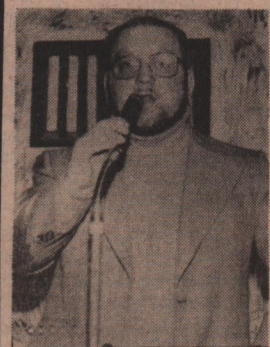


# Socialist Challenge

## 1,896,000 people out of work in July

### 'British' dissident to die on hunger strike?



MARTIN Meehan, a Northern Irish Republican, is on the brink of death.

He is now in his third month of hunger strike and, according to his wife Briegde, went on thirteenth strike last week.

Martin is a 'British' dissident. A leading Republican from the Belfast working class Catholic ghetto of Ardoyne, he was first hauled before the North of Ireland courts in 1972.

The evidence was so flimsy that the British authorities were forced to release him. Later he was charged with membership of the Provisional IRA.

### Army

The only evidence required for conviction on this charge is the testimony of a member of the Special Branch who says he or she 'believes' the accused is in the IRA. Martin was sentenced to three years imprisonment.

After his release he suffered continual harassment from the British Army. On 12 separate occasions he was taken to the notorious Castlereagh Interrogation Centre and held under a seven-day detention order.

Eventually, last year he was charged with kidnapping a teenage barman in north Belfast. The sole evidence against him was an 'identification' by someone who admitted he was a paid agent of the Army.

### Hospital

This agent admitted in court that prior to the identification parade he had been shown a picture of Martin by the Army and police.

On conviction Martin went on hunger strike in the infamous Long Kesh prison camp.

He is now in a prison hospital.

This week you will hear a good deal about Soviet dissidents. Not many of them are expected to die on hunger strike. Martin Meehan, who wants nothing more than a foreign army to leave his country, is expected to die.

# TORIES AREN'T WORKING



UNEMPLOYMENT OFFICE

BRITAIN'S BETTER OFF WITH THE CONSERVATIVES.

# KICK THEM OUT

THATCHER's mob is running riot, smashing up the nationalised industries and the welfare state, creating vast unemployment and spending billions on new and useless nuclear rockets.

Over the past two weeks the Tories have announced that they are:

\*Selling off some of the most profitable parts of British rail.

\*Hiving off parts of the health services to private firms.

\*Ending the Post Office's monopoly by handing over services to private enterprise. In addition, Tory Employment Secretary Prior has announced that he intends to limit pickets to six at any one time.

### Attacks

At a local level, too, the Tories are ushering in a new period of virulent attacks on services. The Tory-controlled Dorset county council, for example, has just announced its intention to end the provision of school meals for infants.

This week's unemployment figures will show that 1.8 million workers are unemployed, an increase of 20 per cent in three months!

To cap it all, the Tories are spending a phenomenal £5 billion on the 'independent' deterrent — the Trident nuclear rocket to replace Polaris.



5,000 people marched through Swansea last Saturday protesting against Thatcher's visit.

Thatcher's government is determined to carry out its programme of solving the economic crisis at the expense of working people. The actions of the Tories over the past few months give the lie to the Labour leaders who say that we must wait until a general election to remove

them. Another four years of Toryism will do irreparable damage to the social services and nationalised industries. Tens of thousands of jobs will go forever. Factories will close, never to be reopened.

To throw out the

Tories means mass action on jobs, pay, and union rights. It means co-ordinating action towards a general strike to kick the Tories out. Here and now we need to build support for three major actions against Tory policies:

\*The mass lobby of the TUC on 1 September on

jobs and against Prior's anti-union Bill.

\*The lobby of the Tory conference on 10 October against unemployment, called by the Right to Work Campaign and the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions.

\*The call to be considered by the Labour Par-

ty national executive this month for a mass demonstration on unemployment in Liverpool.

**LOBBY THE TUC.**  
 'Share the work without loss of pay!' Monday, 1 September, noon, Conference Centre, Brighton.

## OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

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

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

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

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)

Name .....

Address .....

Tel no .....

## HOMENEWS

# Money for Trident but none for school dinners

# BOMBS BEFORE PEOPLE

THE Tories are spending £5,325m on the new Trident missile. For this they will get five nuclear submarines and the ability to obliterate two hundred Russian cities. They could have got:

## ONE TRIDENT SUBMARINE

==

100 new hospitals

or

200 new schools

or

50,000 new homes

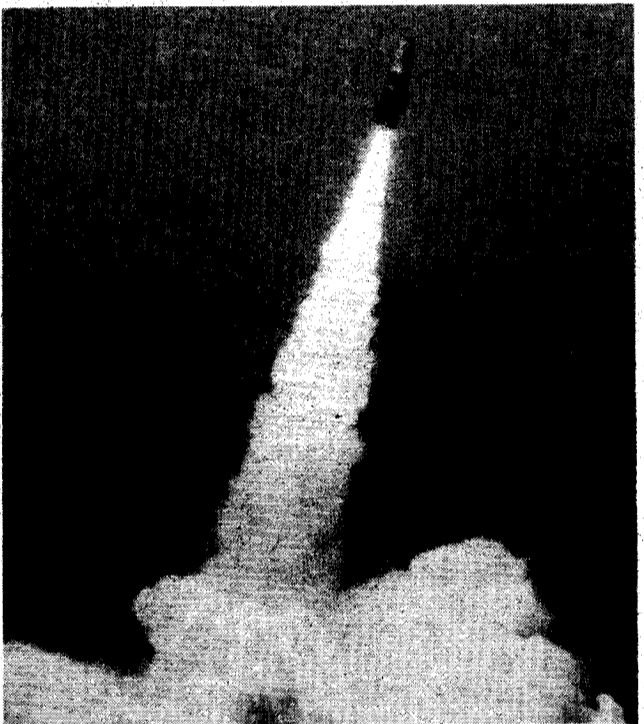
or

200,000 vehicles for disabled people

or

1,500m school dinners

Five Trident Submarines =  
Tory nuclear insanity  
CND national demonstration  
against Trident and Cruise  
missiles 26 October London.



## It's all in the Games

By Paul Lawson

AS this year's Olympics opened, the Olympic authorities have been bemoaning the flaunting of the Olympic ideal of friendship and peace between nations. The truth of course is that the Olympics have long been an expression of the conflict between nations.

Given the prestige of the Olympic medals, it is inevitable that the games should have developed this way. That the competitions are indeed part of an intensely political conflict was vividly demonstrated by the ice hockey clash between the USA and the USSR earlier this year in front of an hysterically chauvinistic US audience. For the spectators and the American TV commentators it was simply a fight over Afghanistan.

All the major nations devote huge resources to winning medals, to demonstrating their worth and winning prestige in this international arena. There is no such thing as an 'apolitical' Olympic games.

The problem is that, given the intensity and importance of this sphere of international competition, it has been impossible to keep the conflicts between nations, ideologies, and classes off the athletic track. In



an era of increasing international tensions, it is inevitable that passions should erupt beyond the 'rules of the game'. The last four Olympics have all been the scene of major political conflicts.

In 1968, the eve of the Olympics was marked by violent clashes between students and the Mexican army, leaving hundreds of students dead. At the Olympic themselves, black American athletes rebelled against their function as medal winners for United States imperialism by giving black power salutes from the podium as they received their medals.

This action, booed and jeered by the middle class crowd watching, was historic. It demonstrated that the Olympic

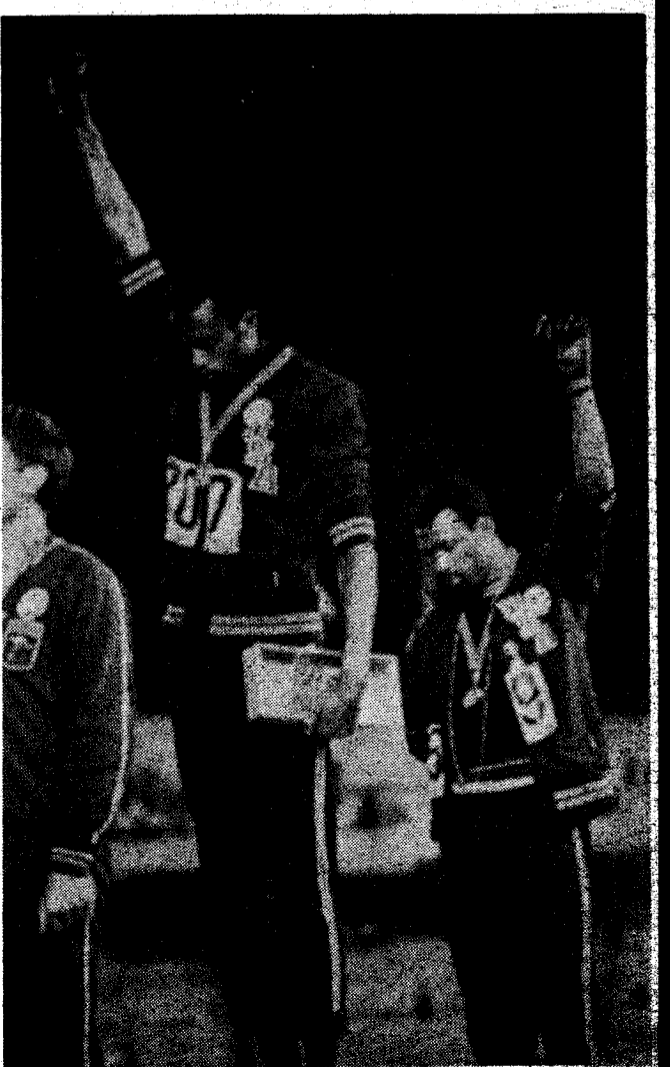
world the refusal of black Americans to play their traditional role of just making it as musicians, entertainers, and athletes.

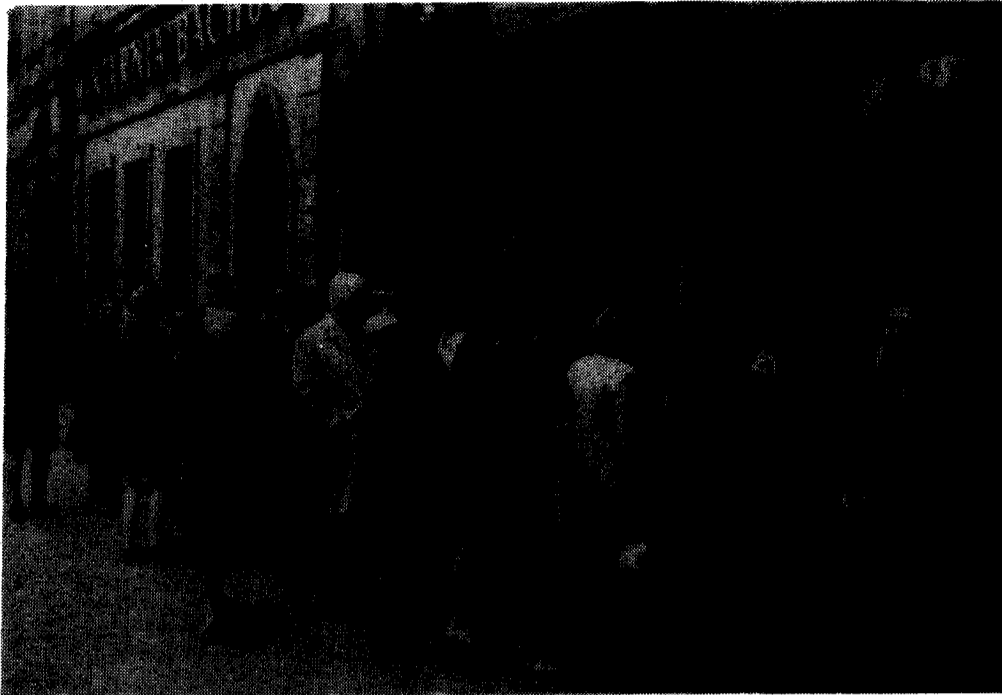
In 1972, in Munich, the fight between Zionism and the Palestinian people erupted in anything but a symbolic form as 11 Israeli athletes were held hostage by Palestinian guerillas. Many died as the result of the intervention by security forces.

The 1978 games in Montreal were clouded by the boycott by many black African states in protest against the participation of countries, in particular New Zealand, which had sporting links with South Africa.

This year of course the biggest conflict over the Olympics since the Second World War has taken place. Getting the Olympics in the first place was a massive diplomatic success for the Soviet Union. Millions of rubles have gone into making Moscow a showcase for Soviet achievement, to extend and develop Soviet influence all over the world.

The United States had everything to gain by disrupting this effort; if the invasion of Afghanistan did not exist it would have been necessary to invent it. In the era of imperialism the Olympic myth of friendship and peace between nations is bound to be disrupted again and again. For the Olympics, the future is anything but rosy.





By Oliver MacDonald

WAVE after wave of strikes have been crashing down on the Polish government since 1 July when Poland's Stalinists launched their attack on workers' living standards by raising the price of meat.

The workers' upsurge culminated in a virtual general strike in Lublin last week, stretching the political resources of the regime to the limit. The movement is far from over, but already the party leaders must be wishing they had left meat prices alone. It would have been cheaper in every way.

The Lublin mass strike began on 10 July with action by workers in a lorry factory and an agricultural machinery factory. Plant after plant followed, with workers downing tools, electing strike committees, drawing up demands and spreading the word around the city.

Army

By Wednesday of last week at least 17 plants had joined battle, among them the power station, building workers, a pharmaceutical factory, the city's flour mill, bakery and dairy works, and manual workers at a hospital.

The Stalinist regime responded the following day by sending the army into the city and dispatching party leader Edward Gierek to Chelm, a town near Lublin — but not too close! — to bellow out a warning that 'irresponsible action' was threatening the 'country'.

Army trucks rumbled through the city as troops distributed bread and milk, the bread apparently coming from the army's own bakery.

These moves were met by rail, bus, and tram strikes which brought the city to a halt. The rail strike began when engine drivers stopped a train on the Warsaw-Moscow line. The Lublin party secretary rushed to the train to beg the workers to move it into the city.

Some party members eventually volunteered to do so, but were thwarted as the engine drivers of the whole Lublin area decided to strike. They elected a strike committee and drew up their demands.

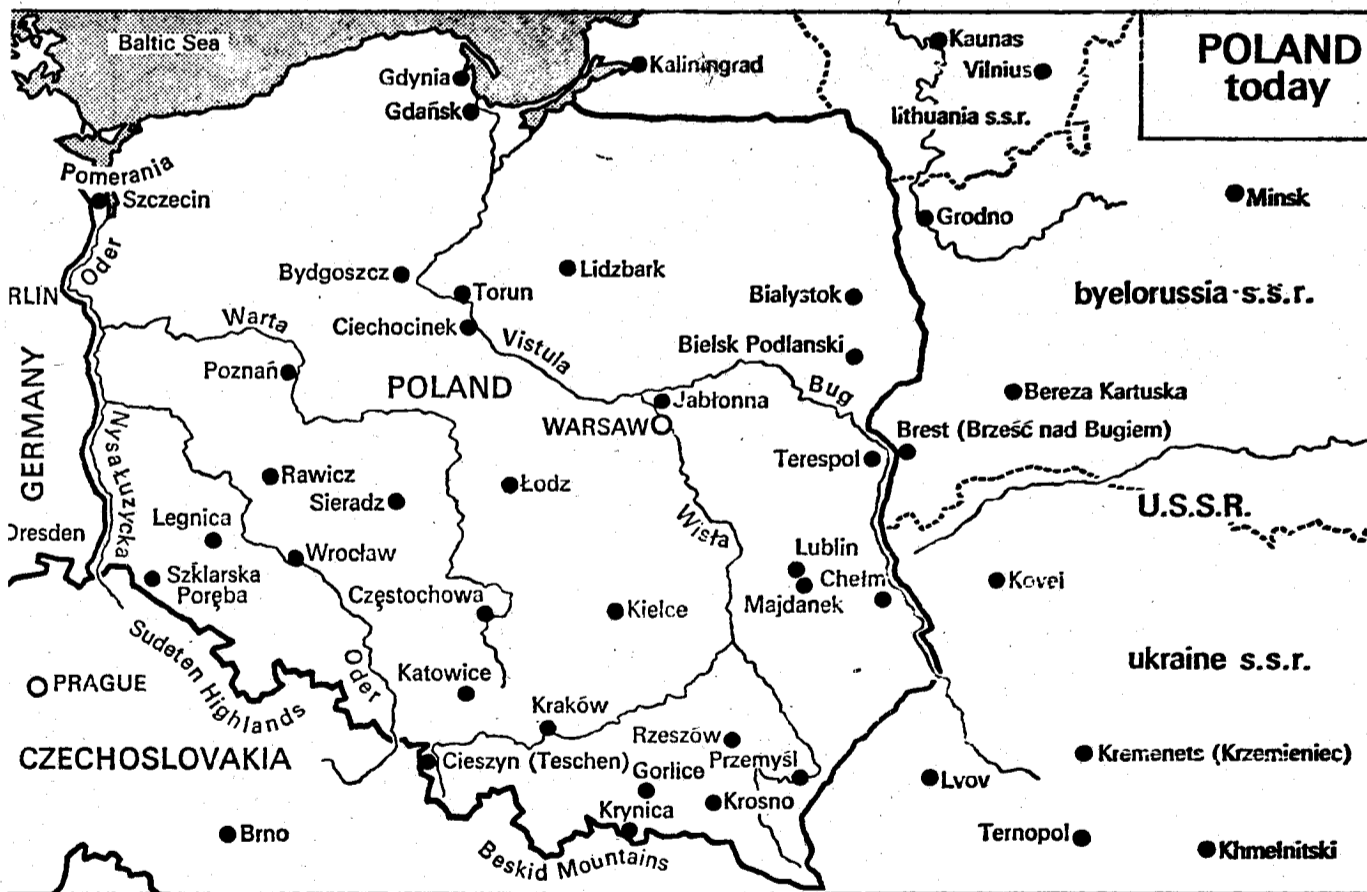
Politburo

All other sections of the railway workers joined them and their representatives were co-opted onto the strike committee. Trolley bus and tram workers also struck.

The workers were insisting that the meat price increases of 1 July should be cancelled or neutralised through wage increases. But they went further.

The political edge of the movement was shown in a common demand raised by the workers in the lorry factory, the power station, the building industry and on the railways. Responding to Gierek's

# Polish workers make mince meat of price rises



promise on TV on 9 July to raise family benefits next year, the Lublin workers demanded that they were raised immediately and brought into line with the family benefits of the security services and the military — a 300 per cent rise.

The railway workers also demanded new, free elections for the railway trade union committee and the right to strike. Along with the building workers and power workers, they demanded written guarantees from the party leaders that there would be no victimisation of workers involved in mass action.

The building workers called for greater housing provision and the railway workers demanded increases in the 'jubilee bonuses' — the lump-sum payments for long-term service.

18 July was a very bad day for the politburo. Since negotiations with the Lublin workers were getting nowhere, an emergency

politburo meeting decided to set up a special government commission under vice premier Jagielski to investigate workers' grievances in Lublin.

Government leaders also spoke darkly of disquiet caused by the Lublin action among Poland's 'neighbours' — in other words, watch out for the Warsaw Pact.

On Saturday 19 July settlements were reached: the bus and tram workers won nearly all their demands; the railway workers won between 400 and 600 zloty a month (£1 equals 60 zloty at the official rate). Settlements were also reached in other factories.

Meanwhile the lorry factory workers who had already won 10 per cent were threatening renewed strike action if their family benefit demand was not met. The strike movement spread to surrounding towns: transport workers in Chelm struck and workers in a bearing



Gierek

factory for aircraft production in Krasnik walked out.

In Warsaw printing workers were moving into action. One of the biggest printing works struck for four hours on Friday morning as their elected representatives — including, for security reasons, party members — chosen the day before, set off for negotiations with the party leadership.

On the same day, two other Warsaw printing houses elected representatives and drew up their demands. The national strike waves roll on.

As in the great strike victory of June 1976, the movement against the price rises started at the large engineering complex, ZM Ursus, which employs 17,000 workers on the southern outskirts of Warsaw. They moved immediately the price rises were announced on 1 July.

They were joined by steel, car, shipyard, aircraft production, and many other workers. At least a

hundred thousand workers were engaged in action in the first week.

The Stalinist bureaucracy can do two things with strikes: crush them before they spread or concede the demands — and maintain a total news silence.

The party leaders knew there would be some trouble, but they banked on quick concessions to a few trouble spots in order to gain the benefit of price increases everywhere else. The plan backfired.

The news embargo told workers something big was afoot. The victories in the first factories to act became widely known through the grapevine. The regime had to go public with a new initiative to try to stem the tide.

Battle

On 9 July Gierek went on TV saying there would be no more wage increases without productivity deals, while he made vague promises of rises in family benefits and in wages for the lower paid next year.

The workers got the message: Gierek's offer was a sign of weakness, otherwise why hadn't he made it on 1 July?

The next day, the famous Zeran car plant employing 20,000 Warsaw workers who had spearheaded the workers' council movement in 1956 answered Gierek with strike action. They were joined by a radio factory in the capital, by two textile factories in Zyrardow, and by the first detachments of the Lublin working class. The second wave of strikes was in full swing.

To date, opposition circles in Warsaw have documented more than 50 stoppages. The actual numbers of strikes may be many times greater while the numbers of plants where the workers have won without a battle is probably very much larger still.

Trade Unions

The economics of the meat price increase has been turned on its head. But that's not the most frightening balance-sheet for the regime.

Gierek has managed to call into being a powerful, self-confident independent trade union movement which will not be pushed back underground without major political convulsions.

Some sections of the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy will now start preparing for just such convulsions, while other groupings will urge political concessions to the workers in order to sweeten the pill of economic austerity. Poland is on the road to profound political upheavals.

The official trade unions have been shown to be bankrupt during the strike wave. In no single case have they led the workers. The Polish workers need new, independent trade unions and new political organisations to conduct their struggle for power.

In this connection, the British TUC's visit to Poland in September takes on a new significance: what does the TUC propose to do to assist the struggle by Polish workers for their rights? Where does it stand on the right to strike and form trade unions in Poland?

By Pat Kane

**THE British Steel Corporation closed the secondary rolling mills at Warrington last Friday, with the loss of 700 jobs. Ironically, the latest edition of *Steelworkers Banner*, the ISTC's journal, carries the headline 'We'll fight the closure'.**

The shutdown came after a ballot result of 2 to 1 in favour of accepting the principle of closure, with over a third of the workforce abstaining.

Yet the Warrington steelworkers in Cheshire were among the most militant during the 13-week strike. What went wrong in the fight to save jobs? Socialist Challenge asked COLIN HERD, the plant convenor.

## Investment

'The mistake we made,' says Colin, 'was to rely on the TUC Steel Committee to fight for our jobs, and not on our own workforce and the support that we could win from other steelworkers.'

'Don't get me wrong, it is important to get the union leaders actively involved in issues like this. This is especially true if you've got a traditionally moderate workforce like we had. When they see that the union is involved, it can get them on the right side.'

'But we left it up to them to organise support, and they let us down. We were told to wait until we

# Warrington closure: "Leadership let us down"

had seen the BSC board, but when we got to London they didn't want to know about the problems that another closure in Warrington would cause.

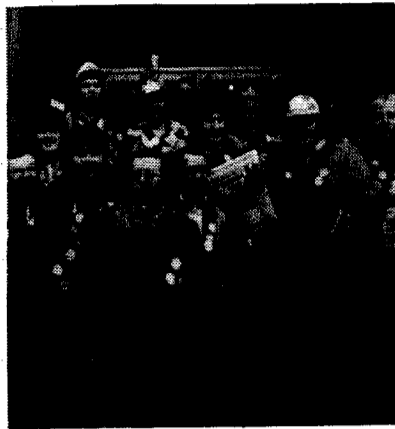
'They had made up their mind that the plant was to close, and they were going to stick to it.'

'The TUC Steel Committee had been delaying meeting with the Board over Warrington. When we finally got to meet them, it was too late to organise the older workers to fight the closure.'

'If you had worked in this plant all your life, then the severance money was a lot.'

The closure was officially announced on 17 April, just two weeks after the end of the steel strike. Secret BSC documents revealed by ISTC have shown that the closure plans were drawn up at the end of last year. But the members of the TUC Steel Committee knew during the wages' strike that the Corporation was preparing for another massive round of closures.

Yet they insisted that the strike



was only about wages and not jobs. The refusal of the TUC leaders to organise against closures during the strike made BSC's job easier.

The strike had produced a new fighting spirit among steelworkers. Six months ago there would only have been a handful of votes against closure; now there were over a third. The task was to win the support of those who were not committed to

taking voluntary redundancy money.

Here again the role of the full-time officials was crucial. At the mass meeting George Cooper, the local ISTC official, announced that 'if you fight, the union will support you, but you have to realise that it may jeopardize your severance pay'.

There was no mention of the solidarity that had been already been organised by the local union committee in winning support from Skinningrove, Rotherham, and Scunthorpe for the boycott of orders from Warrington.

They didn't put forward any militant plan of action, based on local trade union and labour movement support to defend all jobs being threatened in the area. Without anything more than verbal support from the officials, the workforce voted for closure.

To some extent the union leadership, especially ISTC, looked on Warrington as a test case for future closures. But the problem lies in the methods that they want to use. ISTC has produced an alternative

to the criminal mismanagement of BSC. But rather than mobilise their members, the union leaders wanted to rely on an injunction through the courts to stop the BSC closing more plants.

The plans start from the need to make profits, not from the defence of jobs. It could have been written by any management consultant.

The Warrington workers were told that it was through getting the Tories to change their policies and adopt the union's plan that they would save jobs. Bernard Connolly, the craft convenor at Rotherham, described the ISTC plan as 'a sedative before they chop off your head'.

## Planned

BSC is planning many more plant closures. The first is at Consett this September. If other steelworkers are to be successful in defending their jobs, they have to organise to make sure that they themselves control the conduct of the struggle.

Involving the full-time officials is vital, but on its own this is not sufficient.

Full-time officials have to be forced to organise to defend jobs. Just three months ago, Bill Sirs sold out the steel strike. The same officials are still there, 'supporting' the fight to save jobs. Part of this fight is to change the unions themselves, to ensure that there is no repeat of Warrington.

# SWANSEA WAR ON THATCHER

'IT'S war as Thatcher sneaks into Swansea.' That was the headline in the local press last Saturday as the Prime Minister visited Swansea. She showed her contempt for the unemployed by visiting Swansea just days before the official announcement of the ending of all steel production in Wales.

Everywhere she went there were protests and demonstrations. In the North of Wales her car was stopped and pelted with eggs by Welsh language demonstrators fighting for a Welsh language TV channel.

Her scheduled factory tour was disrupted as workers at the Hollyhead ferry terminal and several factories walked out on strike in protest at her presence.

In Swansea the Tory conference was launched on Friday evening at a dinner attended by local Labour Party leader Alan Lloyd. Outside



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (REPORT)

the hotel a vocal picket was mounted by the Right to Work campaign and Plaid Cymru.

On Saturday the largest protest ever seen in Swansea greeted the Tories. From 9am people gathered at a picket outside the Tory conference. Meanwhile the Labour Party and Wales TUC led a demonstration of 5000

through the city.

Large delegations were present from all the major unions. Steelworkers led by the Llanwrn Action Group and miners joined the protest against the run down of industry in Wales. The IMG and Revolution Youth also had contingents on the picket and the demonstration.

Many marchers were bit-

ter at the lack of leadership from the TUC and LP, and most demonstrators refused to march past the conference to the official rally, choosing instead to join the picket outside the conference called by the Right to Work Campaign.

Thatcher was forced to use back entrances to the conference. 'Wales has prospered

before through change and will prosper again,' she declared at the conference. 'Welsh people must be prepared to leave Wales to seek work' — although what work she didn't say!

The rank and file gave a clear message to their leaders at Saturday's demo — 'we're ready to fight, are you willing to lead?'

## Police clampdown for Thatcher visit

AN unprecedented security operation took place in Swansea last weekend as police prepared for Thatcher's visit. Brendan Young, a prominent Irish militant in Swansea, was arrested on Saturday morning under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Brendan helped to organise this year's South Wales Youth March against Unemployment.

After the anti-Thatcher demonstration a 150-strong picket was mounted outside the Swansea Central police station where Brendan was being held. At one point plain clothes police led an assault on the picket and three demonstrators were arrested. Two members of the SWP were arrested, beaten up in the cells, and then accused of assaulting the police!

Brendan was released on Sunday afternoon after his supporters threatened to hold daily pickets. He was asked not one word in custody, except his name, age, address, and previous address in London.

Also last Saturday SWP member George White had his house searched on 'suspicion of having drugs'. Needless to say none were found. Feeling is running high in Swansea, especially among young people, against this campaign of harassment mounted by the police.

By Valerie Coultas

**THE International Marxist Group's summer school was a big success. This was the verdict of many comrades who attended for the full week to discuss and learn about socialist revolutions throughout Europe.**

150 members and sympathisers participated, including comrades from the Swedish, Danish, Dutch, Sri Lankan, French, Austrian, and Pakistani sections of the Fourth International. A member of the American Young Socialist Alliance also attended as did members of Peoples Democracy from Ireland.

Dave Bailey, who gave an account of the events leading up to the defeat of the German revolution in 1919 was a popular speaker at the school. Joe, who came to the school on his own from Colchester, said he was really impressed with this session and many other com-

# Summer school a big success

rades expressed similar views. 'We could really feel the insurrection happening, particularly with the description of the workers surging across the bridges into Berlin in 1919.'

Dave's main point was to show how the revolutionary potential of European workers was dissipated by German social democracy at the end of the First World War.

The discussion on Portugal brought home the relevance of revolutionary movements in Europe today. The dictatorship's failure to deal with the national liberation struggles in Portuguese colonies in Africa — Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau led to splits within the army.

On 24 April 1974, Caetano was ousted from power and Portuguese workers, peasants and rank and file soldiers began to take things into their own hands. But the mass movement had no clear political direction. The major workers' parties, the CP and the SP, both in

their different ways, contained the revolt.

It was pointed out that despite the setback suffered on 27 November 1975, when some rank and file soldiers tried to seize power, the workers movement in Portugal still had confidence. The vote for the workers' parties in the last election had been high, over 50 per cent.

The session on the Spanish Civil War drew out a similar theme and showed how the Stalinist leaders of the Comintern sabotaged the revolutionary movement and allowed Franco to win the civil war.

The discussion on Cuba revealed how the July 26 movement, led by Fidel Castro, was won over to a revolutionary perspective, breaking fully with imperialist domination and establishing a planned economy in 1961.

Joss, 16, from Brighton 'Sarah, a member of People's Democracy in Ireland, enjoyed the

school but pointed out that she thought it would be a good idea to start from people's real experiences. The comrades who attended from Pakistan agreed with her. They pointed out that the British comrades were very fond of Revolution Youth, really liked the school and the option on an introduction to marxism in particular. 'I really found it educational,' she said, 'because I didn't know very much'.

One of the most popular optional courses was the one given by Alan Freeman and John Harrison on an Introduction to Marxist Economics. The sessions were very well attended and most participants expressed enthusiasm at the clarity and simplicity of the presentation. Topics such as the alternative economic strategy and the discussion on Thatcherism were very well received.

analogies and could perhaps pay more attention to the concrete

situation.

The debates on Afghanistan and on the nature of the Soviet Union, although exciting, highlighted this problem. Some participants found the style of presentation rather abstract and wanted more facts. Emma, from Glasgow, thought that it was necessary for socialists to speak more directly and use language that everyone could understand.

The IMG bookshop did a roaring trade as more and more comrades decided to improve their reading habits.

Devinder, a sympathiser who worked at GEC Coventry, explained how he found it difficult to know where to start buying books: 'I've never read a great deal about Marxism before. The school's given me an overview and now I'm longing to go away and start reading. I've got some idea of what to buy in a bookshop.'

A discussion took place among

the participants about how the school could be improved for next year. The general consensus was that a residential school was a very good idea because a great deal was learnt from just talking to comrades from branches and sections of the Fourth International.

It was also pointed out that not enough thought had been given to the content of the introductions and that the theme, revolutionary transformation, had been a little submerged with the additional debates and discussions that had been added.

## Women

It was vital to involve more women and more proletarian comrades in introducing items as this would probably lead to a less abstract approach.

The importance was stressed of both individual and collective education in fighting for revolutionary ideas in Britain where revolutionary marxist culture did not have a strong tradition. Next year the IMG intends to organise a school to cater for a larger number of comrades. Make sure you don't miss out on it if you couldn't come this year.

## Sun, sand... and Socialist Challenge?

SUMMER is here, and most of our supporters are trying to safeguard the little money they have from the effects of inflation, and the escalating costs of being a revolutionary socialist (fares up in price, books up, internal bulletins up etc.), to go away on holiday.

But Socialist Challenge isn't going on holiday; and we want to be here when you come back suntanned, eager to get your teeth into another year of party building.

So save us a little of the money you set aside for getting drunk on Greek ouzo in Crete, red wine in the South of France or cheap spirits in Spain.

Our Thanks this week to:

BLomax	£1.50
SForrester	3.00
DFowler	1.50
Anon	3.50
JTaylor	3.50
BTurner	2.50
Swansea	
Womens Centre	5.00
Swansea IMG	20.00
Stamps sold	4.00
Anon	4.30
CO'Callaghan	7.50
BWells	0.50
JRoffey	10.00
TOTAL	66.80

## Nasira Begum: here to stay, here to fight

By Pete Clifford

OVER 500 people marched through Manchester last Saturday protesting against the threatened deportation of Nasira Begum.

As the wife of a British citizen she was allowed to settle in Britain, but when she was deserted by her husband the authorities moved to boot her out.

Leading Saturday's march were Nasira and groups from other local defence campaigns for Asians threatened with deportation.

From them, and contingents that followed, including many from the Labour Party, came a clear message to Tory Home Secretary William Whitelaw — black people are here to stay and here to fight!

## Anti-Nazi date in West Brom

By Clive Gilson, Leamington Anti-racist Anti-fascist Committee  
MARTIN Webster, the National Front's national organiser, was given a rough ride by Asian youth in West Bromwich when he visited the area to prepare for a demonstration to be held on 17 August.

The Nazis' theme is unemployment. The NF aims to use the disastrous job situation in the West Midlands to put the blame on black people instead of the bosses.

No doubt Webster's mob hopes to capitalise on the support it gained in a West Bromwich by-election a few years ago, and to intimidate the black community. In recent weeks skinheads have been attacking Asian youth in the Sparkhill area of Birmingham.

The NF is mobilising nationally for its march, and anti-racist committees in the area aim to do likewise for a counter demonstration.

## Nicaraguan revolution one year old

By Valerie Coultas

A THOUSAND people crowded into London's Logan Hall last Saturday evening to celebrate the first anniversary of the Nicaraguan revolution.

It was on the 17 July 1979 that the hated Anastasio Somoza fled from Nicaragua, forced out of his country by a mass upsurge of peasants and workers after a fierce battle in Managua had defeated the National guard.

The Nicaraguan ambassador who spoke at the meeting was young and enthusiastic. The National Government of Reconstruction had made great strides forward with agrarian reform, its literacy campaign, and its attempts to counter the economic sabotage of the bosses by supporting workers who were taking over the fac-

tories he said.

He gained a big round of applause when he said that the Sandinista Liberation Front was committed to the liberation of women.

The Grenadan ambassador wished the Nicaraguan people 'many happy returns on your first birthday.' Placing the revolution alongside other

developments in Latin America, including the revolution in Grenada, he said that the dominant role of US imperialism was being challenged — even in 'Uncle Sam's own back yard'.

Arthur Scargill, responding to the mood of the audience after the speeches of the Cuban and Vietnamese ambassadors, concentrated his fire on American imperialism.

He was 'sick of listening to Western hypocrisy about the invasion of Afghanistan'. Where were these people, he asked, when the Vietnamese countryside was being raped and pillaged by American bombers?

If these people were 'so concerned about self-determination, they could make a start by getting American war bases out of Cuba,' he said to widespread applause.

Referring to the £2.50 that

it cost to buy school materials for a Nicaraguan child, he pointed out that if all the money spent on military weapons was used constructively it 'could wipe out poverty, starvation, and suffering throughout the world'.

The meeting had been a good 'launching pad' for the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign in Britain, he said. Now the campaign had to be taken into the British labour movement. 'All the brothers and sisters present should give practical aid to the Nicaraguan revolution.'

An enjoyable evening ensued listening to the Latin American folk music of Saraguru, dancing to Aswad, a Reggae group, and hearing the anti-racist poetry of Linton Kwesi Johnson. Linton summed it up rather nicely: 'Solidarity with the Nicaraguan revolution — Forward to workers and peasants power.'



## Defend Munir Ahmed

Approximately 100 people marched through the streets of Oldham last Saturday in protest against the impending deportation of Munir Ahmed (pictured here). More than half the demonstrators were from the Pakistani community.



## Twenty six arrested at Adwest

by Stuart Cumberpatch

AFTER police attempts to prevent picketing at the Adwest plant in Reading on 2 July, when Adwest convenor Danny Broderick was arrested at the factory gate, 100 pickets blocked those gates on 14 July with chants of 'we demand the right to picket'.

Sixty workers at Adwest are on strike, following the sacking of 26 workers who walked out in a victimisation dispute.

Within minutes of the start of the 14 July action, the picket was attacked by the

committee set up last week has decided to wage a determined political campaign to fight the charges and raise money. If the cases are lost, fines are likely to run into thousands of pounds. Public meetings are planned for 30 July in Reading and later in Oxford and Swindon.

The first trial will be on Friday 25 July. A picket of Reading magistrates court will be held on 8 August when a number of other pickets including Thornett will be in the dock. A large turnout is essential.

The next picket of the Adwest factory will be on Monday 11 August from 6am, when the factory reopens after the summer holidays.

Contributions to: The Treasurer, Adwest Defence Cttee, 46 Berkeley Ave., Reading.

Thames Valley police Tactical Support Group. Despite resistance, the police arrested 26 people including three leading Adwest strikers, several Socialist Challenge supporters and Alan Thornett, a senior steward at the BL Cowley plant.

It is clear that Adwest has now become a testing ground for Prior's attack on workers' rights. In reality his 'maximum of six pickets' becomes no pickets at all.

At a special court on 14 July, 25 people were charged with obstruction, threatening behaviour and criminal damage. One defendant who pleaded guilty was charged with 'threatening behaviour' — shouting insults at scabs arriving on a local bus. He was fined £150 plus £25 costs.

Most of the other defendants have decided to plead not guilty. A defence

## Brixton dole needs your support

CPSA members at Brixton dole office are continuing their strike against the sacking of two members, Phil Cordell and Richard Cleverley, for union activities.

The two were given notice of sacking on 13 June but sent home immediately to keep them out of the office. 49 of the 55 CPSA members at the office are on strike.

The CPSA's national conference voted full support for the fight for re-instatement, but the CPSA executive, in a circular signed by general secretary Ken Thomas, have 'deplored' the action being taken by Brixton, urging instead that Cordell and Cleverley should rely on civil service and industrial tribunal appeals. Such appeals have nil chance of success.

Support is thus urgently needed for the continuing picket, together with resolutions from CPSA branches to the executive deploring their attitude.

Supporters of the daily picket will be interested in the news that the Special Patrol Group have just arrived back in Brixton for a two-month stay. Their last stay was part of the reason why Lambeth Council initiated an inquiry



Photo: ANDREW WARD (REPORT)  
Phil Cordell into policing in the area. Their report is just about to be published — which makes the SPG's arrival back in the area an interesting coincidence.

THE deadline for short news articles for this page is 10.30am Monday. Articles up to 200 words can be rung through on Sundays on 01-359 8189.

## Courts slam anti-nuke demonstrators

By Geoff Young (Sharpness Defence Group)  
ON 8 July a small group of anti-nuclear protestors obstructed a train carrying nuclear waste to Sharpness docks in Gloucestershire. The nuclear waste was to be loaded aboard a ship for dumping in the Atlantic — Britain is the only nation which still dumps nuclear waste in the sea, with its potential threat to marine life and food supplies.

Contrary to press reports, including that in the Morning Star, the stopping of the train was perfectly safe — it was warned 300 yards away and was travelling at only 15mph. The train stopped 20 yards from the scaffolding, before edging up to it.

Seven people were subsequently imprisoned on remand for five days for this sort of civil disobedience — in which no one was hurt and nothing was damaged.

Together with an eighth person, they were later fined £300 each plus £20 costs — a total of £2560. These fines must be paid within three months, otherwise our comrades will go back to jail.

It is vital that we respond to these attempts to intimidate those using non-violent disobedience to stop this nuclear insanity. Please send contributions to: Sharpness Defence Fund, The Gables, Butterow Hill, Stroud, Gloucestershire.

## St Benedict's mass picket on 30 July

ON 4 June the Merton, Sutton, and Wandsworth Area Health Authority voted to permanently close the St Benedict's geriatric hospital.

The AHA hopes to save £15m as their contribution to the Tory government's cuts in the National Health Service.

The closure makes no sense from any medical or human point of view. The hospitals due to take St Benedict's patients — the Bolingbroke, St James, and the South London — are totally ill-equipped to be geriatric hospitals.

The staff of the hospital, supported by patients, relatives, and other hospital workers in the area are determined to continue their eight-month work-in to stop the closure.

Come and give your support on the mass picket on Wednesday 30 July, 6-7pm, Church Lane, Tooting. This will be followed by a public meeting at 7.30pm in the Tooting Co-op Hall, 180 Upper Tooting Road, (between Tooting Broadway and Tooting Bec tube stations).

Speakers: Alan Fisher, gen sec NUPE, Dave Williams, gen sec COHSE, Arthur Hautot, St Benedict's strike committee, Carl Brecker, Fightback, Dai Dawe, regional officer RCN, Frank Faulkner, NUPE steward Bolingbroke hospital, plus film. There will be food available on the picket.

## Manchester organises against missiles

By Duncan Edwardes

EP Thompson attracted an audience of 800 people in Manchester for a meeting on European nuclear disarmament last week.

The meeting decided to launch a local campaign, Manchester Against Missiles (MAM), to oppose the siting of Cruise missiles in Britain and the replacement of Polaris by the £5 billion Trident missile.

Manchester against Missiles will be building the 9 August demonstration called by North-west CND on the same demand. It coincides with the anniversary of the dropping of the H-bomb on Nagasaki.

MAM will hold a rally on 19 October in the Free Trade Hall on the eve of the big CND national demonstration.

Over £600 was collected at the EP Thompson meeting and will be used to organise activities throughout the Manchester area. For information about MAM phone 061 273 2946.

## INTERNATIONAL / IRELAND

IRELAND in 1919 was in turmoil. In the previous year a general election had resulted in over 70 per cent of the population voting for the Republican Sinn Fein party. But the British government refused to accept the election results and continued to occupy the country.

In the face of a guerilla campaign, the British occupation forces replied with their traditional repressive measures. One victim was Robert Byrne, a prominent trades unionist in the southern Irish town of Limerick and a member of the insurrectionary Irish Volunteers.

In January 1919 Byrne was sentenced to a year in prison by a British military court.

When he went on hunger strike in support of his right to be treated as a political prisoner, Byrne was transferred to Limerick Hospital. It was there on 6 April 1919 that his comrades tried to rescue him.

A constable was shot dead, a second was mortally wounded, and Byrne was taken away by the rescue party — but he had been fatally injured in the struggle. His body was removed to Limerick Cathedral. The Limerick Board of Guardians paid tribute to him as 'a self-effacing patriot'.

The British government was obliged to act against such a statement. Limerick city was proclaimed a 'special military area' under the control of the British Army.

At Byrne's funeral the route of the procession was lined by British troops with fixed bayonets; the procession itself was patrolled by armoured cars, while military planes flew overhead. Two of Byrne's cousins were arrested.

On 11 April a large area in and around the borough of Limerick was declared to be under martial law as from the following Tuesday, 15 April.

Anyone who wished to enter this area could do so only if they carried permits, bearing their photograph and signature, that were issued by the British military. No exception was to be made for workers commuting to and from their jobs, many of which were outside the proclaimed area.

On 12 April the workers in the Condensed Milk Company's Landsdowne factory, most of whom would be affected by the permit order, went on strike in protest against the British measures.

The next day the United Trades and Labour Council held a special meeting. It resolved to call a general strike in the city as from 3am on 14 April until the ending of martial law.

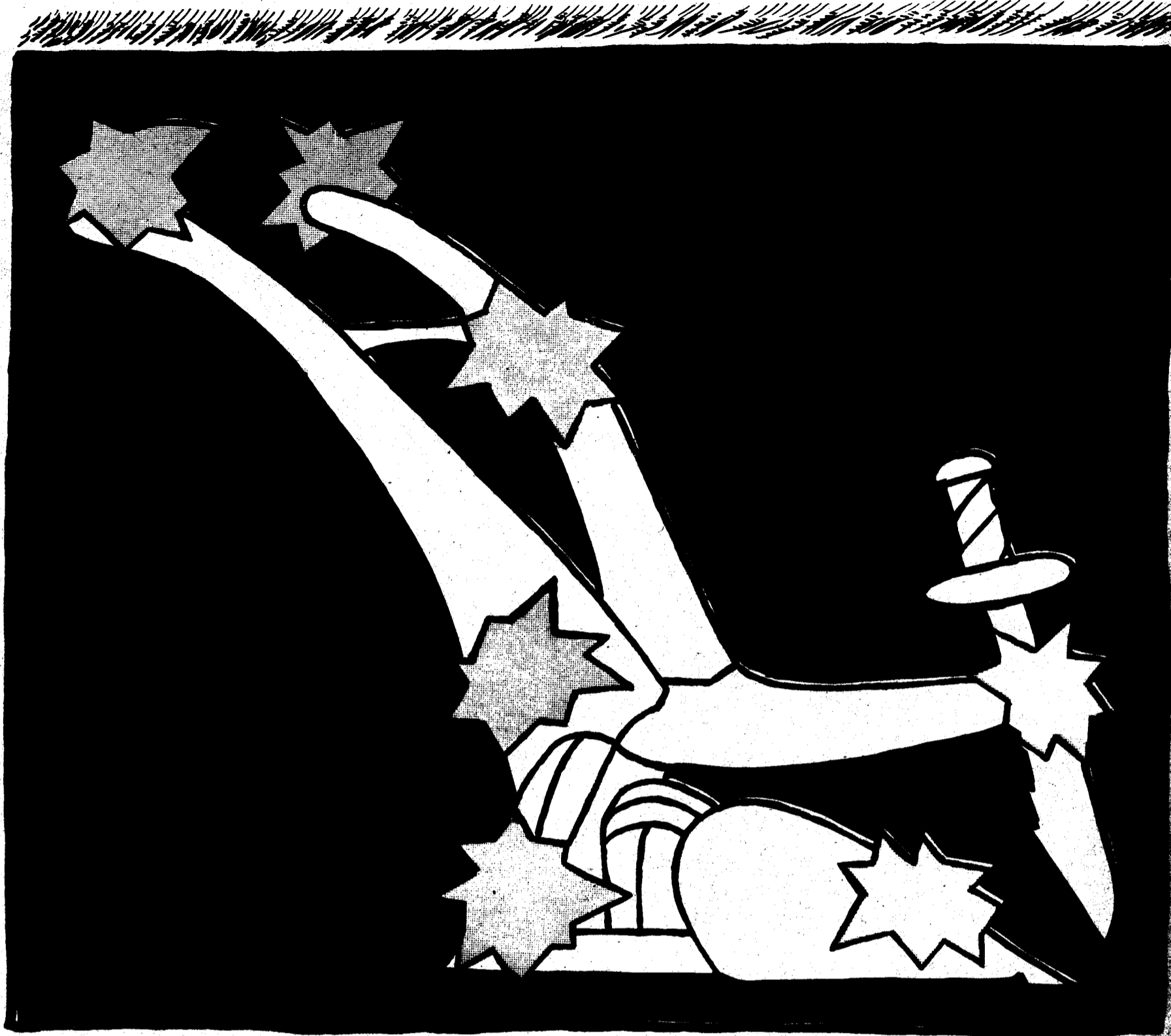
Sean Cronin, chairperson of the trades council, threatened to call out the railway workers, stating that only the 48 hours' notice they were required to give the executive in London prevented him from calling an immediate strike.

The Trades and Labour Council transformed itself into a strike committee. It took over a printing press and prepared placards explaining the strike, posting them all over Limerick.

This was the first of many publications during the next fortnight; permits, proclamations, food price lists, and a strike bulletin rolled off the press. Besides the propaganda, the committee detailed skeleton staffs to maintain gas, electricity, and water supplies.

The strike was an immediate success. Despite the suddenness of the decision, it was executed by 15,000 organised workers.

On 14 April all that was operating were the public utilities under their skeleton staffs; some carriers with permits from the strike committee to enable journalists to interview the committee; the banks, hotels, government businesses,



# THE STORY OF THE L

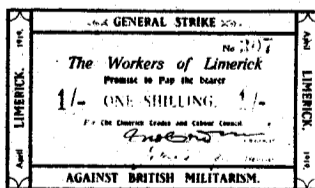
and the railways. The engineers on the railways struck the next day.

This triumph gained support beyond its class nature. The petty-bourgeoisie — the small shopkeepers — participated. The Limerick Chamber of Commerce sent a statement to the British Prime Minister, Andrew Boner Law, condemning the permit system. Sinn Fein backed the strike and Mayor O'Mara refused to leave the proclaimed area for his home.

The strike committee had soon to escalate the struggle.

Food shortages began to appear on the first day. The committee ordered the rationing of hotel meals. In the evening it granted permits — to be enforced by pickets — for shops to sell bread, milk, and potatoes between 2-5pm as from the next day, and for the bakeries to maintain production.

To avoid a shortage, the strike committee established a subordinate body of four city councillors with control of the local Irish Volunteers to organise the supply of food to Limerick. At night, boats with



muffled oars, and by day hearses from the workhouse hospital, brought food supplies into the city. Profiteers were closed down.

Other sub-committees were established to supervise pickets, propaganda, and funds. The first body executed police duties. The propaganda committee was most notably responsible for the daily *Workers' Bulletin*; this maintained publication throughout the period of the stoppage.

By Good Friday, 18 April, dual power in Limerick had developed to its fullest.

On the one hand there was the British Army. It had brought in an extra hundred police at the time of the inquest on Robert Byrne. It had considerable military forces, including an armoured car and a tank. It had barbed wire all along the route

into the proclaimed area.

Against the colonial power was the full force of organised labour in Limerick, backed implicitly by the Irish Volunteers.

The vast majority of the community accepted the strike committee's authority. Even the British Army was affected: a Scots regiment had to be sent home hastily when it was found that its soldiers were allowing workers to pass in and out of the city without demanding their permits.

Already there had been one trial of strength between the two powers.

On 12 April General Griffin, the British officer in command, tried to win over the Chamber of Commerce. The chamber referred the terms offered to the strike committee. The committee replied that it had no wish to take the step it had taken, but that the military authorities had left it with no alternative.

This statement was backed by a number of clergy, headed by the bishop, Dr Hallinan, who denounced the permit system as 'unwarrantable'.

Matters could not remain

**D R O'CONNOR LYSAGHT** writes of a little-known incident in Irish history when the vision of the Irish workers' republic came into view.

thus. Either the strikers or the British had to win. The danger for the British was that the struggle would escalate in a way that could bring Irish labour to state power.

The most definitive move in that direction would have to be taken by the railway workers throughout the country. They had refused to handle freight in Limerick, except where it was permitted by the strike committee or where it was under military guard.

It was expected that they would extend this action to a full-scale railway strike.

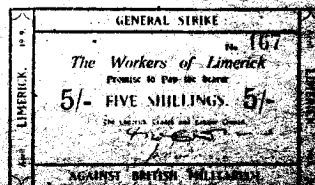
What held them back was the inaction of the national executive of the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress (a single organisation). Its meeting

on 16 April declared that the strike concerned the workers' basic right of travel, and it appealed to all workers and people of the world to support it.

But it did not make any recommendation or call for a broadening of the strike, preferring to wait until another meeting of the executive scheduled to be held in Limerick itself six days later.

Then on 21 April a major blow was delivered in London.

H R Stockman, speaking on





Two Irish Volunteers from Limerick in 1919.

military.' What this meant was quite simple. The executive was prepared to go to any lengths to avoid a confrontation with the occupying forces. The limitations of the politics of pure protest have seldom been more evident. Quite correctly the strike committee rejected the proposal.

The next day the mayor and bishop of Limerick visited General Griffin. What happened at this meeting is unknown. Subsequent events point to them having obtained what might have been considered a compromise: the soviet should end and, if for a week after that, there was no trouble in the proclaimed area the military permit order would be withdrawn.

Faced with this offer, backed as it was by the leaders of bourgeois Limerick and deserted by the national executive, the strike committee began to retreat.

On the same day as the mayor and the bishop met the general, the committee declared that strike notices were withdrawn for those working within the boundary of the proclaimed area.

There was considerable bitterness and copies of the proclamation limiting the strike were torn down. Many talked of a 'second soviet', or just a new strike committee. On 26 April demonstrators stopped permit holders from crossing a bridge until they were themselves dispersed by the police.

As yet only half the strikers had returned but on 27 April the strike was denounced from the pulpit by a Catholic priest. Even without this the strike committee could not resist the pressure. The bishop and mayor had at least some scheme of action; the committee had none.

On 26 April the general strike was declared to be at an end. The next day, except for the bacon factories, the city was back to normal. Seven days later the proclamation was withdrawn. Permits to enter the area covered by them were declared unnecessary a week later.

The Limerick Soviet's defeat, for such was what it was in the long run, had seeds in the nature of the leadership of the struggle — the all-class composition of that leadership and the bourgeois nature of it. But this was compounded by the hostility of the trade union and Labour Party bureaucracies both in Britain and in Ireland.

It was the leadership of the working class movement that betrayed it. This ensured that the Limerick Soviet would not have the place in Irish history that its counterpart in St Petersburg has had in the history of Russia.

The workers of Limerick need not apologise for what happened. For two short weeks the vision of the Irish workers' republic was raised. A splendid vision it was.

'The Story of the Limerick Soviet', by DR O'Connor Lysaght, is available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, London N1. Price 40p plus 20p p&p.



# LIMERICK SOVIET, 1919

This article is an extract from *The Story of the Limerick Soviet*, published by the Irish revolutionary organisation **People's Democracy**

... Foran, president of the... who refused to extend... of the British TUC and of... trade unions whose... were involved in the... declared it to be a... and accordingly... these unions to refuse

strike pay to those of their members who were involved in it.

Stockman's statement was supported by the executive of the National Union of Railwaymen, which ordered its Irish members to avoid action.

While the strike committee was under such attacks it also had headaches from its rank and file. Their militancy was on the increase.

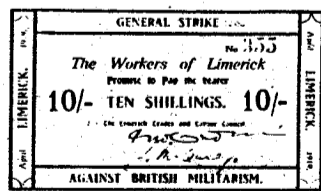
On 19 April an Army sentry had to disperse a crowd of youth. Two days later there was a more serious affair. A hurling match was held just outside the proclaimed area and many used the opportunity to 'trail their coats'.

On returning to the city in the evening some 500 individuals refused to show their permits. The Army stopped them entering the area, with the support of 500 police and two armoured cars. Most of the crowd stayed the night at a nearby dance-hall.

The next day they boarded a train and avoided a military cordon at the city terminus by getting out on the side of the station opposite to where the troops were waiting. The next day shots were fired by troops at a fair when people again refused to show their permits.

The strike committee meanwhile was having money problems. Trades councils and some unions sent money to Limerick, but these helped only to a limited extent. The Labour Party and TUC national executive estimated later that £8,000 a week was needed to maintain the soviet. Only £1,500 had arrived when the strike action ended after a fortnight.

The finance sub-committee



prepared designs for a special bank note to be issued on the credit of the strike committee. Some notes were put out before the strike ended, and were accepted by many shopkeepers.

On 20 April William O'Brien and Thomas Foran, of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union and the Labour Party and TUC executive, arrived in Limerick. That night at a meeting of all sections of the community Sean Cronin, on behalf of the strike committee, offered to hand over power to Labour's executive.

Part of the reason was that he knew what had to be done to win the strike and he felt that the executive would be willing and

able to expand the struggle.

Cronin had already talked about calling out the railway workers; now he declared that the national executive should make Limerick the headquarters of Ireland's national and social revolution.

The other members of the executive arrived in Limerick over the next two days. On 23 April they talked with the strike committee far into the evening. Cronin's hopes were dashed. The delegation stated that it had no power to call a national general strike without the authority of a special conference of the Labour Party and TUC.

What the delegation proposed instead was at once limited and totally utopian:

'That the men and women of Limerick whom they believed were resolved and determined to sacrifice much for the cause they were fighting should evacuate their city and leave it as an empty shell in the hands of the

By Brian Grogan

**'NATIONALISED industry is bad for workers, private industry is good.' That's the message the Tories are hammering out today — and every nationalised industry is threatened.**

\*The Ferranti electronics group and the Fairey engineering firm, rescued from bankruptcy by the National Enterprise Board, are now back in the black: Ferranti made £9.21m profit last year, Fairey £5.2m. Result? The Tories have sold them back to private investors at bargain prices.

\*British Rail has been forced to sell off some of its hotels and cross-Channel ferries.

\*Management at the British Steel Corporation is considering hiving off its lucrative Rotherham/Sheffield complex to raise £500m to meet the government's borrowing requirement demands.

\*Sections of the health service are to be sold to private firms.

\*The Post Office's monopoly on postal services is to be abolished to allow the private sector to move in on the profitable operations.

\*Demands are growing, according to the bosses' paper, *The Financial Times*, 'for breaking up the gas monopoly'.

The Tories have two things in

## Defend the nationalised industries



# ARGUMENTS FOR SOCIALISM

mind. First, to give their friends in the City some unearned profits. Second, and most important, to step up their political campaign to convince workers that nationalised industries are bad because they are nationalised.

'Bear in mind what you know about British Leyland and BSC,' advise the Tories. Well, it's true that waste and inefficiency are rampant in these nationalised industries: their history is one of job loss, speed-up and closures. But the big lie is that these problems come from the fact that they are nationalised.

The truth is that public industries run into difficulties

because they are subordinate to the profit system. In most cases they were nationalised as a step in capitalist rationalisation plans. The task for the management of BSC and BL was to bring these bankrupt firms out of the red.

It was the same story with the mines and rail. All these basic industries had been run down because profits weren't enough to convince capitalists to invest their ill-gotten gains in them. The state had to bail these industries out.

There might be waste and inefficiency in the nationalised sector, but it still has a record comparable to private industry. Between 1958 and 1968, for instance, output per person rose by only

four per cent in British manufacturing as a whole; in the nationalised railways it rose by 4.6 per cent, in the mines by 6 per cent, in electricity by 7.5 per cent, and in the nationalised airlines by 10 per cent. In the past decade the comparison has been even more favourable. Today production per person in BSC is the highest in Europe.

These rates have been achieved despite the fact that nationalised industries have always subsidised the private sector. ICI, for example, has a contract for gas by which it will receive £110m worth of gas for a mere £20m. More typical is the present government's demand that the nation-

alised industries make massive contributions to cutting the public sector borrowing requirement. This will allow the Tories to reduce taxation on private industry and thus boost their profits.

Furthermore the owners responsible for bankrupting these industries in the first place are still receiving compensation: for example, the former owners of the railways are still receiving £50m a year. Even where compensation isn't significant, interest charges on loans to the banks rapidly turn trading profits into losses. This year BSC has to find £200m for interest payments.

To defend the nationalised sector we have to reject the logic of profit; socialists argue for nationalisations under workers' control. Above all this means using the nationalised sector to plan the whole economy and throw overboard the anarchy of capitalism.

To do this we need to extend nationalisations, taking over the top 80 firms that dominate our economy. Then, by taking over the big banks and finance houses, it would be possible to plan investment according to need and not profit.

In this situation the scandal of the closure of whole steel works costing tens of millions of pounds would be ended. For such waste comes from taking investment decisions based on the anarchy of capitalism. But, as is clear today, such waste is a phenomenon of the profits' system as such. The closures, unemployment, lay-off, and overcapacity are typical of the whole economy. This is what we have to attack: the subordination of the nationalised industries to the logic of capitalism.

Such a proposal for workers' control and workers' plans has nothing in common with Tony Benn's ideas for planning agreements. His proposals, which leave the core sections of the economy in private hands, 'forget' one fact: profits are the be all and end all of capitalism.

Workers' control is a total challenge. It counterposes the plan to capitalist anarchy; and at factory level it puts in the hands of workers the decisions over line speed, hiring and firing, and number of hours worked. It is a policy that ensures that workers not profits benefit from advances in new technology and automation. It means sharing the work with no loss of pay.

This is the framework within which defence of the nationalised industries against the Tories should be framed. It is a key task for every militant.

By Patrick Sikorski

In the first three months of 1980 there were 7,000 redundancies in the Northern Region notified to the Department of Employment, helping to bring the total at 12 June to 142,707 — an increase since the same time last year of 24,000.

In the North and South Tyne areas (covering Newcastle, Gateshead, South Shields and Jarrow) there has been a rise of 7,700 since last June to over 47,000.

Three groups of workers have been particularly badly effected. First women workers: over 5 years, unemployment among women has risen 248%! Second, older workers: over half the workers at plants like Adamsez (sanitary ware), Tress Engineering and Vickers Scotswood were over 45 when their factories shut. Their skills were rendered obsolete overnight and they found getting new work almost impossible.

The third group are the young, particularly school leavers. In Newcastle this June 2,455 young people left school without a job to go to. A phone call to the Newcastle Careers Centre on Tuesday 8 July revealed that there were just two jobs available for them in the whole city — a sales assistant in a butcher's shop and a building labourer's job!

### Structural Decline

The industrial north developed during the latter half of the nineteenth century when Britain was the most advanced economy in the world. Coal mining, engineering, shipbuilding and marine engineering were the major growth industries. The peak of the North East's achievement was in the years before the First World War; export of coal at record levels, the launching of the 'Mauretania' with its revolutionary turbine engine, the growth of the power generating industry at Parson's and the vast production of armaments on Scotswood Road.

Post-war unemployment and international recession brought with it a loss of staple markets and crippling unemployment, as well as cuts in wages for workers in employment. The North East manufacturing base has never really recovered.

But both the programme of nationalisation by the Labour Government in 1945 and the regional policies pursued by governments of both parties since have had the same effect. They have allowed the bosses and bankers to pull out of unprofitable, declining industries that would need massive investment and they have heavily subsidised

## Unemployment in Newcastle and the North East Labour's and workers' plans come home to roost



West Newcastle may become one of the first '(free) Enterprise Zones' — Health and Safety Acts will not be binding

private capitalists with generous handouts of public money to set up modern factories in more profitable industries.

The 1974 manifesto on which Labour was elected heralded the dawn of a 'new era' in which the fundamental balance of wealth and power would be shifted from the rich to the workers. Central to this would be the new industrial policy. The National Enterprise Board funded by North Sea Oil would be the tool of this reconstruction of Britain's industrial base.

A spate of workers' plans based on the assumption that the NCB would act like a workers bank with Tony Benn as 'your friendly local bank manager' ignoring the overdraft, was the result — especially in the North East.

But many workers are now asking whether planning agreements and the NEB were an adequate alternative to full-blooded socialisation. This by no means overcomes the central problem of who is going to control the 'process of socialisation' and in whose interests. Is it going to be the workers through their own action or

managers appointed from private industry or banking?

Even more importantly this doesn't even mention the only way this can be done successfully from the workers' point of view — through occupations against closures and mass labour movement action. However what it does signify is that a growing number of stewards realise that in practice the NEB acted from day one like a merchant bank with only commercial considerations in mind.

The Vicker's Combine Committee produced one of the most

famous of the worker's plans concerned with the alternatives of producing Chieftain tanks. But well-produced pamphlets are no substitute for class struggle. 750 jobs have gone from the Vickers Scotswood Rd. 350 jobs will be lost this August at the Vickers Elswick plant and another 200 will go this September. The Vickers' case also conclusively gives the lie to the Thatcher argument that more profit automatically leads to more investment and more job opportunity.

Government and EEC aid was poured into Vickers-Michell (formerly Michell Bearings). However far from any signs of the 700 new jobs promised by Vickers, 54 jobs have actually been lost from Michells over the past 2 years.

The government cash limits have not only forced the nationalised industries to cut jobs to meet profitability targets but prevented the social services from expanding to soak up unemployment. Over the last 10 years thousands of young workers on the Tyne, who previously would have gone into apprenticeships, have found employment in education and welfare services, the University and the Polytechnic, in the hospitals or in the civil service.

More than a quarter of Newcastle workers are in these services today. But now the cuts have dried up this source entirely and while there have as yet been no compulsory redundancies, 1400 Civil Service jobs will go in the North in the next two years through 'natural wastage'.

The latest government recipe for solving the unemployment situation and regenerating industry is the Tory's 'Enterprise Zone' proposal. It is the logical Tory conclusion of past government policy. The proposal is to create inner city zones where no 'restrictive legislation' like the Health and Safety Acts will be binding in order to attract small business and create jobs. It is possible that West Newcastle may be the first area to be declared a '(free) Enterprise Zone'.

Workers have to reject this return to the Dickensian sweat shop as well as rejecting the pie in the sky still being peddled by the Labour lefts of the NEB, planning agreements and workers' plans which embroil the stewards in participation as effectively as any formal 'Leyland-type' participation plan.

The fight for jobs has to be waged as a direct struggle to protect every job; to get a 35-hour week immediately as the first step to sharing the work with no loss of pay; fighting for full pay during lay-offs and short-time and to occupy against closure threats and finally to demand that the next Labour government nationalises under workers' control all the basic industries threatened with closure.



By Lars Palmgren

CLARITA is coming back from the river and tells me that her father will return soon. 'Water?' she asks, and gives me the pitcher she has been carrying on her head.

While I'm drinking, Clarita tells me about the school: 'The school teacher is afraid of us. She says that we, who are in the Bloque (BRP-Bloque Popular Revolucionario), are subversive and that we only have ourselves to blame...'

We are sitting in the shadow of the trees in front of her clayhouse. Clarita is 14. She has eight brothers and sisters. Celisindo, her father, works as a day-labourer in the sugar-cane fields, which stretch out in front of the house.

The crop is ready now. 'It's us and the five nearest houses who are organised,' Clarita continues. 'But in these houses over there are squealers.'

Clarita is little. She looks like she's ten, but sounds as if she is 18.

Celisindo comes up from the river, sweaty from having walked fast. On his back is a small rucksack. 'Work material,' he explains, pointing towards the rucksack. He walks into the house, to put his shoes on.

## Vulcano

Behind the sugar-cane fields, on the other side of the river, the terrain rises steeply. To the right is the vulcano Guazapa. It looks cooler up there.

'Are you ready?' Celisindo asks. He is already on his way down to the river, marching quickly. I run after him. They told me — and I have come to realise how true it is — that I shouldn't walk in the countryside on my own. So Celisindo has been chosen to walk with me.

He belongs to the FTC (Federacion de Trabajadores del Campo, an organisation affiliated to the BPR), like most of the peasants and agricultural workers who live in the areas we are going to visit.

On the other side of the river we start to climb. Celisindo walks fast. When we reach the first plateau my mouth is dry and my clothes are drenched with sweat.

Celisindo indicates the newly harvested fields. 'They only let us lease the fields for six months. The rest of the time they let their animals graze on the rest of what we have sown,' he tells me.

We walk for hours, occasionally taking a rest in the shade. We pass a spring and the water tastes great. Celisindo explains things but I don't have the energy to listen. We have to leave the discussion till later. We still have a few hours of walking ahead of us.

'Can you see down there?' Celisindo asks, as we finally reach our destination. 'Do you see the houses without roofs?'

I can just make out a black shadow in the green vegetation and nod to him. 'It was the first house they burned down,' he says, and starts walking down.

## Fire

Suddenly the houses appear in front of us. Grey-brown, the same colour as the ground, we arrive at La Pava in the canton of Bucnavista. Don Felipe meets us and walks in front of us into the burned houses. 'They collected everything that could burn around here and set fire to it,' he says.

There are no more than 15 houses in La Pava. They were all burnt out. The villagers only had time to save a few. Five were burned down to the ground.

'They also set the maize crop on fire,' Don Felipe explains, and he shows us the charred maize which lays spread out on the ground, mixed with the smashed bricks.

Everyone in La Pava knows now that we are in the village. We are standing in a ring in an open space in front of Don Felipe's house.

'It's now two weeks ago,' Don Felipe tells us. 'When we heard the helicopters coming we went up into the mountains. They came from three directions. Juan Garcia was with

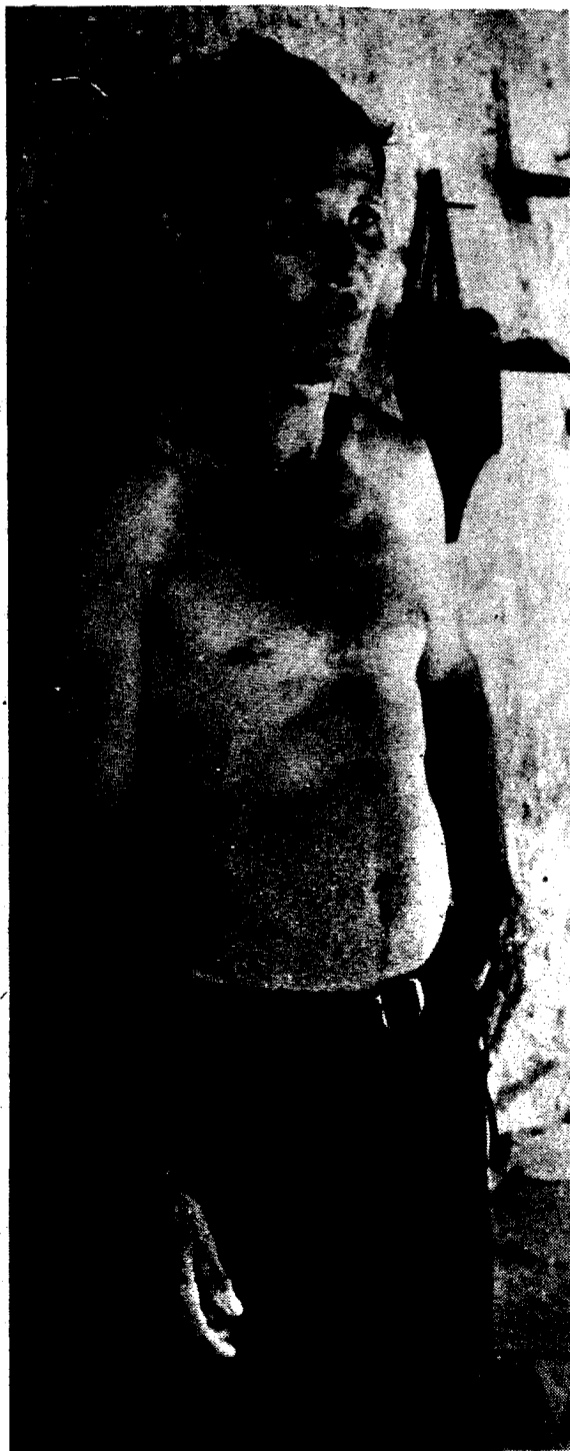
# The revolution in El Salvador "We must liberate ourselves... we shall surely win"

THE revolution in Nicaragua just a year ago could shortly be followed by the overthrow of the tyrannical regime that rules its neighbour in Central America, El Salvador.

The junta in El Salvador stays in power by means of bullets. Thousands of rebellious workers and peasants

have been murdered. Villages have been burned to the ground and crops destroyed.

One such attack was on the village of La Pava in the Buenavista canton of El Salvador. LARS PALMGREN recently visited the village. This is his report.



Don Felipe

them as a guide. He lives down there. A little black helicopter with two gringos joined them. They only stayed for a short while before they left again.'

Most people in La Pava own a little piece of land, but it is so small that it is totally insufficient to live on. Some people don't have any land at all.

'Him there,' Don Felipe points at a man. 'He has now only the clothes he is wearing. They burned down

everything he had...'

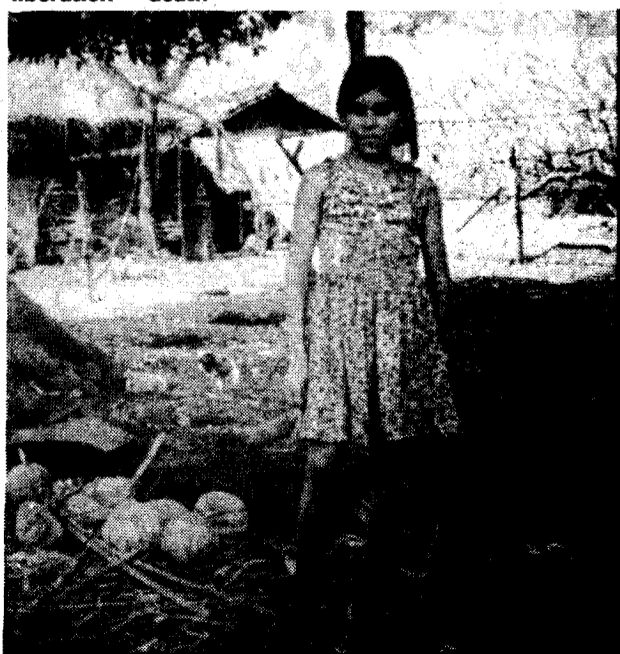
But why? What did they say? What did they want? And why did they destroy the houses?

With a voice as calm as the earth we walk on Don Felipe says: 'They want to spread the terror among us. And when they can't destroy the people they destroy the houses and the crops...'

For the past seven years most people up here have been organised. They have never received anything.



Don Felipe knows that he has only one alternative to liberation — death



Clarita

For three years now they always sleep up in the mountains at night.'

'A group of five people stay to guard the place,' somebody explains. 'But we always sleep together in large groups. You see, over there in the next village, they killed five people while they slept. So now we must stay together.'

A week previously the governing junta declared a land reform — a great, extensive revolutionary land reform, according to the official information to the press.

'No,' says Don Felipe, 'we don't believe in anything they say. They have promised so much and the only thing we have received is this... They burned down the houses around us.'

The carbonized maize crunches under our feet.

'We must liberate ourselves here,' he adds. 'We must create a new system, a system without exploitation. As the people are united now, we shall surely win. We think that other people will support us...'

The pigs are grunting around us. The Don Felipe's cock crows. Anxious birds cause a rustle in the trees. The 50 inhabitants of La Pava are standing together outside Don Felipe's house.

'We are certainly going to liberate ourselves,' they say. 'Those killers must be punished.'

## Death

For Don Felipe and his 50 comrades there is only one alternative to liberation — to die in struggle. It's not simply their words which make me understand that. It's their voices. Only somebody who already knows has such a voice. Only people who have made up their minds can talk like that.

Just before dusk we arrive at Tresceibas. A few hundred members of the agricultural labour union — men and women — are sitting under a giant tree. In front of them on the open space there are ruins of the old schoolhouse, which was earlier also used as a meeting place.

'Last time they came was a week ago,' says one of them, 'but we were not here. We are always forewarned. But this time someone wasn't able to keep up with us when we went up into the mountains. While the helicopters circled the soldiers caught up with him and shot him in the head. They said they will come back every fortnight. They want to get hold of all of us, all the organised. They want to destroy our organisation.'

'You have been fighting for so long,' I say. 'You have demanded lower rents, better prices, you have demanded agrarian reforms, and they have passed a law of agrarian reform. Doesn't that mean anything?'

His smile is the same as Don Felipe's. The others are sitting quiet around us. They know what he is going to say: 'No, here we don't accept anything of that. The agrarian reform is a bluff. They are just trying to feed us with hopes...but we know what it's all about.'

'We know that they will never side with the people. We know that it's only after we have liberated ourselves that we can start to talk about agrarian or any other reform.'

And will they defend themselves?

'We know that they are trying to work out new plans of attack. They intend to come from all directions, as they know we are always warned, but we will get around them somehow. It will come one day.'

There is no reason for them to tell me their plans. It's enough to let me know that they are prepared, and that they will find a way out... When dusk comes we will walk up into the mountains. People will be left behind to guard the place.

## Calm

In San Salvador, the capital, in the backyard of the murdered archbishop, there are 300 homeless families of agrarian workers. They have been forced to run away from their homes and their land. In other places around the city there are another couple of thousands. Some of the cantons are completely abandoned.

This is what the regime aims to do with the 500 families in Tresceibas — force them from their homes. 'But we won't leave. We will find a way. We will not let them take away the little we have...'

Their calmness in the night makes my heart beat normally again. Not even the mosquitos will now be able to disturb my sleep.

This article is taken from 'Internationalen', the newspaper of the Swedish section of the Fourth International.

RATES for ads to appear in What's Left: 5p per word or £4 per col. inch. Deadline: noon Sat. prior to publication. Payment in advance. WANTED: screen printer for the Other Printshop in Manchester. Experience not essential but some artistic capability and organisational efficiency are. Phone Criss on 061-236 4905

FULL-TIME worker required for the Troops Out Movement to work in office in North London. Duties include liaising with branches and co-ordinating their activities, organising national events and fund-raising activities. Also general office work. For further details tel 267 2004. Apply in writing to TOM steering committee, Box TOM, 2a St Paul's Road, London N1. Closing date is Friday 1 August. SAVE 'Pits and Steel Jobs', Labour Party conference fringe meeting, 7.30pm Tuesday 30 September, Cliffs Hotel, Queens Promenade, Blackpool. Speakers include: Emyln Williams (Pres S Wales NUM), Dennis Skinner MP, Neil Kinnock MP, Alec Jones MP, speakers from Llanwrn Action Committee. Invited: Bill Sirs, general secretary of ISTC.

WITHDRAW the army of occupation from Ireland. Picket and blanket protest at the Royal Tournament, Earls Court, 26 July, noon to 1.30pm. Called by TOM.  
IRELAND - the issues at stake. A series of forums organised by the Revolutionary Communist Tendency, No 6, 'Bring the war to Britain: building a working class anti-imperialist movement', Wed 30 July, 7.30pm. University of London Union, Malet St, Warren St tube.

SCEVENTS

ABERDEEN: SC sold Saturdays outside C&As - for more info ring phone Collin, 574060.

BATH: SC on sale at 1985 Books, London Road, and Saturdays 2pm-3pm outside the Roman Baths. Phone 20298 for more details.

BERMINGHAM: SC on sale at The Ramp, Fri 4.30-5.30, Sat 10-4. For more info phone 643-0669.

BRADFORD: SC available from Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.

BRENT: SC supporters sell every Sat Morning at Kilburn Square.

BRIGHTON: For info phone Nick, 605052.

BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. For more info contact Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpelier, Bristol 6.

CARDIFF: SC sales Newport Town Centre outside Woolworths 11-12.30; Cardiff British Home Stores 11-12.30. Also available from 108 Books, Salisbury Road, Cardiff.

COVENTRY: SC available from Wedge Bookshop. For more info about local activities phone 461138.

DUNDEE: SC available from Dundee City Square outside Boots, every Thursday 4-5.30pm, Friday 4-5.30pm, Saturday 11-4pm.

ENFIELD: SC available from Nelsons Newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.

HAMILTON: SC on sale 8-11 every Sat, outside County Bar Almada Street, every Sat outside Safeway 1.30-5. For more info contact Paul, 17 Clyde View or John at 54 Eliot St, Hamilton.

HUDDERSFIELD: SC supporters sell papers every Saturday 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peacock's.

LAMBETH/SOUTHWARK: SC supporters celebrate the victory of the July 26 Movement (as well as other notable events) with a fundraising social, Sat 26 July, 8pm, 18 Half Moon Lane, SE24. £1. Dinner served, bar open.

YORKSHIRE Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities. Tel. 061-682 5151.

OXFORD: SC supporters sell every Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.

STOCKPORT: SC sold every Saturday 1pm Mersey Square. Tel. 061-236 4905 for more information.

SWINDON: SC on sale 11-1 every Sat., Regent St (Brunel Centre).

TEESSIDE: SC on sale Sat lunchtime in the Cleveland Centre, and in Newsfare, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and in Green's, Spencer Market, Stockton.

TEESSIDE: SC supporters meeting Thurs 7 August, 7.30pm: The Press and the unions - a socialist view. Venue: Borough Hotel, Corporation Road, Middlesbrough.

TOWER HAMLETS: SC supporters sell papers every Friday 5-6pm Watney Mkt, Sat 11-12.30pm Whitechapel tube, Sunday 10.30-12.00 Brick Lane.

WOLVERHAMPTON: SC readers group meeting, 'United Nations/NATO/EEC = Capitalist International Party, 8pm, Mon 28 July, The Coach and Horses, Cannock Rd. Speaker Nige Brown. SC on sale at Wolverhampton railway station, 4.30-6pm on Thurs and Fri, at the Polytechnic students union, Fri 12-2pm, and at the Mander Centre, near Beatties, Sat 11am-2pm.

ANTI-COMMUNISM is on the rise in Western Europe. Jill Tweedie, putting forward the view that revolutions set women back in last week's *Sunday Times*, seems to have succumbed to the propaganda.

Iran is no exception in restricting women's freedom according to Jill: the overthrow of French colonialism in Algeria put women back into purdah; Portuguese colonialism left Guinea Bissau but circumcision didn't; the oil profits of Saudi Arabia have placed women behind closed doors. Hitler, Lenin, and the IRA alike all sold out on women.

The picture is crystal clear. Patriarchy rules world wide. Women have no interest in socialist revolution. Men will always sell them down the river.

Jill's Western eyes view the world entirely from her own position as a well-educated professional woman living in Britain. The only oppression she chooses to identify is that of her own sex. By separating sexual oppression from national domination and class exploitation an anti-communist worldview is developed.

China

Compare the position of one-eighth of the world's females today in China with their position a century ago. The socialist revolution that took place in China not only liberated women from famine and Japanese imperialism it also ended the barbaric tradition of foot binding. No small achievement, but one completely ignored by Jill Tweedie.

Since the fall of the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua the women's organisation Ampronac, the Association of Women concerned with the National Problem, has transformed itself from 60 women into a mass organisation. It points out to Western feminists that they must be careful not to assume that their priorities can be the same as women in colonial and semi-colonial countries.

'Our call pointed to the need for women to join the struggle for a free country; without half the population we could not talk of a genuinely popular struggle. The content of the Women's Week would not satisfy the big international feminist movements because it gave greater emphasis to the general struggle of our people for a free country. But it related to the real needs of Nicaraguan women who understand that the pillar of equality of their sex is their equal participation in the construction of a new Nicaragua.'

Imperialist domination is no joke for women. The high levels of prostitution and illegitimacy were well known in South Vietnam. Bangkok today is notorious as a centre for prostitution. Sexual exploitation has always been a part of colonial domination. Women in the Third World have expressed their hatred of foreign domination time and time again by taking up arms and fighting imperialism - in Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Zimbabwe, Ireland.

Rights

National oppression holds back women's emancipation and women are continually propelled into confronting imperialist domination in these countries.

By talking of Hitler and Lenin in the same breath Jill Tweedie deliberately tries to obscure the differences between a socialist revolution and a fascist counter-revolution, and the implications for women.

Hitler, in line with his attitudes of racial persecution, imperialist domination, and extreme class exploitation, indeed banned contraception (for white Aryan women), crushed the German women's movement, forced women to produce cannon fodder for the rising German Empire.

The 'National Socialist Movement' was, as Goebbels explained in 1934 'in its nature a masculine movement', based as it was on the most backward ideas of the petty-bourgeoisie in a capitalist society in severe crisis.

But Lenin led a revolution which overthrew capitalist exploitation in Russia in 1917. The Bolsheviks ended the Russian participation in the First World War, carried out agrarian reforms, nationalised all the major industries, and instituted workers' control.

WOMEN AND REVOLUTION

'MANY women have come to the conclusion that change, whether in the guise of modernisation, revolution, or a new nationalism, inevitably conspires against them or includes them out. Whatever heap there is, they say, we end up at the bottom of it. Whether the men in power are right-wing, left-wing or dead centre, our needs are forgotten.'

'THERE is nothing new about this and nothing peculiarly Islamic. In the years before the Russian revolution, women were promised equal rights, even the sharing of child-care and love without marriage. Women fought and died in their thousands for Lenin and the communist dream.'

But after the storming of the Winter Palace, the Bolsheviks reneged on their promises, calling state childcare 'rejection of the family' and 'petit-bourgeois debauchery'. With so much to do, women's emancipation was too much and too soon.

Alexandra Kollontai protested but it did her no good. The women of the new Soviet state were saddled with the familiar responsibilities, the familiar identity. Ten years later under Stalin, they were acclaimed as 'HeroMothers'.

Jill Tweedie



'IN rebellion alone woman is at ease, trampling upon both prejudice and sufferings.'

Louise Michel, a woman communist writing after the Paris Commune of 1871



'The Socialist Revolution in China not only liberated women from Japanese imperialism and famine, it also ended the barbaric tradition of foot binding. No small achievement...'

The Bolsheviks did not simply promise equal rights for women. They passed some of the most advanced reforms the world has ever seen on this issue. They made marriage a private affair by allowing men and women to live together 'unregistered' by the state. They legalised abortion, divorce, and homosexuality. They encouraged co-educational schools - and experimental styles of communal living. They advocated the ending of domestic slavery in the home.

Kollontai, as the first female 'cabinet minister', encouraged women to organise to fight for these reforms and even went so far as in 1925 to propose that there should be a national insurance or 'alimony' fund to protect single women and their children from falling on hard times. This fund should be contributed to by every adult to stop women being dependent on their husbands and lovers.

She also suggested that women and men should draw up their own marriage contracts to encourage men to take more responsibility for domestic labour.

Trotsky, rather nervously, supported these proposals, but they were opposed by the rising bureaucratic layers within the Soviet Communist Party who realised that stability within family life would ease the suppression of democracy within the young workers' state. It was not Bolshevism which reneged on women's liberation but the party leaders who allowed Stalin to take advantage of the revolution's isolation and reverse the bulk of the progressive legislation that the new workers' state had passed with regard to women.

What the Bolsheviks understood, and what Jill Tweedie consciously tries to ignore, is that

the position of women in society is linked to the general level of economic and political development. An economy that is heavily dependent on agriculture cannot be judged by western standards of industrialisation. China has not yet wiped out illiteracy completely but it has abolished famine and starvation and given the vast bulk of its population work, which is far more than any semi-colonial country that has not embarked on a planned economic development can do.

Neither is it possible to look at political development simply through Western eyes. Khomeini, backed by sections of the bourgeoisie in Iran, is attempting to establish an Islamic regime in Iran with all that this implies for the position of women. But because of the strong anti-imperialist feeling of the Iranian people and their memory of the autocratic regime of the Shah he does not have an easy job on his hands.

The Kurdish freedom fighters who demand the right to run their own country are causing him a lot of trouble. What advice has Jill Tweedie to offer the emergent feminist movement in Iran? Go back to the progressive regime of the Shah where a tiny section of the female population were allowed to wear western attire and the vast bulk of the female population was kept illiterate and in poverty? That will make feminism very popular

among the Iranian masses today! No. The greatest allies of women in Iran today are the Kurdish freedom fighters and factory workers who refuse to be cowed by Khomeini. Only by seeing the links between sexual, national, and class oppression in Iran today will it be possible to defeat the reactionary campaign of the mullahs and further the cause of feminism. The battle will not be easy but Jill Tweedie's advice - to fight 'patriarchy' - is worse than useless. It tells women nothing about where support can be found for a difficult struggle.

Battle

Jill Tweedie makes one point, and only one, that cuts any ice. 'Changing women's lives would mean men losing their identity,' says a young member of Sinn Fein interviewed in the article. He thinks that it's not possible to ask IRA fighters to sacrifice that identity and defeat British imperialism at the same time. Women in the Republican movement, who Jill didn't bother to interview, have a different idea however.

They are beginning to organise and discuss out feminist issues and at a recent conference discussed a wide range of feminist issues including abortion, sexual harassment, contraception, nursery provision, and sexual stereotyping.

It is true that traditional values and culture die hard. In Ireland Catholicism reinforces male prejudices in the Republican tradition. In Iran, Islamic ideology has a strong hold on the movement that overthrew the Shah. Women cannot wait for national liberation and socialism to confront male prejudice. That has to be done as the battle goes on.

Negative

More and more women are drawing this conclusion themselves. Not only in the West, not only in the semi-colonial countries, but even in Russia, where the difficulties are immense, women are pushing forward their demands and their needs to the centre of the struggle.

Jill Tweedie wants women to draw a negative balance sheet of social change. She implies that the struggle against 'patriarchy' is primary and that all other social change is superficial for women. Men are the main focus for her attack. She deliberately tries to confuse women about who the main enemy is.

Sexual oppression cannot be isolated from other forms of domination. Women throughout the world have rejected Jill Tweedie's view by their actions. Women in semi-colonial countries are not confused. They know that imperialism has to be booted out of their country if they are to be treated as human beings.

The needs of the mass of women in Britain today - for community nurseries, decent wages, equal jobs opportunity, for independence from men - cannot be satisfied without confronting class exploitation which uses women as an easily dispensable labour force.

Jill Tweedie does not talk of the women of the Paris Commune, the women in the Russian revolution, the actions of women today in Nicaragua fighting for their freedom. She gives women a pessimistic view of their past and of their future. I wonder why?

VALERIE COULTAS

Trotsky FOR BEGINNERS



NEW!

from The Other Book Shop Special pre-publication offer: £1.95 post free. Cheques/POs to the Other Book Shop, 328 Upper Street, London N1.

Women in Action/Women Fightback

Merger Meeting

Saturday 26 July, 11pm, Lucas Pub, Gray's Inn Rd, WC1.

All supporters of *Women in Action* and *Women's Fightback* invited to attend to discuss the details of the merger between the two journals decided on at the recent Women's Fightback Conference held in Birmingham. For copies of *Women in Action* proposals please contact Judith Arkwright on 01-359 8371

50p WOMEN IN NICARAGUA



THIS new pamphlet, produced by the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, shows just how much a revolution can alter women's lives - a revolution taking place in Latin America today. Copies available at 50p plus p&p from 20, Compton Terrace, London N1.

## Repression in Greece

THE Greek Government is conducting a campaign of repression against the revolutionary left. A group of five, independent far left militants have been arrested at Hania, Crete. They include the journalist George Economas, and Alexandra and G Lagadinos.

Others arrested recently include:

\*Leonidas Christakis, 52, editor of the review *Ideodromio*, accused of setting up terrorist groups;

\*Nikos Ntalos, 20, Alex Triandafillou, 20, E Sefaris, 18, A Pailiou, 20, accused of having set up an anarchist group at Istea (Isle of Euboea), of being in possession of anarchist books, and of having participated in public debates where they supported libertarian positions;

\*John Miras, 18, Constantine Stamatiou, 19, Dimitrios Mpourikas, 21, accused of having formed an anarchist group in Chalkida (Isle of Euboea), and of being in possession of such books as *Listen, Little Man* by Reich;

\*John Mpouketskides, 24, accused of having set fire to the fiscal archive at Nicea. The only proof offered was that he had long hair like the person seen running away from the fire. He was savagely tortured by three policemen under the direction of John Gianoulis, a torturer who operated under the Colonels' regime.

In the prisons, Kyriakos Kassaliades and several other comrades are suffering great deprivations. In Corfu prison recently the autonomist Scandalis was crucified for having protested against prison conditions; his health is now definitely ruined.

Philip and Sofia Kyritsis were sentenced to nine and five years for possession of Molotov cocktails which they say were planted on them. Sofia is ill after being given massive doses of drugs on the orders of the psychiatrist Malatoes, while Philip is very ill after a hunger strike.

The Marxists George Zizinis, and Efi Kotsou are in total isolation, while Philip Kgzikis and Bouketskides, anarchist militants, have been tortured.

The trial will begin soon of 14

militants who have been accused without a shred of evidence of having killed the deputy chief of the riot police. A striking contrast, this, to the trial going on at present of two policemen accused of killing Spzidou Spyzopoulos in 1978: the policemen claim that he fell in the path of their bullets, so it was his own fault!

Please send letters of protest to the Greek Embassy, 1a Holland Place, London W11. Say you were going to take a holiday in Greece this year but will no longer do so.

Please inform the prisoners that you have sent a letter by contacting Nikos Kariotis, Democritou, 21, Metamorfofis, Athens, Greece.

**RON ALLEN, International Secretary, Libertarian Communist Group, London.**

## An open letter to the anti-racist, anti-fascist movement

WE are very disturbed that a National Front demonstration of over 1,500 marched through central London on Sunday 15 June (the anniversary of the death of Kevin Gately) using an 'anti-Arab' platform.

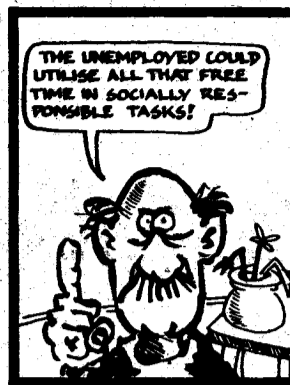
Their demonstration was dominated by the presence of skin-head youths chanting: 'Blair Peach's body lies a mouldering in the grave, and the Front goes marching on.'

The Anti Nazi League counter-mobilisation *did not take place*. Only a handful of isolated anti-fascists witnessed this appalling spectacle.

We therefore feel bound to say this ..... it will not do! Despite the splits and defeats suffered by the extreme right, the evidence is clearly suggesting that the National Front (and the British Movement) are beginning to regroup their forces.

In our view we are now witnessing a new variation on the old theme — 'ignore them, they've gone away.'

We believe that a more serious response is needed. Some commit-



ment to opposing the National Front is not a luxury in the fight against the Tories. It is absolutely necessary. It is remarkable that this point needs to be made at all.

**CLIVE GILSON and VAL WHEELER, Joint Secretaries, Learnington Anti-racist, Anti-fascist Committee**

## On Unity

I READ the article 'End the Scandal of Disunity' (3 July) with some bemusement. In my union, the CPSA, members of the International Marxist Group operate within the Broad Left and look upon Redder Tape's struggle to build an independent rank and file organisation with a certain disdain.

In the NUT we have the Socialist Teachers Alliance, apparently set up in deliberate counter-position to Rank and File Teacher.

Don't you think grand calls for organisational unity are a bit premature when the IMG doesn't seem to share the SWP's assessment of the way forward for revolutionaries in the trade unions?

Building an independent rank and file organisation is no mere example of 'the current tactical line of the SWP leadership'. It embodies a strategic conception of the road to workers' power.

If you understand and support this conception — as your paper frequently appears to — you should begin by instructing your supporters to join the appropriate rank and file organisation, thereby allaying many SWP comrades' suspicions about the IMG, and making an important im-

provement in the work of these bodies.

If you don't, then stop whining!

**PAUL CRAWFORD, North Kensington**

## Boycott Boycott?

CLR James spoils an admirable interview (3 July) by his remarks concerning Geoff Boycott.

He says: 'I would get rid of Boycott. He just demoralises the rest of the team.' In fact, many English batsmen have benefited greatly from opening innings under the guidance of Boycott at test and country level. Graham Gooch is an example.

Note also that Boycott has an average test score of just under 50 spread over 91 matches. Is that a man to get rid of?

Mr James' radical political stance is fine; but he should not adopt 'extremist' positions on the subject of one of England's great openers.

**DAVID WRIGHT, London**

## Hidden from history

A FEW weeks ago you published an article about the CPSA members at Brixton unemployment benefit office who have been sacked for union activities, one of these activities being their attendance of the 'TUC Lobby of Parliament' against the Corrie anti-abortion Bill.

Readers may well think this is

a trifling exercise, but I hasten to point out that the event — the biggest Lobby of the Trousers of Parliament for ten years, it was rumoured, and an important part of one of the biggest defeats of a Tory policy so far — was *organised* by the Campaign Against the Corrie Bill and co-sponsored by the SE Region of the TUC.

SERTUC was quite honest from the start about how it couldn't help pay the bills, do publicity etc. Its support was obviously very welcome, but let's be quite clear about what even the SE Region's banner represented on the platform.

Can Socialist Challenge really be so inept to confuse the TUC with a feminist campaign? Don't women ever get the credit for anything they do? I would hate to think that such a mistake would encourage any tendency towards complacency the TUC may have on fighting for full abortion rights for women.

We may be hidden from history, but the Lobby of Parliament was only five months ago...

**JAN PARKER, London SW8**

## Castro's persecution of gays

SOCIALIST Challenge quite rightly played its part in exposing the lies, hysteria, and hypocrisy produced by the ruling class and its press around the recent exodus of refugees from Cuba to the USA.

It is the duty of all revolutionaries to defend Cuba unconditionally against imperialist attacks

of any type. But it is also the duty of revolutionaries to always tell the truth — in this case, as was widely reported in the bourgeois press, the fact that a high percentage of the refugees are gay.

Why should gays want to leave Castro's Cuba? Is it because, as Castro claimed when whipping up a campaign against them, they are petty bourgeois degenerates or criminals like many of the other refugees?

The real answer is different, although one searches the revolutionary press in vain to find it. Gay people are *oppressed* by the Castro regime: persecuted, driven from jobs, prevented from meeting, denounced as degenerates, imprisoned.

We know that they will not find their lot any better in the capitalist world, but it is not really surprising that many of them should identify socialism with oppression.

If gays are to be won to the fight for socialism, the fight to build a revolutionary party, it is vital that revolutionaries support the struggles of gay people for their rights and against repression both in the capitalist countries and in all the workers' states.

**PERTER PURTON, Oxford**  
**IMG and Gay Activists Alliance**



## UNDER REVIEW

By Hazel Macpherson and Tommy Cusack

THE other day we went to see a Hungarian film called *Angi Vera* at the Gate Cinema. We left the cinema full of love for the film directed by Pal Gabor.

By portraying the relationships between Hungarian Communist Party members at a 12-week cadre school in 1948 — when Europe was in turmoil after the Second World War — Gabor gives us an insight into the nature of Eastern block countries today.

The bureaucrats are there, right from the beginning. But so are the workers. Heroes of the resistance movement, miners, soldiers and women workers — the flower of the Hungarian proletariat in 1948 — have been selected for the school. Some, like the 18-year-old Angi Vera, were deliberately selected for their militancy: in Angi Vera's case her articulate denunciation of the working conditions in her hospital and the treatment the patients receive.

## Peacocks

The Party bureaucrats in the film were generally well-dressed males who strutted about like peacocks in pin-striped suits. But the film drew a sharp divide between them and the bourgeoisie by giving, at the very beginning of the film, an image of the old ruling class in the person of the director of the hospital whose bearing, manner and status showed him to be the genuine article. The director would have been equally at home on the board of a multinational, while the bureaucrats would be more at home on the top table of a trade union conference.

Two women at the school struggle for Angi Vera's allegiance. One, Maria, is an industrial worker who revels in her own sexuality and the companionship of the rest of the women. She continually defies the petty rules in order to assert her own personality. We learn later that she has also been an organiser of land seizures all

# The life and no soul of the Party



Angi Vera does well at the cadre school.

over Hungary. Her distrust of the leadership makes her severely rebuke Vera in front of their classmates for her naive and uncritical acceptance of everything the school's leaders dictate.

The other is Trajan, a journalist, a hero of the resistance who has nevertheless been embittered by the weight of her own sacrifices for the movement. Trajan feels her separation from the life of the workers acutely. She leaves the collective dormitory disgusted by a conversation about sex among the other women — a 'deviation' among the proletarian and peasant women which she (a journalist!) denounces as petit-

bourgeois! A determined follower of the Party leadership, she teaches Vera to betray an old social democrat falsely accused of opposing the unification between the CP and Socialist Party.

Vera also makes a choice between two lovers, both married men with children. Neubauer, a miner who with his comrades spent two weeks in his mine without light to preserve it from the reaction, and Andre, a teacher at the school, who has been a Party member since his first year at University.

Their attitudes to Vera are different. The miner, in openly revealing his love for Vera, ponders why a communist can't

change his life. 'Why can't we get married?' asks the already-married worker.

The teacher on the other hand only wants to sleep with Vera while his family is away, never questions his own marriage but is depressed by the thought of separation from Vera at the end of the course which he clearly sees as inevitable.

Vera chooses the teacher and steals away to his room in the middle of the night. Trajan is persuaded to turn a blind eye to the affair because Andre is after all a teacher. Maria, who thinks Angi Vera is a crawler, takes a dim view of these activities and forces Angi Vera to return

to her bed when she tries to sneak out for a second time.

The day of self-criticism at the end of the course brings events to a head. One worker after another is publicly humiliated for daring to raise criticisms of the course. A peasant woman breaks down in tears. A veteran defender of the 1919 Council of Republics is denounced. Maria bravely speaks out in his defence: 'How dare you speak to an old comrade like that?' she challenges the Party leaders.

Vera alone is singled out for praise. But at this point she breaks down and confesses her liaison with Andre. Trajan tries to shut her up but fails. Andre not only confirms Vera's admission but goes on to denounce the self-criticism process itself. 'We love each other,' he claims. Vera coolly denies this, suggesting it was Andre's authority she loved.

## Prize

Next day there is a new teacher and Vera, at the end of the course, receives a prize...and a job as a journalist.

The final scene of the film sees Trajan and Vera leaving the school together in a fine car. On the road they pass a lone figure huddled on a bicycle riding against the wind. It is Maria, on the way no doubt to lead new overturns of property to establish the Hungarian workers state. Vera tries to call to her but there is now more than a windshield and a car door that separates them. Maria does not hear.

Angi Vera will be shown around Britain on the following dates:

Week beginning 31 August — Unit 4, Manchester; 7 September — Screen on the Green, Islington, London; 14 September — Ritzy Cinema, London; 2 October — Chapter Cinema, Cardiff; 9 October — Birmingham Arts Lab; 2 November — Lancaster RFT; 9 November — Tyneside RFT.

These are all one-week bookings except for Chapter Cinema, Cardiff, and Lancaster RFT which are for three days only.

# Socialist Challenge

## BLACK YOUTH ORGANISE AGAINST RACIST MURDER

By Ken Glanfield

At 4pm last Thursday, Ahktar Ali Baig, a 29-year-old chartered accountant, walked out of the Halifax Building Society in High Street, North-east Ham. A moment later he lay dead, killed by a single stab wound to the heart. Four skinheads have been charged with his murder.

The reaction in the Asian community was immediate. By early evening over a hundred youth had gathered at the scene of the murder shouting 'Death to fascism' and 'Kill, kill, kill the skins'. They marched on Forest Gate police station, where the skinheads were being held.

The youth called for a demonstration on Saturday and marched back to East Ham declaring 'Self-defence is the only way'.

On Friday over five thousand leaflets were distributed calling on black people and anti-racists to join the march.

That evening the black youth formed the Newham Youth Movement to demand: 'Don't moan organise', 'Here to stay here to fight', 'Self-defence is no offence' and 'SUS must go'.

On Saturday at 2.30pm 1,500 people set out from Plashet Park led by the new movement.

### Anger

The mood was very militant, with the black youth and Asian community in front of the march, followed by Ford workers, local trades unionists, Labour MPs Ron Leighton and Nigel Spearing, the local NUT, and anti-racist organisations.

At the top of the High Street racist abuse was shouted at the march from the upper windows of a house. The youth responded to the police indifference by attempting to enter the house to stop the racists. The police stepped in and made four arrests.

It was at this point that the anger of the black youth came to fore.

The march halted at Forest Gate police station. It was going no further until the four people arrested were released.

Local leaders, representatives of



Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

the youth, and Mr Kadri of the Standing Commission of Pakistani

Organisations went into the police station to negotiate.

Outside the anger mounted, the road remained closed, more arrests were made.

After nearly two hours the police gave an undertaking to release those arrested.

The march moved off on its way to West Ham police station where the murder inquiry was now centered. Suddenly the way was barred by a cordon of police and more arrests were made.

The march broke out of the cordon to return to East Ham, picking up more people on route. It was now over two thousand strong.

Five people had now been released, but 29 arrests had been made and no more were being released.

A number of those being held were later to speak of police violence against those arrested.

It was now 6.10pm and the march sat down at the crossroads in East Ham to protest at the arrests and the non-release of their black and white brothers and sisters. After 15 minutes the march made its way back to the scene of the murder, where once more it sat in silence and then listened as prayers were said.

For the Newham Youth Movement, the campaign has only just begun.

In the words of Mr Kadri: 'The police said "Have a go. Catch your assailants". We must have a go and organise our own defence.'

'The mosques and temples must provide the money to do so. All black people must become involved against racist attacks wherever they happen.' A much larger protest is being planned for August 2nd.

The killing of Ahktar Ali Baig is the latest racist murder in Britain. It follows that of Gurdip Singh Chag-

gar in Southall, Altab Ali in Whitechapel, and Ishaq Ali and Michael Ferreira.

They are just some of the victims of the racism in British society, which is backed up by the immigration laws supported by Labour and Tory governments.

The practical effects of these racist laws and the prevailing ideas about white superiority can be seen in the activities of the skinheads who are being held for the latest murder. One was allegedly excluded from Plashet school in East Ham for assaulting an Asian pupil and threatening black and Jewish teachers.

They had openly shown their support for the National Front and the British Movement.

All these are reasons to make sure that the defence campaign in East London has the fullest support from all anti-racists.

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