos all over the north. The law had been flouted and made to look like an ass; while the barricades remained intact, holding out both the British and the infamous RUC.

Inside those barricades a commune-style society existed. The people set up their own co-ops, people's taxis, newspapers and bulletins, local advice centres, policing, radio stations, an independent postal service.

A march called by the Civil Rights Association for Derry on 30 January promised to be another show of resistance. On 26 January Unionist Premier Brian Faulkner held talks with British army General Tuzo. The next day he flew to London for private talks with Heath.

On 28 January the Cabinet's Defence and Overseas Committee met after a previous meeting of the 'inner cabinet'. Such an august gathering was hardly discussing a mere arrest and snatch-squad operation. There followed a public commitment from the British army and the RUC that they would take 'action', as yet unspecified, against illegal marchers.

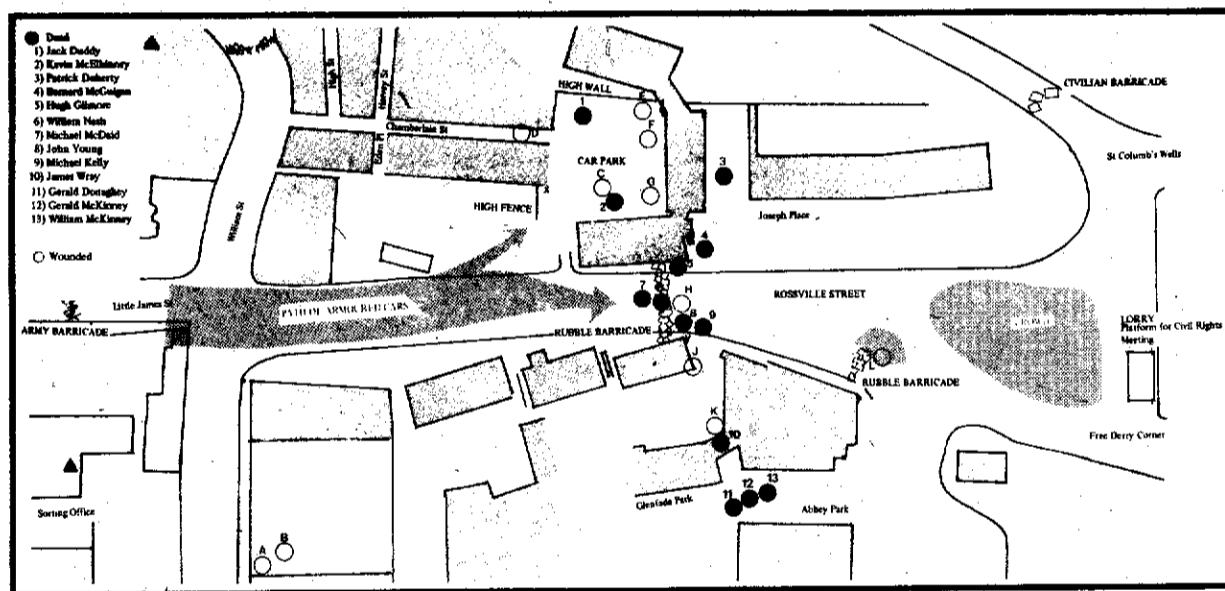
Assurances

On 29 January, Paisley called off his counter-demonstration in Derry after assurances that 'the civil rights march will be halted by force if necessary'. His supporters were instructed to stay off the streets, and on no account 'be anywhere near the city

8 years ago REMEMBER BLOODY SUNDAY?

FEW PEOPLE today remember more about Bloody Sunday than the single fact that the British army shot and killed 14 civil rights marchers in Derry on 30 January 1972. But the details and context

are important if Bloody Sunday is to be understood as well as remembered. Writing from Derry's Bogside, FIONBARRA O'DOCHARTAIGH explains.



centre'. The chosen instrument was flown in — the 1st Battalion of the Parachute Regiment under the command of Colonel Derek Wilford, who was later to receive an OBE from the English monarch for his work on that day.

The army allowed the march to leave the Catholic ghetto but prevented it from marching to the Guildhall Square by barricades erected in William Street. The organisers, accustomed to such diversions, re-directed the march towards Free Derry Corner, some 500 yards from the British army along Rossville Street.

While Bernadette Devlin MP and

Lord Brockway addressed the meeting, a few hundred marchers stayed at the army barricades protesting against the refusal to allow them to march on. Stones were thrown and the army replied with CS gas, followed with water cannon to disperse the small crowd.

At 4.15pm this crowd, fleeing from the gas and water, were running or walking down Rossville Street towards the mass meeting. Then three companies of the 1st Paras swept into the street in armoured cars and were hastily deployed into firing positions. The order to open fire soon followed and thousands witnessed in disbelief the killing and

wounding of unarmed civilians. The hundreds of eye-witnesses, including Irish, British, and overseas

journalists, told a horrifying story. Those who were shot down were either fleeing....

...Kevin McElhinney was on hands and knees crawling away from the gunfire when a soldier shot him. The bullet entered his left buttock and travelled through his body to leave at the left shoulder, going to the assistance of friends or relatives...

Bernard McGuigan was shot in the back of the head as he was crawling on his stomach to save the dying Patrick Doherty, or trying to surrender...

...As everyone fled, Gerald McKinney stood still, holding his hands above his head to indicate 'surrender'. A soldier came up, raised his rifle and killed him by a shot in the chest.

Official

The army version of events — as given in an official statement in the Commons by the Minister of Defence — was a tangle of lies. They claimed they opened fire after coming under attack from nail bombers and 'a fusillade of fire of 50 - 80 shots from the area of Rossville Street'.

No independent witness from among the scores of journalists and other observers accepted this contention. The army could not produce the bullets or the bomb fragments or even one injured soldier to support their claim. The British said that some of those shot were on their wanted list but did not name them, and this was later disproved. They said they shot three snipers in the multi-storey flats in Rossville Street, but all the casualties were at ground level.

No definitive version of what happened can yet be written. Some people argue that the massacre was a result of an army plan to draw out the IRA from the barricaded ghetto, ambush, and eliminate their units. Others say the army went berserk — though it is inconceivable that rigidly disciplined paratroopers would lose their heads at the sight of an unarmed crowd running away from their gas and water cannon. The army story has virtually no supporters outside the military establishment itself. In time, however, some of those in action that day will, when a reasonable time has elapsed, speak out and tell the truth.

Resistance

But perhaps in the last analysis speculation is not necessary. One point stands out incontrovertibly. The massacre was consistent with the entire role of the British army to terrorise and break the resistance of the minority community and to placate the growing strength of the Loyalist far right.

**BLOODY SUNDAY
COMMEMORATION
DEMONSTRATION**

Birmingham: Sunday 27 January

Assemble 2pm, Sparkhill Park, Stratford Rd.

Coaches leave London 10am from York Way (Kings Cross) and Kilburn Sq.

Organised by Sian Fein

The ransom gang that wasn't

POLICE in the South of Ireland have now released all 31 people arrested on 10 January on suspicion of being involved in the kidnapping of a Dublin bank manager's wife and their two daughters.

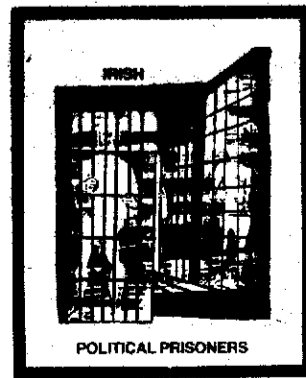
Among those arrested was Martin MacGhoill, a member of the recently formed Smash H-Block Committee and of the Irish revolutionary organisation Peoples Democracy. The majority of those held were members or sympathisers of the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

The arrests took place in a blaze of publicity which strongly linked those held with the kidnapping — which secured a ransom of £30,000. But it is now clear

that the Irish police used the kidnapping to stage a series of raids on political opponents of the Southern Irish government. The real kidnappers escaped when a motorcycle carrying the ransom drove through a laneway too narrow for a disguised four-wheeled police vehicle to follow.

Commenting on the arrest of their member, Peoples Democracy said: 'The only motive was political harassment. We find it particularly disgraceful that the police force of this state spend so much time attempting to intimidate those who are trying to build support for the political status campaign of the H-Block prisoners.'

THE H BLOCKS
THE NEW INTERNMENT



THE graphic in last week's Socialist Challenge on H Block was taken from a new magazine/poster produced by the Troops Out Movement.

The H Blocks: The new internment aims to give British people basic information about the protests of the blanket prisoners and the political background to it. Attractively designed, the magazine costs only 10p plus 10p p&p, or 15 copies cost £1 plus 30p p&p.

It is available from Information on Ireland, 1 North End Road, London W14.

IMG CONFERENCE MEETS FEBRUARY WHICH WAY FORWARD?

Tendency One

The choice for the IMG: party or sect

THE ELECTION of the Tory government was a political setback for the working class. But engineers and steelworkers have shown that Thatcher's offensive will be met with major resistance. Likewise the liberation struggles of the Irish and Zimbabwean people will ensure a difficult passage for the Tories' resolutely pro-imperialist policies.

But what is the political future for the labour movement? It's immediate past has been unhappy. The experience of the Labour government was drops in living standards and massive increases in unemployment — all with the collaboration of the leaders of the labour movement. The need for a socialist alternative inside the working class has never been felt so urgently.

Today, two currents are growing inside the labour movement. One is explicitly reformist. The other is revolutionary. The reformist current, which is infinitely stronger in its mass support, is led by Tony Benn. The revolutionary current, which is extremely weak numerically, is strong in providing a political alternative to the crisis of British society. It is chiefly led and organised by the Socialist Workers Party and the International Marxist Group.

Two other currents have declined in support and influence — albeit gradually. The right wing of the Labour Party have temporarily lost credit as a result of the election defeat. But more immediate in its impact on the left is the slow decline of the Communist Party. This party which played a key role in catalysing the mass anti-Tory sentiment in the years between 1969-74 appears unlikely to be able to repeat the performance today.

Debate

It is no coincidence that the first major public debate of the new left wing inside the Labour Party (on 17 March in London) is with the revolutionaries rather than the Communist Party.

The IMG conference has to provide an answer on the direction of the labour movement today: We believe that its tasks are the following:

* Initiating and participating in the broadest possible unity against the Tory government.

* Through this fight for united action to begin to build a new leadership for the labour movement; a new left wing based on the policies of class struggle rather than class collaboration. Our model for the trade unions is similar to the Minority Movement of the 1920s; for the Labour Party the National Left Wing Movement of the same period.

* The building of such movements and leadership depends on the simultaneous fight for a powerful vanguard revolutionary organisation rooted in the working class. Three fundamental steps are necessary to achieve this: the majority of IMG members should be in the centres of industry; the chance to build a united revolutionary youth organisation should be energetically taken and we must aim for a fusion with the Socialist Workers Party.

Unity

Much, though by no means, all the discussion in the IMG has centred on our attitude to revolutionary unity. We believe that this question is even more important in the battle against the Tories and is not a tactic to be dropped with the fall of the Labour government.

For these reasons we would withdraw the letter sent to the SWP from the IMG in October 1978 and instead propose fusion on the basis of internal democracy. We will propose that the SWP join the Fourth International, since a revolutionary party can only really be developed as part of a revolutionary international.

Major opportunities lie within the grasp of the revolutionary left in this country over the next years. Many sincere militants can be won from the Communist Party and the Labour Party to our ranks. But this can only be achieved if the correct conception of a revolutionary party is defended and is reflected in the building of an organisation, however small.

For our part we believe that all those who defend the historic interests of the working class should unite in a single democratic centralist party, whatever their disagreements on secondary questions. Without this conception there is no possibility of taking any major steps towards building the mass revolutionary party.

This conception is under attack at our conference. That's why we have no hesitation in saying that the choice for the IMG is between building a party or a sect.

Tendency Two

For a decisive reorientation of the IMG

The IMG Conference needs to decisively re-orient our organisation if the IMG is going to be in the forefront of the growing mass anti-Tory movement. We want to link up with new layers of militants who are today fighting to defend their democratic rights and living standards. But this involves new tactics for the different problems we face.

Furthermore, the conference needs to concentrate on more fundamental issues. We must decide to end the abnormal situation where large numbers of comrades are outside the core sections of the working class. The IMG was built primarily out of the youth radicalisation of the late 1960s.

Today new opportunities exist for fighting for our politics in the factories and industrial unions. The question facing the conference is whether the IMG will follow the rest of the Fourth International in politically convincing the bulk of our members to take industrial jobs so that the opportunities are not lost, and so we are best placed in the decisive battles to come.

A related task is to consolidate our initial successes in building a revolutionary youth organisation. Our conference decisions should provide a firm basis for winning all revolutionary-minded youth to political solidarity with the Fourth International.

But all these steps involve a sharp break with the orientation we defended under Labour. We need a clear re-orientation to the mass organisations; a drastic change in our newspaper **Socialist Challenge**; and a more systematic approach to education, and branch and fraction organisation.

Set-back

The election of the Tories was undoubtedly a set-back for the working class. However, events since then have reinforced the view that a defeat for Callaghan was not a defeat for the working class. The Tories want to roll back the social, economic and organisational gains won by the class since 1945. But the working class is strongly organised, and capable of fighting back.

We are not in for a simple re-run of the mass action which brought down Heath. There will be casualties along the way. But it won't be an easier road for the ruling class. The crisis of British imperialism — especially its projects in Zimbabwe and Ireland — threaten to combine with and deepen the domestic crisis.

Above all, the continuing organisational strength of the class can turn today's defensive struggles into offensive battles. But the existence and role of the reformist bureaucracy is a major obstacle. These leaders, when they can't directly sabotage the action — as Duffy did, over Robinson's sacking — will try to divert it into harmless parliamentary channels.

However, the continuing strength and relative independence of the rank and file leadership — especially in the shop stewards movement — will tend to force the bureaucracy to head up the struggles, as the best way of attempting to control them.

Absolutely decisive therefore is our fight for united front and transitional demands and objectives which is the only road to polarise the ranks against the utopian and disastrous road offered by the reformist misleaders and to limit their room for manoeuvre and betrayal. This is the road to building a party, an alternative leadership rather than a sect.

Decisive

This orientation, whilst centring on the unions' cannot limit itself to this. The decisive class struggle forces are not organised in an ongoing way by the Labour Party and there is a burning need to win Labour Party activists to involvement in the mass action from the outside.

But part of making the mass struggle politically count is by polarising the Labour Party around the central issues raised.

The Labour Party may be a 'hollow drum', but its reverberations extend into very wide layers of the working class. Our primary task is to build a class struggle left wing in the unions, but this is



Photo: Dave Swinger

linked to taking the fight into the Labour Party. Tendency Two stands for united trade union/Labour Party action to bring down the Tories. This approach is sharply opposed to the Communist Party's 'Broad Leftism', whose disastrous consequences were clearly revealed with the paralysis of the CP under Labour when the 'darlings of the left' rubber-stamped the Social Contract. The Socialist Workers Party's Rank and File groupings have not engaged in any such class collaboration, but their strategy has utterly failed to make even the slightest problems for the bureaucracy.

The IMG needs to fight for its own orientation — for a united front, and a class struggle left wing to challenge the union leadership in the fight for class struggle policies. On this basis, in each union, a tactical judgement is made about how our members can best fight for our line of march: in the Broad Left, in Rank and File, or in other union formations. But in all cases, we aim to take Rank and File with us.

Struggles

As the struggles develop, revolutionaries of action will emerge from the labour movement. We must link up with all those who in practice take up the overall tasks of the period, whether or not they fully agree with the revolutionary marxist programme at the outset. But successful fusion with them in the future depends on a correct attitude today towards revolutionary currents that exist: the small Trotskyist groups, as well as the SWP.

For 30 years the SWP has tried to build itself against the FI. Its re-orientation in the late '60s has led it to take more or less class struggle positions in the last decade. The practice of the SWP means we characterise it as revolutionary, but this practice objectively contradicts the SWP's formal programme and tradition. While in the next few years the main cadre for building the FI in Britain won't come from the SWP, the fight to build a revolutionary party with a programme adequate to lead the British revolution clearly involves a battle to fuse with the SWP, to form a unified section of the FI.

There are no short-cuts or gimmicks that can build the IMG. We will win new members only if we have a clear line of march which takes into account the new political situation but above all decisively re-orient the IMG towards the labour movement.



Photo: Larry Herman

The 1980 Conference of the International Marxist Group meets on 16-19 February in London. Delegates to the conference are elected from the branches after a three-month discussion in local branches and elected committees.

During the course of the discussion every member of the organisation has the right to submit their views to an internal discussion bulletin. More importantly, members have the right to organise tendencies to gain the maxi-

mum support for their views.

The IMG has a tradition of publicising its pre-conference debates, believing that the issues being debated out are of importance and interest to people outside its ranks.

In these two pages we feature the views of four currents of opinion inside the IMG; three tendencies and a group of comrades on the Central Committee of the IMG who do not agree with any of these tendencies.

Other extracts of the debate will be

featured in Socialist Challenge between now and the conference and a full report of the proceedings will be made. The topics being discussed by the conference include our strategy in Britain, the Tory government and the tasks of revolutionaries, building a youth organisation, and black liberation.

After the conference, it is usual for tendencies to dissolve and the whole organisation works together to implement the positions decided on by the majority of delegates.

Tendency Three

Towards a revolutionary working class party

From the coming conference, the IMG has to radically re-orient its work, break out of the confines of small circle sectarian politics and begin to lay the basis for the construction of a genuine mass revolutionary party. The type of party that we must build has to be internationalist in word and deed. The crisis over Afghanistan, the role of the British ruling class in Zimbabwe and Ireland show in the most dramatic way that the working class has to be able to deal with the central questions of world politics and economics as well as national questions and trade union issues.

Because the IMG is the British Section of the Fourth International it has a great advantage in this task over the other left groups, and building the revolutionary party in Britain has to be seen as part of the task of building the Fourth International as a mass workers' international.

In our view the IMG has to combine two processes: the struggle for a workers' united front against this government to defend every right of the working class from attack; and specific party-building tasks aimed at raising the political level of our organisation, rooting it more firmly in the working class, and assisting Revolution to build an organisation which can organise revolutionary socialist youth.

Driven by the international economic crisis, the Tory government has declared war on the working class. Because the capitalist class has to attempt to increase the rate of profit, through increasing the average productivity of labour, it tries to cut unproductive labour and less productive sectors of the economy. In Britain this means launching a full scale attack on the post-war Welfare State.

The Labour Party and the trade union leaders maintain their base in the working class because of these and other reforms, which workers have struggled for, using the mass organisations as their instruments. Attacks on these rights therefore also pose a threat to the leaderships of the working class organisations. In order to maintain their base in the working class these leaders are being forced to fight this government.

This will involve the bureaucracy, both left and right. We see that both the engineering strike and the steel strike have been led by right wing bureaucrats.

These leaders do not want to fight, any more than do the 'lefts' — the fact is that they have no choice. It is in these conditions that revolutionaries must advance the policy of the united front. In Britain this means the battle to build a fighting alliance between the Labour Party and the trade unions.

Labour

While we fight for the unconditional return of a Labour government within struggles, we also fight for specific demands that can take forward the interests of the class. Thus for example we fight within the abortion campaign to win the mass organisations to support for 'Free Abortion on Demand.' In doing so we reject the slogan put forward by other sections of the IMG of 'A Fight for Socialist Policies' which fails to clarify the distinction between revolutionaries and reformists.

We seek to work with and to structure the activities of all militants prepared to defend the interests of the working class. This entails working in specific formations within the trade unions, but also being aware of the importance of forces at present outside any such groupings. Thus we would break with a left caucus in a union if its orientation were to prevent us reaching out to the masses.

At the same time it is necessary to seriously overhaul the internal life of our organisation. It is crucial to begin to draft a 'Programme for Britain' which can update the Transitional Programme in the light of the last 42 years and which can make it specific to Britain. This process would educate our own membership and enable us to fight more clearly against other tendencies. This also links together with the need to professionalise the life of the organisation, organise its intervention in the mass organisations, turn its press to the concerns of the whole of the working class and make it a place where working class militants can survive.

The IMG will pursue a vigorous fight for the unification of all revolutionaries within a single organisation. We will fight for the principled unification of all Trotskyist organisations. In addition we continue to foster comradely relations with the Socialist Workers Party, for despite its inadequate programme we think it is possible to win this organisation, including its leadership, to the construction of a single organisation of revolutionaries. But we have to draw the lessons of the three year 're-groupment' orientation of the IMG.

Failure

The failure of this project reflects the unwillingness of the leaderships of any of these groups to move in the direction of unification. However, it is clear we have broken with some of the past isolationism on the left and it is now easier to continue debates and attempt to get common work in the class struggle.

However, it would badly misorientate the IMG and others on the left if we projected any short-term prospects of re-groupment. In this we have to be guided by three principles:

1. Having a correct attitude towards the type of party we are building as being based on programmatic agreement,
2. maintaining principled and fraternal relations with the Trotskyist groups and the SWP and
3. vigorously building the IMG through recruiting the new radicalising youth and workers.

The best way to win other forces both as individuals and whole groups to the IMG and the Fourth International is an unrelenting struggle to fight for our politics within the mass organisations of the class and develop our programme and tactics as we learn from this.

For a decisive turn to industry to build the IMG

(This article is based on a resolution for the IMG Conference submitted by a caucus of comrades on the Central Committee)

The World Political Resolution adopted at the world congress of the Fourth International held last November set the central task for the FI to help all its national sections to get the majority of their members into industry. Many sections of the FI are already making the turn and others are clarifying the political issues in order to do so.

Underlying these decisions is the estimate of the world economy and changes in world politics following the defeat for US imperialism in Vietnam and the inability of world imperialism to get the system back on its feet since the onset of the world recession of 1974. The turn to industry flows from the big changes in the situation confronting the imperialists and from the way the working class is responding to the deepening ruling class offensive being waged against it.

The chronic international crisis of capitalism is rooted in the most basic contradictions of the capitalist system. It excludes the possibility that the capitalist class can buy off the working class and its allies through massive social concessions and reforms.

The general character of the Thatcher government's offensive is to turn the clock back economically, socially and politically. It seeks to destroy the fundamental gains of the welfare state won in 1945. To do this there has to be a major change in the relationship of class forces. Major defeats must be inflicted on the working class, especially on its strongest, most organised and most productive sections — the industrial working class. In order to restore its rate of profit the ruling class is obliged to make the industrial workers and their unions the key target.

Attacks

Legislation against the unions, attacks on trade union democracy, especially on the right to strike and to win other workers in solidarity, and the maintenance of sexist and racist divisions within the labour movement are a necessary preparation to prevent a generalised fight back. These facts pose the absolute need for the labour movement to lead the fight for the broad social needs of the workers, unemployed, women, blacks, immigrants and youth, and win these forces as allies in the coming showdown with the ruling class.

The depth of the economic crisis, the nature of the ruling class offensive and the response of the working class have already put the industrial workers at the centre of the fight back. To have any influence in the big class battles (like in steel) and to recruit industrial workers to the IMG requires us to make the turn to industry now.

It is the only way we can take advantage of the new openings in the class struggle, thereby implementing and carrying forward our basic proletarian orientation.

The turn requires us to substantially increase our influence in the Labour Party. Labour Party activists delegated from trade unions can be influential in helping to develop and win support for a class struggle programme to mobilise workers and their oppressed allies in united anti-capitalist actions.

Discussing out the importance of and implication of the turn and deciding to carry it out is the single most important task before our February conference. The overwhelming majority of the outgoing Central Committee support the turn to industry. At the conference a way must be found to register the maximum support for the turn so that it can be carried out in the most effective way possible.

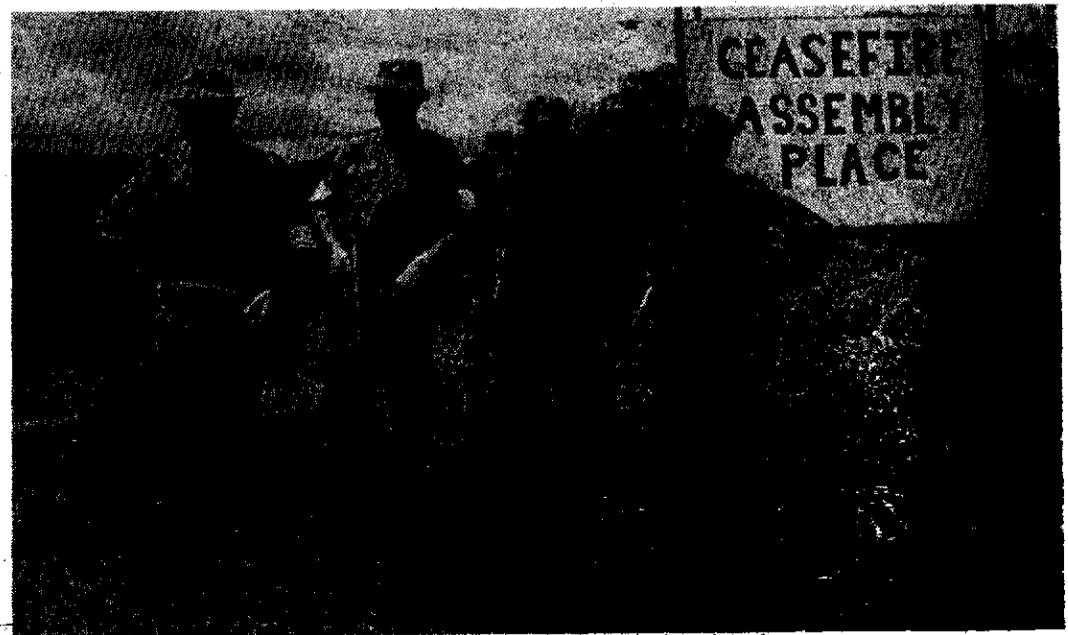
Polarisation

The polarisation of the organisation around the question of the Socialist Workers Party (UK) cuts across mobilising the IMG to carry out the turn. For Tendency One to project a major orientation towards fusion with the SWP while at the same time stating there is no possibility of a fusion in the next period is irresponsible. This orientation is the continuation of the regroupment project adopted at our 1978 national conference. This project completely failed in its task to fuse with organisations like the International Socialist Alliance and Big Flame and build the IMG.

In order to win the many revolutionary-minded militants in the ranks of the SWP to the IMG and the FI it is necessary to make a political offensive against the SWP while endeavouring to get the maximum unity with them in class struggle action. Through our concrete work to build a class struggle left-wing in the labour movement we will show that we are the militants equipped with the programme, organisational concepts, strategy and tactics to build a Leninist combat party. By putting our resources into making the turn to the industrial workers we will be able to convince members of the SWP of the correctness of our proletarian orientation and win them to Trotskyism.

The major tasks facing our organisation are:

- * to get a majority of our members into industry
- * to decisively increase the number of supporters we have in the LP as a necessary part of the turn
- * to orient Socialist Challenge towards the workers and their struggles and make it a paper to build the IMG
- * to build the Trotskyist youth organisation now.



UNDER REVIEW

Page Three comes under fire

By Lucy Britten and Margaret Fry
Former students of journalism at City University, London

A GIRL runs into a police station shouting: 'Rape, rape, I've been raped.'

'Did you see who it was?' asked the policeman. 'No', replied the girl, 'but they were members of the printers' union.' 'How do you know that?' asked the policeman. 'Well', she said, 'they made me do all the work.'

This 'joke' went down well with the port and cigars at the dinner of the Newspaper Society; it came from one of the managers of our only liberal daily newspaper, and it was so funny that it eventually reached the classroom of a post-graduate course in journalism. It was passed on by a lawyer specialising in press law as a 'light-hearted' introduction to a lecture on the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act of 1976. Nobody laughed; two women in the class objected strongly.

Lawyer

The lawyer took little notice. It did not occur to him that the joke might be offensive to women — who in this case are merely good spoil for a spot of union bashing. This unthinking, customary sexism is common among those who run the press.

As an exercise our class was taken to the Old Bailey to report on a rape case. Our tutor for the day was a freelancer whose agency supplies most of the crime copy to local London papers and some to the nationals. One of us wasn't happy about using a rape trial as her first experience of serious crime reporting. 'Nonsense, my dear', she was told, 'it will be very exciting.' Exciting? Was it boredom she was worried about?

The fight started later. One student was told to rewrite the first paragraph of a story which began: 'The Old Bailey today heard the evidence of allegations of another sick sad rape case.' The freelancer crossed this out and wrote: 'This is comment and not reporting', plus 'No

suggestion of violence and does not report the facts of rape attack' (his emphasis).

'This is a real human interest story', he commented, and went on to write: 'An attractive 18-year old girl told an Old Bailey jury today she was brutally raped after a man threatened to attack her with a wrench (deleted) broom handle. The girl, slim and dark haired, said...' He stopped. 'Did he tear her clothes off? That should go in the first paragraph.'

Temper

At this point the student lost his temper and said, 'What you want is: "An attractive dark haired girl with enormous tits, only 18 years old, was raped by a huge bearded black with an enormous penis..."'

A woman student joined in the attack. The newspaper man was totally amazed, and finally told the five students present that 'this attitude would get us nowhere with our editors'.

Sadly he was right. Rape reporting is used to sell newspapers. It is a rare day now that Page Three, Five and Seven do not carry a rape report next to the pin-up.

Larry Lamb, editor of the Sun, told us in his lecture to our course: 'We're selling a product in the same way, I suppose, as one might sell soap powder.' He speaks of sales figures when one asks about Page Three of the Sun. His only doubt about Page Three is whether the pin-ups do really sell as many copies as was once thought.

Advertising

Advertising — often blatantly sexual/sexist — is the blood of a paper, and to gain advertising papers need to be sold, at whatever cost. So copy, apart from the ubiquitous women's page, is designed to appeal to men. Whether it includes models' breasts, unfaithful wives or rape victims it is designed with the male buyer in mind.

City University does acknowledge the principle of equal training for

both sexes, and equal numbers of men and women are accepted on to the course. But with one exception all the tutors are male, and the men who run these courses are already conditioned to view women as lower in their hierarchy.

Reinforcement comes from above. In the UK Press Gazette, the head examiner of the National Council for the Training of Journalists declared that 'the increase in recruitment of women is an extremely worrying trend... Whatever is said about sex discrimination and

equal opportunity it is a plain simple unavoidable fact that the majority of young women journalists are or expect to become wives, and equally true that many of them are also likely to become mothers or will wish to work only part-time.'

A feminist lobby is probably the only answer to sexism on training courses and in the wider world of journalism. Committed to a better deal for women in the media generally, a lobby could also press for reporting about women that is fair, responsible and not sensational.

We can start complaining now about the abuse of evidence in rape cases to make profit. This has already been done successfully with the association of race and crime. One of the women students asked our hard-nosed crime reporter if he would have reported that a rapist was black.

'Oh, I would have done a couple of years ago. Now the law won't let me.'

*This article is reprinted in a shortened form from the December 1979 issue of the Journalist.

Militant — Red Moles?

By Phil Hearse

THE Militant tendency in the Labour Party is becoming the victim of a carefully orchestrated witch-hunt by the right wing in the party and the press.

The witch-hunt was launched by the Guardian's publication on 11 January of a document supposedly put out by Militant supporters in October 1978. It suggests that Militant is building a secret party inside the Labour Party.

Lord Underhill, the party's national agent until six months ago, has threatened to publish his own report on 'Trotskyist infiltration' unless Labour's national executive indicate their willingness to join the witch-hunt and distribute his 'evidence' inside the party.

Suddenly the bourgeois press, which daily suppresses information on all sorts of issues, is campaigning for Underhill's report to be released. The Sunday Express revealed the press's real motives with a feature article 'exposing' the activities of all the 'communists' and 'Trotskyists' in the steel strike.

Why has the Militant affair caused so much fuss now? Labour's election defeat last May put the right-wing leaders on the defensive. The left now has the initiative in the Labour Party, backed by the rising tide of opposition to the Tory attacks.

The right wing wants to hit back, and what better way of doing it than by using their



supporters among the press — The Daily Mirror especially — to help them launch a 'reds under the bed' scare.

They are particularly worried that Militant may win some MPs if local parties can control reselection.

Reg Underhill, the author of the report to the NEC in 1977 is notorious for his right-wing views. Together with fellow national agent Sarah Barker, he was instrumental in the 1960s in driving out the leaders of the Young Socialists, including Dave Ashby and Sheila

Torrance, who had won the YS to Marxist ideas through the paper Keep Left. Underhill and Baker were also instrumental in engineering the expulsion of Ken Coates from Nottingham Labour Party in 1964.

Labour leaders are always appealing for young people to come into the party to change it. The Labour Party is supposed to represent all brands of socialism. Why should Lord Underhill's views, which have little or nothing to do with socialism, be represented while Marxist views are suppressed?

Militant's ideas are hardly outrageous. According to their leader Ted Grant 'they stand for peaceful transformation of society through winning a Marxist majority in the trade unions and the Labour Party.'

Every left-wing viewpoint in the Labour Party is threatened by this attack. It is all very well for those like Tony Benn to defend the right of all opinions to exist in the 'broad church', but he is prepared to stick his neck out and demand that all socialist groupings should have the right to be members of the Labour Party through affiliation?

The only way to fight back against the Labour right is to confront them head-on. Yes, every kind or creed of socialism should be allowed in the Labour Party, every socialist group should have the right to be part of the movement. How else can we show that socialism means freedom and capitalism suppresses free thought.

Socialist Challenge

WHY AND HOW TO STOP CORRIE

ON 8 February John Corrie's anti-abortion Bill stands a very good chance of becoming law. This Bill has to be stopped. Here are some reasons why.

1 Women will be forced to turn to illegal backstreet abortionists in the desperation of unwanted pregnancy. Even sympathetic doctors will be powerless to help in many cases. The dangers of death and disease from unsterile conditions or untrained surgeons will once more become a reality for hundreds of women.

2 Women will choose the highly effective contraceptives — like Depo Provera or high dosage contraceptive pills — which are not safe from the point of view of their health.

3 Women who do qualify for abortion will find it much harder to get them on the NHS. If Corrie's Bill becomes law pressure on the NHS to provide such services will decrease leading to still further decline in what is already a limited provision.

4 Once more employers will claim that women are a 'bad risk' for training and promotion as they are unpredictably likely to go off to have kids. But it will be more true as women will have less choice than they have enjoyed for the last twelve years.

5 Younger women, who often have irregular periods or are less willing to admit to pregnancy, are likely to be the worst

to suffer due to the reduction in time-limits to 20 weeks for abortion. The changes in referral, and the likely increased costs of private abortion, will also affect working class and young women most. Wealthy women have always been able to get abortion and still will.

IF YOU'VE just read the reasons why Corrie will be a disaster for the women of this country — as well as setting back the struggles of women worldwide — then you'll know that it's time to start doing something to stop the Bill. Here's what you can do.

1 Trade unionists: it's not too late to get your union to approve one day strike action for all those who want to go on the lobby on 5 February. The lobby is officially backed by the TUC and the organisers include the South East Regional Council. NALGO has said it will back any of its members going on the lobby — what is your union's view? Women need the labour movement on 5 February if they are not to suffer a huge defeat. And if women lose this one who will be next?

2 Women are the main weight in the abortion campaigns both locally and nationally. They have led the fight to get the labour movement to take up the struggle for women's rights. The TUC demo in October was the culmination of women's campaigning activity. The Corrie Bill may well be passed, but now is not the time for women to get

demoralised. The local activities and the women's assembly at Central hall, Westminster are a chance for women to express their outrage, and to show that though Parliament may pass the Bill it will not be so easy to enforce.

3 The National Union of Students has called an all-day strike on 5 February to protest at the Bill. A demonstration will leave Malet St, London W1 to go to the Commons at noon on that day. For the national motion to become a reality it requires local activists to get their students unions to call for one-day strike in each college. The NUS executive isn't organising this — it's up to you. What is your college planning?

4 The National Union of School Students supports the anti-Corrie campaign, it should mobilise its membership to campaign against the Bill. Leaflet schools with the facts about Corrie. Point out how young women will be affected. There will be lots of local activities in the coming weeks — school students can be involved in these.

5 Doctors and nurses have tremendous weight in this campaign. Corrie and his cronies try to pretend that his Bill is what doctors want, and a favourite line of the anti-abortionists is that the '67 Act turns 'doctors into murderers'. Leaflet hospitals with statements from Doctors for a Women's Choice and explain that we need medical

workers on 5 February to counter the lies of the anti-abortionists.

IF EVERYONE who opposes the Corrie Bill was in London on 5 February the Tories wouldn't stand a chance.



Photo: G.M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)