

Socialist Challenge

UNION LEADERS BACK INCOMES POLICY NO SURRENDER TO THE DIRTY DOZEN



Photo: JOHN STURROCK [Report]

A 'social concordat'. This is the phrase being used to describe the new deal being negotiated by the Labour government and the TUC.

The background to the talks is strikingly obvious.

* The Ford workers, then the lorry drivers, smashed the 5 per cent policy.

* Low paid public sector workers are showing they have the power to do the same.

* Labour's election chances with its present policies have almost reached vanishing point.

And yet, 12 trade union leaders have chosen this time to raise the white flag.

These 'dirty dozen' have published a document entitled 'The Better Way'. In it they suggest that there should be a permanent incomes policy.

They try to pretend that this incomes policy would be 'voluntary', but then go on to suggest that it be policed by a new Prices and Incomes Board and the TUC.

Who signed this document?

- The names are:
- LORD ALLEN (shopworkers)
- JACK BODDY (farmworkers)
- FRANK CHAPPLE (electricians)
- TONY DUFFY (engineers)
- ROY GRANTHAM (clerical workers)
- TOM JACKSON (postal workers)
- LEIF MILLS (bank staff)
- BILL SIRRS (steelworkers)
- KEN THOMAS (civil servants)
- SID WEIGHELL (NUR)
- TONY CHRISTOPHER (Inland Revenue staff)
- GEOFFREY DRAIN (NALGO)

The danger is that a majority of the TUC General Council will now follow these gentlemen's example — that the talks now taking place at Downing Street will result in a series of attacks on the right to strike, the right to picket, and the right to fight against low pay.

But whatever policies are adopted, whatever the talks produce, the General Council of the TUC has no right to go back on conference decisions.

Any 'concordat' must be placed before the labour movement, organised through recall conferences of the TUC and Labour Party.

Let the workers decide. One prophecy can be made with little fear of contradiction. They would not decide in favour of the dirty dozen.



Photo: ANDREW WIARD [Report]



Some of the 'dirty dozen' (from right, clockwise): Lord Allen, Tom Jackson, Tony Christopher, Frank Chapple, Sid Weighell, Geoffrey Drain, Roy Grantham, Bill Sirrs, Ken Thomas, Terry Duffy.

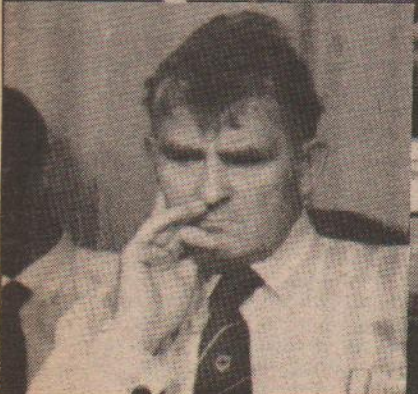


Photo: ANDREW WIARD [Report]



Photo: ANDREW WIARD [Report]



Photo: PETER HARRAP [Report]

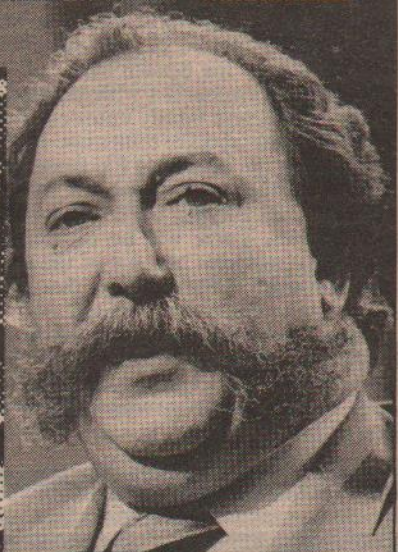


Photo: BOB MURPHY [Socialist Challenge]



Photo: CHRIS DAVIES [Report]

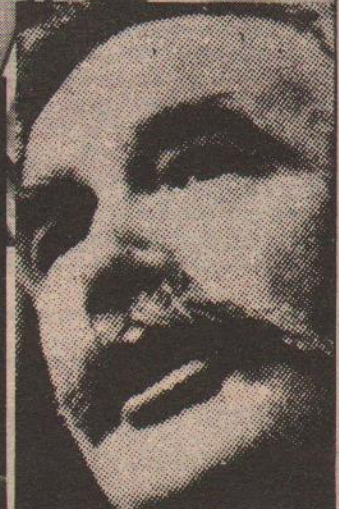


Photo: MORNING STAR

EDITORIAL

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A better way for capitalism

THE document entitled 'A Better Way' is remarkable on many counts. It is signed by twelve members of the TUC General Council. The document thus reflects the combined intellectual weight of Terry Duffy and Jack Boddy amongst others. It represents a sharp attack on the current policies of the TUC and the Labour Party in that it rejects free collective bargaining and comes out strongly for an incomes policy — albeit one which is 'voluntary'.

Let us just pause for a moment and imagine what would have happened if the TUC and Labour Party conferences had voted for an incomes policy and then a minority on the TUC had published a defence of free collective bargaining. All hell would have broken loose. The entire media would have denounced them as 'anti-democratic'. Labour Ministers would have publicly taunted them and the general theme for weeks would have been that the left hates democracy.

But when decisions are taken by one trade union conference after another against wage restraint, and sanctified by both the TUC and Labour Party conferences, then all scruples disappear. Duffy, Boddy, Weighell, Jackson, and co. are the voices of moderation.

Acclaimed by the 'popular press' and feted by the government, they are the voices of collaboration. For them the only future open to British workers is one whose horizons do not extend beyond capitalism. The way they propose is certainly a better one for the present economic system, but not for those who are among its foremost victims.

The fact that the TUC dirty dozen have taken the initiative in this fashion should come as no surprise. The Labour leadership is desperate for a concordat with the unions before the elections. This document has already been used by Callaghan as a wedge against trade unionists involved in struggles.

It needs a reply. Clearly the militancy of the low paid workers is the most eloquent response, but much more is needed. The Duffy-Boddy grouping needs to be confronted politically. The bulk of the TUC leaders are incapable of providing a reply because they accept the essence of what their colleagues are saying.

A recall TUC to discuss the present crisis and propose alternative solutions would be one arena where those in favour of the class struggle could put forward their positions and win support for all workers engaged in struggles.

General Zia's choice

THE Supreme Court of Pakistan decided, as was expected, to uphold the verdict of the High Court and confirm the death sentence on Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The fact that it could do so only by a margin of 4-3 is, in itself, a reflection of how deeply split Pakistan is over the Bhutto trial.

We have no sympathies with Mr Bhutto's brand of politics. But we are nonetheless totally opposed to a military regime hanging him or any other civilian politician. In these situations we can only demand that the people of Pakistan are allowed to determine the government they want through a free general election.

If Zia hangs Bhutto, the country will fall apart in years rather than decades. There will be enormous pressure on him to let Bhutto live, not least because of the situation in Afghanistan and Iran. However Zia also knows that Bhutto alive is a permanent alternative to the present set-up.

The ultimate choice will be made outside Pakistan. It is in Washington and Saudi Arabia that the serious discussions are taking place. Whatever choice Zia is ultimately compelled to make, the realities are overpowering. Pakistan is a state without a future.

THE FIRST WORD

Low pay: Dragging Labour into battle

By John Ross

AT ITS executive meeting last Saturday, the National Union of Public Employees discussed the question of disaffiliating from the Labour Party. It is not an idea that executive members have dreamt up; various NUPE militants have raised it.

And it seems that a resolution along these lines will be submitted to the union's conference in the spring.

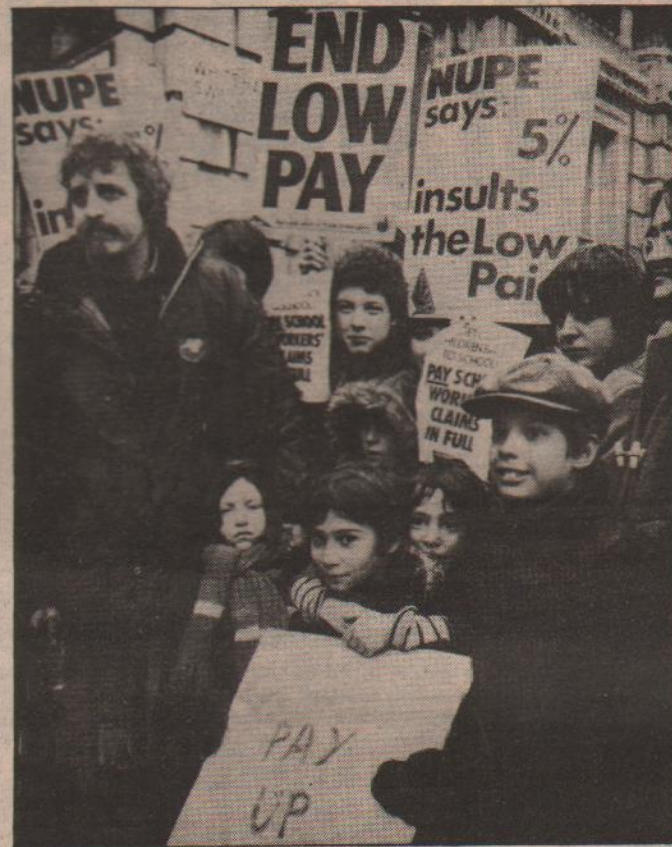
The policies of this Labour government make such antipathy to the Labour Party quite understandable.

When, in pursuit of the government's disgraceful policies, a Labour Prime Minister urges scabs to cross picket lines, contempt for the Labour leadership and everything it stands for is the healthy response of any militant.

But for NUPE to disaffiliate from the Labour Party would be a disastrous mistake.

Millions of workers still see the Labour Party as their party; at least to the extent of voting for it, as do the overwhelming majority of union militants. Quite rightly, they know that the Tories have nothing but hatred for the unions.

This is why disaffiliation would be such a mistake.



It would aid Tory influence and infiltration in the union. And it would cut NUPE militants off from many of the

people whose solidarity is now needed for the public sector strike.

A different course has to be urged on the NUPE leadership; that of using its membership to carry the campaign against low pay deep into the Labour Party.

They should call for every section of the Party — from the National Executive Committee, to each and every branch — to support the public sector claim and to organise in solidarity with the action now taking place.

They should demand that Labour Party funds are used for an extensive publicity campaign in support of the

workers' demands.

It is a battle that needs to be centralised. A call by Alan Fisher for an emergency Labour Party Conference to repudiate Callaghan's policies and support the public sector workers would meet with a real response from the labour movement.

Such a conference could help initiate the fight in the labour movement for socialist policies and a new leadership.

National government?

IT WAS Thatcher's 'bash the unions' speeches which commandeered the headlines last week, but Liberal leader David Steel and former Tory premier Edward Heath also got a look-in with their appeal for a National Government.

The partnership is not new. Ever since the miners' victory in February 1974, Heath and Steel have considered that neither a Tory nor a Labour government could defeat the rank and file strength in the unions.

With that sole aim in view, they want to unite the main political parties in a National Government. Then a straight-forward Tory government could take office to carve its way through the working class.

Historical precedent helps support such a plan. The last National Government, in 1931, savagely cut wages, reduced unemployment pay, and slashed what then existed by way of social services. It led to the largest Tory majority this century.

The plan has some support in the ruling class. But most City opinion is hoping that Thatcher can use Callaghan's attacks on the unions to whip up enough frenzy of 'public opinion' to allow an openly anti-union Tory government to be elected.

Election opportunity

By Colin Smith

WELL OVER a hundred people attended the Socialist Unity conference last weekend, including representatives from towns where candidates will be standing at the General Election.

The conference heard Socorro Ramirez, presidential candidate for the class struggle slate UNIOS in the recent elections in Colombia, recount the experiences of electoral campaigns in Peru, Mexico, Costa Rica and Colombia.

As Bob Pennington, national organiser of Socialist Unity, said in his opening remarks: 'Elections are a time when millions of people discuss politics. The revolutionary left cannot afford to miss this opportunity to talk to those who are disgusted with the Labour Government and are

looking for an alternative.'

This was echoed by a member of the Socialist Workers Party, who regretted the decision of his organisation not to stand in the General Election and urged Socialist Unity to continue to fight for the SWP to reconsider its position.

In the discussion it was emphasised that the aim of the Socialist Unity election campaign was not simply to promote a socialist alternative programme, but to promote the class struggle.

This can be achieved by working with the many independent campaigns, and helping to build left organisations in the unions such as the Campaign for Action in NUPE.

The conference also agreed to make Ireland a central theme in the election campaign.

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

* I am interested in more information about activities in my area.

* I would like additional literature and enclose 50p to cover costs.

[Delete if not applicable]

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Send to Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper St, London N1.

OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

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

2 Our socialism will be infinitely more democratic than what exists in Britain today, with full rights for all political parties and currents that do not take up arms against the socialist state. The Stalinist models of 'socialism' in the USSR and Eastern Europe have discredited socialism in the eyes of the 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.

HOME NEWS

National Health Service

The real killers, the real vandals

LAST THURSDAY, Labour (sic) Prime Minister Jim Callaghan launched another attack on striking low paid workers. This time his target were strikers at some London hospitals. Said Callaghan: 'It is not acceptable that sick human beings, whether they be adults or children... should have proper attention for-

bidden to them.' Callaghan went on to brand the strikers as 'vandals'.

There is one adjective which can be used to describe Callaghan's remarks: sick.

There are no figures available which tell how many people have died, how many people have had 'proper attention forbidden to them' by the massive cuts in government spending on the National Health Service in the past five years.

But one observation can be made.

Three weeks ago some 80,000 low paid workers marched through the streets of London to demand a living wage. And in November 1976 approximately the same number were also on the march.

They were protesting against Labour's cuts — especially in the National Health Service.

Many of those who marched in November 1976 were the same as those who marched three weeks ago.

And since 1976 it has been low-paid workers in the

National Health Service who have led the fight against Labour's cuts.

Some have occupied hospitals threatened with closure, others have gone on scores of demonstrations, some have taken strike action. They were fighting then for a decent health service.

They are fighting for the same today. They know that part of rebuilding a decent health service is paying those who work in it a decent rate for the job.

One example tells the whole story. Since 1974 the pay of nurses has declined by 18.6 per cent, compared to other non-manual professional workers.

And the consequences? Last year 8,000 fewer nurses took up training compared to 1977.

That is why a living wage for all those who work in the health service is not just the quick simple way to end the present wave of strikes; it is also the way to ensure the National Health Service survives.



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

THE DECLINE in the NHS is graphically illustrated by one set of statistics — the number of hospital beds in England and Wales.

The shocking decline reads as follows:

1974: 420,972
1978: 403,682
Not surprisingly, a rise in the number of patients has followed the decline in beds. Those figures are:
1956: 404,176
1976: 607,141

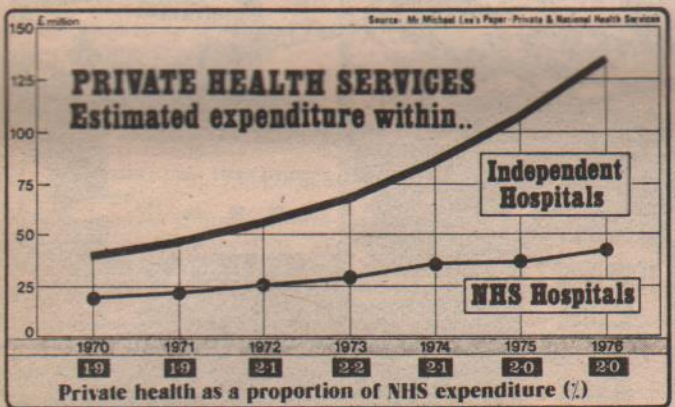


Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

ACCORDING to Nye Bevan, the aim when the NHS was introduced in the late 1940s was to make free health care 'available to the rich and poor alike'.

That has turned out to be a very false promise indeed. The graph illustrates the expenditure in private health services.

The simple fact is that if you can afford it, you can get high quality treatment as quickly as you like.

But if you are not so well off, this is the verdict of a recent

survey in the Financial Times: 'Poor people are even more likely than richer people to die [early] now than they were 30 years ago'.

The fact is that, despite the NHS, Britain spends an especially small proportion of its gross national product on health.

In 1975 it spent 5.3 per cent — lower, for instance, than that of the USA (7.4), Sweden (7.3), and West Germany (6.7).



CALLAGHAN has accused the strikers of being 'vandals'. Listen to this description of an event in October 1977 as it was given by a doctor to the Daily Mirror.

'They literally ran into the hospital...and put the patients in wheelchairs. They broke up the beds with hammers and took away bedsprings.

'They left beds overturned and blankets, mattresses, chairs and flowers were scattered all over the floor'.

The doctor was describing what happened when Hounslow Hospital in London was forcibly closed and when patients were physically removed from their beds.

Once more the reason for this piece of real vandalism was the cuts in the NHS demanded by the Labour government.



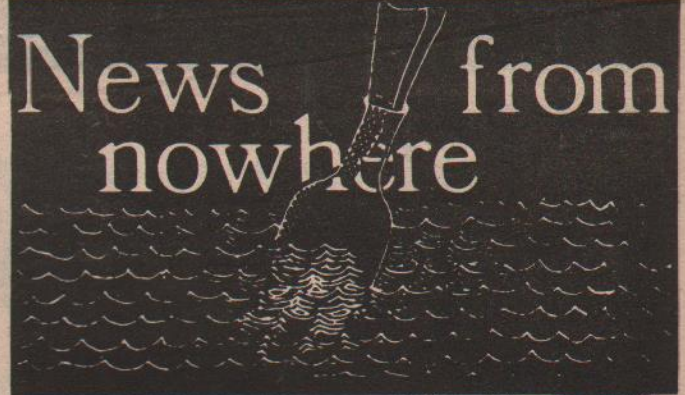
IF THE Labour government and the Whitehall planners get their way, the decline in the NHS will get even worse.

For instance, although there has been a marked decline of available beds in the London region, the plan is to accelerate that decline and to cut a further 21,814 by 1986 — just under a third of those now available.

And although many hospitals in London are already forced to close their doors on occasion because of staff shortages, Labour plans to cut 24,000 more jobs in the London NHS region by 1986.

The conclusion is as obvious as is the slanderous nature of Callaghan's remarks: Defend the NHS.

That, for a start, means defending and supporting those taking industrial action now; industrial action aimed at securing a decent wage for the lower paid and at saving the NHS from collapse.



Rising Unfree

THERE IS a bookshop in Upper Street, Islington, in North London, which goes under the title Rising Free. It aspires to be a 'libertarian' bookshop.

Left bookshops in this country are few and far between. They provide a valuable service for the distribution and purchase of newspapers, journals and books which the monopolies in the book and newspaper business refuse to stock.

This includes newspapers like **Republican News**, which this week merges with the other Provisional Sinn Fein newspaper **An Phoblacht** (good luck and all the best with the new paper — Editorial Board).

But Rising Free has decided not to stock **Republican News**, for political reasons, on the basis that the Provisionals 'are fighting on a nationalist basis and consider the British government and army as expressions of the will of the British people'.

Rising Free also suggests that the Provisionals' ideology 'is a form of national socialism'.

This outburst came after the Christmas bombing campaign launched by the Provisionals in England, which caused Rising Free to stop stocking **Republican News** or any other 'publications which have previously given support to the Provos'.

Those who have offered such support in one form or another include a rather wide spectrum of the British left — for instance, **Socialist Challenge**, **Socialist Worker**, and **Big Flame**.

So what is Rising Free's attitude to these papers? They don't stock **Socialist Challenge** or **Socialist Worker** but they do sell **Big Flame**.

But when we pointed out to a Rising Free spokesperson that **Big Flame** also supported the Provos, we were told: 'That's right, they'll have to go.'

So **Big Flame** will soon be added to the censorship list. But that is not all. The same spokesperson added that the **Islington Gutter Press** would be 'looked at pretty closely', as that local alternative paper has given regular coverage to the anti-imperialist struggle.

But the collaboration in the British government's repression of **Republican News** is not the only feature of management policy at Rising Free.

They also said they would probably be banning the bulletin of the Committee Against Repression in Iran, because CARI had a dispute with an obscure left-wing organisation, the Spartacists, on a recent demonstration. 'I reckon CARI will go too', said the spokesperson.

Last summer Rising Free prominently displayed a poster advertising a 'celebration' of Trotsky's assassination. It seems that their peculiar brand of 'libertarianism' is now almost indistinguishable from the methods of Stalinism.

High places

LONDON's homeless are allowed a wry smile at the news that **Centre Point**, the unoccupied office block in

central London, may be listed as a building of architectural merit.

There is a particular irony here. It was the **Centre Point scandal** which prompted legislation imposing a penal rate where a building was kept deliberately empty and the rating of empty buildings.

But buildings listed as of architectural merit are exempt from empty rates!

Friends in high places?

Lady N

WOMEN STUDENTS will be glad to know that Balliol College, Oxford, is ending its 700-year men-only policy in 1979. They will be less pleased to learn of the chauvinism in the college's annual record for 1978.

It includes an obituary of Lady Julia Namier by Maxine Berg, the first recipient of a research fellowship (sic) in history founded by the Namiers.

Lady N, the obituary says, 'was known to English academic circles through her marriage in 1947 to Lewis Namier (a well-known right-wing historian, ed.). But she had a past and a life of her own...'

Although born in St Petersburg (Leningrad) in 1893 of wealthy parents, Lady N and her first husband, a Tsarist diplomat, were enthusiastic about the revolution.

Both eventually fell foul of Stalin. Her husband was executed, and Lady N imprisoned. She left the USSR in 1934.

And what of her life with Sir Lewis, the man whose biography she was to write? Over to Ms Berg:

'She played a part in Namier's research by learning to drive and chauffeuring him about the country in his search for archives. Her aristocratic presence also made her a success at many of the country houses, and she thereby cleared the way for Namier's access to family papers.'

An ironic comment on this wretched role is not to be found in the obituary.

Chairman Mac

THE DELICATE palates of the Chinese masses are due for a shock. The delights of Chinese cuisine are well-known. What is less well-known is that, while no-one starves to death, there is a shortage of food.

A recent demonstration by peasants in Peking demanding food illustrated this point rather aptly. So the comic operas staged by the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding (SACU) in Britain will soon be needing a new script.

To get back to the story: the Chinese government has just negotiated a deal with **MacDonald's Hamburgers**. From now on the citizens of Peking, Shanghai, Canton, etc., will be able to enjoy **Big Mac** and the odd quarter pounder. Milk shakes will also be available.

But where will the milk come from? Unanswered question. And what about the peasants? They could always organise night raids!

Low pay

The case for all-out action

THE LAST time public sector workers fought back against low pay was in 1974. Their real wages have suffered a sharp decline since that time.

An all-out national strike would get the workers the £60 and 35 hours they are demanding quicker than anything else.

By Patrick Sikorski

Despite the vicious anti-union campaign which is being conducted by papers like the *Daily Mail* and the *Sun* and TV programmes like *Nationwide*, there is growing support for a total strike.

Rank-and-file anger is greater than it was four years ago. This can be seen in the actions of ambulance drivers and hospital porters, sections of workers not well-known for being infiltrated by 'reds and Trots'.

At the same time even bourgeois opinion polls reveal a greater public support for low-paid workers than any other section of workers. This support is so far untapped.

The advantage gained by the rank-and-file vis-à-vis the union leadership and the government is of immense tactical importance.

This time the claims of water, local authority, and hospital workers are running together.

They have united 1¼ million workers around the claim for £60 and 35 hours. This was a victory won by union members at last year's NUPE conference. It was and remains the best way of winning the full claim.

The union leaders are staunch supporters of the Labour government. They are perfectly aware that an all-out strike would ruin Labour's electoral chances. However, the best way to avoid the strike is to force the government to concede the claim.

Not for our union leaders. They are prepared to go along with the government line and be satisfied with a few crumbs.

They hope that these crumbs will satisfy enough workers to enable them to accept a government deal.

At the same time it will divide workers from each other — something which neither the government nor the union leaders have been able to do so far.

The government initially refused to budge from its 5 per cent offer. It then realised that it was too close to election time to fool around and it has now offered a 10 per cent deal for local authority workers and a

package of up to 17 per cent for water workers.

This offer is being eagerly grasped by the union leaders. They hope that they will be able to divide stronger sections from the weaker ones in this fashion. Hence they favour selective strike actions.

But such actions are not sufficient to win the claim. Militancy alone cannot win the day. Public sector workers are scattered in tens of thousands of hospitals, schools and depots.

They can be united by an all-out strike and by democratic organisation of strike committees. In this way the stronger militants will be able to help weaker sections.

NUPE leaders have not looked for ways of mobilising all their members for action and answering the constant barrage of media propaganda.

The workers movement is infinitely more caring than the

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE TRADE UNION DAY SCHOOL

1. Rebuilding the Left in the Unions — Sat 17 Feb.

10.30am The Minority Movement and lessons for today (Rich Palsler)

1 pm Building left tendencies in the unions (Patrick Sikorski, plus speakers from Ford Workers Group, STA, CAN)
The organisation of workers' struggles (Pat Hickey, plus speakers from public sector struggles).

2. The Trade Unions and Eastern Europe — Sun 18 Feb.

10.30am What policy for the unions (Oliver MacDonald)

2 pm Repression in Czechoslovakia (Jan Kavan)
The Soviet trade union group (Vladimir Derer)
The case of Rudolf Bahro (Gunter Minnerup)

Venue: Starcross School, Risinghill Street, London N1.

Admission 50p per day, or 75p for both. Creche/accommodation available.

callous hypocrites of the ruling class and its press; a thousand times more humanitarian than the pathetic Minister of Health Cuts, Ennals. By monitoring and controlling emergency services through strike committees, the public sector workers can win without a single life being put in danger.

The lorry drivers did it by deciding what should and should not go through the picket lines. Was there starvation in the cities due to food shortages? Were millions laid off as predicted? No, it was all a morbid fantasy of the media.

Workers' control of hospitals and ambulance depots would also prevent manage-

ment taking the opportunity to permanently close wards or whole hospitals.

The emergency services code agreed by Fisher, Spanswick and Ennals must be thrown out. It is a management charter to scab.

How, then, can further support be won for the strike? Flying pickets can be sent out to get support from other public sector and industrial workers.

Through local trades councils and strike co-ordinating committees, one-day area general strikes of the broad labour movement can be called to mobilise trade union and public support.

The general strike of public sector workers in London's

East End, called by the ILEA district committee for 15 February, is an excellent example of this.

There are indications that the 10 per cent offer by Callaghan to the local authority workers will be extended in the next week to the hospital ancillary workers.

There is already an agreement between the union leaders and the government on the basis for long-term comparability deals.

All the elements of a sell-out are present, but the initiative is still very much with the rank and file. The strike spreads from day to day. Building now for all-out action can win the full claim.



Leyland - a mess of the unions' making

AN ALL-OUT stoppage at British Leyland was planned for this Friday. The unions claim that management has failed to honour an agreement made in December over parity payments.

In fact it is the union leadership which is primarily responsible for the loss of earnings now threatened at Leyland.

By Geoff Bell

In a full page advert in the *Financial Times* of 6 December 1978, BL management spelt out what the now disputed agreement was all about.

After listing what the offer involved — essentially a 5 per cent increase and a move towards parity in the different plants — the advertisement emphasised:

'All of this is being paid for — not by the government or customers — but by extra productivity in the form of demanning and increased output per man.'

'Unlike some productivity deals, this one will only be paid

as and when the extra production has been delivered.'

Management are now claiming that this extra production has not 'been delivered'. They cite the lorry drivers' strike and the strike at the Drews Lane transmission plant in Birmingham last November as the reasons for the failure to meet the production target.

Consequently, they say, the company will not pay parity wages for November and December 1978. Management have also asked that January and February payments be deferred until March.

Grenville Hawley, the full-time official of the Transport and General Workers Union

responsible for the negotiations with Leyland, has said that the union side were 'misled' by management into signing the December agreement.

But BL made it very plain at the time that higher productivity was necessary to fulfil the parity obligations.

Rather than being 'misled', the union negotiators must be faulted for not spelling out in detail what the agreement involved when they recommended acceptance through a secret ballot of all Leyland workers.

When the offer was first made, Socialist Challenge pointed out that the parity agreement had to be self-financing and described the offer as 'a raffle ticket'.

But others were only too keen to promote the deal. Particularly to the fore was shop stewards chairperson and Communist Party member Derek Robinson.

At a mass meeting at the

Longbridge plant in November, he described those opposed to the deal as 'the lunatic left, the Trots and their henchmen'. Robinson insisted: 'We are prepared to be reasonable.'

Such support for the agreement has won warm praise from BL's boss Michael Edwardes, who commented in a recent interview in the *Daily Mirror*:

'If anything I would say that the Communist shop stewards in Leyland are among the most efficient, concerned and reliable.'

The 'reliable' leadership of Robinson, Hawley and others has now landed BL's workers in the worst of possible worlds.

The December agreement limited wage rises to 5 per cent, it pledged the union to accept 7,000 redundancies, and now it has enabled management to postpone parity payments.

If BL's workers are to extricate themselves from this mess, it is obvious that the first

thing that has to go is the agreement. Otherwise the workers would soon find themselves in a Catch 22 situation.

If they strike against the postponement of parity payments, then the resulting loss of production would allow management to put off paying up even further; but if they don't strike, there is no way Leyland will backtrack.

Apart from the future of the

agreement, BL workers will now be taking a long hard look at both the 'participation' machinery which promoted this agreement and those on the union side who spoke up for it.

A new fighting leadership is needed at BL. If the events of the past few months prove anything, they prove that Derek Robinson and his allies have never been that fighting leadership, nor do they want to be.

WHILE the presses at The Times remain silent, the print and journalist unions facing an entrenched battle over new technology have produced their own version of the 'Thunderer' — The Times Challenger.

Planned to be a monthly, the first 16-page issue contains reports and opinion columns from chapel officials and union leaders on the fight against Lord Thomson.

Funded from labour movement advertising, 100,000 copies of the paper have been produced.

Several articles raise the issue of press freedom, and this will be one of the themes of an open conference on the challenge at The Times to be held by the NATSOPA print union on Saturday 10 February, 2 to 5.30pm at the 'Y' Hotel, Great Russell St, London WC1.

Tyne and Wear

By Elsa Conway
NUPE member, St Nicholas Hospital

CARETAKERS in Sunderland, refuse disposal workers in the whole of Tyne and Wear are out on strike. Most of the hospitals are being hit by various forms of industrial action and only selected roads are being gritted.

The union co-ordinating committee has agreed to grant concessions in those areas where the elderly, sick, and disabled might be seriously affected.

Meanwhile NUPE's local authority branch strike committee is organising a petition of support and a financial appeal.

The Campaign for Action in NUPE held a meeting in Newcastle on 31 January. Approximately 25 people attended and speakers included a nurse, a teacher of the mentally handicapped, and a school student.

In an attempt to stem the obvious tide of militancy in the area, it has been rumoured that private firms are being hired to remove dirty linen and provide linen skips in strike-bound hospital laundries.

Oxford

By Anita Richards
Area supplies department, Oxfordshire hospitals

ACTION has been taken in Oxford by almost every section of public sector workers, with a policy of 'patient care only' being applied in the hospitals for two days this week.

The Churchill sector joint shop stewards committee, which I'm on, has ensured that control over emergency cover is in the hands of the unions taking action.

This makes it much more difficult for management to persuade those remaining on duty to scab on those taking action.

A resolution to the NUPE hospital branch for all-out action has obtained wide backing, but the branch chairperson has refused to allow it to be discussed.

Members could do worse than follow the example set at Oxford Polytechnic. The NUPE steward there failed to build for the 22 January day of action. He has since been replaced by a member prepared to lead the struggle.

Brent

By Hugh Lowe
ASTMS member, Northwick Park Hospital

WITH overtime bans and working to rule as the main form of action by health workers in Brent, management is seeking retribution by prevaricating over bonus and overtime payments.

It has not been amenable to deals. When NUPE offered to provide cover at the Central Middlesex Hospital if management agreed to close two wards, this was turned down.

Local management has also refused to implement a national agreement on engineers' pay, while the Department of Health has issued instructions that local agreements reducing hours for lab technicians will not be recognised.

Teesside

By Alan Theasby

THREE hundred public sector workers picketed the Prime Minister when he visited Thornaby on Teesside last Friday.

He had been invited by Ian Wigglesworth, the local Labour MP and secretary of the right-wing Manifesto Group.

Callaghan was due to lunch at Middlesbrough town hall but NUPE staff there refused to serve him, and he was forced to eat at a private hotel.

The public sector strike committee refused to allow NUPE officials to have lunch with the Prime Minister. Instead pickets handed him a bundle of hundreds of wage slips so that he could see the level of their take-home pay.

The public sector workers were joined in their protest by workers from the Head Wrightson engineering firm in Middlesbrough, which is threatened with closure.

Manchester

By Martin Collins

THE 'VICTIMS' of the public sector dispute in Manchester, even those who have crossed picket lines to bury dead relatives, have made clear on phone-in programmes that they support the aims of the strike.

The extent of public support has surprised the union full-time officials, in whose hands presently rest the decisions about who stays in and who comes out. They are not used to involving the membership.

When Eve Bryczowski, a shop steward in NUPE's housing branch, proposed that mass meetings of stewards should co-ordinate the action, the full-time official pointed to the fact that only 50 turned out for a low pay rally last autumn.

Members of the district committee were amazed. Many of the branches had received the mailing after the rally.

The far left in Manchester has come together in a £60-35 hours campaign, producing a public leaflet to counter media coverage and a bulletin for the unions on building the strike.

We are fighting for the unions to resource such schemes and keep the membership informed.

Southampton

By Steve Ferris
NUPE member Southampton General Hospital

THE UNION leadership at this hospital has followed Alan Fisher's advice of supposedly harassing management through working to rule and lightning walkouts.

The result has been increasing frustration among the members, not least because the tactics create more work for them when they return to normal routines.

Staff have yet to have the opportunity to decide on strike action.

Supporters of the Campaign for Action in NUPE are arguing for such action, together with the election of a strike committee and weekly mass meetings to plan the pay campaign.

NALGO shows social workers the Drain

SOCIAL WORKERS striking for increased pay and regrading have been told to accept a nationally agreed negotiation framework by a special delegate meeting of the Local Government Officers Union.

It looks as though strike action will continue for some time despite this agreement.

By Dave Burns
Press Officer,
Islington NALGO

The scheme adopted by a 2:1 majority at the delegate meeting on 26 January has been favoured by the NALGO leaders since last November.

It has been consistently rejected by the social workers, who saw it as unclear and potentially divisive. Social workers in 14 districts are continuing their strike.

The offer cuts across their demands for locally negotiated settlements, and there is no

guarantee that it will be implemented locally in a way that is acceptable to individual groups of workers.

The deal establishes five grades — three for social workers and two for welfare assistants — with very vague definitions of the 'role' of each level.

The first of the three social workers' levels is more or less the same as the old national grade. After six months on strike, some may well find themselves on the same grade as when they started.

Local employers have re-

fused to start negotiating, even on the basis of this agreement, and there are fears that they are prepared to sit it out.

NALGO's determination to find a compromise deal rather than strengthen the strike gives obstinate councils, like Tower Hamlets, grounds for thinking that if they refuse to make concessions then the strikers will eventually be forced back to work on the worst possible terms.

At the special delegate meeting, where social workers were greatly outnumbered by other local government repre-

sentatives, the NALGO leadership's main argument for accepting the deal was the effect of the strike on the union's funds.

The money will be needed in the summer, they claimed, for a fight against the 5 per cent when the local government pay claim goes in.

But NALGO's complete capitulation over the social workers' strike shows little promise of any action in the summer. General secretary Geoffrey Drain is one of the signatories of the TUC 'moderates' incomes policy statement.

As one delegate at the meeting said: 'NALGO has proved itself to be the Mickey Mouse outfit that some of its members suspected.'

What these events show is the long overdue need to organise a broad section of the membership in a fight to change the union's policies and its leadership.

Hackney 1

By Nick Beeton

THE TRADITIONAL friction between students, teachers, and NUPE staff at colleges has lessened at Hackney further education college as a result of the students' ability to swing support behind the public sector dispute.

The students' union at the college has been very weakly organised, yet when the principal called the students and staff together to persuade us that we should feel free to cross the NUPE caretakers' picket line on the 22 January day of action, the meeting came to the opposite conclusion.

As a former NUPE steward now doing a further education course, I was able to offer first-hand experience of the abysmal pay of public sector workers.

The outcome of the debate was that the students voted overwhelmingly to stay out, and the NATFHE teachers — who had previously been split on whether to cross the picket line — supported our position.

Hackney 2

By Aileen O'Callaghan

THE PUBLIC sector workers' action in Hackney, East London, is being co-ordinated by a strike committee representing NUPE, GMWU

and TGWU members — the first time these unions have got together in Hackney.

NALGO workers in the area have now agreed to do no work which will disrupt the actions of the other unions.

The strike committee's plan so far has been to bring out only key personnel. Thus the refuse drivers are on strike but not the loaders, although as a consequence the latter have no work to do.

Others on indefinite strike are boiler operators in public baths, sewage workers, and home-helps.

Only a day after Health Minister David Ennals was photographed at the Queen Elizabeth children's hospital last week, stroking the heads of babies a 24-hour strike was held by ancillary workers.

Emergency cases were allowed during the strike, and vital services to old people, such as meals-on-wheels, have been kept operating by the strike committee.

Teachers and pickets

By Anna de Casparis
NUT rep Archway School,
North London

WHILE a thousand schools were shut last week by public sector strike action, which is now due to escalate, the executive of the National Union of Teachers has told us to cross picket lines.

They point to a statement by Alan Fisher that NUPE pickets would not attempt to stop

teachers or pupils entering schools. A campaign is being mounted in the NUT to reverse the instruction to scab.

With the outcome of the 35 per cent pay claim that has now been submitted for teachers so closely tied to developments in the public sector, solidarity is of obvious importance.

Joint meetings in schools between NUT and NUPE members should be the first step and it needs to be taken urgently since any teacher who refuses to cross a picket line could be victimised by our union leadership.

Avon

By Mike Eade
TGWU

A DAY of action locally on the public sector claim is not to the liking of Ron Dagger, the Transport Union's district officer for general workers in Bristol.

He told a mass meeting of health and council stewards on 27 January that such action had to be 'confirmed nationally' — which wasn't simply a matter of informing head office but, according to Dagger, having the proposal 'vetted'.

Although the union officially says it's up to branches to decide what action to take, it has refused to take any lead in linking the various sectors.

Ring Us!

WITH widespread industrial action among the one and a half

million public sector workers, among others, we depend for effective news coverage on our readers across the country.

Send us the facts from your locality, together with comments from those lined up against the pay norms about how they consider the battle should be conducted.

You can ring in reports on 01-359 8180/9.

Cheshire Home

By Jane Coleman
Liverpool Women's Action Group

THE BITTERLY cold weather has been making life hard for women on the picket line at the Leonard Cheshire Home outside Liverpool.

Sacked 11 weeks ago when they asked their union, NUPE, to negotiate pay for them, there is still no sign of a settlement. The hopes of the sacked women are now heavily dependent on the results of an inquiry set up three weeks ago.

NUPE's threat to close down the home if the workers are not reinstated seems very hollow now.

The women have begun to lose hope of getting their jobs back and instead are demanding full compensation and the withdrawal of all allegations of cruelty.

The women have reduced their hours of picketing, but they are still determined to keep on fighting. They need financial support and help on the picket line.

IN BRIEF

Defend gays from police harassment

By Jamie Gough

Frank Kelly, a well-known anti-fascist militant in Bradford, has been charged with buggery and indecent assault. 'Indecent assault' here means any sexual act between two men one of whom is under 21, all such acts being illegal.

The man Frank is supposed to have slept with, Shaukat Ali, made a statement to the police naming a 'David' whom he has identified as Frank.

Frank denies that he has ever had a sexual relationship with Shaukat.

This case highlights the barbarity of the law under which people receive long prison sentences for having fully consenting sexual relationships.

It also shows the barbarity of the immigration laws which give the police enormous powers to intimidate and harass black people.

Demonstrate: Sat 10 Feb, 2pm, meeting at carpark of Junction Hotel, Leeds Rd, Bradford.

For more information, contact Frank Kelly Defence Ctee, Gr Fl, 127 Thornton Rd, Bradford. 0274 22518.

Huntley Street trial restarts

By Piers Corbyn

NEW evidence against the police is coming to light in the trial of 14 squatters arrested during the mass eviction from Huntley Street in London last summer.

Vigorous cross-questioning by the defence in court has led the police to admit that two police spies — Nigel Wildman and Mary McClosky — lived in Huntley Street for three weeks prior to the eviction, posing as homeless squatters.

It also appears that tales of a 'missile arsenal' in Huntley Street were also used to justify the scale of the eviction.

The Huntley Street Defence Committee are submitting evidence to the TUC Inquiry into the Special Patrol Group and the Special Branch Police.

The Defence Committee are holding a public meeting — 'Huntley Street — the strong state rehearses' — on 15 February when they will detail the evidence gathered so far.

The trial starts again on Wednesday 14 February. Picket Marylebone Magistrates Court at 10am. There will be a Street Theatre outside the court.

Public Meeting, Thursday 15 February at 7.30pm, Central London Poly, Bolsover St, London W1.

Fighting closure at Vickers

'HOWWAY the lads, howway the lads'... that was more than a Geordie football slogan last Friday, it was the sound as workers from Vickers Scotswood plant in Newcastle welcomed each new contingent from other Vickers plants to a massive march and rally to save the works from closure.

The march must have been over 4,000 by the time it reached the City Hall. After only two weeks campaigning the fight to save Scotswood is a major issue for the labour movement in Tyneside.

In the next issue we will carry a full article on the background to the closure and on the campaign.

HOMENEWS

Wolverhampton: A case study in racism

THE National Front's journal, *Spearhead*, carries a regular monthly feature entitled 'Degenerate of the month'. Last June their selected 'degenerate' was Dave Stevens, member of the Wolverhampton Anti-Racist Committee.

By Rich Palser

For the NF, of course, the fact that Dave is an active anti-racist is enough to qualify him as 'degenerate'.

But how he comes to be facing three separate charges of assaulting police and one of actual bodily harm after being arrested on an anti-racist demonstration last March is rather better explained by the anti-racist committee in their pamphlet *Support the Wolverhampton anti-racists*.

The pamphlet is far more than an explanation of Dave's case, though it leaves no-one in any doubt as to why they should support the picket outside Stafford Crown Court on 19 February to demand the dropping of all charges.

It is a case study in how

racism manifests itself in one town — Wolverhampton — and how to organise to overcome it.

The labour movement was either unaware or did not care. One reply to an anti-racist committee circular was from a Brother J Wenlock of the AUEW Supervisory Section:

'My members feel that if any racist policies are being practised in this country it is not anti-black but anti-white... why not a referendum on immigration...'

So in early 1978 the anti-racist committee decided to make it an issue in the labour movement. Following a successful demonstration, they organised a labour movement tribunal — with local councillors, MPs, and trade unionists on the panel — to

hear the evidence of racist violence and police harassment.

So overwhelming was the evidence provided by the Indian Workers Association and the anti-racist committee that the tribunal concluded that the police had lost the confidence of the black community due to fraudulent charges, brutality, and abusive language.

The work of the Wolverhampton anti-racist committee is a practical example of how black people's organisations can work with other anti-racists to confront state racism and racism within the labour movement.

Learn from them by buying the pamphlet, and help them by being at the picket on 19 February.

WHAT'S LEFT

5p per word. Display £2 per column inch. Deadline: 3pm Saturday before publication. Payment in advance.

TURKEY: What's really happening? Monthly socialist bulletin in English — fascist ideology in Turkey, Kahraman-maras, Martial Law, Kurds etc. Annual subscription £2.50. Postbus 9720, Utrecht, Holland.

JUST OUT: Revolutionary Socialism No 3, the journal of Big Flame. Articles include: the urban struggle in Spain, the new revolutionary politics in Italy, part time women workers and the labour market, the incorporation of the shop steward movement. 40p from Big Flame, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.

SHEFFIELD Revolutionary Communist Group public meeting: 'The struggle against racism'. Thurs 15 Feb, 7.30pm, The Library, King Edward VII School, Glossop Rd, Sheffield 10.

MANCHESTER 17 Feb, Women's Liberation day of workshops, films. Abraham Moss, 10.30am to 5pm. Creche. Adm: £1.50, £1 unwaged.

40 HOUR strike — 35 hour week day school. Sat 10 Feb, 10.30-4.30, Cowane Centre, Cowane St, Stirling. Speakers: Harry McShane, Martin Ross (POEU Dundee), NUM speaker, Ian McDougall (Scottish Labour History Society). Further info. contact: Gordon Love, 23A Wallace St, Stirling.

CHILE campaign worker is looking for accommodation in North London. Phone Jerry: 01-272 4298 (day).

MANCHESTER Socialist Unity public meeting. Mon 12 Feb, 7.30pm, Star and Garter, Fairfield St. (Nr Piccadilly Station).

MOSS SIDE Socialist Challenge and Moss Side CP joint meeting on 'Low Pay and the Fight Against the 5 per cent'. Speakers: Ron Murphy, AUEW/TASS, Geoff West, SU candidate, Rick Gwilt, TGWU and CP. Thurs 8 Feb, 7.30pm, Whalley Hotel, Moss Side.

PEOPLES Democracy benefit concert by Belt and Braces rock band. Sat 17 Feb, 8.30pm-11.30pm, Waterloo Action Centre, 14 Bayliss Rd, London SE4. Snacks available. Adm: £1.25, or £1 (£2.50 for three) in advance from the Other Bookshop.

EDINBURGH Revolutionary Communist Group: third in a series of monthly public meetings. 'The Struggle Against Racism'. Edinburgh Trades Council, Picardy Place, Wed 14 Feb at 7.30pm.

RED LADDER, a collectively run, regionally based, socialist theatre company require a female performer (musical skills an advantage) to start at beginning April. Write, giving details of political and work experience to: Red Ladder Theatre, Cobden Ave, Leeds 12. Tel: Leeds 792228. Closing date 28 Feb.

WOMEN and Health — what are we fighting for? A workshop organised to bring together all women concerned with the fight against hospital cuts and closures and the fight to control our own bodies. Sessions include — an information exchange for campaigns, the politics of community care, racism and health, prevention — a public or personal responsibility? Sat 17 Feb, 10.30am-5.30pm, University of London Union, Malet St, London WC1. Adm: 50p at door.

SPARTACIST League public meeting: Defend the Gains of October. Fri 9 Feb, 7.30pm at Central Library, Fieldway Cres/Holloway Rd, London N5.

SPARTACIST League public meeting — Workers must rule in Iran! 7.30pm, Fri 16 Feb, Australia Bar, Hurst St, Birmingham. For further details ring 021-472 7726.

SOUTH BANK Poly anti-racist week of action. Mon 12 Feb: Public meeting, speakers: Peter Hain, Ted Knight, at Edric Hall, Borough Rd, 6pm. Tues 13 Feb: CAST theatre group present *What happens next?*, 8pm, Student Union, Rotary St. Wed 14: Rock Against Racism gig with the *Users and Crisis*, 8pm, 75p, Student Union.

Snow White might get through immigration, but...

By Emily Grundy, Campaign Against the Immigration Laws

THE recent revelations about 'virginity tests' for Asian women trying to enter Britain provide just one more example of the horrific practices permitted under the immigration laws.

The immigration laws as they stand discriminate against blacks. The enormous discretionary powers allowed immigration officials means that this racism is compounded — in 1968 immigration officers

at Heathrow issued a public statement of support for Enoch Powell.

Discrimination against black immigrants does not stop once they have finally made it to Britain.

Police raids, passport checks, detentions and deportations are all too familiar, and the Select Committee on immigration recommended more money for 'internal policing'.

Under the law someone accused of being an 'illegal' immigrant can be held in prison and deported without trial or

right of appeal. On 30 April 1978 there were 249 people in British prisons held under the immigration Acts, and that is just the official figure.

As a result of the outcry about 'virginity tests' and the picket of the Home Office, Merlyn Rees has now said the practice will stop. The fight against the immigration laws must go on.

It is not enough to campaign against 'abuses' of the system, we must realise that immigration legislation represents one of the chief facets of state

racism and that we must fight for an end to the immigration laws altogether, not just for a law that is slightly less obviously racist.

The Campaign Against the Immigration Laws (CAIL) was set up in June last year by a number of people involved in anti-racist activity to provide information and work with organisations involved in the struggle against the immigration laws.

We produce a Newsletter and will provide speakers for any meeting on immigration or

nationality.

We call on ANL branches, anti-racist and anti-fascist committees, women's groups, trades councils and trade union branches to affiliate to CAIL and take up the issue of immigration in their areas, for example by campaigning around those held in prison under the Acts.

For more information about CAIL and details of affiliation contact CAIL, Box 133, c/o Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N1.



'AWAZ says: end sexual harassment, no immigration controls', yelled a 150-strong picket of the Home Office last Friday. Called by the Law Centres' Sub-committee on Race and Immigration, it was supported by numerous black, women's and anti-racist groups, including a vociferous and militant contingent of Asian women from Southall. The picket was to protest against the forced 'virginity tests' at Heathrow airport.

Professor Huntingford, a long-time campaigner for abortion rights, pointed to the racism involved and said: 'I am appalled that any member of the medical profession could aid and abet this imposition on the liberty of people in general and women in particular'.

CAIL have called a meeting for Fri 9 Feb at 7pm, Roebuck pub, Tottenham Court Rd, London W1.

Photo: G.M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

IRELAND

Censorship and Ireland

Putting over the white, male, middle class view

By Liz Curtis

'CENSORSHIP', said Denis Lemon, editor of *Gay News*, 'is how other people in your name are protecting you from me.'

He was addressing the Theatre Writers' Union conference on censorship in London on 28 January. The TWU was spurred into calling the conference because so many of its own members are falling victim to censorship.

The growing use of overt censorship during the last two years or so — especially in relation to Ireland — has led to a number of discussions among media workers. These discussions have mainly concerned television.

The Theatre Writers' Union wanted to bring together people from all different parts of the media: theatre, television, journalism, the visual arts.

Some 200 people attended, and the speeches both from the platform and from the floor indicated the high degree of concern that many media workers now feel.

And during the conference it became clear that this concern is not limited to overt censorship but extends to the way the media present the world in general.

Speaker after speaker showed how whole sections of the population — Irish Republi-

cans, gays, blacks, women, workers — are excluded from or misrepresented in the media.

This exclusion is achieved in a number of ways. Sometimes, as 'ABC' journalist Duncan Campbell and a statement sent by *Republican News* editor Danny Morrison made clear, the state intervenes directly against those who reveal its unpleasant secrets.

Sometimes the broadcasting authorities step in to ban or cut a TV programme. More than 20 TV programmes on Ireland are known to have been victims of such interference.

Open censorship is avoided where possible, because it inevitably leads to friction. But as Philip Schlesinger, author of *Putting 'reality' together — BBC news*, put it, 'Northern Ireland has presented a crisis for the British state and the British media, and especially for the public broadcasting system.' Britain is fighting an unpopular war in the north of Ireland — much closer to home than previous colonial wars. Control of information is vital to the war effort.

But the media establishment cannot be relied on to toe the line because the repressive methods being used in Ireland actually conflict with the establishment image of 'justice-loving' Britain.

Inevitably investigative jour-

nalists begin to ask questions. The authorities are in a quandary: allowing the truth through leads to awkward questions about the war, but using open censorship exposes the fact that the state has something to hide.

So more insidious forms of control are brought in. Production staff are instructed to 'refer up' programmes on Ireland for vetting at high levels. Deterred, they hesitate to suggest programmes — they censor themselves.

Censorship can take other forms. Elizabeth Bond described how, when a theatre company did a play about the effects of asbestos, the multinational company involved put pressure on the funding organisation, the Pennines Arts Council, which sacked the cast.

Playwright Cherry Potter told how a director watered down her play about the effects of psycho-surgery. He did not even alter the script — he simply instructed the actress to 'act less brain-damaged'!

Several speakers pointed out that censorship can be even more subtle. Gays, blacks, Irish people and women are degraded through 'comedy' while their true perspectives are never shown.

In the interminable bulletins on strikes, strikers 'just happen'

not to be interviewed about what they are striking for.

In such circumstances not even self-censorship is at work. The media are simply churning out a view of the world which reflects the ideology of the people who control and staff TV and press — a West European/British colonial, white, male, middle class view.

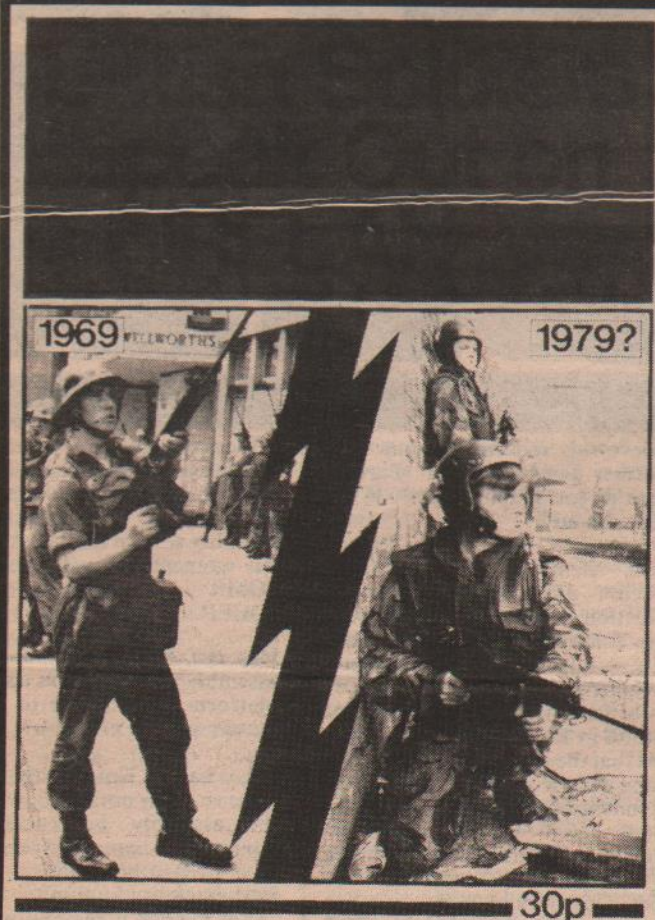
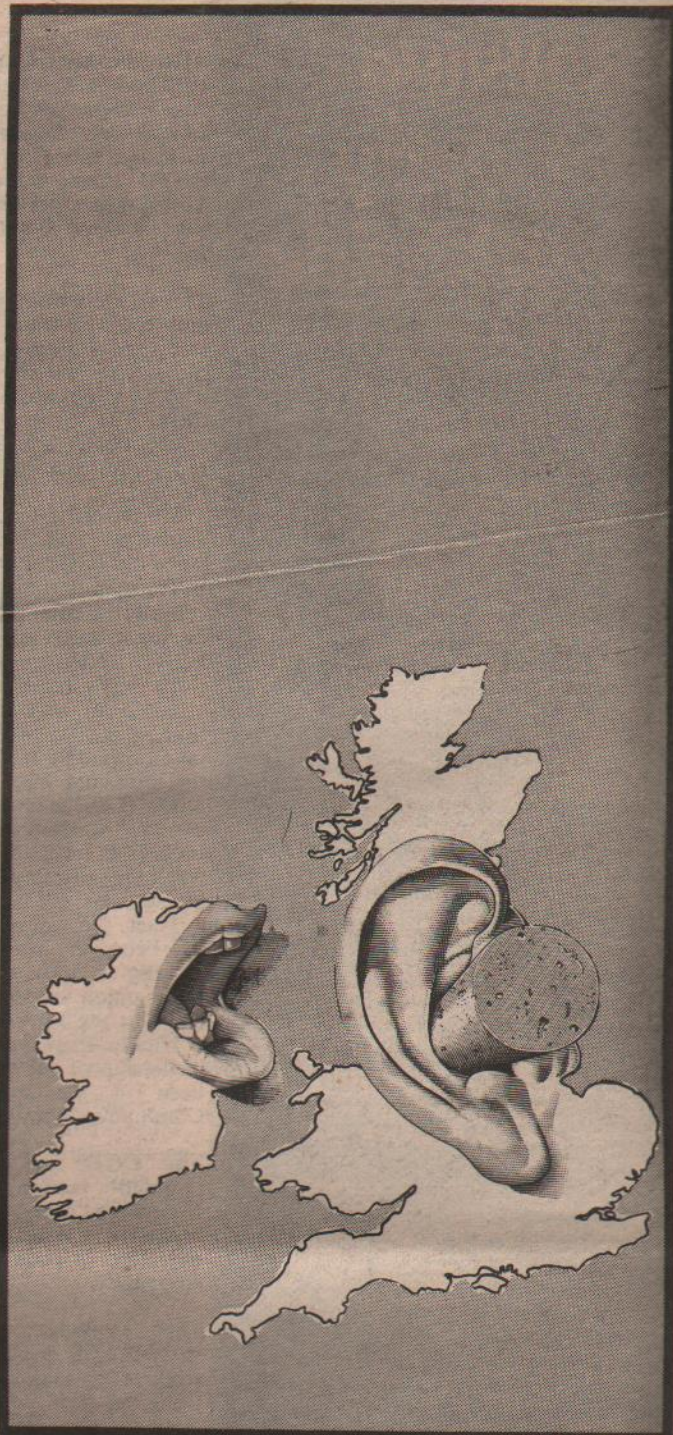
Ultimately, as author Farrukh Dhondy pointed out, what is heard depends on who is in control.

At the same time, the fight for the right of the oppressed to have access to the mass media — as well as setting up alternative means of communication — is part of the fight to destabilise the ruling class.

The conference concluded by setting up a committee which aims partly to act as a pressure group on the unions and ultimately the TUC (while some of the media unions have formal machinery for dealing with censorship, they rarely use it).

The committee could do worse than start by publishing some of the papers given at the conference.

Liz Curtis is a member of the Campaign for Free Speech on Ireland, which will shortly be publishing a comprehensive pamphlet on the media and Ireland.



'British Soldiers Speak Out on Ireland' has proved one of the most popular political pamphlets for some time. Put out by Information on Ireland, the pamphlet has sold out its first print run of 5,000 copies. But now its printers, Interlink, have refused to print a second edition. A variety of excuses have been offered by Interlink director Peter Sinclair. First he claimed that the printers' finishers had objected to the pamphlet, but when Information on Ireland found different finishers Interlink found a new excuse. Sinclair suggested that pressure from other customers had forced Interlink to censor the pamphlet.

Leicester Poly exposes racist rag

AN ANALYSIS of a local paper's reporting of Ireland has been compiled. It is part of the work of the International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland, whose preliminary hearing was conducted last week.

By Ailean O'Callaghan

A 55-page analysis of the *Leicester Mercury's* coverage of Ireland over the last ten years forms the core section of a report by a working party elected by Leicester Polytechnic Student Union.

'We hope', they say, 'to provide the Leicester people with an awareness of the extent to which they have been continuously exposed to a complete misrepresentation of the events in Ireland.'

The publication does just that. Key articles and editorials in the *Mercury* covering major events such as the Civil Rights movement, the attack on the Bogside in August 1969, internment, Bloody Sunday, and so on are documented.

Not only are the facts of these events contrasted with the *Mercury's* reports (which are systematically refuted), but the anti-Irish racism which the

Mercury offers as an explanation of the violence is exposed.

For example, the day after RUC gangs first invaded the Bogside in 1969, the *Mercury's* readers were informed in an editorial entitled 'The Hate of the Irish' that 'the Irish seem set for martyrdom'.

It went on: 'It is difficult for the peace-loving English to understand the forces that drive an aroused Irishman to self-destruction. But that is what is happening. But now the killing has begun it is impossible to foresee its bloody end.'

This, of course, makes it easy to explain away the role of the British army. In June 1970 the *Mercury* explained under the headline 'Why We're There':

'Ulster bleeds and burns — and British troops see action for which they have no stomach at all... Northern Ireland needs Britain for economic survival, whatever we do there is not out of a belated sense of empire or modern power politics but out

of sheer humanity.'

The violence of the oppressed against the oppressor is treated rather differently. At the time of the first internment swoops in August 1971, in which dozens of Irish people died, the paper claimed that ordinary law was ineffective in dealing with the 'ruthless viciousness' of the IRA.

The latter, it alleged without substantiation, had committed 'recent acts of terrorism, murdered in cold blood, maimed numerous people including young children, and put at risk the jobs and the whole future of entire communities'.

Those who conducted the raids, however, and were later proved to have tortured many of those lifted, were the subject of a special plea:

'Spare a thought today for the young British troops. They have just come through another ugly weekend in which they have been stoned and shot at... Amid this turmoil the young

British tommies have to live and work under siege conditions, be treated as mortal foes by a section of the population, and yet conduct themselves in the non-belligerent way specified for service personnel when rendering aid to the civil power.'

When 'non-belligerent' paratroopers killed 14 unarmed civil rights marchers on 30 January 1972, the *Mercury* found that the victims were responsible:

'The accusing finger of guilt again points at the British Army, but the plain fact is that a march, which was completely illegal anyway, got out of hand — as the IRA no doubt intended.'

These are just some of the indictments made by the working party — which, incidentally, was elected by a union general meeting and is accountable to it.

It is impossible to counter distortions without making clear why they are made and in whose interests. The report does both, and in so doing clearly takes the side of the Irish people.

The working party is acting not as a neutral moral arbiter but, as the International Tribunal itself will, as a prosecutor of British imperialism in Ireland and its agents in this country.

Rallying for unity worldwide



Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

By Davy Jones

AT last Friday's Rally Against Imperialism, the International Marxist Group Development Fund Drive raised £2,000.

Penny Duggan, from the IMG Central Committee, made the appeal for money, explaining that the theme of the rally was 'Workers of the World Unite'.

'That need not be an empty slogan', she said, 'the Fourth International in a modest way is a living reality of that political theme.'

The platform of speakers proved the point impressively — with speakers from Latin America, Asia, Africa and Europe.

'Our Iranian comrades', she went on, 'have just distributed 20,000 copies of their newspaper in Iran. The magnificent, large collection at the Fourth International Anniversary rally last November helped to make this possible.'

She continued the appeal by outlining the different objectives of the Development Fund Drive.

'We need more publications, just like our Iranian comrades, to explain our revolutionary politics. And we need to build up our printshop in order to facilitate the production of these publications.'

Another key area of the fund drive is to finance the construction of a revolutionary youth organisation.

'The Revolution paper has its own £4,000 fund drive and as part of the IMG appeal we intend to ensure that it gets every penny of that £4,000,' she explained.

To date the fund drive total has reached £5,787 with a further £826 in pledges to be collected.

Between now and May Day, when the fund drive closes, further national events are planned — in particular a national Revolution rally and a large May Day event.

At a local level too, every IMG branch is organising at least one fundraising event. And every IMG comrade and sympathiser is being asked to donate one day's income, wage or grant, to the Fund Drive Appeal.

So, if you want more information about the fund drive or would like to make a donation, please fill in the coupon below and send to: IMG, PO Box 50, London N12XP.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

.....

I enclose a donation of to

the IMG Development Fund Drive.

(Cheques payable to The Week),

payable to The Week).

After the historic general strikes of 1977 and 1978, which forced the Peruvian military to hold elections to a Constituent Assembly, the general stoppage called by the Stalinist-led CGTP (Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú) on 9 January was a failure. What were the reasons for this?

There were a number, both structural and conjunctural. First of all, the recession — the fact that 50 per cent of the workforce is unemployed and those who have jobs are frightened of losing them. The strike was due to last 72 hours; anyone absent for three days or more from their workplace can, by law, be fired.

Moreover, the stoppage came after Christmas and New Year holidays when the workers are short of money. But most importantly, the strike did not come as the culmination of a period of intense struggle, after a wave of strikes, but was called for a date fixed coldly three weeks in advance.

The delay gave the government the time, which it used very intelligently, to take preventive measures: they raised the minimum wage by 2,000 soles to 8,000 (£20) a month, they put out constant warnings on TV, they gave orders that troops could shoot to kill. It was a type of preventive repression the masses were not used to.

Then, the working class movement has been very badly affected by the sacking of between 5,000 and 6,000 trade union leaders and cadres as a result of the July 1977 general strike.

Finally, there was a lack of unitary leadership of the strike, as there had been in the previous ones; the Communists kept control.

The CGTP is controlled by the 'Unidad' faction of the Peruvian Communist party, in other words, the Stalinists. What was their real objective, in your view, in calling the stoppage?

They wanted to demonstrate their strength. The decision to call a general stoppage was taken at the CGTP Fifth Congress last year. The stoppage certainly represented the PCP(U) chief card in negotiations with the military government. But the stoppage was called off on its second day.

To what extent did the fact that the military has agreed to hold elections soon and return power to a civilian government foster illusions in the masses and lessen their resolution to follow the strike call?

This had only a small effect, I believe. But now it is possible that the masses will be resigned to following the constitutional road, the other road having proven difficult.

What was FOCEP's (Frente Obrero, Campesino, Estudiantil y Popular) role in the strike?

We supported it, of course, though we had no part in the leadership of it. We saw that the masses were willing to fight, and if the stoppage had come as a culmination of strikes and mass movements it would have succeeded.

Frankly, we over-estimated the conditions, failed to realise how much the working class has been weakened by the dismissal of the union leaders and cadres I've already mentioned, by the recession and also by the breaking of the miners' strike last September.

This was a very tough strike, it lasted a month, the miners marched on Lima — and finally the movement was brutally repressed by the military. The CGTP did not support the strike. That fact has not been forgotten.

What are the political perspectives now?

The military government will be able to move with more assurance towards handing over power to a civilian government which will almost certainly take place. But the working class struggles will continue because the economic crisis is going to continue.

Exclusive interview with Hugo Blanco

THIS interview with HUGO BLANCO took place on the evening of 23 January in the Parliament building in Lima where the Constituent Assembly was engaged on its night-long weekly plenary session. Shortly after the opening, the assembly moved into secret session to consider, it was said, relations with Chile after a recent Chilean spy case in Peru.

Before the end of the secret session, Blanco was able to leave the chamber, having denounced the presence in Peru of other spies — those of the CIA — to give this interview to RONALD FRASER.



PERU: RE AND REP

As I said earlier, however, as the elections approach and as a result of the strike failure, the masses are likely to become more electoralist.

In the Constituent Assembly elections last year, FOCEP, an electoral alliance of your party, the Trotskyist POMR (Partido Obrero Marxista Revolucionario) and other left organisations, won 12 per cent of the popular vote, making FOCEP the largest working class force in the assembly, and the third largest of all the parties represented. What do you expect in the next elections?

Less votes than last time, in truth. The bourgeoisie is not going to allow itself to be surprised twice in a row. This is no tragedy for us. FOCEP is a group of militants with a following of half a million voters. We haven't been able to enlist all of them by any means.

An electoral campaign is useful as a means of educating people, and in particular, for us, of achieving our major aim of reuniting the Trotskyist movement. We have recently been able to reunify five separate groups into the new PRT (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores).

To achieve this required a split with your former party, the PST (Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores). What were the reasons?

Sectarian elements in the PST demanded, as a condition of re-unification, that not only should strategic concepts be shared — quite correctly — but also tactical concepts. That is quite a different matter.

The formation of tendencies is not understood in Peru as it is in Europe. The idea that the majority tendency can determine a tactic which is accepted by other tendencies does not exist easily here.

The tactic, of course, may be proved wrong by events; it must then be changed. This implies a flexibility in tactics which some elements in the PST are unable to accept.

Do you see the possibility of further reunification? With the POMR or the PST?

It will be easier with the POMR than with the PST, I think. We do not have behind us the years of rancour and dispute that bedevil relations between members of the two organisations.

We are much newer here, and also have been working closely together FOCEP. Our militants are used collaborating. For example, in assembly session that's taking place this moment. Ricardo Napuri of POMR is speaking on behalf FOCEP.

Has the concept of the constituent assembly providing you with a platform from which to educate masses proven effective?

No, it hasn't. Not directly, in any sense since virtually nothing of what is said in the assembly is reported in government-controlled press. But we have been other political advantage Parliamentary immunity, for one.

Let me put it plainly: a member of this assembly enjoys just about same rights as an ordinary citizen bourgeois democracy. No more.

If it hadn't been for this immunity would have been deported twenty already. Instead of which, we have able to organise and address meetings of 10,000 and more people.

The people want to listen member of the assembly for their eyes, an authorised spokesman.



CESSION RESSION

And so, outside the assembly, it has been possible to use membership to reach the masses, to denounce the government's servility.

Then, there is the fact that the left party offices are not constantly being searched and smashed by the security forces. In a country where a typewriter is a luxury, this has considerable importance.

As far as I am concerned, my membership of the Human Rights Commission of the assembly has meant that I have access to prisons etc. to investigate conditions.

The Commission has the right to investigate certain other areas as well. When two students were shot by police last year during a demonstration, we were able to talk to witnesses and authorities — but not to the policemen who fired the fatal shots.

Has the left been able to curb any of the excesses that the right has tried to write into the new constitution?

No, the left has not been able to shift the constitution by a millimetre.

However, the fact that APRA (Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana), the largest bourgeois party in the assembly, if not the PPC (Partido Popular Cristiano), appears to have accepted the revolutionary left's determined fight to ensure that illiterates should be given the vote, must be considered a victory, surely.

Well, it would be if we were sure that the vote will be given for the next elections. But this has not been finally decided yet.

Let us return to the next elections for a moment. Will FOCEP make an electoral alliance with UDP (Unión Democrática Popular), the electoral front dominated by Maoists and which ran second to FOCEP?

An electoral alliance is a strategic alliance, not a tactical one. We make tactical pacts, join in common action with any parties which share our particular tactical aim at any moment.

But elections are different. They are concerned with the question of power and, in consequence, imply — even if

only symbolically — a strategy. We refuse to create illusions in the masses that the bourgeoisie will permit us to take power through elections. We stand therefore for an electoral unity which strictly respects class independence — no alliance with the bourgeoisie.

Many sectors within UDP are tempted by such alliances. It thus remains to be seen whether such an electoral pact is possible.

The bourgeoisie would, of course, like to take over FOCEP which it sees as an easy prize. It will try to do this by infiltrating those who believe in class collaboration. We shall, however, remain firm on this principle as we have in the past.

The petty bourgeoisie has grown in Peru under the ten years of military rule. Their role in a revolutionary strategy seems to me important, if not determinant. What is the PRT's policy towards this class?

The revolution will be made by the working class in alliance with the peasantry and the poor urban petty

bourgeoisie. The petty bourgeoisie is a very broad class in Peru. It ranges from individuals who are poorer than industrial workers to those who are relatively well off — from the street vendor to the small businessperson.

The former category — you have only to walk down some of the streets in Lima to observe this — is very numerous and lives an extremely precarious existence. It and other strata of the poor petty bourgeoisie stand, in their great majority, shoulder to shoulder with the industrial workers.

They have a profound hatred of the government. We know this because they joined massively in the previous general strikes — though to a lesser extent this time — and by their presence in FOCEP's base committees.

When Popular Assemblies or People's Defence Fronts have arisen, the petty bourgeoisie's participation has always been noticeable.

Where the proletariat has dominated the proceedings, the higher strata of the petty bourgeoisie have moved out; but where this has not been the case, the petty bourgeoisie, including the higher strata, has taken over the Assembly.

These assemblies and fronts have arisen in specific localities during specific conflicts and have disbanded once the conflict has been resolved. We, of course, have tried to ensure that they continue in existence as independent organs of struggle, but so far without success.

Does the impoverished petty bourgeoisie share all the working class's revolutionary aspirations?

No. They don't agree with certain types of working class struggle and slogans. For example, the proletariat's taking over of factories, the slogan of workers' control. Strikes, on the other hand, are much more attractive to them.

Does the PRT recruit among this class?

Of course. Our base is in the working class and poor petty bourgeoisie in the shanty towns around Lima and the provincial urban centres.

We have so far not been able to recruit widely amongst the peasantry. The latter, by and large, have their community organisations and trade union organisation. They see no need for a political organisation.

They accept me as a peasant union leader of the CCP (Confederación Campesina del Perú), and if I raise the cry, 'Viva FOCEP!' they will echo it, but it's no more than a verbal acknowledgement, I know.

What about factory organisation?

The PRT has no committees in factories. The trade union organisation tends to predominate over political parties on the factory floor. There is a greater fear of carrying out political work in the factory than in the shanty town.

The loss of the 5,000 union leaders and cadres I've referred to has had a serious impact. The working class has been weakened, numerically and in its combative capacity, by these sackings and the recession.

It would appear that the terrorism which threatened your life last year has diminished. Is this correct?

Diminished, yes, thanks to the international campaign, but it has not ceased. A PC-ML constituent deputy has been denouncing in the assembly that he received threats during the strike, that papers and a briefcase in his office were burnt with acid. It is very important that the international campaign continue.

One final question. If the bourgeoisie 'slipped up' and allowed the revolutionary left to win the next election, what would happen?

The bourgeoisie will never allow us to take power through elections. There would be an immediate military coup.

Zimbabwe month of action planned



By Our Foreign Staff

THE 85 per cent vote among whites for the draft Rhodesian constitution has surprised even Ian Smith's most loyal followers. The constitution claims to be for 'majority rule' but entrenches a controlling white minority in parliament and retains all the apparatus of the present settler state.

This assured its victory in last week's referendum, but such a large majority provides interesting evidence of how Rhodesia's whites are thinking.

First, it shows that the new constitution changes nothing fundamental. Nearly a year of 'transitional government' involving former nationalist black leaders has shown that white racist capital has nothing to fear from integrating tame black leaders.

The less intelligent ultra-right sections of the white community have accepted the result as proof of final defeat. The leaders of the Rhodesia Action Party and Save Our Nation announced their intention to wind up their parties and pack their bags.

Secondly, the result shows the deep conservatism of the white community in sticking with the familiar leadership of Ian Smith. This innate caution is reinforced by the escalating military and social crisis — as we reported at length last week the white army is losing the war with the Patriotic Front guerillas and the social fabric is tearing apart.

With elections to the new 'majority rule' parliament taking place in April, the need for solidarity with the liberation struggle becomes particularly urgent. So the decision of the Anti-Apartheid Movement National Committee to name March as a Month of Action on Zimbabwe is timely.

It plans three national events:

- * 3 March Zimbabwe Action Conference.
- * 17 March, Zimbabwe Day Public Meeting, organised by ZAPU, one of the Patriotic Front organisations.
- * 21 March, Zimbabwe Fundraising Day.

The AAM has the following aims for the Month of Action:

- * to mobilise political support and material aid for the Patriotic Front;
- * to expose the continued collaboration between Britain and the illegal Rhodesian regime;
- * to campaign for the extension of sanctions to South Africa as the only way in which sanctions against Rhodesia can be made effective;
- * to expose the 'internal settlement' and reveal the true nature of the 'transitional government' in Rhodesia.

There is just one glaring omission from this list. With the collapse of the Smith regime imminent, there is an increased possibility that imperialism — particularly British — may try to salvage the situation by military means.

The solidarity movement should be under no illusions that a British military intervention could be positive, and activity against it should be an integral part of the campaign.

* Further details of local and national events in the Month of Action are available from the AAM, 89 Charlotte Street, London W1. A full list will appear in the March issue of Anti-Apartheid News.

Trotskyists publish Bill of Rights

By Steve Potter

A PRESS conference which took place in Tehran on 22 January heard the proposals of the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (formerly Sattar League) for ending United States domination of their country and for the immediate election of a constituent assembly.

Reporters from virtually all major Iranian and foreign media were given copies of the constitution that the SWP proposes for adoption by such a constituent assembly.

Entitled 'A Bill of Rights for the Workers and Toilers of Iran', the draft maps out how the struggle for democratic rights, against imperialism and against the repressive apparatus should be waged.

The capstone of the programme for the constituent assembly is a workers' and peasants' government instead of a government of the property-owning class.

The press conference was opened by Professor Zeyott Obrohimi of Tehran University. Other speakers were Babak Zahræ, editor of the weekly Payam Daneshjoo, poet Reza Baraheni, Javad Sadeeg, Parvin Najafi and Nemat Jazayeri, former executive secretary of the US-based Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran.

Speakers stressed the need for building a mass socialist party. Such a process will entail the rapid unification of all revolutionary Marxists in Iran, including the Trotskyists publishing Che Bayad Kard, a paper produced in Iran.

* Details of the press conference and the Bill of Rights can be found in the latest issue of Intercontinental Press/Inprecor, 30p plus postage from PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

'Down with Bakhtiar! Yes to workers' power!'

By Steve Potter

THE Iranian youth went from demonstrator to demonstrator feverishly showing Polaroid pictures of atrocities committed by the army in Tehran. The photographs reminded everyone who saw them that repression goes on in Iran and the need for international solidarity remains as strong as ever.

The 2,500-strong demonstration, which took place last Saturday in London, was organised by British left organisations, Iranian student organisations grouped in the Iran Solidarity Campaign and the Committee against Repression in Iran and was supported by the National Union of Students.

After speeches from representatives of these organisations, including the joint far left statement reprinted on the back page, the demonstration's high point came as it passed the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square. The 500-strong CARI contingent in particular shouted slogans including 'Carter! Callaghan! Hands off Iran!' and 'Don't make Iran another Vietnam'.

At the Iranian Embassy — which was massively protected by hundreds of police — the whole demonstration shouted 'Down with Bakhtiar! Yes to workers' power.'

BBC reporters who attended the demonstration were evidently deaf, since it was described on the news as pro-Khomeini, despite the complete



IRANIANS on the demonstration in London last Saturday.

absence of religious slogans.

The demonstration had a large majority of Iranian students on it, showing the lack of appreciation within the left

and the labour movement as a whole of the strategic role which Iran plays in maintaining the whole network of imperialist exploitation in the

key area of the Middle East.

At its Steering Committee next day, CARI saw bringing this awareness to the labour

movement as its main task over the next few months.

After the affiliation of the National Union of Students to CARI, a joint speaking tour with the NUS will be proposed. Meetings held with Liverpool and Hull Port shop stewards committees will aim to culminate with the affiliation of the National Port Shop Stewards Committee.

Other trade unions will be contacted to provide support for the workers' struggles continuing in Iran. There will be a campaign launched throughout the whole labour movement for the total withdrawal of logistical and maintenance aid for the Shah's army.

At the same time CARI will propose united action on the lines of last week's demonstration to all other forces active on the question of Iran, particularly the Iranian students grouped in the Iran Solidarity Campaign.

There will be a full discussion of the situation in Iran and what can be done in the imperialist countries to block the forces of reaction at the CARI Conference on Saturday 31 March at University College London. Speakers invited include Fred Halliday, Hull and Liverpool dockers, and shop stewards from the Vickers Combine Committee.

* Further details of the Conference and delegation forms can be obtained from CARI, Box 4, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N1. Phone 1-5pm — 01-800 8958.

Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

ISC replies to Socialist Challenge

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE PUBLIC MEETING

The struggle for socialism in Iran

Speaker: Steve Potter

8pm, 16 February, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square London WC1 (Holborn tube)

Eritrea film

FOR THOSE who are horrified at what is going on in Eritrea — and for anyone else — there will be a showing of the film Sawrana, shot in Eritrea, at the Scala, Tottenham Street, London W1, on Sunday 25 February at 1.30pm.

There will be a discussion afterwards. Invitations have been sent to the Soviet and Cuban embassies, as well as to sympathetic journalists, such as John Pilger.

The Iran Solidarity Campaign replies to Socialist Challenge.

THERE are a number of points we would like to touch upon as regards Socialist Challenge's contribution, the tone of which makes it sound like a joint statement with the Committee Against Repression in Iran.

1. You write that 'a number of Iranian student groups have been involved in CARI and left because they disagreed with this orientation' (i.e. toward labour and student movements in Britain).

The Confederation of Iranian Students — National Union — was in fact a main founder of CARI and many of its members contributed greatly toward building it. International Marxist Group members in London, Manchester and Sheffield can confirm this.

On the question of orientation we refer you to the draft platform of the ISC. We left, not because of orientation, but because of a right turn on the side of IMG and its Iranian supporters who tried to impose on us their political positions.

2. It is surprising to see that you suddenly think that the slogan

'Imperialist Hands off Iran' is important, because the IMG and its Iranian supporters were the only organisation which opposed 'clarifying the role of imperialism including British imperialism in Iran' (from CARI's manifesto, April 1976).

This point has been forgotten since we left CARI and even until recently activists of CARI argued that slogans like 'Death to the Shah', 'Down with the Shah's Regime' and anti-imperialist slogans were not the ones around which mobilisation should take place and therefore must not be raised.

Either the militant mass struggle in Iran or the prospect of isolation in the solidarity movement must have made you change your position.

3. As regards the exclusion of a CARI speaker from the rally at the end of the ISC demonstration (by far the biggest ever held in Britain on the question of Iran so far, which you did not even bother to report), the event has been distorted to an unbelievable extent by the people who claim to be against falsification.

Prior to the demonstration we had been denied the right to announce it on two occasions (the Fourth International's

Fortieth anniversary rally and CARI's public meeting) and although we do not believe a solidarity rally to be a place to settle political differences, we asked for the feeling of the rally whether to allow a CARI speaker to address it, and it was a deafening 'No' which took away the chance for a CARI speaker.

4. You write that ISC 'is confined to organisations of a particular point of view', 'loose coalition of Iranian student groups called the ISC', 'some SSA delegates questioned the vague political basis of the ISC'.

More biased statements. There are different viewpoints among Iranian student groups in the ISC, but we have all agreed around the draft platform, which is quite clear and could not have been labelled vague when it had not even been read.

The point you make though does apply to CARI, in which the only Iranians are the supporters of the Fourth International.

5. It seems that you always water down political differences. We suggest that you stop asking people to join organisations with whose politics they

disagree ('We suggest that the SWP and ISC...actively participate in building CARI...').

We suggest that you recognise

the existence of differences both in politics and action and stop appealing for unprincipled unity.

ISC platform

DRAFT for platform of 'Iran Solidarity Campaign':

(1) ISC supports and propagates the demands of the Iranian people for the overthrow of the Shah's dictatorial regime and a complete halt to imperialist domination in Iran.

(2) ISC defends the struggle of the Iranian working class for their democratic rights and against all forms of exploitation.

(3) ISC supports all the democratic rights of Iranian toiling masses including

- a) the right of nationalities to self-determination
- b) the right of ethnic minorities for preservation of their culture and identity
- c) freedom of ideology and religion
- d) the right of women for organising independently and fight for their liberation
- e) the right of socialists to

openly and freely organise (4) ISC campaigns for the release of all Iranian political prisoners.

(5) The ISC emphasises the importance of campaigning particularly within the labour movement to win over the active support of the British workers for the Iranian popular movement and aim to put a ban on all trade especially arms sales to the Shah's regime

(6) ISC believes in organisational democracy and does not believe in voting on political and ideological issues

Proposed by CISNU (supporters of Vanguard Armed Movement) CISNU (Left Platform) Autonomous Iranian Students in London Armenian Anti-Imperialist Students Society Association of Kurdish Students Abroad (UK Branch)

Khomeini is back - what now?

KHOMEINI is back! After a wait nearly as long as the Shah's protracted departure, the Iranian masses have finally greeted their figurehead.

But the Iranian revolution is not over indeed its crucial struggles may have hardly begun. And one of the vital questions of the coming months will be the political confrontation between Khomeini and the left.

On this page we look at what Khomeini really thinks, and continue to discuss what sort of revolutionary party needs to be built in Iran.

By Francois Massion

'WE WILL set up a committee to discuss constituting an assembly. The people have already spoken on their desire to have an Islamic government. But if on the juridical level a referendum is necessary, we won't stand in the way of it... We will put forward a candidate for the presidency of the republic. He will have to be elected by the people. Once he is elected we will support him.'

AFTER years of dictatorship the demand for the election of a constituent assembly is popular with the Iranian people.

For the masses this means at last deciding what direction the country should take; it means abolishing the institutions of the Pahlavi monarchy; and it means greater freedom and an improvement in living standards.

This is why the constituent assembly is one of the basic demands of the Iranian Trotskyists.

But for such an election to be really democratic there must be the right of free expression and organisation irrespective of religious belief or political position.

Khomeini is opposed to these ideas. In his opinion 'subversive groups' should not be legalised.

'We will put Islamic conditions to which the candidates must submit. In this way we want to stop small groups standing to the detriment of the mass of

people.'

For Khomeini communism is a great danger threatening Iran, which must be fought vigorously. The increasingly regular attacks by religious followers against left-wing students at Tehran University show how the situation could evolve once an 'Islamic government' was installed.

For the Iranian Trotskyists the constituent assembly will have a series of tasks. It will have to dismantle the monarchical institutions, destroy imperialist domination, emancipate the peasantry, re-establish the right to self-determination of the oppressed nations, and allow the liberation of women.

No capitalist government will be able to carry out such reforms since that would involve the systematic mobilisation of the working masses and the abolition of the class privileges on which bourgeois power rests.

'WHAT WE are interested in is our independence, our freedom and the establishment of an Islamic republic. This means the overthrow of the Shah and the extermination of the royalist regime.'

IT IS by remaining intransigent on the question of the republic — in contrast to the National Front and moderate religious leaders — that Khomeini has gained such great popularity in Iran.

In the eyes of the Iranian masses, the Shah and the



MASS movement has shown that Iranian working class is driving force of the revolution.

monarchy symbolised oppression and exploitation. The slogan of the 'Islamic republic' has been taken up largely because it signified change — and the change was proposed by the only force which condemned the Shah's dealings: Shi'ism and its 'radical' leaders.

But what Khomeini proposes runs the danger of not matching up to the massive expectations which have been placed in it.

Although certain religious leaders have gone as far as to talk about 'ending the exploitation of man by man', the Islamic republic which they propose does not give them the means to eliminate this exploitation.

It does not intend to break with the present capitalist economic system. Its aim is to increase the role of religion in running the state. This will not go much beyond Gaddafi's Libya.

'In an Islamic government there is absolutely no room for

communism. Islam and communism are economically and ideologically different points of view.' (Ayatollah Chirazi)

The Iranian Trotskyists are fighting for a workers' and peasants' republic. The Iranian capitalist class has already proved its inability to put forward even the most moderate reforms for the benefit of the vast majority of the population.

On the other hand, because of their social weight, the working masses, and above all the working class, have succeeded in one year in changing more than the Shah's regime had done in 25 years.

The revolution has shown that the driving force of the movement is the Iranian working class, allied to the poor peasants and intellectuals.

The leadership of the country falls to them. Only a workers' and peasants' government, supported by the organised power of the oppressed and exploited, is capable of meeting

the needs of the Iranian people through the socialist re-organisation of society and the state.

'IN principle Iran will not adhere to any military bloc. We are favourable to non-alignment, but technical questions will be entrusted to advisers.'

THE struggle against imperialist domination at the moment occupies an important place in the Iranian revolution. The oil strikers have demanded the expulsion of foreign advisers and a 'real nationalisation' of the National Oil Company.

Khomeini has taken certain progressive positions on these questions: breaking off relations with South Africa and Israel and supporting the Palestinian fighters. But when it comes to the crunch, things are left to the 'advisers'.

The capitalist regime in Iran

has been shaped by the imperialist powers (primarily Britain and the United States).

Its economy largely depends on the capital of multinationals. Its petrol exports are dependent on the good will of the capitalist trusts which distribute it. Its army is directed by US military advisers and officers trained in the United States.

In this context a break with imperialism means more than just declarations of national independence and of the end of foreign exploitation.

It means a series of economic and political decisions which break with the market economy and the 'national' bourgeoisie, since that is how imperialism has achieved its domination.

This would be one of the tasks of a workers' and peasants' government — to nationalise without compensation the assets of the big foreign firms and to allow the working masses to regain control over their natural resources.

SWP doesn't rule out support for Iranian Trotskyists

By Oliver MacDonald

LEADERS of the Socialist Workers Party are keeping open the question of whether their party will throw its weight behind the Trotskyists in Iran.

But, speaking at a rally on 'Building the Party in Iran' in London on 1 February, they did seem to rule out a campaign to force the Labour government to end its servicing of Iran's Chieftain tanks.

Peter Gowan of the International Marxist Group's Political Committee, invited to make an extended contribution to the discussion, welcomed the points made from the platform about the urgent need for Iranian revolutionaries to return to their homeland and help build a revolutionary workers party.

He said that exiled Iranian members of the Fourth International had returned to the country and linked up with a Trotskyist current that had emerged in a number of cities

during the mass struggle.

Those comrades had already brought out twenty thousand copies of a new weekly paper in Tehran and a Trotskyist party uniting all these forces was in the process of formation.

Gowan stressed the enormous stakes in the Iranian revolution and the responsibilities of the revolutionary left throughout the world to assist the development of a Marxist workers' party.

Pointing out the valuable aid which the SWP could give to the Fourth International's comrades in Iran, he emphasised the impact which such a non-sectarian assistance from the SWP could have both in Britain and throughout the European left.

He added that he did not want to put the SWP leaders on the spot for an immediate reply and urged a serious consideration of the matter.

Neither Tony Cliff nor Terry Povey ruled out the possibility that the SWP might back the

Trotskyist forces in Iran. They were unhappy about what seemed to them a light-minded declaration of the founding of a party by comrades from North America on their arrival in Tehran.

Povey also felt that the new weekly was wrong to have failed to provide coverage of the strike movement in its first issue. Another platform speaker not from the SWP felt that it was wrong to produce a national weekly paper to link up socialists in various parts of the country and that local papers would be better.

But these points are obviously matters of style, form and tactics which should not in themselves be a barrier to SWP support for the Iranian Trotskyists.

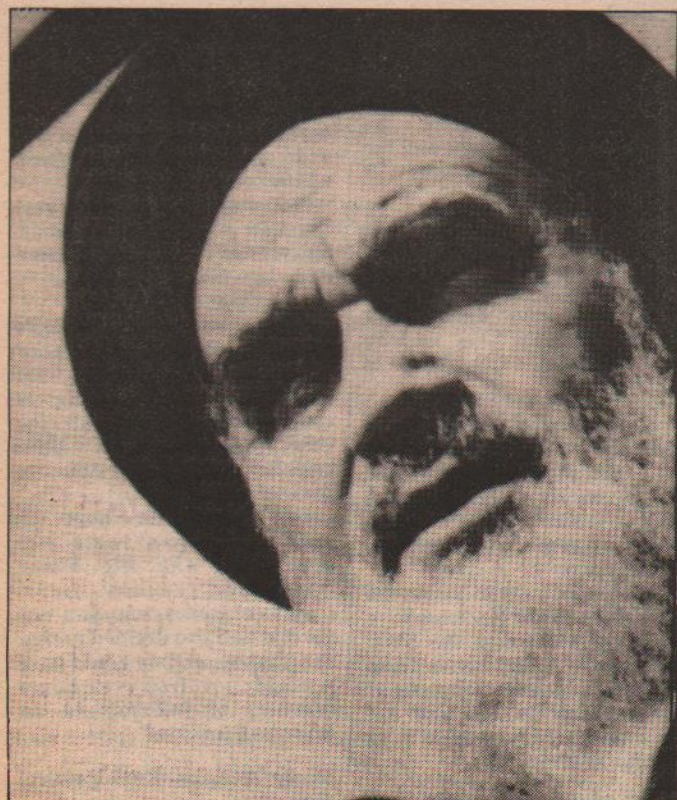
A more disturbing disagreement arose in response to Gowan's second suggestion of a mass campaign to force the Labour government to immediately stop all servicing of the Iranian army.

Both Colin Sparks and Terry Povey opposed such a demand. The considered it unrealistic and that such a campaign could only breed illusions in the Labour government.

They stressed instead that it was necessary to get positive action by British workers in solidarity with Iranian trade unionists — a proposal which Gowan had welcomed but clearly one which will not solve the problem of withdrawing British military specialists from Iran.

However, the SWP's position cannot be regarded as final. In the first place the organisation has a long tradition of demanding that the British government withdraw its troops from Northern Ireland, a parallel case to its military involvement in Iran.

Secondly, Tony Cliff in his summing-up speech pointedly avoided the entire issue, thus presumably reserving his position on it.



KHOMEINI — wants to impose 'Islamic conditions' on democracy

Marxist theory and the British labour movement



By James Francis

THE Chartist movement was characterised by the exact opposite of the so-called 'virtues' of the British labour movement. Its focus was not economic but political. And right from the beginning it was not only ideologically but organisationally international in its character.

Looked at from 140 years later, the six demands put forward by the Chartists — universal male suffrage, equal electoral districts, annual parliaments, payment of MPs, secret ballot and no property qualification for MPs — appear reformist and inadequate (not to mention sexist). But at the time they were genuinely revolutionary.

CLASS WAR

The conditions demanded did not exist in any country in Europe. Moreover there was no mass conservative stratum within the working class, no stable reformist party, which could have confined the struggle to such a programme.

Victory on the six points would have unleashed open class war in England.

The bourgeoisie certainly understood this. The Government's response to the last great Chartist demonstration in 1848 was to blockade London with troops, to fortify buildings, to place the marines on alert and to recruit 170,000 'special constables'.

In addition there were wholesale arrests and deportations — earlier, in 1842, 1,500 arrests followed the struggle in the North-west of England. Confronted by this massive repression, the Chartists had to develop new forms of struggle or turn to arms.

In November 1839, John Frost led 4,000 Chartists, mainly miners, in an armed attack on Newport in South Wales.

More importantly, in 1842, the Chartists developed a new and uniquely working class form of struggle for the first time anywhere in the world — the political general strike. The idea developed from plans for a 'sacred month', but the implications of what actually happened in the North-west went a great deal further than this.

The strike was spread by mass agitation — Oldham, for example, was brought out by the physical arrival of several thousand striking cotton workers from Ashton-under-Lyne. The general strike was wholly political in character — there would be no return to work until the Charter was granted in full.

POLITICAL PARTY

It was amid this agitation that the key question of an independent working class political party was finally taken up.

Thus, already in the early 1840s, the Association for the Protection of Labour, formed out of the Chartist agitation, was discussing the idea of forming a working class political party based on the trade unions. If such a party had been established at that time it would have been vastly different from the later Labour Party.

IN THE earlier articles in this series we have looked at the main characteristics — both historical and political — which distinguish the major trends in the British labour movement.

We have pointed to its political backwardness, its national insularity, its indifference to Marxist theory, and its overwhelming stress on day-to-day trade union struggles. These elements mark the British movement internationally.

But these trends are not due to some specific characteristic of this island. They are due to the historical strength of British imperialism.

The truth of this assertion can be most easily demonstrated by examining the workers movement in Britain prior to the rise of imperialism, when it was not backward but the most advanced in the world.

In this article we examine the lessons of the greatest working class movement in Britain before imperialism — that of the Chartist movement of the late 1830s and 1840s.

Mass action with politics to the fore, the political general strike, the integration of politics and trade unionism, armed activity by the class, the need for a working class political party — these were the clear elements of working class activity in the mid 1840s.

Given another decade to develop, the working class in Britain would have emerged with traditions twenty years in advance of developments in Europe.

RISE OF IMPERIALISM

It was the massive rise of British imperialism from the late 1840s onwards which succeeded in diverting the working class movement into the safer channels of trade unionism and the 'day to day' issues.

This emphasis on politics, prior to imperialism, was also true of international questions. The 1830s and '40s saw the first sustained attempts to create international working class political organisations throughout Europe.

For example, German and French revolutionaries, organised in the international League of the Just, participated in Blanqui's 1839 attempt to overthrow the French monarchy.

These international organisations rapidly spread to England. In 1840 the German Workers Educational Association was formed in London.

This became an international organisation under the name of the Communist Workers' Educational Society. It had Scandinavian, Dutch, Hungarian, Czech, and Russian as well as German members.

The British Chartists took part in these organisations. They had strong links with the struggle in Ireland. The left-wing Chartist leaders, Harney and Ernest Jones, helped set up a 'Democratic Committee for the Regeneration of Poland' in solidarity with the Polish liberation struggle.

This organisation had the support of the Communist Workers Educational Society, the Union of French Democrats, and the left wing



George Harney helped to establish

of the Polish Democratic Society. Political solidarity activity of this kind posed the need for international organisation — the modern prejudice that national organisations had to be built before international ones did not exist.

The first international organisation grew out of a London meeting in 1844, held to honour the German Communist leader Weitling. It was addressed by English, French and German speakers, and was probably the first major international socialist public meeting in history.

The Society of Democratic Friends of All Nations was set up from this gathering and involved the Chartist Lovett plus Polish, German and French revolutionaries.

The next initiative came directly from the left wing of the British Chartists rather than from European exiles.

George Harney helped to establish

the Society of Fraternal Democrats. Its executive committee included prominent members of the Charter Association together with Schapper from Germany, and representatives for France, Scandinavia, Hungary, Switzerland, and Poland.

In 1848 Harney explained the ideals of the Society to a meeting of German Communists:

'I appeal to the oppressed classes in every country to unite for the common cause... the cause of labour, of labour enslaved and exploited. Do not the workers of all nations have the same reasons for complaint and the same causes of distress? Have they not, therefore, the same just cause?'

In pursuit of these ideals the Society tried to create a wider and more authoritative international organisation. It was in contact with the Democratic Association in Belgium which at that time was led by Marx.

These two organisations jointly decided to call an international congress for a 'union of all democrats of all nations in the great struggle for political and social equality'.

The defeat of the European revolutions, including the Chartists, in 1848 was a severe blow to the Society of Fraternal Democrats. The force of the combined defeats led to its disintegration — but this was not the end of attempts to form an international organisation.

In April 1850, Harney, Marx, Engels, and the French revolutionaries Vidil and Adam took the initiative in forming the Universal Society of Communist Revolutionaries.

DEMORALISED

Harney himself survived the defeats of 1848 — his paper, *The Red Republican*, published the first translation of the *Communist Manifesto* in November 1850.

But, like the majority of the old militants, Harney became demoralised and turned to open reformism in the period of prosperity of the 1850s. The first development of modern

British imperialism created unfavourable conditions for the development of a revolutionary workers movement in this country.

But the most left-wing forces in the old Chartist movement tried to keep up the pre-imperialist traditions even into the 1850s.

Ernest Jones, one of the greatest figures of the English workers movement, used all his energy and money in founding a new Chartist *People's Paper*, and trying to unite the Chartist, trade union and co-operative organisations into one Parliament of Labour.

INTERNATIONALIST

The internationalist tradition was maintained in the *People's Paper* — Marx was one of the contributors.

Out of this activity Jones set up the International Committee in 1855 together with French, German and Polish groups. Its first meeting was addressed by the Russian revolutionary, Alexander Herzen, the French socialist Talandier, the Chartist leader Holyoake, and messages were read from Victor Hugo and Blanqui's supporter Barbès.

Its aims were outlined as: 'to protest against alliances with tyrants... to help the oppressed nationalities win their freedom; to proclaim and promote the sovereign rights of Labour, that uncrowned but only legitimate monarch of the world...'

'For us, nation is nothing, man is all. For us the oppressed nationalities form but one: the universal poor of every land, that struggle for life against the nation of the rich...'

'We begin tonight no mere crusade against an aristocracy. We are not here to pull one tyranny down only that another may live the stronger. We are against the tyranny of capital as well.'

The International Committee held weekly meetings, and in August 1856 it joined with the French Commune Revolutionnaire, the German Communist Workers' Educational Association, and the Union of Polish Socialists to form an enlarged International Association.

INSULARITY

Its manifesto 'To the Republicans, Democrats and Socialists of Europe' rejected all alliances with the bourgeoisie in the name of 'national liberation', and called on workers to refuse to participate in the predatory war between France and Austria in 1859.

It was these overtly political and organisationally internationalist traditions of the Chartists which formed the progressive current in the British workers movement.

The retreat on these aspects within the dominant tradition of the British workers movement, towards national insularity and stress on the 'bread and butter' issues, came about as a result of the pressure of imperialism.

The choice facing those attempting to build a new revolutionary organisation in this country is well summed up by the choice between these two traditions: the tradition of the Chartists or the tradition imposed by British imperialism.

Left unity Big Flame says broader debate is needed

BIG FLAME does not in principle, or in the medium term, reject the idea of being part of a new revolutionary organisation, which would include the IMG, the ISA, and other political tendencies.

However, after much discussion within our organisation, Big Flame has decided not to sign the joint appeal on revolutionary unity presented by the IMG and ISA.

The appeal as it stands contains much we would agree with, since we have always been in favour of, and engaged in, joint work wherever possible.

But the political basis of the initiative, the differentiation of revolutionaries from reformists, is not sufficient for regroupment or discussion of regroupment into a joint organisation, the eventual aim of this initiative.

We believe it covers up other important areas of debate on the left. For instance:

*The type of revolutionary strategy and tactics that are necessary in the conditions of class struggle of post-war capitalism. We would agree with Richard Hyman's response to the appeal in *Socialist Challenge*, stressing the importance of 're-thinking some of the analyses and theories which have failed us in the past'.

The appeal gives the impression that the tasks of revolutionaries are unproblematic, that the left has a common understanding and agreement on what these tasks are.

*An explanation for the retreat in class struggle in the post-war period.

*The relationship between revolutionary organisation and the autonomous movements — women, blacks, gays.

*An explanation of why many thousands of militants have experienced revolutionary organisations as a 'revolving door' through which they pass, either into a further one, or into none.

We feel that the IMG is, at the moment, closed to a far-reaching debate on these

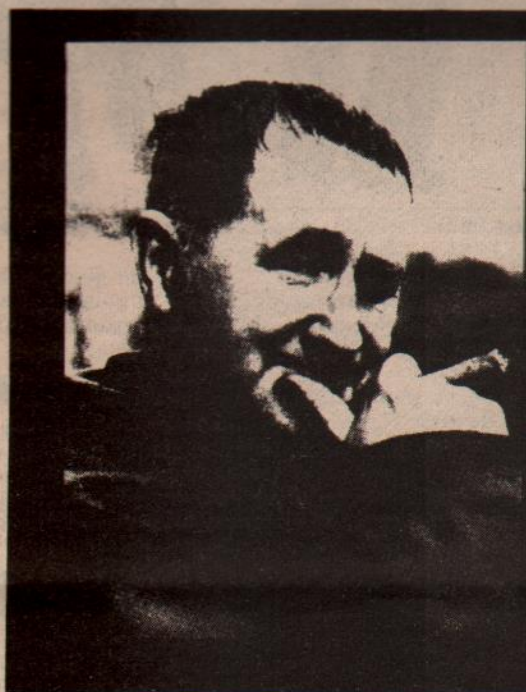
WE PUBLISH here the response from Big Flame's National Committee to the appeal for joint work and revolutionary unity which appeared in *Socialist Challenge* on 6 January.

Members of the International Marxist Group and the International Socialist Alliance, which jointly issued the appeal, have discussed the response and it was considered that none of the points raised by Big Flame should stand in the way of its involvement in the

areas of work outlined.

Much of the Big Flame letter is concerned with criticism of the IMG, which the ISA as a group has no position on. It was therefore thought that the IMG itself ought to reply to these.

The areas of debate outlined by Big Flame clearly need to be pursued, and *Socialist Challenge* hopes to help organise discussions on some of these in the near future.



Praise of Communism

It's sensible,
anyone can understand it.
It's easy.
You're not an exploiter,
so you can grasp it.
It's a good thing for you,
find out more about it.
The stupid call it stupid
and the squalid call it squalid.
It is against squalor and
against stupidity.
The exploiters call it a crime
But we know:
It is the end of crime.
It is not madness, but
The end of madness.
It is not the riddle
But the solution.
It is the simple thing
So hard to achieve.

Bertold Brecht.

questions. Two recent articles in *Socialist Challenge* illustrate this — 'The Crisis of the Far Left in Europe' by John Ross, and Ernest Mandel's 'The Fourth International: 40 years on'.

Firstly, they deny that any substantial changes have taken place in post-war capitalism — hence 'classical' revolutionary politics do not need any altera-

tion. Secondly they assert that the FI has been correct on every major question in the period.

For instance, they say: 'We also correctly understood the historically limited nature of the so-called "post-war boom".' In fact, after the Second World War, the FI predicted that capitalism would quickly collapse and the system would not even meet the im-

mediate needs of the masses.

Similar points could be made about the limits of the FI analyses of Stalinism and other successes asserted.

These points are not made in a sectarian nit-picking way. But this tendency to re-write history backwards, admitting only 'occasional conjunctural errors', does not bode well for the ability of the IMG to learn po-

litically from others, inside or outside a new organisation. This is confirmed by John Ross's *Socialist Challenge* article entitled, 'Can Non-Trotskyists be Revolutionaries?'

Further confirmation of this rigidity lies in the IMG's attitude towards the SWP, expressed in its resolution, 'Our

Orientation Towards the SWP'.

For the IMG, 'The SWP's politics represent a syndicalist break from revolutionary Marxism, i.e. Trotskyism', and its members 'will have to either abandon their programmatic tradition or they will have to abandon their class.'

Much of this resolution can only strengthen fears that this appeal and similar 'unity initiatives' are to be used as sectarian battering rams against the SWP.

For example, the experience of *Socialist Unity* is seen as enabling the IMG to 'launch a campaign for a "socialist alternative" aimed at forcing the SWP into an electoral alliance with us. The appeal we are discussing with ISA/BF should be seen as a lever.'

Big Flame, as a non-Trotskyist organisation, is not willing to regroup with an organisation that defines revolutionary Marxism as Trotskyism.

And if the IMG is not willing to recognise the strengths as well as the weaknesses of the SWP's politics, what chance is there of those of BF being taken seriously within a regrouped organisation, dominated by the IMG with its present perspectives.

BF sees left regroupment as providing the organisational framework for a genuine attempt to learn from and synthesise differing traditions on the revolutionary left. A new united revolutionary organisation should not merely be the sum of parts engaged in constant faction fights.

We remain in favour of joint work and debate — but without conditions. Joint work that will keep open the possibilities for future regroupment.

We will continue to work with the IMG, the ISA, other organisations, and non-aligned militants in areas like *Socialist Unity*, *United Troops Out Movement*, *Anti Nazi League*, *Ford Workers Group*.

Big Flame National Committee

'Pre-conditions are far reaching' replies IMG

BIG FLAME's refusal to sign the appeal for joint work is all the more regrettable because Big Flame has been one of the few organisations on the far left which has consistently stated its commitment to revolutionary unity.

What prevents the comrades from signing the appeal? The Big Flame National Committee agrees that we need to distinguish between revolutionaries and reformists on the basis of fundamental policies.

But it says this kind of programmatic agreement isn't enough.

If Big Flame were to have its way, even before discussions could begin — let alone entering into joint work with the aim of regroupment — each of us would have to put up our hands for a common explanation of such problems as:

'Why many thousands of militants have experienced revolutionary organisations as a revolving door...', or why there was a 'retreat in the class struggle in the post-war period'.

Socialist Challenge has all along rejected an approach

which places these kinds of pre-conditions before any regroupment process can begin.

Since its launch, the paper has argued the need for a united democratic centralist organisation in Britain, in which — through open and democratic debate — these kinds of questions, and many others, could be discussed out.

While such issues can be important, and all have a place for debate inside a revolutionary organisation, it is utterly sectarian to refuse to unite with people who hold differences on questions other than those around fundamental questions of programme.

Far from a sectarian approach, the IMG has adopted a position which paraphrased Lenin's well-known point: 'We should spell out our differences, not in order to further divide our ranks, but in order to dissolve the divisions and unite'.

The record of the IMG in practice just does not add up to the sectarian picture Big Flame is trying to paint.

Today, the international department of the SWP is

discussing how to participate in the forthcoming World Congress of the Fourth International; and in several towns and cities SWP comrades are debating with the IMG on issues relating to the Fourth International.

The other questions that Big Flame considers should be a part of any regroupment debate we totally agree with.

We drew up the document called 'Our Common Ground' so that we could have the basis for discussion on such issues as 'the type of revolutionary strategy and tactics that are necessary in the conditions of class struggle of post-war capitalism' and on the relationship between revolutionary organisations and the autonomous movements.

Big Flame has yet to state its position on the policies put forward in this document.

It's not only that the Big Flame National Committee wants unity on a basis that we would regard as sectarian which is worrying. They

consider a priori that the IMG is closed to these debates.

Several examples are used to confirm the 'rigidity' of the IMG. However, we believe that Big Flame has mis-read the article 'Can only Trotskyists be Revolutionary?'

The argument it contained was that it is quite in line with traditional Trotskyist views that Trotskyists might find themselves in a minority in a revolutionary organisation! Quite the opposite message from that conveyed by Big Flame.

Another proof cited of the IMG's rigid approach is our orientation to the SWP. The worry is that the appeal might be used as the battering ram against the SWP. But the IMG's resolution on the SWP is misrepresented.

We have tried to make a very precise characterisation of the SWP.

We're certain that Big Flame will agree with us when we say that serious differences exist which still have to be overcome concerning the views of the SWP on the relationship between the party and the

autonomous movements, for example.

This kind of debate has been possible thanks to the joint work that has been carried out in bodies like the ANL, the Ford Workers' Group, and the Campaign for Action in NUPE.

Sometimes it's difficult to get this kind of joint work off the ground. *Socialist Unity* is a case in point. Both the IMG and Big Flame have made appeal after appeal to get the SWP to drop its sectarian approach in elections.

Unfortunately, sometimes the only way the SWP will listen is if the sheer weight of the forces involved makes them take stock. That's why battering rams are sometimes necessary.

But is this sectarian on the part of the IMG? Far from it — the fight to involve the SWP in *Socialist Unity* starts from the rather broader concerns of the working class — and not from the interests of the IMG as an organisation.

Big Flame wants joint work

and debate — but without conditions, it claims. We're for joint work as well, but in some of the areas proposed — in the ANL, UTOM and so on — we hope that Labour Party militants, CP members and a wide range of other militants will be involved.

But that's to dodge the real question about revolutionary unity. And for that, Big Flame does lay down conditions — far-reaching ones.

If we adopt Big Flame's course, we'll all be condemned to small sects 'competing' for confused recruits; acting at cross purposes; and all the other things which have crippled British revolutionaries for too long.

Of course, we hope to continue the joint work and discussions with Big Flame comrades.

But comrades, can you not see that had you decided to sign the joint appeal, we could have probably involved even larger numbers of militants in an organised fashion?

Dodie Weppler, IMG Political Committee

LETTERS

Joe Hansen

MANY comrades will share with me a deep sense of loss over the death of Joe Hansen.

In view of the calumnies which have been heaped on him from certain quarters — and which will doubtless be repeated in their tasteless obituaries — it is apt to quote the following extract from Jean van Heijenoort's book *With Trotsky in Exile*:

"...of all the Americans who lived in Coyoacan, Joe was the one with whom Trotsky got along best and for whom he developed the most esteem."

Subsequently, by his contributions to the international Trotskyist movement and the building of the Fourth International, comrade Hansen more than justified the Old Man's high opinion of him.

He will be remembered long after his traducers have been forgotten in the dustbin of history.

CHARLIE VAN GELDEREN
[London]

Class collaboration on China?

SOCIALIST Challenge has deservedly won itself a reputation among independents as the most serious paper on the left today. Because of this reputation, it is all the more serious that your coverage of recent events in China, over the past several weeks, has descended to rank class collaborationism.

Class collaborationism is a harsh term. But how else can we characterise the slavish imitation of the bourgeois line on China.

Since the death of Mao, the bourgeois press has praised the new spirit of 'openness' in China and hailed the end of Mao's 'dictatorship' and the dawning of a 'Peking Spring'. And what do you have, by way of a proletarian line, to counterpose to the bourgeois analysis? Nothing. Only the same bourgeois catch phrases: 'democracy and human rights'.

As Lenin frequently pointed out, talk of abstract democracy is meaningless. Marxists always ask the question: democracy for whom?

It is clear that, since 1976, moves have been made in China to strengthen the privileges of the managerial and intellectual strata. It



is in the context of the ascendancy of these class forces that we must understand the demands for democracy. The wall posters described in *Socialist Challenge* (18 January) reproduce some classic petty-bourgeois demands under the guise of 'socialist democracy': the right to form non-proletarian parties, release of 'prisoners of conscience', the right of foreign travel.

The real significance of the democracy debate is encapsulated by the wall poster which called on President Carter to support human rights in China. It is not noticeably the masses in other countries who expect support of human rights from US imperialism. Why, then, does *Socialist Challenge* imagine that this should be the case in China?

In failing to challenge the bourgeoisie's analysis of events in China, *Socialist Challenge* has aligned itself objectively with imperialism. You should throw your pages open to a debate on this question.

NEIL MACDONALD (Brighton)

Revolutionary position on Ireland

WE ARE following with interest the debate in your paper on revolutionary unity. We hope it will help British revolutionaries to clarify points of difference and agreement among themselves. We are certain this process will not be aided by the contribution of a member of your National Policy Committee, Francis Mulhern (25 January).

He implies that the Protestant majority in the Six County area of our country have the right to self-determination. If this is so, his position is not consistent with revolutionary Marxist

principles, for it means support for the partition of Ireland. The population of the 32 counties of Ireland have the unconditional right to determine their own future, with or without the consent of the Northern Protestants.

They have no 'right' to veto the resolution of the national question in Ireland. This is the framework within which revolutionaries can and should debate.

Francis Mulhern does not seem to accept it — if so, revolutionaries should debate with him as an opponent of the right of the Irish people to self-determination. And *Socialist Challenge* should ask him how he can justify his membership of the NPC, since one of the paper's principles is 'letting the Irish people determine their own future'.

To further emphasise that this is not a tactical question, we quote the following point of principle from the 'Statement of Aims' adopted at the fusion conference of Peoples' Democracy and the Movement for a Socialist Republic (then Irish section of the Fourth International): 'We are united in our rejection of the claim that any lasting solution to the oppression of the Irish people can be found in a Six County framework and in our rejection of any "right" of the Loyalist minority to continue partition.'

As members of PD and the Fourth International we would like immediate clarification on these points.

JOHN MEEHAN, NIALL MEEHAN (Dublin)

NHS low pay

EITHER through editing or a possible mistake on my part, my letter on NHS low pay (25 January) fell short of proper clarification, and I would like to correct a couple of points.

First, the letter should have made it

clear that below grade 10 (at which a £40 basic is reached) are the majority of the workers, such as domestics and porters, who are on the first three grades.

Also, it should have mentioned that it is only when you add the £7.20 supplement on top of the grade 1 basic rate of £35.20 that the total will go over the £40 mark.

STEPHEN PAGE (NUPE Senior Steward, St Andrews Hospital, Norwich)

Women in SF

I AM very puzzled by Ursula LeGuin's article (11 January). I have just finished reading the first and third volumes of her trilogy for children (*Wizard of Earthsea* and *The Farthest Shore*) and there can be no doubt that despite the intensely

THE LENGTH of letters printed will usually be kept down to 400 words in order to encourage as wide a range of contributions as possible. All letters may be cut at the Editor's discretion. Unsigned letters will not normally be published, although we will withhold real names from publication on request.

beautiful way in which they are written, all her criticisms of American science fiction apply with disturbing force to these two books of her own!

The entire archipelago of 'Earthsea' is based on an exclusively male power structure of wizards, 'mages', princes and kings. There is not a single powerful or important female character in either book except for one obvious 'baddy' who gets her just deserts and is torn to shreds by demons.

The masses of Earthsea in general are just a faceless mob dependent for guidance on the wisdom of wizards and the power of princes. Those who live on the fringes of the archipelago are mere primitives anyway. So here we have, in LeGuin's own words, 'the sexual Alien, the social Alien, the cultural Alien, and finally the racial Alien'.

These two books deal in a fascinating and valuable way with the problem of death — our own deaths — and it was totally unnecessary to set them in this authoritarian, patriarchal and anti-socialist world of her devising.

Have I missed something? If it's parody, it's too subtle for me. I would dearly like to hear Ursula LeGuin's explanation.

BOB GILBERT (Swansea)

★ Ursula LeGuin's article was reprinted from the Canadian paper *Socialist Voice*, where it appeared courtesy of Canadian University Press.

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST TENDENCY

Public Forums 'Crisis of Imperialism: Workers versus the State'

Fri 16 Feb **The imperialist state and reformism**

FRANK RICHARDS

Fri 2 Mar **Imperialist oppression and the working class**

MARY MASTERS

Fri 16 Mar **Labour Left, Labour Right and the state**

KATE MARSHALL

Fri 30 Mar **Crisis: workers versus the state**

KEITH TOMPSON

All forums will be held at the **Roebuck**, 108a Tottenham Court Road, Tubes: Goadge Street, Warren Street. 7.30pm.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE EVENTS

THE DEADLINE for this column is midday on the Saturday before publication.

NORTH WEST

WARRINGTON Socialist Challenge group meets regularly. Ring Manchester **Socialist Challenge** offices for details. 061-236 2352.

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, day) or Steve (226 4287), evening, or write to Manchester SC Centre, 14 Piccadilly.

SALFORD Socialist Challenge supporters can be contacted at the Manchester Socialist Challenge Centre c/o 14 Piccadilly, Manchester with a view to forming a Salford SC group.

MOSS SIDE Socialist Challenge supporters sell the paper at Moss Side Centre, Saturday, 11-1.

OLDHAM Socialist Challenge group now meets fortnightly on Wednesdays. For details phone 061-136 2352 or write to Manchester SC Centre, c/o 14 Piccadilly.

PRESTON Socialist Challenge group meeting: 'Southern Africa in ferment — what's behind the war in Zimbabwe?' Speaker Pete Evans (NW trade union anti-apartheid liaison committee). Thur 22 Feb, 7.45pm, in Windsor Castle pub, Egan St.

NORTH EAST

NEWCASTLE Socialist Challenge local supporters are active! If you want

to join them, phone Pete on (0632) 29057.

DURHAM Socialist Challenge Supporters Group. For details contact: Dave Brown, 2 Pioneer Cottages, Low Pittington, Durham.

MIDDLESBROUGH Socialist Challenge sales, Saturday lunchtime near the lottery stand at Cleveland Centre. Also available from Newsfare in Linthorpe Road.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES readers can buy **Socialist Challenge** from Green Books, upstairs in the Spencer Hall shopping centre.

SCOTLAND

For information about the paper or its supporters' activities throughout Scotland please contact **Socialist Challenge** Books, 64 Queen St, Glasgow. Open Wed, Thurs, Fri and Sat afternoons. Phone for alternative arrangement (221 7481). Wide range of Fourth International publications.

EDINBURGH Socialist Challenge supporters group meets regularly. Phone George at 031-346 0466 for details.

DUNDEE Information about **Socialist Challenge** activities from 64 Queen St, Glasgow. Join in SC sales outside Boots (corner of Reform St) each Saturday 11am-2pm.

YORKSHIRE

HUDDERSFIELD SC group meets fortnightly on Thursdays at the

Friendly & Trades Club, Northumberland St.

DEWSBURY Socialist Challenge sales regularly on Saturday mornings in Westgate at the Nat. Westminster Bank, 12.30-2.00pm.

HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge sales regularly Saturdays 11am-1pm in the Piazza.

YORK Socialist Challenge is on sale at the York Community Bookshop, 73 Walmgate or from sellers on Thursdays (12.30-1.45) at York University, Vanbrugh College; Saturdays (11.30-3.30) at Coney Street.

HULL Socialist Challenge meeting: 'For a united revolutionary organisation' — speaker John Ross. Fri 23 Feb, 1.15pm, Hull Univ. Union. Also school on 'Building the socialist alternative', Sat 24 Feb, 10.30am-4pm, at the Waltham Club, Norfolk St., off Beverley Rd. Beer and food provided.

MIDLANDS

For details of activities of local supporters throughout the Midlands contact the **Socialist Challenge** Centre, 76b Digbeth High Street, Birmingham (021) 643 9209.

COVENTRY Socialist Challenge group meeting: 'The roots of racism' — speaker Julian Atkinson. Tues 13 Feb, 8pm, at Wedge Bookshop, High St.

NOTTINGHAM Socialist Challenge Forum: 'The Liberation of Southern Africa' (speaker Tony Southall). Thur 8 Feb, 7.30pm, in Room 8, Peoples Hall, Heathcote St. **Socialist Challenge** can

be bought at Mushroom Books, Heathcote St.

BIRMINGHAM Socialist Challenge meeting: 'The trade unions and the crisis'. Speakers: Simon Temple (Lorry driver, TGWU 5/35 branch); Pat Hickey (TGWU shop steward, Rover Solihull); Chris Adamson (former NUPE area officer); Bob Pennington (IMG Political Committee). Wed 14 Feb, 7.30pm, Australian Bar, Hurst St.

SOUTH WEST

ISLE OF WIGHT readers can buy **Socialist Challenge** from the Oz Shop, 44 Union St, Ryde.

BATH Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday, 2-3.30pm, outside Macfisheries. Ring Bath 20298 for further details.

SOUTHAMPTON Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday from 10am-1pm above bar, Post Office, Bargate.

PORTSMOUTH Socialist Challenge sales, Saturdays, 11.30pm-1pm, Commercial Road Precinct.

SWINDON supporters sell **Socialist Challenge** 11am-1pm Saturdays, Regent St (Brunel Centre).

FOR INFORMATION on activities in the South-West, write to Box 002, c/o Fulmarks, 110 Cheltenham Road, Bristol 6.

BRISTOL Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday, 11am-1pm in the 'Hole in the Ground', Haymarket.

SOUTH EAST

BRIGHTON SC forums fortnightly on Tuesdays. Contact Micky on 605052 for details.

NORWICH Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday in Davey Place (opp. market) and bookstall Thursdays at University of East Anglia.

COLCHESTER Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly. For details phone Steve on Wivenhoe 2949.

LONDON

TOWER HAMLETS Socialist Challenge supporters sell every weekend: Saturdays meet 10.30am, Whitechapel tube; Sundays meet 10am, Brick Lane (corner of Buxton St).

WALTHAM FOREST paper sales every Saturday, 11am-noon outside the post office, Hoe St, Walthamstow, London E17.

TOWER HAMLETS Socialist Challenge Group meets every fortnight (phone 247 2717 for details).

BRENT supporters sell every Saturday, 2.30pm, at Kilburn Sq., Kilburn High Rd, London NW6.

SW LONDON sales every Saturday, 11am-1pm, at Clapham Junction (Northcote Rd), Brixton tube, Clapham Common tube, Balham tube. Also on bookstalls outside Oval tube, Herne Hill BR, and at Shepherds newsagents, Braganza St.

HACKNEY Socialist Challenge public meeting: 'Why the council can and must pay the full public sector claim'.

Speakers include Cllr John Sweeney and public sector workers. Thur 15 Feb, 7.30pm, in the Britannia pub, Mare St., E8.

HACKNEY supporters sell every Saturday, 12-2pm, in Kingsland High St, Dalston — meet outside Sainsbury's.

LONDON Socialist Challenge benefit night for the Fund Drive with Oxy and the Morons, Tues 13 Feb, 7.30-11.30pm, at North London Poly (Ladbroke House annexe), Highbury Grove.

HARINGEY Paper sales at Finsbury Park and Seven Sisters tubes, Thurs evening; Muswell Hill and Crouch End Broadways, Saturday morning. Also available at Muswell Hill Bookshop, Muswell Hill Broadway; Vares newsagent, Middle Lane, N8; and Bookmarks, Finsbury Park.

PADDINGTON/N KENSINGTON Socialist Challenge group meeting: 'Nuclear power — a socialist view'. Speaker Julian Cohen (BSSRS). Wed 28 Feb, 8pm, in meeting room of the 'Tabernacle', Talbot Rd. (Powis Sq.), W11.

LEYTON readers can buy **Socialist Challenge** from Patel's Newsagents, 326 Lea Bridge Road, E10.

WALTHAMSTOW readers can buy **Socialist Challenge** regularly from Sheridan's Newsagents, 86 Hoe St, E17.

HARROW Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly, details from Box 50, London N1 2XP.

'The headmaster

became quite

agitated by

our play...'

MICHAEL HAMILTON, 16, and DOMINIC SHAW, 17, are founder members of Forum Youth Theatre, a newly-formed theatre group which began with a play against the sus laws.

They are also members of the National Youth Theatre and the Cockpit Youth Theatre. They spoke to JAMIE GOUGH about their plans for the group.

Dominic: We got our first play, *This Green and Pleasant Land*, from a friend. It's a protest play against the sus laws, which we read and decided we wanted to do, so we got some people together, including a director, and performed it.

The Forum Youth Theatre grew from this group and we now have about 20 members. We're hoping to start rehearsals for three other plays fairly soon.

Michael: We've put *This Green and Pleasant Land* on at our school, Quinton Kynaston, in North-west London, and at a local community centre. Quite a few schools have expressed an interest in it.

Dominic: The headmaster at our school was very upset about the play. It's a liberal, trendy comprehensive and we've tried for ages to form a student political group there.

For a while we seemed to succeed. We organised a picket of Paddington Green police station after one of our kids was beaten up there, and we protested about certain sexist incidents within the school.

But it became apparent that senior staff were institutionalising the group, which made it completely ineffectual. They allowed us to meet and even announced our activities over the tannoy. Our meetings

seemed to be an extra part of the curriculum!

We had a very different reaction when we performed the sus play. We invited along the police community relations officer from St Johns Wood. I was playing the fascist policeman who beats up the black kid.

The head became quite agitated and seemed to feel a lot more threatened than he had been when we formed the student action group. I think it was because the play wasn't connected with the school and therefore couldn't be institutionalised.

Michael: The next few plays that we'll be doing will be written by ourselves.

I'm writing one about the conflict of minority groups — the way in which a West Indian may discriminate against an Asian; a Rastafarian against women; a black heterosexual against gays, and so on.

The way people victimise each other and what we can learn from it.

Dominic: My play is about how people get seduced into the NF. It's the story of someone who has been sacked from his job and is a reject for various reasons which are the fault of the state.

He lashes out at minorities and has dreams of glorious suicide, sword in hand. He's a

comic, but ultimately he's a pathetic character. In the end he takes an overdose — the easy way out.

We want to put the plays on with the theatre group, but it seems pretty impossible at the moment to get a place of our own.

Michael: Just somewhere where we could rehearse. A clapped out theatre that we could do up — anything!

Dominic: And, of course, places to perform. What we need is contacts; people who would be willing to join us and generally help us.

What I really want to do in the long term is to provide an alternative to the three main youth theatres. At the moment there's the National, the Cockpit, and Anna Schers Children's Theatre (yeach!).

That's just about it in terms of getting into the acting world and doing something with it. They've got the monopoly.

Michael: We don't want money from the Arts Council because that puts a limit on what you can do. They can turn round a year later and tell us they don't like what we're doing.

Dominic: We'll try to survive on funds from organisations like the All London Teachers Against Racism and Fascism, who have helped us, and local groups which are interested.

But it needs funding on a larger scale. Perhaps money from the ANL.

Michael: Perhaps we could get financial support from trade union branches affiliated to anti-fascist groups. We just want opportunities to do what we want.

Dominic: This is a cry for help. And if you can, then contact Michael and Dominic c/o Socialist Challenge.

Morons write

INTRODUCING Oxy and the Morons: Hackney-based, New Wave, playing a benefit for Socialist Challenge on 13 February, and available for gigs (phone 01-249 3867). In their own words:

We play rock music because we enjoy it and other people might. We don't have a corporate political identity, though we are all good liberals.

We feel that culture is a vehicle of ideology and take a political attitude towards the medium in which we work.

We don't have a 'politics' which we put forward. We are attempting to overcome our own personal political contradictions, as is anybody in our audience.

It is impossible to be both commercially viable on a mass level and true to socialist principles.

On the one hand, intimacy in performance is sacrificed for the sake of greater protection, and independence is lost to the control of record companies.

Alternatively, we could face accusations of elitism if we just remained confident in our political integrity and played endless benefits to 'enlightened' radicals.

It will be gathered that Oxy and the Morons are anxious to put their music across to a wider audience than that which has attended the majority of their gigs (largely benefits) to date.

In our lyrics we try to avoid the temptation of sloganeering. Some bands have attempted to 'politicise' their music by grafting on lyrics of a sloganeering nature.

This strikes us as being crass because the slogans can become easily digestible commodities, the same as any pop product. However, these political messages can have a value in raising consciousness and mobilising people.

Our approach is one that employs such techniques as irony and persona.

This has admittedly caused misunderstanding in the past and will doubtless continue to

do so. But we believe very strongly that audiences do not have to be spoon-fed.

In the long run we have to get away from using personalities and powerful figures to try and change consciousness.

As a model, this is not far away from fascism—the leader and the led. Collective awareness through dialogue is

the revolutionary opposite to this model.

OXY AND THE MORONS are playing at the Socialist Challenge Benefit Night on Tuesday 13 February, 7.30-11.30pm, at N. London Poly (Ladbroke House), Highbury Grove, N5. There will also be a second band, **THE CRASS**, plus disco.



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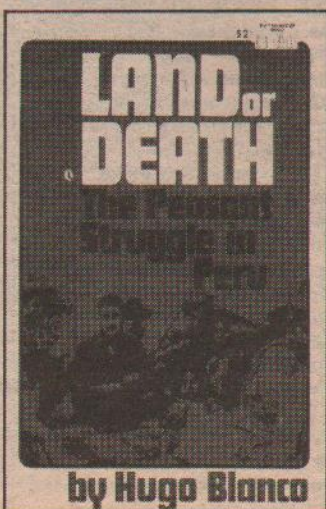
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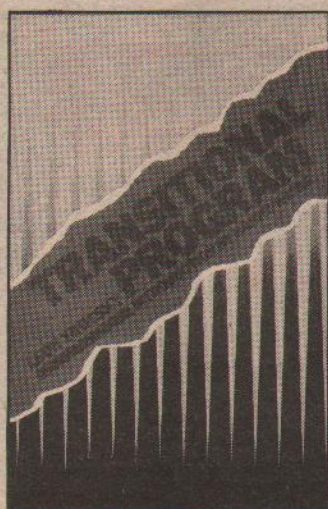
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Socialist Challenge

'Our imagination is captured by the future of the movement'

THIS statement by four British revolutionary organisations was read out to last Saturday's Iranian solidarity demonstration.

THE organisations of the British revolutionary left which have signed this statement are here today to show their solidarity with the mass movement in Iran.

The working people of Iran have, through their heroic and determined action, overthrown the bloody tyranny of Mohammed Reza Pahlavi and opened the way for a socialist revolution in Iran.

But the struggle is by no means over. The imperialist powers which long supported the Shah's dictatorship have been struck an important blow, but they are already desperately manoeuvring to retain and reassert their influence.

We revolutionaries in Britain will be campaigning in the

workers and student movements here to thwart their plans. We will be building a campaign which says, particularly to our own government with its shameful record, 'Imperialist hands off Iran!'

In Iran, with the full agreement of the imperialists, the Bakhtiar government and the generals on whose bayonets it rests are using all their might to preserve the system of repression and exploitation created by the Shah. People are still dying in the streets at the hands of the army.

The first task of the mass movement in Iran is to prevent Bakhtiar and the generals maintaining the Pahlavi regime by repression and manoeuvre.

Revolutionaries in Iran must fight for the widest possible democracy — the right to organise and assemble freely, the right to a free and uncensored press, the right to strike and form trade unions, full equality for women, the right to self determination for the national minorities, the disbanding of the Shah's repressive apparatus and the free election of a constituent assembly.

None of these freedoms can be fought for or guaranteed unless they rest on the organised strength of the working class. It was the mass strike of oil workers which brought the Shah to his knees. Only the continued mobilisation of the Iranian workers' movement can win democratic rights.

But the Iranian masses have more to gain than a parliamentary democracy. It is

Joint statement on Iran



clear from the demonstrations in Iran that many of these aspirations are expressed in the demand for an Islamic Republic.

But although the Islamic slogans may be shouted alike by worker, peasant and business-

man, behind these slogans the fight of the workers and the oppressed is very different from that of the big merchants of the bazaar.

Already some sections of workers are demanding an end

to management control of the shopfloor, no more sackings and workers power. Women have been out on the streets in hundreds of thousands and they have begun to organise for their freedom in the workplace and the community.

The working class has shown its power in Iran and that power can put an end to capitalist exploitation and replace it with the rule of the workers themselves.

The factory and popular committees thrown up by the struggle of the last few months could be the embryonic forms of workers power in Iran. It must be the duty of every revolutionary in Iran to extend and deepen the organisation of these committees.

In the absence of an alternative leadership the masses have rallied around Khomeini. The demands of the workers and the oppressed go far beyond what an Islamic Republic can provide.

In order that their efforts are not fruitless it is vital that a revolutionary party is built which unites the workers and the oppressed and leads them forward to a socialist revolution which will provide the only real basis for a complete liberation from exploitation and oppression.

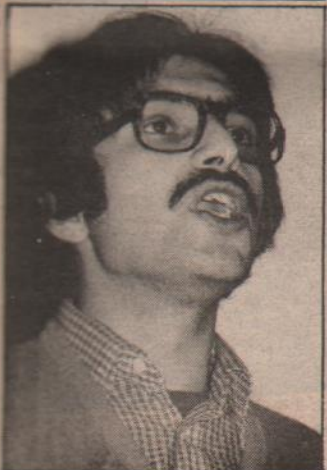
The mass upsurge in Iran has already brought much joy to socialists in other countries by sending imperialism's favourite emperor scurrying into exile.

But our imagination is captured even more by the future of the movement. By the possibility it has of carrying on to rid Iran of all exploiters. Of replacing the tyranny of the Shah with a workers state.

Long live international solidarity!

Forward to the Iranian socialist revolution!

Socialist Workers Party
International Marxist Group
Workers Action
Big Flame



IRANIAN Trotskyist Hamid speaking at last Friday's Rally Against Imperialism in London. Full story on page 8.

OUR FUND DRIVE

'THE need for Socialist Challenge and others to publicise the public sector workers' struggle and combat the vicious lies of the capitalist media is greater now than it has ever been.'

These unexceptionable sentiments accompanied a £10 donation from a medical student last week. But the unusual thing was that the money was from the proceeds

of private medicine!

Our reader was doing a two week locum — filling in at a hospital — and was obliged to treat private patients, as many hospital staff are.

As often happens the student received a gratuity from the consultant for this private work. Our reader decided the best solution was to send it to a paper which was utterly opposed to private practice.

Our thanks.

Many of our readers — especially teachers — will have come across that portly pedagogue Bernard Regan. But by the end of his sponsored slim for the Fund Drive the new emaciated educationist will be unrecognisable.

The original plan was for the macroscopic mentor to lose a stone in one month. But the new-look wraith-like Regan is so pleased with his progress that he is continuing his paid famine for another month.

If he reaches the two-stone mark our svelte schoolteacher stands to make £200 for the paper!

Or even more. Because you can help the trim tutor by rushing your sponsorship to Angular Abecedarian, c/o Socialist Challenge.

Our thanks to our haggard hero and to:

Anon	£2.00
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Week's Total	£137.47
Cumulative Total	£1,172.83

ONE YEAR after the paper was launched, WH Smith agreed to stock Socialist Challenge on a short trial basis. This was successful enough for them to agree to extend the trial period further.

The sales figures are currently under review — and they don't appear to be very good! So we're asking all our supporters to make a special effort to use the outlets provided by WH Smith to get your copy of Socialist Challenge.

More importantly, we want to know why the sales figures have slumped. If you have had any difficulty in obtaining the paper at the outlets listed

below, then please ring us this week with details.

After all, if the problems lie at the door of these outlets, this will obviously be a factor in WH Smith's final decision on stocking the paper.

Remember too that not only is the paper stocked regularly at the following London shops, plus the Oxford and Cambridge

outlets, but you can also ask for a special customer's order for the paper at any other branch of WH Smith.

The present London outlets should be: Victoria (Main, Local), Kings Cross, Brent Cross, Waterloo (South, Terminal, Loop), Crouch End, Kilburn, Liverpool St, St Pancras.

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