

# Socialist Challenge

## FRENCH ELECTIONS:

**FIRST  
ROUND  
GAINS  
FOR  
LEFT**



**BUT WILL IT  
STAY THAT WAY NEXT WEEK?**

**Martin Meteyard and Gilles Giacomini  
report from Paris — pages 2&11**

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Can't they see we're not just  
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# Editorial

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## British Leyland behind closed doors

WAS THE closure of the Speke factory in Merseyside deliberately engineered by the top brass of British Leyland? The *Runcorn Guardian*, a local weekly paper, suggests so. The paper quotes 'top management sources' as saying that 'the Speke plant is being used to set an example against other Leyland plants.'

It should be recalled that the dispute at Speke started when Leyland attempted to raise production from 12.5 to 17.5 cars per hour. The *Runcorn Guardian* claims that it is in possession of a 'highly confidential document' which reveals that 2,203 TR7 cars produced at Speke were unsold in the showrooms when the dispute started last November.

The implications of these allegations are obvious. Local managers at Speke have told the *Runcorn* weekly that the top bosses in Leyland deliberately bypassed normal dispute procedures in order to provoke a strike. In addition British Leyland informed its local managers that they would be satisfied with nothing less than an 'unconditional surrender'. Pat Lowry, Leyland's head of industrial relations, has reportedly threatened the Speke management with disciplinary action if there are any more leaks to the press. The services of a well-known law firm (headed by Lord Goodman) have been bought to prevent further leaks on a national scale.

What these new revelations indicate is that Speke has to be axed so that Michael Edwards can pose as a strong and hard boss. This could help to get more public money from the House of Commons without any serious Tory opposition.

The whole way in which British Leyland is run is an utter scandal. The secret plans to axe workers go hand in hand with the not-so-secret bribes which have been paid to notables in many countries. We have indisputable evidence of this and a number of Danish newspapers have already published details. The facts are in the possession of Callaghan and Varley. But a cover-up has been carried out lest British Leyland's credibility is seriously affected.

Shop-stewards and workers in British Leyland must now demand access to the company's books. They have every right to know what is being cooked up. It is their jobs that are at stake.

## Racism and the media

THE BBC had a special programme on 'immigration' last week. The star attraction was Enoch Powell. The interviewer, Robin Day, constantly deferred to him.

As a result the central issue discussed was repatriation. Powell called for the repatriation of 1 million blacks. He was opposed by Marilyn Rees and William Whitelaw, but the debate was structured in such a fashion that the whole arena of debate was shifted yet further to the Right.

Many of the well-meaning participants from the studio audience have registered a formal complaint against the programme. They are right to do so, but there are broader issues at stake.

Should the media be 'neutral' and 'balanced' where the question of racism is involved. Most of the press and TV companies certainly appear to think so. They are not 'neutral' or 'balanced' on the question of 'terrorism'. Or on the question of strikes in British industry. The bulk of the media displays a blatant Tory bias. Why then the misplaced 'neutrality' on racism. Why the bland interviews with racist leaders (Ludovic Kennedy and Martin Webster on *Tonight*)? Why the equation of racists and those whom they seek to oppress?

In fact the main argument which Labour leaders utilise in reply is in itself racist. 'There's no need for concern', says the social-democratic Tweedledum 'because we're not letting any more blacks in.' 'You're letting in a few', replies the Tory Tweedledum, 'and these should be stopped. Black women should find husbands in this country. Surely there are enough black faces to choose from here already.'

From this it is only a small step forward to repatriation. The problem has been identified. It is black people. Not capitalism. Not the economic crisis. Not the cuts in the social services. Not the urban decay in Britain's cities. Not the massive outlay on defence. No, it is none of these. It is the blacks. That is how the politicians of the major political parties argue.

Anti-racists who are fighting them must at the very least not fall into their trap and accept the limits which they seek to impose on a real discussion of the issues at stake. The media constantly forces us to do that. We must equally forcefully fight back against it.

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## French elections

# Victory could float away

THE MAJORITY of the French population, especially the workers, want a fundamental change in government. The mood in the factories is one of disappointment at the small size of the majority. On the streets the talk is concentrated on the public display of sectarian bickering by the leaders of the Communist and Socialist parties in the run up to the first round. This sectarianism and disunity could well lead to a defeat for the left in the second round. GILLES GIACOMIN reports from Paris.

The clearly defined parties of the left received about 49 per cent of the vote, divided this way: Socialist Party (PS) 24.7 per cent (of which 2.1 per cent was for Left Radical candidates offered positions on PS ballot slots); Communist Party (PCF) 20.5 per cent; far left 3.7 per cent.

The parties of the government coalition plus the extreme right hold about 47 per cent, the Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR) taking 22.6 per cent, the Giscardian Union for French Democracy 21.5 per cent, and other rightist candidates some 3 per cent.

The remaining 4 per cent was divided among a variety of other candidates — including the ecologists (1.5 per cent) of whom about two thirds can probably be counted in the left camp.

### MARCHAIS

For the first time since the establishment of the fifth republic in 1958, the outgoing majority has received a minority of the vote in a national legislative election.

The Gaullist party suffered a slight decline in its vote, from about 24 per cent in 1973, the year of the last legislative elections. More importantly, President Giscard d'Estaing's project of creating a large 'liberal bourgeois' party has failed utterly.

His Union for French Democracy is a hastily patched together coalition of three parties — the Republicans, centrists and radicals — and within this coalition Giscard's own party, the Republicans, gained only 12 per cent of the vote. While this is an increase over its 6.9 per cent in the 1973 elections, it is a strikingly modest one for a party whose leader is the French President.

The bourgeois parties have been unable to broaden their popular base or create new political instruments able to respond to the crisis of Gaullism.

On the left, the result of the PS was disappointing. While it did succeed in its goal of outdistancing the PCF, it fell well short of the 27-28 per cent

of the vote that had been predicted in the polls. The discrepancy between the 52-53 per cent the polls had predicted for the left and the 49 per cent actually achieved results entirely from the disappointing showing of the PS.

The PCF, on the other hand, has retained its traditional share of the vote, which may be considered a victory for the party apparatus. But to do so it had to lead a vigorous campaign against austerity.

A low vote had been expected for the far left, due to the polarisation between the PS and PCF. Its vote confirms the advance made in last year's municipal elections, and shows the distrust of sections of workers towards their traditional parties.

To ensure victory against the right in the second round, it is essential that the left take steps for a united campaign. Although agreement was

reached between the PCF, PS, and Left Radicals on Monday night, much damage had already been done.

The text of the agreement underlines the reckless sectarianism of the course previously adopted by the PCF, since it resolves none of the questions around which the Union of the Left split last September. Yet now the PCF hails it as a great victory!

'You are prisoners of the Communists. Georges

Marchais is the master of the game! You can preserve the unity of the left only by capitulating to Communist blackmail! These were the words the representatives of the bourgeois parties addressed to the socialist leaders. And the PS leaders found it difficult to answer.

To claim that there were no real differences between the programmes of the PS and PCF would have been to admit that the mass workers parties are split, not over principles, but simply over the division of power.

To insist that there were important differences and that they would 'stand up to the Communists' would have been to aggravate the division of the left and thus reduce its chances in the second round.

The spectacle of division on the left which has been such a feature of the campaign now threatens to limit the number of first round votes that will be transferred to left candidates on the second round next Sunday. With such a slim majority for the left on the first round, the bourgeois parties could easily be handed a victory on Sunday.

### NEXT

The vote for the workers parties constitutes an appeal for unity in struggle against the evasions of the CP and SP', said Alain Krivine in Monday's *Rouge*, the daily paper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), French section of the Fourth International.

A statement of the LCR's political bureau underlines the point: 'The government coalition is now an absolute minority, and the right can be ousted on the second round. That now depends on the united discipline of a class vote on the second round...'

'That is why we propose a united meeting of all the organisations that took part in the far left lists in order to launch a joint appeal for automatic and unconditional withdrawal on the second round in favour of the organisations claiming allegiance to the working class that ran ahead on the first round.'

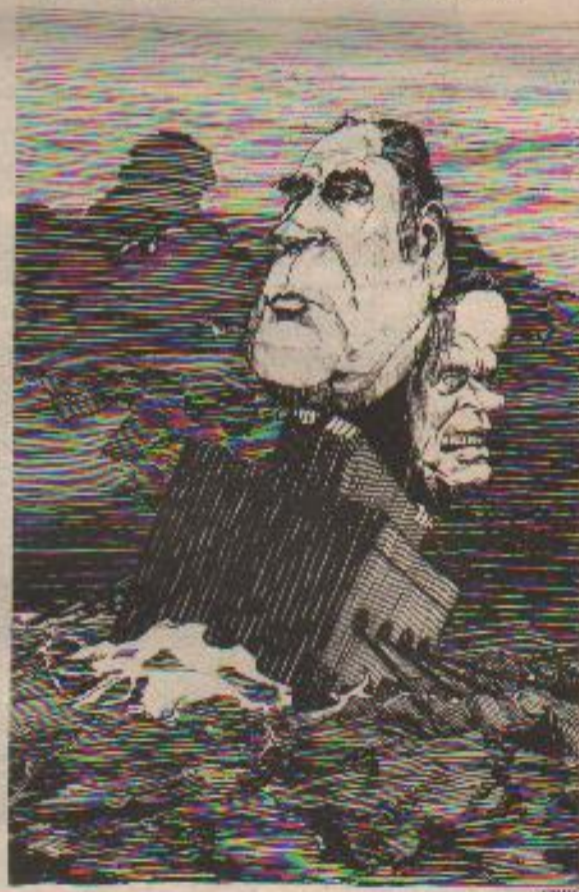
But even if such withdrawals occur, the previous unnecessary divisions mean that it is not at all clear whether the workers' will for unity can be mobilised strongly enough during the week before the second round.

THE FAR left vote of 3.7 per cent represents three main forces: the Self-management Front (FA), dominated by the United Socialist Party (PSU); Workers Struggle (LO); and the joint slate 'For socialism, power to the workers', consisting of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the Communist Workers Organisation (OCT), and the Communist Committees for Self-management (CCA). The figure also includes a small number of Maoist groups.

The exact figures for each group were not available at the time of going to press, but it seems that LO, which stood in almost every constituency, polled about 1.7 per cent — less than its vote in the 1974 Presidential election. However, its leader, Arlette Laguiller, polled 8.5 per cent in her constituency.

The FA did not stand in nearly as many seats. It seems to have polled nearly 3 per cent on average, with its figure rising to 5 or 6 per cent on occasions.

The slate 'For socialism, power to the workers', which stood in 250 constituencies, polled 0.9 per cent on average. In general it picked up about half as many votes as LO, though in Paris the two groups polled about the same.



## OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

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

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

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

# WARNING TO ALL ENGINEERING WORKERS



**If you vote for this man  
YOU MAY NEVER  
VOTE AGAIN**

**TERRY DUFFY** is currently standing in the election for the presidency of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers. 870,000 workers have the right to vote in this election. They should use that vote wisely, for if they do not, they may never have the right to vote again.

Terry Duffy implied on Thursday 9 March that if elected he would try and do away with democracy in the AUEW. He threatened: 'If the national committee decided that they wished to dispense with the need for officials to periodically put themselves before the electorate, then you would see an immediate end to the present demarcation line between the two political groupings.'

He went on to say that if victorious he would try and change the union's rules so that the number of elections fought by officials would be 'greatly reduced'. Duffy argued: 'I know that the majority of our officials would wish to discard this agro that we have now and again (in elections). I would like

to use my influence to find a better method'.

It is only too true that trade union officials — especially the moderates like Duffy — would like to do away with elections. It would mean they were no longer responsible for their actions to the rank and file. They could then find it much easier to pursue the type of policies Duffy advocates.

### CO-OPERATION

Chief among these is co-operation with the 10 per cent norm and, Duffy has promised, co-operation with any stage four of the Social Contract.

Duffy and his friends do not appear in the least concerned

that these policies are currently being followed by the AUEW executive against the wishes of the majority of the AUEW, who voted at the union's conference for an immediate return to free collective bargaining.

Or if they are concerned, perhaps, they have decided that the best way to deal with problems that arise from union democracy is to abolish that democracy. This is why Duffy in his speech glowingly referred to the electricians union led by Frank Chapple in which the president is elected for life. Election for life was, said Duffy, 'a possible alternative' to the present system in which officials have to face periodic elections.

Duffy is supported in his

campaign by such interfering pundits as Bernard Levin who in a recent article on the AUEW election in *The Times* prattled on about 'the not altogether unimportant task of getting Trotskyist hands off freedom of speech'. It seems likely that Levin will back Duffy in his campaign to abolish the freedom to vote in the AUEW. Every other ruling class paper is also campaigning for Duffy.

### BRANDED

This is what they mean by 'freedom of speech' — freedom for those such as the *Birmingham Evening Mail* to distort the election to such an extent that they recently branded Duffy as 'one good man who is not going to sit back and see evil triumph'. Union democracy for the likes of these is indeed an 'evil' thing.

Standing against Duffy is Bob Wright and engineers have until 29 March to vote for him. *Socialist Challenge* has differences with Wright but we have no hesitation in calling for a vote for him. Not least because a vote for Wright means the right to vote!

## News from nowhere

### What a way to start

THE NEW Editor of the *New Statesman* has been busy writing letters to the press to deny that he was ever a communist. It is a somewhat inauspicious start to his editorship.

He should constantly remind himself of the evolution of one of his predecessors, a Mr Paul Johnson. The latter's move to the far Right is now almost complete. In last Sunday's *News of the World*, Johnson told the paper's readers: 'Most sensible people in this country are not unduly disturbed by the activities of the National Front... Much more serious, in my view, is the anti-democratic threat presented by the Extreme Left.'

Exactly what the readers of that paper wish to be told. And racism? It does not exist for Johnson. Will the NS under Page commission an article describing and analysing the transformation of Johnson? It would be a useful start...



### Bad Ms. take

'NUT leaders went along to a Commons sub-committee bearing last week to argue movingly for more help to be given to girl school leavers. They knew, of course, that the sub-committee's chairman, Mrs Renee Short, feels strongly about the diminishing job chances for girls.

'But someone stole Mrs Short's car on her way to the meeting, so Maureen Colquhoun took the chair. Knowing that Mrs Colquhoun has even more passionate views on the subject, the NUT men thanked their stars that they were all ready to say the right things. 'Mrs Colquhoun, however, required more tangible evidence of sincerity. She interrupted the speeches to complain that the sub-committee has so far seen very few women representing the union, and suggested they should try practising some equality themselves. The witnesses, six members of the executive and one official, fell over each other trying to assure Mrs Colquhoun that there was complete equality for women in their ranks. "Right", asked Mrs Colquhoun. "Where are they, then?"

'In fact, there was one woman with the NUT team — 27 year old Kay Carberry, a graduate teacher who works in the union's education department. She was there to carry out the woman's traditional role on such occasions — sitting in the corner taking notes.'

*Times Educational Supplement* [24.2.78]. The TES, it should

be noted, is one of the few newspapers which does not acknowledge Colquhoun's insistence on being addressed as 'Ms'.

### The ovens next time?

AFTER A heated debate, the members of the libraries committee of the Aberdeen District Council decided that they could not refuse an offer of a free annual subscription to *Gay News*.

The debate was extremely heated. Some members revealed the extent of anti-gay prejudice which exists in Scotland by voting against. The final tally was 11 for and 7 against. The latter were no doubt egged on by worthies such as Harry Hatch who made an appeal to 'keep out the filth'.

Ms Oslena Stott, a woman with a direct hot-line to god, warned the committee from the outside: 'Homosexuality is not a sickness but a vile sin utterly abhorred by God. It caused God to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah and two neighbouring cities...' After the committee announced its decision Ms Stott declaimed to the press: 'They will be guilty before God without a doubt. The Lord will judge and they will receive a just judgement.' The problem is that the judgement in question could easily be delayed.

If Ms Stott wants quicker service she should get the advice of our old friend, James Anderton. He is the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester and an acknowledged authority on the subject.

### Whiter than White



THE GLASGOW *Sunday Mail* organised a competition a few weeks ago. It asked its readers whose face they'd like to see plastered with a custard pie. The person who came top of the poll was Margaret Thatcher. The winning suggestion came from Ms C. Moffat of Fife. She wrote: 'I nominate Margaret Thatcher for a dark chocolate cake right between the eyes. It might do something for her colour problem.' She won £10, but the *Mail* artist still insisted on a photo-montage showing her face splashed with a white custard pie [see pic above].

### God on Their Side

ZIONISTS broke up a meeting of the British Anti-Zionist Organisation at Conway Hall, Central London, on Sunday.

About 45 Zionists, including members of the right-wing Herut, entered the hall just before the meeting had got underway and announced to the small audience that they were going to start it with a minute's silence for the Israelis killed in the bus hijack.

Anti-Zionists were obstructed as they attempted to leave the

## Engineers' pay claim

## The fight is only in quiet rooms

BY 27 VOTES to 24, the national committee of the Engineering Union last week ratified the abandonment of the national engineers' pay claim, reports JOHN GRAHAM. The crucial vote came on a proposal from Broad Left delegates opposing any settlement with the employers without demands for a 35-hour week and longer holidays being met in full.

In its place, all that was passed was a resolution supporting the proposed two-day strike called by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions for 20 and 21 March.

It was only a matter of time before this strike too was abandoned.

The employers had previously agreed that the minimum rate for skilled workers should be increased to £57 now and £60 in August. The sticking point had been their insistence that these new rates could only be implemented in cases where this would not result in increases of more than 10 per cent.

When the bosses agreed on Monday to implement the increase in full subject to Government approval, the unions immediately responded by calling off the strike.

This settlement, if approved, would give substantial increases to several thousand low

paid workers — but at the expense of creating divisions inside the unions.

By backing down on the original demand for a £70 weekly minimum wage and a reduction in the working week, Scanlon and his new right-wing cronies have restricted the beneficiaries of the national claim to the very worst paid.

The majority of engineering workers already receive far more than the nationally agreed minimum rate; the average basic rate for skilled workers is presently £66 a week.

These rates have been secured through local wage claims on top of national settlements. But Scanlon's insistence that the new national deal is compatible

with the 10 per cent pay limit will leave any local claim in excess of this limit out on a limb.

What's more, the new deal accepts that the 12-month rule will be applied, so increases will come into effect at different times in different areas a year after their last settlement.

Scanlon and his friends have only got away with such gross manoeuvres so far, because — fine speeches and special issues of the *Engineering Gazette* apart — the Broad Left officials have confined the fight around the claim to the quiet rooms of the executive council and the national committee.

While it would be an obvious advantage if a left-dominated National Committee and Executive could be achieved, the key to defeating the 'moderates' lies in the mobilisation of the rank and file independently of the union machine.

It is the failures of the Broad Left leadership on this second score which leave them incapable of leading an effective campaign against the retreat to secure the full claim.



Pickets outside the Speke No 2 plant

## Speke: time to fight back

A Defence Committee to fight the proposed closure of British Leyland's Speke number 2 plant on Merseyside was set up last week. MARK TURNBULL reports.

At a meeting organised by an ad hoc committee, with supporters of the IMG, WSL, ISA, SWP and Big Flame, Rover Solihull shop steward Pat Hickey said the closure was only the beginning for Leyland's supremo Michael Edwardes.

## ALL JOBS

The fight must be to defend all jobs on principle, argued Hickey. This could be done by declaring a date for an occupation of the factory for six to nine weeks' time, which would provide the basis for a fightback throughout Leyland and in the Merseyside labour movement.

Leyland workers could produce their own plan of production to counter Edwardes' job losses and closures proposals, and demand a shorter working week to keep every job.

'At Rover Solihull there is a waiting list of a year to eighteen months for the Rover 3500 and the Range Rover', he said. 'And the shop floor has been fighting the introduction of a night shift for two years. Why can't those cars be produced at Speke?'

He suggested that Speke shop stewards organise a conference for all Leyland stewards and provide regular information to the membership through bulletins and mass meetings.

Tony Ryan, a shop steward from the factory, had a different approach. He said that those wanting redundancy should go, and a part of the factory be put in mothballs — a view held by some of the shop stewards who want to save the factory.

But Pat Hickey explained that management are not interested in keeping anyone in Speke number 2 plant. 'And they will eventually close Canley, near Coventry, where they intend in the short term to transfer TR7 production.'

## LEADERSHIP

One of the major obstacles to such a united fightback is the leadership of the shop stewards committee which is unwilling or incapable of leading this fight, he said. And Hickey concluded that these stewards must be replaced by workers prepared to lead a fight in the factory and in the whole Leyland combine.

'The Standards Defence Committee meets every Tuesday at 6.30pm in the Garston Hotel, St Mary's Road, Garston. Send messages of support, donations etc. to: Standard Defence Committee, Box SDC, c/o 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool 1.'

'Socialist Challenge groups are urged to invite British Leyland speakers to their next meeting — contact Socialist Challenge for speakers. This could be the first step towards setting up a Speke Support Committee in your town. And don't forget to rush reports of support activities to the paper.'

AS THE 'McCarthyite' disciplinary hearings of nine Transport and General Workers' Union militants from Cowley continue, a fightback against the threat to democracy in the union begins, reports PAT HICKEY.

'We are on the same side of the fence'. This was the headline on an advertisement appearing in last week's *Sunday Times* — with mugshots of Jack Jones, Hugh Scanlon and director Michael Edwardes to illustrate their joint statement.

It may be something of a surprise to Speke workers to know that 'the world is

## Defend the Cowley 9

watching Leyland getting better all the time'.

## WORK TOGETHER

The ad said that Jones and Scanlon agreed 'on the basic need for management and unions to work together'. For the membership it means

the membership it means redundancies and speed-up. And it also means attacks on democracy in the union to prevent any opposition emerging.

This is why the Transport

and General Workers Union is witch-hunting militants in the union's Region 5, based on Cowley works in Oxford, including convenor Bob Fryer who was involved in the unionisation of the Cowley plant, and Workers Socialist League member Alan Thornton.

## FIGHTBACK

But on Saturday a meeting in Birmingham of T&G members from the area who oppose the victimisations began to organise the fightback.

A further meeting of T&G

members is being called for 8 April in Oxford to bring the full facts of the case before union members, and to discuss ways of preventing the serious threat to union democracy that the victimisations represent becoming a reality.

The basis for the Oxford meeting is to be a statement which has already received widespread support in the union.

It says: 'We believe this matter is of great concern to all activists and genuine democrats within the T&GWU and we

believe it is vital that the maximum pressure be put on the relevant regional and national bodies to make sure that no disciplinary measures of this kind are taken against these members. If this sort of action starts in Region 5, where will it end?'

## DELEGATES

Socialist Challenge supporters in the T&G are urged to get delegated to the Oxford meeting on 8 April to fight the McCarthyite tactics of the bureaucracy.

The not-so-golden handshake  
East Moors steel plant closes

THE DECISION last week to accept closure of the East Moors steelworks is a bitter blow not only for workers at this Cardiff plant but also for workers throughout the steel industry.

MICHAEL JONES explains what is still in store for steelworkers after East Moors closes at the end of April.

Agreement on the closure follows one of the most disgusting displays of job-selling by union bureaucrats, with workers receiving what is in reality a pittance for a place on the ever increasing dole queues.

The deal means that the 3,300 workers will receive in all about £10m before tax. British Steel reckon they will save £20m by closing the plant now rather than in 1980.

## FIGURES

Despite Fleet Street's much trumpeted figures of workers

getting £17,000 pay offs, the average will work out at between £4,000 and £6,000. And that is before tax deductions and is dependent often, because of Common Market rules, on being out of work for the next two years.

The deal also threatens about another 1,000 jobs in trades which service the East Moors plant. Overall it could mean that unemployment in the area — which is Prime Minister Jim Callaghan's constituency — will rise to about 14 per cent, about 20,000 workers on the dole.

The deal is also a major

breakthrough for BSC boss Sir Charles Villiers and Industry Secretary Eric Varley in their campaign to put as many steel workers as possible out of work.

As the *Sunday Times Business News* put it: 'Villiers and Varley must have been delighted by last week's events.'

For the closure is a key part of the plans to slash steel jobs originally put forward by a committee headed by Lord Beswick in 1975 — plans which were bitterly opposed by workers at the time.

## THIRD DEAL

It is the third closure deal forced through by British Steel recently. The first two were at Clyde Iron in Scotland and in Hartlepool.

At Clyde, 800 workers voted — against a union recommen-

dation — to accept a pay-off. At Hartlepool, workers with 30 years or more service earning an average of £77 a week, received a pitiful £2,000 compensation.

## NEXT HIT

Already BSC have announced their intention to end Iron and Steelmaking at Shelton near Stoke. BSC plants at Ebbw Vale and Shotton in Wales are the likely next victims of management attempts to axe 6,000 jobs as quickly as possible. All were earmarked for substantial cuts in the Beswick report.

Frustrated with its job slashing success, the corporation also seems likely to try to go beyond the Beswick plans. They are working on what is dubiously called a 'work measurement incentive scheme'. This means that a ten-person team could be told that if they get rid of three,

the remainder can share one person's pay between them.

The agreement at East Moors is a threat to all steel workers. For as the *Sunday Times Business News* admits: 'Failure there could have stopped BSC's campaign to cut jobs in its tracks and cost it a bargain £9-£10m in redundancy payments against a £20m saving from early closure.'

The only way to stop the BSC in its tracks and to prevent union collaborators indulging in a mass jobs sell-out at the expense of their members is to activate the local steel union action committees which have existed in the past.

## CONFERENCE

A national conference of rank and file activists would be one way to plan the fightback and stop steel workers paying for the crisis of capitalism in their industry.

# Oil rig electricians fight on

FOR THE first time, the situation of workers on the oil rigs in the North Sea has made an impact in Aberdeen.

Sixty Mather and Platt oil rig electricians travelled to Aberdeen on 7 March to picket the airport and an open support committee for their strike over redundancies has been set up in the town, reports PAT KANE.

The decision by the strikers to extend the picket to Aberdeen Airport has made this dispute an issue in the local labour movement.

The scab labour recruited in the last two weeks has to travel out to the North Sea rigs from the local airports, and the pickets have now successfully drawn attention to this fact.

With the strike still unofficial it is vital to win support for these workers in the local trade union movement. Failure to win Aberdeen Trades Council

backing for the dispute at its meeting on 8 March represented a real setback, not only for the Mather and Platt workers but for all workers in the North Sea fighting for unionisation.

The Inter-Union Offshore Committee has been just as inactive. This committee is well placed to organise solidarity with the strikers since it is based on all the unions involved in the North Sea.

But committee members claim that they are unable to organise boycott action or

support for the picket because the dispute remains unofficial.

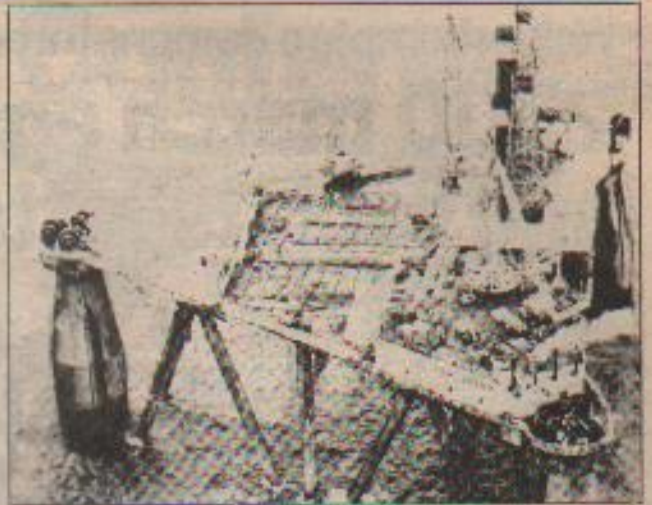
The union concerned in the strike, the EETPU, still refuses to make it official on the grounds that union procedure was 'not rigidly adhered to'.

Union officials inside the Mather and Platt plant in Manchester have latched on to this as an excuse for their failure to build any support for the strikers.

A factory gate meeting at Park Works was held on 13 March, but without support

from the union, the electricians are finding their job much harder.

The problems on the rigs led some workers in Aberdeen to set up Blow Out last summer. This is a rank and file organisation to fight for unionisation on the rigs, which is supporting the open strike committee in Aberdeen. The committee is also supported, so far, by local trade unionists from the white collar union NALGO and EIS, the Scottish Teachers' Union.



## Ruling protects women—this time

A WOMAN who is beaten up by the man she lives with has the right to exclude him from their shared home even if he has property rights. JUDE WOODWARD reports.

Five Law Lords unanimously decided on 9 March that the Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act, 1976 can be used to protect an unmarried woman from her male companion.

The Lords, however, added the proviso that this could only be done on a temporary basis.

No definite time limit has been set, but Lord Salmon (one of the five), mentioned a period of three months as a reasonable maximum time that a man could be excluded from his own property.

It is undoubtedly a step

forward for women that the Law Lords upheld the decision by a County Court to exclude a violent man from his council flat. He had been making life hell for the woman he lived with and her two year old child. But we should not regard it as a total victory.

Although the Law Lords reached a satisfactory verdict in this case women have no guarantee that County Courts will take this view of all cases

that come before them. Moreover it is clear that in this case a great deal of sympathy was provoked because of the situation of the child.

This sympathy is needed for all women who find themselves at the mercy of violent men, regardless of whether they have children or not.

Finally, although the law now allows men to be excluded from their homes to protect the

women and children, the man can reclaim his property rights. As long as the present situation of housing shortage continues it may take a lot longer than three months for a woman to find alternative accommodation.

And she is still in the situation where she cannot obtain any property rights over her home unless she is married to the man she lives with.



JENNIFER DAVIS and her daughter whose situation led to the Law Lords' decision.

# Charter debated

'THE NATIONAL Abortion Campaign declares that it is the right of every woman to control her own fertility in her own interests. This right is a fundamental human and democratic right.'

This is the introduction to a draft abortion charter to be proposed at NAC's fourth national conference next month. SARAH ROELOFS reports.

The National Abortion Campaign decided to draw up an abortion charter as a way of promoting its demands around the slogan 'Free abortion on Demand — A woman's right to choose'.

By specifying the abortion facilities that the health service has to provide for women to gain this measure of control, the charter will strengthen the campaign for day care abortion centres.

The charter will also include the right of women to choose the method of abortion they prefer; to be given all relevant facts so that they can make fully informed decisions; and to refer themselves for abortion, rather than having to obtain permission from two doctors.

It will also challenge racist practices, whereby black women are 'encouraged' to

accept abortion or sterilisation. The charter, which will be discussed and voted on at the conference, can play an important role in the campaign. During the local and national elections, for example, it would provide a focus for a mass campaign in favour of positive legislation on abortion. It can also establish a basis for discussion about the content of a future pro-abortion Bill.

### CONFERENCE

The NAC conference, to be held in Sheffield on 29-30 April, will also discuss the trades union conference on abortion scheduled for the autumn; work among students; and the international situation on abortion.

The NAC conference is open to everyone who supports our aims: women's groups, health groups, trade unions, student union, Labour Party women's sections, and individuals. Everyone who attends can vote.

For further details contact NAC at 30 Camden Road, London NW1. Tel: 01-485 4303.

## £1000 Equal Pay award

THE EXTENT to which employers still manage to evade the 1970 Equal Pay Act was revealed very clearly at an industrial tribunal in Birmingham last week.

Triplex, the giant glass firm which makes car windows among other things, was ordered to pay six women who work at its foundry in Tipton equal pay and to backdate the agreement.

The company dug up the old fraudulent argument that the men working at the foundry did heavier work. But the tribunal found in favour of the women.

The result of the hearing was an astonishing £1,000 back payment to each woman worker, and an immediate rise of £11 a week. Other employers disregarding the Equal Pay Act in such a flagrant way must be forced to comply, although — as the Trico strike showed — tribunals may well side with the bosses.

After a lull in activity against the cuts in London's public transport system, there is fresh hope that effective action can be built to oppose bus and train cuts.

MARTIN EADY reports on new initiatives coming from the London Transport Joint Action Committee against the Cuts.

At a conference on 16 February, the committee decided to produce a bulletin to spread information and organise a fightback against cuts in public transport. The committee aims to organise among London Transport workers and build links with trades councils and passenger organisations.

One of the major gains the committee has made is to overcome the traditional suspicions

and hostilities that have split transport workers. It has united different unions and the bus and rail sections of London Transport against the cuts.

The bulletin can provide an important means of reaching transport workers and passengers in London. But a lot will depend on its editorial policy, which should be as open as possible with different views being expressed.

The Communist Party, whose delegates dominate the committee, see it as no more

than a pressure group on the Greater London Council and union leaderships. Socialist Challenge supporters and other revolutionaries consider that the committee should organise workers and passengers to struggle themselves against cuts and for a better transport system, placing no reliance on councillors or union leaders.

In the coming months there will be a great deal to do, building industrial action against the cuts, circulating

information, mobilising support throughout London Transport, and regular mass conferences to build an effective campaign.

In particular, the action committee is appealing to those working for the Greater London Council to relay information about any proposed transport cuts. Further details of the committee and meetings from the Secretary, J McQuade, 8 Lucas House, Albion Avenue, London SW8.



Southeast Social Security offices were occupied for 35 hours by the local Claimants Union last week. The staff at the offices were refusing to allow the Claimants Union to represent claimants, contrary to the policy of their own union, the CPSA, which is to cooperate with Claimants Unions. So far they have won some concessions from the management, but the struggle continues. Contact Betty of Southeast CU: Shoeburyness 4567.

# Unity at GEC

NEARLY 400 storekeepers at GEC Telecommunications in Coventry are on strike over a claim for £2.88 a week backdated to February 1977.

Their action has led to two occupations of GEC premises and could bring a total closure of all four GEC plants in Coventry. HANNA KHAMIS, ASTMS group representative at GEC Stoke, Coventry reports.

The personnel office and the computer room were occupied and only vacated when the company won an injunction in the courts to end it.

Last week, militants occupied the GEC toolroom, forcing the company to get another injunction. The occupation ended last Thursday.

The company has also been forced to adopt ludicrous security measures, which has led to a dispute with over 50 security guards who are members of APEX.

These disputes are the most advanced of many involving both shop-floor and office

workers, which are beginning to stimulate a much needed unity between the plant unions.

Messages of support, and

cash, can be sent to the strikers, through Brian Skitchley, secretary ASTMS branch, GEC Telecommunications Ltd., Stoke, Coventry.



THE WOMEN'S TUC, which met for its annual conference in Scarborough on 9 and 10 March, discussed provision for the under-fives, breast cancer screening and the need for women to enter areas of skilled employment still the preserve of men. It unanimously passed a motion calling for improved legislation on the TUC to organise a pro-abortion demonstration.

## Wolverhampton demonstration 2500 march against police harassment and racists' attacks...



Photo: ANDREW WARD (Report)

The call by Wolverhampton Anti-Racist Committee for a mass demonstration against racist attacks and police harassment was met by over 2,500 people last Saturday.

Black people from Wolverhampton and Handsworth made up over half the march and it was their chants which let the police know what the black community thinks of the police's 'We see no evil' response to the recent knifings, burnings, and threats.

An Engineering Union banner joined the sea of placards held by members of the Communist Party, Labour Party, International Marxist Group, Socialist Workers Party and other organisations — in the largest demonstration ever to be held in Wolverhampton.

The march was to end with ten arrests, which included seven blacks. The following photographs show the main incident and the determination of the West Midlands constabulary to live up to its reputation.



Photo: ANDREW WARD (Report)

An emotional white (left in photo) is led off after attempting to grab the anti-racist committee's banner. It was a brief incident, but...

### Rochdale marches

FIFTEEN HUNDRED people marched against racism in Rochdale on Saturday, with a large contingent from the local Asian community.

At the rally following the march, called by Rochdale District Labour Party, it was Lerner who received the loudest applause when he called for no platform for the NF, and for black self-defence.

### Leicester picket

FOUR HUNDRED militants picketed fascist paper sellers in Leicester on Saturday to boost the weekly pickets held by the town's anti-racist committee.

Saturday's day of action included backing from the trades council, the Indian Workers Association, Socialist Student Alliance, the Unity Against Racism campaign, and a number of trade union branches.

### Trial of Lewisham 'instigator'

KIM GORDON, co-editor of Flame, a black socialist paper, is on trial at Camberwell magistrates court, South London, as the 'main instigator' of the violence at Lewisham during the National Front march last August.

He is supposed to have incited groups of demonstrators at Clifton Rise, at Deptford Church St. at 3pm and at Lewisham clock tower at 4.30pm.

Those with any information or photographs are urged to write now to: Fisher Meredith, 360 South Lambeth Road, London SW8. Tel: 01-720 5171.

### Anti-NF leafleters charged

FIVE anti-fascists in Norwich are facing charges under the Representation of the People Act following the distribution of anti-National Front leaflets and posters during local elections last September.

The five, all members of the Socialist Workers Party, are accused of distributing material without a publisher's or printer's name and address. The prosecution is being brought by Norfolk police, following a complaint by an NF candidate.

Although members of a number of left and women's organisations took part in the leafletting operation, the five SWP members have been singled out for prosecution. They face heavy fines and possible imprisonment arising from the trial, which began on Wednesday.

Messages of support and donations to: Norwich 5 Defence Committee, 14 Edinburgh Road, Norwich.

### Occupation against Apartheid cash

HULL UNIVERSITY was the scene of a massive occupation by students last week, in protest at the continuing high investment in South Africa by the college. The occupation began on 8 March following a vote at the University Council in favour of retaining their shares in South Africa.

The University Council is chaired by Basil Reckitt of Reckitt and Colmans, which receives the bulk of the university's £2m investments.

Over 150 police moved on to the campus to evict the students, but last Friday a union meeting voted overwhelmingly for reoccupation.

The students have received support from sympathetic staff, who are helping to mobilise wide involvement in the divestment campaign. Messages to: Student Union, Cottingham, Hull. Tel 0482 42431.

## and the police pounce on the chief steward



Photo: ANDREW WARD (Report)

Within moments the police took the opportunity to storm into the front lines of the march...



Photo: ANDREW WARD (Report)

And haul off, among others, Dave Stevens (above), treasurer of the anti-racist committee. A Socialist Challenge supporter and well-known as an anti-racist militant, Stevens now faces three charges of assault.

This could mean a prison sentence. Stevens had been elected by the march stewards as the police liaison officer. Pickets are already being organised for the trial, which starts on 13 April.

The defence committee for the ten arrested urgently needs funds. Write c/o Students Union, Wolverhampton Poly, Stafford Street, Wolverhampton.

## Rally against the ban

THE campaign against the two month ban on demonstrations in London is well underway.

The success of the International Women's Day marchers in defying the ban is now to be followed by a rally on 22 March to be addressed by speakers well-representative of the left, reports DAVY JONES.

The platform at next Wednesday's rally to fight the blanket ban on marches will bring together members of organisations only too rarely to be found co-operating on issues which affect the whole labour movement.

Speakers at the meeting, to be held at Camden Town Hall in Euston Road, London, include: Alf Lomas of the London Co-op Political Committee; Tess Gill, from the National Council for Civil Liberties; Tariq Ali, editor of Socialist Challenge; Laurie Smith, a national organiser in

the Engineering Union; Gerry Cohen from the London Communist Party; and Paul Holborow, organising secretary of the Anti Nazi League.

In the chair will be Ernie Roberts, prospective Labour MP for Hackney North.

While this public rally, starting at 7.30pm, is likely to be large, and is backed by a petition and a further week of action after the NCCL lobby of Parliament on 11 April, the response of the labour bureaucracy has so far been pathetic.



Photo: ANDREW WARD (Report)

A few Labour and trade union leaders have involved themselves in the campaign, but the large majority — left and right — have remained silent. The political lessons of Hyde and Ilford have still to sink in.

The effect of the bans has been to demobilise anti-fascists, while the National Front continues to make the headlines and spread its propaganda.

The state has no intention of selectively banning the fascists, and those who call for bans are unfortunately playing into the hands of those who are only too anxious to prevent mass mobilisations to confront the NF.

Only the strength of the labour movement can put paid to the fascists, and only that strength can now overturn a blanket ban that represents a sharp attack on democratic rights.

That is why we must demand that the labour leaders support the campaign to lift the ban and prevent its extension or reimposition.



Photo: MARK RUSHER (IFL)

A SPEAKER from the Brixton and Croydon Collective, a local black revolutionary group, warns a Socialist Unity meeting in Brixton last Thursday of the need to take up the fight against racism in defence of the working class as a whole: 'We, the black people, are only the tinder to light the fire. You are the ones who will burn.'

The warning was a timely one, for soon afterwards police arrived to break up the meeting on the grounds that there were too many in the hall in contravention of fire regulations! Nearly 100, including many West Indians, had turned up.

So the meeting was unable to take any decisions, but decided to reconvene on 22 March to decide whether to contest the forthcoming Lambeth by-election and to determine who the candidate should be.

# Official Sinn Fein Party Conference

'Both nationally and internationally we have exposed the Provisionals and their ultra-left allies' was one remark.

'The Provisional IRA are engaged in a war against the Irish people' was another.

'The vast majority of the people of Northern Ireland see them [the RUC and the British Army] as their only protectors', was a third. TOM MARLOWE explains.

These comments were not made by Roy Mason, Ian Paisley, or the head of the British Army — although all have expressed similar sentiments. They were made on 5 March at the party conference of 'Sinn Fein — The Workers Party', otherwise known as Official Sinn Fein.

The remarks were enthusiastically broadcast by the British media. BBC TV news reported the conference and an article in the *Daily Telegraph* used the statements to urge Roy Mason to step up his military campaign against the nationalist minority.

The suspicious might think that the British media was distorting what the Officials' conference was about; that it misquoted or quoted out of context these remarks.

On the contrary, the British had no need to misreport the conference; the Officials willingly provided all the ammunition required for the

British media's Provo-bashing guns.

The question is: How does an organisation which was once the major left-wing group in Ireland, whose leadership was once the leadership of the Irish Republicanism, come to find itself in a position where it is lauded by such a right-wing newspaper as the *Telegraph*?

## SPLIT

The fierce anti-Provo feeling of the officials goes back to the split in the Republican movement in 1970. Those who became known as the Officials had been in control of the Irish Republican movement since the mid-60s. Heavily influenced by the Communist Party, Sinn Fein had moved to replacing the traditional Republican concept of the 'armed struggle' with 'Marxist' rhetoric.

Consequently, when the Catholic areas of Belfast were

physically assaulted by Loyalists in August 1969, the Catholic population was defenceless. The IRA had sold their guns, so it was said, to the Free Wales Army.

This failure to contend with the violent sectarianism of the Loyalist state and of the Protestant working class led to the split in Sinn Fein/IRA, with the Officials on the one hand and the Provisionals on the other.

The Officials did not immediately give up the need to physically defend the Catholic areas, or if the need be, counter attack. Indeed the first bomb to explode in England, at the Aldershot headquarters of the Parachute regiment which was responsible for Bloody Sunday, was claimed by the Officials. It was not until 1972 that the Officials declared a 'ceasefire'.

Since then the only time the Officials have lifted guns is to shoot Provos or members of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, who themselves split from the Officials over the necessity for a military campaign.

Both of these splits were not only concerned with the need to wage an armed struggle against British imperialism. Behind the differences were

differing conceptions of the nature of the Loyalist state and of British involvement.

Initially, too, there were differences on a wide range of political issues, with the Officials being well to the left in most instances. But this is no longer the case, and significant sections of the Provos are now well to the left of the Officials, not just on the national question but on a wide variety of questions.

Yet the real demarcation remains the Officials' analysis of and attitude to British imperialism and its Northern State.

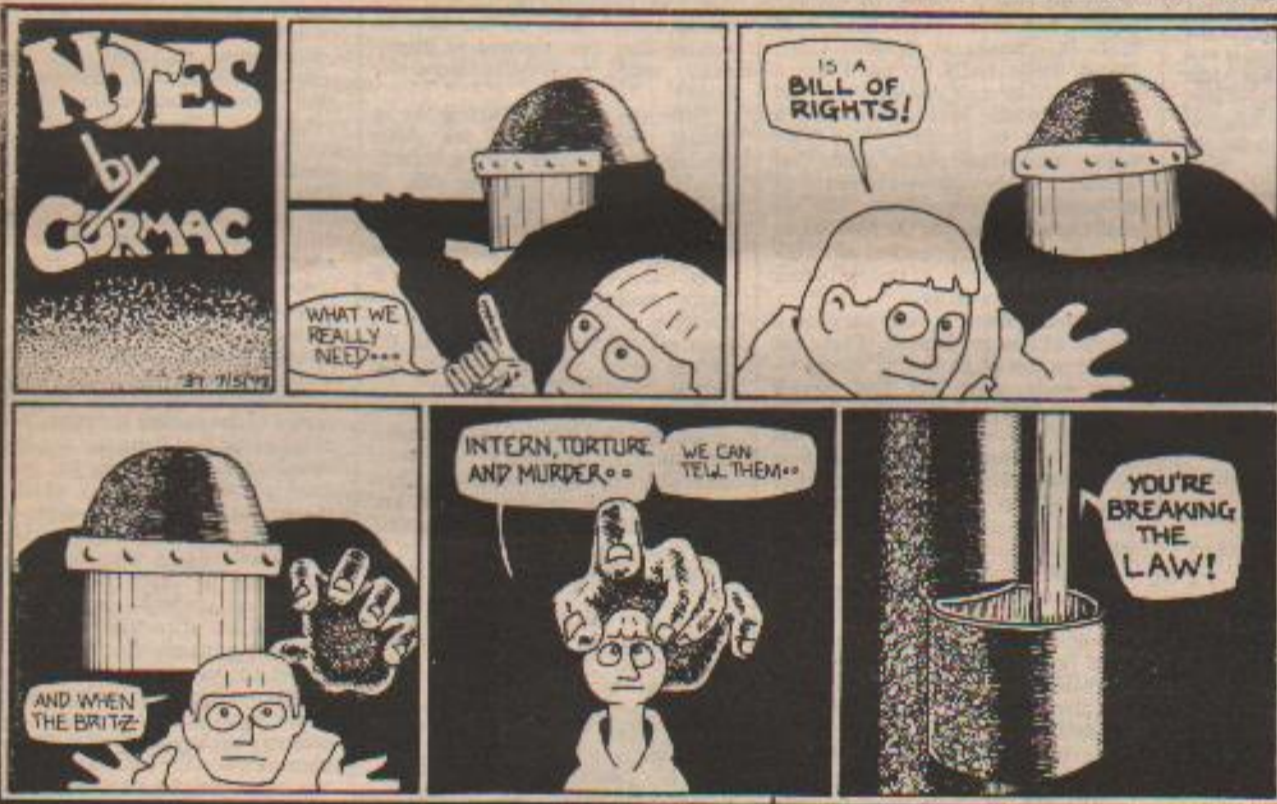
## EVOLVED

The Officials have gradually evolved to a position where they are now out and out pro-Unionist, with their recent conference endorsing a call for a local Northern Irish Assembly within the UK. They do this because of their stress on 'workers unity' in the North of Ireland.

Thus on the dominant question in Irish politics — the partition of the country — the Officials are to the right not only of the Provos, not only the reformist SDLP, but even the Fianna Fail Government which has recently talked of the need



TOMÁS MACGIOLLA, president of Sinn Fein.



## Long Kesh of the Social Democratic and Labour Party.



### Letter

WHEN I first came into Long Kesh I noticed the names of several men on every cage. I asked why the cages were called after these men, and was told they were responsible for us being in the cages. The names are those of Hume, Fitt, Currie Cooper and other leaders

If I analyse and trace the history of the SDLP you will see why these names are on the cages up to the present day.

In 1968 — when a new, more educated generation emerged to oppose all the injustices their fathers and mothers had endured — a mass movement was born with which all the nationalist population could identify. It wasn't long before there were massive protests and civil rights marches.

### CHANCE

With emotions very high, it was then that opportunists and career seekers saw their chance.

When it was opportune, they split with the mass movement to form their own party — the SDLP. They had used the civil rights campaign as a route to political power.

It wasn't until 1973 that they got the chance they had been waiting for. The power-sharing executive was established to

rule the North and the SDLP was in the cabinet. In office they acted just like the old Stormont regime. Cabinet Minister Austin Currie fined rent and rate strikers, although originally he had encouraged the strike.

The hypocrisy was even more blatant, for the SDLP had stated it would never take part in government until internment was ended. There were more interned than ever when the SDLP came to office.

At that stage the Unionist Party under Brian 'Fox' Faulkner were only too glad to accommodate the party in a position of limited power. It guaranteed the revived Stormont a much needed degree of credibility, and the SDLP slotted in nicely to their establishment role.

### GLEE

However both Faulkner's and the SDLP's glee were short lived. In May 1974 the Loyalist strike brought down the executive and ended the SDLP's brief participation in the operation of the bourgeois imperialist system in this part of Ireland.

The years since have been, to

say the least, anti-climactic, and splits and cracks in the SDLP are beginning to appear. It continues to suffer one set-back after another; most recently when Roy Mason's bid to resurrect another power-sharing administration met with no success.

### BACK-TRACK

It appears that the only course open to the party is to back-track to its various green Tory positions of pre-1970, and recently it has started talking about the need for a united Ireland again. By waving bigger and greener flags, it hopes to get the votes of a large section of the nationalist population.

On vote catching I had one encounter with the SDLP I shall never forget. It happened in 1973 when I was staying in a house in South Armagh with a family who were traditional Republican supporters. They were oldish and full of religious fervour, but supported the Republican guerilla war wholeheartedly.

That day their postal votes arrived although they hadn't sent for them. The following Sunday, a local SDLP election worker came by. He preached

to them as a cleric rather than as a political worker, saying such things as: 'You'll vote for the local man. He's one of ours and we must keep out the other sort.'

These bigoted remarks worked wonders, and before long the postal votes were unearthed and given to the election worker to fill in the way he wanted.

When the present guerilla campaign becomes more

politically oriented in a socialist direction no doubt this bourgeois party will be replaced by a truly revolutionary party which will be a lot closer to the nationalist working class population.

Then the SDLP will be recognised for what they are — middle class opportunists whose careers come before the needs of the people.

Yours  
Tiofaudh Ar La

## Audience condemns media

A HUNDRED strong London audience invited by the BBC overwhelmingly condemned British media coverage of the North of Ireland at the end of a discussion programme on 8 March.

The audience voted by a ratio of over three to one in favour of the motion 'The British People have not been told the truth about Northern Ireland'. The vote came at the end of a BBC radio programme, *You the Jury*, in which broadcaster Jonathan Dimbleby had proposed the motion.

He was supported by journalist Mary Holland and by deputy leader of the SDLP,

John Hume. The defence of the media was led by *Daily Telegraph* editor William Deedes, backed up by Tory MP William Van Straubenzee and the editor of BBC TV news, Alan Protheroe.

Both Hume and Dimbleby argued that the 'Irish problem' was 'a colonial one', and Holland testified that when working for the *Observer*, she had been prevented from reporting facts concerning the north of Ireland.

After the motion was debated the studio audience voted 69 in favour and 21 against, with 10 abstentions.

## Nuclear Technology is not neutral Replying to misconceptions and fantasies

'I'M NOT very keen on reprocessing', said Callaghan to the military dictator Zia, on a recent trip to Pakistan. But Justice Parker has decreed that Britain is keen on reprocessing nuclear waste. The Labour Government has indicated that it will back Parker, Britain will become the nuclear dustbin of the capitalist world.

Socialist Challenge is in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament by the Labour Government. We are opposed to the further expansion of Windscale. We do not believe that science and technology are 'neutral'.

We publish below further letters from readers on the nuclear debate. In general we agree with the sentiments they express.

### No Nukes!

CARL GARDNER's defense of nuclear power (2 February) on the grounds that developments in science and technology are neutral and free of ideology, and only assume a progressive or oppressive character depending on the prevailing social relations, is as devoid of political understanding as the ecologists he attacks.

Science and technology are not merely a dispassionate search for knowledge, but are an integral part of the society they exist in. At present, most research and development is funded by, controlled by, and used to strengthen and perpetuate capitalism. Examples: Genetic and biological theories which justify the oppression of women, blacks and gays; technology to suppress dissent (in-depth interrogation, riot control equipment); behaviour modifying drugs for prisoners and the mentally ill.

These and many more examples are nothing more than scientific and technological solutions to different aspects of capitalism's crisis, and contain absolutely no potential social benefits. Thus it is not a basic principle that we will take over and build on 'all technical, scientific and cultural developments of previous societies'.

Nuclear power as a means of producing energy is a solution to an aspect of capitalism's crisis — the need to generate and consume a logarithmically increasing amount of energy, and the 'energy crisis' this contradiction creates.

Contrary to Charlie Young's wild assertion in the same issue, nukes do not have an excellent safety record. What they do have is an excellent propaganda machine on their side, which has skillfully covered up the hundreds of hair-raising near-disasters which have occurred, and the constant irradiation of the environment which is taking place. The masses of safety precautions, warning devices and security arrangements around nukes testify to their danger, not their safety. No process can be made foolproof, even in a workers' state, so there will always be the risk of a catastrophic accident.

Come the revolution, a workers' government would publicise all the accidents, risks and dangers; investigate the environmental damage, and re-assess energy needs in the near future. At the same time, the creative potential of the masses could be turned to researching safer, easier, more environment-conscious methods of energy production. It is highly unlikely — to me inconceivable — that nukes would still appear a desirable proposition after this sort of scrutiny.

But right now we live under a less democratic, more oppressive social system, and we are witnessing its headlong rush into commercial exploitation of one of the riskiest, least controllable areas of technology there is. This assessment of risk is not based on 'guilt by association' with bombs, but on evidence from medicine and physics. If we don't expect the capitalists to suddenly stop killing industrial workers or polluting

the air and seas, why should we expect them to operate nukes with safety and conservation before profit?

Thus it is no more 'anti-technology' to oppose nukes than it is to demand that thalidomide, asbestos, or nerve gas are banned. Even if we only regard nukes as a suspected carcinogen, we must take the position that we aren't prepared to take the risk for the sake of profit.

Just because the vanguard of organised resistance to the nuclear threat is a little light on politics at the moment is no reason to dismiss it as a bunch of cranks and utopians. Just because 'high technology = alienation' is a piece of meaningless analysis is no reason to substitute the equally vacuous slogan 'high technology = potential liberation'. In every country where nukes are in widespread use, the organised left is supporting the growing popular mobilisations against them.

It is about time the left in Britain woke up to this issue and became involved in it as a matter of urgency. For revolutionaries, the question of nuclear power is indeed a political question — namely how to build and educate a mass movement around the slogan: No Nukes!

CHRIS PITTS [Tokyo]

### Crazy Maniacs

CARL GARDNER aptly summed up what is wrong in his approach in his opening lines. 'A debate between ecologists and Marxists is long overdue'. No comrade, what is overdue is the recognition that the best ecologists are Marxists and despite comrade Gardner's obvious ignorance they have been around for some time. By far the best book on ecology published in Britain is by Harry Rothman, not only a Marxist but at one time a member of the International Marxist Group.

Rothman's book *Murderous Province* is a brilliant essay on ecology which does not spare the crimes of the Soviet bureaucracy in this area. I don't want to go into an entire analysis of the ecology question, so I'll restrict myself to two questions — nuclear arms and nuclear power.

Carl Gardner is quite correct to separate these two issues. Unfortunately he still gets them both wrong. Should we support the possession of a nuclear arsenal by the Soviet Union, a (degenerated) workers' state? Absolutely not. While we are certainly for the right of the Soviet Union to defend itself against imperialist aggression we do so because the social gains of the Russian revolution are a gain for the workers and oppressed of the whole world (Cuba, Vietnam, Angola!).

The ability of that same state to wipe out the workers and oppressed of the whole world is a gain for nobody. We should call on the Soviet Union to ditch nuclear armaments, along with chemical and biological ones. The Soviet bureaucracy will not do so because it has no faith in the American workers ability to force the USA to follow suit, just as they have no faith in the revolutionary potential

of the working class in general. We do, and that dispute is one of the central lines of divide between revolutionaries and supporters of the Soviet Union.

Even if one accepts that the Soviet Union should possess a nuclear arsenal — why do they need to be able to wipe the USA off the map five times. The answer is that in any real military terms they don't. Neither side could start a nuclear war today without devastating the entire planet, and they both know it. They also know that neither side can get a 'first strike' potential which would prevent the other side from hitting back. The real purpose of the arms race is different, in the USA it is economic (to aid the economy) and in the USSR it is political (to bolster the bureaucracy).

'Splitting the atom... was probably the most important practical scientific discovery of the twentieth century.' Why? So far its results have been (i) an additional source of energy, which isn't really necessary (ii) nuclear weapons (iii) hundreds of thousands of tons of radioactive waste which won't become harmless for centuries (iv) a lot of leaky nuclear reactors. Comrade Gardner seems to suspend his critical (sic) faculties in the face of the awesome potential of nuclear reactions. Let's look at some of the real arguments.

Is nuclear power dangerous? It certainly is. Charlie Young asserts the 'excellent safety record' of nuclear plants. Not true. There have been leaks in reactors in Britain, USA, USSR, Italy, India, to name but a few. No large scale disasters have yet occurred, which lulls people into a false sense of security. The very nature of nuclear plants mean that accidents will be relatively trivial — or of terrifying proportions. Do we really have to wait for the first major spillage of radioactive material to kill and maim thousands of people before we recognise the dangers.

Nuclear power is necessary as a source of energy. Untrue. There are ample means of producing energy — fossil fuels, wave and tidal power, hydro-electric, solar, wind, to mention a few. Only the first has major pollution problems and these can be controlled. Unfortunately they don't all fit as neatly into the military-industrial complexes of western and Soviet societies.

Should we oppose the development of nuclear power? Yes we should. The less class-conscious sections of the ecology movement want to close the book on nuclear power forever. We think that is short-sighted and doesn't recognise that there is a possibility of the safe use of nuclear power. Today however such a possibility doesn't exist.

We know the record of the maniacs who control our society when it comes to nuclear power. Anyone who thinks that we can safely leave them to play with their nuclear toys is crazy. Only a genuinely rational, planned, technologically advanced socialist society could safely investigate nuclear power. Till then the book should be shut — tightly.

COLINTALBOT [London]

### Six Theses Against Nuclear Power

IT IS GOOD TO SEE some of the British left taking the politics of nuclear power seriously at last. I'd just like to take issue with an argument about technology which seems to be common on the left.

This argument suggests that, in contrast to the bourgeois concerns of the eco-freaks, we 'real' socialists know that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with any technology. It all depends who uses it, on whom, for what. Thus nuclear power is bad under capitalism, good under socialism. The argument (often called the use/abuse model) tries to persuade us that technology is neutral in itself, be it nuclear power, farm sprays, tin openers or assembly lines. So science itself is fine, the only problem is who owns and/or controls it; who uses it and who abuses it.

I think that this position is plain silly for a number of reasons: 1) In

distinguishing between the technology and its human context (i.e. its uses, its financing) the use/abuse approach encourages us to consider either one or the other. Why cannot socialists consider both? It is rigid, arrogant and elitist to deny the complexity of such issues. 2) The use/abuse model falsely implies that the social relations of any technology are separate from that technology.

Technology doesn't just happen. People make it. So the very process of producing a technology means that certain aims are built in. Often but not always (tin openers). Anyway what are these aims?

First: profit. But not always, or obviously. Consider the State's financing of germ warfare or riot control technologies.

Second: the control of people's lives. TV doesn't communicate, but dictates one-way.

Third: the deskilling of work, making it cheaper, meaningless and alien.

Fourth: the introduction of technology, not to make life and work more socially useful, but to replace labour (hence so-called structural unemployment) and to increase the productivity of the retained labour. This creates major and new contradictions. For example, on farms agriculturals replace hand or machine hoeing. Hoeing is no picnic, but what do the new 'scientific' sprays do to your food and to the person who does the spraying? Why do we have to assume that one method is intrinsically more progressive than the other?

Fifth: the use of technology as an instant, technical 'fix' for more fundamental social or economic breakdowns. Isn't this the role of nuclear power for the now-you-see-it-now-you-don't Energy Gap? Isn't this why antibiotics are given to hens in batteries where disease is rife? Yet those antibiotics spread resistant bacteria to the workers who don't even eat the stuff, let alone the person who ultimately eats the carcass. Neutral? Progress?

Sixth: in all these processes a singularly anti-human, anti-socialist definition of efficiency and value creeps in. Cost-benefit analysis. Crass economism. Weighing up life and safety against productivity and profit. The result: humans are made to fit machines; unhealthy, repetitive work, shifts.

You may call all that lot neutral. I don't. You may believe that collectivising the factories ends such problems as a stroke! It might improve work, but doesn't transform it. In other words, the use/abuse approach is in key respects conservative. It's similar to telling a socialist feminist not to be so silly, the personal isn't really politics. Or telling a car-worker: don't worry, after the Revolution you'll still be doing the same work, only it'll be for all of us. How absurd. How uncritical.

TIM LANG [British Society for Social Responsibility in Science, 9 Poland St, London W1]

### Technology and the Strong State

I'VE RECENTLY READ the page of letters on nuclear energy (Socialist Challenge, 2 February) and it appears that only Geoffrey Tunn knows what is going on. As for the rest their contributions are verbose parading of tired old theories (Carl Gardner) which are hardly distinguishable from Stalinism and sheer fantasy (Charlie Young).

Carl Gardner labours under the misconception that science and technology are politically neutral, and that the debate is purely and simply over who has control. Thus he is able to assume that the revolution — whenever that happens — will somehow magically transform nasty capitalist nuclear waste into good clean socialist nuclear waste. Maybe pigs will fly as well!

He then goes on to attack, on spurious assumptions, that those concerned with alternative energy sources are either luddites or utopians, and that such sources are

incompatible with any advanced economy. But this is to fly directly in the face of reality.

In the first place the small scale energy policy is completely in keeping with a capitalist economy in that it allows a de-socialising of a portion of the total energy production by making it the responsibility of the consumers of solar-panels, heat-pumps, windmills etc — commodities which are coming on to the market in increasing numbers. This is further in keeping with a capitalist economy in that it has as its counterpart the run-down of conventional means of energy production and its concentration in the hands of a tiny nuclear elite.

Secondly it is to fail to see that there is a major division amongst alternative energy advocates, namely between those who favour small scale low technology, and those who favour the development of very large scale high technology. The latter policy has been best expounded by members of the Conference of Socialist Economists working in conjunction with members of TASS in a jointly produced pamphlet.

In their main argument is that the struggle against redundancies in the power industry is only likely to succeed if it is linked to an aggressive strategy aimed at radically changing future energy policy in the particular direction of wave and wind power. Interestingly enough this has been made a practical possibility as a result of technological developments which considerably post-date the atom-splitting which Carl Gardner eulogises. Instead of advocating backyard windmills, they advocate the construction of a grid of off-shore windmills of massive dimensions. This can only be done by combining the latest techniques in off-shore drilling rigs with some of the most advanced technology from the aerospace industry. Such a policy would lead to both the production of energy from safe renewable sources, and the creation of a very considerable number of new jobs.

Charlie Young praises the safety record of the nuclear industry. Well it may be true that there has not been a cataclysmic disaster yet, but we are dealing with a technology which has the potential for such a disaster to occur at any moment within a time-span ranging over hundreds of thousands of years. Thus it is a technology which is extremely ideologically attractive to capitalism in that it demands the creation of an armed nuclear power police force to guard the eternally poisonous nuclear waste. Such a force is already being created, but it goes further than this because it lays the foundations for the argument that the status quo should be maintained indefinitely in order to protect us from the abyss of environmental catastrophes. Robert Jungk, Honorary Professor of Future Studies at the University of West Berlin, stated these implications very clearly in an article written for the Austrian magazine *Neues Forum* last year. Jungk wrote:

'Under the pretext that technical developments must be safeguarded against "reactionaries and radicals", it is becoming necessary to erect a recording and ruling system of hitherto unknown precision and dimensions. Could this not be the actual motive for the all too hasty development of nuclear energy? The rulers of the state and industry are thinking not so much about maintaining light and warmth for their citizens, but more about concentrating and perpetuating their own power.'

No, Carl Gardner, science and technology are not politically neutral. We cannot leave the question of nuclear power until 'after the revolution'. It is the task of Marxists to make a serious intervention in the anti-nuclear power movement in order to give it a clearer political direction. But such an intervention can only be made from an informed position rather than from tired old ideological dogma. If we can manage to make such an intervention, then the revolutionary potential of this issue is truly enormous.

JON WILLIAMS [London W12]



## Zimbabwe documents

## Thirty pieces of silver

The Africa in Struggle group takes a close look at the secret minutes of the Zimbabwe 'internal settlement' talks.

Taking part were the Rhodesian Government, the United African National Council (Bishop Muzorewa), African National Council (Rev Sithole), and the Zimbabwe United People's Organisation (Chief Chirau).

'The men in the bush are not ours. We may be the first to face the firing squads.'

This terror-stricken appraisal of the political situation by GM Magaramomba of the Zimbabwe United People's Organisation is remarkably accurate.

And when the minutes of the internal settlement talks become known it will be a matter of stringing up the last racist in the guts of the last Uncle Tom.

The negotiators live in a dream world. Their ruminations are frequently interrupted by solemn cups of tea, which prompts Mgaramombe to remark:

'It is enjoyable to sit at conference and hear politicians argue.' 'Speak for yourself' is Ian Smith's testy response.

Or take this little exchange at the start of one of the sessions:

'CHIRAU (ZUPO): Interjection Mr Chairman, I noticed that in all our deliberations we forgot one very important thing. We forgot to start these meetings with a word of prayer. We have among us Ministers of religion and the Bishop, couldn't one of them lead us in a word of prayer before we start.'

'SITHOLE [ANC]: Mr Chairman, the religious men here are not neutral.'

'NDIWENI (ZUPO): Can we start with a word of prayer as has been suggested?'

'SITHOLE: If this is suggested and accepted I suggest we ask a chaplain from outside this conference, someone who will be neutral and pray for all of us.'

'NDIWENI: May be Mr Smith can!'

'SMITH: I am also not neutral Mr Chairman!'

And these are the people who claim responsibility for the country's future!

Sometimes the proceedings are friendly. The Government delegation wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and the

'nationalists' return the compliment, hoping the whites will 'prosper' in the new year.

Sometimes things are less friendly. At one point Smith advises Bishop Muzorewa of the United African Council to go and 'swallow his head if he wants to'.

But this unfortunate banter doesn't upset the generally amicable proceedings. The black delegations behave like Smith's public relations advisers, suggesting the best way to sell the settlement. Witness this exchange:

'SITHOLE: What about the Patriotic Front (who control the guerilla armies), have you invited them?'

'SMITH: I invited them in the same general way that I invited you. They got the message.'

'SITHOLE: It would be helpful for your credibility to make sure in some way that they got invited and to let the world know about it.'

'SMITH: Point well taken.'

It is this problem of how to sell the settlement to both whites and blacks which takes up the time.

After all there is agreement on the fundamentals before the talks start. At one point the good Bishop pulls up David Smith of the white delegation for talking about revolutionary change:

'...you talk about a revolution. What we are doing here is not a revolution!'

Sithole of the African National Council poses the problem:

'We have to sell the settlement to people inside and outside this country. Any settlement with a white blocking third will be considered a sell-out by the majority of the people in this country. It will be a sell-out deal to the fighters, to the OAU, UN, USA, UK. This may be unpalatable to us, but these are the facts. It is no good to think that we can ignore the rest of the world, we have already done that and we are at odds with the world. We

need a type of settlement that removes sanctions, stops the war and give us international status of a free country!'

Smith approached the talks with the offer of adult suffrage in exchange for certain guarantees. Sithole sums up the 'nationalist delegations' approach:

'...the absolute demand is on a man one vote; everything else is negotiable.'

The first item was what was meant by adult suffrage — who was allowed to vote? Chikerema of the UANC argued that:

'...we must be prepared to see that if we are to sell the conclusion of these talks to the very people who are fighting in the bush, it will be difficult to do so when 18 year olds are disenfranchised. It is the 15, 16, 17 and 18 year olds who are doing the fighting.'

David Smith was doubtful and ventured some homespun psychology:

'...It is a known fact that at 21 children become more serious minded and more mature.'

And Van der Byl exclaims in horror:

'Does the 18 year old limit apply to women?'

But Ian Smith sees the sense in Chikerema's argument:

'This is a minor problem. If all of you are decided on enfranchisement of the 18 year olds I will not stand in the way of progress, I will go along.'

The Anglo-American settlement proposals do not include the enfranchisement of anyone under 21.

The talks turn to the safeguards demanded by the whites. On the crucial question of the judiciary all agreed with Sithole's proposal:

'There shall be an independent



This photo was smuggled out of a Rhodesian courtroom. The judges will stay the same under the internal settlement — so will the defendants.

judiciary free from political influence. To ensure a competent bench there shall be high qualifications for the appointment of judges.'

One small point: who will the judges be?

One can only assume the present ones, who have executed an average of one black a week for the past year.

The UANC proposal had been even worse to start with:

'We accept the principle of an independent judiciary with the proviso for the addition of the privy council for the final appeal.'

Which drew the reply for Van der Byl:

'Doesn't the Bishop's delegation think this is a neocolonial step? BISHOP: We thought this might give added protection to the whites.'

The Public Service Board which controls the civil service consists of three government appointees. At present they are all white. Under the present constitution the appointees serve for a three year period and are replaced.

The participants discussed whether the board should be 'entrenched' in the constitution:

'To suggest that whites be elected on a common roll when they are outnumbered by 30:1, you can't be serious. This wouldn't be the starter. We will be laughed at...'

'SITHOLE: ...This is difficult to sell.'

A blocking mechanism was agreed, whereby 86 affirmative votes (out of 100) are needed to change the constitution or 14 negative votes to oppose it. This arrangement is to last for either ten years or the life of two parliaments, whichever is longer.

It is hard to see how the whites could ever be removed from their entrenched positions.

Leaving this aside, the fragmentation of the black vote and the 28 reserved white seats almost ensures a plurality for the ruling Rhodesian Front!

It may seem incredible that

'SMAKANGE (UANC) ...we are agreeable to the retrenchment as it protects those in (the) outgoing administration.'

He added that he didn't want a situation like the United States:

'...where there is the attitude throw the rascals away and let the new faces come in. This is not good for smooth transition.'

So Smith generously conceded:

'...if we are agreed, I will commit myself to appointing (a) black when the time comes to replace someone.'

This was gratefully accepted.

After skipping over small questions like the composition of the judiciary, the structure of the civil service and deferring the question of the armed forces to the future, the talks went on to discuss constitutional safeguards for whites.

After much posturing they agreed on 20 seats to be reserved for whites, to be elected by whites only and a further eight whites from the common roll are to be guaranteed seats.

These 20 had to be guaranteed because, as Smith points out:

'To suggest that whites be elected on a common roll when they are outnumbered by 30:1, you can't be serious. This wouldn't be the starter. We will be laughed at...'

'SITHOLE: ...This is difficult to sell.'

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Leaving this aside, the fragmentation of the black vote and the 28 reserved white seats almost ensures a plurality for the ruling Rhodesian Front!

It may seem incredible that

the Rhodesian Front is still able to dominate the political scene. But the issue of white confidence was the stick with which Smith was able to beat the black delegations. And with the lurking threat of the freedom fighters in the bush, Muzorewa and company seemed to take a masochistic pleasure in it:

'SITHOLE: I think it is important to make progress... We are under pressure from people in this country and from the boys in the bush.'

And another member of the Sithole delegation explained why Smith (and imperialism) has nothing to fear from them:

'There are many situations where the common man may want nationalisation and we want to say from the start no to such pressures on the government of the day... There are those who think that nationalisation is proper, we feel not, and we want to ensure the rights of the individual to property if that should happen.'

The Government delegation came away with the feeling that they could rely on these people to make 'responsible' black leaders, in the mould of other neo-colonial states.

'VAN DER BYL: ...In the case of Kenya it turned out well after a bad start. Botswana is a primitive situation where a whiteman was brought to administer the government. The best example comes from the Ivory Coast where there is a sound economy.'

That's just the sort of sales pitch that would appeal to David Owen and the Labour Government.

Our job is to make sure the labour movement in Britain is made aware of what the internal settlement means, and its similarity to Owen's plan for the country.

For, as Ian Smith repeatedly remarked: 'My information is that the British will go along...'. We must not let that prediction come true.



Bishop Able Muzorewa addresses a rally in Trafalgar Square in 1972. Then he was speaking against settlement proposals.

# Exposed! US interference in Latin America unions

## Guard dogs on a short leash

Documents that have reached Peoples News Service in London reveal the United States' comprehensive plans to stymie opposition to its policies and those of its client leaders in Latin America. A PNS correspondent explains.

The documents, from the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), show that over the period 1977-1981 the US Government (footing most of the bill), the AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor - Congress for Industrial Organisation) and major US multinationals are and will be spending over 20 million dollars to subvert trade unions and bring them into line with United States foreign policy.

The budget for AIFLD's Washington headquarters alone is over three million dollars.

The nominally independent AIFLD funds 'labor leader training programs' and 'social welfare projects' throughout the American continent with the goal of 'encouraging the growth and development of free, democratic trade unions'.

These trade unionists, having been trained in 'mature, responsible trade unionism' in their own country and at special courses in the US will 'recognise the dignity of labor in a free society' and consequently obstruct any efforts to rock the boat in their own country or break with US imperialist policies.

### VETTED

Ostensibly, 'labor leader training' and 'social welfare projects' seem innocuous, even laudable projects. However, American money is never frittered away and maximum efforts are made to ensure that the US will get value for money.

For example, all the applicants for the training programmes, especially the 'privileged' ones who will be trained at the AIFLD's Front Royal Institute in Virginia, are vetted by the US Labor Mission at the embassy in their own country. He or she is sent with the permission of his or her employer.

The conditions for training also include the stipulation that the trainee will become a full-time official or important leader of a trade union when he or she returns. In this way the AIFLD has succeeded in having its trainees in the leadership of



GUATEMALA Earthquake. US aid went to pet trade unions — not the victims.

trade union confederations.

In Ecuador, Brazil and El Salvador, for example, over 90 per cent of the leadership of the 'democratic' trade union confederations are AIFLD-trained. The same is true for just about every country in Latin America.

'Social welfare projects' are no less controlled. The money spent through AIFLD, the US Agency for International Development (AID), and the AFL-CIO (known to many in Latin America as the AFL-CIA) on health facilities, housing projects and workers' credit unions is tied to membership of the appropriate union.

In this way, workers are bribed into belonging to kept unions with the express purpose of undermining the mobilisation by independent trade unions.

A startling example of AIFLD 'social welfare' in action is provided in the document from Guatemala. In February 1976 a gigantic earthquake destroyed tens of thousands of homes, smashed businesses and led to disease epidemics.

In response to the disaster the AFL-CIO donated 100,000 dollars. This money was distributed by the AIFLD through the CTF (Confederación de Trabajadores Federados — the major 'free, democratic' trade union federation) for food, blankets,

tools and roofing materials.

This aid was not indiscriminately handed out and the funds were used to repair the damage done to the CTF, and to increase the prestige of the 'free, democratic' trade unions.

### NOTORIOUS

The vast majority of the finance is donated in grant form by the AID to the AIFLD. Thence the cash is donated in 'sub-grants' to US unions to the AFL-CIO.

Unions notorious for being used in this way are the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), the Communications Workers of America (CWA), the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks (BRAC), the Glass Bottle Blowers Union (GBBA) and several others.

These unions pass the money to the recipients through their respective International Trade Secretariats (ITS) such as the International Federation of Free Teachers Unions for the AFT (to which the British National Union of Teachers belongs) or to the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) for the BRAC (to which both the Transport and General Workers Union and the National Union of Seamen belong).

In its reports and prospective plans the AIFLD announces in detail how much it will be spending in such and such a country through such and such a union and ITS.

Through this tortuous maze some examples can be traced that show up sinister associations. In 1975, for example, the International Federation of Petroleum and Chemical Workers (IFPCW) was disbanded since it had been exposed by prominent American trade unionists as a CIA operation.

It has been discredited and exposed too extensively to be of any further use either to the AIFLD or the CIA (an organisation never far from the centre of the AIFLD's activities).

However, all was not lost, and from a State Department document signed by Henry Kissinger in November 1975, we see that, '... in 1976 the GBBA will replace the IFPCW...'

The idea was that the GBBA should begin the groundwork for recreating an international organisation to replace the IFPCW, reaffiliate the unions that used to belong to it and thus continue to be used by the AIFLD and the CIA. The likelihood of the scheme being adopted depended on the amount of publicity given to this fact.

The CIA's connections with the AIFLD can be gleaned from the interesting alterations between the AIFLD and the local US embassies (under the State Department) as well as from revelations such as Philip Agee's that the AIFLD has long provided cover for CIA officers.



In Brazil in 1968, a senate investigation revealed that the AIFLD had been using its money in electoral activities. In spite of widespread pressure following massive publicity, the AIFLD did not leave.

A May 1977 AIFLD memorandum noted that the US ambassador in Brazil had maintained for two years that the local AIFLD office should be closed. AIFLD representations, however, ensured that it remained.

From the same memo comes this: 'AIFLD continues to operate in most of the problem countries, supporting friendly labor leaders, primarily through training programs which include discussions of trade union and human rights without specifically criticising

this context barely distinguishable from a government agency).

All these stand four square in the defence of United States multinational interests all over the world.

Whereas the AIFLD and the AFL-CIO purport to stand for free trade unionism, everywhere they are committed to upholding the most corrupt, even semi-feudal, regimes since any kind of reform or genuine social progress is regarded as the first step towards social revolution.

In late 1958, members of government, business people and trade unionists gathered for a conference at Cornell University in the USA on 'American Labor's role in Less Developed Countries'. John T. Dunlop, of the Harvard Economics Department, outlined the attitude that is the present policy of AIFLD.

On trade unions in the Third World, he said, 'When we go to a country like Iraq or Ghana, maybe the best advice we can give them is not how to run a free trade union but maybe to tell them not to have any trade union or to have a controlled trade union.'

### EXPLOITATION

He went on, 'We have to be reconciled to the fact that for a generation or more these unions are going to be kept unions. It is completely consistent to say that, on the one hand I am in favour of free and independent unions, while on the other hand I recognise that in the face of the Communist threat there may be good reasons for the unions to be kept unions.'

The AIFLD and its counterparts for other continents, the African-American Labor Congress, and the Asian-American Free Labor Institute, are pivotal instruments in keeping the 'free world' open for the fullest exploitation by US imperialism and the maximum quiescence of the international working class.

The workers of the world must organise internationally just as their opponent does; the struggle cannot be confined to national boundaries.

The first step must be for all trade unions to rid their own international bodies of the agents and clients of imperialism who control so many of them now.

\* For further information and access to any of the above-mentioned documents, contact Peoples News Service, 182 Upper Street, London N1 [Tel: 01-359 3785].



Above and below: in the Guatemala earthquake of February 1976, aid from the AFL-CIO was distributed through the 'kept' unions.



the host government. Some of our embassies in these countries have raised policy objections to AIFLD's continuing support of a trade union movement willing to operate within government constraints, but no country programs have been terminated to date for this reason.'

In this and other examples we see an organisation that can go over the head of an ambassador and ignore him. One such organisation is the CIA; who else could exert so much pressure?

The presence of the CIA in these affairs is one aspect of the unified global strategy of the United States government presented variously through the CIA, the AIFLD, AID, the US Information Agency, US embassies and the AFL-CIO (in

## Intercontinental Press Imprecor

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'THE MOST important strike for 30 years' is the view of the 3-page lead article on the US miners' strike in this week's Intercontinental Press/Imprecor (vol 16, No. 10).

Also in this issue are: a report on the Coalfield Conference in Ireland; an article on the French elections; an analysis of the Japanese Communist Party's rightward drift; an interview with a Nicaraguan Trotskyist; articles on Jamaica, Iran, Peru, Canada, Germany; an analysis of Carter's drive to get the Cubans out of Africa.

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# French CP won't break links with Chile 'National independence' or workers' unity?

GEORGES MARCHAIS, leader of the French Communist Party (PCF), has announced that he is not in favour of breaking diplomatic relations with Chile. 'We want our own freedom to be respected, we cannot interfere with the internal problems of other countries', he told the Brazilian paper *Jornal do Brasil*.

This may come as a surprise to the British left. But, as MARTIN METEYARD reports from Paris, it sums up an election campaign in which the left has tried to outdo the right in advancing nationalist solutions.

'Neither Washington nor Moscow — with Communist Ministers the policy of France will be decided in France' says the PCF. They want to keep France's nuclear strike force at full strength.

The position of the Socialist Party (PS) is more ambiguous, but it too continually harps on the theme of 'national independence'.

French troops are dotted all over North and Central Africa. In recent months they have intervened directly in Chad, Djibouti and the Sahara.

The pretence of the nominal independence of many countries in this area is barely maintained; the economies and state apparatuses are so closely linked to France that they are at the mercy of their imperialist masters.

## WITHDRAW

Any true socialist government would immediately withdraw troops from these territories, dismantle all the

other mechanisms of neo-colonial oppression, and give generous aid to the struggles of the masses. Neither the PCF nor PS propose these things.

France also maintains a direct colonial hold on its overseas 'departments' and 'territories'.

## ENSLAVED

Over a million people are enslaved in this fashion in French Guiana, the Caribbean islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, the island of Reunion in the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific islands that go to make up New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and the Wallis and Futuna islands.

Their dependent status is laid down in a statute voted unanimously by both left and right in 1946. Today the PS appears divided on the question, while the PCF advocates 'autonomy'.

In Guadeloupe, a PCF candidate recently explained that 'Autonomy does not



Mitterrand

signify independence but an original form of decolonisation in the framework of the French Republic...an autonomous Guadeloupe would be French.'

In other words, the left's insistence on 'national independence' for France means the denial of independence to the oppressed and exploited masses of these colonies.

## HARASSMENT

Racism has always been a major problem in France, particularly since the struggle for Algerian independence. Police harassment of immigrant workers goes on non-stop — you only have to use the Paris Underground at night to see the constant checking and questioning. Any immigrant

without the right papers is immediately thrown out of the country.

Physical attacks on immigrants are increasing, and several have been murdered by fascist gangs in recent months.

Immigrant workers get the worst and most dangerous jobs, the lowest wages, and the worst housing. All in all, as much if not more is at stake for them in the French elections as for the rest of the country.

## RIGHTS

There is just one small problem: immigrant workers are not allowed to vote.

Worse still, neither the PCF nor PS intends to let them do so in future. The PCF's justification of its position once again puts supposed national obligations above class interest.

Jean Colpin, a member of the PCF Central Committee, said last December: 'Equality of rights can only mean a shrinking of the immigrant's national ties, a negation or renunciation of their national identity. The right to vote in France...supposes duties, implications and behaviour which can contradict the attachment of the immigrants to their country of origin.'

In other words, immigrant workers should keep out of the politics of the French people — even though their whole lives are determined by those



West Indian Women on the march in France.

politics.

On the essential question of immigration controls both PCF and PS agree that entry must remain limited 'in accordance with the economic plan.'

A bulletin published in September 1975 by the Communist-controlled council in Montreuil stated: 'The census has also revealed an increase in the immigrant population from 9.79 to 14.96 per cent, while the council believes that it should not exceed a level of about 10 per cent if the best conditions for the various communities to live together are to exist.'

## CONTRAST

This is in sharp contrast to the left's campaign. The final issue of the Trotskyist paper *Rouge* before the elections

contained two pages of reports and analysis on the theme of self determination — including a guest column by one of the pro-independence parties in New Caledonia.

## CAMPAIGN

The paper has also covered the campaign of the candidates put forward by the Antilles section of the Fourth International in Guadeloupe and Martinique.

Similarly, while the PCF and PS have devoted almost no attention to the problems of immigrant workers — because there are no votes to be won there — the candidates of the joint far left slate, 'For socialism, power to the workers', have made a special point of visiting immigrant residential areas and factories.

# Czech Trotskyist Petr Uhl: Don't trust the party leaders

Two leading Charter 77 supporters are under 24-hour police surveillance in Prague. They are Trotskyist Petr Uhl and Dr Frantisek Kriegel, a Praesidium member under Alexander Dubcek. We don't know what the bureaucracy plans to do with Uhl and Kriegel, but we intend to influence those plans by campaigning for an end to this harassment.

In this and the next issue we look at the careers and political outlooks of the two men. This week MARK JACKSON writes on Petr Uhl.

THE NAME of Petr Uhl first found its way into the news in March 1971 when he went on trial with 18 others accused of being a member of the Revolutionary Youth Movement and then the Revolutionary Socialist Party.

These groups originated during 1968 at the Philosophy Faculty at Prague's Charles University.

The post-68 leadership set to work to root out everything and everyone connected with the Prague Spring both inside and outside the Communist Party. In particular a massive party purge was instituted which eventually led to the expulsion of half a million members from the CPCPS, a third of its total membership.

## CHALLENGE

The formation of the Revolutionary Socialist Party was a challenge to any illusions in the benevolence of any section of the party leadership.

The RSP felt the need to project an alternative prog-

ramme to that of all wings of the Communist Party and saw that only the activity of the Czechoslovak masses themselves could put it into practice. To do this a solid and independent organisation was required.

## SOLIDARITY

The RSP consciously identified itself with the international struggles of the oppressed, declaring its solidarity with the French workers and students who had risen against French capitalism in May 1968 and with the struggle of the Vietnamese people against US imperialism.

So it wasn't just a matter of being independent of the bureaucracy, but of every force in world politics other than the oppressed masses themselves.

The RSP worked in unofficial trade union committees, especially the metalworkers' and university employees', and among the Prague students. One of their big successes was the mass production of a leaflet for the



Soviet tanks in Prague.

second anniversary of the Soviet invasion.

In January 1970 the group was broken up by the work of an informer and agent provocateur. It was another 15 months before the RSP was brought to trial.

The indictment made a tortuous attempt to link the RSP to world imperialism and to show evidence of these links in contacts with Western far leftists.

At the trial many of the defendants, including Uhl himself, openly attacked the fabric of falsehood and insinuation on which the indictment was based.

At the opening of the trial Uhl challenged its constitutionality, pointing out the contacts maintained by the judges with the secret police, and the complicity of some of them in the show trials of the 1950s.

Another defendant, Jan Prolik, admitted taking part in

the various activities mentioned in the indictment, but rejected the notion that the activity was in any way anti-socialist. He denounced the absurdity of the indictment saying, 'How dare you say we are anti-socialists, when we take our inspiration from Marx, Engels and Lenin?'

## INTEREST

The trial aroused great interest in Prague. On the morning of 8 March lawyers representing the defendants protested against the refusal of the presiding judge to admit the public to the trial. The judge replied that, if all those who held entry tickets were allowed in, the courtroom would overflow.

Uhl received a four year sentence, the highest handed out at the trial.

At the start of 1977, Uhl participated in the launching of Charter 77, seeing the need for

In September 1977 Uhl was held for 24 hours and his flat searched to prevent him attending the trial of two Charterists, Ales Machacek and Vladimir Lastuvka. His driving licence has been removed and his phone cut off.

The police even tried to sow divisions within the Charter movement by terrorist actions. The rejection of these ridiculous insinuations by the rest of the Charter dissuaded the police from pursuing this tactic further.

Finally, in December 1977, Uhl lost his job as an engineer at a Prague factory. The letter informing him of this move explicitly gave his participation in the Charter as the reason.

## SURVEILLANCE

Policemen sit outside the door of his flat checking the visitors and sometimes preventing them from entering. The fact that 24 hour surveillance is an honour accorded by the regime only to Uhl and Frantisek Kriegel suggests the high estimation they have of Uhl's importance within the Charter movement.

It is likely that the authorities are planning further moves against Uhl, possibly a trial or expulsion from the country.

To counter these possibilities the Western left has to take on the case of Petr Uhl and to demand an end to the harassment and that he gets his job back.

Behind the miners' strike

# US workers fight back

Last December a black steelworker in Houston, Texas was called into the office of the plant manager. Besides this boss and his boss from the steel company the union's local (branch) and district heads were in the office. Their offer was simple: stop your militancy on the shop floor and we'll give you a new car, a wage increase and a union post. Yes, they said: 'We'll really make you somebody.' STUART PAUL reports.

This trick is the oldest in the book of how to turn a militant into a bureaucrat. But the answer of this worker is a sign of the new mood rising in the American working class. Turning on their last phrase he said, 'you don't understand. I already am somebody,' and walked back to the shop floor.

For years the radicalisation in America spread through independent mass movements which organised outside of, and especially in their early years in open hostility to, the organised labour movement.

**POLITICS**

The black movement was the first to undermine the long period of calm which US imperialism enjoyed after World War II. Civil rights marches of the early sixties were only the beginning. By the early '70s, Chicanos, women, and students had organised movements which were having a social impact far beyond their own ranks. Organised protest came also from prisoners, gays and oppressed nationalities.

The most important independent movement, however, was the anti-war movement, from which many of the other movements gained their first leaders and inspiration.

Much to the alarm of a poll financed by America's richest families, the rights being demanded by college students in 1969 had, by 1973, come to be considered as rights by young workers as well.

Blacks make up 20 per cent of union membership in basic industry (United Auto Workers, United Steel Workers) and the largest government employees unions (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees — AFSCME — Letter Carriers, Postal Clerks).

**SCAPEGOAT**

As of 1977, the 'average' American worker is no longer an adult white male. Jack Barnes, a leader of the American Socialist Workers Party, pointed out last year that: 'Adult white males have slipped to 49 per cent of the workforce.'

'So it's hard to say what the average worker is. But the average worker is darker than white, more female than ever, and younger than before. Women, oppressed nationalities, and workers under 21 make up 51 per cent of the American working class today.'

Long before the current national coal strike began, the miners in Stearns, Kentucky went on strike for union recognition. (A nearby mine owned by the same company had killed 26 miners in an underground explosion caused by safety violations). Chicano trade unionists in San Antonio, Texas (over a thousand miles away) organised a support meeting for the miners and contributed \$500.

The political origins of the

**Picket the US embassy in support of the miners. Grosvenor Square, London, Wednesday 22 March, 12 noon to 2pm. Supported by Socialist Challenge and Workers Action.**

**And follow the example of Socialist Challenge supporters in Wilmot Breeden, a Birmingham car components factory, who collected signatures for a petition of support for the US miners. It was signed by members of the AUEW and the National Society of Metal Mechanics. Among the many signatories were 15 shop stewards and a member of the Birmingham AUEW West District Committee.**

**The Stirchley AUEW No 2 branch has also sent a resolution to the UMWA.**

growing radicalisation in the labour movement is demonstrated in the demands put forward by union militants. Last February (1977) the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) elected a new president. In the campaign a strong challenger to the bureaucracy's slate emerged called 'Steelworkers Fight Back.'

**RIGHT WING**

Their candidate for President, Ed Sadowski, was constantly red-baited in the bourgeois media and attempts were made to discredit him by recalling his opposition to the Vietnam war. He replied that it was a crime for the labour movement to have supported the war. It should have stopped it and should stop a similar war in the future.

Steelworkers Fight Back was built around opposition to the Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA) which bans steel strikes, although the members were never allowed to vote on it. Nor can they vote on their contracts. However, in its campaign it took a number of militant positions which in this country the Communist Party would not even contemplate.

Sadowski won a quarter of a million votes, and in 'basic steel' (steel production) an

outright victory. A few months later Iron Ore mines, who because of industrial unionism in America, are also members of the Steel Workers Union, went on strike.

**TREACHERY**

Organised in the Mesabi range, the strike took advantage of a loophole in the ENA no-strike pledge, allowing 'local issue' strikes, to fight for wage parity with other steelworkers. The Mesabi range had been solid for Sadowski, but the bureaucracy had to support their strike. What's more they won. The loophole has been 'amended' out since, but their long fought strike showed a militant alternative to ENA and its fruits. This mood in the American labour movement has not been isolated to one campaign. Following Fight Back in steel, a similar group has been set up in the rail unions.

Miners For Democracy was set up when an anti-bureaucracy candidate for UMW president was murdered after losing the election. When the election was declared invalid in 1971, the MFD won the new elections, and introduced rank and file control of several union functions denied by the previous bureaucracy. Most important of these was the right to vote on their contract. They also regained delegate control of UMW conference and

membership control of the UMWA Journal. The union began an organising drive, its first in 20 years.

And although many of the original MFD activists have been sacked or resigned since, the gains won in union democracy are proving valuable today.

Sadowski, for all the progressive points of his platform, remained loyal to the capitalist Democratic Party. But there are signs, especially in this miners' strike, that this long-held illusion of the American labour movement is suffering the same crisis as the blinders of the fifties and early sixties.

**SUPPORT**

Harry Patrick, who was until last December UMW Secretary-Treasurer, said in the 23 December Militant(US): 'I think we've had enough. We've tried and tried and tried to work within one of the two major parties, and it is simply just not going to work. I think a labour party put together with the right kind of education and programme could be a damn viable force.'

The racist politicians are also losing supporters. A white coal miner in Alabama responded to an attack on a picket line by State Troopers by telling a black supporter: 'You learned about Wallace before we did, but now we've learnt the lesson too.'

# Women celebrate their day...

**THE International Women's Day Rally in London on 8 March was an overwhelming success.**

The hall and balcony of the London School of Economics Old Theatre were crowded with women who were there to celebrate their strong feelings of sisterhood and to express their solidarity with women all around the world suffering from the effects of sexist and racist societies.

After women had sung songs of sisterhood and struggle there were speakers from various groups. They all echoed the call for an international tribunal on the repression of women.

Women from Iran and Latin

America spoke about the torture of women, particularly pointing out the way sexuality is frequently used. Rape by prison guards followed by either forced abortion or the refusal of abortion facilities is widespread.

The issue of abortion was also raised by the speaker from the National Abortion Campaign, who talked of the way that abortion is the focus of attacks upon women's rights throughout the world — even in 'democracies'. Black women's groups from this country explained the difficulties they faced bringing up children and finding jobs with bad housing and unemployment.

Perhaps the best response was

to the representatives from two groups of women who are involved in work on women in Ireland. They read evidence from Irish women on the brutality of British troops towards women and about attacks by the Garda in the South of Ireland.

In the summing up at the end of the evening the call for an international tribunal on the repression of women was repeated and it was decided to hold a series of planning meetings to start organising this.

The many women at the rally felt that it had been an example of how effectively women can organise, a great show of sisterhood, and an informative and necessary event.

# or try to!

GENOA was one of the few cities in Italy where International Women's Day was not celebrated this year. On the eve of the event, police armed with machine guns arrested and badly beat 23 feminists as they were decorating a local square in preparation for the celebration.

The following weekend 1500 demonstrators marched through Genoa to protest this unprovoked attack and to demand the release of seven of the women still in custody.

Despite this show of force the seven were not released until 13 March and all 23 now face charges of resisting arrest.

In other major Italian towns feminists gave out parsley sprigs, used by women to prevent pregnancy in the Middle Ages. This gesture defied the tradition of giving women flowers on 8 March — one promoted by Italian Communists as well as the Eastern European bureaucracies.

To make the sting even sharper many pro-abortion campaigners tied a slip of paper to their parsley sprigs. The paper was a mock voucher awarding women free abortions if they were members of the Communist Party (PCI).

The PCI has never promoted free abortion and has continuously compromised women's rights in its efforts to achieve the 'historic compromise' with the Christian Democrats.



Seems these here miners don't LIKE Mah Edward Heath impression!

JOHN ROSS's two part article (Socialist Challenge, 12 and 19 January) is a very welcome opening statement in a discussion that needs careful consideration by the whole revolutionary left. It stands in marked contrast to the smug self-satisfied tones of David Widger's letter in Socialist Challenge of 19 January.

The article can be welcomed for two reasons: a) that it acknowledges the demobilisation of the working class since 1975, and b) attempts to come to terms with the crisis of the revolutionary left. The recognition of these two facts is the first step towards the posing of some correct questions about the situation we all face today. John Ross's article could, therefore, be the first step along the road to reality and effectiveness. The following comments should be seen in the context of this overall appreciation and not as seeking points of disagreement, rather they should be seen as an attempt at dialogue.

VALID

Ross locates the change in the situation of Britain relating to the working class in the period late 1974 through 1975, and I feel that this is a valid estimate. However, I am not sure that he is correct when he argues that this demobilisation, and later defeats of individual struggles, was not because of the strength of bourgeois institutions but because of the betrayals of the reformist bureaucracy. It seems to me that this manner of presentation conflates the question of bourgeois ideology and the institutions which mediate it and the institutions of repression. Moreover, I feel there is an element lacking in his account of the year 1974. All of these questions are linked.

What the article stresses in relation to 1974 was the very real victory of the miners in toppling the Heath Government and the winning of their wage claim. However, what is lacking is the recognition of another and equally important element in that situation, i.e. the re-emergence of a large Liberal vote. In the February 1974 election the Labour Party actually received less votes than in the 1970 election. This was the paradox of February 1974. The polarisation of the classes — which began as far back as 1966 — seemed to have reached its height in early 1974, and to have real possibilities for a working class victory, but in fact in electoral terms it showed the beginning of the dissipation of this polarisation. The emergence of the large Liberal vote, plus the rise of the nationalists in Scotland and Wales, indicated the great instability of the bourgeois order. And these events have to be set on top of the hammering stability had already taken from huge sections of the working class in militant industrial struggle.

# BRITAIN 1978: Crisis of Society, Crisis of the Left

## Some comments by Ken Tarbuck

So, what we had was not the clear cut position of a working class poised for — seemingly — easy victory, but a paradoxical one of great militancy by large sections of the working class coupled with large sections of the population backing away from both Labour and Tory Parties. This, set alongside of the emergence of the National Front as a national political force, indicated the dis-equilibrium of the system at that point.

This dis-equilibrium was also apparent in the formation of a number of ultra-right para-military organisations during 1974, a feature almost wholly lacking in Britain for many years. However, Ross says that bourgeois institutions were not strong at that period, but he is only formally correct, since he leaves out of account the Labour Government. To talk about the betrayal of the reformist bureaucracy makes it appear as some sort of *deus ex machina* which arrives in the nick of time to pull the bourgeoisie's chestnuts out of the fire. The reality is that the Labour Government was a part of the bourgeois institutions, which we are told were weak, and not something outside of them.

The question here is why were the reformist bureaucrats able to demobilise the working class in 1974/75? And, surely, this is where the effect of bourgeois ideology arises. For real, and substantive, victories of the working class to have resulted from the situation in early 1974 it would have been necessary for a different working class leadership

to be in position, one that was not subservient to bourgeois ideology. Given the actual relationship of forces at that time there were only two possible outcomes to the general instability in the system, either a Labour government which would derail the industrial militancy of the working class, or the establishment of some sort of authoritarian regime which would have dispensed with parliamentary niceties. Far from the bourgeoisie not having confidence in the ability of a Labour government to carry out the task of de-ramment, it was its first bet because it understood that in the circumstances it was its best bet.

This situation had its roots in the political changes in Britain going back to 1966, when the Labour Government was, and was seen to be, the most clear sighted and coherent defender of the capitalist system. The fiasco of the Heath Government indicated that in the present period a Labour government can serve the interests of the bourgeoisie far better than a Tory one. Now, why is it able to function as such? Not merely because it betrays workers' struggles, but because it is able to do so and still retain its ideological hold on the vast majority of the working class. It is able to do this because the working class itself is still — in the main — dominated by bourgeois ideology.

Ross, in this sense, has only gone half way to mapping out the situation in 1974. Bourgeois hegemony which had begun to be weakened, especially in the period 1972-74, was re-

established and — precisely through that bourgeois institution — a Labour government. This bourgeois hegemony is mediated through a whole series of institutions, but it would be wrong to concentrate a discussion upon only some of them. What we have to understand is the totality and the way that some institutions are to the fore at one time while at others different ones become the main focus.

SIMPLISTIC

John Ross reduces this whole complex question to one of the working class leaders being bought off. This is too simplistic, and is almost a mirror image of those who argue that bourgeois institutions are too powerful to be defeated. Ross says:

'Every single capitalist policy since 1974 has been quite explicitly framed on the assumption that the NUM cannot be defeated in struggle and therefore its leadership must be bought off.'

This type of argumentation reduces the question to one of 'bad' or 'weak' men. Implicit is that 'good' or 'strong' men must be put in the place of the existing leaders. I am sure that on reflection John Ross will see the trap he has laid for himself.

The second part of the article in fact seems to recognise precisely the crucial importance of the domination of bourgeois ideology. Moreover, John Ross lays his finger on one of the most wearisome aspects of British Marxism, i.e. its sectarianism. This is seen as being partially rooted in the attitude of 'looking after the little things and the big things will look after themselves'. His quotation from Marx, however, must be understood in the opposite sense to that inferred in the article. The 'little things' mentality is not the cause of sectarianism but is its product. We have to look much deeper for the roots of sectarianism than John Ross allows for. The raising of small differences to the level of big ones is not the cause of sectarianism but its effect.

John Ross well describes the result of sectarianism on democratic discussion within the left groups but fails to account for it. He conflates a description of the disease with an explanation. I will not attempt to go into all the ramifications of this problem here (I have dealt with it at length in 'Marxism, Method and Revolution' in Intervention No. 1) except to say that education and democratic discussion are inseparable. The ability of the 'leaders' of far left sects to maintain their grip depends to a large extent upon the acceptance of a vulgarised version of Marxism by many of their followers. In this respect it is symptomatic of the crisis of the left that recently there has been a proliferation of groups, most of them being formed by splits within pre-existing groups. Even more indicative is that there are large numbers of unattached people who

have been in one or more of the existing organisations, and their number seems to grow while the groups either stagnate or decline.

Unfortunately, John Ross's prescription of united socialist activity does not completely fill the bill. Such united activity can only be brought about on the basis of a joint understanding of what are the 'big issues'. Genuine unity can only be brought about by real dialogue between various currents on the left, one that refuses to be bound by the shibboleths of the past.

John Ross has made several steps forward in this respect, and we should all be willing to participate in the discussion so initiated. However, participation in discussion does not automatically lead to agreement, sometimes it clarifies the nature of the disagreements. Such clarifications are, however, necessary steps on the road to unity. No one should be demigrated because they do not agree with certain propositions. In the final analysis only the working class itself can lend substance to any particular propositions by actualising them in struggle.

John Ross posits that united action of revolutionaries and working for a united revolutionary organisation isn't an 'obstacle to building the party' but a vital part of taking forward the struggle of the working class. One can certainly agree with such sentiments, however they in turn raise problems. Firstly, implicit in such a statement is that building the party is today on the agenda, whereas many, like myself, feel that we are only in the preparatory stages of such a venture, i.e. of building a cadre for such a party. The two are not separated by an impenetrable wall, yet they do constitute quite distinct tasks.

Secondly, I for one would question the assumption of building the party, rather it is a question of building a party. This is not a semantic difference. If — as the recent USFI resolution on socialist democracy does — we recognise the need for more than one workers' party after the overthrow of capitalism, this poses the question will not this need subsist before such an overthrow? If the answer is yes, then the question of united front work takes on quite a new and compelling logic. If there is more than one workers' party involved in struggles to overthrow capitalism, it implies that the united front becomes a strategic necessity and not a tactical gambit.

These are some of the issues that need to be dealt with in any discussion about left unity if we are to leave the old shibboleths behind. This in no way implies that such discussions should not take in current problems, or day-to-day questions, rather the resolution of the small problems will come about by a thorough understanding of the big questions that need answering.

**KEN TARBUCK** is an editor of the Marxist magazine *Intervention*.

### What's Left

**NGUGI DEFENCE** Committee are holding a public meeting on 21 March. Speakers will include James Baldwin and Alex La Guma. This is part of a series of events planned by a defence committee to protest at the imprisonment without trial of Ngugi wa Thiong'o, an internationally known Kenyan novelist and academic. Venue to be listed.

**SOCIALIST Students Alliance National Conference**, 18/19 March, Kent University. If you believe in a mass campaigning union, an independent democratic union; left unity to defeat the right — then come along. Further details from Colin Campbell at Pamela Holmes (Canterbury 65234).

**BELT & BRACES** Roadshow. Come a person for general office work. Typing essential. Bring science useful. Tel: 01-450 0465.

**MARX'S CAPITAL** And Today's Global Crisis, a new pamphlet by Raya Dunayevskaya. With an introduction by Harry McShane. Includes critique of Mandel's introduction to Capital and of Tony Cliff on Lenin. £1 from 17 Monsey Park Road, London N11.



'FOR A SOCIALIST AFRICA' badges, ideal for selling to your workmates during the Anti-Apartheid month of action in March. Or End Immigration. Describe badges. Put yourself on the other side of the class lines from Callaghan and Thatcher, use them during the run up to the local elections. 15p each plus 7p p&p, or 7p each for orders of ten or more. From J Wilson, SC Badges, PO Box 20, London N1 2XP. Cheques payable to J Wilson.

**ZIONIST OPPRESSION** of Oriental Jews (Sephardim) in Israel. Speaker: Robin Ezra, an Israeli lecturer, Sunday 2 April, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. Organised by London Area British Anti-Zionist Organisation (BAZO), c/o 58 Old Brompton Road, London.

**THE OTHER CINEMA** distribution and benefit, 18 March at 7.30pm Henry Cow, Red Balloon and EAs performing at Middlesex Hospital Medical School, Cleveland St, London W1 (near Goodge St Tube).

**SOCIALIST FEMINIST** educational of Women and the Welfare State, 10.30-4.30 on 18 March at St Anne's Hall, Venn Street, Daphn London SW4 (one minute from Clapham Common Tube Station). Cheques available. Suggested reading: Women and the Welfare State by Elizabeth Wilson.

**BROADSIDE MOBILE** Workers. The aim requires a versatile socialist musician (full-time). Long term commitment a necessity. Ability an advantage. Write to: 55 Holborn House, Holborn Place, London SW1. Phone: 01-450-6922/730-0386.

**F.I. LITHO LTD**, 325/3 Upper Street, London N1, urgently needs an experienced Touch Typist or someone willing to learn. 35 hour week. £26. Please apply, enclosing full curriculum vitae, before 31 March to the manager at the above address.

**EAST LONDON Socialist Unity** Good Friday Benefit Pop at St. Hilda's East, Club Row, London E2. 8 till late sat, bands disco. Details to be announced later.

**EAST LONDON Socialist Unity** is discussing the Socialist Unity programme at the Brillanti, Mare Street, Hackney at 8pm on Wednesday, 22 March.

**NEWHAM TEACHERS** Group meeting with David Edgar, author of 'Destiny' on 20 March at Forest Gate School, starting at 7.30pm B.R. trains from Liverpool St to Forest Gate Station or buses 25 and 85 from Stratford to the Princess Alice.

**ISLINGTON** Campaign Against Racism And Fascism picket of Council meeting, 21 March. Stop the National Front using these meetings as a platform for their politics. Assemble 6.30pm, Town Hall Upper Street.

**ROADGANG** (Socialist Feminist theatre company) requires experienced actor. Pay £52.55 p.w. Write with full details of skills etc to 13 Swinburn St, Galshead, Tyne and Wear.

Advertisement for socialist REVIEW featuring images of newspaper front pages (The Guardian, The Express, The Sun) and a call to action: 'Do you want to know more about what's going on in the world than you read in the newspapers?' Includes contact information for the publisher.

# Missing—black workers

IN THE centre spread of Socialist Challenge on 23 February you put forward a set of constructive proposals for left unity. These proposals include support for the independent women's movement, but at the same time make no mention of black workers.

The Anti-Nazi League, which you do mention, is a propaganda group against the NF, and the anti-fascist committees are largely involved in defensive work in response to fascist initiatives. In the intervening periods these committees are usually inactive. Although they have begun to broaden their activities, their perspectives do not go beyond organising mainly white militants against fascism.

Black workers are one of the most oppressed sections of the working class and have been in the forefront of the fight against fascism and racism over the last two years. It is these workers who have first hand experience of racist and fascist attacks, and who have organised the defence of their own communities. Without the continuous mobilisation of these workers against fascism, the impact of the anti-fascist forces would not be what it is today. The ruling class has used the tactic of attempting to integrate these workers into traditional politics and develop a black reformist leadership, but so far this has failed.

Despite a significant mobilisation of black workers behind revolutionary banners on anti-fascist demonstrations, and despite their readiness to get involved with revolutionary candidates in the elections, it is distressing to note that you have ignored this most oppressed section of the working class. If the white working class had involved itself with the revolutionary organisations to the same extent as the blacks have, then would you have put forward the same perspectives in your centrespread? I would say definitely not. At this stage I wonder if revolutionaries have progressed much beyond the Fourth Congress of the Comintern when one American delegate complained that he 'had encountered race prejudice among many white comrades who did not really want to grapple with the negro problem.'

This lack of perspective for black workers probably derives from the traditional way of thinking of the left in Britain. The revolutionaries tend to think and organise at the point of production whereas the black workers tend to be involved in politics at a community level. This is especially true of black youth. I feel it is necessary to point out here that the national organisations claiming to represent black communities are totally bankrupt and do not represent anyone. The few who have any credibility are locally based. These organisations are mainly active in the Afro-Caribbean communities and are very suspicious of the revolutionary left. It is important that a sensitive

approach should be made to these organisations.

The importance of black workers as an independent section of the working class cannot be ignored by revolutionaries in the drawing up of perspectives for left unity.

RAGHIB AHSAN (Birmingham)

## What price unity?

AS A former member of the SWP, I was delighted to read your statement 'Time to Link Arms' on left unity. A united organisation involving the present SWP, IMG and former IS comrades would be a very powerful combination, bring back into activity many of our comrades who have fallen by the way-side since 1968, and immediately pose the possibility of this new socialist workers party (small s, small w, small p) replacing the CP as the main force to the left of the Labour Party.

This new organisation would be much more powerful than the sum of its parts, and give a new perspective to many worker militants who have been through the revolutionary groups but have given up the ghost on a big united organisation being created. You can bet your last penny that the Communist Party leadership would be petrified by such a development, which would have an impact on its own rank-and-file.

But there is a problem, and one you don't seem to recognise. It's all very well to say that a new organisation must be democratic and allow freedom of criticism. Fair enough. But actually the majority of the members and leadership of the SWP are deeply suspicious of your motives. As Duncan Hallas said in the article which you published, the problem is that the IMG don't want real unity, they only want unity manoeuvres to strengthen themselves at your expense. It's absolutely useless just protesting your good intentions. You have to recognise that at the beginning at least, and probably for a long period, the ex-SWP current would be a large majority. You have to be prepared to accept that, and guarantee your adherence to majority decisions, within the framework of free debate.

Moreover, you have to be prepared to enter a joint organisation without doing so just to conduct a vicious faction fight. Because that's what really scares the SWP leadership and membership alike: the thought of a long period of complete paralysis while Tariq Ali and John Ross slog it out with Tony Cliff and Steve Jeffreys over an increasing pile of internal bulletins and a rapidly dwindling membership. The IMG membership must clearly understand the reasons for unity: some IMG members I've met seem to agree with Duncan Hallas's view of the reasons for the attempts at unity.

So be precise comrades. Are you prepared to accept the discipline of an organisation in which your views are in a minority? Are you prepared to make concessions to allay the fears of the SWP membership, for example some initial limits on the time periods of internal discussion?

Are you prepared to stay in a new organisation which doesn't adopt your views and refuses to adhere to the Fourth International. Or are you just planning a raid to eliminate the 'centrists'? I would be interested to read the response of the editorial board to these questions.

Keith Smith (Birmingham)

## Scandalous!

'SCANDALOUS! Outrageous! Unbelievable!' — I agree — these are the words I would use to describe the behaviour of Socialist Challenge supporters on the small anti-fascist picket at Ilford. Justifiably angered by the police sell-out on agreed plans, this anger was channelled into vituperative denunciations of the Socialist Workers Party as the most immediately obvious Anti Nazi League supporters.

The turnout was, by your supporters in any case, feeble — perhaps the thought of working at canvassing was less attractive than that of a punch-up. Socialist Challenge does little to dispense the impression. The quite incorrect one-to-one SWP/ANL correlation is repeated in spite of repeated stress on the differentiation of the two and their objectives.

The accusation of League complicity in calling for bans is reiterated in spite of the presence of both Peter Hain and Paul Holborow as co-signatories of 'Fight the Ban' on the front page of the same issue of the paper.

Finally, Brian Grogan's call for resistance to the police as an alternative to gaining wider support — apparently on the dubious ground that martyrs make good rallying points — is, in the circumstances, utterly suicidal. One must ask comrade Grogan: Where is the mass support resulting from the martyrs of Lewisham?

Only an initiative on the lines of the ANL can break the isolation of the revolutionary left which makes heroics irrelevant.

T. NICHOLLS (SWP member, West London)

## Three cheers for the bull!

I WAS VERY disappointed with last week's letter from members of the London Anti-Racist and Anti-Fascist co-ordinating Committee concerning the Anti Nazi League. Essentially it suffered from the disease it was attacking — sectarianism.

The basic question is: Has the emergence of the League helped the anti-fascist struggle? My answer is an unequivocal Yes. Despite many cases of sectarianism toward existing anti-fascist committees which do have a real base (and there are a lot which do not), what the League has succeeded in doing is projecting anti-fascist politics on a national

basis. While the League's positions are very limited and could be improved, the fact that they are limited to a very specific target (the National Front) is not necessarily wrong. I believe it was Trotsky who said we should be prepared to unite with the devil himself if it helped build action against the fascists.

Although some of the League's reformist sponsors do see its propaganda campaign as an alternative to mass action on the streets, it was the League which continued with the mobilisation at Ilford after all their reformist sponsors and Redbridge CARF had run away at Mr McNeer's bidding. In spite of its wrong position on the ban, there would not even have been two thousand people at Ilford but for the League. Certainly ARAFCC itself couldn't mobilise that number — not least because in its role as a co-ordinating committee it could not take a decision to mobilise against the ban which went against the local CARF. No doubt the League was acting like 'a bull in a china shop'. Three cheers for the bull.

Because the League is a mass single issue campaign drawing in broad political forces, it will not have an analysis or position on racism, sexism, immigration controls and so on. However, by massively extending the audience for anti-fascist politics, it can help create a mass movement within which revolutionary socialists can work to explain the origins of fascism in racism, sexism and so on.

The League has this potential of reaching hundreds of thousands of people — revealed in the size of meetings it holds. But it will only realise this potential if it is democratised and has a steering committee accountable to its base. This does not necessarily mean building branches, as the comrades state.

The IMG is aware of numerous instances of sectarianism by the ANL towards existing, viable anti-fascist organisations. We will fight these abuses which will damage the prospects of both. But we will fight sectarianism not simply in the ANL but in our own ranks as well.

MICK GOSLING (London Organizer, IMG)

WE APOLOGISE for the fact that the letter last week from four members of the 10-member ARAFCC Secretariat did not indicate they were writing in a personal capacity. The error was ours, Ed.

## Inadequate

ON 2 MARCH you carried a letter from Bob Purdie critical of your 'Troops Out' editorial about the Le Mons bombing. We consider that it was not your editorial but his letter that was totally inadequate.

There are two main points in his letter that we would repudiate. Firstly, he says that the IRA are weak in relation to the security forces and that therefore they are only attacking 'soft' targets. In fact the reverse is the case. On the morning of the Le Mons bombing the C.O. of the Green

Jackets (the premier military unit) was killed when his Gazelle helicopter — which according to Soldier magazine is the 'last word' in technology — was shot down in an operation reminiscent of NLF operations in Vietnam.

Since then there have been a number of direct attacks on the 'security forces', in some of which the new M60 machine gun has been used. There has, then, been an overall escalation of the military campaign, resulting not only in more bombing of economic ('soft') targets but also increasingly in direct and successful attacks on the army.

Secondly, Bob Purdie asserts that the Provisionals' campaign has failed and that therefore they should 'dump arms now'. But it must be understood that a war is being fought that only one side can win. The Provisionals want a British withdrawal; the British want to stay. If either the British were forced to concede a withdrawal, or the Provisionals were forced to dump their arms, this would quite rightly be regarded by the other side as a victory.

A study of other colonial wars fought by the British shows that it is precisely when they have defeated a freedom movement that they go in hardest. In Kenya it was after the fighters in the forests had been decimated that some of the worst British atrocities occurred. The Hola massacre was just the tip of the iceberg and the British 'rehabilitated' the detainees in the concentration camps. History shows that when you are fighting the British, attack is the best means of defence.

If the British were to force a defeat on the Provisionals their next step would undoubtedly be to exorcise the spirit of republicanism from the ghettos. The SAS would be given an even freer rein to shoot down republicans in the streets, republican prisoners would be subjected to 'rehabilitation' techniques and the RUC and UDR would be back with a vengeance.

Finally, we repudiate Bob Purdie's pessimistic view of the overall situation. The militancy of the Catholic working class has been shown in the past two weeks by the huge turnout for the political status demo and for Paul Duffy's funeral. In the south of Ireland, Fianna Fail coming to power with an unprecedented majority on a pro-Irish unity and British disengagement ticket has led to a situation where all parties in the south are openly expressing quasi-republican ideals.

This has been a major set back for Roy Mason and the British government because it is once again respectable to be in favour of Irish unity and British withdrawal. In these circumstances what British socialists should be discussing is how to build a campaign to make this a reality.

ALASTAIR RENWICK, JOHN LLOYD, LIZ CURTIS

WE ARE RECEIVING an average of 30 letters a week for the Comment page. It is obvious that we cannot publish them all. However, we will from now on give priority to those letters which are 400 words or below. We reserve the right to cut other letters.

# Socialist Challenge EVENTS

## NORTH WEST

WARRINGTON Socialist Challenge group meets regularly. Ring Manchester Socialist Challenge offices for details. 061-238 2362.  
GREATER MANCHESTER Socialist Challenge School students who support the paper and would like to get involved in anti-fascist activity please contact Chris 273-5947 (daytime), or Steve 226-4287 (evening), or write to Manchester SC Centre, c/o 14 Piccadilly.  
PRESTON Socialist Challenge supporters can be contacted by ringing Preston 54616.  
SOUTH MANCHESTER Socialist Challenge group meets every other Thursday at the Albert Inn off Whitlow Rd. Help sell Socialist Challenge between 11.30am and 1pm at Mass Side shopping centre or Longsight Market, Dickenson Rd. Further information from 061-238 2362.

## YORKSHIRE

HULL Socialist Challenge discussion group meeting on 'The Army and the Labour Movement', Wed, 22 March, 8pm. Warcham Club, Norfolk Street.  
HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge meeting 16 March. Friendly and Trades Club, Northumberland Street, (opp station). Discussion around Red Ladder's latest play, 'Taking Our Time'.  
YORK Socialist Challenge meeting, Friday, 17 March 8pm: 'Politics of the local State', Martin Shaw from Hull University. Cattle Market Pub, Barbican Road, York.

## NORTH EAST

DURHAM Socialist Challenge supporters group meets regularly at Big Jug Pub, Claypath, Durham City. Details from J. Fox, 41 The Avenue.  
DARLINGTON Socialist Challenge sales on Saturdays outside

Northern Rock on High Row, 11am-1pm.

MIDDLESBOROUGH Socialist Challenge sales on Saturdays outside Boots at Cleveland Centre, 11am-1pm. Socialist Challenge is also available from Harrison's (newsagent) in Linthorpe Street.

## WALES

SWANSEA Socialist Challenge group meets every other Wednesday at 7.30pm in St Helena Inn, Vincent St. Swanssea. All supporters welcome. Next meeting 5 April.

## SOUTH EAST

COLCHESTER Socialist Challenge supporters sell the paper every Saturday outside Caters from 10.45am-12pm. Further information of local activities from Mike, 11 Angles Rd, Wivenhoe.  
COLCHESTER Socialist Challenge group to be set up in town. If you are interested, come along to a meeting at the Labour Party Hall, North Chapel Street, 14 March, 7.30pm.  
BRIGHTON Socialist Challenge Forum, Tuesday, 4 April, 8pm. What sort of revolutionary paper do we need? Resources Centre, North Street.

## SCOTLAND

For information on Socialist Challenge contact Scottish Socialist/Socialist Challenge bookshop, 68 Queen Street, Glasgow (Tel: 041-221 7481). Open weekdays 10-4, late closing Thursdays at 6pm. Wide range of Fourth International publications.  
DUNDEE: Information about Socialist Challenge activities from 64 Queen St, Glasgow. Join in SC sales outside Boots (corner of Nelson Street) each Saturday, 11am-2pm.  
EDINBURGH Socialist Challenge meetings every second Wednesday. Contact George Keravan, 12 Merchiston Grove, Edinburgh. Tel: 031-348 0466.

ABERDEEN: Information about Socialist Challenge activities, ring Jim on 43696 (after 5pm).

## MIDLANDS

For details of activities of local supporters contact the Socialist Challenge Centre, 78a Dighigh High Street, Birmingham. 021-643 9290.  
LEICESTER Socialist Challenge supporters meet fortnightly at the Highfields Community Centre. For details ring 0533 25924.

WOLVERHAMPTON Socialist Challenge Forum, Tuesday, 28 March. Nuclear Power and Socialism with Dave Ansdraft and others from local survival and environmental groups. The Vink, Stafford Street, 7.30pm. SW11. Next meeting Wednesday, 22 March, 8pm.

## SOUTH WEST

SOUTHAMPTON Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday from 10am-1pm outside Ubawa Bar Post Office, Bargate.  
BRISTOL Socialist Challenge group meets next 4 April, 7.30pm. The Swan, Soles Croft, Bristol.

## LONDON

NEWHAM Socialist Challenge Forum, Wednesday, 15 March. 'The Left and the elections'. North East London Polytechnic, Livingstone House, Livingstone Road, Stratford, E15. Room 108, 7.30pm.  
CAMDEN Socialist Challenge supporters group meets Wednesday 15 March, 7.30pm at 30 Camden Road, N161 (Camden Tenants Federation office). The meeting will continue the discussion on Socialist Unity, and prospects for revolutionary unity.

HARINGEY Socialist Challenge group meets next Monday 20 March, West Green Community Centre, Stanley Road (off West Green Road), Turnpike Lane tube.  
HAMMERSMITH Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly — details from PO Box 50, London N1.

GREENWICH-LEWISHAM Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly. For details ring Ray, 01-638 1127.

NARROW Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly. Anyone interested please contact PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

SOUTH WEST LONDON Socialist Challenge supporters meet fortnightly in the WCCR Neighbourhood Centre, 172 Lavender Hill, SW11. Next meeting, Wednesday, 22 March, 8pm.

BRENT Socialist Challenge Open Forum. Supporters meet every other Monday. Next meeting 28 March, 7.15pm. Discussion on the Tribunal on the British presence in Ireland. Phone Tessa at 965-3087 for venue.

LONDON CPSA Socialist Challenge readers. We are establishing a CPSA supporters group to work in the union and Broad Left. If you are sympathetic to Socialist Challenge's ideas, write to London SC organiser, c/o PO Box 50, London N1.

# Punk on screen Brutality rules Britannia

**RICHARD CARVER** pays a lot of money to give punk a last chance and is bitterly disappointed at what the film *Jubilee* has to offer.

**FIRST THING.** I don't think it's very funny when I have to pay a trendy entrepreneur £1.75 (yes one pound seventy-five) to see a film about (among other things) a trendy entrepreneur ripping people off. I particularly don't like it when I leave the cinema — Gate Two in this case — with a nasty taste in my mouth and a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach.

It wasn't so much the violence — I mean, these days we're all so blasé about mutilation — as its utter nihilism. And I'd been promised that this film had something deep to say about British society.

### RAMBLE

*Jubilee* has a two-sided plot (if that's the word). We start at the court of Queen Elizabeth I with a long metaphysical ramble by court astrologer John Dee.

Apparently this is based on Dee's treatise 'The Hieroglyphic Monad'. It doesn't matter. Only the alchemists in the audience will understand what it's about and there weren't many there the night I went.

We come back to this monu-

mental tedium a number of times throughout the film, but the real action is elsewhere. Bod (played by the same actress as plays Elizabeth) reigns over a punk England, post-modern and post-Clockwork Orange, where brutality rules, women are dominant and aggressive (and very violent) and men passive and sexual.

### GROTESQUE

The population spends its time smashing up cars, making records and disembowelling policemen. Everything apparently is owned by Borgia Ginz, the camp and implicitly Jewish impresario.

He is played by Orlando of the Lindsay Kemp mime company, so we also get treated to a grotesque sado-masochistic mime from that incredibly overrated gang.

The cast is split half and half between people with names like Little Nell and Adam Ant (that's their 'real' names) who can't act, and actors and actresses who find the whole thing rather embarrassing and keep dropping their working class accents.

I went to see the film because



**JENNY RUNACRE:** a punk image of the queen of England

I thought punk was important. The clothing and lifestyle hold no attraction and the music does grievous bodily harm to my aural apparatus. With *Jubilee* I was giving punk a chance to prove itself. It failed.

To be fair, none of my punk friends liked it either. For them it wasn't 'real' punk but a trendy bowdlerisation. Or they

say it was a misogynist gay film — which is plausible since the director's previous track record is *Sebastiane* (nude men speaking Latin).

But I don't believe there is 'real' punk and trendy punk any more than I believe the people who tell me that the hippies died in Haight-

Ashbury in 1967. *Jubilee* perfectly expresses punk with all its limitations. Anti-authoritarianism (of which there's plenty in the film) is not the same as class struggle or revolutionary politics. It can just as well equal fascism and extreme reaction.

### CULT

There's a strong (though wrong) current in the West Indian community that sees all punk as fascist. For all the Rock Against Racism badges and Right to Work marches, punk needs politics before it becomes anything more than a youth cult.

We've had youth rebellions before. They all claimed to be completely different from their predecessors. Hippies were pretty nice people too, remember. They believed in love (including gay love), they were opposed to racism, authority and all the rest. But it still took a massive political movement before long hair became a real symbol of resistance.

### VIOLENCE

This is a punk film. It shows a future when Britain is turned over to the production of punk music — Buckingham Palace is a recording studio — where violence is the rule and old fashioned illusions like socialism have been swallowed up by the record magnates.

The film is not necessarily in favour of this future: it simply

says that this is what is coming. If you want something more hopeful you will have to look beyond this film... and beyond punk.

*Jubilee* is presently showing at Gate Two in Russell Square, London; ABC cinemas in Edgeware and Luton; Scala, Liverpool; and Futurist, Birmingham.



### Watch it!

Under Review needs media watchers. In order to establish a regular Media Watch column, we need your contributions.

If you have something to say on any of the media moguls' productions — a TV or radio programme that irks or elates you; a local newspaper story, advertisements... then pick up your pen or typewriter.

Media Watch depends on you!

## Why the BBC can't deal with racists

**A KLU KLUX Klan leader was interviewed on the BBC-1 programme Tonight on 6 March. His name is David Duke. He is white and has blond hair. He has children who are white, have blond hair and blue eyes. He is proud of the fact that his entire family is white, writes TARIQ ALI.**

He came to Britain to meet fascist groups so that they could discuss how to 'protect White civilisation'. He 'slipped through' the immigration hall at Gatwick. Black readers please note: This KKK thug 'slipped through'. Irish readers please note: This KKK vandal 'slipped through'.

The question is: Why did the BBC interview this man. Answer: He was 'news'. But he was news only because the media made it a big story. On BBC-1 the same Duke appealed to 'white people' in Britain to be on their guard. They were getting swamped and their 'culture' was being sullied by blacks. Remember the British politician who used a similar rhetoric not so long ago.

At the very least, the BBC should have invited a black militant to confront this articulate hoodlum. They did not do so. Instead an embarrassed Denis Tuohy, who means well but is pretty

ineffectual, was left to interview the KKK. Apart from a few abusive remarks to show that he (Tuohy) was tough, he could do little else. The KKK man won hands down.

The very fact that Tuohy couldn't deal with his arguments is, in itself, an indication that Britain's white liberal facade has cracked. They can't deal with professional racists, because they've half accepted their case. After all, people like Tuohy probably get their ideas from papers like *The Guardian*.

And where does that paper stand on racism and immigration? This excerpt from its editorial on the subject last Thursday is an admirable summary: 'Liberals have a long, inglorious history of being wrong on this issue... Liberals were wrong to oppose immigration controls in the '60s. They were wrong, too, to pretend that the only reason coloured people wanted to come to Britain was the large number of job vacancies.'

'If we had not closed the doors, there would still have been a large flow of immigrants even with our present rate of 1.5m unemployed...'

Tuohy and *The Guardian* are, unfortunately, part of the problem.

## McCann's revenge

**AFTER the premiere performance of Eamonn McCann's play Mad Micks and Englishmen an appeal for funds was made on behalf of the International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland, writes GEOFF BELL.**

The fundraiser introduced an element of competition into his efforts by calling out the names of political organisations. 'Who's here from the International Marxist Group?' he asked (catcalls). 'From the Socialist Workers Party?' (triumphant shouts). 'From the Communist Party?' (groans). 'From the Labour Party?' (laughter). Unintentioned though it was, this was a reflection of some of the problems with *Mad Micks*. The audience at the London School of Economics premiere was an exceptional one, made up for the most part of far lefties and Irish activists.

### COP-OUT

Accordingly, they could understand and appreciate *Mad Micks*. Two incidents in the play were particularly well received. One when a character is sarcastically told: 'You can discover the two nations theory and write to the *Irish Times*.' The other when ex-North of Ireland premier Brian Faulkner is seen riding piggy back on the top of another character.

But it is a restricted audience that can grasp the relevance of these two points — the intellectual cop-out of the notion that Ireland is two nations; and that Faulkner's



Photo: MARK HUSHELI (IFL)

favourite pastime, and ultimately the cause of his demise, was horse riding.

There is nothing wrong with authors making assumptions about an audience's knowledge of their subject. But to do so in agit-prop theatre is a different matter.

Agit-prop is supposed to simplify and cut through ruling class propaganda. The theory is

that it can be understood in labour clubs and trade union branches. It is difficult to see *Mad Micks* serving this function.

To take another example. A Loyalist in the play performs various bigoted songs and sectarian jokes. They are in fact actual Loyalist songs and jokes, but because this is never made clear the uninitiated

could draw the conclusion that they are nothing but crude caricatures drawn by the author.

The most effective part of the play is when McCann portrays a Derry couple, and explores the evolution of the greyhound-fighting husband and of his wife, who gains a form of liberation through membership of the IRA.

### FUNNY

Unfortunately the part of the script where McCann deals with this couple has been trimmed by Pirate Jenny and the dramatic and political potential of this section is not fulfilled. Instead much of the conversation which takes place between the two is a thinly disguised attack on the economism of the British left.

All this is not to say that the play isn't funny. It's worth seeing and enjoyable. It is just a pity that Eamonn McCann's ability cannot be harnessed more effectively. An hour and a half play by him centring on the Derry couple he depicts could be very good indeed. It would not be agit-prop; but simply because McCann has wit and humour does not necessarily mean he is only fit for agit-prop.

**Mad Micks and Irishmen performances:** 16 March, Preston Poly; 18 March, Titchfield Street Community Centre, Liverpool 5; 19 March, Everyman Bistro, Liberty Hall, Liverpool; 21 March to 6 April, Half Moon, Aldgate, East London; 3-6 April, Sugawr Theatre, Duke of Wellington Pub, Balis Pond Road, London NE; 7 April, Folk House, 40 Park Street, Bristol 1.

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# Socialist Challenge

## Secret Zimbabwe talks documents reveal **BISHOP IS SMITH'S PAWN**

**THE BISHOP** is Smith's pawn. Checkmate to the white racists. That is the only conclusion we can draw from the astonishing documents on the Zimbabwe internal settlement talks now in our possession.

They are 167 pages of typed minutes of the talks between the Ian Smith Government, the United African National Council (Bishop Muzorewa), the African National Council (Rev. Sithole), and the Zimbabwe United People's Organisation. The record was kept by J.M. Gopo, the ANC(S) Secretary of Education.

The analogy with a chess tournament is inaccurate. Judging from the minutes it was more like a boxing match

where one contestant had agreed to take a dive and could hardly bother to put up token resistance.

### JUDICIARY

The conclusion of the talks is well known: the whites retain effective control over the armed forces, the judiciary and the civil service. There will be 'protection from deprivation of property unless adequate compensation is paid promptly.'

And there will be a blocking mechanism in Parliament which allows the whites to defend these 'entrenched' parts of the agreement. 'One man, one vote' is revealed as an utter farce.

But what these documents reveal is that the nationalist delegations caved in on every one of these guarantees with hardly the pretence of a discussion.

Only the blocking mechanism prompted any debate and that was over the secondary question of how the whites are elected.

We have devoted considerable space to these documents because we think the words of

the negotiators themselves provide the perfect answer to those, like Foreign Secretary David Owen, who are falling over themselves to accommodate to the 'internal settlement'.

We also think the documents show that Smith's deal hardly differs in essentials from the Anglo-American plan presented by Owen and America's Andrew Young. If there is to be genuine self determination for the black people of Zimbabwe both proposals must be thrown out.

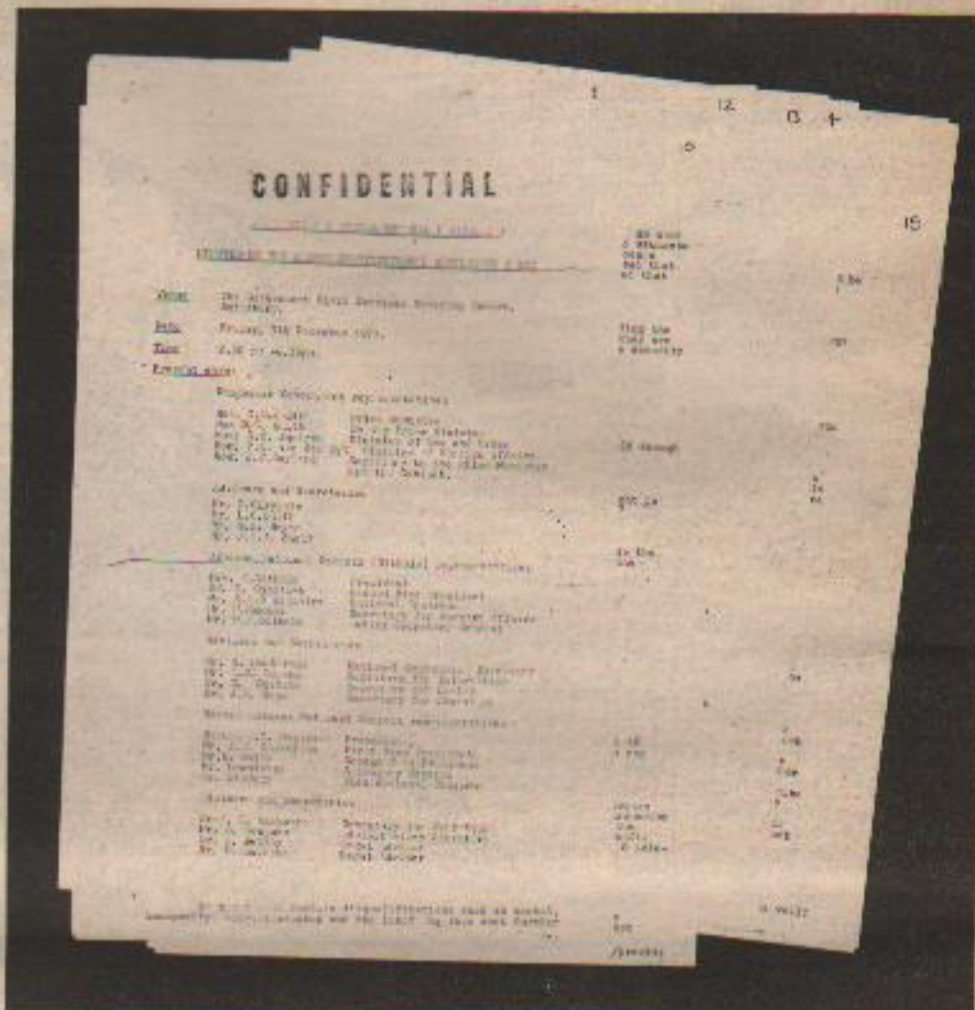
### INFORMATION

According to the minutes Ian Smith says:

**'I have information to the fact that if we were to arrive at a genuine settlement there will be no objection by the UK, USA, Western European countries as well as the UN. Most of these are reluctant to make public pronouncements (sic) about what they would do for fear of public opinion and are afraid to come up against the views of the Front line states.'**

Smith's estimate may not be so wide of the mark. It's up to the labour movement to make sure he doesn't get away with it.

\* Turn to page 9 for full story.



**THOUSANDS OF** teachers are taking action this week to further their pay claim. Many schools have been shut as a result of the teachers' sanctions, which include no lunch time duties and no after-school activities.

Management has offered 9 per cent plus 1 per cent to be used to re-establish differentials. The teachers unions are demanding 12 and a half per cent across the board.

The chairperson of the Burnham management panel has resigned because he considers that the teachers' claim is reasonable.

## OUR FUND DRIVE

OUR APPEAL on behalf of the Leicester Socialist Challenge supporters met an immediate response from Birkenhead. A reader donated 10 stamps. Nothing unusual, except that these graphically illustrate the victory of the Vietnamese revolution.

The comrade comments: 'What a coincidence! Rooting around in old college Soc. Soc. minutes I find these NLF stamps given to us by the then NLF representative Ms Binh.'

I've tried asking the local philatelists what a suitable asking price would be, but the Birkenhead stamp market

seems to be markedly uninterested in the manifestations of the upsurge of the world revolution... But as the Leicester comrades have suggested — the Upper Street scene may be different.'

We would urge all our readers to look around, in the attic or in old books, and see if you can find anything of value!

Meanwhile the fund drives



continue to prosper. The usual quarterly appeal, for which we need £1800, has just topped £1300. In the last 15 days of March we have another £500 to raise, that is nearly £34 a day. The emergency appeal to pay off old debts and buy a small press has reached £433.90. This week's total was just under one hundred pounds.

One reader attacked Socialist Challenge for beginning 'to take on a distinctly sectarian character. Your continued snide attacks on the SWP are completely in that tradition which you propose to break from... How can you have the nerve to lecture the SWP or anyone else on left unity when frankly your organisational level is so abysmal. Viz: the disgraceful returns for your fund last week. Has it not occurred to you that your politics and practice may be linked to your results?'

This correspondent continued: 'I am an SWP member but I welcomed the birth of Socialist Challenge. A variety of views on the left means we can retain our critical faculties, the retention of which distinguish us from the dead weight of stalinism. So change course now!'

To help us to do that the comrade gave us a £1 donation. We agree that there is no separation between the success of the paper and its ability to raise money from its readers



and supporters. The week the writer refers to was a disaster. Since then the fund drives have picked up. We would also point out that since the paper was launched last June, we have not yet failed to make our financial targets. However our supporters cannot afford to be complacent.

This week our thanks to the following for aiding the Tatlin tower:—

Anon	2.00
D. Holmes	5.00
R. Hibbert	5.00
Oxford supporters	20.00
J.F., Oxford	5.00
D. Khamis	2.00
F.M.	5.00
E. Mahood	10.00
Anon	5.00
Swansea supporters	5.00
Birmingham supporters	3.50



B. McKenna	1.00
J. Fitzpatrick	3.00
T. Anglim	1.00
M.B.	30.00
B. Drummond	3.00
D. Simmons	2.00
E. Singer	3.00
P. Murphy	0.25
UCL readers	0.74
Anon — sale of coat	2.00
Coins in coffee jar	8.84
Leeds supporters	10.00
P. Hamilton	15.00
J. Moore	10.00
TOTAL	157.33

London supporters are sparing no effort to raise money for the emergency appeal. At every meeting there is a collection for the paper. Our thanks to:—

Wandsworth IMG	25.00
Anon/Hackney	5.00
M. Krokos	1.00



London IMG teachers	12.50
B. Ballantine	5.00
C. Gardner	10.00
West London IMG	2.50
L. Carville	2.00
South East London IMG	29.00
P. Sheppard	5.00
TOTAL	97.00

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