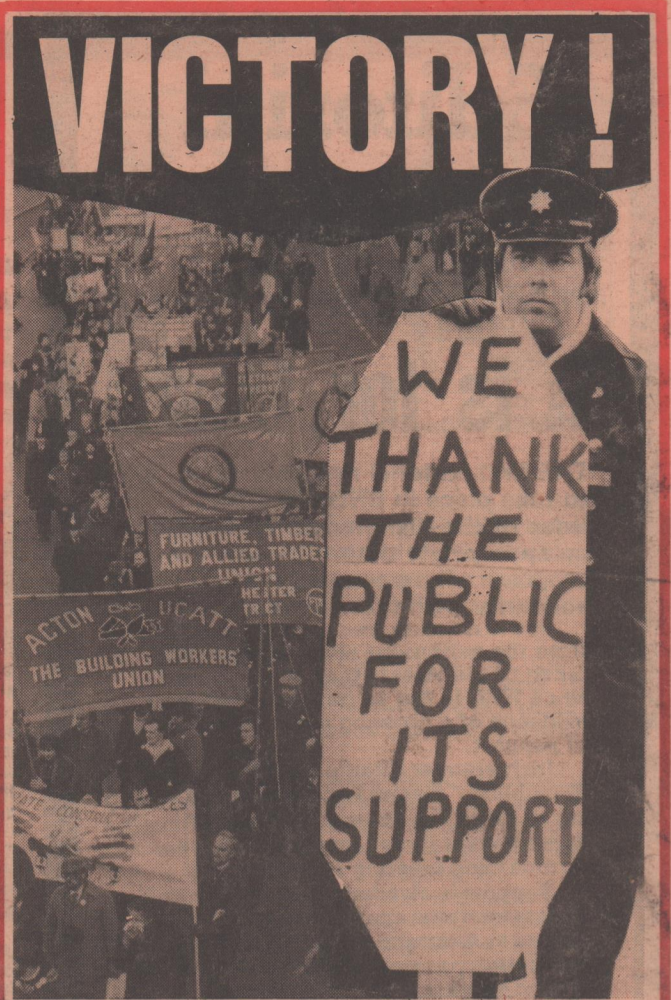


Socialist Challenge

Irish hunger strikers

NOW IT'S TEN WHO FACE DEATH



Victory to the firefighters

THE Fire Brigades Union have inflicted a humiliating defeat on the Tory government. On Monday evening the local authorities agreed to give the FBU most of what they had been demanding.

The six per cent pay limit, announced by the Tories just a couple of weeks ago received, a roasting.

The FBU won because of their threat of national strike action, the support promised by the TUC, and the solidarity shown by the working class movement — a solidarity particularly evident on Liverpool's unemployment demonstration on Saturday.

This stirring of power has sent the Tories cringing. If the FBU can do it, so can the rest of us.

BEFORE ARMAGH



THOSE who do not understand why ten Irish political prisoners have gone on hunger strike should take a look at the pictures on either side of this article.

On the left is a young healthy woman. Her name is Mairead Farrell. That picture was taken four years ago. On the right is a woman prisoner in Armagh jail. She looks ill, gaunt and degraded. The woman in that picture is also Mairead Farrell, as she looked six months ago.

Today Mairead is on hunger strike — one of the three women prisoners who, at the start of this week, joined their seven male counterparts in Long Kesh prison who have been refusing food for over a month.

All the political prisoners in Armagh and Long Kesh were tried in 'emergency', juryless courts. All were interrogated and convicted by methods condemned by Amnesty International. All are asking no more than to be allowed to live under the conditions in which such prisoners were held in the north of Ireland from 1972-76.

In Long Kesh and Armagh they have lived the type of appalling existence illustrated by the picture of Mairead's cell. Eventually they could stand no more, and so began their hunger strike 'to death if necessary'.

The prisoners' demands have been backed by tens of thousands of people who have demonstrated on the streets of Ireland. As yet no

IN ARMAGH



similar movement has been built in Britain. The leaders of the Labour Party — including the left-wing leaders — have been conspicuous by their silence. That silence could well prove fatal for Mairead Farrell and her comrades.

Every reader of Socialist Challenge is urged to do all they can to ensure that such a tragedy does not occur. For a start that means demonstrating in London this weekend.

Don't let the Irish prisoners die. All out 7 December. Assemble Speakers Corner, 1pm.

Editorial

Socialist Challenge
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H is for Hush

THE first national demonstration to take place in Britain on the issue of the Irish hunger strikers is an appropriate time to review the progress of the campaign of solidarity with these strikers.

In the north of Ireland more people from the nationalist community have taken to the streets than at any time since 1972. In the south, too, there is evidence of a growing mass sentiment of support.

Irish premier Charlie Haughey of the 'Republican' Fianna Fail party is still trying to avoid the issue; presumably he doesn't want to say much before his forthcoming meeting with Thatcher.

Support is also being expressed on an international scale. MPs and trade unions in Australia, Spain, and the Basque country are particularly to the fore.

The weak link is in Britain itself. There have been successes in the student field and an increasing awareness in the women's movement, but the tough nut of organised labour has yet to be cracked. The chauvinistic traditions and ideology of British labour remains a formidable obstacle.

Hush

Only a couple of MPs — Joan Maynard and Ernie Roberts — have put any effort into the campaign. Kevin McNamara was the only MP to differ from the bi-partisan condemnation of the hunger strikers during the debate on the Queen's Speech.

What of the rest, the left-wing Labour MPs and the oh-so-left national executive committee of the Labour Party? For them, H is for hush.

Last week the NEC refused to discuss the question, despite attempts to raise it. One leading left MP, a very leading one, has said privately that 'Ireland doesn't need martyrs', while another has explained, again privately, that he supports the prisoners' five demands but wouldn't say so publicly because he fears it would cost him his parliamentary seat.

Criticism

Perhaps, when the hunger strikers start to die, these MPs will re-discover a few shreds of political principle, even simple humanity and politely ask Thatcher if it would not be possible to seek some compromise.

For the moment the leaders of the Labour left are peeling the flesh from the hunger strikers as vigorously as is Thatcher.

And yet in the recent past the Labour NEC has stated its criticism of the conditions in which the prisoners are held, and individuals such as Tony Benn have declared their support for Irish unity, the denial of which is the reason why there are Irish political prisoners.

While such people can express general sentiments, when it comes to the question of their practical application these people choose to identify with all the repression and nastiness which the British state has pursued in the H Blocks and Armagh.

Remember

For those who do support the demands of the prisoners, there needs to be a re-doubling of effort to raise the issue wherever we can, especially in the trade unions and CLPs.

Remember what Sean McKenna, one of the hunger strikers, said when he wrote to Socialist Challenge a couple of weeks ago: 'The only support which speaks clearly is support through action.'

150,000 demand

ON THE ROAD TO

By Pat Kane

ABOVE the speakers' platform on Liverpool's Pier Head a huge digital display showed the result of Thatcher's Tory policies — it registered one more worker made redundant every 15 seconds.

For years Merseyside has suffered from unemployment. Factory after factory has closed, and whole areas like Kirkby have been turned into industrial deserts.

It was the people of Liverpool, who turned out in their thousands, that made the march on Saturday such a huge success.

They came from everywhere to join the march. From the shops and pubs, they spotted the nearest Liverpool banner, and on they came. The Merseyside dockers and Ford Halewood plant had thousands behind their banners.

Even with mass unemployment there was no lack of militancy from Liverpool's workers.

It was a different world from the normal labour movement march. Coming from all over the North and Scotland, thousands of ordinary people demonstrated who would never come to London marches.

At Sefton Park, the assembly point for the march, it was obvious that this was going to be one of the biggest labour demonstrations for years.

Labour Party banners were everywhere, and 8,000 youth marched with the Labour Party Young Socialists.

Unity

In each section of the march, labour party, trade union, and socialist organisations mingled together to reinforce the desire for unity of the whole movement against the Tories.

At the Pier Head the leaders of the labour movement addressed the huge rally. Michael Foot, the new leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, was cheered when he appeared on the platform. Denis Healey, the last Labour Chancellor, was booed.

Some people still



THOUSANDS of demonstrators crowd Liverpool's city centre

remember the failure of the last Labour government to save jobs with its own Tory policies.

The first speaker was Jo Richardson, from the Labour Party national executive, who said that 'the only person I want to see on the dole now is Thatcher. I hope she is sitting in Number Ten frightened by the anger of this demonstration.'

'We all know someone who is now

unemployed, but we musn't forget that women have a right to a job as well as everyone else. Thatcher is also throwing women out of work through cuts.'

'The next Labour government will renew our resources by spending money on welfare projects. It is our money, raised through taxes, that finances these projects, not hers.'

When Michael Foot addressed the rally he disappointed many of the demonstrators by insisting that the only way to defeat the Tories was by waiting for the next election and voting Labour.

By then thousands more will be on the dole queue. When Alan Fisher, general secretary of the public employees union NUPE demanded a general election, the

crowd demanded general strike.

The TUC-Labour Party liaison committee is planning a series of regional demonstrations against the Tories.

If the anger of Saturday's demonstration is turned into a massive anti-Tory campaign, including strike action, the government can easily be swept from office by the power of the Labour movement.



THOUSANDS of youth joined the march



MERSEYSIDE dockers led the march

the right to work

LIVERPOOL PIER



'Get the Tories out of office at the earliest possible moment'

'KILL the lie that there is no alternative to mass unemployment. That is what this demonstration is about.'

'Banish the despair that mass unemployment brings in its train. Of course, we can stop the whole wretched process of industrial ruin, if we have the will.'

'Prepare to destroy at the ballot box, which is the only place they can be finally defeated, the party of unemployment, the government of unemployment.'

MICHAEL FOOT, Labour leader

THE next Labour

government must not go down as another one that tried to administer capitalism better than a Tory capitalist government, but as one that began the re-building of British industry, along socialist lines...

'Build a greater mass movement that will get the government out of office at the earliest possible moment...'

'Ensure that the fight inside and outside Parliament is waged in both places.'

ERIC HEFFER, MP

'MRS Thatcher is determined to rule by fear in the hope that she can break the power of the labour

movement and drive us all back into a new serfdom enforced by the police and army...

'The Labour Party must become a mass party again. Our objectives are:

'To halt ministers in their tracks by the strength of our response... To compel an early general election... To win support for socialist policies in a constructive way...'

'To secure Labour majorities in Parliament and on all local authorities... We have it in our power to do all this in 1981.'

TONY BENN, MP

'THE people to suffer most from Mrs Thatcher's policies are the country's most vulnerable workers - racial minorities, women, unskilled workers, the low paid and the young.'

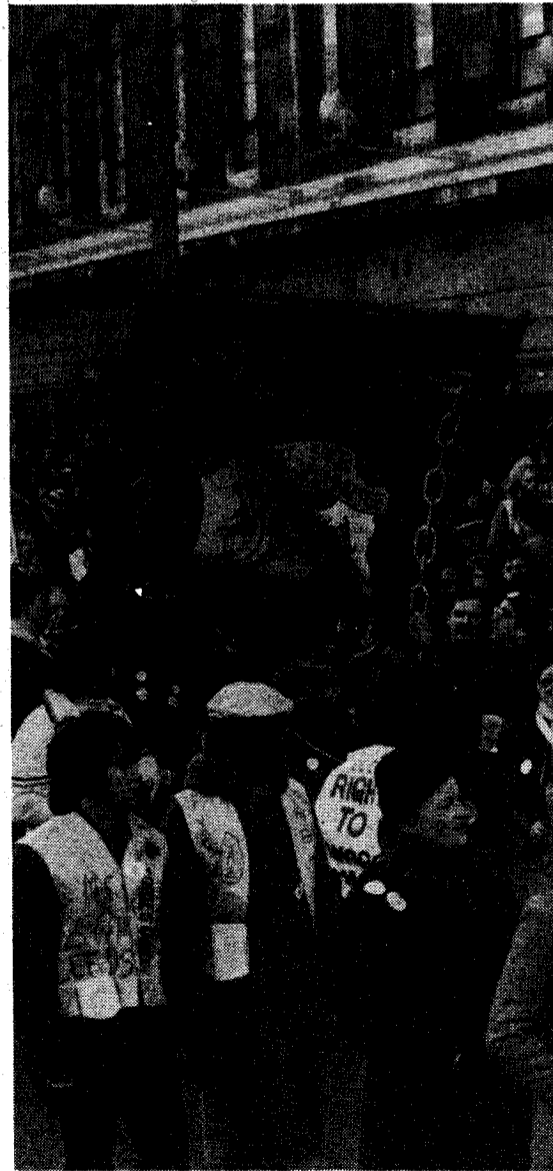
ALEX KITSON, Labour Party chairperson

'BITTERNESS and anger among unemployed youth are reaching explosive proportions.'

'It should be made clear to this government of bankers and industrialists that this generation will not tolerate the level of



A BIRMINGHAM woman gets her message across



'Gardners sacked us, the nation backed us, and WE WON'. The slogan on Gardners' placards.

unemployment experienced in the '20s and '30s.

'LET'S demonstrate in the Midlands and in the North-east and have the same

TONY SAUNOIS, Young Socialists chairperson

message wherever we go - let's call for a general election now. Let's test the feeling of the people of Britain about the way this government is performing.'

ALAN FISHER, general secretary, NUPE



H is for...

HENRY II the English King who invaded Ireland in the middle of the 12th century, and who thus began an occupation which has lasted ever since.

HENRY VIII, the first English ruler to declare himself King of Ireland. He managed to extend the territory in Ireland under English control by a policy of repression and bribery.

Local Irish lords were either executed, if they didn't accept Henry's rule, or were bribed. Henry VIII must have been one of the few rulers in history to explain his right to rule because of his unpopularity:

'Forasmuch as... the Irish men and inhabitants within this Realm of Ireland have not been so obedient to the King's Highness and his most noble progenitors, and to their laws, as they of right and according to their allegiance and bounden duties ought to have been... be it enacted, ordained and established by the authority of this present Parliament, that the King's Highness, his heirs and successors, Kings of England, be always Kings of this land of Ireland.'

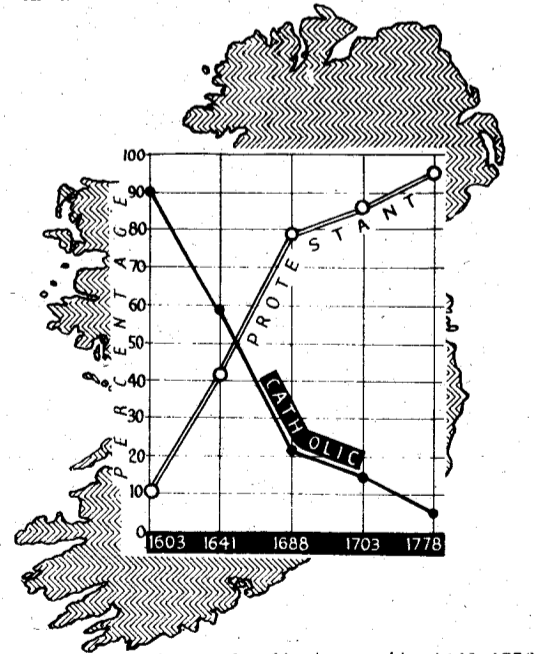


HUGH O'NEILL, who led a major rebellion against the English crown in the 1600s. Hugh's base was in the province of Ulster, the last major area in Ireland to resist English conquest.

When he was finally defeated in 1603, and driven into exile, the rebellious province of Ulster was ruthlessly 'planted' by the English monarchy.

Whole areas of land were confiscated from the native Irish and given to English and Scottish settlers who were brought in to ensure that never again would Ulster rebel against the British Crown.

By 1641 around 100,000 settlers had been planted in Ulster. The native Irish either fled or were reduced to living on the poorest of land.



The transfer of land ownership: 1603-1778

HILL. Christopher Hill, a leading contemporary historian who has summed up the attitudes towards the Irish displayed by the English ruling class after its first 600 years of occupation:

'A great number of civilised Englishmen of the 17th century spoke of Irish as stones not far removed from those which Nazis used about Slavs, or white South Africans use about the original inhabitants of their country.'

'In each case the contempt rationalised a desire to exploit.'

Join the fight for socialism

I would like to be put in contact with Socialist Challenge supporters in my area

Name.....

Age.....Occupation.....

Address.....

By Bill Alder

'IT SHOWS good sense' was Joe Gormley's comment on Monday when the result of the miners' pay ballot was announced.

For the right-wing president of the NUM, the Coal Board's victory in the ballot, in which miners narrowly voted to accept the employers' pay offer, indicated that his members had 'a sense of realism'. Just how realistic this was may be judged by

What good sense means to Joe Gormley

Gormley's plan to counter pit closures. Asked by a reporter how the acceptance of the pay offer would help save jobs, this miners' leader replied: 'It allows me to have discussions with the government minister.'

There was a 56 per cent Yes vote in the pay ballot — a margin which attests to the determination of a majority on the NUM executive to do nothing to interfere with

the Tories' policies.

The employers claim the deal is worth 13.8 per cent, but the increase in basic pay is only 7-10 per cent. The rest is supposed to be made up by changes in the bonus scheme.

But this extra money won't be received at those pits where productivity is low through no fault of the miners, or those where cuts in output are being threatened by management.

And where the bonus is achieved, it won't be the Coal Board which will be paying the miners. They will be paying themselves at a cost of extra effort and greater risk of accident and injury.

That's Gormley's gift to the NUM. It's a good reason to back the unity that is being built in Wales between miners and steelworkers, who are calling for national action to halt the closures.



Ford workers reject pay deal



Photo: Angela Phillips (IFL)

FORD's new disciplinary code will increase productivity and reduce safety.

By Mick Drake, Ford Dagenham
ALL OVER the country, Ford workers have rejected the company's 9.8 per cent pay offer. After the new National Insurance increases the offer is worth only £5 a week for manual workers.

While asking the mass meetings for support for more talks, our national negotiators have failed to indicate what actions they plan against the company, or what will happen when Ford refuses to meet the union claim for 20 per cent, shorter hours, and fringe benefits.

The present state of 'non-cooperation' with the company that exists on paper has ended the current procedural agreements and could provide the basis for an effective fighting policy.

'Non-cooperation' ties into a campaign to break the company's new disciplinary code. This code seeks to impose fines of two days' pay every time a supervisor's instruction is refused and work stops for 10 minutes or more.

Management also suspends workers involved in stoppages and lays off any plant affected by these suspensions.

Last week the shopfloor at the Halewood plant in Merseyside gave their answer to the new code. When 22 workers from the press shop were suspended for rotating boring jobs, the press shop of over 300 workers struck in support.

The next morning the management sent round a letter laying off the assembly and body plants.

This is an important battle for both sides. After a six-week strike in 1974, Halewood had won the right to rotate jobs with no conditions attached. Ford has invested £207m in Halewood in the last year, and £135m went on the new robotised Escort lines.

It wants to use the new code to break the power of the shop stewards and increase productivity. When the code was introduced on 17 November it was openly flouted.

Ford claimed last Thursday in the *Daily Telegraph* that 'Halewood workers

have not met production targets since the plant opened in 1963'. The company is running a propaganda campaign about possible closure so that it can push through the new code, and enforce redundancies as a result of robotisation.

The press shop workers have shown the way to fightback in what is now bound to be a long battle between management and unions for shopfloor power.

Unfortunately no such clear lead has come from the national negotiators. White Ford waves the big stick, full time officials and convenors have shied away from saying that rejecting the company's offer means we must prepare for strike action.

There is no way in which Ford will make an improved pay offer unless it is forced to. It seems likely that the company will take another leaf out of the Leyland book by going over the heads of the national union leadership and simply putting the increase in the pay packets.

Only by adopting a new offensive policy of non-cooperation and committing shop stewards committees to support for strike action in January will Ford be defeated and our claim won.

After Gardner's victory, Hawker Siddeley plans for the future

By Joe Broughton

THE victory of the Gardner's workers against management's redundancy plans isn't just a punch on the nose for Thatcher, but a fundamental challenge to the right of multinationals to switch capital and technology from one country to another.

For five years Gardner's parent company, Hawker Siddeley, have been buying and selling companies like Malcolm Allison bought and sold footballers. But unlike Big Mal's team, Hawker Siddeley are topping the UK engineering league table, with £120m profits this year alone. Gardner's have nearly £12m in undistributed profits in the bank.

Already this year 350 companies have gone bankrupt in the North-west, but Hawker's claim that plummeting markets and investments are responsible for their redundancy plans doesn't hold water. During the eight-week dispute the order book for Gardner's engines increased to 94 a month.

What's more, these orders may well have come from the US market which has experienced a 10-12 per cent increase in demand for diesel engines this year.

So what has Hawker Siddeley been up to? It's now clear that Thatcher's political alliance is with the multinationals against their smaller UK rivals. Hence both the accelerating pace of take-overs of smaller companies — for example, Gardner by Hawker's

— and the recent rebellion of UK firms at the CBI conference. Thatcher is sacrificing small firms on the altar of monetarism.

Hawker Siddeley's long-term project for Gardner's is still very likely that of stripping it of its assets and selling it for a profit at a later date. Today the machinery and stock in the Gardner plant is valued at £29m — £15m more than Hawker's paid for it in 1977!

In this sense the struggle at Gardner's bears a greater resemblance to the Roberts Arundel dispute in Stockport in 1967 or Imperial Typewriters in 1974 than the oft-mentioned 1971 work-in at UCS — a genuinely bankrupt company.

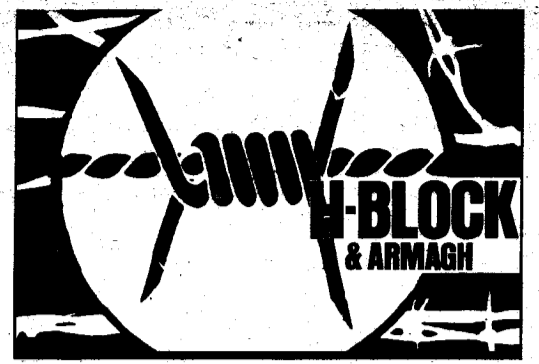
Other Hawker subsidiaries are hitting problems. Workers at Mirlees Blackstone, for example, a producer of marine engines, have been confronted with 900 redundancies.

When a multinational decides to play off one subsidiary against another, the ideal counter-stroke is the building of powerful inter-plant combine committees. A pincer movement can be developed across-the-board by generalising the struggle inside the multinational.

The recent opening by Hawker of a diesel engine factory in Bangladesh with wage rates only about eight per cent of levels paid in its Western subsidiaries shows the direction the bosses intend to go in. The international organisation of workers must surely stem from the need to combat the international plans of the multinationals.



Photo: Pete Grant (Socialist Challenge)



H is for

HENRY GRATTAN, the leader of the Hall-Protestant Irish parliament towards the end of the 18th century. Under Grattan, that parliament began to demand, and sometimes win, greater freedom from British control.

Grattan sought more independence from Britain, and more rights for the native Catholics. But both his liberalism and nationalism had their limits.

As he told members of the Protestant Ascendancy in Dublin: 'I love the Roman Catholic. I am a friend to his liberty, but it is only inasmuch as his liberty is entirely consistent with your ascendancy, and addition to the strength and freedom of the Protestant community.'

The half-way house to Irish freedom and equality was, for many, too little. In 1798 Wolfe Tone led the first modern armed rebellion against British rule. He was easily defeated and two years later Britain passed the Act of Union which abolished the Irish parliament once and for all, restoring direct rule from Westminster.



HUNGER, the Great Hunger of 1845-48 when Ireland lost at least a quarter of its population through famine and emigration. More than a million died as home-grown food was exported to England.

The Westminster government did little to alleviate the suffering, having previously established an agriculture system in Ireland which made famine inevitable.

HOME RULE, the eventual political response by the Irish to British misgovernment of the country. The demand for Irish Home Rule began to be voiced in the late 1860s and grew louder and louder as the years progressed.

Home Rule envisaged the return of an Irish parliament but with Britain still retaining overall control. In election after election in Ireland, the Home Rule party won a majority and eventually British prime minister Gladstone agreed to a measure of Home Rule.

But Gladstone was blocked by his own Liberal Party and he was outvoted by the permanent Tory majority in the House of Lords.

Eventually in 1912 a new Home Rule Bill was passed in the House of Commons. But this did not come into operation until 1921, when a new limitation had been placed on Irish self-rule — the partition of the country with the north-east of Ireland remaining under British control.



HEROES — the heroes of the 1916 Irish Rising, who took up arms to demand that all of Ireland should be free from Britain.

The leaders of 1916 were all executed by the British authorities, but their action and their deaths re-established Irish Republicanism as a modern and mass-supported cause.

Photo: Andrew Ward (Report)

Tory cuts grind railways to a halt

By Martin Eady, NUR

UP TO 50,000 jobs on British Rail could be lost in 1981, a crowded meeting of railway workers in London was told last week.

National Union of Railwaymen executive member Geoff Revell told the meeting that all sectors of the industry are threatened. He said that the crisis we face is political in nature, and therefore demands a political response.

'We must get the membership to understand the necessity for prolonged struggle and political action,' Revell argued. He referred to the NUR executive's decision to 'use the full power of the union to defend the membership — that means industrial action.'

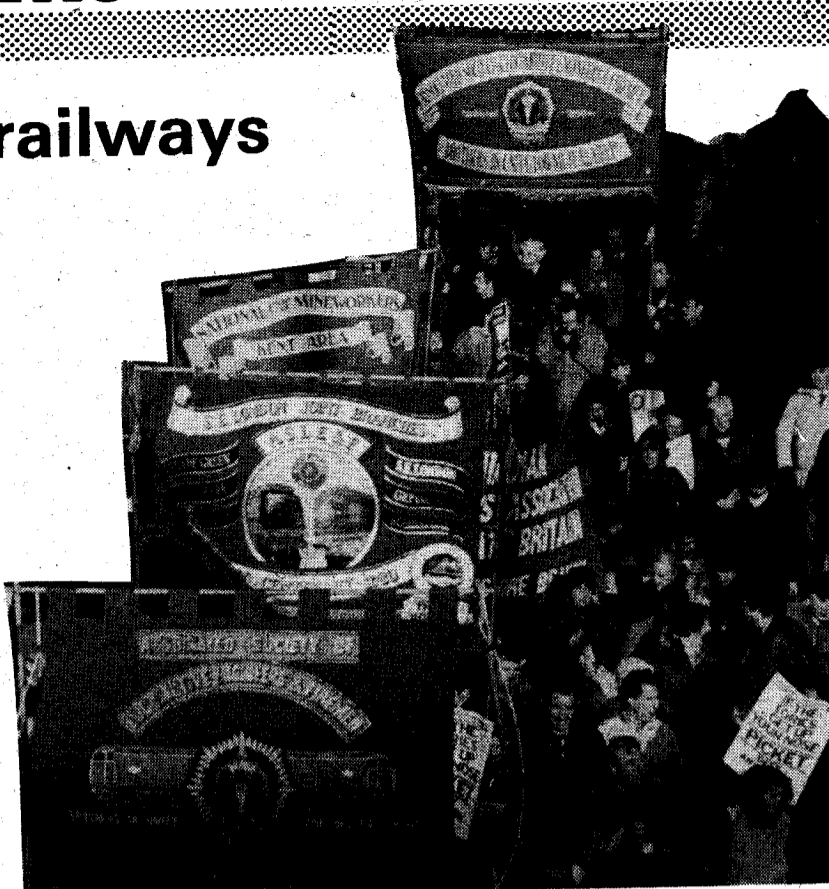
This fighting mood was taken up by many speakers from the floor. Geoff Hemsby, secretary of Paddington 1 Branch, said: 'If this government is to be beaten, it will be necessary for the NUR to take the lead

in supporting the firemen. 'We will have to construct a new triple alliance of miners, steelworkers, and railworkers. In turn this should be broadened out to a general strike.'

But a member from Wolverhampton pointed out: 'I want the union to fight — you've not fought for us before, don't sell us out now.'

Caroline Stephens, assistant secretary of Battersea branch, moved a resolution that the executive should specify a date for strike action. Executive members at the meeting remained stoneyfaced as the chairperson declined to put the resolution to the vote.

Many more meetings like this one in London are needed to organise to save rail jobs and services from the Tory axe.



RAILWAY workers marching towards Liverpool's Pier Head last Saturday.

Two weeks strike action against the Tories

By Pat Kane

THE massive attack on local government services announced on 'Black Monday', 24 November, by the Chancellor of the Exchequer came as no surprise to trades unionists in the South London borough of Lambeth.

The Tory cuts will mean thousands of redundancies across the public sector, and several unions representing building workers in Lambeth are now preparing for two weeks of strike action against the government starting 2 February.

Alf Sherwood, convenor of the building unions in the borough, explains the implications of the cuts:

'Just now we're playing a cat and mouse game with the Tories. We can't be sure exactly where the cuts will be, but the present reductions in the rate support grant from Whitehall will mean at least a thousand redundancies in the borough. We're flatly refusing to have anything to do with redundancies.'

Pressure

'This is why industrial action is needed, right across the country. If enough pressure can be brought to bear the Tories will not be able to ignore us. Our members would rather lose a fortnight's wages and fight the government than lose their jobs altogether.'

Lambeth unions plan

'This is what everyone has to work out in their own mind.'

'The Lambeth recall conference on 17 January is very important. No one can do it on their own. If enough people can answer Lambeth's call there will be

action. I don't just mean local action, but national action.'

'The Fire Brigades Union is going to be on strike and we'll be part of a national movement against the Tories.'

'In Lambeth all the unions are joining together

under the one name. This is what happens when you're attacked. Our action wouldn't be against the council. It will be against the government.'

'Raising rates is just punishing the ratepayers for the Tories' policies. The

councils are facing restrictions from the government and the ratepayers are demanding increases in services, but no one in their right mind can ask for massive rates increases.

'The policy of the government is to nick money from pensioners and the like. Take the £900m that they are taking from employers' increased National Insurance contributions. If they can raise that type of money, and not even know they'd done it, it should be easy to get the finance to solve our problems!'

Welcome

The white collar workers in Lambeth town hall are following the building unions in opposing cuts. At a packed meeting of the local government union NALGO on 21 November, 1,800 members voted to support militant policies to prevent redundancies and cuts in services.

Mike Tichelar, of the local NALGO executive, described this as 'very encouraging'. He said: 'The meeting reversed earlier mass meetings, and decided to take militant action.'

'Unlike earlier mass meetings, the executive members went out and convinced their members through section meetings of the need to take a stand against cuts. We really prepared for the meeting, and it voted for action.'

Hands off students' unions

By Ann Henderson, NUS executive (in personal capacity)

OVER 20,000 students marched in London and 5,500 in Glasgow last Friday to demand: Hands off our unions.

The demonstrations were organised by the National Union of Students, in

opposition to the Tories' plans for student union financing. They were the largest marches in Britain on student issues since 1972.

If the government has its way, from next September students' unions will be transformed into departments of each college, instead of receiving their funds directly from the local

education authorities. This will effectively deny students the right to organise on political issues, as college authorities will have the right to decide how students spend their money.

Many students on the demonstrations last week recognised that this is a blatant attack on their independence. Many raised anti-Tory slogans.

The high point in London came when the march passed a fire station: loud applause greeted the firefighters, along with chants of 'Smash the 6 per cent' and 'Victory to the Firemen'.

Large numbers of further education and technical

college students demonstrated. Although many of them have yet to win the right to organise autonomously in their colleges, the Tories' proposals would put a stop to this development.

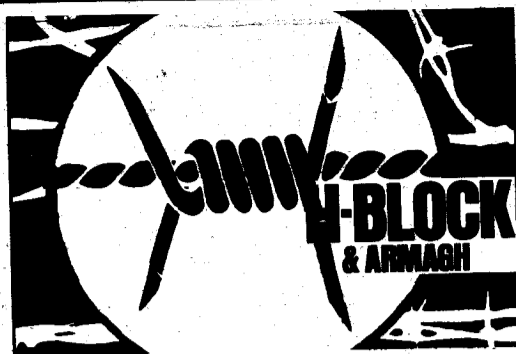
Throughout the last term students have begun to organise on political issues. There was a large number on the CND demo in October, for example.

A speaking tour on the Irish hunger strikers has been held with speakers from the Student Campaign Against Repression. This group organised a student demo in Belfast in support of the hunger strikers last week.

NUS's national conference takes place this week. It should reject any idea of negotiating a better deal with the Tories.

Instead it should decide on a national campaign based on mass action against the attacks on students' rights, and it should seek support from the labour movement in that fight.

Such a fightback means rejecting the 'Development Plan' put forward by some executive members to transform the NUS into an apolitical organisation. The conference should tell the NUS leadership loud and clear: lead the fight to defeat the Tories' proposals!



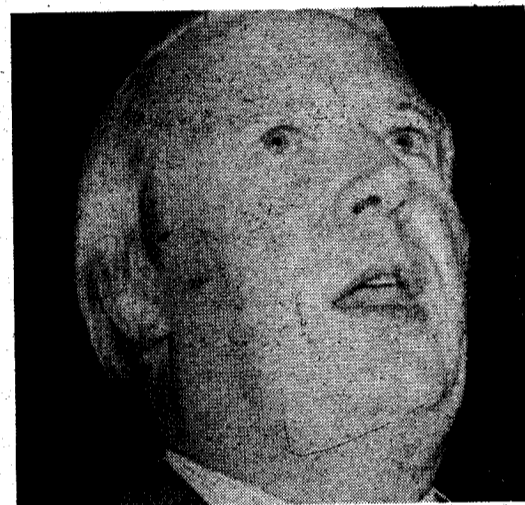
H is for

HAROLD WILSON, the prime minister who sent British troops back onto the streets of the north of Ireland in 1969.

This followed a year-long campaign by the Civil Rights Movement to win equality for Catholics in the north of Ireland. Continually beaten off the streets, the Catholic working class in Derry finally rose up in August 1969.

It was to defeat this rising, rather than, as the myth has it, to protect Catholics, that the troops were sent in. As home secretary James Callaghan explained:

'The government of Northern Ireland informed the United Kingdom government that as a result of the severe and prolonged rioting in Londonderry it has no alternative but to ask for the assistance of the troops at present stationed in Northern Ireland to prevent a breakdown of law and order.'



HEATH, Edward Heath, the British prime minister responsible for the introduction of internment without trial of Republican and socialist opponents of the British-backed Loyalist government in the north of Ireland in 1971.

Heath was also in power when the British Army killed 14 anti-internment demonstrators in Derry in January 1972.

These two events confirmed the view held by many Irish people that the ultimate answer by Britain to the demand for civil rights in the north of Ireland was repression.

The nature of the movement in Ireland changed to one of getting rid of the British presence.

H is for H BLOCKS, built by the British government a few years ago to house the growing number of Irish political prisoners. The rights of these prisoners to be treated differently from those found guilty of 'normal' crimes is what is at issue in Ireland today.

The H Block prisoners, or those similar to them, were given such rights in 1972. These were abolished by the Labour government four years later.

The prisoners are tried in juryless courts, as is not the case with ordinary 'criminals' in either the north of Ireland or Great Britain.

H is for HUNGER STRIKE, the latest weapon used by Irish people to win some justice from a British occupation of Ireland which for over 800 years has produced mass repression, death, starvation, and a denial of simple human rights.

It is a right to run your own country; the right to have equality of treatment, whatever one's religion; the right to be treated as political prisoners when those in prison find themselves there because of specific political conditions then in operation.

H is for HELP the prisoners to win their rights and the Irish to win their freedom.

The Troops Out Movement and the campaigns in this country to win the demands of the H Block and Armagh prisoners can be contacted by phoning 01-267 2004.

Photo: Pete Grant (Socialist Challenge)

Photo: Skip Lazlo (Socialist Challenge)



H Block: the issues at stake

Ireland hits the screen

IT HAS been a long time coming but at last it has arrived: British television is to discuss, debate, and explain Ireland. Or rather that's the promise.

The show began on Tuesday with the first episode of BBC-2's 'television history' of Ireland. Next Monday Panorama will feature a debate on Irish unity.

For unity will be John Hume of the Social Democratic and Labour Party and ex-Irish premier Jack Lynch. Against are Bill 'shout to kill' Craig and failed politician Conor Cruise O'Brien.

On 5 January ITV's history series, The Troubles, starts. This looks the likeliest to be banned because the publicity material suggests an excellent effort.

IT would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the hunger strike or how its outcome will affect the whole progress of the Irish struggle for self-determination.

From Belfast, JOHN MACANULTY examines what is at stake. John is a leading member of People's Democracy, the revolutionary socialist organisation in Ireland with links with the Fourth International.

He is the author of the PD pamphlet A People Undefeated.

The article here is a shortened version of one in the current issue of Socialist Republic, the PD newspaper.

The hunger strike to the death by the seven H Block prisoners marks a new and crucial phase in the battle for political status.

What hangs in the balance now is not only the lives and rights of the prisoners but the issue of partition itself and the legitimacy of all forms of opposition to it.

The British government has shown itself completely callous and intransigent and is determined to go to any lengths, including collaboration in assassination, to avoid making any significant concession.

Force

Only one weapon is great enough to force the British back — that is the mass force of a risen Irish people organised in a mass movement.

All the elements necessary for such a movement exist. If we unite and agree a programme of action which strikes at the enemy's weakest points, the elements of an historic victory over imperialism will be in our hands.

Why does the shadow of the H Blocks dominate Irish society? People's Democracy believes that the issue is a central one — that the outcome will affect the life of everyone in Ireland.

Partition

A victory for the British would threaten the legitimacy of all forms of opposition to partition and would strengthen all the forms of repression on which partition depends: the special laws, the

Support

THE National H Block Committee in Ireland has asked for messages of support for the demonstration outside the British Embassy on 6 December, and a series of activities planned for 10 December, International Human Rights Day.

Individuals and organisations should send telegrams to: National H Block Committee, 30 Mountjoy Sq, Dublin 1.



H Block on film

All pictures on this page are stills from a new film, H Block Hunger Strike. The film can be used for meetings, fund raising, or information. It is available from The Other Cinema, 79 Wardour St, London W1V 3TH. Tel 01-734 8508. Rental: £20 colleges, £15 others. A review of the film will appear in a subsequent issue of Socialist Challenge.



torture and repression, and the British collaboration with the Loyalist killer squads.

The pressure will be on for Haughey to increase even further the repressive apparatus in the south, which he needs no encouragement to do.

The massive dose of confidence that the imperialists would get would mean that the economic and social struggles of workers would be beaten back north and south.

A victory for the anti-imperialists would have equal importance. A new mass movement would have been established. It would be united and filled with confidence and be in a position to move against other aspects of British oppression and Free State collaboration.

The British would have seen the ruin of their main plans and the question of their withdrawal would become a real possibility. Above all, there would be the possibility of a unity of all the political, economic, and social struggles of the working class and the forging of the revolutionary weapon that will finally destroy imperialist and capitalist rule in Ireland.

All the events of the past

months have backed up this analysis: British collaboration in the killing of H Block activists, the use of the SAS in the anti-Unionist areas, the manner in which Thatcher has gone out of her way to put her own reputation behind British intransigence and the British international campaign against the H Blocks.

However, the hunger strike is generating forces that can defeat the British strategy, if we can apply them properly.

It has mobilised thousands of H Block militants throughout the country. It has speeded up to some extent

the unifying of all the forces involved in the H Block struggle, and it has sharpened the sympathy and concern of many ordinary people and produced a willingness to support the campaign in some way.

Above all, it has produced a fear in Fianna Fail and the Social Democratic and Labour Party that their collaborationist policies will be exposed, and it has generated a frantic desire to keep quiet about the issue or cover up with platitudes.

In order to put together all the elements to ensure a victory we have to look back at

the successful campaign for political status in 1972. There were three central aspects to that campaign:

● It was able to hold hostage the SDLP and to a much lesser extent Fianna Fail and limit the amount of negotiating and collaboration with the British.

● The campaign was able, by sheer force of numbers, to prevent the free movement of the British army and the RUC in the areas and thus limit their control of the areas.

Sympathy

● It was able to depend on the sympathy of the mass of the people in the 26 counties and this support prevented the British from attempting any repeat of Bloody Sunday.

A new mass campaign must be built in a similar way. It has to present the British with a worse option than that of giving way on political status. It must focus on Fianna Fail and SDLP collaboration and demand:

'No talks with British torturers!' 'SDLP and IIP out of the councils and British government institutions!'

The prisoners and the H Block movement are locked in a literally life or death struggle with a determined and vicious enemy, but if we examine our resources we can see that they are much greater than we had supposed.

If we organise properly the majority of the Irish working class and all the oppressed layers of our society can be drawn into struggle.

Problem

For all their strength and viciousness, the British have one great problem — they have to confront the rising strength of the Irish people.

We must learn from the prisoners how to resist and show that we too are unwilling to be ruled and coerced in the old way. Only in this way can the lives and rights of the prisoners be protected and the eventual victory of the Irish revolution be assured.

Socialist Republic, (12p) and A People Undefeated (50p) from: The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, London N1. Add 20p for p&p.



The H-block Hunger-Strike — A Brit Response

We lied. By non-jury courts you were 'tried', having been questioned, beaten, sensorily deprived. We pronounced: you are common outlaws and so belied history.

You Irish, by Britons decried, must squat astride mirrors;

have rectums pryed, are degraded, abused, your rights denied so your captors can deride you, crack your pride.

Isn't it time we Brits tried to realise the Irish own Ireland and at last retired?

Pat Arrowsmith 29/10/80

SOLIDARNOŚĆ Polish workers win again

By Davy Jones

ANOTHER victory has been won by Poland's independent trade unions.

Last Thursday the Polish government was forced to release Jan Narozniak and Piotr Sapelo, who were accused of publishing a secret document on the opposition. The government action came after the threat of a general strike by the independent union Solidarity.

Now Solidarity wants an inquiry into the security forces following the revelations in the Warsaw prosecutor-general's document. The government has been forced to negotiate on this demand.

The document makes dramatic reading. It details the development of the opposition movements and then explains the steps taken by the security forces to counter these developments. The measures include:

- Strenuous attempts to take court action over petty offences that may have been committed in the course of 'anti-socialist' activities.

- Detaining activists beyond the maximum permitted 48 hours through release and immediate re-arrest techniques.

- Charging activists with breaking laws concerning the ownership of printing presses and publishing without a permit.

The document also reveals that the regional police departments are currently preparing 15 cases involving 'criminal activities' of members of 'anti-socialist groups' in 14 cities. Among what it describes

as 'revisionist' suggestions in the programmes of the opposition groups, the secret document singles out: 'The creation of trade unions independent of the state, giving the working class the right to strike, and replacing the unified party of the working class with several parties competing with each other.'



Solidarity desperately needs better printing facilities

Solidarity members were horrified by the document and at the arrest of two supporters who published it. Free trade unions and the right to strike were among the 21 demands in the Gdansk agreement with the government following the mass strike wave this August.

The Polish workers are learning that free trade unions are incompatible with a huge government-controlled security force working to undermine them; hence the calls for an inquiry.

Threat

In particular the workers have demanded to know those responsible for the events of 1976, when thousands of workers were arrested, many were beaten, and a few died at the hands of the security forces.

The threat of an invasion by the USSR persists. On 28 November *Rude Pravo*, the Czechoslovak Communist Party paper, drew a parallel between current events in Poland and Czechoslovakia in 1968, when 'after all possibilities had been exhausted there was no alternative but to turn for assistance from the Warsaw Pact allies.' This article has now been reprinted in the Soviet paper *Tass*.

Demand

Workers in Britain should demand that there is no Warsaw Pact intervention in Poland.



Victory! Two Solidarity supporters are released after the threat of a general strike by Solidarity

Polish solidarity appeal

BIRMINGHAM engineering workers have endorsed an appeal for closer links with Polish workers and a financial drive for a small press to print the Solidarity newspaper.

A quarterly meeting of the Birmingham south district AUEW shop stewards last week passed an appeal, which calls for a national solidarity committee with the

Polish workers. Its aims would include:

- Developing an understanding in the British labour movement of the problems facing Polish workers after the strike settlement.

- Establishing practical links with Polish workers in the struggle to build their own organisations.

- Co-ordinating 'twinning' links between factories, mines, shipyards and other plants in Britain and Poland.

- Raising funds for a small printing press to print the new union journal.

- Raising funds for a small printing press to print the new union journal.

Signatories to the appeal include the following in an individual capacity:

Larry Connolly, chairperson, Lucas Birmingham area senior shop stewards; Roger Griffiths, member Birmingham south district committee AUEW; John Allen, Birmingham east district sec. AUEW; Mike Towey, national committee for division 16 AUEW; Bro Blakemore, pres. Birmingham south district AUEW and convenor Triplex plant; Bob Whiskens, Birmingham south district committee AUEW and deputy AUEW convenor, Land Rover Tyseley; Steve Griffiths, AUEW Convenor, SDI Rover Solihull.

Copies of the appeal for circulation to the labour movement are available from: Steve Griffiths, Polish workers appeal, c/o 137 Digbeth, Birmingham B5 6DR.

'I'VE SAID on many platforms that socialists cannot have double standards when it comes to the question of human and civil rights.

'We quite rightly protest and organise against the fascist regimes and dictatorships in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, South Africa, and many other parts of the world.

'And we make it absolutely clear that irrespective of whether the people who are fighting against those regimes are communists or Catholics or just ordinary bourgeois liberal democrats we are with them in the struggle to eliminate the fascist and authoritarian military dictatorships.

'We cannot say with regimes that call themselves socialist or have a socialised base for the economy system, that when oppression takes place in these countries; when the ordinary human rights that we and our forefathers have fought for for generations are not in existence; when people are put into psychiatric hospitals for the terrible and simple crime of speaking out and organising for their political principles, we cannot then remain silent.

'We cannot say we must have a blind spot because they talk in terms of socialism.

'I believe in fact that what has happened in East Europe and the Soviet Union has put back socialism for generations, not only in the West but throughout the world. Particularly workers in countries like ours who have fought hard for basic democratic rights

Eric Heffer on Poland

have looked at the situation in these countries and said "If that is what socialism means then we don't want it."

'Therefore we have stood up and been counted in the same way. We stand up to be counted in relation to our struggle against fascism. I'm not equating the system of society in East Europe with fascist societies. There are some people who say they are two sides of the same coin.

'I argue contrary to that because they do have a socialised base but the real point is that with a socialised base or not you cannot have socialism without democracy, without freedom, without free expression of opinion, without the right of workers to organise freely, without a free press in the best sense of the word.

'I've found a great deal of unpopularity even among some of my friends for saying some of these things. Because historically they are afraid, and quite rightly afraid, that maybe we might be used and manipulated by enemies of the working class movement throughout the world.

'But I say to them that we have to point out the opposite view; that if we don't stand up to be counted we are assisting the enemies of the working class movement.

'To come to the real issue: the question of the Polish workers organising to

create free trade unions separate from the state apparatus and from party control. It is vital surely in any socialist society that you don't have one vast bureaucracy with total centralised control, but you have many areas and centres of power which can offset each other.

'The most important centre of power must be the independence of the working class to create independent trade unions.

Democracy

'If sections of workers independently wish to organise separately free trade unions, even, incidentally, if these were Roman Catholic unions, they have the right to do it and we have to support them in that right.

'I hope the Russians are not going to do in Poland what they did in Czechoslovakia, when they moved in with their tanks and guns to destroy what the Czechoslovaks had actually created. Because if they do, it will be much more dangerous to world peace now than when it happened in Czechoslovakia.

'But why do they think in those terms? If you have a socialised base in these countries but with real democracy and real working class power then the



Eric Heffer

bureaucrats in the Soviet Union, the whole bureaucracy, will fade overnight.

'They will be under the same pressure because they fear their own privileges in their own country. That is the truth of it. That is why we have to say, "Stand Off", and why we have to give our support.

From a speech by Eric Heffer at a fringe meeting at the Labour Party conference in October.

Photo: GM Cookeon (Socialist Challenge)

BRTAIN - THE UNKABLE STARTERS' UNSINKABLE CARRIER

WHICH country has the largest concentration of nuclear weapons bases per square mile and per head of the population in the world? One look at the map published here provides the answer and reveals the staggering level of British involvement in the nuclear arms race.

The map, part of an excellent *Sanity* broadsheet that has just been published, includes over 500 nuclear bases, communications facilities, command posts and bunkers.

Airbases

Of special interest are the seven airbases permanently controlled by the United States Airforce; another four which are USAF reserve bases, and at least five others which are subject to co-location ('joint' control) with the RAF. In all 20,000 USAF personnel are stationed in Britain.

As the map reveals, Britain is a gigantic nuclear powder keg. Each one of the bases shown here is a potential nuclear target, and, as is now revealed, no area of the country will escape a nuclear conflict.

In 1983 the USA and Britain's Tory government plan to add a new dimension by introducing ground launched Cruise missiles at Greenham Common and Molesworth RAF bases. Coupled with the Tories' decision to spend £7bn on nuclear submarines armed with Trident missiles, it is now apparent to millions of people that we are racing towards a holocaust.

Conference

There was a March Against the Missiles at this year's Labour



Party conference. The excellent response that the demonstration received prompted Manchester Against the Missiles, the organisers of the march, to call the Labour and Trade Union Conference Against the Missiles to be held in Manchester on 28 March next year.

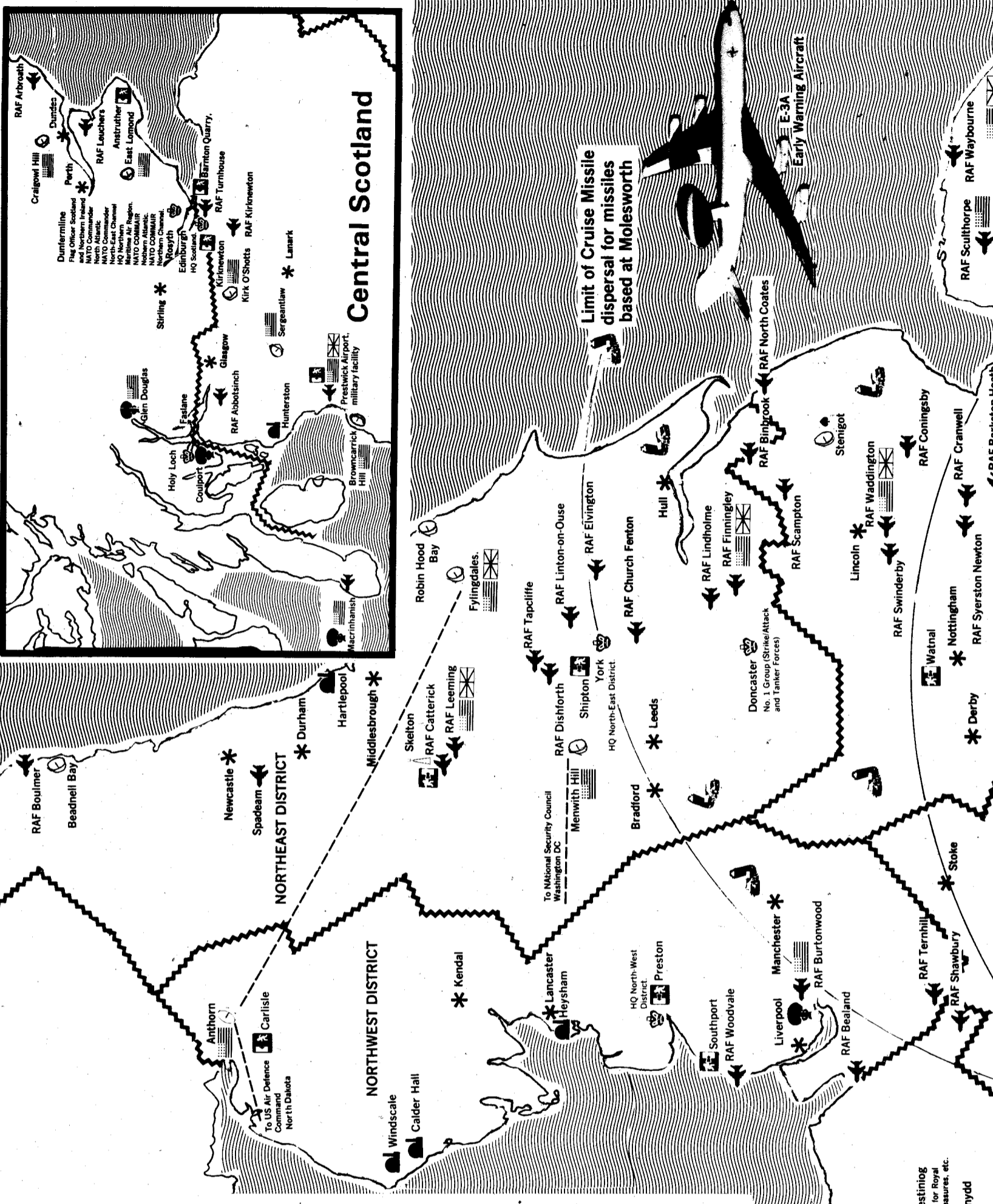
Both Labour Action for Peace and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament national conference have agreed to sponsor and actively build the conference. There is already a wide range of individual sponsors.

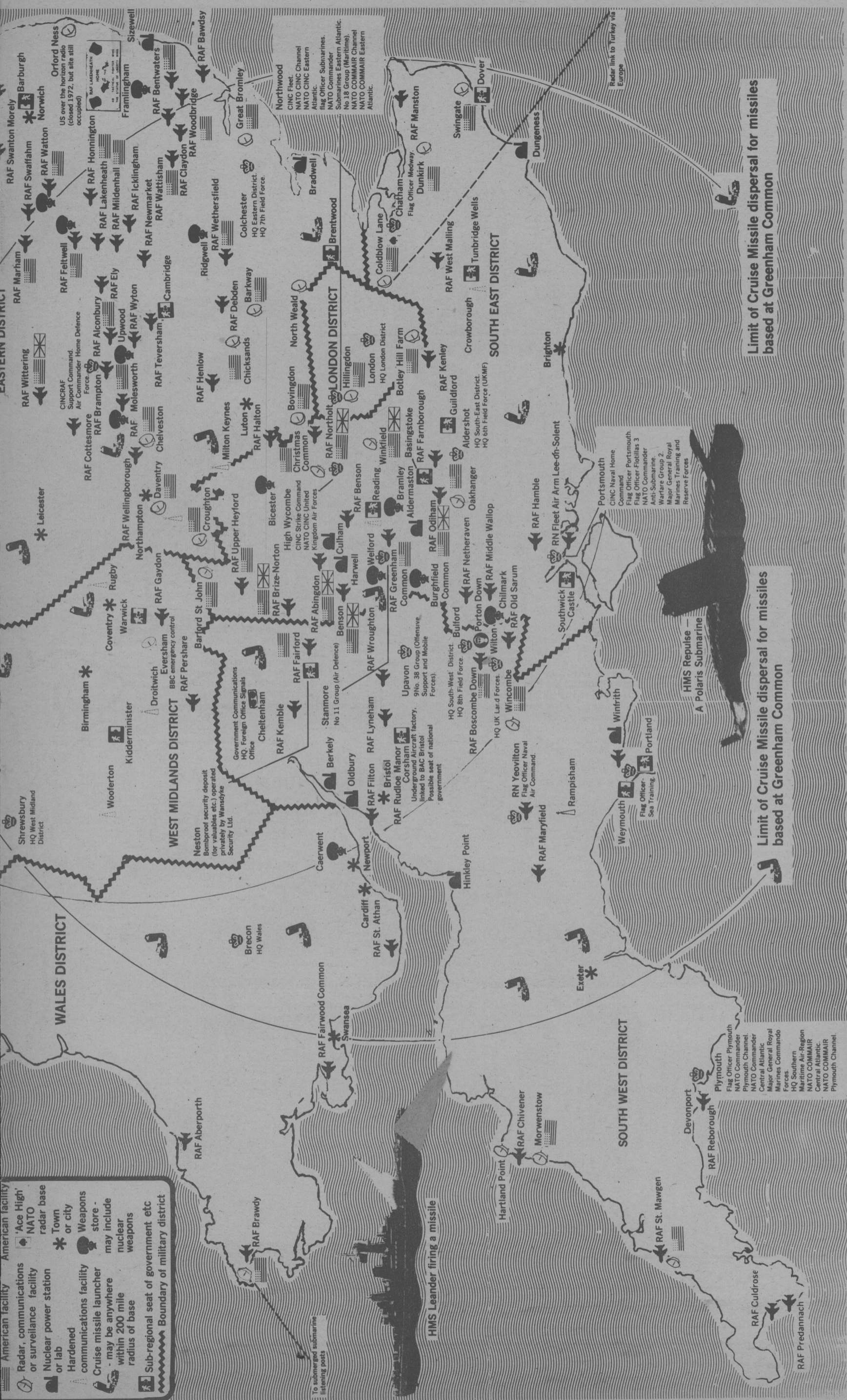
Opportunity

The conference will be an opportunity to launch a labour movement campaign to stop the missile madness and to discuss all aspects of the nuclear threat and how to end it.

- What you can do:
- * Add your name to the list of sponsors.
 - * Write from your trade union/Labour Party or CND branch requesting full details.
 - * Join CND and support the conference.

* **NUCLEAR BRITAIN: CND activities planning map** by Chris Horrie, Simon Stewart, Alan Lenton (Socialist Challenge) and others costs 35p and is available from CND Publications, 11 Goodwin St, London N4. No activist should be without one.





Labour Movement Conference Against the Missiles
Manchester, 28 March 1981

Nicaraguan capitalists walk out of Council of State

By Lars Palmgren, reporting from Managua
ALL THE representatives of Nicaragua's bosses' organisation, the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP) and of the capitalist parties staged a walkout from Nicaragua's Council of State here on 12 November.

Joining them were the delegates from two small trade union federations whose leaders identify with the capitalist forces.

The walkout was planned well in advance. COSEP representative Jaime Montealegre even read and distributed a printed document that explained why the bourgeois delegates and union bureaucrats were leaving the council.

The Council of State is a consultative and legislative body, subordinate to the executive branch of the revolutionary government, the Junta of National Reconstruction (JNR). The capitalist forces were allocated a minority of seats in the council when it was set up last May.

Banning

The 12 November session of the Council of State had begun in the usual way, with the week's correspondence being read by the presiding committee. Among the letters received was one from each of the capitalist parties protesting against the banning of a Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN) rally and complaining about demonstrations that had taken place outside the MDN's headquarters in Managua.

Another letter from Interior Minister Tomás Borge explained the considerations involved in prohibiting the MDN rally.

MDN representative Alvaro Jerez demanded the floor for an immediate response to Borge's letter. This was denied by the Council president, Commander Carlos Núñez.

At the top of the Council's agenda for the day was an important discussion on proposed improvements in the wages and working conditions of farm workers involved in the coffee harvest. Núñez explained that the need to come to decisions about these proposals before the beginning of the harvest was more urgent than the MDN's complaint against Borge.

Suspend

In addition, the Council's own bylaws prohibit alterations to the agenda once it has been adopted.

Taking a flexible attitude, however, Núñez proposed including Jerez's request as a special point at the end of the day's agenda. And that was when the walkout occurred.

As a result, Núñez decided to suspend the session.

The dominant sector of the capitalist class in Nicaragua is on the warpath. But they seem to have forgotten that there has been a revolution here, a revolution made not by them but by the workers and peasants. As Eloisa Corrales, a chemical worker, said:

'If we fought once for a free homeland, we will struggle to the end to defend this process, because it has given us the opportunity to participate in the government that represents all the workers.'

The fact that the delegates from the Confederation of Nicaraguan Workers (CTN) and Confederation of Trade Union Unification (CUS) left their seats in solidarity with the bourgeois representatives has evoked strong reactions from the ranks of the unions that make them up.

Following the walkout from the Council of State, mass organisations led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) quickly organised rallies, demonstrations, and meetings in cities and towns throughout the country to reject the capitalists' provocations.

CENTRAL AMERICA

Showdown approaching in Nicaragua

By Paul Lawson

DISSIDENT officials in the US State Department revealed last week that contingency plans have been drawn up by the American government to use US troops in Central America.

They disclosed that this would be done in cooperation with unnamed governments in Central America in the event of the situation in El Salvador 'getting out of control'.

This revelation came at a time when the revolutionary struggles in the area are reaching a turning point.

Conflict

The walk-out by the Nicaraguan bosses' federation COSEP from the country's Council of State and the subsequent shooting of COSEP leader Salazar, show that the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie is now coming into increasing conflict with the Sandinista government.

At the same time the junta in El Salvador is making a determined effort to drown in blood the country's revolutionary struggle. Last week they murdered key leaders of the Revolutionary Democratic Front, which brings together all the opposition groups.

There are daily clashes between the junta's army and the revolutionary guerrillas.

It is above all the events in Nicaragua which will determine the course of the Central American revolution in the short term.

Following the victory of the insurrection against the dictator Somoza in July 1979,

Militiamen prepare to defend the revolution

the FSLN adopted a policy of including in the government sections of the ruling class which had fought Somoza.

This involved important concessions to the interests of private industry and agriculture, in an attempt to involve these sectors in the process of reconstructing the badly-damaged economy. Various bourgeois politicians were given positions in the Government of National Reconstruction.

Sabotage

Two developments sabotaged this attempt at co-operation. The FSLN was forced to take sides in a series of struggles by agricultural workers and poor peasants, around demands for better conditions and an extension of state control. The FSLN sided with the workers and peasants.

Secondly, it became increasingly apparent that the bourgeoisie was not in the least bit interested in 'reconstructing' the economy in conjunction with the

FSLN. Government plans were sabotaged by private enterprise.

At the same time the FSLN pushed ahead with the formation of militias and vast political mobilisations which accompanied the literacy crusade. The political dominance of the FSLN was consolidated.

This conflict came to a head last April, when two leading bourgeois politicians, Chamorro and Robelo, walked out of the Government of National Reconstruction. But the Council of State set up the following month still included representatives of the employers' federation and small 'trade union' groupings which sided with the bosses.

In recent weeks the Nicaraguan capitalists have intensified their attacks on the FSLN. The mouthpiece of the bourgeoisie, the daily paper *La Prensa*, has stepped up its attacks on the FSLN and the revolution in Central America and the Caribbean.

The main bourgeois party, the National Democratic Movement (MDN), planned a big political rally against the

government on 9 November, which was banned by the FSLN.

Much more seriously there has been a series of incursions into the northern part of the country from Honduras, carried out by former members of Somoza's National Guard which was broken up and destroyed at the time of the revolution.

Invasion

Honduras has recently signed a treaty with El Salvador for mutual 'defence'.

It's no secret that in Panama the United States has assembled a force of 10,000, including former members of the Nicaraguan national guard, Cuban exiles, and even disaffected Vietnamese, which could be used as an invasion force against the revolution in El Salvador or Nicaragua.

There are two crucial factors in determining how far the bourgeois opposition to the FSLN will go. To what degree will it achieve unity,

and will it be prepared to be associated with a Somocist counter-revolutionary force in bringing down the FSLN government?

So far the opposition has been split into several groups including the COSEP, the MDN, and the Democratic Conservative Party.

If these forces were united behind the project of a counter-revolutionary invasion from the north, the FSLN government could be in serious trouble.

The FSLN might then be brought down without the need for the direct use of American troops.

There is every sign that the FSLN is aware of the possibility of a link-up between international counter-revolution and the bourgeois opposition in Nicaragua itself. Everything points to a consolidation and systematisation of the power of the FSLN.

To defend itself the FSLN government is having to make a decisive break with the bourgeoisie. A new stage of the revolution is opening.



Workers and peasants rally against counter-revolution

REVOLUTION UNDER SIEGE



Civil war intensifies in El Salvador

THE El Salvador Army has unleashed an offensive in the Morazan district, in the north east of the country, against revolutionary guerrillas of the FMLN, the new military co-ordination of the resistance.

The junta's army has been accompanied by US 'advisers', and supported by heavy artillery and helicopter gunships.

Like the US army in Vietnam, the El Salvador government has a strategy of indiscriminate attacks on villages which are classified as 'rebel'.

During the latest offen-

sive it is estimated that as many as a thousand peasants have been killed or wounded by government forces. Fifty thousand people have fled from the countryside, either to the main towns or neighbouring Honduras, to escape the army's terror.

Despite the ferocity of the army's attack, there is still strong resistance from the FMLN guerrillas. Since the beginning of the year, at least 8,000 people have been killed in political violence. Some 85 per cent of these deaths were as a result of right-wing violence.

The military junta in El Salvador came to power in October 1979 through a CIA-engineered coup. So

far this year US military and civilian aid to El Salvador has totalled more than £93m.

Sixty per cent of the population of El Salvador are peasants living in utter poverty. Literacy was estimated in 1977 at 35 per cent. Health care is primitive, with 38 per cent of natural deaths resulting from infectious and parasitic diseases, compared with 2.1 per cent in Cuba.

The only way out for the people of El Salvador is insurrection. The savage response of the military junta shows that the 'fourteen families' — the tightly-knit group of wealthy families who dominate the country — are prepared to go to any lengths to defeat the opposition.

In right-wing circles there is open talk of the need for '200,000 dead' to defeat the revolution.

El Salvadoran leaders murdered

FIVE important members of the revolutionary opposition in El Salvador were found murdered last Friday.

They had been kidnapped by junta-backed rightist thugs, before being killed. They had been strangled and then shot.

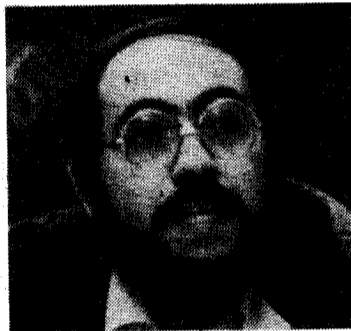
The Revolutionary Democratic Front accused the National Guard of being responsible for the murders.

Among those murdered were Juan Chocon, one of the most important leaders of the opposition and a member of the People's Revolutionary Bloc, and Alvarez Cordoba, president of the Revolutionary Democratic Front.

Cordoba was a member of one of the 'fourteen families' which dominate the Salvadoran economy. He had become convinced that only through insurrection would reaction be defeated.

'The revolutionary war has already begun'

Interview with Ruben Zamora of Salvadoran FDR



THE following interview with Ruben Zamora, secretary of the External Commission of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) of El Salvador, was conducted by Fred Murphy of Intercontinental Press on 19 October in Bloomington, Indiana, during a national conference of the Latin American Studies Association.

It has now been two months since the August general strike in El Salvador. We have received various reports on the strike — we understand that it was not an insurrectional strike but rather was aimed at preparing further, organising the people, and so on.

How well have the achievements of the strike been consolidated, in terms of popular organisation and preparation for sharper confrontations with the regime?

As you said, the main objective of the recent strike was a political-military one. That is, to take a look at the level of preparation and development of the people's militias.

As a result of the strike, we can point out the most important aspects of our struggle. In the first place, the development of the people's militias: they have been extended further. They had their test of fire in the strike, and have continued to grow quite substantially.

Secondly, in terms of the people's army, the confrontations are becoming generalised and there are more every day. It is important to point this out because the so-called serious news media is either systematically covering it up or else is publicising only the statements of the repressive Salvadoran army.

The truth is that the

people's army in El Salvador is going into battle and confronting the army, the security forces, and the paramilitary bands of the military/Christian Democratic dictatorship on a daily basis and in many parts of the country.

What we have seen since August is an upturn in the armed struggle in El Salvador, through actions in which up to 120 members of the security forces and the army have fallen. Some confrontations have lasted five or seven hours.

The people's army has shown its superiority in terms of the morale and quality of its combatants. This contrasts tremendously with the low morale of the regular forces of the government, despite all the military apparatus it has and despite the supplies the United States has been providing.

So it could be said that the revolutionary war has already begun in El Salvador?

Certainly. We see the war process as a long one, with various stages. In this sense, the revolutionary war already began quite some time ago. What must be pointed out now is that we have entered a new stage in the war process, the stage of generalised harassment of the regular forces.

We might say that the objective of this is to tie down the enemy, to immobilise the regular army and the security forces by means of the systematic harassment that



the people's army is carrying out.

What is the situation of the economy?

In fact, because of the situation of struggle and war, the economy of El Salvador is passing through the worst crisis in its history, comparable only to the crisis of 1930.

Private investment has not only come to a halt this year — there has even been disinvestment. Earlier investments have been taken out of the country. Since October of last year foreign investment has dropped by 46 per cent.

sources have calculated that since the beginning of 1979 about \$1.5bn has left the country. This has taken place in two ways: on one hand, income from exports does not enter the country but is deposited in banks in the United States or in Europe.

On the other hand, there is what we pointed to earlier — disinvestment, removal of capital. Even machinery has been taken out of the industrial plants of the country.

Much is being made in the US news media of the 'agrarian reform' in El Salvador. But I have also seen reports that the concrete effects of these reforms could mean famine this year — that crops are not being harvested, and so on. What can you tell us about this?

The military/Christian Democratic junta's supposed agrarian reform is certainly having some negative effects on production. The country is going to suffer a severe shortage of beans this year.

Along with corn, beans make up the basic diet of the peasantry — that is, of the majority of the Salvadoran population. The price of beans has reached levels that make them practically inaccessible.

Last year a pound of beans cost between 70 and 80 centavos; this year they have reached 2 colones and 40 centavos (1 colon = 16p). So there has been a tremendous drop in bean production with a corresponding shortage and price inflation.

As for corn, the situation is not so serious.

In terms of agricultural export products, which provide the bulk of the country's foreign currency income, cotton production has dropped by around 30 per cent.

We don't yet have the

figures for coffee since the harvest only began in September. What can be said for certain is that in some regions of the country — particularly around the volcanoes where the best coffee is produced — the landlords are not harvesting.

Rather it is precisely the forces of the people's army that are located in those zones that are harvesting the coffee. They sell the harvest in order to provide for the people's army and for the peasants who live in those zones.

Finally, I would like to ask what you consider to be the most important tasks for the movement of solidarity with El Salvador in the coming months, both in the United States and in other countries?

The Revolutionary Democratic Front has pointed to five fundamental tasks for the solidarity movement in this period.

In the first place, it is important to denounce and oppose the growing military intervention by the United States in the internal affairs of El Salvador.

In the second place, it is necessary to continue to denounce the violations of human rights in El Salvador.

The third task of solidarity is to publicise the refugee problem that is arising in El Salvador. At this moment we already have some 40,000 refugees — both those inside the country and those who have fled to neighbouring countries — who are facing really horrible conditions and who are subject to abuse by the security forces.

This is a very serious problem that is growing week by week. Only in the past week, for example, we learned that 2,500 more refugees resulted from a military operation by the army in Morazan Province.

The fourth task is to denounce the military junta and expose the true nature of the government — to explain that it is not a centrist, progressive government, but a counter-revolutionary, terrorist, right-wing government. That is what there is in El Salvador.

And, finally, the task is to publicise and seek support for the Revolutionary Democratic Front as the expression of the broad alliance of all the democratic, progressive and revolutionary social sectors of our country, and as the only progressive alternative of power that can provide stability, peace, and justice to our homeland.

Those are the five tasks.

No love for Charles in India

'STOP harassing Indians at British airports' was the slogan of Indian students demonstrating against Prince Charles at Delhi University on 25 November.

Since arriving in India our future King has been met by demonstrators who

remember Indian women facing virginity tests at Heathrow airport.

The scandal over virginity testing led to an inquiry by the British government's chief medical officer, Sir Henry Yellowlees. His findings were disclosed by Home Secretary Willie Whitelaw on the last day of the last parliamentary session, to try and avoid the inevitable uproar it would cause.

While virginity tests have been stopped, the Tories have approved the practice of X-raying children from the Indian subcontinent as a means of determining their age and consequently their right to

settle in Britain.

This practice was condemned last year by the World Health Organisation for exposing people to unnecessary radiation. It has also been proven totally unreliable. Many experts claim that such tests are only accurate to within two years either way!

The Campaign Against Racist Laws will be discussing these new immigration procedures as well as the Tory nationality proposals at a national delegate conference on Saturday 10 January.

Further information from: CARL, c/o Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5.

SWAPO leader for London

SAM Nujoma, the leader of Namibia's national liberation movement, SWAPO, will address a rally in London on 10 December.

He will do so amidst signs of a growing panic in Western capitals about the prospects for a 'friendly settlement' to the Namibia issue.

Latest to get in on the act of trying to salvage something for the West out of the Namibia war is

Henry Kissinger, who last week had a frantic meeting in Lisbon with the South African foreign minister.

At the same time UN secretary general Kurt Waldheim issued a call for an 'all-party conference' on Namibia, to be held in January. This conference is meant to discuss 'final arrangements' for the 1978 plan drawn up by David Owen and Andy Young for UN-controlled independence elections in Namibia.

The South African regime has repeatedly avoided commitment to this plan, just as the Western powers at the United Nations have blocked the imposition of sanctions against South Africa for its illegal occupation of Namibia.

The aim of the latest diplomatic offensive seems to be to set up a Lancaster House-type conference of the sort that settled the Zimbabwe war.

It is a tribute to the liberation war being g-

ed in Namibia by SWAPO that the Western powers and South Africa are now being forced to make such moves. But any Western-sponsored conference on Namibia will have inherent dangers for SWAPO.

Solidarity with the liberation struggle remains the key task for socialists in this country. The rally next Wednesday will provide an opportunity to show such solidarity. It takes place at Friends House, Euston Rd, NW1 at 7.15pm.

Behind the Chinese purge trial

By Phil Hearse

MAO Tse-tung's widow, Jiang Qing, uttered her first words in the trial of China's Gang of Four last week when in reply to the numerous charges against her she declared: 'I don't know.'

These sentiments must be shared by many socialists in the West who can only gaze in amazement at the example of 'revolutionary justice' now being handed out in Peking.

It is all too reminiscent of Stalin's purges in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, although unlike then it is difficult to feel much sympathy with the victims of the Chinese purge.

The leading four defendants — Jiang Qing, Zhang Chungqiao, Wang Hongwen and Yao Wenyun — have all wielded considerable power in the past and in many ways they are the victims of the very conspiratorial methods that they themselves used against political opponents.

Charges

Which is not to say that the charges have any bearing upon reality. During the final years of Mao's life the 'Gang' may well have manipulated the ageing and increasingly senile Mao.

But the accusation that they plotted to murder him, or were responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands is ludicrous. The trial is the culmination of a struggle inside the Chinese leadership going back 20 years.

That struggle began in the late 1950s with the launching by the leadership of two immensely important movements — the People's Commune movement and the Great Leap Forward.

Collectives

These were directed, organised and inspired by Mao. The People's Commune movement aimed to create, very rapidly, 26,000 huge agricultural collectives, some of which would have well over 10,000 members.

The productivity of the communes would be increased by 'moral incentives' — calls to

work hard, to build socialism better. This went hand-in-hand with the Great Leap Forward.

The Leap was a huge productivity drive, both in agriculture and industry, aimed at driving forward the process of China's industrialisation together with stimulation of agricultural productivity.

Crushing

The campaign ended in ruins. While productivity was pushed up for two years, the Chinese masses could not sustain the arbitrary work rates and the harsh mobilisation methods prescribed by the Great Leap and the second five-year plan. The final crushing blow was the withdrawal of Soviet aid and experts in 1960.

Differences over these methods within the Chinese leadership broke out at the Plenum of the Chinese Central Committee in 1959 — the Lushan conference. Peng Teh Huai demanded a retreat from the methods of the Great Leap Forward. He was rapidly followed in this by Mao's most celebrated opponent Liu Shaoqi, whose main ally was Deng Xiaoping.

The conflict between the various factions continued during the first half of the 1960s. It came to a head in 1966, when Mao found himself in a minority within the Central Committee. To fight his opponents, Mao went outside the official channels of the party and mobilised millions of youth, the Red Guards, against his enemy.

Rebel

Mao said, 'bombard the headquarters' and 'it is right to rebel'. The movement, whipped up by his chief lieutenant Lin Biao, was awash with the rhetoric of egalitarianism and anti-bureaucratism. But when Mao said, 'bombard the headquarters', he meant 'bombard the headquarters of Liu Shaoqi', not rebel against all forms of bureaucracy.

Mao's move to launch the 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution' in 1966 threw China into chaos. Students, youth and workers started to rebel against bureaucratic



Mao Zedong and Lin Biao at the time of the cultural revolution.

methods and injustices. The still widespread poverty, and the arbitrary methods of the party bosses locally and nationally still provided fertile ground for dissatisfaction and revolt.

'Criticism' of everything and everyone was the order of the day. In the industrial city of Shanghai in 1967, a virtual insurrection took place against the party bosses; Wang Hongwen came to prominence in this movement. Both major factions of the bureaucracy manipulated sections of the mass movement for their own ends. But genuinely anti-bureaucratic tendencies emerged which rejected all sides.

The rebellion of the students and workers reached such proportions that all the bureaucrats began to panic. They agreed a compromise, which left Mao's faction the more powerful, while the People's Liberation Army was called in to lead the 'three in one' committees which took over power in those areas where the mass movement had wrecked the official party structures.

The bureaucrats' compromise, and the use of the army to repress the rebellions, effectively brought the Cultural Revolution to a halt. Mao, if not the outright winner, came out of the crisis ahead on points. Thousands of party bureaucrats had been purged by the Cultural Revolution but as normality and stability gradually returned, many

managed to re-establish themselves in the party. Mao's victory began to be whittled away.

Chou Enlai acted as the mediator, implementing Liu Shaoqi's programme, but using the rhetoric of Mao. Internationally, China's foreign policy swung violently to the right.

The conflict was largely confined to the upper echelons of the bureaucracy. The 10th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 1973 resulted in a stand off between the factions. But when Chou Enlai fell ill in 1974, he was able to ensure that 'moderate' Deng Xiaoping replaced him rather than the radical Wang Hongwen.

Themes

A fierce faction fight broke out again in which all the old themes of the dispute were raised. Deng and the 'moderates' wanted private land plots and bigger wage differentials. Mao, ailing and politically inactive, signalled his disapproval and refused to attend the 1975 Congress to discuss these plans.

But with Mao's death in 1976, the anti-Maoist faction was able to complete its victory. In April 1976, political riots broke out in T'ien-an-men Square in Peking. The identity of the organisers and the objectives of these riots are still obscure; but the demonstrations were aimed at Jiang Qing and the other 'radicals'.

Large sections of the masses

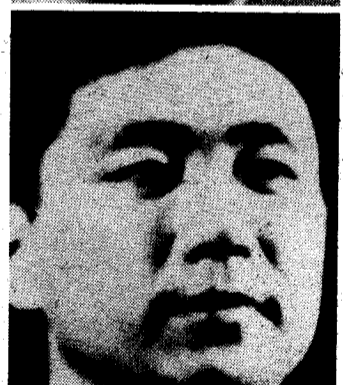
regarded Jiang and her supporters, despite their 'radical' and 'egalitarian' phraseology, as just as domineering and dictatorial as any other section of the leadership. Even if the Tien-an-men rioters were demonstrating for the 'moderates' against the so-called 'radicals', they reflected dissatisfaction with bureaucratic rule.

Purges

The Chinese revolution, unlike the Russian, never experienced a period of socialist democracy. The revolution was imposed by a highly disciplined peasant army, not by the self-activity of the workers, and it never broke out of this bureaucratic straight-jacket.

Paradoxically, the Chinese masses have not been through a period of defeat and degeneration of the revolution like the Stalinist purges in the Soviet Union. They remain highly class conscious and politically aware. Neither Jiang Qing nor her opponents represent the interests of the Chinese masses, but merely two different methods of bureaucratic rule.

Socialists should oppose the ludicrous purge trial going on in China, not because they support Jiang, but because such trials are totally alien to the practices of socialist democracy. Getting rid of these methods will mean getting rid of all sections of the Chinese bureaucracy.



From top: Zhang Chungqiao, Wang Hongwen, Yao Wenyun and Jiang Qing.

THE POVERTY PIT

Organising the unemployed

By Alison Cooper

'IN giving these benefits, the government is keeping its promise to help pensioners, widows, the disabled, and others in need'
 — Patrick Jenkin, Secretary of State for Social Services, announcing the new supplementary benefits on 24 November.

Here are a few facts:
 * £270m has been cut from unemployment, sickness, and invalidity benefit.
 * £125m has been 'saved' by delaying by a fortnight the annual uprating of benefits.
 * 1,805,000 supplementary benefit claimants are worse off as a result of the Tories' latest actions.

Benefits were uprated on 24 November, but claimants received far less than they ought to have done.

Benefits

Two Acts of Parliament this year have resulted in massive cuts in government spending on benefits and in the jobs of those who administer them. Chancellor Howe's announcements on 24 November signalled that claimants remain a prime target for the Tories' carving knife.

The Social Security Act 1980 mainly affected supplementary benefits. The Act has meant that there is no benefit for school-leavers during their first six weeks of unemployment. Single payments (grants) are no longer given to replace worn-out shoes and clothing.

Weekly additions to benefit for specific needs such as laundry, diet, home helps, and heating are now severely restricted. The annual uprating of benefits is now based on the rise in prices not in earnings, as previously.

To make sure that these slashes in benefits cut as deep as possible, the government has abolished the Supplementary Benefits Commission, the nominally independent watchdog over the DHSS. It means that local officials now have greater power than ever before.

Simplify

The Tories said that the aim of this new law is to simplify the social security system. It has in fact resulted in a welter of complex regulations, the continuation of a secret code, and over four million confused claimants.

A glimpse of what is really behind the Tories' legislation was given by the Social Security (No.2) Act 1980, the express purpose of which is:

'To amend the law relating to social security for the purpose of reducing or

abolishing certain benefits and of relaxing or abolishing certain duties to increase sums.' And it did just that! Unemployment, sickness, and invalidity benefit have been increased by only 11.5 per cent, well below the estimated inflation rate of 16.7 per cent.

Absence

Sickness benefit is now paid only after four days' absence, not three as previously. And £12 a week has been cut from the benefit of strikers' families.

When Chancellor Howe foreshadowed the government's second piece of legislation on social security in his budget speech last March, he lifted the veil of deceit by announcing that the Act would be a necessary contribution to cuts in public expenditure.

Now the government is out in the open, brandishing its carving knife with wild abandon. This is the line-up for 1981:

Maternity benefit will be cut.

So, too, will *sickness benefit*, the first eight weeks of which will become the employers' responsibility. A flat-rate of £30 a week will be paid regardless of family circumstances.

Industrial injury benefit will be 'under review' following a discussion document which suggests a levelling down. Also 'under review' are *child benefits*.

Taxable

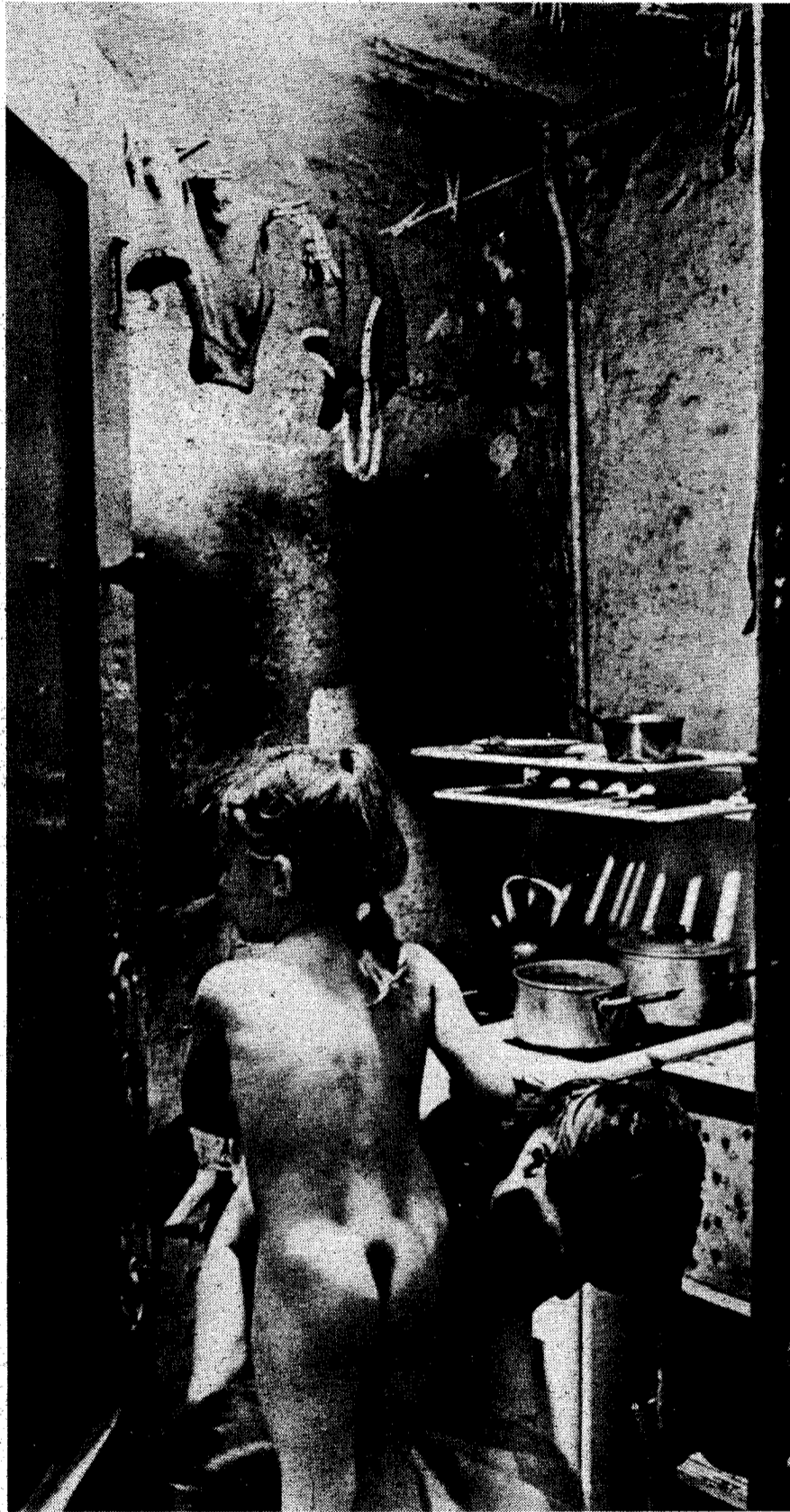
All benefits will be increased by 1 per cent less than the rate of inflation, including the so-called safety net of supplementary benefit, while *unemployment, sickness and invalidity benefits* may be reduced by a further 5 per cent.

What's more, we can look forward to certain benefits being taxable in 1982!

The barrage of legislation on benefits is a direct attack on claimants. Apart from taking money out of public expenditure so that nice fat presents can be made to the City & Co, the government wants to keep benefits low so as to maintain the stigma of claiming and to boost competition for the ever-decreasing number of jobs.

Far from keeping the wolf from the door, the Tories have thrown it wide open and invited the beast to devour the poor.

Tories lop £500m off social security payments



THE welfare state and all who benefit from it are now facing the biggest onslaught in 50 years. Only the rich are exempt from the Tories' latest cuts.

Not since the 1930s has any government either attempted or succeeded in cutting social security, which with the jobless mountains that have sprung up coast-to-coast provides the lifeline for millions of people.

National insurance benefits — for unemployment, sickness, and invalidity — are losing their real value and many people are

being forced to claim the means-tested supplementary benefits.

The Tories and their media thourds the reality of life on these benefits with the myth of 'scroungers' and the 'Costa del Dole'. It is hard for claimants as unorganised as they are to challenge this vilification of their life, and the attacks on their benefits.

But they are mounting a challenge. On 24 November, the day that the massive cuts in social security were introduced, demonstrations were held in London, Edinburgh, Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, Newcastle, Sunderland, and Cardiff.

Claimants

Among those who demonstrated were unemployed, sick, disabled and retired claimants. They were joined by members of the two DHSS unions, the Society of Civil and Public Servants, and the Civil and Public Services Association.

This showed a strengthening in unity between the two groups directly affected by the social security cuts. What is needed is support from these and other trades unionists for claimants' interests. That is what can blunt the Thatcher axe.

Exposing the scrounger lie is important. With unemployment at 2.16m and rising, it might seem obvious that those on the dole or receiving other benefits aren't exactly shirking work. But the Tories and friends badly want to place the blame and guilt for the jobless mountains on the working class.

The unemployed and other claimants have to become organised, otherwise life on benefit will lay waste to their confidence. Some claimants, including single parents and school-leavers are organised in claimants' unions, which trades councils should support.

Assist

The TUC General Council has just agreed in principle plans to assist the setting up of unemployed workers' centres throughout Britain. It is also asking unions to step up efforts to retain and recruit the unemployed into union membership.

These moves need to be supported. The unemployed have to be in the same section and branches as those with jobs, otherwise they will simply be ghettoised and demoralised.

Most importantly by being able to join in struggle with workers who are opposing redundancies and closures, the unemployed could play a role in demanding the 35-hour week and work-sharing with no loss of pay.

'They want you to feel like dirt'

JOHN JAMIESON, who was a steelworker at Consett, has been unemployed for five months:

'I didn't get any redundancy money because I'd only been there a short time. I've got as much unemployment benefit as I should have and I hear that by the time I get onto supplementary benefit that will be cut as well.'

'If only they'd cut the dole queues and prices as fast as they're cutting jobs and dole money, we'd all be a lot better off.'

ANNIE COX was a packer in a factory before she had to give up work due to osteoarthritis and claim invalidity benefit:

'I think Thatcher's trying to starve us all to death. How does she expect us to live? It was bad enough before but it will be even worse now.'

'If my money's not going up as much as the prices how can I be expected to manage to buy things?'

DOREEN LUMLEY is a single parent with two children. She has been on supplementary benefit for five years:

'I don't know what I'll do now. They're stopping giro for clothes. I've always had to get the extra money for the kids' clothes and shoes. There was no way I could pay it out of the weekly money.'

'It's as if they're forcing us to beg for charity. They want you to feel like dirt.'

How the Tories are cheating claimants

The effects of the government's social security laws

	What claimants should have got on 24 Nov	What they are receiving as from 24 Nov
Unemployment and sickness benefit, single person	£21.55	£20.65 Loss of at least 4p in every £
Child benefit, per child	£5.20	£4.75 50p short of what's needed to restore purchasing power
Invalidity benefit, couple with two children	£63.35	£56.60 Loss of £351 in first year

Who loses and who gains in Tory Britain



A quarter of the population depends on social security payments of various kinds. The Tories have cut over £500m from this fund.

They have been generous to the wealthy, presenting tax handouts of £1,400m. This has benefited 5 per cent of the population.

Some £3m a year is lost through social security frauds, compared with £5,000m that never reaches the public purse because of tax evasion.

In Tory Britain there are 1,450 supplementary benefit fraud investigators and a total of 250 tax investigators.

Approximately £650m in benefits are unclaimed each year.

WHAT TO AXE:

Chancellor Howe has some blind

spots when it comes to cutting. For example...

*A 25 per cent windfall tax rate on bank profits would raise £440m.

*Instead of increasing the rate of National Insurance contributions paid by low to average wage earners, as planned, the ceiling on these contributions could be abolished. This would raise £310m.

*Withdrawing the tax cuts for the rich made last year would retrieve £1,400m.

**Myths and legends about social security are put to rest in 'Would the Real Scroungers Please Stand Up', from which some of these statistics have been taken. It is available price £1 from: Wandsworth Rights Umbrella Group, 609-613 York Rd, London SW18.*

SC Sales

ABERDEEN: SC sold Saturdays outside C&As — for more info ring Colin, 574060.
BATH: SC on sale at 1985 Books, London Road, and Saturdays 2pm-3pm outside the Roman Baths. Phone 22298 for more details.
BIRMINGHAM: SC on sale at The Ramp, Fri 4.30-5.40, Sat 10-4. For more info phone 643-0669.
BRADFORD: SC available from Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.
BRIGHTON: SC sales regularly every Sat outside Open Market, London Road, from 11am-1pm.
BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. More info from Box 2, c/o Fullmark, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpellier, Bristol 6.
BURNLEY: SC on sale every Sat morning 11.30-1pm St James St.
CARDIFF: SC sales Newport Town Centre outside Woolworths 11-12.30; Cardiff British Home Stores 11-12.30. Also available from 108 Books, Salisbury Road, Cardiff.
CHESTERFIELD: SC supporters sell outside Boots, Marketplace, Saturdays 11.30am-12.30pm.
COVENTRY: SC available from Wedge Bookshop. For more info about local activities phone 461138.
DUNDEE: SC available from Dundee City Square outside Boots, every Thursday 4-5.30pm, Friday 4-5.30pm, Saturday 11-4pm.
EDINBURGH: SC sales every Thursday 4.15-5.15pm Bus Station, St. Andrews Square; Saturday 11.30-2pm East End, Princes St. Also available from 1st May Books, or Better Books, Forrest Rd. More info on local activity from SC c/o Box 6, 1st May Bookshop, Candelmaker Row.
ENFIELD: SC available from Nelsons newsgents, London Rd, Enfield Town.
HACKNEY: supporters sell SC every Saturday morning at Ridley Road market 8.
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.
HULL: SC supporters sell papers every Saturday 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.
KILBURN: SC sales every Sat, 10am in Kilburn Square.
LAMBETH: SC available from Village Books, Streatham; Tethric Books, Clapham; Paperback Centre, Brixton; Oval tube kiosk. Also sold Thur and Fri evenings and Thur mornings outside Brixton tube.
MANCHESTER: SC supporters sell 11-1pm Sat at OLDFHAM outside the Yorkshire Bank, High St; at BURY in the shopping precinct and at Metro Books; at BOLTON in the town centre; and in MANCHESTER outside the central reference library in St Peter's Square and at Grassroots and Percivals Bookshop. Tel: 061-236 4905 for further info.
NEWCASTLE: SC on sale every Sat 11-1pm outside Fenwicks. Also available at Days of Hope bookshop, Westgate Rd. For more info ring Phil or Pete on Newcastle 737507.
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 Way. Can be delivered weekly: phone 483 8909 (evening), 236 4905 (day).
SWANSEA: SC sales outside Co-op, Oxford St, 11am-1pm, Saturdays.
SWINDON: SC on sale 11-1 every Sat., Regent St (Brunel Centre).
TESSIDE: SC on sale Sat lunchtime in the Cleveland Centre, and in Newsfare, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and outside Woolworths on Stockton High Street.
WOLVERHAMPTON: SC sales on Thur/Fri at Poly Students Union from noon-2pm and British Rail 4.30-6pm; on Saturday near Beatties, town centre from 11am-2pm.

Is your town or city mentioned above? If not, send in details to this sales column.

Socialist Challenge Events

MANCHESTER: Women and Socialism Day School Sat 6 Dec 10am. UMIST Students Union. Creche, food, drink & social.
NEWCASTLE: Jobs not Bombs meeting Sun 7 Dec, 7.30pm at Post Office Inn. Speakers include: Patrick Sikoraki from Socialist Challenge, Tyneside Nuclear Disarmament Campaign, Youth against the Missiles.

International Marxist Group notices

CRUISE: next national fraction Sat 13 Dec. Venue to be announced.
POEU FRACTION: Sat and Sun 6/7 Dec in Leeds. Agenda: perspectives; Labour Party; women's liberation. Details of venue later.
RAIL FRACTION: Sat 13 Dec, 1-5pm at national centre.
IMG WOMEN'S LIBERATION NOTES: Is your branch receiving them every week? If not write to women's organiser at the centre. And why not send in a report for inclusion in the bulletin? All contributions in by Monday each week. Ring Judith on 01-359 8371 to discuss a visit from the IMG women's organiser this autumn.
IMG MEMBERS: We urgently need you to fill vacancies in a variety of technical posts in National Centre. Any cdes interested ring Penny on 01-359 8371.
FOR SALE: Back copies of IP/1 for SC Fund Drive. Vols 16/17/18 (1978, 1979, 1980). Offers to Fed, Camden IMG, c/o PO Box 50, London N1.

What's Left

RATES for What's Left ads: 5p per word or £4 per col. incl. Deadline: noon Sat. prior to publication. Payment in advance.
BIRMINGHAM STA Fri 12 Dec. Bournbrook Hotel, Bristol Rd, 8pm-midnight. Disco, food, late bar. Adm £1.
LABOUR Movement Rally in support of Irish Hunger Strikers. Fri 5 Dec 7.30pm. Invited speakers so far include: Dave Hallsworth (Tameside Trades Council), Alex Frazer (UCATT), Sue O'Halloran (Sinn Fein, POW dept-Britain), Vera Sheff (NUT), Billy Taylor (AUEW), in personal capacity. At John Marshall Hall, 27 Blackfriars Rd, London SE1. Near Blackfriars BR station. March with RCT contingent on 7 Dec National Irish prisoners demonstration. Assemble 1pm, Speakers Corner, London. Ring 01-274 3951 for further information.
WORKERS Socialist League 6th Anniversary Rally. Speakers from Socialist Press and Trotskyist International Liaison Committee. Plus new film on H Block Hunger Strike and 'Courage of the People' (film on Workers' Struggles in Bolivia) 2.30pm Sat 6 Dec, New Ambassadors Hotel, Upper Woburn Place, London WC1 (opp Euston Station) Tickets £1.50 on the door.

No to council house sales
Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton.
11 December at 7.30pm
Speakers from: London Tenants Association, Lambeth NALGO, Lambeth Trades Council, Dexter Whitfield (Co-author of 'The Great Sales Robbery'). All Welcome.
Organised by Lambeth Labour Left.

EXIT — individual's right to choose

By Bernard Misrahi

NICHOLAS Reed and Mark Lyons face possible 14-year jail sentences. Their crime? Allegedly conspiring to assist suicides.

Reed and Lyons are members of EXIT — formerly the Voluntary Euthanasia Society — which has become the latest target of the police and Tory press.

The overwhelming majority of EXIT members are over 50, and most are women.

Many have nursed dying relatives in the past and have seen their intense suffering. They want the option of 'dying with dignity' rather than being kept

'alive' in such a pitiful condition that death would be infinitely preferable.

The Director of Public Prosecutions seems determined to put EXIT out of business. Large quantities of EXIT's records have been removed by police who have also taken more than



300 statements for evidence.

The DPP has admitted that the condition of some of the suicide 'victims' was 'very often sad and in some cases heart-rending', and that the person Lyons is accused of 'murdering' wanted to die.

Contrary to the picture painted by the press, EXIT does not try to convince people to commit suicide. It opposes suicide except in extreme circumstances.

Its main object is 'to promote legislation which would allow an adult per-

son, suffering from a severe illness for which no relief is known, to receive an immediate painless death if, and only if, that is their expressed wish'.

While suicide has been legal since 1961 — before that you could be prosecuted for a failed suicide bid! — it is still illegal to give advice or in any way assist a person wishing to commit suicide, even if she or he are of sound mind.

EXIT believes that it is an individual's right to choose to end their life.

That right includes access to information and assistance if necessary, free from legal threats.

Predictably the main opponents of EXIT are the Church and the medical profession, the same people who oppose a woman's right to choose whether to have an abortion.

They believe that your body belongs to God, or to doctors who don't think patients are capable of taking such important decisions by themselves.

EXIT members believe that life should be lived to the full, and that better social and medical conditions should be provided for the old and sick. But they also consider that an individual should have the right to stop prolonging a life made unbearable by severe illness.

EXIT can be contacted at 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8 5PG.



When a Stranger Calls He Knows You're Alone Dressed To Kill The Shining
 'A stream of films portraying women as vulnerable and alone thereby boosting the male ego'

Women under attack

By Jude Arkwright

DESPITE the outcry against the Yorkshire Ripper, violence against women is part of the fabric of our society. Striking evidence of this is the number of current films depicting violence against women which are considered suitable as entertainment.

Since *Hallowe'en*, which showed the rape and murder of three babysitters, a stream of such films have gone on general release. *He Knows You're Alone* portrays women as vulnerable and alone, thereby boosting the male ego.

In *Dressed to Kill*, which has the second highest audience rating outside London, the murderer even dresses like a woman to make us feel we cannot even trust other women.

As a spokesperson for Women Against Rape commented: 'If there were a group of films all about attacks on children or black people or even animals there would be a public outcry. But these films are a sign of just how acceptable violence against women is.'

That's the reason why women took to the streets in Leeds after the last Ripper murder and attacked the cinema showing *Dressed to Kill*. Women in South London held a Reclaim the Night demonstration last Friday and picketed cinemas showing anti-women films.



Women in Leeds protest anti-women films

Sympathy

It's not just the media that perpetuates violence against women.

Despite amendments to the rape laws, rape victims are still cross-questioned by police in great detail about their sex lives; judges routinely warn juries that rape victims may often lie, and rape is still legally impossible within marriage.

Rapists and even murderers often receive sympathy from those in authority, as with ex-PC Peter Swindel. He is accused of killing a prostitute while carrying out bondage, and then chopping her body to

pieces. A murder charge has been withdrawn in favour of manslaughter (sic). Swindel's defence counsel remarked: 'I don't want to say anything embarrassing but as one knows from time to time there are people who have odd habits...'

Women are increasingly being denied the right to work by rising unemployment. We have no other independent income, and in law we are seen as a man's

property to dispose of as he pleases. Then we are subjected to the constant threat of violence.

No wonder we're angry! But the way to deal with violence is not to rely on the police, as the Ripper case shows. Nor should we heed their advice of staying indoors. Women are more vulnerable isolated in the home.

We should be out on the streets organised together. We should demand better

lighting and transport facilities at night, subsidised transport home for women workers, and rape crisis centres funded by the state.

Sexual harassment and violence against women is an issue that the trade unions should take up. Canada's TUC, the Labor Congress, has passed a resolution protesting against sexual harassment on the job.

The Canadian Rape Crisis Centre estimates that over 50 per cent of women face sexual harassment at work and that one in four women will face sexual assault at some time in their life.

Women should look to their own strength and to that of the labour movement to oppose male violence and sexual harassment.

REVOLUTION

FOR A UNITED REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH ORGANISATION

REVOLUTION HAS A NEW PHONE NUMBER 01-359 8301
 REVOLUTION Youth and IMG student fraction — note change of date. Now Fri 12 Dec in MANCHESTER at the 'Squat', Devas St, Oxford Rd, Manchester. Noon to 6pm. Details: ring Stephanie on 021-359 5921.

Other
THE BOOKSHOP
 Bob Rowthorn
Capitalism, Conflict and Inflation — Essays in Political Economy
 Lawrence and Wishart, £3.95
 This collection of essays on Marxist economics, which won the 1980 Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize, is now available in paperback.
Squatting — The Real Story
 Bay Leaf Books, £4.90
 This book, written and produced by squatters, tells the story of the 250,000 people who have squatted in Britain over the past 12 years — using over 500 photographs, plus cartoons, poems, songs and posters.

'Stuart Hood on Television'

Lifting the lid on TV's box of tricks

By Penny Valentine

'THE fact is that television is an industry and those who work in it are industrial workers...

'The fact that the production of television programmes is highly industrialised has important effects on the programmes which we see on our screen and on the procedures employed to realise them.'

Stuart Hood's critique of television* differs sharply from previous publications, not just because of its informal style which delivers a mass of rich material in a useful, immediately accessible way, but because it goes beyond the familiar decoding of the 'message' that television puts out.

Although to explain how that message is created Hood initially covers ground already explored by media study groups and sociologists — particularly the 'Bad News'

group at Glasgow University — he moves on to a detailed argument of television's relationship with us, the audience.

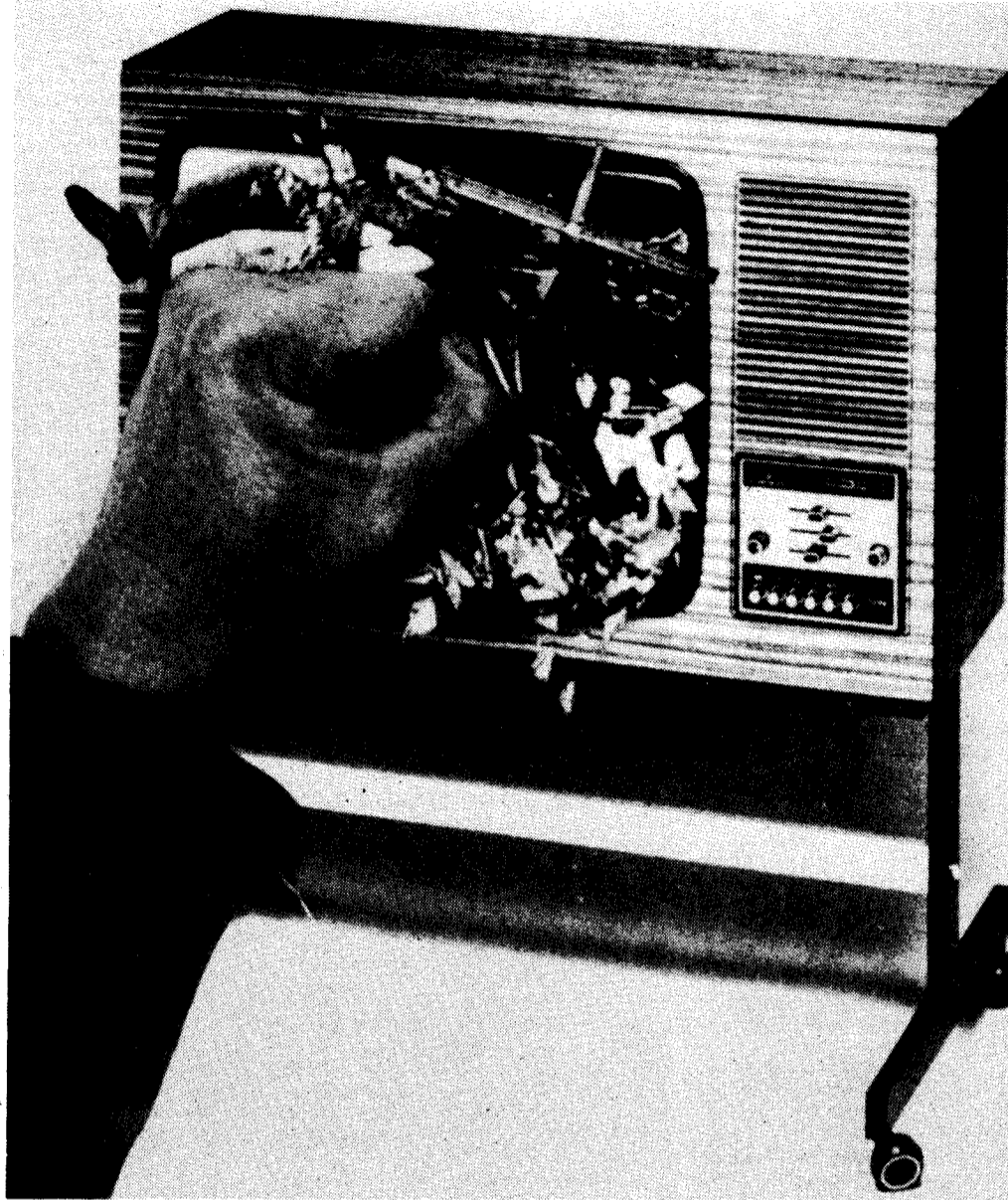
This is against the 'popular' concept of a passive mass audience.

To show how TV defines the 'acceptable' boundaries of its view of the world, the author breaks down its internal structure, and how it functions as a major capitalist industry.

Outlook

It's an area Stuart Hood is intimately familiar with, having been both Controller of Programmes and Head of News at the BBC; someone who 'slipped through the net', as he describes those whose political outlook doesn't fit with the overriding ideology of the industry.

It's a shame, by the way that Pluto hasn't included a short biography of Hood. Although the book stands



'The book gives socialists a much clearer idea of how that picture of the world on our screens is the result of a clearly defined process'

perfectly well on its own terms, it would have added even more background to his analysis of the way

television is set up internally: a series of checks and balances, of centralised decision-making and

self-censorship endemic to the system and of gate-keeping which so obviously affected his own work.

'But above all they (TV workers) must learn the limits of the possible — the limits set by management of the BBC, by the management of the television companies and by their supervisory body the Independent Broadcasting Authority.'

Hood's book implicitly undermines a simple conspiracy theory; the view that the media generally function to protect the interests of the ruling class. Instead he shows why TV's main tendency is nonetheless to reproduce the ruling class's view of the world.

Messages

By looking at the nuts and bolts of television he puts flesh on a sociological reading of its messages. He shows how in a certain political climate TV 'liberalism' can flourish safely contained, how scheduling is used as a form of censorship, and he looks at the fourth channel and new technology.

Although eventually Hood's view is pessimistic, particularly about any attempt to make a worthwhile intrusion into the system, and he omits to mention the work being done by, for instance, community video groups, this is still an impressive invaluable book.

It gives socialists a much clearer idea of how that picture of the world on our screens is the result of a clearly defined process. Well worth anyone's three quid.

* 'Stuart Hood on Television'. Pluto Press, £2.95. It is available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, London N1. Add 10% if ordering by mail.

Support the Kurdish people!

A NUMBER of extremely useful points have been made by Charlie Van Gelderen and other correspondents critical of the position adopted by *Socialist Challenge* and its sponsoring organisation, the International Marxist Group, in relation to the Iraq-Iran war.

As both Teheran and Baghdad whip up a wave of chauvinist frenzy, ordinary workers and peasants continue to die. For internationalists to support one side in this war is impermissible.

The Khomeini regime has utilised the war to further repress the left. Even the tame Tudeh party has been banned and its headquarters sealed. While socialists are being arrested, Judge Khalkhali calls for a deal with the 'Great Satan'. His torturers continue to oppress the Kurdish people.

The Kurdish nation has been under attack for centuries, its literature banned and its people dispersed. Today the three states within whose boundaries a majority of the Kurds live — Iran, Iraq, and Turkey — are in extreme crisis. It is the best opportunity the Kurdish people have ever had to unite and carve out a separate nation for themselves.

The most advanced Kurdish organisation in Iran is the 'Toilers Revolutionary Organisation of Kurdistan' (KOMALA). In a recent pamphlet distributed in

Asian Youth Movement Bradford: emergency appeal

THE Asian Youth Movement Bradford has been fighting racism and fascism for the past three years and has consistently supported the struggles of black people nationally and internationally against racism and imperialism.

We have also consistently supported the struggles of Irish people against British imperialism.

The AYM, which has been a major voice in the struggles of black youth in Bradford and nationally, and in the forefront of campaigns against state racism — in particular the

racist immigration laws — now faces a major crisis.

As a result of our refusal to give up the struggle against racism and the failure of the Black Freedom March, the AYMB now needs £1000 to carry on the struggle and avoid bankruptcy.

Already we have been forced to close our centre; court hearings are imminent. We call on all progressive organisations and individuals to help us during this crisis.

In a period of rising unemployment and economic crisis, with one of the most reactionary governments ever

in power, the struggle needs to be intensified.

Please show your support and help us out of this crisis so that we may continue to take part in the struggles of today and in the future.

Please send donations (payable to the Bradford Asian Youth Movement) and letters of support to:

Asian Youth Movement
Bradford,
6 Edmund Street
Bradford 5

Fight racism! Fight Imperialism! Fight immigration Laws!

Here to stay, here to fight!

Sweden, KOMALA denounced the war as 'an unjust war which does not deserve to be supported'.

KOMALA argues that both sides 'want to direct the attention of their own toilers and workers away from themselves and against a foreign enemy. For this reason their war, in reality, is in first place a war against their own peoples.'

An internationalist stance would have enabled us to solidarise with and support currents like the KOMALA.

As the international and national dimensions of the war become clearer it is surely necessary for *Socialist Challenge* to review the situation and revise its stance.

C HOWARD,
London

Anti-Semitism and red herrings

GEOFF Sheridan's letter on anti-Semitism (13 Nov) was in part reactionary and throughout inaccurate:

1. He says that a call to combat anti-Semitism is 'unexceptionable'; in fact it is pretty exceptionable. When has *Socialist Challenge*, or its predecessors, had any article — let alone any serious article — on anti-Semitism?

When has the IMG ever tried to combat anti-Semitism? It needs a bombing in Paris and fascist violence in this country for

the left to even acknowledge the existence of anti-Semitism.

2. Instead of defining all Jews in terms of Zionism, he uses the other crudity of defining Jews in terms of Orthodox religion. He would presumably — unlike the fascists — have some difficulty in identifying Jews who consider themselves as neither Zionist nor religious. But that is his identity problem.

3. Personally, as a Jew, I derive cultural support from traditions completely unmentioned by Geoff: the mysticism of the Kabbala, the popular spirituality of the original Hasidic movement, the revolutionary socialism of the Bund.

4. Geoff has a totally Euro-centric image of Jewry. He does not appear to recognise even the ex-

istence of Sephardic Jews, Jews from the East who have developed their own particular cultures.

5. One of his more reactionary statements is that Jewish identity is undermined when anti-Semitism is relatively dormant. This repeats the myth that Jewish culture only exists in adversity.

6. Geoff's most reactionary statement is that 'assimilation' is 'not a process socialists would wish to halt'. Is this position — that minority groups should assimilate with the wonderful non-racist, non-sexist, non-imperialistic traditions of English culture — official IMG policy? If so, why does the IMG exist?

STEVE COHEN,
member of the Jewish Socialist Group

Benn — no more left-wing than Foot

I HAVE just heard that Tony Benn is not going to challenge Michael Foot for the leadership of the Labour Party in any electoral college. I'm not surprised!

Benn supported Foot in the PLP election and he is now going to stand in the shadow cabinet elections.

Of course no ordinary member of the Labour Party has any say in the election of the shadow cabinet because nobody has suggested they should, least of all our Tony.

The PLP being a right-wing creature is not sympathetic to the left wing

here, not just because Benn attacked their privileges but because they suspect him of trying to ride the tiger of the constituency Labour parties for his own gain.

Unfortunately, in Michael Foot the PLP has a shrewd opportunist than Benn — it's not Tony's fault, Michael has had more practice. Benn can't expect to get many votes from embittered PLP cynics, so the only alternative to being shadow minister for the weather is doing a deal with comrade Foot and hoping that by ingratiating himself he will be better placed to fight for the leadership of the party when Foot departs this world.

All in all, not exactly what the 'Neither Healey nor Foot but Benn' sages expected. Time to eat your words, comrades; wear sackcloth and ashes.

S J Madewell



BENN — not such a shrewd opportunist as Foot?

Socialist Challenge

ABORTION RIGHTS: THE FIGHT IS ON AGAIN

By Jude Arkwright

TIMOTHY Sainsbury, Tory MP for Hove, may be the next MP to try and curb women's abortion rights. He came top in the private members' ballot in Parliament last week.

Sainsbury can't make up his mind whether to sponsor an anti-abortion Bill or a Bill on 'indecent displays'.

Second in the private members' ballot was Donald Stewart, MP for the Western Isles, who is also a committed anti-abortionist.

Sainsbury, nephew of Lord Sainsbury of shopping fame, is considering two clauses to restrict abortion rights. The first would reduce the time limits for abortion from 28 to 22 weeks, and the second would introduce a stronger conscience clause for doctors.

He has learned the lesson of the previous failed anti-abortion Bills, which were more detailed and easier to defeat through parliamentary tactics.

The attack on late abortions follows the recent Denning Appeal Court ruling against prostaglandin late abortions. No woman wants a late abortion, but they are unavoidable with the current inadequate facilities and cuts in the health service.

For young women afraid to admit pregnancy the facility of a late abortion is particularly essential. Under the Tories the number of late abortions is rising — in 1979, 1767 abortions were performed after 20 weeks, 1.46 per cent of all abortion.

The pro-choice movement should now swing into action against all restrictions on women's abortion rights. The TUC should be forced to mount a campaign against any new Bill, as it did against the Corrie Bill.

The National Abortion Campaign (NAC) has called on all its supporters to start

a massive letter-writing campaign to Sainsbury and Stewart to show the extent of the opposition they will face.

NAC's national planning meeting in January will discuss the next phase of the campaign.

This new threat to abortion rights shows the need for positive legislation to en-

sure a woman's right to choose in law and in practice.

In March next year NAC and the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign have called a labour movement conference on positive legislation, which would also discuss the campaign to defeat any new anti-abortion Bill.

WOMENS CHOICE NOT DOCTORS CHOICE



Socialist Challenge — your weapon against the Tories

THE Tories are squaring up for a 'bare-knuckle fight' with the public sector. Over two million workers are on the dole while £12b goes each year on machines of destruction.

But there is a fightback. Last Saturday a magnificent 150,000 marched in Liverpool against unemployment.

In recent weeks we have outlined three other events that show the way: the first meeting of the steering committee set up from the Lambeth anti-cuts conference; the support given by CND to the call for a demonstration of 250,000 against the missiles and for a labour movement conference; the great victory of the Gardners' workers fighting redundancy.

In each of these strides forward Socialist Challenge supporters have been at the forefront: touring Gardners' speakers round the country and raising money; championing the cause of a labour movement orientation for the anti-missiles movement; leading the fight for a militant stand against local government cuts and rate rises.

This campaigning for workers' unity against the Tories and reporting it in our paper demands money — lots of it!

Socialist Challenge has launched an ambitious fund drive for £100,000.

This week we received a further £375 towards our goal, making £1,818 so far. Next week we will be reporting on the sales and fund drive in detail, including targets for local districts and branches.

Our thanks this week to:

R Bernal	£10.00
A Browne	7.50
Anon	1.80
Harry Wicks	0.80
Mark Whyte	2.70
J Alwyn	7.50
Liverpool IMG	50.00
A Bailie & P Tierney	50.00
R Annis	0.50
Anon	2.00
May Gomez	20.00
Middlesbrough IMG	50.00
Lewisham IMG	73.00
Anon	100.00
Total	£375.80
Grand Total	£1,818.29

Selling Socialist Challenge

AN extra 1,200 copies of Socialist Challenge were taken by local supporters last week for sale at or on the way to the massive Liverpool unemployment demonstration.

Even without those 1,200 copies, sales have gone up by 750 a week since the new-look paper began two months ago.

That still leaves us with a long way to go to meet our sales target by next April of 7,000 weekly sales through our local supporters.

If your branch or supporters group would like to order extra copies of the paper, or if you would like to start selling it yourself, please contact our distribution office on 01-359 8180, or write to Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50 London N1 2XP.

LABOUR Movement Conference on Abortion and Positive Legislation

The fight for positive legislation and against restrictive Bills needs the backing of all sections of the labour movement.

Please show your sup-

port by sending a delegate to the conference planning meetings, by sponsoring the conference, by sending out information and by sending a donation to conference funds.

More information from: NAC, 374 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1

ANTI NAZI LEAGUE

International Anti-fascist Rally Monday 8th December



7pm. FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, EUSTON ROAD, LONDON NW1.

Speakers:

Renato Zangheri, Mayor of Bologna.
Henri Buch, Secretary General of FASP, Autonomous French Police Union.
Leo Heinemann for the VVN, Association of Nazi Victims in Germany.
Tony Benn M.P.
Paul Holborow, National Secretary of A.N.L.

Tickets: £1.00

Available from: University of London Union, Malet St., WC1. Bookmarks, Central Books, Other Books, Compendium, Colletts, and other good bookshops.

By post from: ANL, c/o PO Box 353, London NW5 (inc SAE).

SUBSCRIBE NOW

Britain: 12 months £12.50; 6 months £6.50
Abroad: 12 months — Surface Mail £12.50
Airmail £18.00

Multi-reader institutions: Double the above rate

Name _____

Address _____

I enclose a donation for the Fighting Fund of —
Cheques, POs and Money Orders should be made payable to 'Socialist Challenge'.
Complete and return to: Socialist Challenge, 328 Upper Street, London N1.