

Socialist Challenge

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12p

Labour Conference Sensation

BENN

The resignation speech...

I MUST start off today by making a self-criticism, which I owe to the party and the Labour movement as a whole. Up till today I have believed that it was best for those of us who disagreed with the Government to remain quiet until after the next elections. Then after labour was defeated at the polls we could point the finger at the guilty people and fight to get rid of them. I was wrong.

What this line completely ignores is that fact that one's silence has become part of the problem. It is already being used to defeat workers in struggle. The time has come to speak out aloud. For if we do not, our labour stream will get so polluted that it will destroy many of our young activists.

This Government is the most reactionary Labour government we have had since Ramsay MacDonald. In its eagerness to manage capitalism it has now implemented social policies which have created massive unemployment, led to a decline in the living standards of working people, and big cuts in schools, hospitals and house-building programmes. The International Monetary Fund approves of all this, but these are the very measures which are alienating our supporters throughout the country.

At the same time we have the growth of racism and fascism. Some Labour supporters have in despair turned to the fascists. What an indictment of our policies. We have an attack on democratic rights inspired by our own Government and eagerly taken up by the Tories. We have retreated on the question of women's rights and abortion.

We have allowed a tinpot employer in North London to make a laughing stock of the entire trade union movement with some Government Ministers advising APEX that it was better to lose the strike than allow mass picketing to lead to the defeat of this Government. It appears that this Government has forgotten that it won the election in 1974 because of the miners' strike.

And if that were not enough, we have the Tories and their friends on the extreme right (in the mis-named 'National Association for Freedom') arguing that it is 'socialism' which is to blame for this crisis. We are letting them get away with this nonsense and they know it's nonsense — as if the City of London and the Treasury believed that Jim, Denis, Shirley and company are socialists — because we refuse to fight back.

In the sphere of foreign policy we remain tied to the coat-tails of the US State Department. I feel ashamed that as a Minister in 1968 and again as one today I cannot cancel the uranium contract between Rio Tinto Zinc's Rossing Mine in occupied Namibia and British Nuclear Fuels. This uranium is vital in South Africa's bid to get nuclear weapons.

Yes, comrades, we are reactionaries at home and abroad. True, this is not new for a Labour Government. But what is novel is the virtual absence of an organised opposition. Don't rock the boat lest the Government lose the election is our leaders' motto of the season.

What they refuse to understand is that the boat is being rocked by the sinister forces of an economic system in crisis. The only way to keep the boat on an even keel is by socialist measures. The crisis should not be an excuse for postponing these, but rather the reason for implementing them.

Let us therefore go on the offensive. Let us mobilise all the creative energies of our working class. Let us nationalise the 25 big monopolies. Let us combat the anti-socialist offensive of the Tory press and its friends in industry and the educational establishment.

We should learn from history that good has come only from those without power challenging those with power. Let us create countervailing powers to answer the capitalist challenge and in the process fight to create a socialist society. We must march with the unemployed, with the anti-fascists, with the rank-and-file workers opposed to the undemocratic methods of some of their union leaders.

This is the only way we can re-build our movement and our party. If this means quitting the Government, then so be it. Others have done it before. We have wasted enough time already. The Tories can only be effectively fought and defeated if we first challenge this Government's policies. I, for one, will do so and I will speak so loudly that my voice is heard outside Parliament.

[Standing Ovation. Sustained applause.]

...he won't be making



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

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Editorial

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The Labour Party Conference

THE LABOUR PARTY annual conference is likely to be a non-event. As we pointed out in these columns last week, there will be no real debate on the vital issues confronting the working class. The only major crisis which appears to threaten the party is the crisis of the party organisation itself.

The perilous financial condition of the mass party of the working class and its declining membership is no secret. Individual membership stands at 659,000, but everyone knows that this figure itself — the lowest since 1948 — is grossly inflated. Real membership is less than 400,000, and those who regularly attend meetings in the constituencies number 65,000 at the most.

In reality the party's organisational crisis is a reflection of its political bankruptcy. It has been unable to mobilise anyone in the face of the anti-working class policies of the Labour Government. It has alienated the support of tens of thousands of working class voters in by-elections in Walsall North, Workington, Stechford, and Ashfield. It lost these seats not because of any organisational inefficiency, but because of the Government's vicious attacks on the working class and its living standards.

The Labour 'lefts' have a lot to answer for in this situation. They have defended Government policies. They have sat in the Cabinet as the Government moved further to the right. They have helped Callaghan to tame the National Executive Committee of the party. Eric Heffer, sacked from the Government two years ago, has publicly argued that the main priority is the maintenance of the Government. The policies of the Government are irrelevant to Heffer. It must be kept in office at all costs, according to his view.

Last year's conference passed motions calling for an 'active campaign' against the cuts. It passed resolutions to fight racism and fascism. The NEC refused, in effect, to implement these resolutions. The Benn-Foot axis ensured that the 'left' remained passive.

Because of this retreat, an estimated 140 motions have been removed from this year's agenda. The conference arrangements committee has treated the left with the contempt which it, quite frankly, deserves. This is not to say that most of the Tribune motions were of any use. They were the old and familiar mixture: reflation, import controls, and long live the National Enterprise Board. As Ernie Roberts appropriately remarks elsewhere in this paper, this is just a pathetic attempt to 'manage capitalism'.

For rank-and-file activists of the party, the message is clear. No reliance on or waiting for the left social-democratic leaders to mount campaigns. It is organisations such as the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign and the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Party (CDLP) which give an indication as to how Labour activists should be orienting on particular issues.

The importance of the questions raised by the CDLP has received its own unique tribute from the party bureaucrats: despite backing from 78 Constituency Labour Parties, the conference arrangements committee is trying to ensure that there is no debate on the question of internal party democracy.

What is needed at the moment is a linking up of socialists in the Labour Party with those already fighting outside — against racism and fascism, for abortion rights, against the cuts; and most importantly with the developing rank-and-file opposition within the unions. A democratic rank-and-file conference of socialists in the Labour Party thus needs to be convened urgently to discuss all these issues.

Lobby Labour for abortion rights

The National Abortion Campaign will unconditionally defend any doctor who comes under attack from the anti-abortion group Life in their latest campaign to prosecute gynaecologists who terminate a pregnancy when the foetus is 'viable'.

This new attack on a woman's right to choose comes as pro-abortion forces mobilise to lobby the Labour Party conference and hold a national demonstration in Birmingham. SUE LANDAU reports.



LARC picketing Labour's Executive Committee meeting earlier this year

The threat by Life — to take down Infant Life Preservation Act, 1929 — is seen by NAC as an attempt to intimidate doctors to perform even fewer abortions.

Sarah Roelofs, of the NAC Steering Committee, told Socialist Challenge: 'We will immediately launch a mass campaign to ensure that Life does not succeed with its pernicious aims.' 'We would do this not as part of an attempt to force our views and opinions on everyone else as Life does, but on the basis that the choice of whether to have an abortion should lie with the woman herself.'

OUROWN

'It is a woman's right to have this choice'. As Stella Browne, a pioneer abortion campaigner, said in 1935: 'Our bodies are our own'.

Both Life and SPUC have been campaigning for a repeal of the '67 Act, claiming that they are protecting the 'human rights' of the unborn child while showing a complete disregard for the rights

....and why you must demonstrate in Birmingham

THE WEST MIDLANDS Regional Health Authority under-spent its budget by almost £1 million last year. Yet it has one of the lowest number of beds for gynaecological operations in the country, and only 20 per cent of abortions performed in its area are on the NHS.

These figures emerged in an interim report from a working party set up by the health authority to examine the abortion and counselling service in the area. The report recommends that out-patient abortion clinics should be provided to improve

the present situation.

Birmingham National Abortion Campaign this week welcomed interim report as a step towards recognising the 'appalling abortion situation in Birmingham'. But they don't intend to wait until the final report to see things corrected.

The campaign is holding a day of inquiry on 10 October to collect evidence from gynaecologists, doctors, nurses, social workers, pregnancy counsellors and, of course, women, on just what the abortion service in Birmingham is like.

They will take the evidence to the next meeting of Birmingham Area Health Authority on 26 October, and hold a picket of the meeting to demand more abortion facilities in Birmingham, where reactionary anti-abortionists presently rule the roost. The number of health service abortions performed in the city is going down, not because less women want them, but because every year the consultant gynaecologists turn away hundreds of women who are eligible for them.

of women. They are now prepared to attack doctors for performing a completely legal operation. Dr. Barbara Roberts, who spoke at the Tribunal on Abortion Rights earlier this year, said: 'I too am concerned about the sanctity of human life... about

the sanctity of real, not potential human beings. No human being's rights include the right to live inside the body of another person. Unless a woman freely chooses to place her body at the disposal of a foetus, it has no inalienable right to remain there.'

October.

Don't let anti-abortion Labour MPs get away with going against their own party's conference policy! Join the lobby organised by the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign. Don't let reactionary health officials and consultants like Birmingham's Hugh McClaren dictate to women! Organise support now for the national demonstration in Birmingham on 29 October called by the National Abortion Campaign.

Anti-strip picket

by JAN PIETRASIK and CLAIRE DE CASPARIS

'SEX FOR pleasure, not for profit' was the message on placards carried by protestors outside the Hofbrauhaus night club in Hull last week. The 30-strong picket was mounted by the Working Women's Charter Campaign and the Hull Socialist Alliance in opposition to a new twist in sexist entertainment — a 'horror' strip show for men only, with such delights as 'Egyptian mummies' removing their bandages.

Other placards pointed to the real horrors women face — 'Fight against the horror of rape, drudgery, women bashing, and

exploitation'. Jeffrey Marshall, manager of the Hofbrauhaus, has another point of view. He told the local press: 'It is more comedy than anything else....The girls who are doing the show do not feel insulted. If people don't like it, they don't have to watch it.'

The pickets distanced themselves from the type of moral 'Clean up Britain' campaign led by Mary Whitehouse. This kind of event, they explained, treats women like mindless and weak people with little purpose in life beyond serving and satisfying men. It also degrades the strippers themselves.

OUR POLICIES

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

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

- To build broad-based class struggle tendencies in opposition to class-collaborationism in the labour movement. These should be non-exclusive in character grouping together militants holding a wide range of political views.
- To begin to fight for the creation of a unified and democratic revolutionary socialist organisation which can, through an application of united front tactics, begin to be seen as an alternative by thousands of workers engaged in struggles.

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

2 Our socialism will be infinitely more democratic than what exists in Britain today, with full rights for all political parties and currents that do not take up arms against the socialist state. The Socialist 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 'Euro-communist' nor the pro-Moscow wings have any meaningful strategies 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.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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

I am interested in more information about activities in my area.
I would like additional literature and enclose 50p to cover costs.
(Delete if not applicable)

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ADDRESS

Send to Socialist Challenge, 328-329 Upper Street, London N1.

Interview with Jack Dromey

'Tell the Gov't to get off our backs'

by Geoff Bell

All the signs are that the General Council of the TUC, the leadership of the Association of Professional, Clerical and Computer Staff, and the Labour Government are preparing to sign the death warrant of the Grunwick strike. All they are seeking is a decent form of burial.

But the strikers are preparing to resist this betrayal. Jack Dromey, a member of the strike committee and secretary of the South-east Regional Council of the TUC, spoke to Socialist Challenge about what lies behind the threatened sell-out.

Dromey began by accusing the Labour Government of being the main culprits for the set-backs the strikers have suffered over the past six weeks:

'Ever since mass picketing began there has been tremendous pressure from the Government. The Cabinet has told the TUC's General Council not to do anything to rock the boat. They are scared it might damage the Labour Party electorally.'

'Many on the General Council feel inclined to accept this view. It is a very defensive attitude. It will be a sorry day for the labour movement if it cannot come out fighting against an employer who has broken every rule in the book.'

PAPER SUPPORT

But as far as the official leadership of the labour movement is concerned it is evident that they have not the slightest wish to 'come out fighting'. All the TUC seem likely to sanction is paper support for a stepping up of a blockade of supplies.

This Dromey described as a 'smokescreen for defeat', and he reiterated the strike committee's view that only 'co-ordination action on supplies and services' would have any effect.

Rather than back such a strategy, the bureaucracy of APEX has preferred to rely on procedure. Indeed their faith in such methods extends not just to relying on the Labour Government, but even to depending on the good offices of the Tory and Liberal Parties.

'The APEX strategy', said Dromey, was that 'they believed that once Scarman ruled in favour of the strikers, Thatcher Steel and Callaghan would come together to make a co-ordinated call for recognition and reinstatement.'

NONSENSE

Whether the APEX leadership actually believed in this possibility or whether they simply fed this nonsense to the strike committee in order to persuade them against mass picketing is not particularly relevant. What is relevant is the effect it had.

'The strikers were in a situation in the summer when the employer was on his knees', Jack Dromey considers. 'The unscrupulous goings-on of the official movement have allowed Ward to get off his knees. Everything was done by the powers that be to take the steam out of the dispute. The lesson of that period was put not your faith in procedure.'

The obvious question now is whether the type of mass picketing the Grunwick strikers attracted during the summer can be re-kindled, especially in the face of the open hostility of APEX and the TUC. Dromey remains confident. He revealed that contact had already been made with a

number of the major delegations who had attended the mass pickets, and that he expected their support would be forthcoming.

Referring specifically to the possibility of the Yorkshire and Welsh miners attending another mass picket, Dromey had this to say:

'You have to remember that the miners were under a lot of pressure not to attend the mass picket on 11 July. But they came. If need be, I think progressive sections of our movement will respond again.'

In the event of the TUC refusing to back the call for a cut-off in services, the strike committee will issue the call for a new mass picket to take place in the second or third week of October. Whether a mass picket by itself is sufficient to win the strike remains to be seen, but Dromey also lends his support to moves now taking place among members of the Brent Constituency Labour Party to put an emergency motion to the Labour Party conference calling for the Government to nationalise Grunwick in the event of George Ward closing the factory down.

'Given the nature of the present Government, nationalisation is

highly unlikely,' Dromey argued. 'But if ever there was a case for compulsory purchase it is Grunwick.'

At the moment the main worry of the Grunwick strike committee is not so much to persuade the Government to intervene in their favour, but rather to stop intervening in favour of the management. Dromey's appeal to delegates at the Labour Party conference is: 'Tell the Government to stop intervening against us.'

'They set up the Court of Inquiry to defuse the situation. This is why they intervened and it was not in the interests of the strikers. Tell the Government to get off our backs and recognise that this low profile approach is bringing serious discredit to the Labour Government.'

OFFICIALS

Throughout the interview Dromey was careful to stress that the strike committee preferred that any renewed campaign to win the strike would be led by the 'official movement'. But he remains confident that if that doesn't take place there are plenty of others who would step into the breach:

'The men and women of principle will back our call for a mass picket. There is a great depth of feeling within the trade union movement over Grunwick.'

MASS ACTION

Some of those supporters Jack Dromey was referring to may argue that the call for a renewal of mass picketing should have been made earlier. Socialist Challenge certainly believes that the central feature of any mass action should be directed towards demanding that the Labour Government nationalise Grunwick without compensation to George Ward suggested in the phrase 'compulsory purchase'.

At first glance Jack Dromey is correct when he says that for the Government to agree to such a demand is 'highly unlikely'.

But if there is one way it can be gained it is through mass action so that the Government feels it has little option. This yet again illustrates the importance of organising massive support for the new mass picketing Dromey referred to.

To put it bluntly, there is no other way the magnificent Grunwick strikers can avoid defeat.



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)



Photo: ANDREW WILKIRD (Report)

Flashback to the mass picket

Organise support committees

THE THREATENED sell-out of the Grunwick strike makes it more urgent than ever that militants throughout the country organise the widest possible support for the strikers. One of the most appropriate ways of doing this is to organise support committees. An example of what to do is the work undertaken by the committee set up in Manchester.

This Grunwick strike support committee has its origins in June in a decision by members of the International Marxist Group and Bob France to organise a factory tour and a public meeting for a member of the strike committee.

Until then, the local APEX bureaucracy had been totally inactive on the Grunwick issue, although this inactivity did wake

them up somewhat — they sent two full-time officers to address the meeting.

The Manchester support committee was established after the factory tour, with the aim of taking the Grunwick issue deeper into the local labour movement. Since then the committee has:

- * Organised two further public meetings, addressed by a member of the strike committee and local labour movement speakers.
- * Organised a series of street meetings.
- * Reproduced copies of the strike bulletin for distribution in Manchester factories.
- * Produced four issues of a local support bulletin.
- * Produced leaflets in Urdu for the local Asian population.

* Sent teachers to the days of mass action and the lobby of the TUC.

* Organised a cota of people to go down to the picket line.

* Held a social to raise money for the strikers.

Manchester is not alone in this type of activity and it is now investigating the possibility of contacting similar committees to set up an effective co-ordinated network of committees.

Socialist Challenge supporters have helped the Manchester committee by giving full use of their local offices, phone, and duplicating facilities. The committee can be contacted at Socialist Challenge Centre, 14 Piccadilly, Manchester, Tels. 062-235 2352.



Yes, no and maybe

THE EXECUTIVE of Edinburgh Trades Council is dominated by Communist Party supporters. Recently the National Front has made its presence felt there: Asian shops have been fire-bombed, Socialist Workers Party offices have been attacked, and individual sellers of left papers assaulted.

The Edinburgh Anti-Racist Committee has been active in organising a fight back. In the process it has won the support of local unions.

A few weeks ago there were three resolutions before the trades council: two separate ones from the Transport Union and the local government union NALGO called on the council to affiliate and sponsor the anti-racist committee. The third from the trades council executive opposed any formal links with the committee.

The CP split into three groups during the voting. The largest backed the executive's attempts to restrict discussion and confine voting to the executive's resolution. They indulged in the most unbelievable bureaucratic manoeuvres [which our Edinburgh correspondents might write up at a later stage for the Surplus Value column], but these failed.

The second group of CPers [including ex-chairperson G. McManus] voted with the far left in opposing these manoeuvres. A smaller group actually voted for supporting the anti-racist committee.

There were two recounts of the vote because the bureaucrats on the executive insisted on miscounting them. The executive was defeated by four votes and the NALGO resolution was passed [21 for, 17 against]. Given the Front's plans for a rally in Edinburgh, the importance of this victory cannot be underestimated.



The Hunted Minister

The Sunday Times Magazine asked some bad sleepers about their problem. This is what Roland Moyle, Minister of State for Health, had to say: 'I didn't suffer from insomnia until the Abortion Bill Committee started. I was only getting half-an-hour naps. To go to sleep, I just think about next year's Abortion Bill and that sends me off to sleep.'

'The thought looms of how much sleep we will get then and I go straight off. Sometimes I play through a soccer match in my mind. I've always been successful and gone to sleep.'

Inspector Taylor calling

WESTMINSTER Reference Library received a bizarre phone call the other day. The caller was an Inspector Taylor from Scotland Yard. His query: the exact definition of a word. Yes, the word was 'Racialism'. The librarian at the other end nearly fainted. Was this a hoax call? No, it wasn't. The inspector was serious.

We have a suggestion for our ignorant inspector: take a trip to a few stations in South London and ask the 'copper on

the beat' [a literal reference to this case to random beatings blacks] what the word means. He'll give you a graphic description. Don't bother the reference library in future.

The fascist brothers of Bristol

THE GANNAWAY brothers are fascists. Gerald is an ordinary member. His brother Phil is the local secretary of the fascist National Front, at present 'holidaying' in sunny South Africa.

Gerald has decided to charge the local community paper Bristol Voice for violating the Race Relations Act. The charge relates to a cartoon which appeared in the paper last year. Gannaway claims it is an incitement to racial hatred because it suggests that the Pros uses violence against Indians and alienates them from the party of the master race.

Gannaway is reported to be boasting that when his brother returns from South Africa the NF might take-over the case as an organisation. Philip Gannaway, incidentally, is an Electorians Union delegate to Bristol Trades Council!

The police are taking the case seriously and are investigating the Bristol Co-op Press which prints the paper. Interesting that not a single fascist has been charged or investigated under the Race Relations Act for carrying racist placards, yet Bristol Voice is being continually harassed.

During the last county council elections the paper courageously exposed NF dishonesty in number of local wards. Shortly afterwards a brick arrived through the window of the Voice office. The police did not investigate that either.

Fading star

LAST SATURDAY's Morning Star favourably reported an attack by Colin Barnett on a picket on 8 October. Although reference was made to 'certain groups' behind it, only the International Marxist Group was named.

The Star thus achieved another 'first' — as the only daily paper to carry a report without naming the organisers of the picket. Tameside Trades Council fascist sub-committee.

Nor, unlike the rest of the press, did it bother to mention the reason behind it. It was left to the Daily Telegraph to explain that the committee had called a picket because Webster will not be walking alone. If the Star wants to stop its circulation from dropping any further, it might least try to keep up with journalistic standards of the bourgeois press.

Guided democracy

COMMUNIST PARTY branches are busy discussing the 'No Draft' to prepare for their November conference. In Glasgow according to our correspondent the branches voted overwhelmingly to send a delegation composed entirely of 'Against the Draft, Against the Socialist Oppositionists. The labour historian John Foster was selected as the chairperson of the delegation.

More to the point neither McKie, the Glasgow district secretary, nor John Kay, the Scottish industrial organiser, was elected as a delegate. King Street since intervened to insist McKie has to be on the delegation. This is what the Indonesian leader, Sukarno used to describe as 'guided democracy'.

Carworkers carry on fighting

MPs launched a new attack on carworkers last week when a report of the public accounts committee at Westminster recommended that no more money should go to British Leyland without 'co-operation and improved productivity'.

Carworkers have been a favourite target in ruling circles for a long time and it is easy to see why. On 21 September, workers at Fords rejected the company's offer of a wage increase of between 7.5 and 9.5 per cent. The following day Vauxhall workers began a three-day strike. This was in support of a 'substantial increase' and a cost of living clause in their agreement.

From Birmingham JOHN GRAHAM reports on the latest developments of another group of carworkers in struggle — those employed at the Lucas electrical components combine.

The Lucas electrical combine has been forced to offer £50 compensation to all of its production workers affected by the recent 10-week toolmakers' strike. Although a miserable sum in itself, this offer is a significant breakthrough.

In almost all engineering and car plants, workers are only entitled to lay-off pay when the lay-offs are caused by disputes external to the company they work for. But of course most lay-offs result from internal disputes and the workers affected are disqualified from compensation.

Production workers at the Joseph Lucas combine refused to accept this. At one factory, women workers staged an occupation and demanded payment. Following the return to work, workers at Shaftmoor Lane went on strike in Birmingham and in Cannock imposed a work-to-rule and overtime ban which quickly held up supplies of starter motors to British Leyland. And when union stewards went to meet the Lucas management, four hundred workers marched off their sessions to picket the meeting demanding lay-off pay.

After Lucas refused to meet this demand, the work-to-rule was spread right across Lucas's electrical factories. The result — Lucas made an offer of £50 compensation to all production

workers. Although some of the militant plants like Shaftmoor Lane are prepared to fight for more, other plants have accepted the £50 and it will probably be the final figure.

This represents a major breakthrough for the 10,000 laid-off workers at Lucas, since up till now they have not been compensated for layoffs regardless of their cause.

The Lucas settlement should be noted by all militants in cars and engineering. In a situation where many expected production workers to be demoralised after a long lay-off, militant action has forced Lucas to pay compensation for an internal dispute.

The value of winning lay-off pay during disputes is not only financial, of course. It also prevents the laid off workers being used as an anti-strike force, as has happened so many times in the past.

Next week's Socialist Challenge will include a four-page special on the struggles at Fords. It is being written by the Ford Workers Group, and is a must for all militants in the car industry.

Socialist Challenge supporters are urged to plan now for a special sales drive inside and outside all car plants.



Darlington strikers under pressure

by GEOFFREY SHERIDAN

THE 16-WEEK strike at the Westminster Press in Darlington moved into a new and potentially dangerous stage on Sunday when the executive of the National Union of Journalists agreed to go to mediation without pre-conditions.

This reversed a decision of the executive the previous week that any mediated settlement must uphold the union policy of support for those seeking a post-strike closed shop. The new formula the executive unanimously agreed (with one abstention) states that the union 'will examine the recommendations of the mediator in the light of the union policy'.

Left wing members of the NUJ executive believe that this wording will still safeguard the fight for the closed shop, as support for that is union policy. The motion itself is a result of immense pressure on the strikers and the NUJ leadership to change this policy.

This pressure has come from a

sustained campaign by the press baron that the NUJ closed shop is a threat to their freedom, from right-wing NUJ members who hold the same position, and from the print union bureaucrats who have threatened to withdraw support if the strikers did not drop their pre-conditions.

The Darlington journalists will not be returning to work during mediation, but nor will the NUJ leadership be making any moves to spread the strike to other Westminster Press papers. This is in spite of the firm support for the strike shown NGA printworkers.

The rank and file group Journalist Charter has set itself the task of building for an extension of the strike, and it is vital that this call should now be loudly proclaimed by the strikers themselves.

A defeat at Darlington — which can by no means be ruled out — would be a huge set-back in the closed shop battle, and open the door to a Press Charter which would curb the NUJ curbing the barons' tyranny of the press.

Printworkers

PRINTWORKERS in the National Graphical Association together with journalists have been given the green light by their union executives to take industrial action against racist reporting. In the first ever joint agreement between the NGA and the NUJ on editorial content, the unions state: 'The lies and methods of the racists should be publicly and rigorously exposed.'

The eight-point statement goes on to say that newspapers and magazines should not originate racist material, and recognises the 'right of members to withhold their labour on grounds of conscience because employers are providing a platform for racist propaganda.' Mutual support is offered to members of either union taking such action.

'It's a bit of a bomb-shell', NGA executive member George Jerrom told Socialist Challenge, 'and we don't intend to let it fizzle out. Production workers take perhaps a bigger interest than journalists in how their skills are employed on issues of this kind, and this joint statement gives added support to those members

who are prepared to act against racism.'

Jerrom, a member of the Communist Party, adds that right wingers in the NGA will now have to argue that members should print racist filth.

While the print unions have been decidedly reticent about any interference in the press barons' 'right' to publish what they like, the new statement follows the recent decision of the NGA executive to support any members taking action to secure a right of reply to the reactionary muck published about the Grunwick strike, including advertisements by the 'National Association for Freedom'.

The agreement between the NGA and NUJ includes joint support for the journalists' code of conduct on race reporting, under which complaints against journalists on the Sun, Daily Mail, and Sunday Express are to be examined by the NUJ executive within the next few weeks. Journalists on several local papers have already taken industrial action over racist and fascist material.

ASTMS women

by JANET MAGUIRE

When Graham Smith, our union secretary at Guy's Hospital, told us that there were not just physical differences between men and women but 'women were mentally inferior and incapable of representing themselves, let alone men', the predominantly male-attended group meeting returned him to union office with a vote of confidence.

The women in my department — all members of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs — then decided that a real fight was needed inside not only our union, but in all the unions to make sure that women win our full rights.

ASIMS has had two meetings of its national executive since we sent in a complaint from the South-east Medical Branch about

Graham Smith. But it has not yet found the time to discuss the complaint.

We are organising a conference which will discuss how women can organise inside the unions to enforce the equality policies and what new policies and rules are needed so that women can play our full role and actually get our rights.

We urge Socialist Challenge supporters to make sure now that their organisations send people along.

Supplies of leaflets, posters, and tickets from: Janet Maguire, ECG Department, Guy's Hospital, London SE1. Tickets are 40p each or three for £1.

The NUR Hall, Easton Road, London WC1 where the conference is being held on 22 October only holds just over two hundred — so get your applications in early!

civil rights

by TONY OSBOURNE

THE VIOLENT attacks on the paedophile meeting in London last week by a largely National Front and British Movement were admirably 'justified' by the hysterical press campaign which preceded it.

But apart from being an effortless propaganda coup for the fascists, the attacks showed the hypocrisy of the ruling class on freedom of speech.

When the Paedophile Information Exchange meeting began at Coxway hall, only nine police were present to 'protect' those attending, in spite of the flood of threats that had been made against the organisers, and several liaison discussions between PIE and the police. When several people were kicked on the ground after leaving the meeting, only four arrests were made.

PIE has admittedly made

things rather easier for the press, which loves a good witch-hunt, by concentrating on the sexual repression of children to the virtual exclusion of the manifold other forms of oppression they suffer under capitalism.

By raising the issue of childhood sexuality and challenging the basis of the laws of consent outside this context, PIE appears to suggest that what they call free, non-violent mutually satisfactory relations between adults and children are possible in present society — when in reality they are not even possible between adults.

It is clear, however, that whatever the problems with PIE's position, it has attempted to bring into the open a discussion which is of immense importance, and which is so subversive in its possibilities that the ruling class will use every trick to keep it bottled up.



OVER 1,500 attended the demonstration in Birmingham on Saturday called by the National Women's Aid Federation under the slogan 'Battered Women Need Refuges'.

Birmingham was chosen as the venue for the demonstration because there is not one refuge centre for battered women in the city. The demo was the culmination of a week of action organised by the Federation.

It is campaigning for an increase in refuges as well as more lasting solutions to battering. The theme of the week of action was: 'Battered women demand control over their own lives'.

The thinking behind the demand is that until there are enough refuges, suitable housing, adequate income, and proper legal protection for battered women, they have no real alternative to living with violent men.

The week of action sought to highlight these demands. In Swansea, for example, there was a picket of the magistrates court protesting about the way battered women are treated by the legal system, together with a public meeting.

Bristol was another centre of activity. A display was held in the city centre, leaflets were handed out, and there was a public meeting and film show.

SOCIALIST UNITY IN EAST LONDON

A local bye-election is due to take place soon in the Spitalfields Ward of Tower Hamlets in London's East End (the ward includes Brick Lane). Socialist Unity will be contesting the seat. Its candidate, Hilda Keas, a member of Westminster Trades Council and well-known militant from the East End itself. More in next week's paper.



On 20 September Secretary of State for Health David Ennals agreed to meet representatives of the workers at the Elizabeth Gerrett Anderson Hospital. This demonstration outside the meeting by EGA workers and supporters demanded that Ennals withdraw his predecessor's decision to close the hospital.

Photo: DEREK SPEIRS (IFL)

Build the Rank & File Conference

The days of passive acceptance of wage cuts by the working class are over. Murray, Scanlon, and their friends in the higher ranks of the labour movement have made it clear they are determined to throw their weight behind the bosses and the Labour Government. But large numbers of workers have refused to bow down in the face of this attack.

JOHN ROSS explains that the fight-back has to be extended nationally around policies which can unite the working class. That's why the conference call by the Rank and File Organising Committee, a body led by the Socialist Workers Party, is timely.

There is an urgent need for organisation against the wage controls. At the union conferences earlier this year a majority of hands went up in opposition to the 12-month rule and against wage controls. But this didn't stop the union leaders at the TUC.

They resorted to the most blatant violations of their members' democratic rights so they could commit the TUC to the wage cutting policies of the Labour Government. And in the coming months these same leaders will be just as ruthless in dealing with workers who are moving into struggle to defend their real wages.

But the sailing won't be smooth for the labour leaders. There has been a 140 per cent increase in strike days so far this year compared to the same period last year. The Lucas carworkers and the air traffic assistants have already shown the militancy to fight to defend living standards.

Despite setbacks — such as the acceptance of the 12-month rule

by Chrysler stewards and the calling off of the unofficial national dock strike — claims continue to be submitted by workers which challenge Labour's wage policies. And as important as the mounting militancy is the increased support for the demands and methods of struggle needed to put up a real fight on living standards.

UNITY

Workers at the annual conferences of the public employees union and the transport workers union who voted for automatic cost of living increases to protect their wages against inflation have been joined by those on the shop floor at Fords, Vauxhalls, and elsewhere. And even the Trade Union Congress was forced to vote for an abolition of the cash limits system in the public sector through the pressure from the rank and file.

It is precisely because these kinds of policies unite the working class and begin to provide an answer to the crisis that the TUC leadership will try to avoid any



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

The first national 'Rank and File' conference held on 30 March 1974.

RANK AND FILE ORGANISING COMMITTEE

The first national 'Rank and File' conference was held in Birmingham on 30 March 1974. It was called by an Organising Committee politically dominated by the then International Socialists and several of their rank-and-file papers such as: The Collier, Hospital Worker, Redder Tape, Rank and File Teacher, etc.

The conference was attended by representatives from 300 trade union bodies of which 15 per cent were shop stewards committees, combine committees or district committees. Of the rest, one-third were from white-collar sectors.

It totally rejected wage controls, redundancies and pledged to aid all struggles against the Industrial Relations Act. An important disagreement at the Conference was on racism and women's oppression. An amendment which insisted that these two areas — as well as workers' control — be added to the resolution was defeated (89 for, 182 against). Ken Hamer argued for the Organising Committee that these issues would 'divide the militants'.

The second conference was held in November 1974. There were 422 delegates from 311 organisations. The main resolution rejecting the Social Contract and calling for a 30 per cent across the board increase was carried by 292 votes to 84.

Debates centred around a sliding scale of wages. Dick North of the Organising Committee called for rejecting such a notion as it 'reflects the pessimism of the weaker sections represented here today'. The second point of contention was on the election of the Organising Committee: a motion calling for a democratically-elected committee based on one delegate from each sponsoring paper and ten directly elected from conference was rejected.

real struggle, and will refuse to take up the demand for automatic public expenditure increases for health, education, and so on, to compensate for inflation.

The struggle which can develop in the coming months will have the best chance of success if they — and the support for them — are organised beyond a purely local, company or industry-wide basis. The fight to defeat the wage controls can best be organised by building on the steps that have been taken, such as the area meeting of shop stewards called in Clydeside, the West Midlands public sector shop steward conference to be held in Birmingham on 15 October and the moves made by the dock workers stewards committee to draw up a national wage claim.

The Rank and File conference on 26 November will draw together militants who are opposed to wage controls on a national scale, and will begin to coordinate and organise solidarity for workers in struggle.

It would be better if a more powerful body than the Rank and File Organising Committee had called a conference against wage controls. The left wing of the Labour Party and the Communist Party have much greater support in the unions. But neither have led — or have any intention of leading — a real fight against wage controls.

The Communist Party's industrial organiser Bert Ramelson boasted in the party's discussion paper Comment (17 September) that the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions — led by the CP — had lobbied the TUC; that the CP had a hundred delegates (1 in 11) at the TUC Congress; and that George Guy was the second CP member to join Ken Gill on the TUC General Council.

CP STRENGTH

The industrial strength of the CP, when compared to that of the far left as a whole, is undeniable. But the policies the party has pursued throughout the spring and summer have amounted to little more than sabotage of working class struggle. The CP failed to do anything following the LCDTU and the Leyland Conference on wage controls in April, because it claimed that the TUC would reject wage controls.

Under the familiar guise of avoiding a 'split in the movement', the Communist Party supported Scanlon and other bureaucrats against the Leyland toolroom strikers. Yet it was

CAMPAIGN FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

This body is politically dominated by the Workers Socialist League, a group set up after its supporters had been bureaucratically expelled from the Workers Revolutionary Party of Gerry Healy and Vanessa Redgrave.

It has so far organised two national conferences: the first on 'Wage Control and Union Democracy' on 24 October 1976; the second attended by 300 delegates in March 1977. Earlier this year the CDLM organised a Scottish Conference with the collaboration of the Scottish Socialist League and recently held its fourth conference on the car industry. All conferences pledged to support working class struggles against the government's economic policies around an extensive programme including the sliding scale of wages. The CDLM has till now been a reflection of the politics of the main organisation within it, the WSL.

Scanlon and the rest of his mates whom the party had sided with and promoted — who secured the vote for wage controls at the TUC.

In the coming months the CP will continue to rely on people who are the chief props of the Government's attacks on living standards. Even if the party does call a new meeting of the Liaison Committee, little will be achieved because it will remain tied to its present policies.

The Rank and File Organising Committee is a far weaker body than the LCDTU. However, it has had a clear position of support for all workers fighting the Government's pay policy.

Despite its relatively small support, the committee could therefore play an important role in the coming months. Whether it will depend on the policies that the Socialist Workers Party fights for at the conference.

The SWP has taken two correct steps leading up to the conference. First, in contrast with some previous futile attempts to directly organise the mass struggle through its rank and file organisations, the SWP has called for area shop stewards conferences and similar broad conferences to draw up wage claims, and launch a fight around them, including building solidarity.

Secondly, the SWP has broken with some previous sectarian positions and — following the example of the Right to Work Campaign — will likely call for united action with the CP and LCDTU.

The SWP's approach to the Communist Party appears to be designed to merely 'expose' the CP, rather than calling for a

joint democratic conference of the Rank and File Organising Committee and the LCDTU. Nevertheless these steps should help to make it clear that the CP, not the RFOC, is splitting the movement against wage controls.

Despite these positive moves, there are two crucial weaknesses in the plans for the conference. First, the SWP has not followed the lead given by workers submitting claims at Fords, Vauxhalls and elsewhere. They have failed to support a policy for an automatic cost of living increases to protect wages against rising prices.

AN ERROR

The Socialist Workers Party has also refused to demand automatic increases in social expenditure to compensate for inflation. Without a fight for these policies, working class living standards are constantly undermined by soaring prices.

Secondly, the SWP has still failed to realise that establishing workers democracy in the Rank and File campaign is not a luxury but an absolute necessity if broad forces are to be organised in action. If the SWP does not correct this error, the Rank and

File Organising Committee will remain just a 'front' for the SWP with dwindling influence as its real character becomes clear in practice.

The real test of the Socialist Workers Party's ability to change course will be the conference itself. No supporter of the campaign should be excluded from the conference; alternative resolutions to those submitted by the organising committee should be discussed; any committee elected by the conference should proportionally represent the different positions in the movement and campaigns in the wake of the conference should be organised in a similar united democratic fashion.

If these policies are carried out then militants will have an indication that the SWP is interested in a serious fight for united working class action against wage controls.

The Socialist Workers Party has made mistakes in organising the conference, but it should not be thrown out of the window. Support for the conference should come from every militant committed to fighting the programme to defend the interests of the working class. Workers involved in struggles and in union organisations such as the Socialist Teachers Alliance should all campaign for support for the conference.

Militants should: urge trade union bodies to elect delegates to apply for affiliation to the organising committee; put forward resolutions for their policies at the conference; stand for election to any committee established; participate in democratically organised campaigns launched; and be just as ready to fight any incorrect position imposed by the SWP.

The Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement — organisation led by the Workers Socialist League, which has its own conference on 23 October should fight at the Rank and File Conference for the correct programme it has adopted on major questions, like the sliding scale of wages.

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)



Delegate Hilary Wainwright speaking for a resolution to adopt the demands of the Working Women's Charter at the November 1974 conference. Conference rejected the resolution.

NATIONAL RANK AND FILE DELEGATE CONFERENCE

Saturday 26 November in the Co-op Hall, Manchester

Credentials for delegates from all trade union organisations from the Rank and File Centre, 266a Seven Sisters Road, London, N4

Out of the Ghetto

★
THANK YOU for the space that you gave to the views of Dave Purdy and myself. As you chose not to refuse our arguments on incomes policy but rather subject them to that mixture of abuse and innuendo that too often passes for analysis on the left, I will leave what we wrote to act as its own defender. (After all you share with Enoch Powell the view that all incomes policies are wrong. Does that make you a racist reactionary? Then why insult us at the same childish level?)

However you do make a single substantial political point, that is to accuse us of 'rejecting unequivocally the independent political capacity of the working class' and of regarding workers' control as 'romantic utopianism'. Now such assertions can only follow from a very obscure reading of our pamphlet for nearly every section contains reference to the central need for greater control by the working class. However, in case it needs emphasis let me make it plain that we believe that the issue of popular democratic control (not participation or consultation) should be the main underpinning of all socialist policy, whether in production or in general social relations.

The pivot of our argument is that, far from lacking independent political capacity, the British working class has, by virtue of many decades of organisation and struggle, achieved a position where it has substantial power, at least in a negative or blocking sense. This is particularly true in the field of wages struggle. We hold that to advance, the working class must begin to exert this power positively by intervening in all the areas of production and community action which are barred to it or which are now relegated to diversions from the main economic struggle.

Your concerns with popular democracy and your attacks upon bureaucracy have a legitimate base; no Communist should ever forget that the Trotskyist claims about Soviet degeneration were, and remain, entirely well-founded and that Communist acceptance of this is, even now, half-hearted.

But your adoption of organs of popular democracy is fatally flawed by an inability to come to terms with what function these bodies are to have before a revolution. They do not spring up fully-armed to overthrow the bourgeois state; they are not reflections of the Puller workers Soviet or the Kronstedt

sealers. They are concerned with immediate problems, are often geographically or industrially isolated and they have many, and sometimes conflicting, political and social strands running through them.

The basic Trotskyist (and it must be said, often a Communist) attitude is that the role of rank-and-file bodies, short of armed revolution, is to cause aggro and to resist co-optation and compromise. There is no sense that they might take control now because that would forestall the revolutionary timetable laid down by the all-knowing 'Party'.

But over any period longer than months, it is issues of compromise, of what can be won and what must be delayed, what immediate control is possible and what must be deferred, which must decide the actions of any functioning political body. And then normal Trotskyist reaction is to cry 'Reformism' and move on to the next area of struggle, hoping that at some point every favourable external factor will coincide and a Marxist party will sweep to power on a flood of workers' councils.

Workers' control has no place in your scheme except as some idealised form which will dominate after some future event. We believe in workers control now as a major part of a transition to socialism.

You left out a number of paragraphs in the excerpt you published. No doubt unintentionally these contained all the criticisms we made of 'the current degenerated pay policy' which has resulted in a gross and dangerous imbalance between the immediate reality of sacrifice and the remote prospect of reward, which has devalued the terms of the Social Contract, jeopardised its chances of survival and squandered its progressive potential.

You also omitted what many might feel to be our most pertinent criticism. That the responsibility for this bleak outlook lies as much with the failures and weaknesses of the left as with the sins and strengths of the Labour leadership. The left's failure to transcend the twin perspectives of economism and romantic revolutionism parallels and sustains the continued tenure of social democracy. And that describes your reaction to our pamphlet just as well, for by inventing absurd positions for us to take, just so as you can then knock them down, you actually dodge justifying your own politics.

MIKE PRIOR (N. London)



THERE MUST be many readers of *Socialist Challenge* who were depressed by the Purdy/Prior article (8 September) and James Francis's reply.

The existence of the Social Contract between the Labour Government and TUC from 1974 till this summer posed the British left with a conundrum it has been unable to solve. The response of the left — from both reformist and revolutionary wings — has been to opt for vulgar economism. Overwhelmingly the alternative to the Contract which the left has offered has been a return to free collective bargaining and the 'normal' workings of traditional trade unionism — in other words, the conditions of 1973.

Despite the errors of the Purdy/Prior camp, it is to their credit that they see that this is an inadequate response to the situation, and that there is nothing intrinsically socialist in a wages free for all. If successful, a wages offensive would reinforce the widespread belief that capitalism can deliver the material goods, and if unsuccessful could lead to defeat and demoralisation on a scale not seen since the war.

Having identified the central political problem of the current situation, however, Purdy and Prior proceed to put forward a strategy which no socialist could accept. Firstly, they completely misread the real corporatist content of the second stage of the Social Contract, and its role in restoring capitalism.

The whole concept of a Social Contract is now justifiably criticised by the majority of conscious workers in Britain because of its blatant use in reviving private enterprise at the expense of working class living standards — an elementary point which Purdy and Prior overlook. They argue as if any social contract is per se a move towards socialism — a thesis which Francis rightly demolishes.

Secondly, Purdy and Prior argue as if the trade union bureaucracy and its traditional bargaining role is the mechanism of socialist advance. Both practical experience and theoretical analysis show that the union bureaucracy is heavily embedded in the status quo and that its capacity for the hegemonic role that Purdy and Prior wish to take on is negligible.

Two members of the Communist Party have taken the new draft of the 'British Road' to its ultimate logic. They argue for a 'socialist social contract' as part of a broader reformist strategy.

In this extract David Purdy and Mike Prior argue that —

The Left should support an Incomes Policy



Out of the ghetto, into the quagmire



THE WILLINGNESS of *Socialist Challenge* to feature political debate and analysis is refreshing when compared to the comlike content of *Socialist Worker*. Your coverage of the Purdy/Prior pamphlet, *Out of the Ghetto*, was, however, disappointing.

James Francis may, like many of your readers, be angered and outraged by the pamphlet. His commentary certainly showed it as he filled it with emotive references to 'Fabians', 'Ramsay MacDonald', 'prostituting Gramsci', 'distorting Lenin' and 'outflanking Kautsky from the right.' In fact his commentary reads more like an extract from the short-course history of the CPSU on the 'Trotsky-Bukharin clique' than a political analysis.

Purdy and Prior wrongly underestimate the necessity to maintain the independence and force of the labour movement at the present time. They do, however, illustrate in a powerful and stimulating argument, the necessity to develop an economy-wide strategy to establish working-class political and economic power.

The current abandonment of the social contract and return to 'free collective bargaining' is seen even amongst active trades unionists as a return to unrestricted wage militancy rather than part of an economy wide class strategy.

The need to develop such a programme in form relevant to current political conditions is a vital debate for the movement in this period of reversal and defeat. Whether you support transitional demands or a revisionist strategy simply shouting slogans and indignantly demanding statements from the CP does not develop the debate on socialist strategy.

Does reasoned coverage in *Socialist Challenge* apply only to the incestuous debates on the ultra left?

It is easy, then, for Francis to attack Purdy and Prior's ideas. His own piece, however, is equally disheartening, because of its failure to even perceive a problem. Francis neither rebuts the charge of narrow economism which Purdy and Prior level at the left nor engages with the problem of strategy; instead he simply ignores both. We are exhorted to reject 'well worked out social contracts' and rely on the 'independent political capacity of the working class'. Free collective bargaining — the focus of Purdy and Prior's attack — is equated with workers democracy, and we are left with the impression that as long as different sectors of the working class do their own thing, everything will come out all right in the wash.

This isn't socialism, it's idealism. There is no evidence to suggest that normal trade union bargaining, without any wider perspective, will reach beyond the limits of trade unionism itself. Experience suggests, in fact, that the trade union consciousness of the working class is overwhelmingly dominant in Britain, and is a major barrier to the development of mass socialist consciousness. If James Francis and *Socialist Challenge* are now suggesting that trade union bargaining can in some way transcend its own limitations and spontaneously generate socialist consciousness, then this is a new turn in the debate, and one which requires defence.

I doubt if it can be defended, however, and would reassert a more conventional socialist view. This is that there is no possibility of socialist development unless the working classes are presented with a strategy which combines immediate demands with a longer term perspective of social change, and provides a real alternative to the current social system. Economism, it has generally been argued, fails to do this precisely because it confines the prospects available to the working class within the limits of what is possible within the structures of the current system.

T.L. FISHER (Birmingham)

JOHN BLOXSOM (Lancaster)

AUEW elections

MICK RICE's article arguing for a vote for Bob Wright in the Engineering Union elections for President (*Socialist Challenge*, 8 September) is dangerously confused. It seems strange that an article of approximately 800 words supporting a particular candidate says nothing about the record or policies of that candidate!

Presumably Rice does not consider this to be relevant. So what is relevant? Apparently, simply the fact that Wright is the official Broad Left candidate. A considerable part of the article is devoted to praising the virtues of the democracy of the Broad Left for whose decisions Rice has such a deep respect.

I would certainly agree with him that the International Marxist Group could have made a much better intervention at the Broad Left conference which 'elected' Bob Wright as their candidate — including proposing an alternative candidate. It should be pointed out, however, that Mick Rice did not propose an alternative candidate either — I assume because he thought that Wright was in fact the best possible candidate. If this is so, then his confusion is even more dangerous than appears from his article.

The rosy picture which Rice paints of complete democracy within the Broad Left is nonsense. The so-called 'election' of Wright was nothing more than a rubber-stamping of a decision which had already been taken. At

the very same conference Rice himself attempted to move a resolution calling for a lobby of the National Committee — only to have it ruled out of order by the chair. So much for Broad Left democracy.

But the real issue in the election is not the mistakes of the IMG or the degree of democracy within the Broad Left. What we should ask ourselves is what a vote for Bob Wright against Ian Morris would actually represent in the present political context. It is obvious (in spite of Mick Rice's failure to mention it) that the record and policies of the candidates is a central factor in determining this.

Revolutionaries can't demand the perfect programme before they cast their vote. But Wright is hardly just another 'left' with the usual social democratic limitations. On the central question of the Social Contract, he has vacillated between silence and explicit support (insisting, of course, that the Labour Government fulfils its half of the deal). He has neither lifted a finger, nor uttered a word to assist workers in struggle against the attacks on their living standards.

Particularly disgusting was his implicit support for the strike-breaking role of the Executive Council during the Leyland tool-makers' strike. In fact, Wright's record is so dismal that Hugh Scanlon (R.I.P.) can announce that he would be 'proud' to campaign for him. But for Mick Rice, the fact that Wright is the

Broad Left candidate is sufficient. I wonder what his position would be if Scanlon himself were running for another term as the Broad Left candidate? I shudder to think.

John Graham's article pointed out that the programme on which Ian Morris of the Socialist Workers Party is standing is inadequate in many respects. However, on the central questions facing the working class he quite clearly stands for a fight-back against the reactionary policies of the Government and the scabbing role of the AUEW leadership.

It is true that the SWP has a sectarian conception of the role of a candidate in such elections, and this is a weakness which will probably prevent Morris from getting as large a vote as he might have done. But the motivation of the SWP in standing Ian Morris should not determine our attitude to his candidacy. Morris's vote will not be a vote for the views of the SWP or the Engineers' Charter on how to build a rank and file movement. In fact, most of his votes will come from people who have probably never heard of the SWP before.

To the militants in the AUEW who do vote for Morris their vote will be an expression of opposition to the betrayals of the union leadership and for a fight-back to defend living standards.

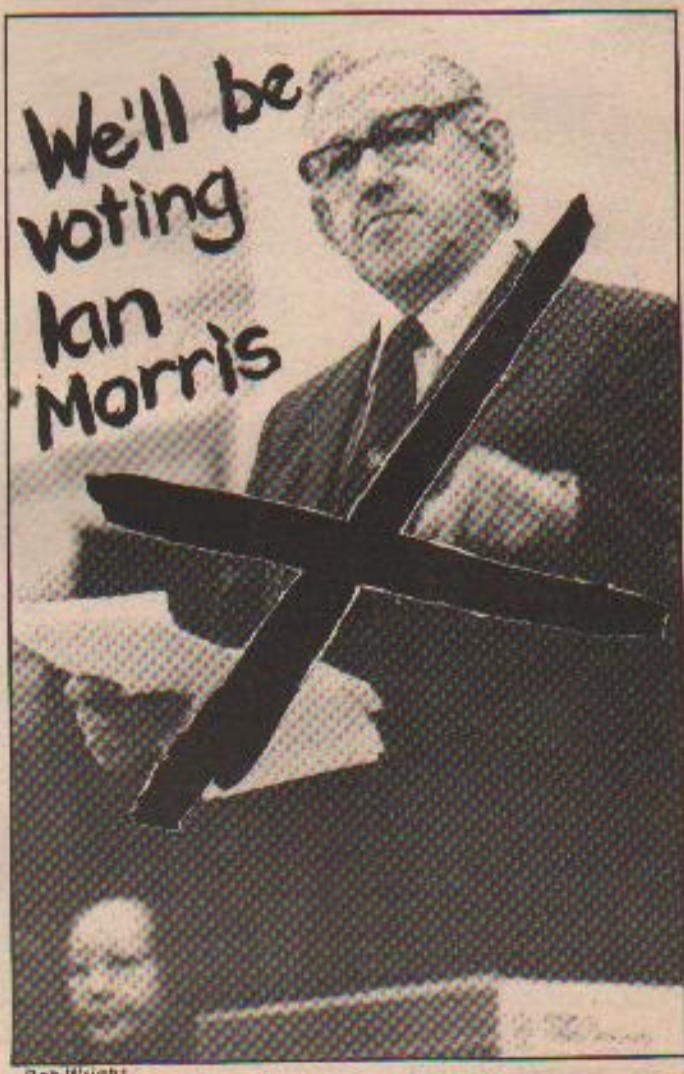
But would a respectable vote for such a candidate represent an advance in the fight for class struggle policies within the

union? I am in no doubt that it would. Such a vote would be an explicit rejection of the bankrupt line which the leadership of the Broad Left has been pursuing over the past few years. Bob Wright's candidacy represents the continuation of that bankruptcy.

I find it difficult to understand why Rice regards the suggestion that revolutionaries should cast their vote for a candidate in the second ballot whom they refused to vote for in the first as 'playing fast and loose with the trade union movement'. This is precisely what thousands of AUEW members will be doing. After all, this is the reason that the two-ballot system of election was introduced.

Clearly, when the choice is simply between two social democrats (one more right wing than the other), the situation is entirely different than when the opportunity exists to vote for a genuine class struggle candidate. When such an opportunity exists, to advocate a vote for a class-collaborationist such as Bob Wright is a complete capitulation to the Broad Left. The fact that Mick Rice makes such a political retreat indicates that there is less danger to revolutionaries within the trade unions from 'ultra-left adventures' than from right-wing opportunism!

RON THOMPSON (Shop-steward, AUEW, Sheffield)



Bob Wright

16 October In deepest Hoxton

ON 16 OCTOBER the Hackney Committee Against Racism, supported by the London District Committee of the Communist Party, the London International Marxist Group and numerous Asian organisations will carry the struggle into the fascist stronghold of Hoxton in the heart of London's East End, reports ALAN LENTON.

Hoxton has historically been a fascist stronghold. It is in the borough of Hackney where Mosely stood for the British Union of Fascists in the 30s — the same borough in which the National Front received their best percentage of the vote in the 1974 election.

It is in this area that John Tyndall will be standing in the General Election. Over the past 18 months the fascists in East London have stepped up their campaign of physical attacks and burning of property. The attempts to burn

down the community book-shop, Centreprise, and the SWP headquarters in the same area, are only two of the incidents.

The demonstration is built around three key issues facing the black community in East London.

*No Platform for Fascists. The denial in every way of the so-called right of these political gangsters to spread their lies and race hatred.

*Defence Against Racist Attacks. Racial minorities have the right to self-protection from physical attacks.

*An End to All Racist Laws. All the Immigration Acts are racist, especially the 1968 and 1971 Acts. The Government must repeal them now.

Assemble at Shoreditch Park, Poole Street, New North Road, N1.

Bus routes 76, 141, 271; nearest tube: Old Street.

Anti-fascists on the march!

29 October Reading is next

The fascist National Front is planning to meet at Reading Old Town Hall on 29 October. What was originally planned as a small local meeting has since the Tameside ban acquired a broader significance. The fascists plan to make it a major show of strength. MICHAEL FOLEY writes

Speakers at the Reading meeting will include NF president squadron leader John Bradley and their national activities organiser Martin Webster. Local Front Fuhrer Philip Baker has said: 'Because of the problems in Manchester I think it is quite possible that the event that we hope to arrange in Reading next month will be a much bigger show.'

Webster has said that he expects at least three hundred supporters to come to Reading.

The granting of permission to use council premises for the Front meeting on 29 October came about because of the decision by Liberal and Conservative members to vote for the use of the hall by the Front. The arguments were the old ones of

decision at the next meeting of its policy committee which has to ratify the hiring of the hall. A meeting of all political organisations in Reading opposed to the Front is taking place on 6 October at the initiative of the local branch of the International Marxist Group.

If, as seems likely, the council approves the decision to hire their premises to fascists Socialist Challenge will be supporting the trades council pocket on the evening of 29 October at Reading Old Town Hall.

Coaches will be leaving from London. For more information contact London IMG at 01-263-3081.

Southampton

A HIGHLY successful meeting organised by Socialist Challenge supporters in Southampton has laid the basis for a broad anti-fascist united front in the city.

Nearly a hundred people were present including members of the International Marxist Group, Socialist Workers Party, the

Tameside is still on

All the available information suggests that fascists will be arriving in Tameside in ones and twos to applaud and encourage the one-person march which their Fuhrer, Martin Webster, will initiate on 8 October. Local anti-fascists are calling for national support for a mass rally and picket outside Hyde Town Hall. OLIVER NEW reports.

Last Thursday the Tameside Anti-Fascist Committee, which is a sub-committee of the local trades council, decided not to call off the picket and mass rally outside Hyde town hall. Unlike Colin Barnett, secretary of the North-west TUC, the anti-fascist committee do not think that the ban on the fascist march and rally is the end of the story. A unanimous vote passed the following resolution:

'This committee, having carefully considered all information received, recognises that Martin Webster will not be alone on his march through Hyde on 8 October.

'We assert the right of the labour movement to defend the democratic right of all sections of our people against fascism.

'We therefore call upon all those individuals and organisations who oppose fascism to

Join us on a mass picket of Hyde town hall at 10am on 8 October.

Don't be fooled. Webster will not be alone — No platform for Nazis!

The anti-fascist committee was only recognising the obvious — that the National Front is not likely to be too far away from their leader. While he makes a one man protest against 'red terrorism' culminating in a speech on the steps of the town hall, his loyal followers are unlikely to be at home having Sunday dinner.

But this is not quite so clear to Colin Barnett. He lost no time at all in condemning the call of the anti-fascist committee, just as he condemned the original plan by the Socialist Workers Party for a 'victory' march in central Manchester.

But it wasn't Barnett who forced the police to ban the Front march. It was the intention of thousands of people to get out to Hyde and stop them by weight of numbers. Those numbers are still needed on 8 October to assert that fascism will not parade on the streets, and there are indications that a number of organisations in the Manchester area and elsewhere will mobilise in support of the anti-fascist picket.

Indeed, the strength of anti-fascist feeling in the North-west has already taken Brother Barnett by surprise. A meeting of 200 labour movement delegates, which he personally convened before the ban, voted overwhelmingly for all anti-fascists to go to the town hall on the 8th to stop the Front.

A follow-up meeting of the same size was equally militant — a striking indication that large numbers of trade union and labour militants are determined to see fascism defeated, and are no longer content just to talk about it.

DEMOCRACY

If the labour movement and the left endorse the call by the trades council sub-committee — and the trades council executive meets after Socialist Challenge goes to press — then every effort must be made for an all-out defence of the democratic right of the working class to demonstrate its opposition to fascism.



This disgusting rubbish arrived in the post from Basingsstoke

free speech and democracy. The liberals contributed a new argument: race relations in Reading are good so there is nothing to fear from the fascists!

Anti-fascists in Reading are calling for a mass picket of the Old Town Hall, where the meeting will take place. Keith Jerome, secretary of Reading Trades Council, said that he expected trade-unionists from all over the South-east to be mobilised and predicted another Ladywood or Lewisham. The trades council do not plant a violent confrontation. They do, however, intend to try and talk to every fascist who enters the meeting.

There is still a chance that the local council might rescind the

Communist Party and a fair sprinkling of local trade unionists. Raghb Ashan, the Socialist Unity candidate in the recent Ladywood by-election, spoke on the fight against fascism and racism.

Money was collected to cover the costs of the meeting and to defend local militants arrested in Lewisham. A group of bus workers donated £5 and a social raised £45.

An ad-hoc committee consisting of the SWP, IMG and individual members of the Labour Party has been formed. Apart from anti-fascist work locally, it intends to organise a coach for the Reading picket on 29 October.



Riot shields are now in regular use

Why Slipman gets it wrong

'Students Told to Stay Clear of Street Violence Tactics', was headline in The Guardian over the speech made by the National Union of Students President Sue Slipman last month. Here COLIN TALBOT, a member of the NUS Executive and a leader of the Socialist Students Alliance, states his views on her strategy for fighting racism and fascism.

SUE SLIPMAN's speech in Edinburgh was eagerly reported by the national press. This is not totally surprising since a lot of what she said came straight out of the editorial columns of The Guardian and other liberal papers.

Slipman's remarks on Lewisham and Ladywood reflected the strategy of the 'Broad Left' in the NUS: respectability, respectability and more respectability. Nowhere in her speech was racism defined in terms of the oppression and victimisation of black people.

She talked of 'racial conflicts', of black reacting in 'violent and anti-social ways'. There was no mention of the fact that the National Front is not merely racist, but a fascist organisation, which attacks not just black people, but increasingly Jews and groups in the labour movement.

Now we know that Slipman has said that she is NUS President before she is a member of the Communist Party. We won't debate that stupidity now, nor compare her remarks with Dave

Cook's article in the Morning Star. But Slipman is well to the right of a number of Labour MPs and trade union leaders.

The function of her speech was to divide the far-left groups from the ranks of the student movement as a whole. It was a fight between 'reason' (represented by Tories, Christians, Communists, 'decent coppers') and the 'ultra left' (represented by the far left groups and blacks who fought the fascists and no doubt people like Ernie Roberts as well!) In reality the counterposition is between those who want to organise mass actions against the racists and fascists and those who are content with mere talk or pressure politics (lobby your MP, write to The Guardian). We do not object to either. All we argue is that they cannot deal effectively with racism and fascism. Our strategic aim is to involve the largest number of people possible against fascism on



Sue Slipman

the streets. This can include people of diverse political opinions and parties provided they are prepared to act.

Slipman imagines that Vice-Chancellors and Principals can be won over to fighting racism. It

depends on what one means. If all that is needed is a statement or a written paper saying 'Racism is a bad thing', there would be few problems. But a bit more is involved. She really believes that the same people who are busy implementing racist fee increases and racist quotas against overseas students will sit down with their victims and discuss how to fight them. It is not only a utopian illusion, but its practical consequences are reactionary: no independent action by students. She further believes that whole institutions can be utilised to fight racism.

At a time when reactionaries are unleashing attacks on the whole left (concentrating, incidentally, on all those academics who addressed the Communist University last summer) as a prelude to a witch-hunt, Slipman wants us to believe that Politics and History Departments in universi-

ties can be transformed into fighting racism and fascism. This is either gross illusion-mongering or an invitation to real ultra-leftism at this particular time.

CHEEKY

She asks us 'not only to fight the fascists but also to learn how to win'. This is a trifle cheeky. How would she have 'won' at Lewisham? How will she stop the fire-bombing of left book-shops and offices, the random assaults on blacks, the breaking up of Labour Party meetings? By mobilising the 'decent coppers'? But if the 'decent coppers' can't even prevent the 'indecent coppers' from harassing blacks and carrying out racist operations, how will they fight racism in society as a whole?

No, Sue Slipman! The answer lies neither in 'the institutions' nor in individual violence, but in mass mobilisations. We are at a stage where there are now a real possibility, provided the NUS leadership does not engage in too much back-stabbing. Yes, we'll show how it is possible to both fight and win.

Labourism a

You may recall that we were intending to have a more biographical interview with you when you first retired from the AUEW. However, you've obviously decided, quite correctly, to remain very active in politics.

You've now been selected as a Labour candidate in a safe working class Labour seat. All the indications are that you will be elected. What made you decide after you retired from the AUEW to remain an activist within the labour movement?

The capitalist press have in fact raised this with me as well — why should a person who has retired become a Labour candidate when there are so many young people aspiring to become Labour candidates?

I have to point out that age has got nothing at all to do with it. It's a question of a person's political position. There are many young people today who are certainly endeavouring to become Labour candidates, but who are as right-wing as the people they're attempting to replace. And age isn't the measuring rod, but where does that person stand irrespective of whether they're young or old on the issues of the day. It was felt in Hackney that the position I take on the major issues of the day and my previous experience in the movement stretching over a period of nearly fifty years — this was the sort of person they wanted.

Unlike the capitalist press, we're extremely happy that someone like you is going to be active in the Labour Party. Maybe we can start by asking you as someone who has been active in Labour politics for a very long time, what you think the main difference is between when you came into activity and Labour politics today?

In the first place, of course Labour has achieved power electorally several times since I came in and in 1945 with the biggest majority in its entire history. It had then the power and the opportunity to transform society completely.

I had the feeling as others who took part in that victory did that they could, in fact, have changed society completely. People were ready for such a change.

But of course that opportunity was allowed to slip. By 1950 we had a situation that led to Harold Wilson, Nye Bevan and a number of others on the left resigning from the Government on the question of cuts (incidentally as they are being applied today) in the social services. The Party was bedevilled by differences of opinion about whether it ought to extend the social services — housing, education, health, and the rest of it — or whether they ought to cut back and 'save the economy' by making the workers' welfare and social services pay for it as well as their wages.

The point that obviously comes to mind is the attitude of the Labour leaders today. Wilson and Callaghan have presided over massive cuts, incomes policy, mass unemployment and so on. What do you think the Labour Party should do to these questions?

They should never agree to cutting back social services which have been built up as a result of workers struggle over the years. That means putting the clock back.

If society has problems then these should be solved at the expense of those who create them — the capitalists in society who continue to benefit from massive profits.

Suggestions have been made over the years for wealth taxes, for an imposition of taxation upon the rich rather than upon the working class, and the taking over of what the Bevanites used to call 'the commanding heights' of the economy — the banks the insurance companies, the combines, those sections of the multinationals that are in Britain. We need a government that has real control because it owns the major areas of the economy.

How would you answer those who argue that to oppose government policies is the surest way of bringing down the Labour Government? Recently the right-wing union leaders had the attitude that he who pays the piper would be able to call the tune, and they didn't want the NEC criticising the Government.

What attitude would you have towards Callaghan and the right-wing trade union leaders who have said 'don't fight the Labour Government, because that is the surest way of bringing the Government down'?

I've been present at meetings with members of the National Executive of the Party when the right-wing trade union leaders have made sharp criticisms and attacks on the NEC for daring to criticise the policies of the Labour Government. People like Gormley and the Post Office Workers union leaders were particularly amongst those who were making such attacks.

But there were others of us present who make it clear that it was our responsibility as well as our right to make criticisms of policies that were being pursued by Callaghan and the Labour Government. These were against the best interests of the working class and included the attacks on living standards and the worsening of the social services.

How would you explain the present regression of left Social Democratic politics. You yourself mentioned that in the forties, fifties and certainly the early sixties, there was a fairly well-organised, coherent left opposition to the policies of the Party leadership.

However, it appears that Wilson's manoeuvre of incorporating left leaders into the Government has succeeded. In the fifties, Bevan and Wilson resigned over prescription charges which are piffling compared to what's happening now. We have had hardly a single resignation from the Government.

Foot and Benn have accepted policies which would not have been accepted by any left social-democrat in the past. What is governing their actions, is the politics of fear — we can't let go what we've got because what we might get in its place is worse — a very self-defeating way of looking at politics.

Yes there's not been the same sharp reaction against the reactionary cuts that are being made in the social services as there was in 1950. There have been three instances of resignations that I can remember — Eric Heffer on a foreign policy issue, and Judith Hart on the question of assistance to the third world, but she seems to have changed her mind and gone back as a Minister. Bob Hughes also resigned as a junior minister at the Scottish Office. So you're right, there has not been that sharp division that existed in the '50s.

One of the reasons is that there is not the left-wing organisation in the Labour Party that existed in the fifties. There was the 'Victory for Socialism' movement, the Keep Left movement, both of which voluntarily closed down.

In fact I was one of the Vice-chairman of the Victory For Socialism movement, with Mikardo and others. But meetings were held on the basis that if the right-wing groupings that existed in the Party would cease activities then so would we. I opposed this line, but a majority was in favour. So an organised left-wing opposition ceased to exist.

The only attempt to have an organised opposition has been loosely through what is known as the Tribune Group — quite a loose group of MPs, some of who are on the left, some in the centre.

It has not been an effective opposition politically in the country. It had done a certain amount of work in the parliamentary party but not in the country, because it has no roots in the trade union movement or in the constituencies throughout the country.

Any opposition inside the Parliamentary Party must have roots in the Party membership, particularly in the trade unions.

In reality we've seen a consistent rightwards drift in the labour movement. From 1964 to 1969 there was a big debate in the Labour Party on the question of incomes policy. Michael Foot was very hard against it and an organised trade union opposition destroyed In Place of Strife.

Today, we have Foot and Benn justifying an incomes policy and we also have the bizarre spectacle of trade union leaders who won elections in their unions a 'lefts' to fight for union democracy, against incomes policy, etc, coming out to defend wage control. I'm talking now of both Hugh Scanlon and Jack Jones who have evolved to the right. Its quite revealing to see Scanlon's election programme and compare it to what he's saying now. How would you explain this?

There's an old problem in the labour movement. It's the idea that you can manage capitalism. The theories that you can manage capitalism are not dead. They're very much alive. This is an argument which has gone on inside the labour movement for as long as I can remember.

They come to the fore sharply in the times of crisis. They've come to the fore recently. The idea is that capitalism can be managed by a majority Labour Government and that the problems thrown up by the capitalist system can be solved, either by various kinds of planning measures, NEDC, planning agreements in industry, workers' directors in private industry, the control of wages, through Social Contracts — all these are part of the ideology that in some way capitalism can be managed in a just and humane way.

In fact, socialists ought to know by now that capitalism is a system full of contradictions which can only be solved within its framework at the expense of the working class and their standards of living.

In other words, you would be opposed to any form of incomes policy?

I'm opposed to incomes policies. I'm opposed to workers' directors in private industry — although I'm in favour of workers having control in the public services and industry because this is supposed to belong to us in any case. It's been taken over on behalf of the people.

What would you say to the programme of Tribune in that case? In particular, refutation of the economy, import controls and so on?

The capitalists want to be profitable. The capitalists want to be successful. Some capitalists want protection of their industries. Some don't want protection, they want 'free, aggressive enterprise' because they are big multinationals who can win such a fight. So even what the capitalists want varies according to their particular business interests, their financial interests. They may be based at home, or abroad, or in both places.

And so, for a Labour Government and the labour movement to get involved in trying to decide what is in the best interests of certain capitalists is a completely wrong approach to the economic problems facing us.

They must look at problems not from the point of view of whether by having import controls it would assist a particular industry, or whether by having free and unfettered trade because it suits some other sector. This is really not the problem for the working class. The problem is to make certain that the industries and services of the nation are conducted in such a way that they satisfy the needs of the working people in this country, and to associate themselves by trade and other agreements with other nations which will be in the mutual interests of the people living in the nations concerned.

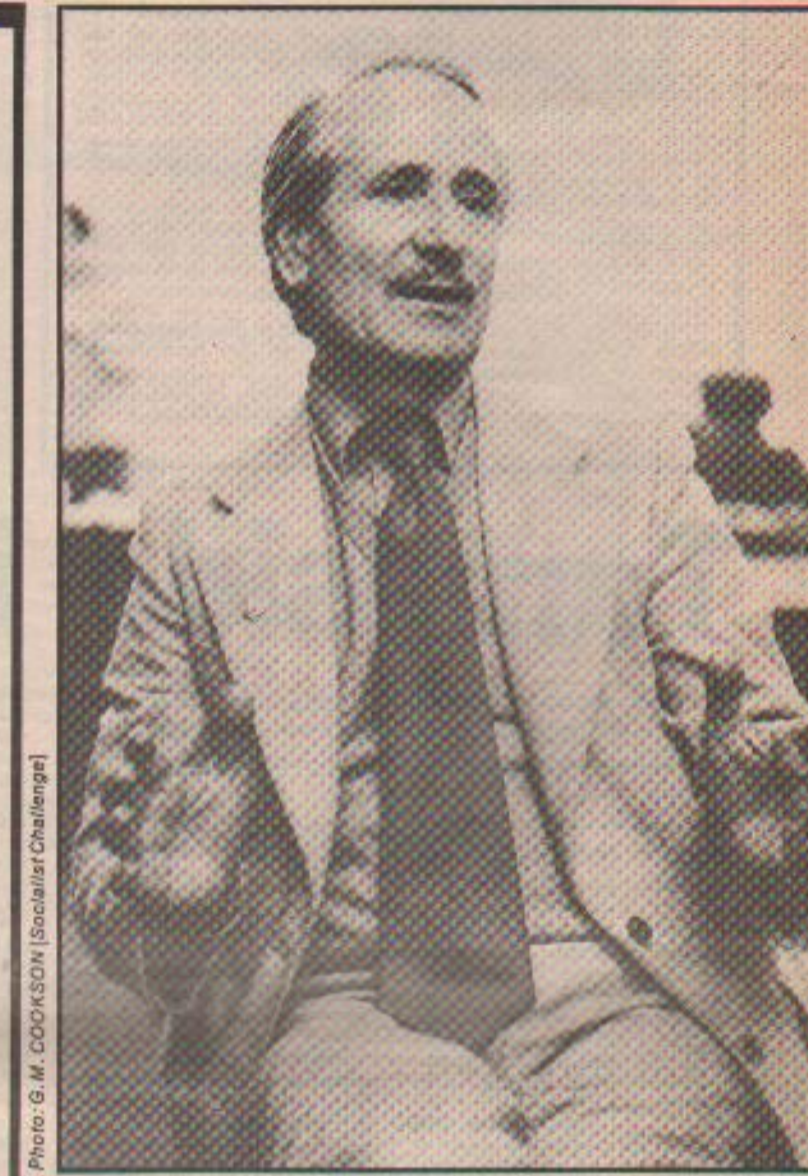


Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

An interview wi

You said earlier that one of the essential differences between the situation now and the situation in the '50s was the lack of an organised opposition, an organised left-wing in the Party and the constituencies.

There is of course a similar lack of organised opposition in the trade unions. What role do you think you will be able to play as a left-wing Labour MP in the construction of such a left-wing, what would it stand for and what would it actually do?

Well, there is a left-wing movement inside the Labour Party at the moment. It has been active for just the last few years on the issues of internal democratic control and structure within the Labour Party.

I'm one of the founders of this organisation — the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy. And this, I think, is an excellent thing because at least there is a fight going on internally to try and have control of the leadership of the party. To decide how the leader should be elected. He should be elected, of course, by the Annual Conference of the Party in the same way the Treasurer is elected by Annual Conference.

There is the question of the automatic reelection of members of Parliament, where every member can be challenged in the constituency, and a change made, should the constituency want such a change.

These are important aspects of the left's struggle inside the Labour Party.

In other words, what you're saying is that constituency Parties should be the main arena through which democracy is ex-

ercised? The point has been made, and very eloquently by Michael Foot in an interview he gave many, many years ago in which he said that: 'For most of my political life from '34 till '60, the trade union leadership was in a cabal, in alliance with the Labour Party leadership and they could impose their will upon the conference. Many of us spent a large part of our political life fighting against some of the Conference decisions, claiming that those decisions were themselves undemocratic. Therefore when people ask "don't you want a system where every decision is made by the Party Conference?" I'm not so enamoured with it because the Party Conference can become more of an oligarchy than any expression of democracy within the Labour Party.'

And he then goes on and argues that trade union representation should be through the constituency organisations. He's obviously changed his mind since then.

Yes, well of course, since he said that the votes of the trade unions — some of them — have swung from the right to the left on some issues.

But that doesn't make the procedure inherently more democratic because they could swing back again just as easily.....

This is a subject that needs debating in greater depth. For me, the trade union movement and the delegates who are elected to a Labour Party Conference are elected, particularly in the case of the AUEW, more democratically and by a bigger number than those who go from the constituencies.

Often a constituency delegate can be

and the Crisis



Ernie Roberts

...ed by quite a small number of people, trade union delegates go to a ballot in the union, and many thousands of votes are cast for the delegate that represents them.

How they're controlled when they get to the conference is another matter. You have the situation which existed at the NEC where a delegation, as in my own case, was refused permission to vote. It doesn't rest there — that fight goes on inside the union. That matter will be taken up by the delegates inside the Union and the President will be challenged, as it was where Carron did this sort of thing. Carron was defeated by the rank and file at the conference.

Many of the delegates who go from unions are also individual members of the Labour Party and are active inside their own Parties and so it isn't a question of an arbitrary division between those who are trade unionists and those who are constituency members. I think what is needed to make the Labour Party more democratic to the members and to the working class would be for the unions in the constituencies to become affiliated, sending delegates to become more active inside the Labour Party.

As I say, it's a very wide question. For my part in Hackney, I've been encouraging to get more trade union representation on the constituency party that the CLP becomes a reflection of the point of view of workers in their trade unions as well as the politically active workers in the constituency.

Another way of moving towards achieving the same aim would be for the Labour

Party with trade union backing to build factory branches.

I'm not only in favour of this, I actually carried out what was probably the first experiment in this when I worked at Jaguar Motors in Coventry during the war.

Party organisation throughout the country had disappeared because of the war conditions and people were not collecting or paying contributions, so I raised the question with the Midlands Region of the Labour Party Executive — of which I was a member. They discussed the matter, and it was agreed that we carry out an experiment to have a factory branch.

I found it very easy. I made 100 members. I collected their contributions as I was a shop steward — as I collected the trade union contributions. As the employers, Jaguars, wouldn't give us premises, we took a bus which the workers used to travel to work in — a 45 seater bus — and we used to have meetings of about 60 persons inside the bus, sitting and standing up, every week. So every week in the factory there was political education and discussion which of course gave rise to 1945, when it was going on in the army as well.

You have always been a bit of an iconoclast in the way you operate. I remember very well in 1968 at the height of the witchhunt and hysteria you as a well known trade-unionist joined the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, marched to Grosvenor Square — in fact we marched together.

At the present time, it is not Vietnam but the fight against racism and fascism.

There is once again a hysteria which is gaining ground, together with a more rightward drift in British society as a whole. What are your views on this and how do you think the fascists can best be fought?

All the working class trade union and political movements have got to unite on the fight against fascism. Otherwise they'll go down separately as they did with Hitler, Franco and Mussolini. There has to be a united working class movement in the fight against fascism.

To fight fascism, we have got to take up the issues on which fascism are feeding. That is unemployment, housing, health, hospitals and other social conditions that face the working class — particularly of course, the condition of wages and the standard of living.

We must take up issues thoroughly the labour movement, the Labour Party and the MPs must get involved in these struggles — such struggles like Grunwick.

That should be so on these other issues I have mentioned because if the movement takes up the issues of housing and unemployment and so on then this will knock away the main prop and appeal which fascism has to the politically immature young workers particularly who are fighting against these conditions.

Don't you think also that the question of immigration and the way that has been used — racist immigration laws — actually panders to the fascists because once you accept that the problem is the so-called hordes of blacks ready to enter the country unless you have control, then you really give in to the racist argument. Since Gaitskell's '62 campaign not a single Labour leader, right or left, has campaigned boldly and ruthlessly against racism and against immigration laws.

Yes, my own union has carried resolutions against the immigration law of 1968 and 1971 and has opposed this idea that the problems which face this country can be solved by shutting out workers from other countries coming to Britain and finding employment here.

The TUC has conducted some campaigns — the most recent one was held in London, 20,000 took part in a march but nothing much has been done since then. It's a case of bringing out troops, taking them for a march, telling them to go home and leaving the matter there.

What is needed of course is a continuing campaign. If there is a march of 20,000 one should expect that the next march should bring out 100,000 and then going on to a time when one can bring millions of workers out on the streets on the issue. It is a question of building up and building on the tempo, a campaign to fight racist immigration laws and racist practices and fascist racist ideology which is being promoted by Tory politicians and unfortunately on one or two occasions, Labour politicians, like Mellish as well. And of course people like Powell.

There is a discussion now in the labour movement of a wide ranging character which has been raised by the situation in Tameside about the way in which to deal with the fascists through legal bans. What attitude would you take to that?

I am very doubtful about the use of law in solving the problems of the working class. I made a statement at a TUC and at other meetings in the working class movement that the law concedes only that which the organised working class has the power to win by its own strength.

And even when it concedes in law, that law has to be pushed, implemented and there has to be the power to see that it is implemented. Just take an example.

Equal pay is known to be one by the women and even health and safety legislation, the right to have a union, the right to operate as a trade union, even that kind of legislation (although it's been on the statute books for 150 years) has to be fought for as Grunwick and Dessouters prove. So legislation does not solve problems. All it does is to identify that there has been a fight and the workers

have had a victory if it is seen to be a good law.

Fascism is not going to be outlawed because as you can see in Tameside, that same action — the decision to stop the fascists from having a demonstration — is being used against all other sections in society. Even the Salvation Army and the Church parade as well as trade unions and other recognisable political parties meetings and demonstrations. So it can be detrimental to the interests of the working class to rely upon the law, to rely upon bans and proscriptions to solve the problem. Fascism will be stopped ultimately when the working class has sufficient strength to stop the fascists from engaging in racist and anti-trade union activity.

Michael Foot and Bevan have at different times described the House of Commons as a very betwixting club. They were both of course determined not to get betwixed by it. But they did. They became very able parliamentarians and their whole life became dominated by parliamentary politics — even though Bevan though Bevan in his early years told people that nothing could be achieved in parliament without an extra-parliamentary mass movement outside. What do you think you will be able to achieve in the House of Commons as a Labour MP?

I would also like to think of Parliament as a club to be used to hit the capitalists over the head with. I would differ from Bevan on one essential principle in his book 'In Place of Fear' and his statements — he always made a separation between parliamentary action and industrial action for political ends.

He said he did not agree with industrial action for political ends. I disagree with that. I think you must use the industrial strength for political objectives. My own union proved this when it smashed the Industrial Relations Act. If we'd have left it to the politicians, we would probably still have had that Act.

What do you think will emerge out of this LP Conference. The most important feature as we see it, is that for the first time since a Labour Government has been in power, there is not a single resolution which is going to be debated attacking the Government's economic policies. NUPE has said as much — that they have been suppressed — in a full page advertisement in the last issue of Tribune. What do you think can be got out of this year's conference?

This year's conference is going to be a pre-election conference. That is probably the reason for not wanting too many debates, or topical resolutions which attack the economic policies of the Government.

While there are not attacks by resolutions, there are a lot being made by workers in the country who are demanding increases in wages and so on. The bakers which has just finished, the engineers which is just coming up and the miners. So whether there is a debate at the Conference or not, there is action to change the situation in the country.

The mood of the Conference is likely to be one of 'don't do anything to spoil Labour's chances of becoming a majority Government in the next election which is likely to take place before the next Labour Party Conference.'

What would you say to trade union leaders who say that workers should not submit big wages increases and that they shouldn't fight because that will bring the Government down?

The one thing that is turning the workers against the Labour Government is precisely the fact that there has been no real fight on the question of wages and on the issue of the social wage which is the social services and so on. Workers have been suffering as a result of the policies the cuts and economies which have been made by the Government. The Government is

digging its own grave.

So the real way to victory is to change course, change the direction, for the Government to start doing things at even this late hour which is in the interests of the living standards of the working class and the general social conditions of the working class.

Yet Callaghan and Tory and Liberal politicians are correct when they say that under the present conditions of crisis the things which you want would seriously damage capitalism and the capitalist economy and the whole concept of a mixed economy? When they say — within the context of the present economic crisis — reforms are not possible, there is a certain logic to what they are saying.

That is logical and correct. Any socialist measures are bound to weaken capitalism. They are conflicting ideologies. Any development we make in the direction of socialism is bound to weaken the strength of capitalism.

So they mustn't object. By taking socialist actions, they weaken the existence of British capitalism. Our interest in the future is not tied up with capitalism. It is tied up with implementing socialist solutions.

If a Labour Government with an overall majority, committed to socialist policies, including nationalising the 25 major monopolies in this country, were to come to power then this would meet with determined ruling class resistance. One couldn't rule out the use of extra parliamentary intervention from the right in the shape of the army, and so on.

This is the real fascist reaction, the kind of state force of the Tories, big business and their fascist movements. That's the real danger. The working class has to have enough strength to meet such a situation. They will be more able to meet it if they are made aware of it.

None of us should ignore the fact that as the workers' make inroads into capital, as they raise their living standards and achieve for themselves a better life, at the expense of capitalism, the capitalists will fight back and will use all the power they can muster to stop the workers from achieving their objectives. But that is not to say that such a fight and such a struggle should not take place. That's what trade unions and political working class movements are all about.

Do you think the ideas of the present leaders of the LP can be changed?

There are two options. The first is, that if they won't change, then we'll change the leaders. The working class has got to have the right to make up its mind about its trade union leaders and its political leaders. Actually the fight inside the Labour Party around the Campaign for Democracy in the LP and the fight inside the unions which is going on for greater democracy — the right to elect their union leaders, the right to control their delegations and so on, are all part of it. If the leaders don't change their minds then we'll change the leaders.

What logically flows from this, is that you are opposed to all bans and proscriptions in the Labour Party?

Yes I think the LP is a federal body which is wide enough to encompass all shades of working class opinion within it. The only kind of ideas we shouldn't tolerate within the Labour Party is the opinions which state that we should defend the status quo. We have got quite a few of those opinions too. What we really need is a socialist status quo.

INTERVIEWERS: TARIQ ALI AND JONATHAN SILBERMAN

7 DAYS in the 32 COUNTIES

Minister Mason's stone necklace

by SUE JACKSON and JOHN MAGEE

It has not been a good week for the Labour government in Ireland. Both on the political and on the trade union front Britain is having great difficulty in making its authority felt.

The headline capturing event has been the clash over the British Government's pay policy at the engineering firm of Mackies. In Belfast alone 15 engineering companies are faced with major pay claims. Of these only four are for less than 30 per cent, while four are over 40 per cent.

Industrial action in support of these claims is already underway at a number of plants, including the SPC factory at Monkstown. But it is the 130-year-old family firm of James Mackie where most attention is focussed. Workers there have won a 22 per cent wage rise which the Labour Government is doing its best to reverse. Last Friday they declared that Mackies will lose export credit facilities if it insists

on paying the rise.

So far the company has refused to budge, and the unions, the company, and even the local CBI are at one in demanding the government allows the settlement to go through. For the company the rise is important because it is afraid of losing its skilled workers. For the workers the rise is essential.

SACKINGS

As Jimmy Graham, District Secretary of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, said last week: 'Workers on the shopfloor will tell you that this wage increase only brings them up to supplementary bene-



fits level'. The sanctions imposed by the government jeopardise some £6 million worth of orders and open the possibility of mass sackings. With unemployment already running at 13 per cent and some 2,000 additional redundancies in the pipeline, Labour's determination to maintain subsistence level

wages at Mackies threatens to add to Belfast's already swollen dole queue.

The effect on the anti-Union workers would be especially severe. It is only in the past few years that Mackies has employed any Catholics and there is little doubt that in the event of sackings it would be the Catholic workers who would be the first to go. This is at a time when unemployment in Catholic West Belfast is already running at around 30 per cent.

West Belfast has also been the scene these last two weeks of a more permanent problem for the Labour Government. Militants in this area have staged a number of demonstrations to mark the first anniversary of the withdrawal of political status for 'crimes' committed after September 1976.

On 16 September over a hundred attended a rally in Belfast's Castle Street organised by the

Relatives' Action Committee to demand political status for all political prisoners. A march down King Street was prevented from entering the city centre by the British Army. The subsequent sit-down protest was addressed by Jim Gibney, just released that morning from Crumlin Road jail.

The following day the Central Belfast Relatives Action Committee held their own rally in Divis Flats at the bottom of the Falls Road. The speakers stressed that political status — the right to wear your own clothes and not be subject to normal prison routine — had originally been won in 1971-72 by the mass support shown for the hunger strike of the prisoners.

Whether it applies to Labour's wages policy, or to its Irish policy, the message is summed up by the latest slogan to adorn the Falls Road. It reads: 'Stone Mason Will Not Break Us'.

Intercontinental Press



Carter Vetoes Visa for Hugo Blann

The latest issue of Intercontinental Press contains an extensive interview with four Irish socialists including Bernadette McAlliskey. Copies, price 25p (plus p&p) are obtainable from the Other Bookshop, 329 Upper Street, London N1.

UTOM Meeting

The United Troops Out Movement will be holding a fringe meeting at the Labour Party Conference on 3 October at the Norfolk Hotel, Kings Road, Brighton, beginning at 6.30pm. A Labour MP will be speaking at the meeting and the speaker from Ireland will be Phil Flynn, deputy general secretary of the Local Government and Public Service Union.

A year in a blanket

by our Long Kesh correspondent

Tuesday 15 September marked a milestone in the fight by prisoners in the H Block of Long Kesh and in Armagh Jail for political status for all political prisoners. Keiran Nugent, a young man from the Falls Road, has withstood the most degrading, barbaric, and inhuman treatment for a full year.

As he was the first anti-imperialist prisoner to refuse to wear the prison uniform he bore the brunt of the earlier part of the fight alone — left in solitary confinement with only a blanket to cover him. Since then he has been refused all visits, parcels, letters, recreation and means of mental stimulus. Recently the blanket has been replaced by a towel in a further attempt to break his morale.

Around 170 men and women have followed Keiran's example and the figure is expected to rise to 300 by Christmas. That this number of people have suffered these conditions for so long highlights their political commitment and makes nonsense of the claim by Roy Mason that they are 'criminal elements'.

Long term damage to the health of these prisoners may be irreparable. Reports seeping from H Block suggest a general deterioration with sores, blisters, ulcers, sight defects, and nails dropping off.

The British media can no longer claim to be shocked or concerned about the plight of political prisoners in such places as the Soviet Union and Zimbabwe when they observe a stony silence about the treatment of Irish political prisoners who have been subjected to such vicious treatment.



Long Kesh Letter

The ruling class have gone into a frenzy with the news that prisoners in Long Kesh were undergoing weapon training. The Sun screamed: 'Inside the classrooms at Long Kesh the subject is always the same. Terror.'

Socialist Challenge knows otherwise. We print our second letter, smuggled out from Long Kesh, written by an Irish political prisoner. He starts by telling of the teaching of a subject other than 'terror'.

We are going to classes in history in here. A lecturer came in from a loyalist area of Belfast but he is a liberal type. We are doing Russian history from 1904 until today. The lecturer claims to be a socialist to the right of centre. He was very surprised that we knew a good deal of Russian history.

It was his first time in here and he was frightened and shaking all over when he first came in; until he discovered we weren't the mad fools the media makes us out to be. So the fun with history shall be good all winter.

The sociology lecturer was in as well. He's an astute person and plays his cards close to his chest; seems right wing. I'm of the opinion that sociology is a little bourgeois.

We have a good library here, plenty of books, even the three volumes of *Das Kapital*. We have total freedom in this cage system, apart from searches. We are closed in at 9pm and set free at 7.30pm.

Meanwhile the news from outside stays the same. In the non-jury courts blatant discrimination and disparity of sentence is an ever occurring phenomenon. On 13 September three right wing loyalists were convicted and sentenced for the armed robbery of Glananne post office in South Armagh.

Two were members of the UDR — a regiment of the British Army, 98 per cent Protestant. They received sentences of six months and five years, while the third, civilian member got eight years.

The area in which the robbery took place is notorious for sectarian killings by loyalist gangs dressed in army uniforms — mainly UDR. The famous Miami



Showband murders at a bogus UDR checkpoint occurred nearby. Two former members of the UDR were killed in the same incident when their bomb exploded prematurely.

Their 'associates' shot dead three members of the showband and seriously wounded two

others. Two members of the UDR have been convicted of this atrocity and are now doing life.

A chain of similar assassinations has occurred within a five mile radius of Glananne. Outside Newtonhamilton two Gaelic football enthusiasts were mur-

dered at another bogus checkpoint in September 1975, while the following January the three Reavey brothers were shot dead in their homes at Whitecross by uniformed men.

Bearing in mind the history of the area and the fact that Republicans would be guaranteed at least 10 years for a similar offence, how can the judicial system claim to be impartial? How can they justify the leniency of the above sentences in comparison with the heavy sentences imposed on republicans?

The British Army is still doing its bit for 'law and order'. Their terms of reference have recently been extended to include bailiff duties on the Lough Foyle estuary near Derry.

This situation arose when the Army arrested a number of local fishermen under the notorious Emergency Provisions Act. They were ostensibly arrested to prevent 'terrorism', but this was later proved to be a disguise for the real purpose of the arrest — to protect the interests of those small minority of unscrupulous exploiters who own the major fishing rights in this country.

The unfortunate fishermen were charged in Derry and fined £400 for daring to take what was rightfully theirs.

To add insult to injury, the British Army has been using their Belfast city centre base in the former Grand Central Hotel as a storage depot for illicit goods obtained from the homes and premises of the people of Belfast. It has reached such an outrageous proportion that a number of soldiers have been charged with stealing £4,000 worth of goods. We may well ask who is protecting who and from whom?

Yours,
Tiocfaidh Ar La.

BRINGING THE WAR BACK HOME

Staged trials

PICKETS at the Manchester Show were harassed by the police last weekend. The picketers were distributing anti-recruitment leaflets exposing the role of the British Army in Ireland.

One picketer, Keith Hackett, was arrested and others were stopped from leafletting by threats of further arrests under the incitement law. This did not prevent over 20 people returning to the show the next day and distributing over a thousand leaflets.

Struggle continues

MORE THAN 80 people packed into the small Conway Hall in London on Tuesday to hear Jackie Kaye of the Prisoners' Aid Committee and Steve Palmer of the Revolutionary Communist Group speak against Britain's repression of the Irish people.

Jackie Kaye examined the repression of those in Britain who actively support the right of the Irish to self-determination. She referred to elaborately staged trials, continued harassment under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and the brutal and degrading treatment of Irish prisoners in British jails.

Weekend school

THE INTERNATIONAL Marxist Group is organising a weekend school on Ireland on 15 and 16 October. It is open to all members and sympathisers of the IMG and invitations have also been sent to Workers League, Big Flame, and a number of Irish groups.

There will be a limited number of places available for supporters of Socialist Challenge. Registration is £1. For details write to: C. Smith, PO Box 50, London N1.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE is organising a public forum on Ireland on Friday 14 October. Entitled 'Ireland: The Struggle Continues — A Socialist Perspective', the meeting will feature Bernadette McAlliskey, of the Independent Socialist Party and speakers from the Movement for a Socialist Republic, Peoples Democracy, and the United Troops Out Movement. The meeting will take place at 7.30pm at the NUBO Hall, Jockeys Field, Holford, London.

Troops cross Lebanese border

Israel's strategy of tension

When Israel sent its tanks over the Lebanese border, nearly two weeks ago, the Palestinian movement braced itself for a new attack on its right to exist. It is now clear that this was a piece of gunboat diplomacy rather than an attempt to launch a full-scale war. But the situation in southern Lebanon remains explosive. **RUTH CHALLIS** and **COLIN TALBOT** fill in the background from Lebanon and Israel and **RICHARD CARVER** in London assesses Israel's intentions in Lebanon.

THE 'WAR' in southern Lebanon is not all that it seemed. Far from being an all-out battle which could escalate into a new war, it has emerged that the Israeli tanks and Palestinian mortars are creating a lot of smoke but very little fire.

That does not make the smouldering conflict in 'Fatahland' any less important. The latest attack is a none too subtle — but so far successful — Israeli attempt to disrupt the American peace plan. In its early stages it

was the Israelis as much as the Palestinians who broadcast the assault on Lebanon to the world.

But Israeli intervention in southern Lebanon is for real. The pictures on this page show that Israeli tanks have long been passing the border fence into Lebanon and that the rightist militias are openly supplied with Israeli arms.

The aim of the present attack is to call the bluff of all the other forces in the Middle East. By launching an apparently major offensive the Israelis hope to put

the skids under the US plan for Palestinian representation in a united Arab delegation at the recalled Geneva conference.

They know that the Palestinians are in a weak military position after the latest ceasefire agreement and mean to expose that weakness. And, above all, it is a challenge to the Syrian army, which has adopted an increasingly pro-Palestinian stance, to take on the Israelis if they dare.

The Israelis know that Syrian backing for the Palestinians is little more than a bid to win bargaining counters at the Geneva carve-up. They also know that militarily and politically Syria is no position to undertake even a limited war. The most the Syrians can do is to send in a few troops in the uniforms of Sa'iq, one of the Palestine Liberation Organisation militias.

The Israelis want to create a 'buffer zone' on their northern border, by pushing the Palestinians north beyond the Litani

river. The vacuum would be filled by pro-Israeli Lebanese rightists.

The danger was that the Israelis might be trying to push all the way up to the Litani river this time. That immediate threat seems to have passed. Instead they have set themselves the more limited target of scaring the Syrians into negotiating a Palestinian withdrawal from the border zone.

The PLO's repeated concessions to the Syrians have weakened their ability to resist these pressures. Both politically and militarily they have given away many of the advantages they retained at the end of the civil war. The PLO leadership's preoccupation with winning itself seats at Geneva is bound to make it pull its punches.

Still, the militias themselves are determined to resist this and any future Israeli invasion of Lebanese soil. This sets strict limits on their leaders' room for manoeuvre.



How not to build solidarity

LAST SATURDAY saw a meeting to discuss setting up a Palestine Solidarity Committee, organised by the pro-PLO current of the General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS). It was attended by representatives of the General Union of Arab Students, the rejectionist current of GUPS, the International Marxist group, Socialist Workers Party, New Communist Party, Workers Revolutionary Party, Matzpen and other organisations and individuals.

The meeting's convenors put forward a statement on the 'Aims of the PSC', beginning: 'The PSC recognises the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. . . There could be no better example of how not to set up a solidarity campaign. Its object should not be to act as a 'front' for the PLO or any other Palestinian organisation for that matter, but to build the broadest support among the student and workers movement for the struggle of the Palestinian masses against Zionism and the Arab regimes.'

The IMG's alternative resolution explained that the 'only condition of entry into the PSC is

opposition to Zionism as a settler-colonial project in the service of imperialism' and 'unconditional support for the right of the Arab-Palestinian masses to organise and struggle independently of the Arab regimes against Zionism.' It went on to outline the tasks of local branches of the campaign in organising information and solidarity action.

The meeting's organisers adopted increasingly administrative and undemocratic measures against this proposal as it became clear that it had the overwhelming support of the meeting. The meeting ended with a walkout of almost all the participants after it had become clear that the chair was ignoring the floor. The convenors were left to rubber stamp their resolution with the grateful assistance of the WRP and NCP.

The organisations and individuals who walked out, and others who were not represented, are meeting on 5 October to discuss a demonstration and other actions against the Israeli Prime Minister's visit to Britain in early November.

Israel's occupied zones

Where it's better to be a dog

In August a fact-finding delegation from the National Union of Students Executive visited Lebanon and Israel to gather information on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. **COLIN TALBOT** reports on some of the things he saw in Israel. A fuller report will appear in a future issue.

DRIVING past Tiberias on the west coast of the Sea of Galilee in the early evening is a spectacular sight. Above the darkness of the lake rise the darker hills of the Golan Heights, topped by the darkening blue sky. Along the top of the Heights are numerous clusters of twinkling lights.

It is a beautiful view and it is very easy to forget what those lights represent. For they are the illumination of the Israeli settlements which have been established on Golan on the land captured from Syria.

Throughout the West Bank and Golan we saw Israeli settlements. Most are surrounded by high wire fences and all have their own arsenals. These are the settlements which caused such a stir when the new Israeli government of Menachem Begin legalised three of them on the West Bank.

PROUD

What upset the establishment and press in the West was Begin's forthright admission that these settlements had official backing — the previous Labour Alignment administration had merely done the same thing without admitting so publicly. Begin has come out openly and claimed the occupied territories as 'liberated' zones.

Israelis are proud of their occupation. They claim that it is the most liberal occupation ever carried out and cannot be compared to colonialism. The story the Palestinians of the West Bank tell is a very different one. The Mayor of Ramallah, Kham Khalf, told us of deportations in the middle of the night, of the beatings of young student demonstrators, of torture in the military prisons where Palestinians are held without trial.

Khalif also told us how he is prevented from leaving the West Bank. For example, he is unable to attend a meeting in October for him in the British House of Commons by two Labour MPs. When we spoke to the Military Governor, Yakob Katz, he at first denied that there were restrictions on anyone's movements. When we mentioned Khalif's case there

was much umming and ahing, and he explained that we had to understand that the Mayor was a big security risk!

The Israelis point to the lack of hunger and poverty and claim this as a positive feature of their occupation. A Palestinian stallholder in East Jerusalem said it was true that no-one starved, but no-one gets rich either. In any case, he said, even the dogs don't starve. However he added that the dogs were better off than the Palestinians because they didn't have any feelings.

In Israel the delegation met leading members of both the ruling Likud coalition and the ousted Labour Alignment. The impression that I gained from these meetings and from many discussions with ordinary Israeli Jews was that there is what they call a 'Zionist consensus'. This consensus is the agreement which all, or at least the vast majority, of Israeli Zionists have on the basic questions of the day.

They all support the refusal to countenance any independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza. They all support Israeli aid to the rightist militias in southern Lebanon, including Israeli invasion of the south if necessary. In their attitude to the Palestinians, there is very little difference between the different Zionist parties.

In the north of Israel, at the so-called 'Good Fence', we saw

Israeli-rightist collaboration in action. From the 'Good Fence', just outside Metulla, we could see two military bases on the tops of hills to the west inside Lebanon. The Israelis claimed that these were Lebanese rightist bases. But four days earlier we had seen these bases from Palestinian bases near Taibe inside Lebanon.

The Fedayeen had pointed out that one of them was equipped with sophisticated communications equipment — which could only be of use to the Israelis. We saw destroyed Israeli tanks outside Taibe that had been knocked out in April. The Israelis say they have not been into Lebanon since 1973.

In Jerusalem we met leaders of the anti-Zionist movement — Israel Shahak of the League for Human and Civil Rights, and Leah Tsemel of the Trotskyist 'Matzpen Marxist'. Both Shahak and Tsemel predicted renewed Israeli aggression and the possibility of an invasion of southern Lebanon.

Shahak, a survivor of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, believes that the Likud government will soon need a war as Israel's internal economic difficulties escalate — 40 per cent inflation, for example. Palestinian leaders also predicted the Israeli-rightist push in southern Lebanon to try to dislodge the Palestinian-leftist forces from the border region.

As Zionists claim the area of Lebanon to the south of the river Qasbiye, between Metulla and the sea, such an invasion would probably include permanent occupation. All the signs in the past week would indicate that such a full scale invasion is not far off.



Rockets captured from Phalangist militias bear Israeli markings

Lebanon:

The government with no power

Lebanon, nine months after its occupation by the Arab peace-keeping forces, is still paralysed. The puppet government of Elias Sarkis passes laws but has no police or army to implement them; judges draw salaries but the courts remain closed; and the de facto partition of the country into Christian and Moslem religions continues apace. **RUTH CHALLIS** reports from Lebanon.

In Beirut the Syrian army maintains a precarious calm, occasionally punctuated by outbursts of fighting which it cannot prevent and in which it dare not intervene lest the political tight-rope-walking of the Assad regime in Syria be endangered.

No attempt is being made to reconstruct the devastated city. The financial and commercial bourgeoisie of the Arab world has long since fled, taking with it the basis of Beirut's prosperity — a prosperity built, ironically, on the boycott of Israeli ports.

In West Beirut huge refugee camps sprawl among the ruins of the Moslem quarter of the city. Outside the camps almost every building bears the pock marks of artillery fire and whole areas lie in ruins. The old tourist haunt has sprouted a makeshift street market, made up by shopkeepers who were either bombed out or who fled mixed districts, terrorised by such incidents as the Quarantina massacre or the assault on Tet Al-Zaatar. The latter alone cost an estimated 3,000 lives.

The camps are swollen to bursting. Hundreds of people — Palestinian and Lebanese — are forced to camp on the beaches and in the caves outside the city. Some of these people may have

fled their homes three or four times — from the Israelis, from Jordan after Black September and now from the Lebanese rightists.

However, amidst the chaos of a civil war 'frozen' by the Syrian invasion, the infrastructure built by the Palestinians has survived and even flourished under the impetus of the mass mobilisations of 1973-76. We visited hospitals, clinics, nurseries, workshops and factories — all set up and run by Palestinians.

The powers of organisation of the Palestinian resistance are indeed phenomenal. For instance, one hospital we visited has a large underground area which is safe from bombing, has sophisticated equipment and supplies, and can be reached from the camps by underground tunnels.

Much of the organisation in the camps is undertaken by women and during the civil war this assumed an immense importance. We learned of bomb-shelter committees, food distribution centres and paramedical teams which were composed entirely of women.

Of course, at first there was some opposition to the idea of women actually engaging in battle, but this lessened considerably

as women went into battle zones with a first-aid kit on one shoulder and a rifle on the other. Eventually a women's brigade was formed and there are now women fedayeen fighting in the South.

The Palestinians date their revolution from 1 January 1965, the occasion of the first Fatah guerrilla operation. It is impossible to overemphasise the importance of armed struggle in transforming the Palestinian masses from defeated refugees into a conscious nationality, aware of its rights and doubly aware of its enemies.

Above all the commando groups offered hope, and they found a quick response in Lebanon both after the 1967 war and the 1970-71 clashes with the Jordanian regime. The area known as Fatahland, stretching across Southern Lebanon, is the region traditionally controlled by the resistance and for several years has been the launching pad for operations against Israel.

Now it is the scene of fierce fighting between the Palestinian-leftist alliance and the Israeli-rightist forces. The civilian camps in Southern Lebanon are a traditional target for Israeli 'reprisal' air raids and the flat-roofed huts are camouflaged to lessen the danger from frequent strafing.

* Ruth Challis was in Lebanon as part of a delegation from the British Anti-Zionist Organisation. She will be writing an article on the situation and role of Palestinian women for the next issue of Socialist Woman.



Colin Talbot (right) and Dave Aaronowitch of the NUS Executive examine a destroyed Israeli tank in Lebanon.

In Brief

WEST GERMANY: The Evening Standard last week published a letter from Socialist Challenge International Editor Richard Carver exposing the distortions in their report of our revelations of Hans Martin Schleyer's Nazi past (see last week's issue). You may remember that they maintained that the information they received from the Wiener Library contained 'nothing damaging on Schleyer'. The letter pointed out that the Wiener Library had confirmed that Schleyer was in charge of Nazifying the Austrian universities, was a leading member of the Association of Industries in Prague, and that he was an SS officer. In reply the Standard repeated that this was 'nothing damning'!

EAST GERMANY: East Germany, the country with no political prisoners, released 180 of them last week. The release was paid for by the West German Government! Apparently the going rate for a physician is 150,000DM. Labourers only fetch 30,000DM.

BRAZIL: More than a thousand people were arrested when police broke into the Catholic University in Sao Paulo last week. Thousands of students were meeting to discuss demonstrations against the military regime.

SPAIN: Madrid missed its newspapers for a day last week when papers closed in protest against a bomb attack on the satirical paper *El Pápagu*. Two people were killed. Only the right-wing *El Alcázar* appeared. The Triple-A far right terrorists claimed responsibility.

PORTUGAL: Police suspect that a recent series of bombings can be traced back to a far right group linked to the Angolan FNLA. The aim is to provoke a right-wing military intervention.



SANTIAGO CARRILLO

EUROS: Santiago Carrillo, general secretary of the Spanish Communist Party, will be guest of honour at the Labour Party conference. His French and Italian counterparts have refused similar invitations.

ITALY: Guerillas, apparently leftists, shot a Communist Party journalist five times in the legs outside his Turin home last week. You would not know from the British press that the vast majority of the far left condemns this brutal and lunatic ultra-leftism. The Communist Party has been quite successful in labelling anyone who opposes its collaboration with the Christian Democrats as mad terrorists.

PHILIPPINES: President Marcos has declared a public holiday for Filipinos to give thanks for five years of martial law. He marked the occasion by arresting 28 oppositionists.

HONG KONG: About 80 police officers have been arrested on suspicion of taking bribes from a drugs syndicate.

USSR: Ernst Axelrod, a dissident psychologist, has been arrested. There are fears that Anatoly Shcharansky, a member of the Helsinki monitoring group arrested several months ago, may be committed to a mental institution.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Jan Princ, a Charter 77 signatory, has been sentenced to three months jail. Ales Machacek and Vladimir Lastuvka are to go on trial this week on charges of distributing the Charter. The trial is only scheduled to last three days.

Labour in Africa Imperialism's messenger boy

Delegates in Brighton next week will face a familiar spectacle: another year of brazen Government defiance of Labour Party policy on southern Africa. CHRIS O'BRIEN reports.

Once again there is a resolution condemning Government arms sales to South Africa. Once again it will be passed, and once again the Government will ignore it.

The past year has been a distinguished one for arms sales. Take the tropospheric scatter system, for instance. The system is used by all major powers for military communications, since it gets rid of the need for vulnerable ground stations.

Under a loophole in the 1970 Control Order Marconi was going ahead with a contract to sell such a system to South Africa when news leaked out. The Labour Government was forced to plug the loophole and make Marconi apply for an export licence, only to grant the licence on 25 October last year!

Labour's record on Namibia, under South African occupation, is equally glorious. The Namibian people have long ceased to take Labour's proclamations of support seriously. And with good reason.

RIOTINTO ZINC

In 1968 the Labour Government and its Technology Minister, Tony Benn, signed a contract with Rio Tinto Zinc for the exploitation of the Rossing uranium mine in Namibia. The successful operation of Rossing is crucial to South Africa's nuclear programme.

In 1973, when Labour was in opposition, Benn wrote in *The Guardian*: 'We have already decided to terminate the AEA-RTZ contract. That particular case, in which neither the AEA nor RTZ were altogether candid with the last Labour Government, points to the need for even greater vigilance than has been shown in the past. As the Minister responsible at the time, I certainly learned that lesson.'

He had learned nothing of the sort, for now it is the same Tony Benn, Secretary of State for Energy, who is refusing even to

discuss the cancellation of the Rossing contract, despite repeated calls by the South West African People's Organisation and industrial action by workers in the mine.

FRAUD

Even Labour ministers admit that Britain does not need any Rossing uranium within the next ten years — and that assumes that we want a British nuclear programme. So why is the Government determined to buy Namibian uranium?

Benn says it is in the long term interests of Namibia! We prefer to see it as yet another example of a Labour Government playing messenger boy for imperialist interests in southern Africa.

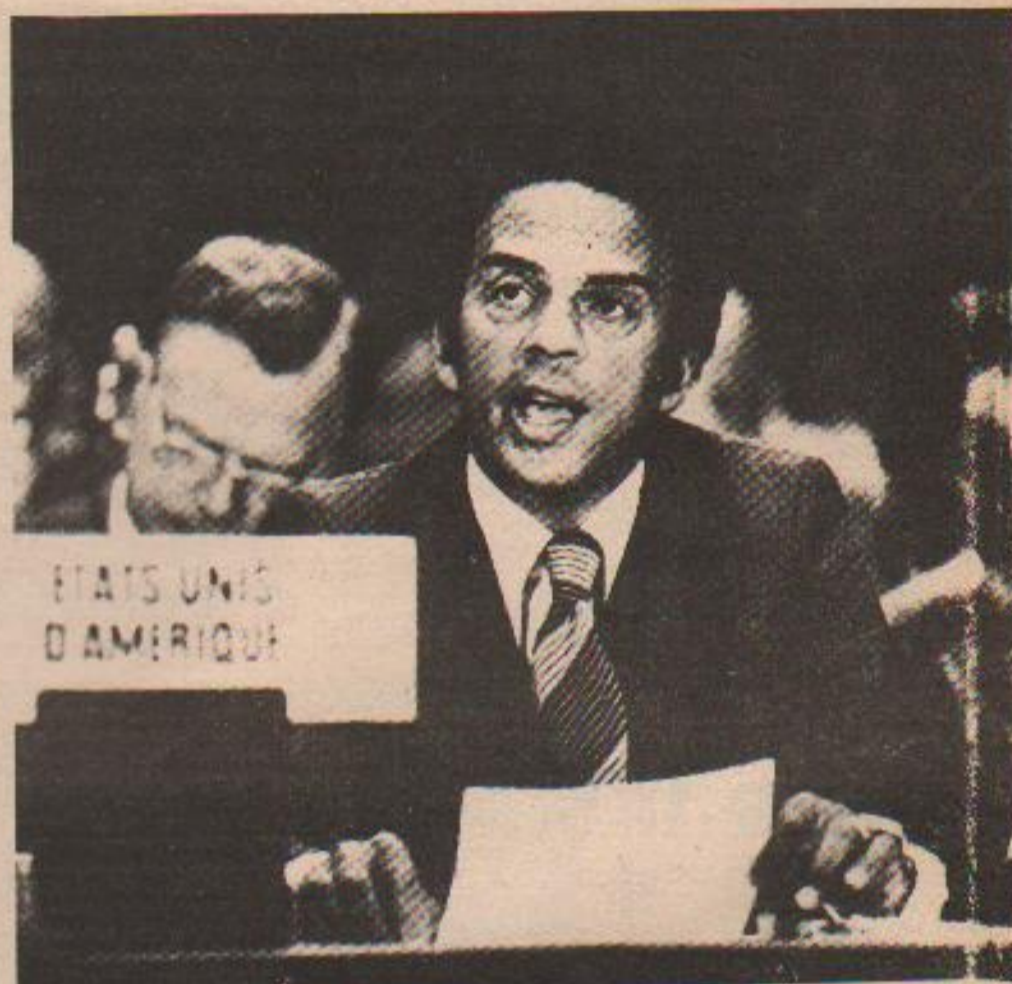
The crowning glory of Labour's foreign policy — the Anglo-American plan for a 'transition to majority rule' in Zimbabwe — confirms this view. Quite simply, the plan is a fraud.

Instead of the right to immediate elections to a Constituent Assembly with one person, one vote, there is a non-elected transitional regime, presided over by Lord Carver, a man with long experience of counter-insurgency operations, including in Kenya, and a public champion of Brigadier Kitson's views on the subject.

The transition is to be policed by a force which includes sections of the Ian Smith army. Last week we printed an eye witness account of the murders and tortures carried out by these very people who are meant to be the guarantors of majority rule. A report published last week by the Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice confirms our story.

RACIST JUDGES

The racist judiciary is to remain intact: the same judges who pass death sentences on the freedom fighters are to be entrusted with giving power to the



ANDREW YOUNG, American UN ambassador, has stayed in the background during recent talks. But it is still US imperialism that calls the tune.

black majority!

Clause 5 of the proposed constitution includes a provision for 'the protection from deprivation of property'. That means that, for example, the grossly inequitable system of land tenure cannot be altered, unless the white landlords choose to up and go. If they do, the Owen-Young plan proposes a multi-million pounds fund to compensate them. White property figures larger in the mind of Labour's Foreign Secretary than black lives.

These developments are the perfect answer to those on the

left of the Labour Party who have called on the Government to carry out its colonial responsibilities against the 'illegal' Smith regime. It shows that Britain has no progressive role to play in southern Africa. The weakness of every conference resolution and pious declaration in the past has been a failure to recognise this simple fact. In the face of overtly pro-imperialist policies from the Labour Government polite requests can achieve nothing.

If British companies are to stop arming the racist regimes, if

Britain is to cancel the RTZ contract and if Labour is to recognise the right of Zimbabwe to self determination, conference resolutions will need to be backed up with a campaign of propaganda and action in the labour movement as a whole. A first step would be support from Labour Parties for the trade union week of action planned for the early new year.

If delegates leave Brighton to fight for their local parties to implement the policies they have voted for, for once the resolution passing may not have been in vain.

Fascists behind jail break

*Continued from back page.

defunct UBC.

It was a widespread operation pulling in dozens of people from all over London, including, for a while, the well-known model Sulina Judd. Her agents and the police denied that she had any connection with the fraud.

Also arrested were Roberto Loyola, the man bailed in the UBC case, and Umberto Frascati and Antonio Papalia, the men who escaped with Torri.

Only a few days previously Torri had been seen in the House of Lords. There may be no connection, but it does show that he has acquaintances in the highest echelons of British society.

Scotland Yard's investigations into the Torri case have revealed a £1,750 million fraud, apparently involving the North American Mafia and kidnappings in Italy, neither of which they are prepared to discuss.

The original charges against Torri and friends related to an attempt to defraud the Cessna Aircraft Co. of a light plane by paying \$1.5 million of post-dated invalid bonds. A clue on the plane indicates that this was to be used for a drugs run — Torri's old business.

Strange, then, that the British press should have omitted to mention a £13 million heroin haul in London a month later. Those arrested were Marco Chiuri, an associate of Vallanzasca, the Italian fascist bandit, Ermilio Alosi and Federico Gicardi. All three were members of the d'Agnolo gang involved in the Italian van hold-up. Anonymous sources indicate a direct connection with the Cessna light aeroplane.

At the moment this must remain speculative, but it comes as no surprise after the discovery of a clear link between d'Agnolo, Loyola and Torri.

A couple of obvious conclusions have emerged from my investigations. First, the ease with which all those concerned have been bailed for astronomical sums. Zarpinelli, the shipping agent, had no trouble getting his hands on the £60,000 needed to bail d'Agnolo, Loyola and Scalamandra. Similarly an anonymous benefactor was able to offer £150,000 for Torri and his associates when they first appeared. Torri's friend in the House of Lords perhaps, or one of his high society friends, or even the mysterious Zarpinelli again?

Zarpinelli himself provides another clue to the political connections in the affair. An Italian source claims that it was he who put up the bail for Sandro Saccucci, the Italian fascist MP arrested in London last year for the murder of a left

winger. Saccucci, who had been implicated in the 'Tora-Tora' attempt at a fascist coup in 1970, led by Prince Valerio Borghese, was lucky this time. He was saved from extradition by his re-election as an MP which entitled him to parliamentary immunity.

Another feature of the Saccucci affair leads on to the second conclusion. Saccucci was able to lie low in Britain for several days, despite having Interpol and Scotland Yard on his tail, until he was picked up in a house in Coptic Street, Bloomsbury. Torri similarly has had little trouble getting in and out of Italy by an underground route, despite having no passport and a jail sentence hanging over him. D'Agnolo is now believed to be in Italy with no passport or identity card.

POSTCARD

There is an extremely efficient underground network between London and Italy, possibly the same route that Torri, Frascati and Papalia are travelling at this moment.

On Sunday, Scotland Yard claimed to have a postcard from Torri, posted near Frankfurt. On Monday they speculated that he may still be in Britain. Maybe the police could take a look at the building in Coptic Street which houses the offices of quite a well-known person. They know who I mean.



PIER LUIGI TORRI and MARISA MELL in 1970. [Inset] SANDRO SACCUCCI: Italian fascist who used the British underground network.

In the mid-1950s there was emerging in South Africa a group of angry young Black men who were beginning to 'grasp the notion of (their) peculiar uniqueness' and who were eager to define who they were and what. These were the elements who were disgruntled with the direction imposed on the African National Congress by the 'old guard' within its leadership.

These young men were questioning a number of things, among which was the 'go slow' attitude adopted by the leadership, and the ease with which the leadership accepted coalitions with organisations other than those run by Blacks. The 'People's Charter' adopted in Kliptown in 1955 was evidence of this. In a sense one can say that these were the first real signs that the Blacks in South Africa were beginning to realise the need to go it alone and to evolve a philosophy based on, and directed by, Blacks. In other words, Black consciousness was slowly manifesting itself.

It may be said that, on the broader political front, Blacks in South Africa have not shown any overt signs of new thinking since the banning of their political parties; nor were the signs of disgruntlement with the White world ever given a real chance to crystallise into a positive approach. Black students, on the other hand, began to rethink their position in Black-White coalitions. The emergence of the South African Student Organisation and its tough policy of non-involvement with the White world set people's minds thinking along new lines. This was a challenge to the age-old tradition in South Africa that opposition to apartheid was enough to qualify Whites for acceptance by the Black world.

WE SHALL LEAD OURSELVES

Despite protest and charges of racialism from liberal-minded White students, the Black students stood firm in their rejection of the principle of unholy alliances between Blacks and Whites. A spokesman of the new right-of-middle group, NAFSAS, was treated to a dose of the new thinking when a Black student told him that 'we shall lead ourselves, be it to the sea, to the mountain or to the desert; we shall have nothing to do with the White students'.

The call for Black consciousness is the most positive call to come from any group in the Black world for a long time. It is more than just a reactionary rejection of Whites by Blacks. The quintessence of it is the realisation by the Blacks that, in order to feature well in this game of power politics, they have to use the concept of group power and to build a strong foundation for this. Being an historically, politically, socially and economically disinherited and dispossessed group, they have the strongest foundation from which to operate. The philosophy of Black consciousness, therefore, expresses group pride and the determination by the Blacks to rise and attain the envisaged self.

At the heart of this kind of thinking is the realisation by the Blacks that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed. Once the latter has been so effectively manipulated and controlled by the oppressor as to make the oppressed believe that he is a liability to the White man, then there will be nothing the oppressed can do that will really scare the powerful masters. Hence thinking along lines of Black consciousness makes the Black man see himself as a being, entire in himself, and not as an extension of a broom or additional leverage to some machine. At the end of it all, he cannot tolerate attempts by anybody to dwarf the significance of his manhood. Once this happens, we shall know that the real man in the Black person is beginning to shine through.

Of course it is not surprising to us that Whites are not very much aware of these developing forces since such consciousness is essentially an inward-looking process. It has become common practice in this country for people to consult their papers to see what is said by Black leaders — by which they understand the leaders of the various apartheid institutions. While these

White Racism and Black Consciousness

Vorster's police regarded him as dangerous. So they killed him. We print an extract from an article by STEVE BIKO.



Ntsiki Biko and her children after learning of Steve's death

by Steve Biko

bodies are often exploited by individuals in them for candid talking, they certainly cannot be taken seriously as yardsticks by which to measure Black feeling on any topic.

National consciousness and its spread in South Africa has to work against a number of factors. First there are the traditional complexes, then the emptiness of the native's past and lastly the question of Black-White dependency. The traditional inferior-superior Black-White complexes are deliberate creations of the colonialist. Through the work of missionaries and the style of education adopted, the Blacks were made to feel that the White man was some kind of God whose word could not be doubted.

The attitude of some rural African folk who are against education is often misunderstood, not least by the African intellectual. Yet the reasons put forward by these people carry with them the realisation of their inherent dignity and worth. They see education as the quickest way of destroying the substance of the African culture. They complain bitterly of the disruption in the life pattern, non-observation of customs, and constant derision from the non-conformists whenever any of them go through school.

Lack of respect for the elders is, in the African tradition, an unforgivable and cardinal sin. Yet how can one prevent the loss of respect of child

for father when the child is actively taught by his know-all White tutors to disregard his family's teachings? How can an African avoid losing respect for his tradition when in school his whole cultural background is summed up in one word: barbarism?

To add to the White-oriented education received, the whole history of Black people is presented as a long lamentation of repeated defeats. Strangely enough, everybody has come to accept that the history of South Africa starts in 1652. No doubt this is to support the often-told lie that Blacks arrived in this country at about the same time as the Whites. Thus, a lot of attention has to be paid to our history if we as Blacks want to aid each other in our coming into consciousness.

We have to rewrite our history and describe in it the heroes that formed the core of resistance to the White invaders. More has to be revealed and stress has to be laid on the successful nation-building attempts by people like Shaka, Moshoeshe and Hintsa.

Our culture must be defined in concrete terms. We must relate the past to the present and demonstrate an historical evolution of the modern African. We must reject the attempts by the powers that be to project an arrested image

of our culture. This is not the sum total of our culture.

They have deliberately arrested our culture at the tribal stage to perpetuate the myth that African people were near-cannibals, had no real ambitions in life, and were preoccupied with sex and drink. In fact the wide-spread vice often found in the African townships is a result of the interference of the White man in the natural evolution of the true native culture. 'Wherever colonisation is a fact, the indigenous culture begins to rot and among the ruins something begins to be born which is condemned to exist on the margin allowed it by the European culture.' It is through the evolution of our genuine culture that our identity can be fully rediscovered.

We must seek to restore to the Black people a sense of the great stress we used to lay on the value of human relationships; to highlight the fact that in the pre-Van Riebeeck days we had a high regard for people, their property and for life in general; to reduce the hold of technology over man and to reduce the materialistic element that is slowly creeping into the African character.

BUY BLACK

It goes without saying that the Black people of South Africa, in order to make the necessary strides in the new direction they are thinking of, have to take a long look at how they can use their economic power to their advantage. As the situation stands today, money from the Black world tends to take a uni-directional flow to the White society. Blacks buy from White supermarkets, White greengrocers, White bottle stores, White chemists, and, to crown it all, those who can, bank at White-owned banks. Needless to say, they travel to work in government-owned trains or White-owned buses.

If then we wish to make use of the little we have to improve our lot, it can only lead to greater awareness of the power we wield as a group. The 'Buy Black' campaign that is being waged by some people in the Johannesburg area must not be scoffed at.

It is often claimed that the advocates of Black consciousness are hemming themselves in into a closed world, choosing to weep on each other's shoulders and thereby cutting out useful dialogue with the rest of the world. Yet I feel that the Black people of the world, in choosing to reject the legacy of colonialism and White domination and to build around themselves their own values, standards and outlook to life, have at last established a solid base for meaningful co-operation amongst themselves in the larger battle of the Third World against the rich nations.

As Fanon puts it, 'the consciousness of the self is not the closing of a door to communication... National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension.' This is an encouraging sign, for there is no doubt that the Black-White power struggle in South Africa is but a microcosm of the global confrontation between the Third World and the rich White nations of the world which is manifesting itself in an ever more real manner as the years go by.

Thus, in this age and day, one cannot but welcome the evolution of a positive outlook in the Black world. The wounds that have been inflicted on the Black world and the accumulated insults of oppression over the years were bound to provoke reaction from the Black people. Now we can sit and laugh at the inhumanity of our powerful masters, knowing only too well that they destroy themselves and not us with their insolent cynicism. Now we can listen to the Barnett Potters concluding with apparent glee and with a sense of sadistic triumph that the fault with the Black man is to be found in his genes, and we can watch the rest of White society echoing 'amen', and still not be moved to the reacting type of anger.

We have in us the will to live through these trying times; over the years we have attained moral superiority over the White man; we shall watch as Time destroys his paper castles and know that all these little pranks were but frantic attempts of frightened little people to convince each other that they can control the minds and bodies of indigenous peoples of Africa indefinitely.

What's Left

Rates: 5p per word. Display: £1.00 per column inch. Deadline: 3pm Saturday before publication.

ON SATURDAY, 1 October two films on Gurwick will be shown at the Other Cinema, Tottenham Street, London W1, beginning at 6.30pm. They have been produced by the Newsreal Collective and the Poster Collective. Proceeds will go to the strike committee and tickets are £1.50 each. They are available from the strike headquarters, 375, High Road, Willesden, London NW10, or at the door.

LEWISHAM Anti-fascist and Brixton Anti-Jubilee Defence Committees. Fund-raising party, Sat 1 Oct, 8-2, 40p (unemployed 15p - kids free). 36 St Alphonsus Road, Clapham Common SW4. Reggae, Rock, Food, Real Ale. Organised by All Lambeth Anti-Racist Movement.

CAMPAIGN for Free Speech on Ireland is now researching a study of media coverage of the Irish question. Please send any information, including personal experiences, to the Campaign at: c/o 84 Claverton Street, London SW1. All information will be treated in strictest confidence and all contributors consulted before publication.

INTERVENTION No 1 contains Marxism, Method and Revolution by Ken Turbuck. An analysis of the nature and role of cadres, sects and sectarianism based upon a textual analysis of Gramsci. From Intervention, 539 Battersea Park Road, London SW11. 40p post paid.

WOMEN in Manual Trades National Meeting. Women working in construction, or as mechanics, gardeners, printers etc., or interested in doing so, contact Women in Manual Trades, c/o Tess McMahon, 18 Sholebrooke Ave, Leeds 7. (Leeds 629427 exts.)

NATIONAL conference on 15 October to discuss and coordinate the defence of Gay News and of gays generally against the backlash. To be held at Birmingham Gay Community Centre, 9-10 Borcley St., Digbeth. Tel 021-643 7889. Starts 11am.

MIDLANDS Socialist Feminist Conference: 'Feminism, Sexuality and Abortion'. Saturday, 15 October, 10am-8pm, Lancaster Polytechnic, Coventry. Registration £1: students and claimants 75p. Cheques payable to: Socialist Feminist Group, c/o Carolyn Pickering, 37 Gavelston Road, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.

LONDON accommodation wanted. Socialist moving from Glasgow seeks room in flat or house. Phone Alan Freeman 041-332 8728 or (work) 041-339 8855 ext. 7120.

DEMONSTRATION for cultural workers. Organised by Independent Theatre Council and Association of Community Theatres. Demo coincides with meetings between Treasury and Arts Council to determine next year's arts subsidy, to call for an alternative subsidy and end to cuts. Assembly 11am, Speakers Corner — to lobby Treasury and Dept. of Education. Fri 30 Sept. Bring costumes, banners etc.

BROADSIDE Mobile Workers' Theatre's play about the struggle of the Portuguese people against fascism and for socialism, *We Have the Power of the Winds*: Theatre Technis, 9 York Way, London N7. (01 267 0433) Sat 8 Oct, 8pm. Followed by discussion. Tickets £1 (Students, OAPs 50p).

VIOLENCE against women: Workers League public meeting with speakers and discussion, The Roebuck, Tottenham Cl Rd, 29 Sept 8pm.

MERSEYSIDE Workers Action supporters meeting on 'The question of Left Unity'. Guest speaker Sean Malgamra. On Wednesday 28 September at Paddy Doyle's Bar, The Triton, Paradise St., Liverpool 1, commencing 7.45pm.

BROADSIDE Mobile Workers' Theatre requires administrator (full-time). Must be socialist, long term commitment. Phone: 01-450 6992/01-730 6396. Write to: 58 Holborn House, Holborn Place, London SW1.

WOMEN in Eastern Europe. Meeting to discuss bourgeois-feminist movements and current debates about the family on Sat 8 Oct, 10.30am-5.00pm, In TV Room, LSE. For further details phone 01-263 2741.

WANT A GAY TIME? Mary Whitehouse speaks on Freedom! Hackney Town Hall 7.14 27 Sept. Gay News supporters meet in pub opposite 8.45.

HULL Trades Council anti-fascist committee open meeting to mobilise for 8 Oct Tameside Demo. Speakers from Hull and Tameside AFCs. 8 Oct, 7.30. Venue to be decided. For details of meeting and coach ring Maggie Blaydon 0482-443243.

COVENTRY'S Labour movement. History workshop on work, shop stewards and politics. 28-30 October. Details from WEA, 81 Berkeley Rd., Coventry.

FIGHT racism! Stop the Nazi Front! Public meeting 8 Oct, 7.30pm, Nelson Hall, Edinburgh. Sponsored by Edinburgh Anti-racist committee, Central LPYS and Anti-fascist Defence Campaign.

Fighting the fascists

1

ANTHONY BARNETT, writing on the lessons of Lewisham (Socialist Challenge No.13) makes some pertinent criticisms of the actions and political positions taken by the far left in its intervention in, and reporting of the events of 13 August.

We hope that in the future he will direct some even more 'pertinent criticisms' in the direction where in our view they are certainly more needed, i.e., the pages of Tribune, Labour Weekly and the Morning Star.

We fully agree that some omissions were made in the reports about the role of various organisations. However, in spite of the rather naive posturings of the SWP leadership, we do not believe that on the day any one organisation played a hegemonic role, mainly because of the real unity achieved in the preparations beforehand among the forces of the far left and the anti-fascist vanguard, which led to a great deal of joint activity on and before 13 August.

We agree also that the use of quotations torn out of context to justify particular actions or pos-

tions do nothing to aid the building of a mass working class united front against the fascists. Equally to use the same quotations, saying on the one hand that they are incorrect, but on the other, that there are other reasons for stopping the Front, without saying what they are, or how they should be stopped is a curious omission in an article dealing with the 'Lessons of Lewisham'.

We believe the record so far demonstrates quite clearly that it is those in the CP and the labour and trade union movement who argue for their 'alternative' against the fascists in terms of the 'respectability' of the ballot box and who condemn united action on the basis of 'no platform' for fascists, who need to re-learn the lessons of how to fight the fascists. Whatever the weaknesses displayed by the far left, it certainly cannot in the main, be criticised for playing a divisive role in the anti-fascist movement.

As members of the IMG in Lewisham, we have had the experience of fighting alongside militants of the SWP; Young Communist League, Labour Party others both inside the All Lewisham Campaign Against Racism & Fascism (ALCARAF), as committee members, and outside, in support of the Lewisham 21 Defense Camp-

aign, set up by the SWP, for the broadest possible unity in action on August 13th.

In the face of united opposition from the local CP and their supporters in ALCARAF we fought from the outset to widen the Campaign on a national basis as opposed to their 'fighting fascism in one borough' approach because they wanted to control the campaign through ALCARAF, on a local basis.

In this we argued that to build the greatest unity, it was necessary to fully support the ALCARAF demonstration with large contingents from the far left and anti-fascist bodies having the 'no platform' position, at the same time calling upon ALCARAF and its followers to support the assembly at Clifton Rise in the afternoon in solidarity with the black and Asian community and against the NF march.

While it is true that certain of the SWP leadership and Socialist Worker ignored the need to argue for their positions, except in a rather ultimatum and sectarian way, and downplayed the role of united action, many SWP members recognising this need, fought alongside the IMG and others in ALCARAF and the labour movement to achieve this.

Contrast this with the posi-

tions taken by the Lewisham CP and some Labour Councillors who refused to support the Lewisham 21 Campaign and help to broaden its base; who refused to allow representatives from the Campaign into extended ALCARAF committee meetings planning the counter-march and who in the form of the CP issued statements attacking the Lewisham 21 Campaign, the SWP and the counter demonstration at Clifton Rise, on the basis that the actions were 'divisive' and would 'alienate white working class opinion'. This was symbolised by a CP steward who uttered the immortal words: 'We do not accept the police telling us where to march, you should now disperse'. The logical corollary to these capitulations can be seen in the ban imposed by the Labour controlled Lewisham Council on the use of halls by the local SWP. This puts into practice the scandalous position, voiced by the Labour Mayor, of equating the fascists with the so called 'lunatic left'.

It is when we see such actions and hear such arguments that we really wonder whether the CP and the LP have learnt any lessons from history at all and whether it is they rather than us who need a good dose of the 'truth'.

MALCOLM KITSON [SE London IMG]

Two views on the Carnival

1

UNTIL two weeks ago, Socialist Challenge had nothing at all to say on the years' fighting this Carnival. I was therefore a bit mad to see the first viewpoint to be expressed through our pages echo the sort of coverage that filled the bourgeois press.

Dave Shillinglaw's letter contained comments like: 'It was unsafe for a white person to walk the streets... myastl was surrounded and mugged on my way home', puts his reactions in the same camp as those who do not distinguish between small time pickpocketing, etc. and violent crime. The branding as 'muggers' — i.e. violent criminals of a layer of unemployed, destitute black youths who resort to petty crime simply to survive is not only wrong, but downright racist.

Worse, to see in this situation merely a threat to whites on the streets is to turn the real issue on its head. If the comrade was surprised to find a little anti-white feeling at Carnival — a time when West-Indians hope for at least a day or two to enjoy themselves on their own communities' streets — then he should stop to think a little deeper about what young blacks have faced for years on the streets here — daily harassment by racist police, and now increasing attacks and even murder by fascist thugs.

In saying this, we do not at all identify with the Socialist Workers Party's incorrect slogan 'Police are the real muggers', which confuses and mis-educates on the nature and political role of the police, and therefore on what demands are necessary in confrontations with the police. But we certainly had better recognise that young blacks' hostility to both the police and the racist system they uphold is justified, deep rooted and, like it or not, is going to have some anti-white manifestations. Anyone who cannot understand this should have stayed away from Carnival in the first place.

The second part of the letter seems to be suggesting that the problems and frustrations of young blacks should be dealt with through tighter policing by armed stewards from their own organisation.

There are always organisations within the black communities who will do the police's work for them. And who else gets into the hands of the present ruling class strategy of splitting the communities down the mid-

die into those who are 'respectable' and law abiding, and the 'troublemaking' youth — those scorned by the black population as a whole — as the letter goes to see it.

Certainly local stewarding forces elected from the community which attempt to draw in the most oppressed layers, i.e. the youths themselves, were necessary at the Carnival. But organisational and tactical solutions should not be substituted for what is wrongly seen as lack of attractive self-organisation within the communities.

The necessary long-term organisation to deal with these problems will be based on an appreciation of the demands which these struggles throw up — on a programme for black struggle and black liberation. I think it is this issue which is absent from the pages of the left at present, including Socialist Challenge, and is the one to which we have to address ourselves.

SHERA MALONE [N London IMG]

2

DAVE SHILLINGLAW'S letter contained a number of conclusions. In particular his use of abusive words like 'muggers', etc. However the points he raises should not be obscured in a relay of white liberal or black nationalist rhetoric.

We are Asians who were present at the Carnival. We were ourselves jostled and actually saw an Arab student being knited and black stallholders being deprived of their money by gangs of black kids.

As Marxists we can understand the despair which drives unemployed black youth to act in this way. But to understand is not to justify. What we are witnessing is classic lumpen behaviour. It can be seen also amongst white working class youth.

Naturally the fact that the youth in this case are blacks gives the phenomenon an added dimension. All the more reason therefore for black Marxists who have some influence in the community to take a firm line and explain that lumpen rampaging does not solve any problems. To glorify such acts is both short-sighted and counter-productive.

As for the argument that whites should stay away, which is also used by some comrades, does this extend to Asians and Arabs and some blacks themselves as well? In which case why bother to have a carnival at all?

Many thanks, Ashin Charter, Ashin Malik [Asian supporters of Fourth International]

2

I WOULD LIKE to be able to congratulate those who have been calling for a NF march ban as at last the Temeside march

and meeting has been banned. I would like to say that the anti-fascist movement has been done a service, but am unable to.

A qualitative change has taken place that I'm sure will be regarded as a success by many. In fact though the incipient mass anti-fascist movement may have been badly damaged. The 20,000 anti-fascist trade unionists due

to march peacefully against racism have also been banned, and all for the sake of a miserable few hundred Fronters.

Make no mistake, it is not the Front who will bear the brunt of the ban, it is the left. The chance to build a mass movement to fight racism has been set back, while the Front appears to be the victim. They appear 'democratic' whereas the left is portrayed as a bunch of hoodlums. We must not disregard the political level of the workers or become alienated from them by dismissing the impact of the media on them and by exaggerating the gains we have made.

'Ban the NF march' means that one agrees that a bourgeois government should have the right to ban marches. It is giving power to the bourgeois state, which is at present a bigger threat than the NF. Principles and class lines have been broken, it is time we took stock. If the bourgeoisie uses a ban as an excuse to strengthen the state then it is a heavy price to pay.

The way forward is to fight political interference by the state and to build a mass workers' movement against racism in the working class. That is how to fight the NF. Campaign for the Labour Party to fight, build local committees and involve the unions, build bases in the black

communities. Only the masses can solve this question with correct leadership. Ignoring them and taking the NF, the police and the state on in the streets ourselves is pure adventurism as well as being apolitical in nature.

Even those people attracted by the present SWP/IMG strategy will only develop politically in the context of a mass campaign. We have to use our forces in a way to involve hundreds of thousands of workers. Similarly it is not revolutionary to encourage black youth to go and fight the state on the streets, it is adventurism and the state will win. It is essential to build our forces both numerically and politically in order to fully utilise their potential in conjunction with masses of workers won to their sides by a mass-movement outlook.

I insist that the line drawn is between bourgeois state and working class independence. We should be totally opposed to any popular front style agreements between the left and the state against the NF.

For a Workers' United Front Against Racism and Fascism Against all State Intervention For a Mass-movement Outlook Against Sectarian and Ultraleft Adventures

PAUL ANDREWS [S.E. London]

Socialist Challenge EVENTS

Socialist Challenge Groups should send in details of events to arrive not later than first post Saturday, or by phone no later than midday Saturday.

EAST ANGLIA

NORWICH: For details of Socialist Challenge support group contact: C. Scott, 7 Clarendon Road, Norwich.

SCOTLAND

For information on Socialist Challenge contact Scottish Socialist/Socialist Challenge bookshop, 54 Queen Street, Glasgow (Tel: 041-221 7481). Open weekdays 10-4. Late closing Thursday 8.00pm. Wide range of FI publications.

DUNDEE: Information about Socialist Challenge activities from 54 Queen Street, Glasgow. Join in SC sales outside Boots (corner of Reform Street) each Saturday, 11am-2pm.

SOUTH/WEST

PORTSMOUTH Socialist Challenge readers group every Monday, 7.30pm at Wiltshire pub (upstairs), Hampshire Terrace. Next meeting 3 October. 'Critique of the revolutionary left today'.

SOUTHAMPTON Socialist Challenge group public meeting, 5 October, 'Defend abortion rights', Anchor pub, East Street, 8pm.

YORKSHIRE

SHEFFIELD readers meet fortnightly, 7.30pm, the Lion Hotel, 3 Nursery Street (off the Wicker), Sheffield.

YORK Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Sundays, 2 October, 'The Middle East — A new war brewing?' Lowther pub, Kings Staith, York, 8pm.

NORTH WEST

For details of activities in the NW write or ring the Manchester Socialist Challenge Centre, Third Floor, 14 Piccadilly, Manchester 1. 061-236 2352.

Open Tuesday 6-8pm, Thursday 6-8pm, Saturday 10-1pm. Room available for meetings. Duplicating services.

LIVERPOOL Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Wednesdays at Stanley House, Upper Parliament Street, 5 October: 7.30pm 'Racism and Fascism. Stop the NF in Manchester'.

BURY Socialist Challenge group meets at the Royal Hotel, Silver Street every Tuesday at 8pm.

WARRINGTON Socialist Challenge discussion and action group meets every Tuesday, 8pm at Bowling Green, Liverpool Road, Warrington.

LONDON

SOUTHALL: Supporters group meets fortnightly. For details phone 01-5735095.

BRENT Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Mondays at Willeaden Junction Hotel, Station Road NW10. 7.30pm. Next meeting on 'Racism — How to combat it', Monday 3 October. All welcome.

TARIQ ALI, editor of Socialist Challenge, will be speaking on 'Building a united movement against racism' at the following three meetings:

CENTRAL LONDON, Thursday 8 October, 8pm, in the University College Conference Room, Gower Street, WC1.

NORTH-EAST LONDON Polytechnic Tuesday, 11 October, 12.15pm, Room 2092, Barking Precinct, Longbridge Road, Dagenham.

CENTRAL LONDON at the London School of Economics, Thursday 13 October, 12.30pm, St Clements Building.

HOME COUNTIES

BASINGSTOKE readers' meeting every Tuesday at Chute House, Church Street, 8pm.

READING Readers meeting, Every Thursday evening, 7.30pm, 89 Armit Road, Reading.

MIDLANDS

For details of activities of local supporters contact Socialist Challenge Centre, 766 Digbeth High Street, Birmingham, (021-643 9209).

LEAMINGTON Socialist Challenge public meeting, 'Socialist Unity and the fight against racism', speaker Raghib Ahsan, Tuesday, 4 October, 7.30pm, Raneleigh Tavern, Leamington Spa.

Totally inadequate

MANY COMRADES on the revolutionary left in this area have been surprised and alarmed at the cursory coverage given by your paper to the Right to Work march. Only one, small article the week before the TUC conference so much as mentioned it. The reporting of the march was minimal after the event. You printed a photograph of John Deason at a meeting described as having occurred during the march — in fact this meeting of unemployed took place in Skelmersdale two weeks earlier!

Considering that the RTW Campaign is the only credible organization building among the unemployed at present your token support was totally inadequate. Although the march itself did not have the impact on the labour movement that previous marches have had, it did attract a great deal of support from rank and file workers, strike committees and the communities through which it passed.

Socialist Challenge claims to support the campaign. Why then did it not call upon its readers and supporters to help build the march right from the start, rather than belatedly paying it lukewarm lip service?

PETE SLOMAN [West Middx Socialist Workers Party] KEN MATHESON [West London International Marxist Group]



(THE TWO recent articles on Ukrainian nationalism are guilty of something that we must avoid in analysis of the Soviet Union — wishful thinking.

How good it would be if there was in fact an 'explosive' political situation in the Ukraine' and 'growing unrest' in the Ukraine in the Brezhnev era. But where is the evidence? The Ukrainian Workers and Peasants Union which was quoted involved about a dozen people who were all arrested seventeen years.

The level of activity among intellectual dissidents, including those who raise the national question, is comparable to that in the Russian Republic, i.e. strictly limited. And to use the inner-party manoeuvring of self-interested bureaucrats like Shelist as evidence of widespread popular feeling is not on.

The articles fail to consider the possibly new significance of such questions as nationality in the context of a workers' state — even a deformed one. Is it necessarily right to condemn as

'economic pillage' the withdrawal of roubles from the Ukraine, when many of them are used to relieve poverty and develop industry in the backward Central Asian republics? Is it necessarily right to scoff at the idea of nations gradually drawing closer together?

The crucial issue is, of course, whether the Ukrainian masses understand and consent to these processes. As to consent, Socialist Challenge has an excellent record on pointing out and campaigning against the total lack of democracy in the Soviet Union. As to how far the Ukrainian people understand the system they live under, and what their idea of socialism is and their commitment to it — we just don't know. Which makes it all the more important to analyse the few facts we do have as coolly and objectively as possible.

BARBARA BROWN [North Devon]

Sci-fi: The alternative to space operas

Socialists are often drawn into speculative conversations which start with the phrase 'After the revolution...' We all know that things will be different. But how different? To see how our own views hold up and how much we are able to break from the present reality it is worth examining that other group whose bread and butter is a different future — science fiction writers. **ALAN LENTON** reports.

What first becomes obvious when looking at science fiction is that it can be broadly divided into two categories. The first is typified by the writing of E.E. 'Doc' Smith at its worst and Isaac Asimov at its best. It is characterised by its complete failure to go beyond the confines of current society.

Instead of looking at the possibilities inherent in people, it assumes that capitalist forms of social organisation are all that is possible. This shows up in a number of ways. The story is set in the context of a (usually human) empire, whose economic basis is capitalist or even feudal, and whose social norms are exactly the same as today's, or yet more draconian.

HOUSEWIVES

This sort of literature is particularly reactionary on the question of the position of women. Usually they are portrayed as breeding stock, or at the very best as perfect middle class housewives.

If this were the only side to science fiction, the picture would indeed be bleak. But fortunately there has always been another side. This has been the use of science fiction to explore trends in capitalist society and take them to their limit.

It was this side that came to the

fore during the McCarthy period in the United States. Because of the dangers involved in criticising capitalism, many authors wrote savage satires about the logical consequences of capitalism in America by setting their stories in the future.

The classic story in this genre is *The Space Merchants*, by Fred-

erick Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth, which describes an attempt by an American multi-national to sell a piece of newly-discovered real estate — Venus. Although this sort of writing still internalised a lot of the norms of bourgeois society, it was nonetheless a considerable step forward from the Smith-Asimov space opera.

In recent years, mainly under the impact of the writings of Ursula Le Guin, this second side of science fiction has made another step forward. It has moved from a negative criticising of capitalist society to a positive experimentation with new social forms and economic organisation.

In Le Guin's books the plot

merely becomes a device around which she hangs the implications of her main theme. Thus in *Left Hand of Darkness* she explores the implications on the level of day to day living of everyone being the same sex and able to bear children.

In *The Dispossessed* Le Guin poses the problems of setting up an anarchist community using modern technology, how to fight against the development of bureaucracy, and even how to swear when there's no religion and sex is not dirty! It is writing like this that begins to make people question their assumptions about what living 'must' be like.

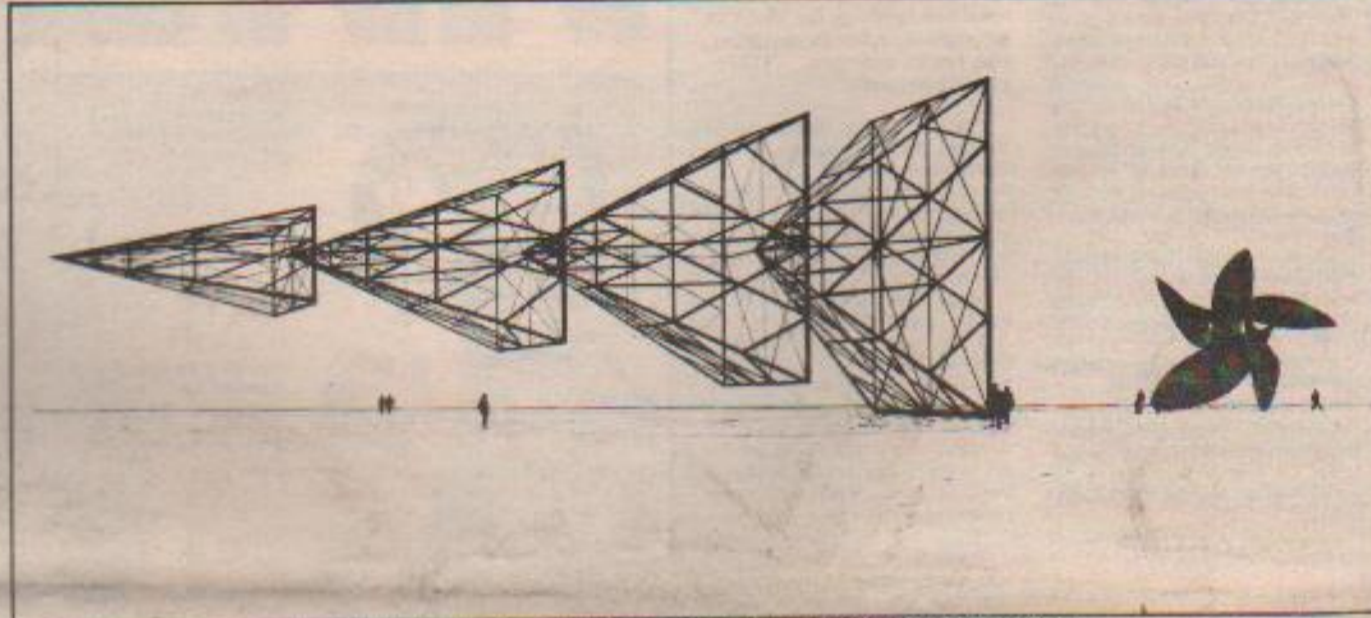
Science fiction is grounded in a contradiction. Although it is dealing with the future, the experience of science fiction writers is formed in the present, and their success or failure depends on their ability to break from its confines.

Those authors who unwittingly or otherwise fail to transcend

these bounds are doomed to produce more or less distorted reflections of capitalist society. That such stories are acceptable to the *status quo* is indicated by the way in which, for example, Asimov's writing now features in English Literature courses.

To the extent that writers do manage to overcome these obstacles, however, they produce works which directly confront bourgeois ideology, and this work should be supported and encouraged by socialists. Science fiction has a tremendous potential for socialists to get across their ideas about what we are fighting for. It is to be regretted that so few have taken the opportunity.

ALAN LENTON is manager of *The Other Bookshop* which (and this is no accident) has an extensive selection of science fiction literature — at 328 Upper Street, London N1. Tel: 01-226 0571.



LEV NUSSBERG's 'Construction 1' [1963], from Unofficial Art from the Soviet Art, published by Secker & Warburg

TV's fears for 1990 — too much 'socialism'

by **JONATHAN ROSENHEAD**

The only reason 1990, the eight-part thriller just started on Mondays on BBC-2 wasn't called '1984' is because that would be a little too close for comfort. Oh yes, and someone else had already used the title.

This is the scenario. Britain lies impoverished in the grip of a massive State bureaucracy, whose tentacles reach out to the smallest details of personal life. Everything is rationed. Inspectors of Culture throttle the flow of unwanted ideas. HMSO prints

everything down to uplifting tales for tots.

Bully boys from the Public Control Department of the Home Office track down parasites, the work-shy, malingers. Seemingly everyone wants to get out — to America — and

dissenting artists and writers are encouraged to do just that. But not doctors and scientists, who have to sign away 10 years of their life before they can be trained.

Illegal emigrants are public enemy number two — number one are the dissidents who don't want to leave.

DEFEATING THE BUGS

So far, so bad. But this picture of 1987 (let's compromise) is Orwell plus the technology of political control. True, Orwell had the telescreens. But now we have the drugged dart-guns to immobilise fleeing suspects, planted transponders radiating

the locations of those under electronic surveillance, and adult rehabilitation centres where social misfits are given psychiatric 'treatment' by notorious mind-benders.

There are happiness pills to reward the faithful and misery pills as a cost-effective way to reduce prison congestion by intensifying the unpleasantness. Everyone who is anyone assumes s/he is being bugged though our heroes Kyle and Lomas have the counter-technology to defeat the bugs.

We've got this far without mentioning the story because there isn't much of one. Kyle (played by Edward Woodward) is a muck-raking journalist on one of the two remaining independent dailies. Dely Lomas (Barbara Kellerman) is the suave deputy controller of the Public Controls Department. He has ambivalent feelings about her, because he is helping to smuggle out illegal emigrants, but fancies her. She (according to the BBC's publicity) is torn between her regard for Kyle and her belief in her job. Doubtless they will continue to spar for the remaining episodes.

STATESNOOPERS

This could be the story line for any cheap thriller. Where the creative energy has gone into constructing a passable picture of a technology-based Strong State, and here the series (devised by Wilfred Greatorex) is grimly compelling. It is also dangerously misleading.

We are, after all, primarily interested in these political science-fact/fiction epics not for what they tell us about the future, but for what they reveal about the present. And the perils which the programme warns us about are of too much State interference, too many State snoopers.

The Government is clearly Labour — people are vainly hoarding and hiding gold sovereigns to avoid the wealth tax; but control has gravitated to 'hooligan bureaucrats'. Civil servants are the new (and rich) power elite.

In other words, the Strong State has come about because of too much 'socialism'. Britain 1990 looks very much like Russia 1977. The underground dissidents are portrayed, not as revolutionary socialists or militant trade unionists, but as rough-hewn individualists seeking bourgeois civil liberties.

The threat to liberty is shown as coming from power-bungry bureaucrats, not from the corporate bosses whose interests they serve. Ultimately, although 1990 acutely describes the control potential of available technology, its accompanying distortions serve those same corporate interests.

JONATHAN ROSENHEAD is joint author with Carol Ackroyd, Karen Margolis, and Tim Shallice of *The Technology of Political Control*, published earlier this year by Penguin at £1.25.



Challenge to imperialism

by **TOM WILSON**

'Challenge to Imperialism' is the title of a series of nine films to be shown on Friday nights at the Nottingham Film Theatre beginning on 30 September with Antonio Das Mortes.

The series includes Third World films which represent a political and cultural resistance to imperialism, such as *The Guns* from Brazil, and *Eminai* and films made from within imperialist powers but which are clearly in opposition, including *Ireland Behind the Wire* and *Minamata*.

The first two parts of *Battle of Chile* (the third is yet to be completed) are included as two of the finest political realist films yet made.

The series has been arranged by a small group who negotiated with the film theatre to plan the series for the normally poorly attended Friday nights. The group has also arranged the publicity, and a 96-page booklet of background material on the films. We hope to arrange informal discussion after the films, together with meetings by the Troops Out Movement and Chile Solidarity to follow the films related to these struggles.

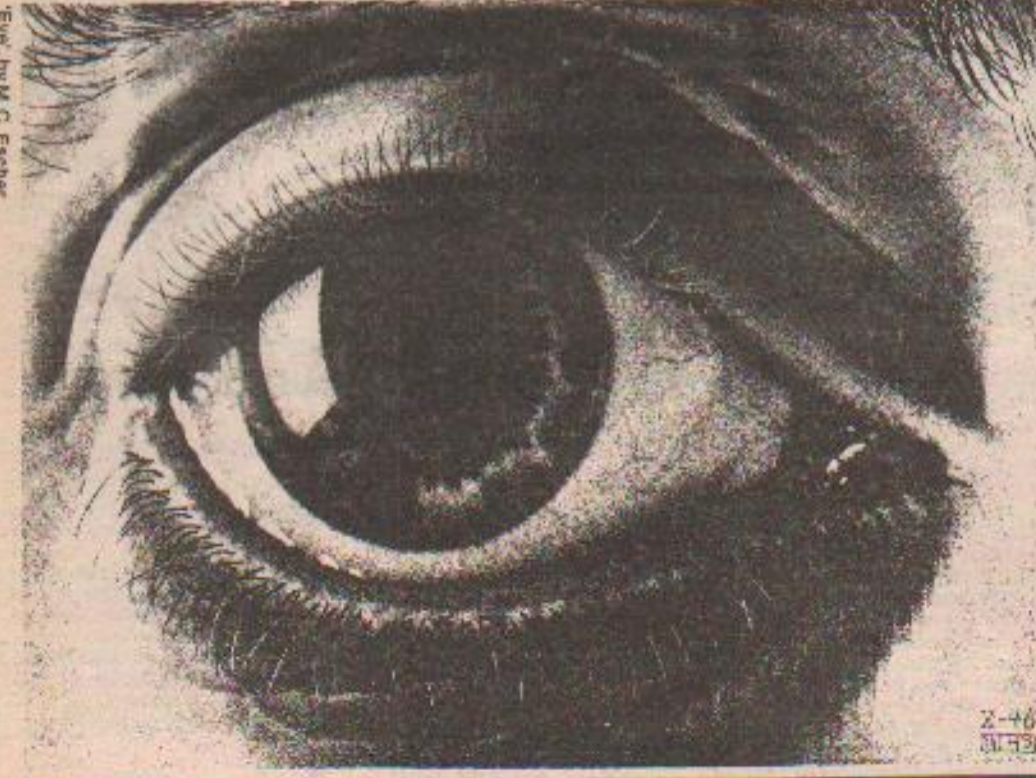
The series will continue after Christmas with films in which the formal and political issues raised in the first part will be examined more closely. Later in the year it is hoped that Nottingham Women's Group will be able to arrange a Friday evening film series.

There are 25 regional film theatres in Britain supported by the British Film Institute and there are independent cinemas and college film societies which might be encouraged to show programmes similar to ours. Many of these films are rarely shown outside London.



For further information on the Nottingham film series, or inquiries regarding its organisation, contact (with s.a.e.): Tom Wilson, 18 Premier Road, Forest Fields, Nottingham NG7 6NW. Tel: 0602 622593.

The 'Challenge to Imperialism' booklet, which includes over 20 articles and numerous illustrations, is available from the same address, price 50p incl. postage. The Friday films at 7.30pm are at the Nottingham Film Theatre, Broad Street, Nottingham.



Eye by M.C. Escher

THE OTHER CINEMA

25 Tottenham Street, London W1. Tel: 637 9308

GRUNWICK FILM Benefit for Grunwick strikers. First public showing of the Newarcol Collective's film on the 15 July mass picket, plus slide show by the Poster Film collective. One showing only, Sat. 1 October, 8.30pm.

BATTLE OF CHILE (Parts 1&2). A film retracing the tense last months of Allende's Government against the opposition's orchestrated campaign of economic disruption. Sat. 1 October, Part 1 2.30pm, Part 2 4.30pm.

PIERROT LE FOU. A revival of Jean-Luc Godard's much loved and most accessible film, a dazzling tale of 'the last romantic couple' involved in a political intrigue. Fri. 30 September to Thurs. 6 October at 8.40pm, weekdays at 4.30pm. Starring Jean-Paul Belmondo and Anna Karina.

ABANDONED CHILDREN. A moving documentary on the urban street urchins in Columbia by American photographer and film-maker Danny Lyon. Sun 2 October at 8.30pm with a presentation by Danny Lyon and Mon. 3 October to Thurs. 6 October at 8.30pm.

Socialist Challenge

Don't let it drag on!

IN THE fight to help Trotsky slay the counter-revolutionary dragon, a Canadian supporter aimed a well-timed blow for £50. Along with the cheque were the following remarks:

"I recently subscribed and am very impressed by your newspaper. I use it to explain British politics to contacts and people in my office. The international coverage is also very good. I read *Inprecor* but need more than that — so your paper fits my needs.

"Canada is quite a prosperous country in comparison to Britain. So I will take advantage of my high wages to help your paper."

That £50 was matched by a similar cheque from our Newcastle supporters, and from others throughout the world over £180 came in to the fighting fund last week. Our regular contributors, who give us a donation through a bankers order, added a further £130. That brings this week's contribution to £317.38.

FATAL BLOW

Our regular weekly target of £130 has been more than doubled. The ground we lost in August has all been made up.

Trotsky now stands poised to deal the fatal blow to the dragon. The overall figure since the launch of the paper is £1724.81. In the few days before the end of the month we must raise another £75.19, if the sting is to be taken out of the dragon's tail.

Our thanks to all those supporters who gave us this week's magnificent total. We send out an urgent appeal for the final £75. Send in your money, help slay the dragon and keep Socialist Challenge alive.

Our thanks to:

Leigh Marxist Worker Group	5.00
Newcastle readers	50.00
S. Randall	1.25
Anon.	8.00
D. Herman	5.00
Badge sales	13.27
S. Schneider	1.60
D. Love	1.00
A. Dolenz	5.00
Basingstoke supporter	1.00
J. Atkinson	0.25
Hull Socialist Teachers	1.24
Canadian supporter	50.00
E. Waaland	0.25
R. Fraser	2.50
A. Punter	1.00
D. Naish	5.00
Anon.	5.00
Havant Trades Council delegate	3.00
Southampton readers	2.00
Oxford supporters	17.62
G. Irwin	0.25
C. Smith	0.75
Anon.	10.00
Bankers orders	130.00
Total	£317.38

During the Marxist Symposium this month a film benefit was held at The Other Cinema for Socialist Challenge. This was a big financial and political success. In conjunction with The Other Cinema, which is fighting to stay alive, we have decided to make these benefits a regular event. The proceeds will be split between the paper and the cinema.

The first benefit, together with a discussion and social, will be held on 29 October and thereafter on the last Saturday of each month. The first film will be *Queimada*, which features Marlon Brando as an emissary of British imperialism sent to break the colonial ties between Portugal and Queimada, a small island in the Caribbean. The theory of permanent revolution on the big screen!

Fascists behind London jail break

Exclusive

The press had a field day when three Italians on multi-million pound fraud charges escaped from Thames Magistrates' Court in Stepney last Thursday. Pier Luigi Torri particularly took their fancy, with his good looks, his actress wife and society connections — a lovable villain. But in fact Torri is at the front of an operation involving the Mafia on two continents, heroin smuggling, and fascist terrorism. CHRIS O'BRIEN reports.

The story starts inauspiciously enough, with the passing of the Companies Act 1976, Clause 31, which came into force in April this year, is designed to eliminate an anomaly in the British banking system — the tertiary sector — the so-called 'fringe' banks.

There are hundreds of small banks, registered in places like Anguilla or St Vincent for about a fiver a time, which were not previously required to register their assets or shareholders with the normal authorities. The system made Britain a haven for every fly-by-night who needed a bank to conceal another, more sinister operation.

Trade Secretary Edmund Dell was hardly aware of the horns' nest the new legislation would stir. Quickly the extent of fraudulent business got beyond the control of the Department of Trade officials assigned to implement the new law and passed into the hands of the Fraud Squad. They, in turn, quickly enlisted the help of the Serious Crimes Squad.

BACKGAMMON

One of the first banks to fall was the Universal Banking Corporation of 25a Crawford Street, near Baker Street. Last December, seven people were arrested on charges related to the publication of a false balance sheet as an inducement to purchase. Among them were Mario d'Agnolo, who was also charged with possession of forged banknotes, Roberto Loyola (handling forged cheques), and Gino Scalamandra, a world-class backgammon player.

D'Agnolo was already known to Italian police for his part in the armed robbery of a van. Nevertheless bail was provided at £20,000 each from a shipping agent called Zarpinelli. D'Agnolo jumped bail, skipped the country, and I have been unable to trace him since.

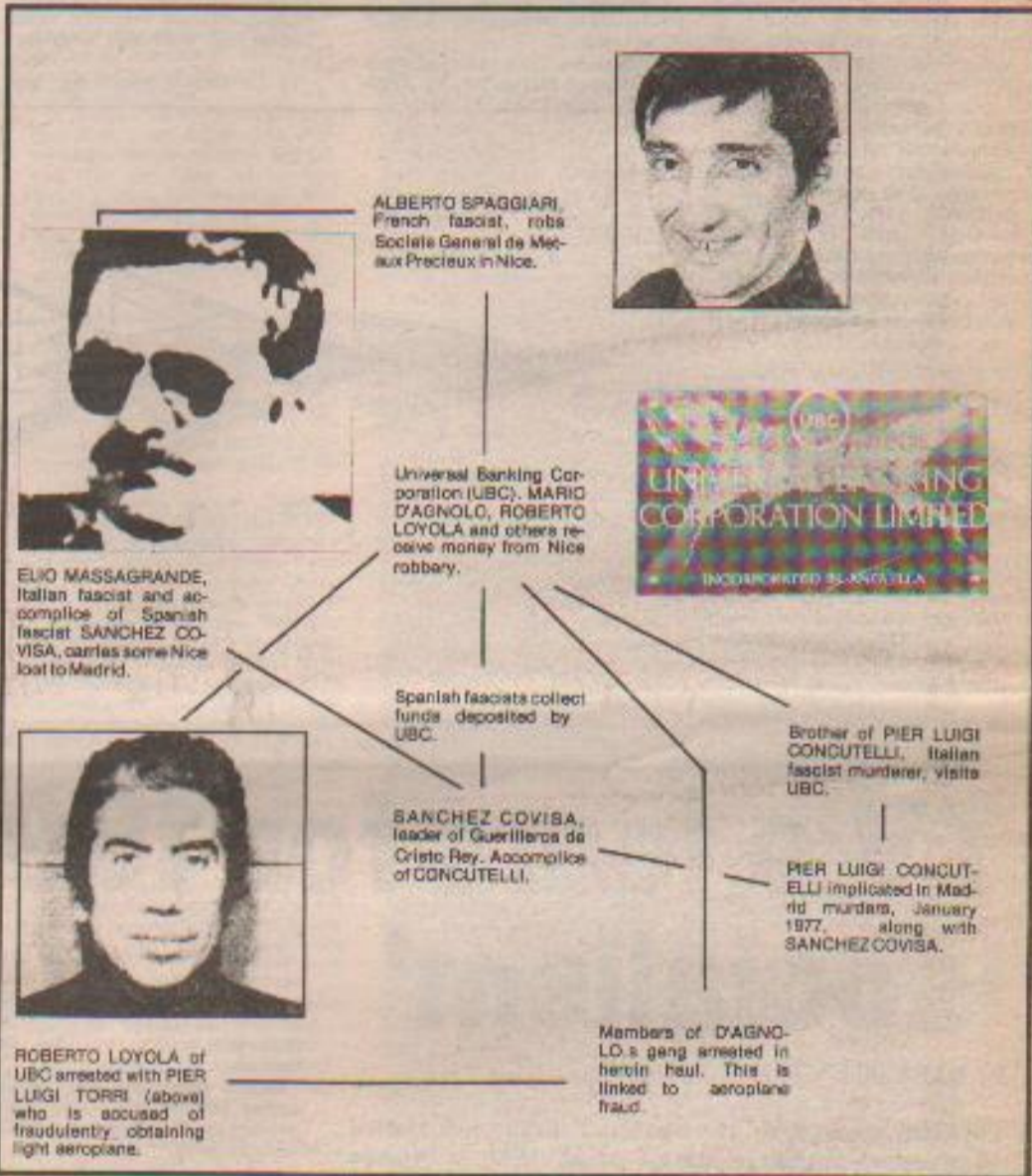
So far a simple story of police laxness, but the thing the (scanty) British press reports did not mention was that a number of those arrested had known connections with the terrorist far right in Italy.

TIP-OFF

Sources in Italy and Spain go even further. It seems that the Universal Banking Corporation was involved in distributing money to named accounts of known fascists throughout Europe: in the Banco de Bilbao in London, the Banco Espanol in Brussels, the main office of the Banco de Alicante, the Banco Meridional and the Banco de Granada in Madrid and another unidentified bank in Malaga.

The information is from reliable sources and two other facts add weight to the story. First, Scotland Yard's tip-off for the arrests came from the Florentine judge Pier Luigi Vigna, who was investigating the murder of Judge Vittorio Occorsio by fascists last year.

Secondly, the brother of the



man universally believed to be Occorsio's murderer, Pier Luigi Concutelli, visited London in November last year, only weeks before the Scotland Yard arrests. He was followed by Italian secret police agents who saw him enter a bank. They refuse to reveal the name, but we have good reason to believe that it was the UBC.

SEWER

Another piece of information we have received, if true, confirms the fascist connection still further. In July 1976 Alberto Spaggiari and some accomplices robbed the Societe Generale de Metaux Precieux in Nice of money and precious metal totalling at least 40 million francs: the famous Nice sewer robbery.

To the French press Spaggiari was another lovable villain. He was also a fascist, a former member of the OAS, the far right terrorist organisation pledged to opposition to Algerian independence. He had once had General de Gaulle in his gun sights... literally!

We definitely know where some of the booty ended up. Elio Massagrande, an Italian fascist with connections in Greece and Spain, took three Societe Generale gold bars from Italy to Spain, depositing them in the account of Jose Luis Clemente Antonio, the owner of the 'Il Apuntamento' pizza house in Madrid, who had provided succour to Stefano delle Chiaie and Salvatore Francia, two Italian fascists directly implicated in the murder of Spanish

leftists. Massagrande and Francia were arrested in March after the discovery of an arms factory in a Madrid flat owned by Mariano Sanchez Covisa, the leader of the far right Guerrilleros de Cristo Rey. Cartridges found in the Madrid arms factory exactly matched those found on Pier Luigi Concutelli when he was arrested in Italy a few weeks earlier.

They also matched the bullets which killed five Communist labour lawyers in Madrid in January. After Judge Vigna had released further information linking Concutelli to Sanchez Covisa, most people drew the obvious conclusion. Concutelli, remember, was the Italian link with the UBC in London.

However, our sources tell us of an even more direct link with Spaggiari and the Nice robbery. We are informed that the UBC was a clearing house for a large part of the proceeds of the robbery, which formed the bulk of the money distributed to the fascist bank accounts.

PLAYBOY

This is where Pier Luigi Torri enters the story. Torri, a playboy film producer married to the actress Marisa Mell, is wanted by the Italian police on drugs charges. He also has a four year jail stretch waiting for him back home.

He too has long-time far right connections in Italy, which did not seem to worry the clients of

his Maritime Bank (registered in Anguilla again) nor later the International Commerce Bank, nor Jose Manuel da Silva of Lisbon, who received regular large payments from Torri's account.

BEAR

James Maude, the owner of Bear Securities, which acted for the ICB, categorically denied that Torri was among the ICB's directors or shareholders, but the beauty of fringe banking is that there is no legal record of who those directors and shareholders are.

The police knew differently. On 6 May they arrested Torri after a dawn raid on the ICB, whose name was becoming increasingly linked with the now

*Continued on page 12.

OUR NEW MASTHEAD

We hope our readers like the new design of our Socialist Challenge masthead. We have had a number of letters asking whether our dropping of the two slogans 'For a unified revolutionary organisation' and 'For a Socialist Opposition' represents a change in editorial policy. The answer is No. We continue to stand by our policy of standing for a building a new, non-sectarian revolutionary organisation in Britain.



Socialist Challenge

WIELD A SOCIALIST OPPOSITION FOR A UNITED REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

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