

Socialist Challenge

NOW TORIES GO FOR THE KIDS

THE longer Thatcher goes on, the lower the age of her victims.

The Tories are not content just to attack working people, their living standards, and their unions.

Even school-leavers, forced onto the dole by the 'mad monetarism' of Keith Joseph, aren't sufficient to sate the Tory appetite.

For now it is children who are to become Thatcher's latest targets.

The evidence came in a statement on Monday from Social Services minister Patrick Jenkin. He said in parliament that child-benefits will deliberately be allowed to fall behind inflation.

Mumble

Even a few Conservative back-benchers mumbled their discontent. Tories, it seems, also have children.

The government move is in direct defiance of an election promise made in the Tories' manifesto. It overturns a parliamentary amendment successfully fought for two years

ago by left-wing Labour MPs Audrey Wise and Jeff Rooker which automatically compensated child benefits for the effects of inflation.

As with other Tory policies, it will be the poorest and most unprivileged members of society who will suffer — those who rely on child benefits to feed and clothe their kids properly.

Single

Particularly hit will be single-parent families and unemployed parents. Many parents will be affected because one of the advantages of the child-benefit system is that it is women who control how the money is spent.

The social consequences for the kids themselves are frightening. Statistics show that baby-battering and wife-beating are most liable to occur in low-income families because of the tensions and economic worries involved in such situations.

It all adds up to a new slogan for the Save the Children Fund — Kick Out the Tories.



THATCHER'S SORROW AT DEATH OF TYRANT



THIS SMALL BOY had his arms cut off deliberately. He was mutilated by the Shah of Iran's secret police to try to make his father reveal information.

Mrs Thatcher last week expressed 'sorrow' for the death of the Shah — a man who ruled over the biggest torture chamber in the world.

An estimated 100,000 political prisoners were held in the Shah's jails. Those who managed to escape execution told of the electric shocks, rapes, enemas with boiling water, tearing out of nails and teeth, an electrically wired bed designed to burn the person placed on it; and the pressing of the skull in a vice, sometimes until it broke.

By the Tories' friends shall you know them.

Dancing on his grave p.9.

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.

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HOMENEWS

Labour Party conference priority Down with Tory militarism

By Mick Sullivan,
North Islington CLP

IF numbers of motions are anything to go by, the Labour Party conference in October will declare for unilateral nuclear disarmament. Almost a third of the motions are on defence and disarmament, and of the 131 dealing with these issues 75 call explicitly for unilateral nuclear disarmament by a future Labour government.

The full conclusions of this position — British withdrawal from the NATO war machine — is demanded by 24 of the motions. The remainder support the Labour Party's present opposition to the siting of Cruise and Pershing missiles in Britain, or call for a campaign for European or world-wide disarmament.

No motion from any affiliated organisation supports the view of Labour's Parliamentary spokesperson on defence, Bill Rodgers, that we should accept the new missiles and 'negotiate with the Soviets from a position of strength'.

Cuts

The lavishly funded Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding, which published Rodgers' recent pamphlet *Defence, Disarmament and Peace: The case for Cruise Missiles*, has not, it seems, been able to persuade a single constituent part of the party to support it.

It remains to be seen whether Rodgers and his NATO-financed friends will be able to line up sufficient trade union block votes to defeat or neutralise the evident desire at the base of the party for unilateral disarmament.

Education has the second largest slice of motions on the conference agenda. These are mainly concerned with restoring Tory cuts, a commitment to full nursery provision, and the ending of private education. The Health Service comes a close third, with restoring cuts, abolishing private practice and prescription charges, and nationalising the drug companies featuring prominently in the 20 motions.

A year's experience of the Tories' strong state has ensured that the fourth largest block of motions deal with the police — calling for greater accountability, particularly of the Metropolitan Police; disbandment of the para-military Special Patrol Group; independent complaints procedures, and access to police stations; repeal of the 'Sus' laws; and for an independent inquiry into the murder of Blair Peach.

Wages

Motions from the major unions dominate the section on economic strategy, most of which draw on the 'Alternative Economic Strategy' for proposals on public investment and import controls. Callaghan's loyal allies in the National Union of Railwaymen add 'the place of incomes within the policy must be determined'.

The Labour leader also receives support for his call for incomes policy from the Union of Communication Workers and the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, although the latter claims that 'it would be understood that wages are not allowed to fall below the movement of prices'.

Labour left takes initiative on leader's election

AT the meeting of the Labour Party national executive last week, the party's left wing at last showed a bit of leadership.

By a slim majority the executive decided to place before conference two recommendations on the election of the leader.

First, a vote will be taken on the principle that the leader is elected by conference. If this is carried a further vote will be taken on the NEC's constitutional amendment which would give effect to an electoral college system proposed by the Rank and File Mobilising Committee.

This would simply be conference control in a different form. The leadership



Anti-nuclear campaigners on Labour Party demonstration against Cruise Missiles last June

In fact a majority of the 11 motions under prices and incomes seem to support wage controls through the guise of calls for 'a planned economy'. As the motion from Liverpool Walton CLP points out: 'In a capitalist economy incomes policy is a euphemism for lower wages and higher profits'.

The section on unemployment, with motions mainly from the constituencies, puts forward a far more relevant programme, calling for nationalisation, a shorter working week, worksharing with

no loss of pay, and a crash programme of public works.

The 'bold socialist programme' of the Militant tendency is given its yearly airing in the section on public ownership, with the eccentric suggestion that the next Labour government should pass 'an enabling act to end the power of big business'. Socialism by fiat!

The nine motions on Northern Ireland probably understate the strength of opposition to Britain's rôle in Ireland. This has been growing in the Labour Party over

native proposal at the executive meeting just before conference.

The substance of this alternative, also backed by Frank Allaun MP, who chaired the last conference, is that the party executive should put up at least two different methods of election: the one already agreed, and one in which the PLP, the unions and the CLPs would each have a third of the vote.

There are two objections to such a suggestion: the second method would give more power to the bastion of reaction in the party, the PLP; and to put two alternatives to the vote could split the votes of those who want to democratise the Labour Party, and allow the status quo to be maintained.

Whatever is eventually put to the con-

ference, the trade union block votes will be decisive for the outcome, and the score on this front looks none too hopeful. But the campaign for democracy did receive a boost last week with the decision of the finance and general purposes committee of the Transport and General Workers Union to back the '50-50' system.

Rank and file activists in the Labour Party and trade unions will need to ensure that their leaderships don't backtrack on such decisions. And, in the case of certain unions, such as the AUEW, a campaign has to be mounted to reverse anti-democratic decisions already taken.

Such pressure has the three basic aims the left have had since last conference: executive control of the manifesto, mandatory reselection of MPs, election of the leader by conference.

Loyalists

Then there is the cretinous economism of the Militant tendency: 'Conference recognises that there exists in Northern Ireland the objective basis for forging workers' unity based on the problems shared by the working class of both communities, such as low wages, mass unemployment, and bad housing.'

Militant is apparently unaware that as the crisis worsens so Loyalist workers have become increasingly determined to protect their limited privileges in jobs and housing from Catholic encroachment.

Lastly, the Labour loyalism of the Campaign for Labour Representation in Northern Ireland, which wants the Loyalist-dominated Northern Ireland trade unions to build a Northern Ireland Labour Party. Never mind that this would line up the Labour Party organisationally behind the artificial partition of Ireland.

Surprisingly only seven CLPs have put forward motions on the election of the party leader — all of which want it taken out of the hands of the PLP. There are only three motions on the reselection of MPs.

It would seem that most parties who made submissions on these issues to the Labour Party commission of inquiry prematurely thought that party democracy had been won. They have underestimated the ability of the right wing and the trade union block vote to take back the gains made so far, and to stop further steps towards accountability.

Action

Despite the radical content of many of the motions on the agenda and the breadth of issues put forward for debate, almost without exception they are proposals for what a future Labour government should do. Very few address themselves to the problem of how to deal with the present Tory government, or seek to commit the party to an immediate campaign of mass action with the trade unions to drive the Tories from office.

A simple strategy of winning party democracy and polishing up an alternative programme for the next Labour government is not enough. If the Tories are able to last their full term, the scale of defeat and demoralisation in the working class could be such that Labour would have no guarantee of being elected.

The Labour Party needs to play an active role with the rest of the labour movement in building action to defeat the Tory attacks. It is a pity that this requirement is not reflected more widely in the resolutions for the annual conference.

Newham anti-racist mobilisation on 2 August

By Ken Glanfield

BLACKS and anti-racists in the London borough of Newham will take to the streets on Saturday, 2 August.

The protest will be over the recent racist murder of Ahktar Ali Baig, and police provocation on the 19 July march in Newham against the murder.

After this march, Jagdip Sing from the Newham Youth Movement was beaten up by the cops outside East Ham police station.

The 2 August protest was agreed last week at a meeting organised by the Steering Committee of Asian Organisations, which has equal representation with the Newham Youth Movement on the body organising the march.

Businesses

At the meeting support for 2 August was also expressed by Prem Singh from the Indian Workers Association. A representative of the Sikh community proposed that all Asian businesses should close on the day, and it was agreed to work towards this.

Bulwinder Singh from the Anti Nazi League and Newham Labour Party explained how he had witnessed the attack on Jagdip Singh on 19 July:

'I saw two policemen hit at Jagdip's testicles and stomach. He was then arrested for being an illegal immigrant, and carried into the police station by four police.' Jagdip was later released.

Backing

The march on 2 August is expected to be the largest anti-racist mobilisation seen in Newham. Support has already come from the Greater London Council of the Labour Party and the political committee of the Co-op. Backing for the defence campaign mounted after the 19 July arrest is also vital.

Donations can be sent to: Newham Youth Movement, c/o 241e High Street North, London E12.

'Let the NF photograph you' — police

LAST week's council by-election in Brighton was the occasion for a National Front meeting in a local school, courtesy of Brighton's Tory council.

Apart from the NF's candidate, Harold Jones, and leader Martin Webster, all the fascists bussed in for the meeting were skinhead youths.

Thanks to the presence of hundreds of cops, local anti-fascists were unable to prevent the meeting taking place. They did, however, decide to attend the meeting and dutifully queued in two's for admission.

Each person entering the foyer of the school building was met by two constables who insisted on two conditions — that those entering must let the fascists search them and they must allow an NF photographer to photograph them! The police role in protecting the fascists has never been so clearly revealed.

After the meeting an activist from the local women's centre was beaten up by three Nazis.

FIGHT THE NEW NAZI WAVE: WEST BROMWICH 17 AUG

THE NATIONAL FRONT is organising a demonstration in West Bromwich for 17 August under the slogan 'British jobs for British workers'. Unemployment has been hitting the previously prosperous West Midlands very hard and this is the

first major attempt by the National Front to take advantage of this situation to re-build their organisation.

The NF's message is simple: unemployment is caused by 'immigrants' taking 'our' jobs. It is also ludicrous. Large numbers of Asians and West Indians were brought to this country in the '50s

and '60s when there was a labour shortage, at a time of boom in the economy. Now that there is a capitalist slump, black and white workers are both suffering the consequences of unemployment — but black workers suffer more, since they are generally consigned to the worst jobs and are considered the most 'dispensable'.

Recently, the Birmid Qualcast Foundry in neighbouring Smethwick announced several hundred redundancies. Its workforce is overwhelmingly Asian. 'British jobs for British workers' must sound sick to the Asian workers who face the dole!

The Anti-Nazi League has announced a counter-demonstration to the fascists. IMG branches from Birmingham south should support this counter-mobilisation.

NO TO RACIST MURDERS

Demonstration
Saturday 2 August

2.00pm, Plashet Park, Plashet Grove, London E6
Called by: The Steering Committee of Asian Organisations, 100 North Street, Barking, Essex.



Time for the left to act

By Paul Lawson

THE MURDER of Ahktar Ali Baig in East Ham last week, allegedly by skinhead youths, came as no surprise to socialists in the area. East London is infested by gangs of skinheads who support the Nazi British Movement (BM). This problem is not confined to East London. Attacks on blacks by skinhead gangs in the London borough of Ealing, which includes Southall, are now a daily occurrence.

The gangs of white youths who invaded the Sparkbrook area of Birmingham a few weeks ago, beating Pakistanis and smashing up Asian shops, were skinheads organised by the British Movement. Nazi skinhead gangs frequently travel London's Piccadilly tube line, decked in combat jackets with the BM's distinctive lion and Union Jack badge, looking for blacks and gays to beat up. In short, Nazi penetration of the skinhead gangs is reaching epidemic proportions.

'Patriotic'

To understand why this is happening, we have to look at the crisis of the National Front (NF). During the early seventies the NF managed to establish itself as the dominant fascist group in Britain, by trying to get away from the Nazi image, trying to look like a 'respectable' nationalist and 'patriotic' organisation.

Immigration was the main issue on which it played, but it was by no means openly Nazi. Anti-semitism was played down. Ex-colonels and retired group captains were recruited as fronts for the hard-core Nazi leadership around Tyndall and

Webster. In the 1977 GLC London local elections the National Front got nearly 100,000 votes.

The NF went into crisis, however, under the pressure of two different things. First, the campaign run by the Anti Nazi League effectively blew the NF's cover; the NF was firmly identified as a Nazi organisation. Many of the NF's potential supporters were frightened off. Then, the NF suffered from Thatcher's Tories coming to power. The room for a right-wing 'respectable' organisation was squeezed as Thatcher seemed to be adopting more and more of the NF's programme.

Ranks

The resulting pressure on the NF led many in its ranks to demand a return to more traditional open fascism — street fighting and anti-semitism. The drift in this direction by a section of the NF's main leadership led to the split in the Midlands to form the British Peoples Party, and the growth of support for the British Movement.

Dual membership of the NF and the British Movement is common. The British Movement is open about its Nazism. Its leaders have links with the Ku Klux Klan in the US, and Nazi groups all over Europe. It claims that the National Front are just right-wing Tories, not real fascists.

The British Movement have been able to penetrate skinhead street gangs, organising them around anti-black violence. Of course, it is far from true that all skinheads are fascists. But the gangs, especially the young all-male gangs have proved particularly fertile ground for the BM.

Large numbers of these young thugs cannot be won by the propagand

da of anti-racists and the left. Their cult of violence, and the elan and mystique which the BM's Nazi filth gives them, makes them completely alien to the left's propaganda. The only answer for this hard core is the method of self-defence, a willingness and ability to organise to protect black communities against their violence. Whatever limited progress is made by the methods of propaganda self defence against racist gangs will be needed.

The left needs to start to organise again on an anti-racist basis among youth — to re-vitalise Rock Against Racism, which has tended to die away. The National Union of School Students has an important role to play — which is one reason why we need a mass campaigning NUSS, not a rump of revolutionaries masquerading as a union. (Perhaps we should also ask some of those bands who came to fame on the back of Rock Against Racism to stop playing for fascist skinheads and do some RAR gigs again — UB 40, are you listening?)

Reggae

Some skinheads are into 'two-tone' — mixed reggae-punk bands. Using these bands in RAR gigs on a wide scale could be an important way of combatting the Nazi influence. But we are in a different period than when RAR started. In all probability RAR gigs with two-tone bands would have to be protected by self-defence groups.

It is time for the left to grasp the fact that fascism has not been completely defeated by the ANL. It has suffered a severe reverse and changed its spots. We need to take the offensive again, to re-create an atmosphere of confidence amongst anti-racists.



By Colin Talbot,
POEU Westminster branch

'This is now the policy of the union and must be carried through with determination.' These were the fine words of Bryan Stanley, general secretary of the Post Office Engineering Union, at the end of the wages debate at the union's conference last month.

Stanley and his right-wing supporters on the national executive had just seen the conference decide on a pay claim of 30 per cent on basic rates and 7 per cent for 'additional skills, experience and responsibility'. This claim was a full 10 per cent higher than the executive's recommendation — 23 per cent plus 4 per cent for productivity.

Last week Stanley showed his 'determination' by settling for only 20 per cent on basic rates and 3 per cent for productivity. The national executive voted 14 to 9 to go along with this miserable sell-out, despite the valiant opposition of the Broad Left supporters who demanded a recall conference to discuss the offer.

Answers

In a letter to POEU branches, Bryan Stanley outlined his five reasons for accepting this offer. It's worth answering his points one by one:

The National Executive Council has decided to accept this offer against the background of an increasingly depressed economy and taking into account the following points:

1. It compares favourably with the generality of settlements made in the 1979/80 pay round.

An offer of 23 per cent does not compare favourably with the fact that the armed forces, police, and 'top people' have had rises well over 30 per cent this year and have 'caught up' with inflation, while we have lost almost 15 per cent in real terms since 1975. Sir William Barlow, chairperson of the Post Office, has had increases totalling £13,000 this year.

Post Office engineers get 23 per cent — but it's not enough!

2. The council believes that no further movement could result from negotiation, with or without prolonged industrial action.

If this were true, how does Bryan Stanley explain that the Post Office's 'final offer' of 17 per cent was magically transformed into 23 per cent after the POEU conference voted overwhelmingly for industrial action? How does he explain the fact that the POEU gained a significant reduction in hours, to 37.5, in 1978?

The truth is that Bryan Stanley and friends are frightened of industrial action because, as in 1978, they are worried that PO engineers might begin to realise their strength and the weakness of a leadership like Stanley and Co.

3. The Post Office is facing a cash-crisis in the current financial year as a result of cash limits. This is likely to lead to a short fall of £200m in the telecommunications business.

The cost of any further increase to the membership would be likely to exacerbate the situation to a point at which unacceptable economy measures had to be undertaken to ease the cash flow situation.

At the POEU conference it was made quite clear to delegates, by Stanley and others, that industrial action for 27 per cent or 37 per cent would mean confronting the Tories' cash-limits policy.

Stanley said at the conference: 'We are facing a board and a government that want a

OF RATS AND SINKING SHIPS...

NORMAN HOWARD, currently the Political Officer and Editor of the POEU Journal, is about to give up his trade union post as a POEU assistant secretary. He is, as they say, moving on to 'higher' things.

In August, he will be changing his role as publicist and press officer for the main trade union in British Telecoms to join British Telecoms management as their, yes, you guessed it, Chief Press and Broadcasting Officer.

Some uncharitable souls in the POEU have suggested that Mr Howard will at least now be getting paid by the right people, as he's been doing such a good job for them for years anyway.

settlement lower than the cost of living and the cash limits policy would be severely imposed.' Out of 700 delegates only about half a dozen voted against industrial action.

4. The statement on the future of the monopoly made on 21 July provides the worst possible context for prolonged industrial action.

The best way to defend the Post Office as a nationalised industry is to fight the Tories and not to back down before them. Far from putting us on the defensive, Sir Keith Joseph's attacks on the monopoly should be fought by going on the attack.

PO Telecoms is profitable; it provides a good service, and is getting better all the time. It is the hard work and skill of telecoms workers which creates that wealth and that service, not the monopoly. What's wrong with demanding a fair share of the wealth we create?

5. The offer provides for the maintenance of the real value of the members' wages and for some real improvement in cash terms.

The offer does not provide for any real improvement. Prices, on 1 July, stood at almost 23 per cent higher than a year previously. For our wages to keep pace we needed 23 per cent.

That is what the original claim said, and that is why 23 per cent doesn't mean an increase. Our claim for 30 per cent was aimed at raising basic rates sufficiently to recoup some of the real wages we've lost in recent years. Instead we've got a basic rise of only 20 per cent; the other 3 per cent 'productivity' we'll have to sweat for.

In total, Bryan Stanley's argument adds up to craven capitulation — nothing more or less. That is why he turned down the call for a special conference so that the rank and file, through their democratically elected and mandated delegates, could decide on the offer.

The Broad Left in the POEU is launching a campaign for such a conference, although the 'democratic' rules of our union mean that we have to get a full two-thirds of our 290 branches to support such a call, making it an almost impossible task. Nevertheless such a campaign is very important to show the rank and file that their current leaders aren't in the least concerned with their wishes or desires.

We might not win this time round, but the fact remains that our 23 per cent is still a dent in the Tories' unofficial public sector pay limit of 14 per cent. If we can put a small dent in that policy with a leadership like Bryan Stanley and Norman Howard (see insert), then others ought to be able to do much better.

Engineering: the policy alternative we need

By Andy Lilley, AUEW

LIKE everywhere else, jobs in West London's engineering industry are going fast, and there are no signs of a fightback at the moment.

As a result management is getting bolder. When calling for voluntary redundancies the bosses now stipulate where they should come from. This makes it cheaper for them because they exclude the older workers with long service from the lists thus avoiding high redundancy payments.

Every grade of worker is involved — setters, operators, assemblers and labourers. Within that overall picture youth are having a particularly rough time. Young workers can't get into factories for their first job. If they are made redundant they cannot find new work.

Places like Trico's are running down the mid-day short shift which is very important for women with children.

Looking at the figures for the boroughs of Hounslow, Hillingdon and Ealing the biggest percentage rise is in Southall. This clearly indicates a big growth in unemployment among West Indian and Asian youth and among black workers generally.

Sliding

Obviously this is affecting wage settlements. In Lucas CAV it looks like they're settling for 10 per cent which is lower than expected. The stewards there have accepted that the company can't make a profit. However at Hoover they've just negotiated an 18-25 per cent wage increase for the coming year and for the next year they've agreed to 10 per cent plus a sliding scale tied to inflation. But we know that come the autumn they will probably have three-figure redundancies.

On top of this some of the agreements are being signed with the tacit acknowledgment on the union side that there will be a long summer shutdown and short-time working. Without a district or national alternative being offered the majority of convenors and stewards are making the best of a bad job and selling jobs for wage increases. Co-operation with management on the makeup of lists allows them to keep their own jobs.

A further disadvantage is that the majority of the District Committee are Broad Left supporters tied to a policy of import controls. At the same time they spend time trying to get joint management/union approaches for special treatment from the government for their particular region. All this defuses the national fight-back.

Combine

Two related demands are now vital in the engineering industry — worksharing without loss of pay and nationalisation.

When a local factory like Crown Cork which has a workforce of 600 declares 30 redundancies then the organisation of worksharing without loss of pay is an immediate possibility.

When a national combine like Lucas announces its Birmingham redundancies then there is obviously a need for a fight through a national shop steward combine committee for a national worksharing plan. Of course Lucas would never agree to this and then nothing short of a fight for nationalisation would make sense.

A major obstacle to such moves was the AUEW executive's sell-out of Derek Robinson. Every steward in the country was shaken by the Robinson affair. A successful defence of Robinson would have automatically led to opposition to the subsequent redundancy and closure plans. This could have paved the way for the nationalisation of the components industry to protect jobs throughout engineering.



the AUEW played a national leadership role.

Now the current right-wing union leadership are willing to see the introduction of secret ballots because these undermine the workplace strength of the shop stewards movement. Success in this project for Duffy would consolidate the right wing in the union and pave the way for amalgamation with Chapple's EEPTU. The union has to adopt a policy of complete opposition to the Employment Bill.

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Rallies

In our area there will be campaigns in favour of Wright by the *Engineering Gazette* and Broad Left supporters as well as by supporters of *Engineer's Charter*. What is needed is the maximum unity of these campaigns to win votes for Bob Wright and to explain that the fightback is possible here and now.

The best way to achieve this would be to propose local rallies sponsored by all the currents in the

union supporting Wright and open to all stewards and members.

In the past *Engineer's Charter* has run against Bob Wright in the first round of the elections — which was a correct tactic to get their policies across. They then called for a vote for Wright in the run-off.

The Broad Left have used this as an excuse to have nothing to do with *Engineer's Charter* supporters, but this time they can't use the Charter as a scapegoat for electoral failure.

The danger for *Engineer's Charter* is that in trying to be the best builders of the Wright campaign they will not raise the policies which are urgently needed now to lead the fight back against the Tories and the sell-out of the Duffy/Boyd leadership.

Socialist Challenge supporters should be putting forward policies of worksharing with no loss of pay and nationalisation in their branches, shop stewards committee, district committee and in the course of building all the campaign activities that take place in favour of Wright in the areas.

Rail next for asset strippers

By Peter Grant, ASLEF
Paddington Branch

THE Tories are planning to sell off the most profitable parts of British Rail.

They are offering to City asset-strippers large chunks of Sealink Ferries, Sealink Hovercraft, British Transport Hotels, Traveller's Fare, Freightliners, and British Rail engineering. Also in Joseph's sights is the British Transport Properties Board, which holds vacant railway sites in most city centres.

It was from these sectors that, in 1979, most of British Rail's operating profits came — at least, before interest charges of £60m were deducted.

If this partial denationalisation goes ahead, British Rail will find itself in the same financial position as the British Steel Corporation: the Tories will have created another 'inefficient' nationalised industry.

Railworkers know that in order for BR to survive it needs government finance.

They also know that the only way to get that money — the cash that will safeguard jobs and save the railways from another round of Beeching-style cuts — is by industrial action to stop the sales and kick out the Tories.

This is why my union conference instructed the leadership of the National Union of Railwaymen to call an all-out strike if the government touches any of BR's assets, and called on the Labour Party to commit itself to renationalisation without compensation when it returns to office.

Conference also insisted that we shall not allow wages in the public sector to be pegged as an 'example' to the private sector, nor allow the hard-won conditions of service on the railways to be eroded.

Railworkers must push their executives to take action in support of these policies. We face a bitter struggle to save the nationalised rail industry.

REMEMBER HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

Hiroshima Day: Wednesday 6 August
Nagasaki Day: Saturday 9 August

THE DEAD of Hiroshima and Nagasaki will be remembered in the next weeks in actions organised throughout Britain by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

Vigils, petitions and meetings will also warn against the present trend towards nuclear escalation, the most dangerous step being the introduction of Cruise missiles into bases throughout Western Europe.

NEWBURY

A 75-hour continuous vigil will be held directly outside the main gates of Greenham Common Royal Air Force base outside Newbury, one of the two proposed sites in Britain for the Cruise missiles. The vigil will run from 8.15am on Wednesday 6 August to 11am Saturday 9 August. These are the exact dates and times on which the atom bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Over 30 MPs have pledged their support for the vigil and it is expected that other prominent figures will attend including Peter Hain and Tony Smythe (director of MIND). The vigil is being jointly organised by the Oxford Campaign Against the Missiles (Campaign ATOM, c/o 48 Stratford St. 0X4 1SW) and the newly-formed Newbury Campaign against Cruise Missiles (c/o Adam Thorpe, Newbury Arts Workshop, Old Temperance Hall, Northcroft Lane, Newbury.)

MANCHESTER

A mass demonstration will take place on Saturday 9 August, assembling between Mancunian Way and Booth Street (on Oxford Road) at 1.30pm. The march will move off to arrive for a rally in St. Peters Square at 3.00pm.

SCOTLAND

A day of action will take place throughout Scotland on 9 August, involving mass leafletting and petitioning in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Haddington. (Contact Ian Davison 041-942 1099 for further details.)

In Glasgow there will be a commemoration ceremony on Sunday 10 August at 2.30pm at the Cherry Trees (in front of Art Galleries).

YORKSHIRE

A Nagasaki Day march will assemble at 2pm at Heworth Green car park, marching to Clifford's Tower via York Minster for a rally at 4.00pm. A feeder demonstration will assemble on 9.30am that morning in Easingwold Market Square marching via Hawkhill to York to join up with the main rally.

BIRMINGHAM

The World Disarmament Campaign and the CND are jointly organising events on the two days. Hiroshima Day will be marked by a vigil starting 4.00pm in Victoria Square ending 6.15pm. On Nagasaki Day petitioners will meet at St. Martin's in the Bull Ring at 11.00am.

COVENTRY

EP Thompson and Dorothy Thompson will be speaking at a Hiroshima Day public meeting at 7.30pm at St. Mary's Hall, Bayley Lane after a vigil in the Broadgate between 11.00am and 2.00pm.

BRISTOL

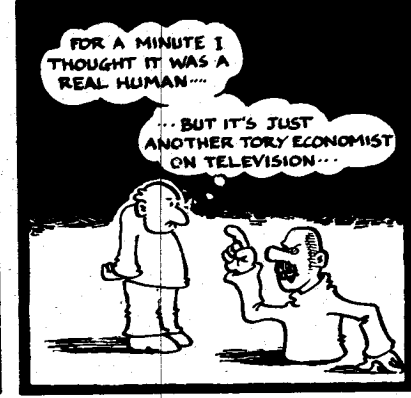
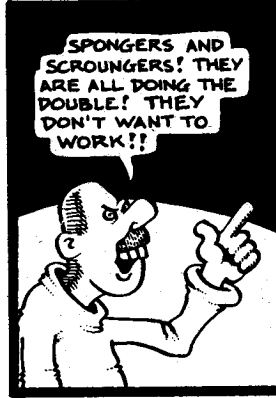
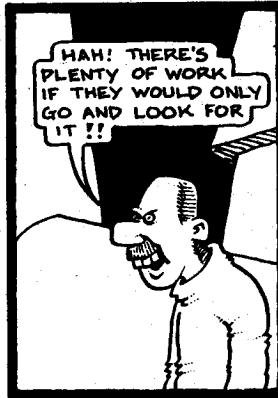
Burke's statue will be the meeting point for an early (8.00am) start to a Hiroshima Day vigil organised by the CND which will continue throughout the day. Contact Mike Birchnell 0272 32092 for further details of CND activity in the area.

LONDON

The Hiroshima Commemoration Tree in Tavistock Square is the venue for a meeting at noon on 6 August. In the evening a concert will take place in Islington Town Hall. Hackney's Second Anti-Nuclear Festival will take place in Clissold Park, Stoke Newington on Sunday 10 August.

NOTTINGHAM

A stall with petitioners will be set up in front of Broad Marsh centre on Hiroshima Day from noon to 2.00pm.



BOC workers fight back with work sharing demand

AFTER maintaining that their Hackney depot was no longer viable and demanding 26 redundancies, British Oxygen bosses management have come clean and announced massive new investment in the depot plus another 10-redundancies!

Management want to increase productivity by reducing the workforce and increasing the 'throughput' of cylinders from the depot.

All talk of the market for their products in the area collapsing has gone out of the window with the announcement of a £2m plus investment programme which will mean that every single cylinder in the depot's stock of 22,000 bottles will be replaced at a cost of roughly £100 per cylinder. In

addition management want the loss of eight drivers' and two testers' jobs.

This is just a part of the proposed national 'slimline' that BOC want to push through. But they have to crack the Hackney nut before they can implement the plan.

The BOC workforce however is 100 per cent firm in its opposition to the redundancies and has worked out a detailed plan to defend jobs.

Their response to management is simple. Ever since 1970 when a national agreement for working an average of eight hours overtime on top of the basic 40 hour week was signed, management have consistently demanded an average of 20 hours overtime a week. The stewards at Hackney propose cutting overtime and introducing a basic 35-hour week immediately. This, coupled with a small reduction in the tonnage output of gas, would mean that all the jobs at the depot would be saved.

Additional measures include a demand for early retirement and a new national agreement to end formal provision for negotiating redundancy agreements.

Management have responded by offering an extra £3000 per worker for every job lost as a one-off addition to their previous offer.

While the full-timer from the Transport and General Workers Union is interested in incorporating these terms as a permanent basis for negotiating redundancies, convenor John Walsh's response is a firm 'No Deal!'

As we go to press the results of national negotiations are not known. But if any redundancies are enforced at the end of the 90-day waiting period (which expires on 28 September) then the response will be an all-out strike by BOC Hackney workers backed by an overtime ban throughout the rest of the combine.

Union block vote spells danger for Labour left

THE much publicised Labour Party commission of inquiry has finally completed its work. On the most controversial issues — election of leader, control of the manifesto, reselection of MPs — it remained absolutely silent.

Commenting on this outcome in the last issue of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee's broadsheet, Eric Heffer stated: 'It needs to be said that the NEC members argued from the word go that the three constitutional questions should be determined by party members at conference.'

'Now these questions will be taken in the normal constitutional way. Those who were manoeuvring to use the commission to bring about changes in the national executive to undermine its marginal left-wing majority find their efforts have come to nought.'

If the commission, or rather certain members of that esteemed body, failed to get their way on the actual constitutional

changes, then they did try to block any progress to democracy by resurrecting the 3-year rule which was thrown out at last year's conference.

By recommending the reinstatement of this rule, they hoped to prevent any further discussion on constitutional proposals. Their attempt has so far been thwarted. The NEC meeting to discuss the commission's report threw out any suggestion of the rule being resurrected.

But it could still be placed on the conference agenda through an amendment from an affiliated organisation, in which case the left will have to mobilise against it. Its re-introduction would mean that any constitutional proposals discussed this year would be ruled out of order if re-submitted by affiliated organisations prior to 1983.

So if the block vote defeats the left in Blackpool, Labour activists will be saddled with the PLP veto on the manifesto, a leadership which fails to implement conference policy — and no constitutional way of changing that situation.

What the mobilising committee stands for

IT WAS a proposal from the Rank and File Mobilising Committee which was carried at the Labour Party executive meeting. The Mobilising Committee supports:

- * Defence of automatic reselection;
- * Election of the leader by the party as a whole;
- * Democratisation of the PLP;
- * NEC control of the manifesto;
- * Defence of the present composition of the NEC;
- * No reintroduction of the 3-year rule.

Between now and the Labour Party conference, the Mobilising Committee is planning a series of rallies and public meetings. In its last *Broadsheet* it appealed to all supporters of democracy and accountability in the movement to:

- * Take extra copies of the *Broadsheet* — use them to

convince others of what is at stake. Propose that your CLP, trade union branch, or shop stewards committee puts in a bulk order. Get a speaker from the Mobilising Committee to your meetings.

* Get your organisation to endorse the five principles of the Mobilising Committee.

* If your organisation's policy has not yet been fixed, campaign now for its votes to be cast on the side of democracy in Blackpool. Contact the Mobilising Committee to be put in touch with other activists doing the same work, so that you can work together.

* Write immediately to the NEC to urge it to stand firm on the major issues of mandatory reselection, NEC control of the manifesto, and election of the leader by the party as a whole.

* Help in the different local activities, particularly the meetings and the rallies.

Contact the Mobilising Committee c/o 10 Park Drive, London NW11 or phone John Bloxam (01-607 9052), Jon Lansman (01-440 9396), David Smith (01-985 8635), or Barry Winter (0532 703664).

The major rallies planned so far include:

London
15 September, Camden Town Hall, 7.30pm. Speakers: Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, Bob Wright.

Manchester
17 September, 7.30pm, University of Manchester Students Union. Speakers: Tony Benn plus others.

Birmingham
22 September, 7.30pm. Speakers: Tony Benn, Bob Wright. Venue to be announced.

Sheffield
24 September, 7pm, AUEW House. Speakers: Tony Benn plus others.

Edinburgh
31 August, 2pm, Trades Council, Picardy Place. Speakers: Reg Race MP plus others.

Gays fight back

By Terry Conway

A 150-strong picket greeted the committal hearing last week of the 12 people arrested during the Gay Pride march in London last month.

Police harassment continued, with the arrest in the courtroom of two members of the defence committee. They were bound over to keep the peace for twelve months

THE Hemingford Arms in Islington is regularly used as a local centre by the left in the North London borough. Over the past few weeks there has been trouble between gay people who use the pub and groups of mod youth, some of whom are National Front members.

Last Friday evening the confrontation developed into a full-scale fight on the pavement outside the pub at closing time. Some 20 youth shouted anti-gay slogans and chanted 'Sieg Heil'. They were not expecting the gays to fight back and were somewhat disconcerted that they were outnumbered and finally driven away.

The problem could well escalate since the National Front seems to be re-establishing its sales pitch at nearby Chapel Market on Saturdays.

for lighting a cigarette when they were about to leave the courtroom.

The pickets responded with the kind of determination that had been shown on the march.

Unfortunately *Gay News* refuses to support the activities of the defence committee. Similarly when the arrests took place during the march the organising committee was more interested in going ahead with the planned celebration than protesting the police attack.



Part of the picket at last week's hearing against those arrested on the Gay Pride march

Photo: LAURIE SPARHAM (IFL)

SEXUAL POLITICS

Copenhagen UN conference: mid-decade chat

THE United Nations Decade for Women conference held two weeks ago in Copenhagen cost about £3m to organise. That's a lot of money to waste on a gathering which appeared to do little more than issue a large number of platitudes.

This was the view given to us by the newspapers in Britain which bothered to comment on the event. Leonora Lloyd, a representative from the International Contraception, Abortion, and Sterilization Campaign and an active feminist for the last ten years, was not allowed into the lavish Bella centre for the main event but she did attend the Women's

Forum which was organised as an alternative to the main jamboree.

In Mexico City in 1975, where the Decade of Women began in International Women's Year (you could be forgiven for not noticing this!), women stormed the main conference — it was dominated by government ministers, many of them men — to demand representation. 'The alternative Forum was organised this time to deliberately avoid any similar confrontations,' Leonora explained. 'The themes for both conferences were the same — Peace, Health and Education.'

At the main conference government officials spent their time boasting about the great strides forward they had made for women. Leonora spent her time making con-

tacts with women who are fighting all over the world for fertility control. 'We showed two films from the National Abortion Campaign, sold loads of badges and organised a press conference. We made loads of contacts including ones in Thailand and Russia.'

Impressed

Yvonne Roberts writing in the *Sunday Times* described the alternative Forum as a feminist version of the 'eight-cities-in-two-days' trip to Europe, because of the massive number of workshops and stalls. Leonora pointed out that English was the main language spoken which suggested a high concentration of women from the West, or with a

Western education.

She was most impressed however, with the large numbers of women from women's groups and anti-imperialist groups in Latin America.

The different problems facing women in Third World countries were highlighted in a number of workshops. Explained Leonora: 'Women in the Third World have to tackle more basic problems, like getting fresh water, enough to eat — 60 per cent of Indian women will never see a doctor in their lives. The main cause of death for Latin American women of child-bearing age is illegal abortion'.

When an American woman insisted that 'female circumcision is an attack on all womanhood' and mus-

WOMEN IN THIRD WORLD

TOO often in the West we are given to believe that women in Third World countries are passive victims of their fate; that no resistance is offered in these 'backward' countries to female degradation.

Such a view is far from the truth. In the last two decades women have fought alongside men for national liberation — in Cuba, Vietnam, Nicaragua. This has encouraged women to view

themselves as the equals and to raise their own concerns.

On these pages we look at imperialism on the lives of women in the Third World, record events at the UN's Decade for Women and the role of women during the Bengal in 1946-50.

Imperialism dominates every facet of life in the Third World today. The colonial powers came to Africa, Latin America, and Asia, using torture, extermination, rape and terror on a mass scale. Slavery was only the most extreme form of the brutal exploitation of these lands which have been thrust into the world market by the expansion of capitalism over the last century and a half.

Women's lives reflect that reality today. In most semicolonial countries the majority of the population live and work on the land, engaged in subsistence farming. The family is the basic unit of agricultural production. Women play a vital economic role by producing children who share the work and give security in old age. Marriage takes place early, at puberty, and women often give birth to as many children as possible. A barren woman is considered a social disgrace. Infertility is grounds for divorce in many such societies.

The low level of economic development causes extreme deprivation for the community as a whole and women in particular. Women live under virtual total domination of the male members of their family. It is not uncommon for female children to receive less food and care, leading to stunted growth or early death from malnutrition. Female infanticide is still practised in many areas. Often illiteracy rates for women reach 100 per cent.

As the capitalist market begins to penetrate the rural economies inflation and the drive towards larger productive units forces the male members of the family to migrate to the towns. Women often find themselves forced to eke out an impoverished existence from the land on their own, as in the Bantustans of South Africa.

Some workers are even compelled to leave their homeland and come to Western European countries in search of work. Once there, women immigrants in particular are forced into the most menial forms of employment.

For women who migrate to the cities, however, there is a greater opportunity for education and financial independence than in the rural environment. In taking jobs in industry or breaking into the professions women begin to occupy positions which



challenge the myth of their inferiority.

Women, who make up between 8 and 15 per cent of the workforce in most colonial and semicolonial countries, are heavily concentrated in industries such as textiles, food processing and electrical parts. In Puerto Rico women are the majority of workers in the major pharmaceutical and electrical industries. The profits from these concerns are vital to the imperialists. Women's labour is very cheap, and employing them at low rates drives down the general wage level in these countries. Women cannot rely on a permanent job. Unemployment and underemployment are common. Women are often forced to take desperate measures to feed their families. Handicrafts and home cooked food are sold on the street, laundry is taken in. Prostitution is frequently the only recourse.

Legal equality for women is not common in the semicolonial world. Husband's have far more rights over their wives than in Western societies. In most cases, a man can say when his wife will and will not work, a man can take away his wife's wages, a man often has the custody of the children rather than the woman. In some countries, such as Afghanistan before the PDPA government came to power, it was common for women to be sold into marriage. Women can be murdered for committing adultery in Islamic

countries. For the Indian crushing women's economic de

Contrary to today does not the tradition countries.

It often and backward domination, woman laws India, the n accentuated though no underwritten Muslim cour Iran, the t designed to deny them a effectively d as the Repul

Violence under imper used for the imperialists; their own fa take advan participate i customs humiliations



IMPERIALISM often reinforces religious hierarchies and backward traditions to enforce its domination. Many of the most barbaric anti-woman laws are based on religious codes. In India, the misery of millions of women is accen-

tuated by the caste system underwritten by the Hindu religion. In Iran the enforcement of the veil is designed to banish women from public life and deny them any individuality.

be fought by all women as a single issue, Sudanese women were more cautious: 'But first I have to fight for the right for girls to live to reach puberty...'

Women's health

African health visitors are trying to deal with circumcision as part of the general question of women's health within their own culture and traditions. The main problem was persuading women to come to the clinics and getting health and sex education into the schools. Mothers and grandmothers feared for their daughters' non-marriageability if they weren't circumcised. 'I argued for Western women to

concentrate their fire on their own government's exploitation of women in the Third World,' Leonora said, 'whether it's through population control policies or through an army of occupation as in Ireland.'

Having two conferences didn't avoid a confrontation as was intended. Provoked by the 'Peace' theme, Jacqueline Heinen, a journalist from *Rouge*, the French Trotskyist newspaper, drowned out an Irish minister for 15 minutes in a protest against the treatment of women in Armagh jail and the forcible occupation of the North of Ireland by the British army.

On Friday 18 July news of the Bolivian coup broke and it was decided to march to the Bella centre in a demonstration against the Bolivian

military and calling for the imperialists to keep their hands off Bolivia.

The Danish police had other ideas. They stormed the march, pushing women away from the Bella Centre and threw the few women who had managed to reach the front doors out onto the street. 'We turned and applauded the police for their polite behaviour outside the Decade for Women conference hall — they looked quite sick'.

Broken

After one woman had been sent off to hospital with a broken arm, a small delegation was finally allowed in.

Leonora was a little disappointed with the alternative forum. 'There was no machinery for decision making,' she told us, 'and it didn't really get to grips with organising anything. Women so obviously need to work together — for instance over the use of dangerous drugs — that it was a shame so many women present seemed to view themselves as Lady Bountifuls, telling women in the Third World how to solve their problems rather than concentrating on the practical task of solidarity and support.'

'What women in the Third World need from us is an end to imperialist exploitation.'

African delegate at UN conference



IN THE WORLD

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they step out of line.

Educational opportunities for women are extremely limited. The system reinforces the image of women as mother-housewife-wife onto all female children. Co-education is less prevalent than in Western societies. Only a small number of women have been able to take advantage of the benefits of higher education in these countries.

Control over fertility is a long way off throughout the world. In the underdeveloped world women are pressured to have less children. Birth control information is almost always in the framework of racist population control programmes imposed by imperialism. Forced sterilisation has been carried out on one-third of Puerto Rican women.

Women in these countries have been widely used as unwitting guinea pigs for testing birth control devices and drugs — the pill was tested out on Turkish women ten years before it was used in Europe. Access to abortion is also tied to coercion not freedom of choice. Every year millions of women are forced to seek illegal abortions under the most degrading conditions possible, leading to an unknown number of deaths.

Western capitalism foists its own standards of 'beauty' on women in the colonial world. Women are forced to conform to these alien standards while at the same time having to suffer rigid sexual double standards. The sexual mutilation of female children and the custom of polygamy (one husband, several wives) are only the most extreme examples of the general view of women that they exist for male sexual gratification, not for their own.

Because women's position in these societies is intimately bound up with imperialist exploitation it is impossible to separate the fight for women's demands from the national liberation struggle itself. In Vietnam, Algeria, Cuba, Palestine, South Africa, and Zimbabwe women have taken up arms against imperialism and then begun to raise their own demands within that struggle. In the North of Ireland women have been leading the battle for political status for Republican prisoners both inside and outside the jails.

The women's liberation movement has given these struggles a broader dimension. It has inspired women to rise up and place their needs and concerns at the centre of every struggle. The gap between archaic norms and values and the everyday lives of women grows ever wider. Women of the Third World have so little to lose that once they begin the battle a social ferment is unleashed that capitalism finds difficult to control.

In 1946-1950 in Bengal, sharecropping peasants rose up against their landlords. These peasants cultivated the land with their own cattle, implements and seed yet they only got half the crop. Sometimes the landlord would take more than half because the peasants could not afford to pay their debts. The terrible famine of 1943-1944 was a disaster for these peasants and the *Kisan Sabhas*, peasant fronts of the Communist Party of India, organised the struggle to win two-thirds of the cultivated crop.

'Land to the tiller' became one of the key slogans of the movement, as did the demand for the expulsion of the British who upheld the exploitative system.

Rural Bengal was in ferment. In some areas the peasants managed to take two-thirds of the crop; in others they won 60 per cent. Peasants burst into the landlord's grainstores and took *Tebhaga* — two-thirds of the crop. Terrified landlords called in the police and over 50 peasants were killed by police bullets.

Some landlords were forced off their land completely and the peasants took over. They elected peasant committees to look after the village administration. Volunteer troops were formed to put the committees' decisions into action and to guard the area against any attacks. People's courts were set up.

Red Flag

Women were active in this movement at every level. They harvested the crop under the Red Flag; they took part in the demonstrations; they went on delegations to landlords.

At night they guarded the villages armed with agricultural implements. In Kakkdip and Hajong they took up arms against the police, military, and the landlords.

It was women who carried the messages from one district committee to another, and on their way to the market or while visiting relatives they passed on the word about

When peasant women fought back in India

meetings. A warning system was operated by women — sounding conch shells, bells, bugles or drums when the police entered the village. This was the signal for people from neighbouring villages to gather and face the police while the *Kisan Sabha* leaders escaped.

Knives

Women's inventiveness knew no bounds. Many Muslim women hid their weapons in their saris. Women rescued people from police custody using brooms, knives, axes, husking tools, even chilli powder. In Hajong women prevented the police from taking away arrested men by dragging the police boat ashore. In Rampur a woman led the peasants to attack a policeman and break his rifle. She refused to free him without a party directive.

Many women were killed because of their militancy. In 1948, in Lalgaon, police raided the *Kisan Sabha* office. Three women chased and surrounded them. The police opened fire killing Sarojini and Basini. The third woman, Anuya, who was eight months pregnant, had her womb slashed open by a bayonet. The fate of her unborn child held out to the world, she fought on till she died.

The struggle against the landlords encouraged the women to question their own treatment in the home. In the 'liberated zones' controlled by *Kisan Sabhas*, women began to bring cases of wife beating, discrimination and molestation to the people's courts. In Harpur, a party cadre went to inform a woman of a meeting, found her alone and attempted to rape her. The people's court ordered him to leave the area within 24 hours. In such situations women's groups would see that the court verdict was

carried out. Women had gained confidence and strength in the struggle. Men were forced to give them the respect they were due. How did these poor landless women who had little time for meetings become so active during the *Tebhaga* struggle?

Earlier peasant movements, like the *hat-tola* movement aimed at reducing taxation, had been led by the rich peasants who had more to gain from cutting taxes as they had more produce to sell. Women in these families were kept in the home. The poor peasant women worked in the fields. The crop was a product of their labour as much as the men's. The battle with the landlords was their battle.

The intensity of the struggle brought women to the forefront. The villages were in turmoil, the routine of life was disrupted, men would not make so many demands on women. Domestic responsibilities took second place.

The spontaneity of the actions also pushed women to the fore. If a demonstration was planned men would be at the head of it. When a village came under attack defence was vital from every quarter. Women were often the first to respond because of their role in defence work.

Widows

The militancy of the women was sometimes greater than the men's because they had even less to lose. Widows, like Dipsari Dmajpur often became leaders. In Mymensingh and 24 Paraganas where the movement was strongest Muslim women came out of purdah.

The people's courts became a focus for women's demands. Women in Kakkdip, who were forced to work as domestic servants in

the landlord's houses for nothing, demanded payment. When their husbands tried to get them to continue working unpaid they raised the issue in the village court.

Urban activists helped with political education classes backing women's attempts to raise their own demands. Women's role had changed. They were not playing a subordinate role in the struggle, they were helping to lead the fight against the landlords. From fighting on the economic front they became aware of their sexual subjugation.

Crushed

But after independence the movement was crushed. The Communist Party was banned and the activists were forced underground. Although women demanded the release of those arrested and punishment for the landlords and police who had been responsible for murders their activity in politics began to decline. The Communist Party, even when it was legalised again, did try to organise women but only for the fringes of political activity. Domestic responsibilities began to dominate women's lives once more.

Villages

It was only in the revolutionary atmosphere when landlords were being driven from villages that women had the opportunity to challenge all the structures of power and control that dominated their lives, including the power of men. Yet even at that high point of struggle they were rarely elected to the village committees set up by *Kisan Sabhas*. Their greatest achievements in the struggle came when they used their collective strength as women to raise their own demands and make sure their voice was heard.

This article is an edited version of one written by Adrienne Cooper in the July 1979 issue of *Manushi*, an Indian Feminist Journal. This journal is available from: The Manushi Editorial Collective, A-5 Nizamuddin East, New Delhi 11013.

What are little girls made of?



and bubbling energy with **Parle Gluco — the tastier energy food.**



PARLE Gluco — India's largest-selling biscuit

And here's what Parle Gluco is made of — the goodness of milk, wheat, sugar, glucose.

What are little boys made of?



and bubbling energy with **Parle Gluco — the tastier energy food.**



PARLE Gluco — India's largest-selling biscuit

And here's what Parle Gluco is made of — the goodness of milk, wheat, sugar, glucose.

Poland: 'We've reached a higher level of organisation than in 1976'

ONE of the most exciting developments of the wave of strikes in Poland against the increase in meat prices has been the appearance of elected strike committees.

The French Trotskyist paper *Rouge* asked JACEK KURON, a leading member of the Polish civil and political rights organisation KSS-KOR, about these committees and prospects for the future.

Q: Apart from WSK Mielec and ZM URSUS, have strike committees or workers' commissions been set up during the recent strikes?

JK: There is not that much organisation if one takes into account the total number of factories on strike. But in certain strikes delegates have been elected in mass meetings and this has been a great success.

For example at WSK Swidnik the elected delegates obtained the assistance of the official trade union lawyer to help them in their negotiations with management. This is an aspect of the protest that we have not seen before.

The memory of the repression which struck the 'ringleaders' in 1970 was a powerful break on self-organisation; there are some factories where the strike committee, elected shop by shop in secret ballot, doesn't show itself openly. This is the case in the huge 'Stella' stocking factory at Zyrardow which employs a majority of women, many of whom are single mothers.

Factory

For this factory we have begun to take up a collection because the workers there are paid on the 15th of the month and we believe that because of the strike their pay will be delayed to force them to give in.

We've reached a higher level of organisation than in 1976, but there aren't strike committees everywhere. URSUS is a shining example of self-organisation for the rest of the country.

Q: You talk of the need for a national discussion as one of the conditions for carrying through structural reforms. At the moment is this only a policy on paper or are you in a position to organise, for example, a national meeting of representatives of firms on strike?

JK: No, not yet. We think that in this wave of strikes we can gain experience, popularise — and this is most important — the most advance experiences. And as we expect a hot autumn, we think that there will be then a generalisation of workers' self-organisation, of self-organisation of the whole of society, but in the first instance of the workers.

Jacket

Moreover it is a unique life-jacket for the country, and even — although I'm not keen on saving it, but that's the situation — for the government. But that's for the future.

Besides, when we discussed it with the comrades from URSUS they said to us: 'You talk about the autumn but it's taken us four years to develop and be capable of this level of organisation!'

Well it's true that the climate is more propitious today; we can popularise forms of organisation by pointing to concrete examples. For example, in the last issue of *Robotnik*, number 57, we published, together with the 11 July KOR declaration and a calendar of recent events which lists strikes, claims, and so on, a very detailed report of the birth of the workers' commission at URSUS. We are going to continue to do this in the hope of trebl-



JACEK KURON: 'The strikes will end when workers everywhere win their 10 to 15 per cent demands.'

ing the present print-run (30,000) copies of *Robotnik*.

Q: What is your prediction for the present strike wave? Is it going to continue?

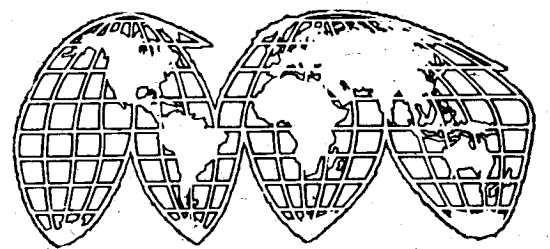
JK: It will end when workers everywhere win their 10 to 15 per cent demands. For the moment the authorities are retreating before the workers — an open invitation to strike! But at the same time there are lay-offs; all of Lodz (the second largest workers' town in Poland) is going to be laid off because, as a result of the economic crisis, they are having to stop production.

They have drastically cut back on imports to pay back interest on loans, and it is only thanks to the slow rhythm of

economic life that transport and energy production are continuing.

At the same time the situation is deteriorating, inflation is going to swallow up the wage rises. Even so the increases won in the last days have been important: at the beginning of July the 'Cegielski' workers at Srem won 7 per cent and within two days WSK workers at Swidnik returned to work with 15 per cent!

The only solution is a major reform, self-organisation, but the workers aren't ready for that yet. When they go back, faced with new difficulties, the working class will be stronger, more conscious of what it has won. That will be the difference.



AROUND THE WORLD

Turkey

AN estimated 800,000 workers took part in a general strike in Turkey last week. The stoppage was over the murder of Kermal Turkler, one of the country's most prominent trade union leaders. Turkler was shot by a gang of right wingers.

The strike was in defiance of martial law imposed by the right-wing government headed by Sulayman Demirel.

Meanwhile the Turkish government continues to place advertisements in the world's press aimed at encouraging tourists to visit Turkey. A recent one in the *Guardian* reads:

'There is still time to enjoy an inexpensive Mediterranean holiday! Why not enjoy a country that is peaceful and friendly... the £ goes a long way in Turkey!'

Israel

THE Israeli government has just banned several hundred books from sale or distribution in the occupied Arab territories. Titles include *The History of Jerusalem, Islam and Western Civilisation, Palestinian Poetry, and Modern Arab Literature*. But the really subversive work spotted by the censor is *The Merchant of Venice* by one William Shakespeare.

The legislation under which the bans have been imposed was originally drafted by Britain when it was in control of Palestine in 1946.

South Africa

POLICE wielding clubs injured at least 160 boycotting black students when they attacked a demonstration outside a high school in a black township near the eastern Cape city of King William's Town last Wednesday.

One press report said that 58 youths were taken to hospital with broken limbs and head injuries. A further 100 were treated for less serious injuries.

Last week mixed-race students in South Africa suspended their school boycott.

West Germany

THE former political affiliation of Franz-Josef Strauss, the Christian Democratic challenger in the West German elections, is beginning to make itself felt. Strauss was once an 'education officer' for the Nazis.

First there is the case of 18-year-old Christine Schanderl who last week was expelled from Regensburg high school in Bavaria, a part of Germany already controlled by Strauss. Christine's crime was that she came to school wearing a 'Stop Strauss' button.

Second, the case of four Munich youths aged between 15 and 18, who, one recent night, were the subjects of a 'citizen's arrest'. In fact they were kidnapped by six Strauss supporters after they had been seen standing near a defaced portrait of the great leader.

The youth themselves claim they didn't apply the graffiti but being in the vicinity was enough for the modern version of Hitler's brownshirts. The six, one of whom was armed with a club while another had a walkie-talkie, frog-marched the youths off to a police station.

Third there are the more official activities of the Strauss campaign. Remember how in Hitler's day the Nazis claimed they were fighting a great conspiracy involving everyone in sight? How does this, a Christian Democratic campaign poster, measure up to those old standards: 'Germans do you know who is behind the anti-Strauss campaigns? East German-financed journalists, bad cheque writers, pot smokers, friends of terrorists, Communists and, unfortunately, also the Social Democrats. Stop this leftist popular front!'

United States

THE Carter administration is currently involved in negotiations with the government of Somalia over establishing a US military base in the African country. Somalia is envisaged as being one of the staging posts of the US's rapid deployment force, designed to 'restore order' in any Middle Eastern country which threatens American interests.

The Somalia government have asked to be paid \$200 billion for the use of their territory, but the US have so far only agreed to pay \$30m. What was that about a recession?

Intercontinental Press/Inprecor

IN this week's issue: Half a million Nicaraguans celebrate the first anniversary of their revolution. Israel's deep crisis. American labour — what it stands for. Plus Carter's conscription campaign disarray, and more...

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WHAT'S LEFT SC EVENTS IMG NOTICES

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.
BROADSIDE: Mobile Workers' Theatre requires socialist actress (musical abilities an advantage) for a permanent job starting 10 October. Write by 27 September giving full details of theatrical and political experience to: 241e High Street North, London E12, or phone 01-470 2581.
LAST chance to apply to be manager of Birmingham bookshop. Ring 021-643 0669.
STOP racist violence — build the fightback in Newham! East London Workers Against Racism meeting, Friday 1 August, 7.30pm. East Ham Town Hall, Lister Room, High Street South, E6. Speakers: Fran Eden (ELWAR); Newham Youth Movement. Further details ring 01-274 3951.
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.
BIRMINGHAM: 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, Montpellier, 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, Galsbury Road, Cardiff.
COVENTRY: SC available from Wedge Bookshop. For more info about local activities phone 46113.
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 newsgagents, 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 Elliot St, Hamilton.
HULLERSFIELD: SC supporters sell papers every Saturday 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.
LAMBETH: SC now available at kiosk Brixton tube, Oval tube, Herne Hill British Rail and Tetric Books Clapham.
NEWHAM: SC sale every Saturday, 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Market, Upton Park.
OLDHAM: SC sold every Saturday outside 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.

WOLVERHAMPTON: SC on sale at Wolverhampton railway station 4.30-6pm on Thurs and Fri, and at the Mander Centre nr. Beatles Sat 11am-2pm.
SOCIALIST CHALLENGE BENEFIT: Saturday 27 Sept at the Metropolitan pub, Farringdon Road (corner of Clerkenwell Road), London EC1. Bands, disco, bar extension to midnight. Nearest tube: Farringdon.

**No replacement for Polaris!
No Cruise Missiles!
No more Hiroshimas!
DEMONSTRATION
Saturday 9 August
1.30pm Mancunian Way, Oxford Road, Manchester 1.
Rally 3pm, St. Peter's Square. Speakers include Frank Allaun MP. Organised by CND.
(All North West Socialist Challenge supporters are asked to attend. Join the Socialist Challenge contingent. 'Britain out of NATO! US Hands off Iran and the Caribbean!')**

BRANCH ORGANISERS. National meeting Sat 20 Sept. Venue to be announced.
NALGO FRACTION. Sat 13 Sept. National Centre, noon-5pm.
ANTI-CRUISE FRACTION. All London and south of England branch reps to attend. Sun 17 Aug 11am. National Centre.

CPSA comrades are urged to come to the national fraction Sat 30 Aug 12 noon. National Centre.
ABORTION fraction. Sat 6 Sept. Details from Jude at centre.
RAIL FRACTION. Sat 2 Aug. noon-5pm. National Centre.

Bolivia: resistance to coup continues

By Paul Lawson

TIN miners in Bolivia are leading the resistance to the military coup which took place on 17 July. It is reported that tin miners in the Huanani and Siglo Viente areas south of the capital, La Paz, were armed with machine guns and dynamite; troops armed with tanks have been sent to crush them.

The coup in Bolivia, led by faceless generals, was a preemptive move to prevent the president elect, Siles Zuazo, leader of the Popular Democratic Union, from assuming the presidency. Zuazo won 38 per cent of the votes last April, not enough for an overall majority, but enough to assume the presidency.

The military feared the consequences of the UDP coming to power. Zuazo is by no means a

socialist, but a UDP government introducing radical reforms would threaten to unleash a revolutionary dynamic, as happened under the Allende regime in Chile.

The military coup was carried out with ruthless efficiency; the first act of the rightist-led troops was to invade the headquarters of the Bolivian trade union federation (COB). During this attack trade union leader Simon Reyes, a leading member of the Bolivian Communist Party, was killed as was Marcelo Quiroga, the Socialist Party's presidential candidate.

Juan Lechin, Bolivia's best-known trade union leader, was wounded during the coup. Witnesses speak of other trade union leaders being beaten and tortured by the military.

Latest information reaching the Bolivian Human Rights Committee in London confirms that despite attempts to starve them out, Bolivia's 50,000 miners have managed to

smuggle in food from Peru and the stoppage remains solid.

Troop mutinies have been reported in some areas forcing the generals to threaten whole-sale bombing of the mining camps.

Unconfirmed reports speak of the use of napalm.

Another report points to the complicity of other southern cone dictators in the coup evidencing the presence of 200 Argentinian troops in the country.

The coup is a hard blow for the Bolivian workers and peasants. But the extent of the resistance shows that the Bolivian workers are far from defeated. The events of the past week are a dramatic confirmation of the whole trend of politics in the last decade in the southern cone of Latin America.

As the struggles of the masses develop, the military are increasingly determined to use force to stifle even potentially revolutionary developments. The policy of mass



mobilisation in the workers' movement has to go hand in hand with preparation for armed self-defence. In Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and Bolivia the utopians have been those who relied on the peaceful,

parliamentary road.

BRITISH MINERS are organising in solidarity with the miners of Bolivia. This Wednesday saw a march from Speakers Corner to the

Bolivian Embassy organised by the NUM. The Bolivian Human Rights Campaign is currently organising solidarity with the Bolivian workers. Contact them at 16 Ribblesdale Road, London N8 7EP.

Dancing on a tyrant's grave

AT long last Mohammed Reza Pahlavi is dead. That is good news. Like the cancer from which he died, the deposed Shah of Iran was a terminal sickness which was, in its time, responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of people.

He was responsible as well for the torturing of countless citizens of Iran, and the incarceration in political prisons of an estimated 100,000 people.

'The bloodsucker of the century' the contemporary Iranian press has called him, and if that is an exaggeration it is only a slight one, and one that is excusable considering the injustice and suffering the subjects of the 'king of kings' endured during his reign.

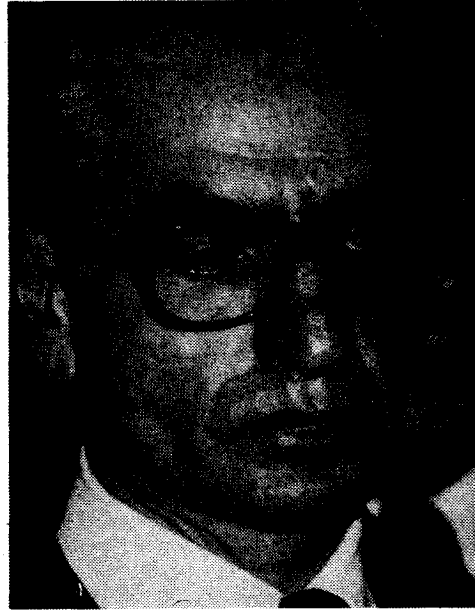
The Shah did not impose his rule alone. He was returned to power in 1953 by a joint British-US intervention. When he set up SAVAK in 1957, agents of this hated secret police were trained in the US and Britain.

Oil companies

In co-operation with the Western oil companies the Shah undertook a 'white revolution' whose main beneficiaries were the capitalist class and the Pahlavi family. His autocratic rule was staunchly supported, until just before he fled Iran, by Jimmy 'human rights' Carter and the Labour government in Britain.

If the Shah appeared to possess an enormous capacity for evil, it was Western capitalism which nurtured and encouraged that evil.

But what, it has been asked, has followed the Shah? Has not Khomeini simply replaced Pahlavi as the new Shah? Is there any more freedom or justice in Iran today than there was when Iranians first took to the streets to demand an end to repression and exploitation?



The Shah.



Child labour was one of the features of the Shah's Iran that he preferred to conceal from his Western fans.



Under the Shah there were over 100,000 political prisoners; some met their fate at the hands of the military firing squads.

It is best not to ask such questions at isolated moments in history. It is better to ask: Where is Iran going and where has it come from?

Under the Shah, the majority of the people — including the urban poor, the nationalities in Kurdistan, Khuzestan, Turkomenstan and Azerbaijan, women, the oil workers — had no future. That was why these sections of Iranian

society combined to overthrow the Pahlavi regime.

Today in Iran many of these people continue to be oppressed, but they also continue to fight that oppression.

Most importantly the removal of the Shah taught the masses in Iran the power they possess; the instability of the Khomeini regime is evidence itself that this power has not been put in cold storage.

This struggle of the Iranian masses for their self-liberation continues. That struggle received its most magnificent impetus with the overthrow of the Shah, and without that overthrow the process of revolution in Iran would have remained frozen.

Consequently the death of the Shah now is little more than footnote in history. All the same, it is worthy of a small celebration.

By Steve Potter

TWO BIDS to install a military dictatorship in Iran under ex-prime minister Shahpur Bakhtiar have failed. Now a third has been uncovered — led by the man who was known as the 'Butcher of Tehran'.

The latest coup plot is still in preparation according to the British news magazine *Now!* In its 25 July issue the magazine revealed that a 7,000-strong 'Liberation Army of Iran' has been trained in Egypt and Iraq and is now stationed in frontier camps on the Iraq/Iran border.

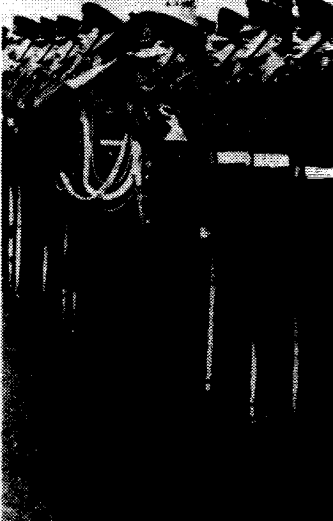
Overall commander of the counter-revolutionary forces is General Gholam Oveissi, the Shah's martial law administrator, who was directly responsible for the massacre of tens of thousands of peaceful demonstrators against the Shah. It was Oveissi who gave the orders on Bloody Friday in September 1978, when 5,000 died. He recently visited Washington and held discussions with US officials. Afterwards he boasted: 'By the end of the summer I shall be master of Tehran.'

According to *Now!* 'The immediate objective is to establish bases at Ahwaz in the oil province of Khuzestan, and at Hamadan, near Kurdish territory. Once Oveissi's agents succeeded they would call on disaffected troops and the local population to join them, then re-group to march on the holy city of Quom, and finally Tehran.'

This plan appears much more determined and serious than the plot exposed by President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr on 10 July.

He asserted then that a coup planned by air-force officers in Ahwaz had been put down. Two former generals of the Shah, Said Mehdivan, the Shah's air force commander and Ahmad Mohaqeqi, previous head of the military police, apparently later confessed that they had planned to bring Bakhtiar to power. Mohaqeqi was executed.

According to the *Christian Science Monitor* of 14 July Phantom bombers would have bombed various targets including the home of Ayatollah Khomeini, President Bani-Sadr's offices,



General Oveissi in London in June 1973

theological colleges in Qom and the residences of the majority of the deputies to the Iranian parliament.

One of the first acts of the new junta was to have been the release of the 53 American hostages, claimed the *Monitor* report.

The exposure of the conspiracies provides additional support for Bani-Sadr's assertion that the raid organised by Washington on 24 April the 'fiasco in the desert' — was part of a broader military plan to bring down the Iranian government.

The type of regime installed by such a coup would inevitably be devoted to crushing the resistance of the working class and peasantry Iran. No quarter could be expected from the likes of Oveissi.

Plotters

However, many of the policies of the Iranian regime open the door to the plotters and to Bakhtiar. The suppression of the democratic rights of the oppressed nationalities in Iran leads the right wing to believe that they can count on the support of the Arab people of Khuzestan for example.

Nevertheless faced with the threat against the Iranian people plotted by imperialism, working people have no choice but to say: End the plots against Iran! End the British economic boycott! Hands off Iran!

THE CASE FOR CHARTER 80

CHARTER 80, the campaign established in Britain to promote the demands of the H Block and Armagh political prisoners, is now establishing a firm foundation.

Among recent signatories to the call for 'human rights for Irish political prisoners' are Mick McGahey, president of the Scottish National Union of Miners, and Gordon McClellan, general secretary of the Communist Party.

The arguments on which the demands of the prisoners are based are described in a new pamphlet produced in Belfast by the trade union sub-committee of the National H Block Committee*. The pamphlet explains the background to the H Block issue, relates the 'conveyor belt' system of 'justice', and outlines a number of case histories of trade unionists who have become political prisoners.

One such history is that of Tom McAllister, a member of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers. This is Tom's story — and the case for Charter 80.

Tom was 13 years old when British troops went onto the streets of Belfast in 1969. Living in a socially depressed area on the Falls Road made him, like others his age, a target for harassment from both the British Army and the RUC.

On average the McAllister household was raided by the security forces several times a week, and sometimes two or even three times daily.

Tom left school at 17 to become an apprentice fitter, but due to spending too many all-night sessions in army or RUC barracks he found it impossible to hold down his job. He left work to return to school, but even this became impracticable, as he often was arrested on the way to school.

He was arrested again on 29 March 1978 in what was later said to be a hijacked vehicle. It was also claimed that guns and explosives were involved. At-

tempting to escape, Tom was shot in the ankle and knee. While he was on his face on the ground the Special Patrol Group (RUC) fired more shots into his back injuring the base of his spine.

Later Tom's doctor testified that the position of this injury indicated that Tom had been shot while lying on the ground. An eye-witness to the shooting told the same story.

The injury left Tom paralyzed from the waist down. He also had a broken leg. He was taken to the Royal Victoria Hospital where he was given a blood transfusion. The very next day he was transferred to a military hospital.

Approximately four weeks later, without warning, Tom was transferred to the infamous Castlereagh RUC station. He still had a leg in plaster, and had a bag and catheter attached to him to assist his bowel and bladder movements.



TOM McALLISTER — 'But for the political set-up in our country he would never have seen the inside of a prison.'

In that state he was delivered for 'questioning', despite the fact that the day he

was moved the consultant in charge issued Tom a certificate stating that he had to remain in

hospital for at least a further 13 weeks.

Tom's parents and solicitor found out about the transfer and contacted the family doctor who saw Tom the next day. During the examination Tom

complained that the police were interrogating him standing up — even though he had one leg in plaster. Five weeks after being shot he was finally charged. After this his parents visited him.

In a statement to the Association for Legal Justice his mother said: 'We were under no illusions about how Tom would look after the Special Branch were finished with him, but we were completely astounded when we saw him. He, in all honesty, was a physical wreck.'

'He was in a highly nervous state, twisting his hands and pulling at his nails. At that moment I knew without a doubt that my son had been to hell and back at the hands of the sadistic animals.'

'They had withheld the pain-killing drugs left by his GP. He said they had stood him for interrogation against a wall, pulled his hair, his ears, pulled his head back as far as possible. He said they also sat him in a straight-backed wooden chair, and from behind kept kicking his chair so as to jar his spine.'

Tom appeared in court the next morning. He was remanded in custody. The magistrate recommended that the medical authorities at Crumlin Road prison should examine Tom and if necessary remove him to

hospital for proper treatment.

The family doctor rang the prison, spoke to the doctor there and urged that Tom be transferred to hospital. The prison doctor agreed with this opinion. Nevertheless Tom McAllister remained in prison, on remand, for over a year.

When his trial was eventually heard it lasted all of three days. He was convicted of possession of a gun and explosives, and was sentenced to twelve years and ten years, to be served concurrently. He was denied political status and immediately went on blanket protest.

According to his mother he is at present 'badly handicapped'. She explains: 'He wears a built-up boot. He has gone from over 12 stone to about seven stone. He has the zombie-like appearance that all the blanket men have, yet he is determined to remain on the protest until he gets political status, and we his family fully support his aims.'

'He is no criminal, and but for the political set-up in our country he would never have seen the inside of a prison.'

*Trade Unions and H Block costs 50p and is available from 'Trade Union sub-committee', 52 Broadway, Belfast 12. Cost 50p plus 20p p&p. Ten Copies or more 30p each.

News from the Troops Out Movement



PLANS are now well underway for the Troops Out Movement delegation to Belfast on the weekend of 9/10 August.

The delegation will visit and picket British Army forts in West Belfast, and will take part in a demonstration on 10 August marking the anniversary of the introduction of internment. An educational programme is also being arranged to allow those who go the opportunity to meet local people and learn the truth about the Irish situation.

The delegation is being planned so that people who are working can leave home on Friday evening and get back Monday morning.

A variety of travel arrangements are on offer depending on how much people can afford. The idea is that the delegation as a

whole will meet up in Belfast on Saturday morning but the most popular way of getting there is likely to be by boat; the fare for the train/boat return is £34.

Most of the delegation are expected to travel by boat, so there should be plenty of company. Accommodation in Belfast will be provided, mostly in the homes of local families.

There will be a meeting for all those in the London area wishing to take part in the delegation on Monday 4 August at 7.30pm in the Roebuck pub, Tottenham Court Rd.

Further details can be obtained by phoning the national office of the Troops Out Movement on 01 267 2004. If you want to see Belfast for yourself and learn what the British media refuse to tell you about Ireland, phone that number now!



UNDER REVIEW

'London's first local weekly alternative newspaper'

By Kate Holman

A NEW newspaper is to be launched in the East End of London in the autumn. The paper, *East End News*, produced a pilot issue on 15 July. So far 8,000 copies have been distributed.

The pilot issue contains a special supplement, printed in Bengali and English, which highlights one of the major changes facing the East End — the run-down of the garment trade. It includes photographs taken by Sylvia Pankhurst never before published in this country.

The rag trade has by tradition employed a succession of immigrant groups — ranging from Chinese, Irish, and Jews at the turn of the century to the Asian community today — often rewarding them with starvation wages and sweat shop conditions.

Now the decline in the tailoring business is swelling the number of unemployed in the East End, already high due to dock closures and public sector cuts.

The *East End News* — London's first local, weekly alternative newspaper — aims to unite a broad front of trade union and local groups on issues like cuts in living standards, racism, and sexual discrimination.

The structure of the co-operative that will run the paper is daringly democratic. The *EEN* will be owned by its readers as well as workers. Anybody who buys five £1 shares becomes a member of the co-op and is entitled to a vote at general meetings.

The membership will elect a manage-

ment committee to supervise the week-to-week organisation, with representatives from Tower Hamlets trades council, local political parties, women's groups, ethnic minorities etc. The aim of the structure is to avoid control by any one sector of the community.

Already over 400 organisations and individuals have bought shares. The *East End News* can only succeed with mass support from the people of East London.

The format will be lively and professional, with wide sports coverage and a comprehensive round-up of events and entertainment in the East End. Ads will not be accepted if they clash with the paper's policies.

Last year the *East Ender* — a weekly owned by the Stratford Express group and widely respected for its anti-racist policy — was taken over by the rival GLEN group and closed down. This left GLEN's own paper, the conservative *East London Advertiser*, with a monopoly in Tower Hamlets. The *ELA* is staffed entirely by non-union journalists who left or were expelled from the NUJ around a recent strike. It was during a NUJ pay dispute last year that the first *East End News* was produced, a one-off edition that provided the spur for the new paper.

The launch of the *East End News* comes at a time when the role of the press is under harsh scrutiny. Coverage of the 'winter of discontent', the sacking of Derek Robinson, and 14 May, has demonstrated the bias and distortion common to most national dailies.

At the same time, protests from immigrant leaders over racist treatment, and direct action such as the occupation of the

Evening News office by women appalled at the paper's attitude to lesbians have shown that many people are no longer willing to tolerate victimisation by the press.

The trade union movement is learning the painful lesson that to counter some of the distortions it must exploit the Press for its own ends. Unions like NALGO have set up media seminars. At the TUC last year the *Campaign for Press Freedom* was launched to challenge the whole structure of the 'free' and privately-owned press. It has since adopted the *East End News* as its pilot project.

NUJ members have been forced to realise their own role in press bias, through the blind acceptance of established 'news values'. This has led to an intense debate within the union about 'professional standards' and the strength of the NUJ's code of conduct.

The success of the *East End News* will be important to these future initiatives — particularly given the degree of support it has received from the TUC, the print unions, other trade unions at national and local level, the Labour Party and other areas of the left, women's groups, pensioners, gay groups, MPs, local churches, and so on.

But the co-operative has only raised half its launch target of £25,000, and that extra few thousand pounds might make or break the project. The *East End News* still needs more money, more members, more supporters, to be sure of success.

If you would like more information about the *East End News* contact the office at 17 Victoria Park Square, London E2. (01-981 1221).



New books for your HOLIDAY READING

THE RETURN OF THE SOLDIER, By Rebecca West, 188pp (Virago, £2.50). Rebecca West's first published work of fiction, a woman's war novel in which she powerfully explores a recurring theme in all her work — the nurturing and life-sustaining force of woman in a world governed by the destructive and deathly powers of men.

THE JUDGE, by Rebecca West, 430pp (Virago, £3.50). Her second novel, set against the background of Edinburgh and the Essex sea marshes, is a powerful expression of her vision of life as a perpetual struggle between the forces of love and death.

HARRIET HUME, by Rebecca West, 288pp (Virago, £2.95). A witty and beautifully imagined fantasy set in London which recounts the victory of love and the love of beauty over man's eternal quest for dominance and destruction.

TESTAMENT OF EXPERIENCE, by Vera Brittain, 480pp (Fontana, £1.95). The sequel to *Testament of Youth* continues her autobiography after the First World War, once again interlacing her private experience with the wide sweep of public events: the depression, the growth of Nazism, the peace movements of the 1930s, the Spanish Civil War, and then the horror of the Second World War. (*Testament of Youth* is also still available, price £1.95.)

THE HIDDEN FACE OF EVE — Women in the Arab World, by Nawal El Saadawi, 236pp (Zed Press, £2.95). A picture of what it is like to grow up as a woman in the Islamic world which places personal relationships in the context of society as a whole. Complete with an introduction which looks at the questions posed by the development of the Iranian revolution.

THE IRA, by Tim Pat Coogan, 620pp (Fontana, £2.50). The new edition of this comprehensive history, widely hailed at the time of its original publication in 1970, has twelve new chapters dealing with events up to September 1979.

All from THE OTHER BOOKSHOP, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XQ (tel. 01-226 0571). Add 15% on mail order for postage and packing.

LETTERS

No fascists in Handsworth

WILLIE WHITELAN IS A SOFTIE. THE NF MARCH ON TO WEST APL. BROM.

I RIPPED this sticker from the wall of a Birmingham subway. National Front graffiti is everywhere in Birmingham and many more of these vile stickers are displayed.

As you know the NF is planning to march in the West Bromwich area and there are also proposals for an NF march in Handsworth on 17 August.

If the march goes ahead we must mount the largest anti-fascist counter march or rally that there has been for a long time. The Front must never get into Handsworth.

PAULINE ROE, Birmingham
PS: APL stands for Anti Paki League.

'Second home' bombings in Wales

AFTER the bombing of the Tory Secretary of Wales' third, but alleged 'ancestral' home and the detention of Brendan Young, an IMG member in Swansea, under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, it may be worth recalling the S Wales IMG's attitude to the arson attacks on second homes in Wales:

'Basing ourselves on the programme of revolutionary Marxism, S Wales IMG believes the only solution to the problem of second home ownership is through a mass action, anti-capitalist campaign...

'The burnings are individual responses, even where some clandestine organisation is involved... the very nature of the burnings excludes mass involvement. An impassable barrier is set up between political activists and the popular opposition.

'It is for this reason, rather than respect for capitalist proper-

ty, that S Wales IMG stands against the arson campaign.'

Passed at its May aggregate, S Wales IMG is now emphasising these positions in its political work, pointing out that bombing and arson play no positive role in the class-struggle. Individual terrorism isn't a way forward; it just allows the police to harass and intimidate those political activists who are centrally important to building a mass anti-Tory movement in Wales.

While reflecting disillusionment and confusion at the refusal of the Wales TUC, Welsh Labour Party, and Plaid Cymru to build such a mass movement, it above all lets these organisations off the hook and makes an anti-Tory movement even harder to achieve.

DEREK DAVIES, S Wales IMG

Providing a tangible alternative

I AM grateful for Anne Cesek's fraternal review (17 July) of my pamphlet, *Reviving the Labour Party* (obtainable, incidentally, from the Institute for Workers Control, 45 Gamble Street, Nottingham, price 40p).

But her suggestion that I believe with 'the traditional left in the Labour Party' that extra-parliamentary activity 'is simply an added luxury' to parliamentary reform is inaccurate and certainly could not have been extrapolated from the pamphlet.

For example, I argued 'we need to go further and give a priority to extra-parliamentary action, even to the point of subordinating electoral politics to it', and 'what is required is to press for parliamentary change as far as the system will allow it, from the base of extra-parliamentary activism.'

'Any other strategy in contemporary Britain is doomed, either to absorption by the state (in the case of an exclusively electoralist approach) or to frantic irrelevance at the margins of society (in the case of fringe left groups).'

Similarly, while it is true that the traditional Labour left tends to see the Alternative Economic Strategy as a 'compromise' with capital, that is not true of newer left forces.

We see it as an essentially political strategy, using concrete policies of immediate relevance to Britain's economic crisis as a mobilising base for pushing the system to its limits and ultimately transforming it (see Geoff Hodgson, *Socialist Economic Strategy*, ILP, 1979).

The real problem with Anne's position on the AES — and that of the rest of the far left — is that it fails to provide a tangible alternative, relying instead on an essentially rhetorical appeal to agitation without a clear programme for fundamental change.

PETER HAIN, London

NAC and the TUC

JAN Parker is right to point out (25 July) that the 8 February lobby of Parliament on abortion was only sponsored, rather than organised, by the South East region of the TUC, and that the crucial driving force was the Campaign Against Corrie.

The IMG has been heavily involved in building both NAC and CAC in the last five years, and we would be the last to deny either the role of such campaigns or the strength and significance of women organising around their own demands — no one is going to fight for them unless we women do first!

However, Jan tends to counterpose the 'feminist' abortion campaign to the 'male-dominated' labour movement. We believe that it is necessary to take feminist politics into the labour movement and that it is possible to do this because of the thousands of women in the Labour Party and the trade unions who have shown their willingness to fight for their rights — by coming out on the abortion demonstrations and so forth.

When we talk about the labour movement being 'male-dominated' we have to remember that although the leadership is male chauvinist, reformist, etc, between 30 and 40 per cent of the membership are women, who can be mobilised to fight back and challenge the leadership when that leadership holds back the struggle for women's rights.

After the support we got for the campaign against Corrie, we

are now in a position to take up positive legislation for a woman's right to choose. We should mobilise support in the labour movement, especially among women, and say to the trade union leaders 'right, you supported us against Corrie, now are you really prepared to stick your necks out and fight for something positive, a woman's right to choose in law and in practise?'

The support of both the TUC and its South East region is itself not merely 'welcome' but essential in the campaign for a woman's right to choose. Essential because it gives the campaign a means of reaching more and more women inside the labour movement, and because support from the TUC and SERTUC gives us women qualitatively more strength in fighting for our right to choose.

We agree that it is only women who will fight consistently for our rights and who know what we want. But it is also true that we cannot do it on our own!

JUDITH ARKWRIGHT, London N1

The future of Socialist Challenge

FEARS I have had regarding the political direction of Socialist Challenge over the past year seem fully justified by the editorial 'The Future of Socialist Challenge' (10 July).

This is quite blatant about how it sees the paper going: 'We want to popularise the paper. This means writing shorter articles, revamping the language and style of the paper.'

It is to the credit of Socialist Challenge that in its earlier years, 1977-78, we had a paper that was directed exclusively to the revolutionary vanguard. It may be because of the style of SC that not as many workers read it as we would like.

Another reason/excuse for this defection to workerism/economism in its crudest form is what's happening in the Labour Party.

It's a historical fact that while in office the Labour Party hammered the working class into the ground. But the instant it is in op-

position it is transformed into a radical left-wing socialist party and the attacks on the working class while it was in office are forgotten.

This opportunist about-turn by the Labour Party would seem to justify a SC of the old variety and not another *Socialist Worker*, *Militant*, etc. In fact, if the editorial statement is just for opens *Socialist Worker* will seem like *Das Kapital* in comparison.

Since I left the Socialist Workers Party I have sold SC for over two years in Dundee. I am committed to the ideas of a unified revolutionary organisation and autonomous youth and women's movements.

I shall be watching for future developments of SC with some interest and I will determine my future commitment by how far SC slides down to a *Socialist Worker*-type of paper.

JOHN MALONE, Dundee

BOOKMARXCLUB Summer Quarter 1980

This is the list for the third quarter of 1980. You may join for the quarter simply by selecting books to the value of £8.50 or more at book club prices (heavy type) — the normal retail price is in brackets. Books may be collected from Bookmarks or will be sent by post.

- | | | |
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| 5 <i>Women and Russia</i> Women & Eastern Europe Group £1.30 (1.75) Complete translation of a new Russian feminist magazine suppressed by KGB. | | |
| 6 <i>Politics of Housework</i> ed Ellen Malos £2.95 (3.95) A collection of writings on housework. | | |
| 7 <i>The Harder They Come</i> by Michael Theiwell £2.20 (2.95) Working class Jamaican life introduced through story of a songwriter and gunman. | | |
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Socialist Challenge

TWO DATES TO REMEMBER TO BEAT JOBS SLAUGHTER

BY the time the TUC meets at its annual conference in Brighton at the start of September the official number of unemployed will be over two million.

That explains why the fight for the right to work needs to be one of the major themes of that conference. The preliminary list of motions to be debated by the TUC was published at the start of this week. Included are a whole number on unemployment.

But while marfy fine sentiments are displayed in these motions there is a noticeable shortage of concrete ways and means of ensuring that there will be 'no return to the Thirties'.

One of the few that does put anything forward comes from the Transport and General Workers Union.

It calls for 'a campaign to fight the cuts, resist closures and redundancies, establish widespread training facilities, reduce working hours and overtime with an immediate goal of a 35-hour week, control of the introduction of new technology and step up the battle for an alternative economic policy'.

Bad

For starters, that's not bad. But such policies will not be won simply by passing resolutions at the TUC. The type of 'campaign' the TGWU advocates will have to be fought for and mobilised around.

It will require a commitment from the entire trade union movement; a commitment which would leave no holds barred in the fight

●●●●●●●●●●
Monday
1
September

for jobs.

One way of stepping up the pressure so that the TUC takes such a fight seriously will be for the rank and file in the unions, and the unemployed themselves to apply that pressure.

The opportunity to do so comes on 1 September when there will be a mass lobby of the TUC on unemployment. Demand the TUC takes action! Join the lobby on 1 September.

THE number of lies coming from the mouths of Tory politicians about unemployment is increasing as fast as the dole queues.

The first lie came when Thatcher, Geoffrey Howe, and other Tory bosses claimed unemployment was caused by high wage claims. Thatcher said on 22 July that 'the main factor' behind the 1.9m unemployment figures announced that day 'is the high increase in wages'.

Simple

Such nonsense is disproved by a few simple facts:

*The North of Ireland has the highest unemployment rate and the lowest average wages rates of all the regions ruled by the Tory government.

*The textile and clothing industry is one of the worst hit by job losses. Ann Spencer of the National Union of Garment Workers said at the weekend: 'Five factories a week are closing and only today I was notified of 400 more redundancies.'

And what is the wage rate for a dress-maker in this industry? The grand sum of £49.70 a week.

Lie

Then came the lie that it's because the unemployed are unwilling to move that they are unemployed. Said Thatcher last Thursday:

'I think it is reasonable to expect that there must be some mobility if people are willing to move to where jobs are available.'

Just where are people expected to move to? Perhaps Thatcher had in mind the 'prosperous' South-east. By comparison with other regions unemployment in the South-east might not be quite as bad, but last month this region had the highest increase in

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Friday
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October

unemployment in the country.

At the weekend the Cambridge Economic Policy Group forecast that by 1983 unemployment in the South-east would be approaching nine per cent.

Switch

These attempts by the Tories to switch the blame for the unemployment scandal on to anyone but themselves should be exposed and resisted.

That is why it is important to build the demonstration called by the Right to Work Campaign and the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions at the Tory Party conference in Brighton on 10 October.

Skinner advises Consett to occupy

By Pete Tattersall, Gateshead NUPE

DENNIS Skinner has repeated his call for Consett steelworkers to occupy the plant against closure and to use it as a base to organise widespread labour movement support for the fight.

The Labour MP's call came at a rally organised by the Save Consett Steel Campaign at the Belle Vue Football ground in Consett at the end of a march by 1500 steelworkers through the town.

Unfortunately Skinner's call was only heard by a fraction of the original march as many workers began to drift away after hearing Bill Sirs, ISTC General Secretary, come out with gems like: 'They could at least have given the chairman's job to a British lad instead of a foreigner'.

Sirs went on to suggest that Consett should be taken over by a private owner if any of them found it an attractive proposition rather than see it close.

This appalling proposal is ironic because one of the main problems that Consett faces is

direct competition from the private firm of GKN. GKN would not be unhappy if Consett was removed as their chief competitor — particularly as the private firm has just invested £48m recently.

Meanwhile the continuation of negotiations between the BSC and the Consett unions is a sham being dragged out by management as long as possible in order to damp down any hint of a direct struggle. The next meeting is planned for 12 August.

But BSC have already told the workforce that only one furnace will be operating after the summer break. This will halve production in preparation for closure.

As Bill Thompson, Chairperson of Save Consett Steel Campaign Committee said, 'British Steel are nailing up the coffin before the talks are even finished.'

Once again the road of alliances with MPs, lobbies to Parliament, reasonable negotiation and playing the capitalist's game of arguing viability has led to a blind alley for steelworkers. It's time Consett workers and Llanwern workers took things into their own hands and tried the methods of occupation argued for by Dennis Skinner and others.



Support YOUR press

THE PRESS LIES continue to pour out on the Olympic Games and Afghanistan.

In a remarkably candid article in the *Sunday Times* Ian Jack claimed that much of the copy being sent back by journalists covering the Games was being edited by Fleet Street copy desks to reflect pro-boycott sentiments.

On Afghanistan another *Sunday Times* reporter, Philip Jacobsen, delivered a broadside at the way in which the Western press had continuously distorted the war. Stories of heavy Russian

casualties as tribesmen 'massing' outside Kabul were pure fabrications he asserted.

Socialist Challenge highlights the facts which the Fleet Street editors delete. That's why we appeal to you to keep contributions to our fund drive coming in through the lean summer months.

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