

Socialist Challenge

We are the people of tomorrow,
The children, the power of the future.
We are the roots of the olive trees,
The fruit of the land.

We are the destroyer and strong wind.
We are mothers...
The furious thunder,
The calm sea...
We are the landless.
The fighters.
The lonely dove...

We are the hand that holds the gun,
The colours of our flag,
We are what we were meant to be...
We are Palestinians.

THE WAR IS NOT OVER

The war is not over in Lebanon... Its cities bombed, its children maimed and killed, its hospitals destroyed, Lebanon is still an occupied country. The Israeli army will remorselessly pursue its aim of destroying the PLO in Lebanon and creating a pliant Phalangist neighbour to its north.

Pushing north to Jebayel, the Israeli army threatens to attack the Palestinian refugee camps outside Tripoli, a town of half a million people. There are still five thousand PLO fedayeen active in the Bek'aa valley. There are 30,000 Syrian troops entrenched in Lebanon, the Israeli's show no sign of leaving Lebanon before they get out.

Also the new Phalangist President, Beshir Gemayal, commands 30,000 right wing militia, many thirsting to avenge their defeat by the left in the civil war in the mid-1970s.

The presence of imperialist troops in Beirut 'overseeing the evacuation' is a sign of the unease with which even Israel's best allies view Sharon's intentions.

...The war is not over for Palestine.

The setback in West Beirut cannot be blamed on a lack of heroism on the part of the PLO fighters. Their resistance to the Zionist military machine has been truly remarkable. It is a result of the treachery of the Arab bourgeoisies who have shown themselves once again to be the mortal enemies of the Palestinian people.

Gemayal's election as Presi-

dent is proof of how by their refusal to defend the Palestinians, the Arab ruling classes has paved the way for reaction in Lebanon — the country where the class struggle was the most advanced, and the socialist movement the most developed, in the Middle East.

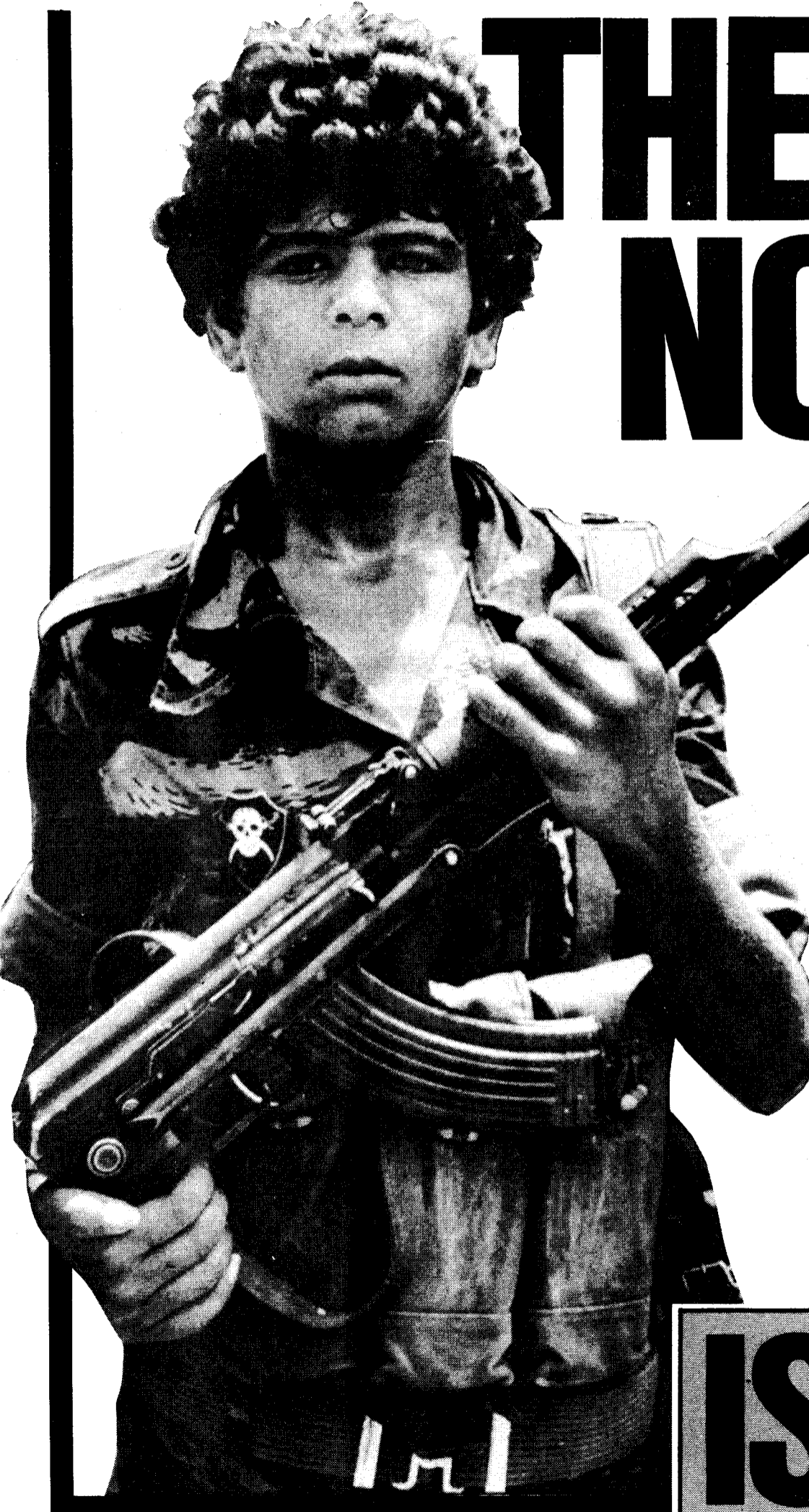
But make no mistake, despite the dispersal of the PLO militias, the Palestinian revolution is unvanquished. Its centre of gravity will now of course shift to the Occupied Territories and to within the Israeli state itself.

Two million Palestinians are still living within Israel's present borders. Two million who will continue to refuse the authority of the Zionist state which has dispossessed them of their land, disbanded their town councils and murdered their sons and daughters. They provide increasingly necessary labour for the Israeli economy — this is the contradiction which Zionism cannot eliminate.

The task of the hour, however is to campaign for massive medical aid to Lebanon, and for solidarity with the Palestinian people, defence of the Lebanese left, for Israel out of the Occupied Territories, and for all Israeli and imperialist troops out of Lebanon!

This will mean continuing to challenge the shameful silence of many on the left of the labour movement in this country. Since 6 June when Israel invaded there has no longer been any excuse for failing to understand the murderous character of the Israeli state which is expansionist and racist in its essence.

ISRAEL OUT OF LEBANON!



Editorial

PO Box 50, London N1 2XP
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All out 16 September

Government members are discussing a zero limit wage increase for the public sector next year. Details have been 'officially' leaked by government sources who say the new pay policy will be launched at this year's Brighton Conference — so much for have a re-look at health workers' wages in 1983!

They are emboldened by their success at driving unemployment up to a record near 3.3 million — which is almost one in seven of the working population. They have got away with swinging cuts in the public sector. And they are encouraged by their defeat of the train drivers. The Tories now feel this is the time to drive home their advantage.

They are confident that their union bashing combined with the reduction of inflation to single figures, as well as the three percent cut in the mortgage rate has done them the world of good with their supporters.

The Tories came to power determined to weaken the unions and intent on winning electoral support from big sections of the middle class as well as sections inside the working class. The 51 percent support they clocked up in one opinion poll shows that they could have had some important successes in their aims.

This is why we make no apologies for returning once again to the health dispute. This is a battle between the working class and the Tories that can be won. Behind the health workers stand unions representing millions of members, who have shown by their actions that they are prepared to down tools and come out in support. One decisive call from the TUC could bring the great battalions of labour into action.

The outcome of such a victory would be enormous. This solidarity action would tear the Tebbit Bill to shreds and open up a great breach in Tory wages policy. It would even have the potential to force the Tories out of office.

This action would reverse the process of capitulations in cars, steel and other sectors where the union officialdom has rolled over before the Tory steamroller.

If the labour movement loses this one it will be much harder to fight the zero pay limit next year. Alternatively to defeat the government now would encourage the workers to fight back against wage freeze, unemployment and attacks on the welfare state.

On the domestic front nothing is as important as winning the health workers' pay claim. Socialist Challenge says:

Back the ASTMS call for a General Strike on 15 September. All support to the conference called by the Scottish shop stewards on 11 September. Victory to the health workers.

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

If you would like to be put in touch with Socialist Challenge supporters in your area or would like more information fill in the form below

Name

Address

Age

Union/CLP (if any)

Send to: Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Trade Unions



Scottish steel workers in 1980 — will Sirs let them down again?

Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

Steel closures challenge Triple Alliance and TUC

By Des Tierney

ALMOST 200 steel jobs are to go in Sheffield and Scotland if the recently announced closures go ahead. This new onslaught on the British Steel industry cannot go unchallenged. Despite the feeble response from Sirs, general secretary of the steel workers' union, the ISTC, the signs are there for a fightback from angry workers. In Sheffield, Cliff Wright, the ISTC's River Don convenor, said that 'with the jobs lost in the area there is nowhere for us to go. If we have to sit in, we will sit in.'

Steelworkers throughout Scotland are preparing to fight for the survival of their industry. The announcement last week by the British Steel Corporation of the closure of Parkhead forge in the east end of Glasgow and the closure of the Clydebridge works on the outskirts of the city involved the loss of 1000 jobs.

This is bad enough, in an area where many of the towns have an unemployment rate of over 20 per cent, but it is the threat which these closures pose to the giant Ravenscraig steel works in Motherwell — one of the three bulk steelworking complexes in Britain and still employing over 5000 workers — which makes the present redundancy notices so important.

One of the plants to be closed, the Clydebridge platemill, is a major customer of the Ravenscraig works, and it is feared that as the BSC management continue to cut production in the wake of falling demand the Ravenscraig works will be chopped.

That's why the fight at

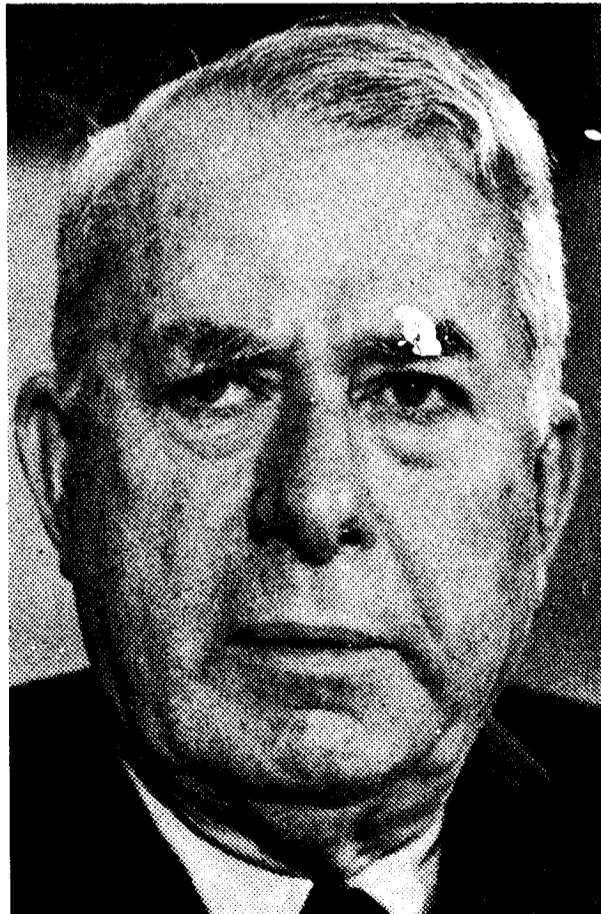
Clydebridge and Parkhead are so important and the workers are ready to fight for it.

Workers at Clydebridge met representatives of BSC management with a very angry picket when the closures were being announced. They were particularly angered that one of the reasons given for the closure was their one day strike the previous week in support of the health service workers.

TUC

Jimmy Burtney, the chairperson of the joint shop stewards committee is adamant: 'we are determined to fight this closure. We have a young workforce at Clydebridge who are not interested in redundancy money. They're interested in their jobs.'

Joe Cairney, shops steward convenor at Parkhead was equally determined, 'the workforce here are shocked and disgusted. This closure has nothing to do with our work content, rather it is indicative of



Steel boss Ian MacGregor

this Tory government's policy and their treatment of Scottish industry.'

Unfortunately the anger of the workforce is not reflected by the Scottish TUC. Jock Henry, the deputy chair of the STUC took the opportunity of the closure announcements to call for import controls and support for the Alternative

Economic Strategy, 'The only long term solution involves import controls and the expansion of the market.'

Clive Lewis, the Scottish organiser of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation is arranging meeting with the STUC, the miners and the railworkers to discuss joint

action through the Triple Alliance.

Andy Barr, Scottish organiser of the NUR has already stated that he is confident that NUR members would support joint action with the steelworkers.

So far Labour MPs in the steelmaking constituencies have been conspicuously lacking in ideas.

Fight

Underlying some of the reluctance to propose industrial action is the fear that such action could hasten the end of BSC's operations in Scotland. Those workers still employed fear threatening their own job prospects even further if they take on BSC in what they consider could be a futile battle.

The failure of the STUC and the Labour Party to stop the closure of Talbot at Linwood, the Singer plant at Clydebank and the Invergordon aluminium smelter obviously doesn't fill the workers with confidence.

But steelworkers will also remember the tremendous fight put up by the women at Lee Jeans factory at Greenock and the Plessey factory at Bathgate. Their militant action and the mass campaigns which they were able to inspire in their support shows what would be possible if the full weight of the steelworkers was used to stimulate such a campaign throughout Scotland.

Why consultant backs the claim

SAM GALBRAITH is a consultant neurosurgeon at the Southern General Hospital, Glasgow. The Southern General is one of the largest hospitals in the area and its workforce has been right at the forefront of the demand for 12 percent.

Mr Galbraith has spoken at meetings and rallies throughout Scotland in support of the claim. He is one of the few members of the medical profession to have done so and his contribution has been valued by those who are struggling for a just settlement.

Mr Galbraith is a Labour Party member, and is also a member of the Medical Practitioners Union, which is a section of ASTMS.

He gave the following interview to Marie Louise Irvine, also a doctor and a member of ASTMS.

Why do you support the dispute?

Medicine needs a team approach. I can't do my job without help from lots of people and many of these people are getting below subsistence wages. I am concerned with the whole of the health service not just my work. I have to support the health workers who have subsidised the health service for years.

What is the general attitude of the medical profession?

The majority believe the claim is just. But the majority are opposed to industrial action. They want to have their cake and eat it. However, if you really do believe the claim is just then you have to put the blame for the present action on the Tory government.

Consultants talk about 'responsibility' and that health workers struggling for a living wage are irresponsible. It's easy to talk about responsibility when you earn £30,000 a

year. People should know that the British Medical Association voted this year to retain the right to strike.

Do you see the Tory government pay offer as part of a general attack on the NHS?

Yes, I do. There are many issues involved. There is an

this we must not lose sight of the main issues. The healthworkers are fighting for a decent living wage — the 12 percent. At present we are fighting the Tories on a specific issue. And it is around this issue that the whole trade union movement must unite.

What do you think of the proposals for a national stoppage by all trade unionists in support of the claim?

I support it. The health service belongs to everyone and a national stoppage in solidarity would be an effective way to show the government that there is overwhelming support for the claim.

Do you think the present struggle is making people more aware of the threat to the NHS?

One of the great spin-offs

Party had lost interest in the NHS, but now socialists are realising there are big problems that have to be sorted out.

What sort of problems?

Lack of money, poor management, lack of accountability by the medical profession and the encroachment of private medicine. Services are being reduced by the Tories. Greater Glasgow Health Board has announced cuts of £6 million, that will seriously affect health care in this city. Four wards may be closed at the Southern General. It is not the case that bed places are being redistributed. They are being reduced.

What is the best way to fight the cuts?

The only solution is a political one. It has to be through the trade unions and the Labour Party. We have to campaign so that improving the health service and reversing the cuts is high on the Labour Party agenda, and to make sure they do something about it.

How do you tackle the problems you have described?

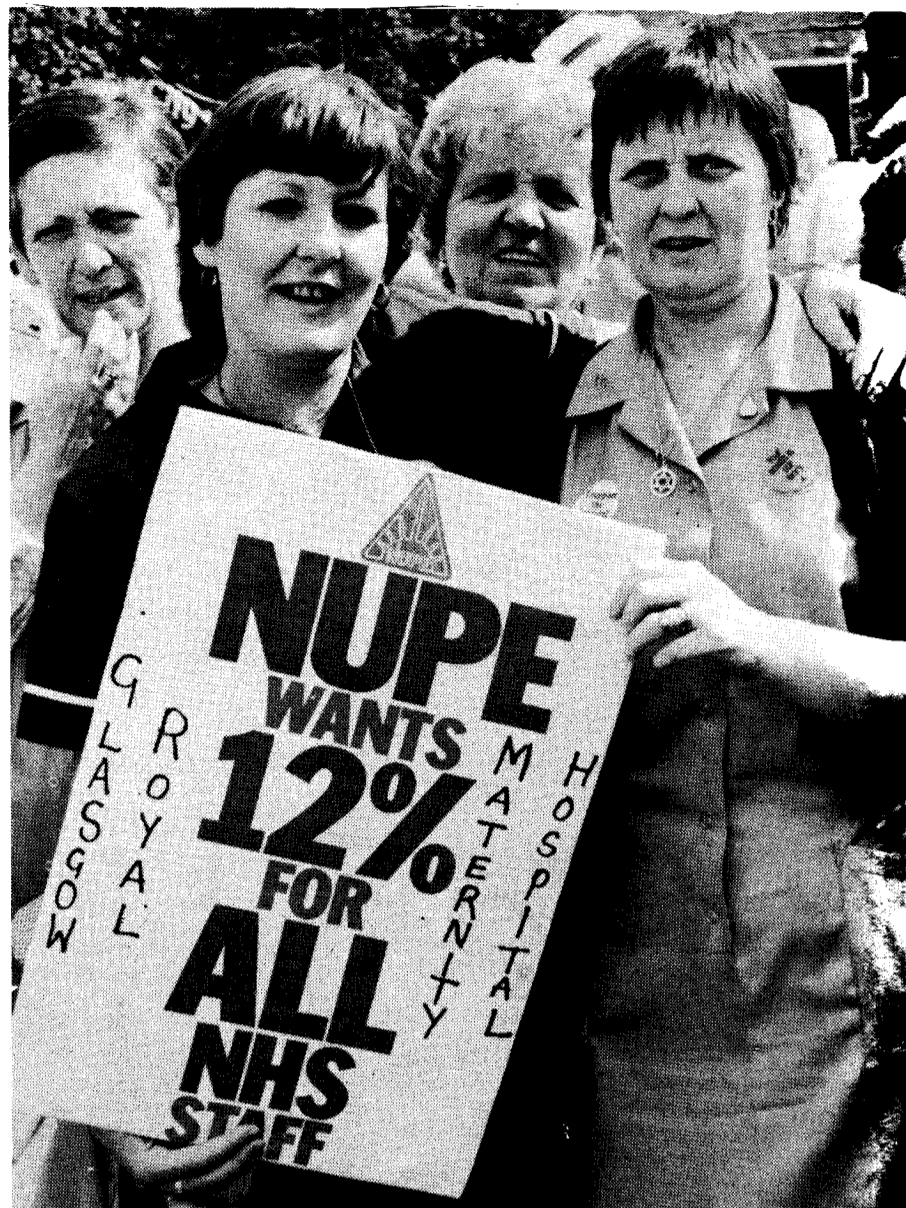
We need a campaign in the Labour Party to raise consciousness about the needs of the NHS. The Tory Health Act of 1980 did a lot of damage to the NHS. There was little response from the Labour Party. This was very bad. It is most urgent to defend the health service. Remember it's easier to prevent things being done, than to fight them once they have happened.

The Grampian Association of Health Service Unions have called for a half day stoppage in Aberdeen city factories and offices for Friday 27 August, the day after the RCN ballot results. There will be a demonstration and rally on the same day and Aberdeen Trades Council are coordinating the campaign to broaden the dispute. Workplace meetings and mass leafletings are being organised.

In Aberdeen at the moment emergency and accident cover is being operated, and 19 out of 27 medical record staff are on indefinite strike. The strike committee see that the only way forward for the dispute locally and nationally is solidarity from other workers.

attack on the health service and the trade union movement. In recognising

is that it has brought the NHS into the limelight once again. The Labour



Message from Scottish health workers

'We can win!'

BELOW two Scottish health workers speak to Socialist Challenge about their pay claim.

DANNY CAROL is a 24-year-old theatre orderly at the Southern General, Glasgow. His take-home pay is £53.18 and £65 if he works a weekend.

I want to stick out for the full 12 per cent. I think we could get it. Even if the RCN settle it won't make any difference, they have never been involved in the industrial action anyway.

This is the first time I have been involved in a strike. We have always been exempt before. But when this one started we went to our union 'rep' and said we wanted to do something.

At this hospital the laundry workers have been out for 12 weeks — they get strike pay of £40. The ODA's who are the operating department assistants, have been on strike for six weeks. We keep six out of ten people working to

cover emergencies. We divide the wages between us which gives us £40 and then we also give money to the strike fund.

We know that some patients will suffer, because of the dispute. But that is the fault of Thatcher's government.

The action of other workers in supporting our dispute has boosted our morale. For a time things were down but now they have lifted. The picket line had been falling off, but when shipyard workers came down to picket and gave a large donation, this really encouraged us again.

Sean Geraghty's action was great, there are not enough guys like him about. Chapple refused to support his members and I reckon he should be in Mrs Thatcher's cabinet.

I just hope we can get more solidarity. Stuff the Tebbitt Bill. The TUC should organise solidarity action. The working class has a lot of

potential power that is not being used.

Anne Campbell is a NUPE steward and works in the laundry at Southern General. Anne is also a member of the NUPE Youth Advisory Committee.

'There are 10 young women working in the hospital laundry who used to be YOP workers and stayed on. They are very active in the strike. They have come down to the picket lines every day and have been visiting factories to get support.

I hope that because of this experience they will come to union meetings after the dispute.

Other women are coming forward because of the strike. The 12-week strike in the laundry has been the backbone of the strike here — and they are all women workers.

The joint shop stewards committee recommended that we come out and put it to a vote of all the workers and



this has also been voted again at four or five other meetings. The vote to stay out has always been unanimous, even though we are only getting £40 a week.

We now need all the joint shop stewards committees in the Greater Glasgow health area to send resolutions to the Scottish TUC calling for all-out indefinite strike action,

with emergency cover only. Then we should demand that the TUC call on all trade unionists who support the health workers to come out for a 24-hour stoppage of

solidarity. We want to see this dispute settled. We believe that if the TUC carries out these demands we can win the 12 percent.

THE BENN HERESY

by Alan Freeman

By Phil Hears and Bob Pennington
UNDERSTANDING the politics of Tony Benn and the 'Bennite' current is crucial to grasping the prospects for socialist advance in Britain. The ideas of Benn and his supporters represent the main left-wing opposition to Toryism and right-wing Labourism in Britain today.

Whilst Benn and Bennism are not revolutionary — and Alan Freeman resolutely defends Benn against such an accusation — it still remains a fact that a genuine mass revolutionary socialist movement will not be built without both confronting Bennism and also fighting alongside of it. To paraphrase Trotsky, we have to take the reformist workers seriously, because they take their own ideas seriously.

At every stage of the political crisis reformism appears in new and often more left-wing forms. Bennism is the latest of these and we can be confident it will not be the last. Bennism nevertheless has a certain distinctiveness in that it does have a more or less comprehensive political solution to the British economic and political crisis. This therefore assures it of a certain durability.

Join

When such a movement with such widespread support appears, it is incumbent on Marxists to analyse its proposals. We do not do this just so that we can 'expose' it but, we do it in order to find those points in its programme where we can join with it in a united front against the capitalist class and its direct agents in the labour movement.

By unravelling Benn's personal political history, Alan Freeman is able to trace the development of the post-war British crisis and the failure of right-wing labourism — what Benn calls social democracy — to deal with the reverse of the old Bevanite leaders like Foot, Castle, and Wilson, whose experience in office led them to the right. Benn's experience in office

had the effect of actually radicalising him. He was pushed to the left when he saw how the capitalist state sabotaged radical change. This prompted Benn to take up the theme of democracy in a way which the Bevanites were never prepared or even wanted to do.

Policy

The Bevanites always saw the battle with the right as being simply about policy. For them parliament was the focal point of change and the supreme representative of democracy. For Benn, parliament appears as the end-point of the democratic process — a process that begins with the mass movement.

The theme that parliament must be more democratic, more accountable and really sovereign, as opposed to the bureaucracy of the civil service, the multinational corporations, and the capitalist class in general, pervades Benn's speeches. The theme of democracy and mass action from below is a crucial part of the distinctiveness of Bennism.

Alan Freeman considers that the raising of the issue of democracy and making it a central concern in British politics is Benn's most crucial achievement. Alan however does not accept Benn's argument that parliament can be made truly sovereign. As a revolutionary Marxist he obviously does not reject an elected assembly on a point of principle, but he recognises that what matters is on what type of state does such an assembly rest. When that is a capitalist state then it is impossible for the mass movement to impose its will through parliament.

In our opinion

Freeman's discussion of 'marxism and democracy', his account of the circumstances in which civil war might be needed to defend parliament against the capitalist class, and his explanation of the inevitable limitation of real parliamentary sovereignty in the capitalist state are probably the strongest part of the book.

The other distinctive feature of Bennism is the alternative economic strategy or AES, which includes limited nationalisation, workers' participation and planning agreements with the major capitalist companies on investment and output to reconstruct the ailing economy. The left-wing critique of this is we assume well known to our readers. But Freeman here does bring to light an element of wide-eyed utopianism in Tony Benn's thoughts.

Benn thinks agreement with the capitalists might be possible. He attributes almost magical powers to the talisman of the 'popular will' to get fundamental change. This is Benn's blind spot. He rejects the idea that the ruling class might engineer a coup against a left-wing government. He completely underestimates the possibility that the British ruling class, in alliance with international capital will do everything in their power to de-stabilise a left Labour Government as a prelude to its fall.

Assault

Benn does not seem to understand that when you have an economic and political crisis of the proportion we have today, any future Labour government will come under a furious assault from domestic and foreign capital. The only time when this will not happen is if the Labour left and the working class as a whole have been utterly defeated. Even a government of the Foot-Healy type would be given the

treatment.

The IMF-engineered runs on the pound in 1965 and 1975 would be child's play compared to what they will do next. Although Foot might be at the helm the strength of the Labour left still makes a Labour government 'unsafe' in the eyes of the ruling class.

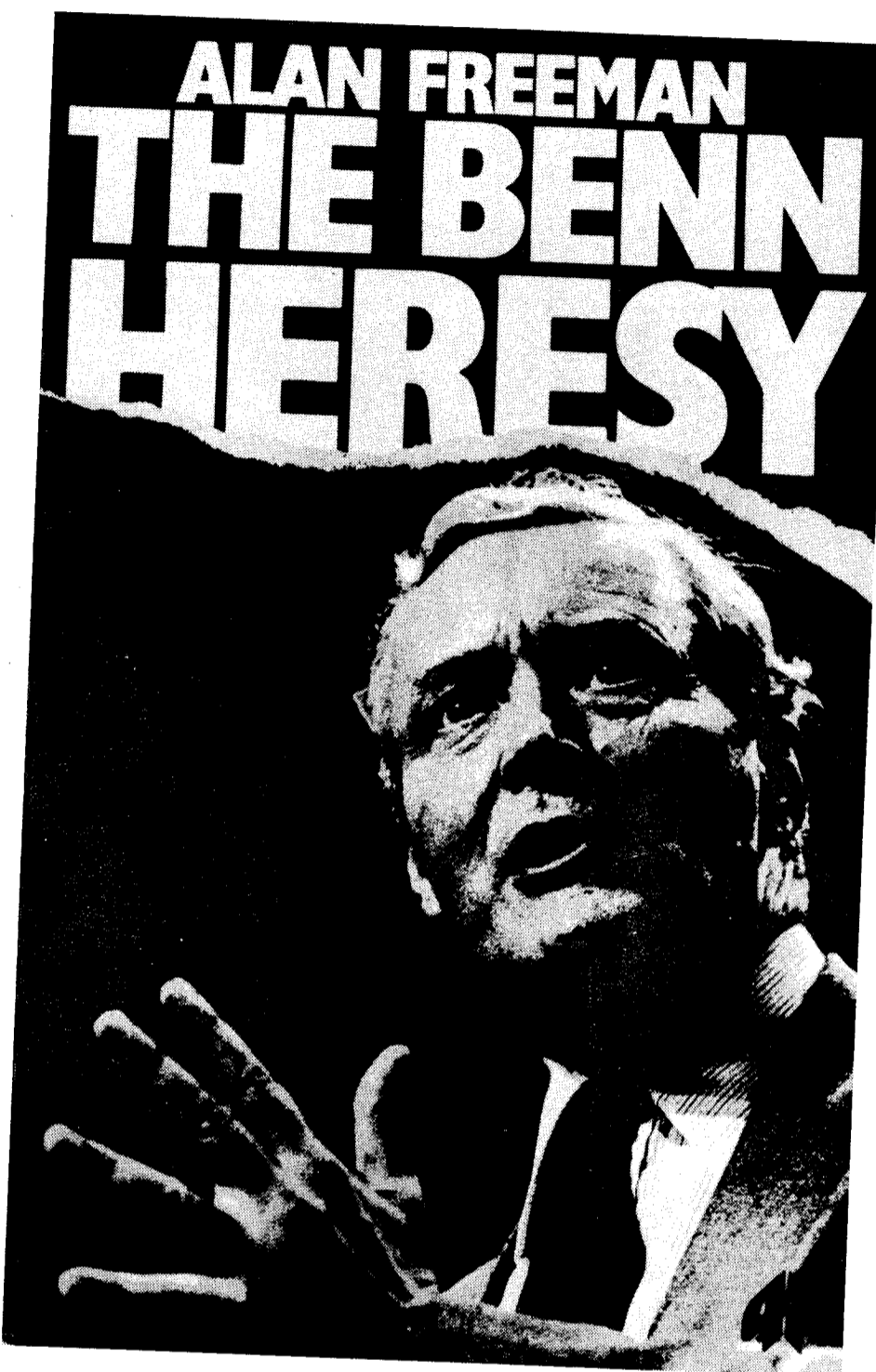
To have any chance of surviving in office the next Labour government will have to immediately move against the sabotage of domestic and foreign capital. Nationalisation of banks, control of the import and export of capital, the taking over of the finance houses and steps towards nationalising the big monopolies will have to be top-rated items on Labour's agenda.

Control

This will require the mobilisation of the trade union movement. Such measures can only be done if the workers in these industries and financial institutions supervise and control the bosses. Workers control will be the necessary measure to stop capitalist sabotage.

Benn refuses to face up to the idea of such a dramatic confrontation. When asked about this in interviews with *Socialist Challenge*, *Socialist Organiser*, and *Capital and Class* he tries to fob it off with; 'That's what I call the Allende question' or make jokes about 'my old tin hat and rifle'. Benn, as Freeman points out, sees revolutionary change, not as the mass mobilisation of the working class which acts as essential motor force of the transition, but either as a putsch or an 'industrial coup' — the actions of a minority. Benn's political thinking is therefore essentially flawed because he underestimates the lengths to which the British ruling class will go to suppress socialist change.

Does that therefore mean revolutionary Marx-



ists should shun the Bennite forces? Of course not. As Freeman says Benn does address himself to the crucial questions. This means that the first task is to be with this mass movement inside the Labour Party and the trade unions where we can fight with it against the right wing. Bennism represents the furthest stage of left development of all but a

minuscule minority of the working class. There is no question of influencing this movement from the sidelines or imagining that it can be by-passed by a new layer of workers coming into struggle. The second task is to arm the Bennite supporters with an understanding that only a Labour government that breaks with the capitalist class and is committed to

socialist policies and has the means to implement them can avoid a terrible debacle.

Anyone who wants to understand the crisis of British capitalism, the character of the Labour right, the role of Thatcherism and what makes Bennism tick, can do no better than read Alan Freeman's book.

The trials of Tribune

By Brian Heron
THE DEATH agony of the Tribune group of MP's is going to be a drawn out affair. By 39 votes to 27 they decided to support the Labour Party NEC's new register of groups. The official parliamentary left have scored an own goal.

Commenting on the reasons for their decision, Mr Buchan MP for Renfrew East and chair of the group said, 'We are opposed to expulsions and witch-hunts, but we know the right wing has never required a register when it wanted a witch-hunt ahead.'

But surely the real function of the register is not hard even for Mr Buchan to grasp. Perhaps this is why after the meeting he suggested that the outcome indicated

concern within the group about the need to defend Labour's constitution. The offensive against Labour's constitution can be put at Militant's door who have threatened the Labour Party more than Harold Wilson's referendum on the EEC, Barbara Castle's *In Place of Strife*, Callaghan's secret missile programme or Healey's pay norms.

The beauty of the register, as the *Guardian* of August 19 reports, 'is that members of Militant can put themselves outside

its requirements without the need for disciplinary action against them.' Thus we can skip the trial and get on with the execution.

The Tribune group's decision strengthens Foot. Last weekend, the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staff's executive voted by a 2 to 1 majority in favour of the register. The ASTMS conference in 1981 supported Tony Benn, but the ASTMS executive in general and Clive Jenkins in particular opposed Benn's decision to contest the deputy leader's position last year after having voted for the democratic election of the leader. The deputy leader-

Tribune

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'UP THE REDS'
with FRANCIS BOTTLE, 'The Communist Party's hidden role in Labour's troubled times' page nine

A GUIDE TO THE ANTI-BOMB 'PEACE CAMPS' back page

TRIBUNE COMMENT
IF THERE is one question, central to the Labour Party's future, it is whether it should remain a party of the working class. The Tribune group's decision to support the Labour Party NEC's new register of groups is a step towards answering this question. It is a step towards the creation of a party of the working class. The Tribune group's decision to support the Labour Party NEC's new register of groups is a step towards answering this question. It is a step towards the creation of a party of the working class.

Can the unions knock sense into the PLP?
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Tribune newspaper, under new editorship, now dissociates itself from the Tribune group

ship contest turned then into an organised challenge to the bureaucrats who lord it over most of the unions.

Overcome by this whiff of democracy Jenkins has been busily putting together a new coalition which aims to take over

the job of guarding the bureaucratic birthright in the Labour Party, but without the discredit associated with Grantham, Boyd, Duffy and Chapple.

Basnett. And the first test of the new bloc is the register at this year's Labour Party Conference,

Conference against the witch-hunt

Socialist Challenge urges its supporters to attend the meeting organised by Hackney North Constituency Labour Party on 4 September at County Hall, Westminster. Details from Hackney North CLP, 28 Beatty Road, London N16.

We also urge all supporters to get delegated to the Labour movement conference against the witch hunt on 11 September at Central Hall, Homerton Road, London E9 5PW.

Sorry!
Gremlins got at last week's announcement of the Hackney North meeting. The correct date is 4 September and not, as we printed last week, 30 September.

and the subsequent removal of Militant radicals in the Tribune group, who only want a little the witch-hunt feel they have some friends in the

unions. And so 39 of them added yet another stain to the tatty pink banner of Labour's official left. No wonder Tribune itself pronounced them dead.

Stop the missiles

The Japanese anti-nuclear movement



30,000 people assembled on the evening of 5 August in Hiroshima's Peace Park to hear an appeal by the chairperson of the National Japanese Congress against Atomic and Hydrogen bombs (Gensuikin). The park was again packed the next morning on the anniversary of the bombing. At exactly 6.15, the time of the explosion, everyone stood to observe a minute's silence for the victims. At 8.21 a flock of doves was released to symbolise the wish of the people of Hiroshima for peace.

CHRIS PITTS, a Sheffield bus driver, has been spending his holiday in Japan. Chris is a CND activist and has been concerned to find out about the Japanese movement. He sent us this report from Tokyo.

THIS YEAR a new wave of anti-nuclear sentiment has developed in Japan which has mobilised hundreds of thousands of people. Many left-wing activists were taken by surprise last March when 200,000 people responded to a call by the SOHYO* national union federation for a demonstration in Hiroshima against nuclear weapons. Two months later on 23 May in Tokyo, 400,000 attended a second rally again called by SOHYO.

In a country where government policy is 'neither manufacture nor possess, nor allow the introduction of nuclear weapons', the basis for such a movement would seem to be missing. In fact the reason lies in Japan's special relationship with the United States of America.

The crux of this special relationship is AMPO, the Japan-US Security Treaty. Signed shortly after the end of the US occupation it gives the US armed forces virtually unrestricted access to Japanese land and naval bases and air space. It has always been unpopular with the Japanese working class. Hundreds of thousands demonstrated when the US was using Japan as a staging post for the war in Vietnam.

Against this background, the roots of the new anti-nuclear movement can be traced back to the candid remarks of ex-US ambassador Edwin O. Reischauer in April 1981, that if the US wished to store nuclear weapons at their facilities in Japanese ports, they would feel free to do so without prior consultation with the Japanese government. In short, the US military can do what it likes in Japan, and to hell with the wishes of the Japanese people. The Japanese government could only plead ignorance, since under the terms of AMPO they have no right to know anything about US military activities in Japan.

Militant

The immediate result of this was a small but militant demonstration against the USS Midway entering Yokosuka Naval Base, south-west of Tokyo, the following June. The ship was en route to joint US-Japan naval manoeuvres, and was widely believed to be equipped with nuclear missiles.

Between these two events, in early May, the Japanese and US governments had issued a joint communique describing their relationship as an 'alliance' — interpreted by many commentators as meaning a military alliance. The reason that this caused such dismay here is that most progressive forces defend the famous Article 9 of the constitution, which renounces Japan's right to wage war. Accordingly, for several years, there have been many indicators that the hawks in the government and ruling class are actively softening public opinion for a revision of the constitution.

Test

Hardly a year has gone by without some government or public figure making a public statement to test public opinion on the question of Japan possessing nuclear weapons, or changing the constitution (Article 9). Every year, it is traditional for the Prime Minister to attend Yasukuni shrine, where Japan's WW2 officers and unknown soldiers are buried, but this has usually been in a personal capacity. In the last few years, subtle changes have taken place in this ritual which give it the character of an official function, leading some Japanese to believe that the government is on the verge of exonerating its role in the second world

war. If this seems a little oblique, the most recent actions of the Education Ministry in censoring school history books is quite clear. The Ministry has insisted that the wording of textbooks should be changed to describe Japan's invasion of China, Korea, etc as an 'advance' rather than an 'invasion', and that passages describing Japanese atrocities in those countries should be toned down before it will approve them. This action has caused a storm of protest from the countries in question and in Japan itself. The Ministry however, remains adamant, simply insisting that it will make more effort to explain its reasons to those countries.

Gallop

Although reactionary policies and belligerent remarks have long been heard and seen from government ministers and SDF officers, the fact that the ruling LDP won an increased majority in the last election has increased its confidence to the extent that the rightward shift has become a gallop. Its most recent action was to revise the system of Upper House elections to assure itself a bigger majority in the future. Against this background, and the fact that most of the union bureaucracies are also moving to the right, finding it more comfortable to accept the ruling class's excuses that recession means austerity and lay-offs than to fight against them, the new anti-nuclear movement is the largest and fastest growing part of wider radicalisation.

Another factor fuelling this anti-nuclear movement here has been the announcement by the US that it intends to equip hunter-killer submarines with the Seventh Fleet serving in the West Pacific (and hence using Japanese ports), with Tomahawk missiles, during 1983/84. It is not clear at present whether they intend to install long-range types with nuclear warheads, or conventional warhead short-range missiles, but since the US is also discussing the possibility of installing Pershing II Cruise missiles on Japanese soil, most activists are drawing their own conclusions.

Joint

The Self-Defence Forces, it is pointed out, have a lot of equipment to cope with the effects of nuclear war such as radiation suits, and also possess many conventional weapons which could easily be converted to nuclear ones. The SDF had once conducted joint exercises with the US using sea and air forces, but recently they have also been holding joint exercises involving ground troops. Adding all this together provides the basis for the emergence of a mass opposition movement despite the government's formal position.

*SOHYO is the largest of the main national union federations, encompassing around 3.5m, mainly public service workers. It is closely identified with the Japan Socialist Party, and to a lesser extent the Japanese Communist Party.

Why we are marching

THREE young people from the greater Manchester area told PAUL ATKINSON why they will be marching to Blackpool.



LEE of Stockport YCND says: 'I will be marching to show this Tory government that we don't want their missiles. After a year on the dole the chance of me getting a decent job is nil. Yet they spend 12 billion pounds on missiles. I think this money should go on creating jobs.'



DAVE from Oldham YCND reckons, 'We should tell the Tories we have had enough. Thatcher should not be allowed to get away with what she has at the expense of ordinary people's jobs. It shows where her priorities lie. The Tories' slogan is "profits not people". But it's time for us to put things right by forcing a future Labour government to stop spending money on nukes and pay youth a decent wage instead of the poxy £25 we get on YOP schemes.'



MARK CUTTS, who is from Hazel Grove, wants to 'go on this march because when Thatcher and her Tory government attacks the working class, they attack the youth even harder. All the money that they spend on defending their interests, like in the Malvinas war, police pay and so on, could be better spent on things like real jobs and the health service. At the last Labour Party conference a two-thirds majority voted for unilateral disarmament. I want to make sure that if a Labour government gets in at the next election they act on this.'



YOUTH MARCH

jobs not bombs

Manchester sept 23

> Blackpool sept 26.

'No to an early and painful death'

says Paul Atkinson, East Manchester CND

YOU HAVE probably never heard of General Bernard Rogers. Well he is not all that important, except in one respect. He is a man who can decide whether or not you become a nuclear cinder! General Rogers is the NATO supreme commander in Europe.

Last week they interviewed him on TV and he was most insistent that NATO is only 'defensive' and what it is doing is defending 'freedom' against the 'threat' of the USSR. Now if you are one of the 40,000 political prisoners being tortured in Turkey or one of 12 million unemployed in the EEC, General Roger's platitudes on freedom must have a hollow — some would say cynical — ring.

What's more he is a man prepared to do his job, come what may and that means 'being dead is better than being red' and he will 'press the button' if his conscience dictates.

General Rogers learned from US military academies like West Point who teach a simple ethic which was well put by the military lunatic who burned down a village in Vietnam and slaughtered most of its inhabitants and remarked after-

wards '... it was necessary to destroy the village in order to save it.'

He told his TV interviewer he would use 'nukes first', saying this is our 'deterrent today'. This somehow contradicts the idea of Mr Healey and Mr Shore that having 'nukes' stops anyone using them, because if one side used them no one would survive.

This stuff probably sends shivers down your spine — if it doesn't then it ought to. Perhaps you dismiss it by re-assuring yourself that General Rogers is a 'nutter'. Well I have bad news for you. He is not a 'nutter'. He is a class conscious serving member for capitalism, who will burn you and millions like you to frazzle if he thinks it will be in the 'interests of freedom'. That is freedom for imperialism to exploit the majority of the world's population.

Our youth march on its own will not stop General Bernard Rogers but it can help to build a movement that will do so. Make sure you and your organisation supports it — after all, you can hardly fancy an early and very painful death.



Protestors gather around floral cross in Warsaw's Castle Square in 22 August

Key test on Polish anniversary

By O. MacDonald

TWO YEARS after the great strike wave that launched Poland's independent labour movement, Solidarity, Poland's underground resistance movement is mobilising demonstrations and protests aimed to show that working class support for their independent organisations remains as strong as ever. The campaign will reach its climax on 31 August the second anniversary of the Gdansk Agreements which marked the Stalinist government's capitulation to the demands of the workers in 1980.

The coup d'etat by General Jaruzelski in December last year was a bad defeat for the Polish workers' movement, but it failed to crush Solidarity. Some elements within the Jaruzelski regime have been pressing for a second wave of terror and violence to try to finish off the underground resistance movement once and for all.

Others, the so-called 'liberals' like deputy Premier Rakowski, favour a mixture of repression of key working class activists with a prolonged period of political manoeuvring to divide Solidarity and wear it down, using the exhausting economic crisis and the conciliatory stance of the Church hierarchy as weapons in this campaign.

In every major city, Solidarity's activists have regrouped around networks of factory committees and clandestine bulletins which the police have been incapable of penetrating and suppressing in significant numbers. Since April a national co-ordinating committee has linked together Solidarity's regional leaderships in four important areas — Gdansk, Warsaw, Wroclaw and Cracow-Nowa Huta. Huge demonstrations at the start of May and very widespread token strikes on 13 May marked a first show of strength by the underground. The present mobilisation will mark the second key test for Solidarity.

So far the movement has remained firmly united in action, without any significant breaking of ranks. But a major debate continues within Solidarity on the aims that the move-

ment should pursue. A big part of Solidarity's intellectual advisers together with some leaders like Lech Walesa are prepared to acknowledge that Solidarity went too far in the past and are ready to make basic changes in the organisation's structure to transform it into a non-political trade union and accept a lengthy strike ban because of the economic crisis. On the other side the bulk of the underground activists see Solidarity's basic aim to be a mass movement to bring fundamental democratic change, breaking up the whole bureaucratic structure of the political system.

Linked to these disagreements on aims, the two groupings seek to adopt different tactics. The 'pure trade union' trend argues for tactics that will re-assure elements within the regime that they can achieve lasting co-operation and good-will from Solidarity if they are ready to restore its legal rights.

On the other hand, the activists of the underground movement favour tactics which will eventually force the regime to grant major concessions or face the prospect of a second revolutionary upsurge on the scale of the Gdansk commune of 1980.

At present the Jaruzelski regime has no intention of entering into any serious negotiations with any section of Solidarity and the differences within the movement have not therefore become a political factor of the first importance. The government has been hoping that the more conciliatory trend within the leadership of Solidarity, aided by the pressure of the Church hierarchy and prominent circles of intellectuals around the movement would gain the upper hand, as the movement saw the level of active working class support declining. If such a trend were to develop then the need to have serious negotiations with Solidarity would decline and an entirely new trade union structure, entirely under bureaucratic control could be established.

The mobilisations up to 31 August will therefore be a crucial test of strength for both Solidarity and the government. Indications so far, including Jaruzelski's hurried visit to the Crimea to see Brezhnev last week, suggest that the regime fears it may have underestimated the scope of support for the Solidarity underground.

NEXT MONDAY, 31 August, the underground leaders of Solidarnosc are calling for a massive display of defiance against the Polish regime. Already there have been riots in the major Polish towns, but especially in the port of Gdansk, the birthplace of Solidarnosc. Last week ten thousand workers demonstrated in Gdansk against martial law and for the release of Lech Walesa, only to be met with the water cannon and truncheons of the police.

On 31 August the workers of Poland will be commemorating the Gdansk agreement signed on that day two years ago — the agreement which recognised Solidarnosc and the right of the Polish workers to their own independent trade union. On this anniversary PAUL LAWSON describes the events which led to the agreement.

Food price rises have a way of sparking off rebellions in Poland. In December 1970 the giant price rises decreed by the party leadership led to riots in which dozens of Polish workers were killed. Again in June 1976 a 69 per cent increase in the price of meat led to nation-wide rioting.

On 1 July 1980 the Polish government introduced a new price system for meat, which effectively transferred some of the better, cheaper meat, to the so-called 'commercial' shops — which are reserved for the bureaucracy. This time there were no immediate riots, no spontaneous explosion. But, as the workers began to see and feel the effects of the move, work began to stop in some of the major factories, including the Ursus tractor factory, the Mielec aircraft factory and a vehicle parts factory near Gdansk.

The workers were demanding wage rises to compensate for the government's measures pushing up meat prices. This was just the start of a vast wave of strikes. Under orders not to put up too much resistance, and to get the matter over with as soon as possible, the factory managers began to concede to the workers demands. But, as the managers conceded, the scale of the workers' demands increased, so much so that some of the workers who had already settled for five per cent went on strike again demanding more. In some places the wage increase demands were as much as 20 per cent.

There was no national strike because there was no workers' leadership to co-ordinate such a strike. However a series of 'rolling' strikes took place which shook the regime. Party leader Gierek went on television on 10 July to say that there would be no nation-wide wage increase — claiming the country couldn't afford it.

At this stage a new force came onto the scene. The KOR, the Workers' Self-Defence Committee, began to co-ordinate information about the strikes and eventually became an active force linking up the factories in struggle. During July some 150 plants took strike action. After years of bureaucratic mismanagement, the Communist Party leadership was seeing the emergence of a generalised challenge to its rule.

As the whole world now knows, the major challenge to the bureaucracy started to emerge at the shipyards in Gdansk, specifically the huge Lenin shipyard. At 4.30 am on 14 August, members of the semi-clandestine 'Free Trade Union of the Coast' gathered outside the gates of the shipyard to meet the 17,000 workers going in. They were demanding the reinstatement of one of their activists, Anna Walentynowicz, a long-time supporter of free trade unions. All the guiding nucleus of

the Free Trade Union, and its newspaper *Robotnik Wyrzeza*, were subject to constant police and management harassment. The group saw the new attempt by the management to sack Anna as the opportunity to bring the Lenin shipyard behind the nation-wide strike movement.

From 4.30 am onwards the workers started to give out their leaflets. Eventually their demands were taken up inside the yard. The scene that followed has been recounted many times. Workers addressed the shipyard employees from the top of a crane. They were successively addressed by the unfortunate shipyard manager Gniech, and by ex-employee Lech Walesa who had been helped over the wall earlier in the morning.

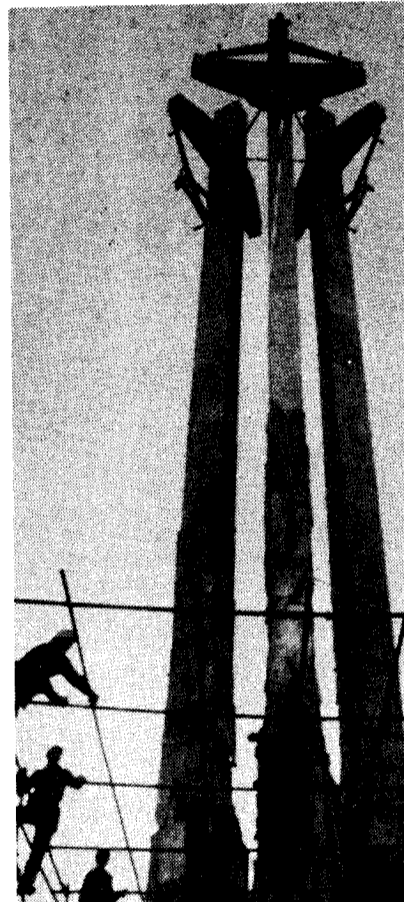
The meeting went indoors to negotiate. Walesa and others from the Free Trade Union were at the forefront of the negotiations on the first day. The workers demanded a one-third increase in pay, re-instatement of sacked workers, earlier retirement and the abolition of the special 'commercial' shops. They demanded a monument to the workers who had been killed by the police in 1970 — a demand eventually conceded by the shipyard management.

The strike spread. The Paris Commune shipyard in Gdynia came out. Workers throughout Gdansk began to go on strike. The demands of the workers had gone far beyond the narrow concerns of the shipyard. By Saturday 16 August the negotiating committee at the Gdansk shipyard was on the verge of reaching agreement — on a 1,500 zloty a month wage increase reinstatement of sacked workers and no victimisations. This agreement represented a major concession by the shipyard management.

But the negotiating committee of the workers at the shipyard was getting out of contact with what was happening in the rest of the area, where large numbers of workers were striking. The ending of the strike by the Gdansk shipyard would have led to the government picking off the other strikers. The strike committee split but a majority voted to settle. A delegation from the Gdansk public transport garage arrived to demand that the strike be continued.

Lech Walesa's announcement over the public address system that the strike was over was greeted with heckling. Then Walesa changed his mind and went round the shipyard demanding the strike continue. Delegations from other plants swarmed to the Lenin shipyard. That evening the Inter-Factory Strike Committee, the initial nucleus of Solidarnosc, was formed. The radical minority of the strike committee at the Lenin shipyard had effectively outflanked the

31A



Monument to strikers killed in 1970



Masses jubilant at shipyard gates

majority by broadening their base. They drew up their list of 16 demands, later increased to 21 which became the negotiating

Solidarity

JG '80 - 31 AUG '82

Trade Union of the Coast, into a general confrontation with the government over basic workers' rights. From now on the negotiations at Gdansk became a focal point for the whole movement.

The strike spread even further. 25,000 workers went on strike in Szczecin, including in the Adolf Warski shipyard. Tadeusz Pyka, one of the government's deputy prime ministers, went to Gdansk to negotiate for the government. As the tension rose, party leader Gierek went on television and promised better pay and food allowances, better welfare provisions, an investigation into workers' conditions and a reform of the official trade unions, the CRZZ. These proposals were unacceptable — the right to an independent trade union had become a crucial stumbling block.

Deputy prime minister Pyka attempted to split the workers by insisting on separate agreements with the different enterprises, but the Inter-Factory Strike Committee held solid. Pyka was recalled to Warsaw and replaced with senior deputy premier Jagielski. Day after day of intense negotiation followed. The whole of Poland was watching the negotiations. The government went into crisis, and a re-shuffle among the bureaucrats took place. But for the time being Gierek kept his post. The intellectuals and the Church rushed to support the movement.

The government put forward a demand which was to shape the whole outcome of the agreement — that the Inter-Factory Strike Committee accept the leading role of the party. Massive tensions built up among the negotiators on this point. Many workers were unhappy about the acceptance of such a clause in the agreement. 'The leading role of the party' in Eastern Europe is a synonym for the continuing domination of the bureaucratized Stalinist parties, completely tied to the state apparatus.

Eventually the formula was hammered out. Point one of the agreement began: 'The unions endorse the principle of social ownership of the means of production, constituting the foundation of Poland's socialist system. Recognising the leading role of the Polish United Workers' Party in the state...'. Eventually Walesa forced acceptance of this point through. The main points of the agreement became: 1) Recognition of the leading role of the party, 2) Recognition of the right of free trade unions, 3) Recognition of freedom of the press and 4) Recognition of the right to strike.

The accords were signed among scenes of jubilation. But many of the workers outside and inside the shipyard gates seemed disappointed that the strike was over. Had the negotiators made too many concessions to the state? Did they have to capitulate on the leading role of the party?

Time has shown the Gdansk agreement was, in fact, notwithstanding the acceptance of the opening paragraph, a massive victory for the Polish workers. In recognising free trade unions, the authorities had opened the floodgate to the development of Solidarity. Their insistence on the 'leading role of the party' was tantamount to giving notice that they intended to take all their concessions back. But the Polish workers were not betrayed by the Gdansk agreement and the similar one agreed at Szczecin. It constituted a crucial turning point in legitimising the struggle to organise the Polish workers in the fight against the bureaucracy — a fight which is far from ended.



Workers couldn't get enough information



Always there: the military threat



Lech Walesa signing historic agreement in Gdansk 31 August 1980

basis leading to the Gdansk agreement. These demands included the right to strike, independent trade unions, freedom of expres-

sion, pay increases, more rest days, freeing of political prisoners and a series of demands for better conditions and services.

The formation of the Inter-Factory Strike Committee entirely transformed the situation. What had started as a series of in-

dependently organised strikes, had been transformed, thanks to the role of the Workers' Self-Defence Committee and the Free

NICARAGUA

Washington's phony peace plan

By Brian Grogan

PRESIDENT Reagan's hopes of 'destabilising' revolutionary Nicaragua were persuaded over the weekend under the guise of a phony 'peace plan'. According to Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Thomas Enders, Washington will supposedly end its military involvement in both Nicaragua and El Salvador if 'Cuban forces are pulled out of Nicaragua'.

Cuba has no troops in Nicaragua. It has 2,100 teachers, 200 doctors, some health workers, building workers and agricultural experts. The United States has sent no such aid to the Nicaraguan people, despite being asked to.

This operation of the 'Big Lie' has as much connection with peace as did Goebbels who perfected such propaganda techniques for Hitler. This cynical peace offer is merely to provide a cover for more open US involvement in the actual military invasion of Nicaragua presently under way aimed at overthrowing the revolutionary Nicaraguan government.

Cash

Some 5000 counter-revolutionary troops, organised in large units and possessing sophisticated weapons are now operating out of Honduran camps close to the Nicaraguan border. There are continuous and covert CIA operations into Nicaragua. Most of the 50 US advisors in Honduras are thought to be near the border. In July, there was a two week joint US Honduran military operation along the border. This involved US pilots, mechanics and air traffic controllers and two US C-130 aircraft helping to transport a Honduran battalion to the new base just

north of Nicaragua.

US military aid to Honduras doubled this year to \$10.6m and is due to increase to \$16m in 1983. This aid is to include six A-37 light attack planes to add to the dozen or so French Super-Mystere fighters already giving it the most advanced airforce in Central America. It is reportedly seeking US F-5 jets as well.

Coinciding with the joint military exercises, two air attacks were launched from Honduras against key economic targets inside Nicaragua. On the anniversary of the Sandinista revolution, 19 July, and unmarked aircraft from Honduras attempted to blow up storage tanks containing 800,000 gallons of highly flammable fuels at Corinto — a town which handles three quarters of Nicaragua's only oil refinery in Managua. Both attacks failed, but potentially could have wreaked havoc.

Victims

In response to this vulnerability from air attacks, the Nicaraguan government has been seeking to obtain interceptor aircraft from France, the Soviet Union and other countries. The Soviet Union has been reported as providing come MiG-17's. According to Washington's topsy turvey logic, the possession of

such defensive planes 'would be seen as a major escalation'. So, according to the *International Herald Tribune*: 'Options known to have been under study by the United States and its allies include:

- * US military action to destroy the MiG's
- * A blockade or quarantine of Cuba or Nicaragua
- * Tightened US economic restrictions on these two countries
- * Temporarily stationing US airmen and military planes in Honduras and Colombia
- * Stepped up supply of US combat aircraft
- * Political assault on the MiG's in the Organisation of American States and other international organisations'

Action

In a diplomatic note earlier this month, Nicaragua protested that the US-Honduran manoeuvres 'represent a clear and open provocation which appears to be aimed at causing an unnecessary war between Honduras and Nicaragua, with unforeseen consequences.' The mounting attacks leave the Nicaraguan government no choice but to strengthen its defences and prepare for a full scale war. On 14 August, the Sandinista government ordered militia units to report within ten days for intensive combat training. The Sandinista Peoples Army remains fully mobilised. Civil defence preparations are under way in all factories and schools and neighbourhoods.

This is the only serious way to meet Washington's proposals of 'peace'.



Nicaraguan troops patrol near Honduran border



Nicaraguan security chief Lenin Cerna with dynamite utilised by counter-revolution

Air India: strikes made illegal

By Ian MacDonald

ONCE again flexible rostering has raised its head at Heathrow airport. Air India management imposed new working rosters on 2 June which were out of line with the agreed procedures.

At the end of June as part of their drive to get the new rosters accepted, a steward was sacked and the works based TGWU branch voted to take strike action.

As with the ASLEF dispute, management is determined to smash the union and so on 4 August it sacked 100 workers. Unfortunately the mainly Asian workforce is split — 200 members are now working the rosters, whilst

100 of their brothers and sisters are outside on the picket line.

Seizing on the division the management have insisted that the workers inside sign a document which terms strikes 'illegal and unauthorised' as per Indian law.

The Hounslow Labour Party has pledged full support for the strike and is building a public meeting which will be used to mobilise wider support for the dispute. The LPYS has consistently visited the picket line in a show of solidarity with the strikers.

Offers of financial help and messages of support to Transport House, 7/9 South Road, Southall, Middlesex, cheques made payable to A1 TGWU.

Why the recession isn't ending

Pennies from heaven

By Alan Freeman

LAST WEEK it seemed for a moment as if the Confederation of British Industry's dearest wishes were coming true. Interest rates fell for the fourth time this year; another cut in mortgage rates was said to be on the way.

Share prices boomed on Wall Street; that mysterious financial totem, the Dow Jones index, saw its biggest one-day leap ever. American interest rates, the cause of anguished squeals from every treasury in Europe, were going to fall.

Was this the light at the end of the tunnel? Was John Wayne finally going to rescue the world from recession?

Not quite. On Friday, the *Financial Times* reported that the government 'received three pieces of bad news on the economy from official figures published yesterday'. These were:

- Capital investment (already at an all-time low) fell again this quarter. Manufacturing investment fell most sharply at 4.5 per cent, concentrated in new plant, which registered a 7 per cent drop.

- Manufacturers stopped restocking, which generally signals a downturn.

- Cyclical indicators, which predict future economic activity, turned down in July, having risen since last autumn.

Nor is America doing so wonderfully. The shares boom relates, not to its

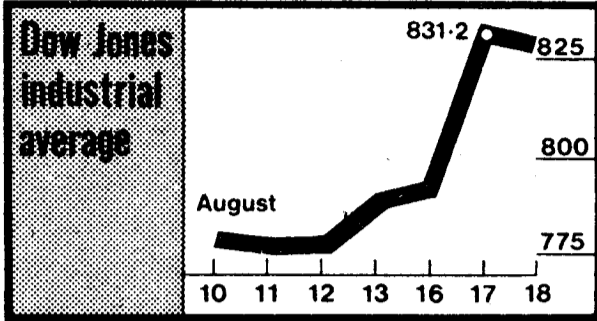
strength, but to its weakness. The boom followed pronouncements by Dr Henry Kaufman, the so-called 'guru of the bears' who, having predicted high interest rates for most of this year, has now changed his mind.

Why? Because things are worse than he thought they were. In a letter to clients of Saloman Brothers, his company, he explained that the 'expected business recovery of 1982 is now less likely to materialise'.

Credit

Industry is now so badly off, and so conditioned to recession, that it has given up hunting for easy credit from the banks.

In short, as the *Financial Times* commented, we are witnessing a new postwar event: a long postwar recession. After two years of 'waiting for the upturn' there is now a



growing suspicion that the wait will be a long one.

The Economist Intelligence Unit, in its latest forecast, says that there was a slight rise at the beginning of this year but that 'the impetus has now ended, however, and we do not see a further stimulus to overall output occurring until early 1983'.

The Unit expects this recovery to be deepened by a Conservative-Liberal-SDP coalition in 1984. This will really set us on the road to riches with an unemployment figure of 'only' 2.7 million by 1986. This is its 'optimistic' forecast. We won't go into the pessimistic one.

Behind these developments we can discern the outlines of something very important: the ugly shape of the postmonetarist world economy.

In reality, interest rates have not fallen. They have adjusted to a lower infla-

tion rate. The 'real' interest rate (interest minus inflation) is no lower than last year. Does this signal recovery? Neither has inflation been conquered, nor has the basis for recovery been laid.

Thirties

The cost of single-figure inflation in the West has been the deepest and most sustained recession ever: probably deeper than the Thirties. This happened, not because the 'money supply has been brought under control' but because Western governments have convinced manufacturing industry that they will no longer serve as guarantors of economic growth. Firms cannot expect to be bailed out by banks who will be bailed out by governments, and so they have finally kicked the postwar habit of running for credit to finance ex-

pansion. As Kaufman recognised, the new relative adjustment of share prices and bank loans recognises that this is a permanent phenomenon.

The shares boom was not a surge of confidence in industry; it was a tremor of suspicion about the banks. There is no better proof that monetarism cannot 'control the money supply' than what has been happening in international banking markets. International lending has reached fantasy proportions: the fantasy ended last week in Mexico City.

The problem facing Friedman's disciples is that we live in a private economy. Decisions to lend money are ultimately in private hands. The government can influence, but not control, credit, bank lending and hence so-called 'money creation' by private concerns.

Profits

By raising interest rates through the roof, monetarist governments produced a flood of 'hot' money into the banks. Banking profits soared: the already grossly inflated British banking sector recorded profit increases of seventy, eighty, a hundred percent a year.

But where do these profits come from? Banks

make money not by borrowing but by lending. Only in the fairy story world of capitalist economists does money create wealth on its own.

Ultimately, banks grub in the same trough as all other capitalists: the exploitation of your labour and that of your sisters and brothers.

Debt

Banks have to lend money to profit-making enterprises, or they build up a house of cards which eventually collapses. The dramatic decline of industrial production could not but have an eventual impact in the banking system.

As Kaufman puts it 'banks were constrained by a thin capital base and substantial non-earning assets while the massive overhang of debt in the international market also restricted the capacity of the financial institutions to stimulate the economy.'

The banks have been dealing in hope, expectation, oil gambles and funny money instead of real income. In two years alone, short-term foreign lending by British banks rose from £5bn to £30bn!

Mexico

The banks beat a path to the doors of the so-called 'advanced developing countries'. But precisely because the development of these countries was ultimately subordinate to that of the imperialist nations, there was a top limit to their ability

to absorb 'hot' money. Mexico reached that top limit last week.

The terrifying prospect of a banking collapse now hangs over the imperialist economies. They cannot afford this: the *Financial Times* now speaks of international banking 'suspending reality' and of the 'delicate task of bringing it gently down to earth'.

But what are the prospects for recovery? Bringing the banks down to earth does not bring industry up from off its knees. A major imperialist world boom would require a single imperialist country or group of countries to take on its shoulders the task of re-expanding world demand. At the end of the last war America took on this task as the completely dominant world power.

Rivals

But the almighty dollar no longer rules. The American government learned this lesson painfully after the 1974 slump, when it led the world out of recession and found that, because its European and Japanese rivals were now strong enough to compete with it on a world scale, they reaped the benefits of American led expansion. Only the forced devaluation of the dollar allowed the Americans to compensate for this effect.

This time round, Reagan isn't playing: imperialism has fallen victim to a crisis of leadership, and we face a new era of war, inter-imperialist rivalry, and mass unemployment.

Welcome back to the thirties.

Mexico or bust

By Alan Freeman

WHY is Mexico going bankrupt? Anyone visiting the sumptuous Hotel Nacional in Mexico City could tell you. The 36 storey tower, funded by a nationalist businessman who swore not to use a single Yanqui dollar, was to be a monument to Mexican endeavour — but ran out of money halfway through.

With only the top two floors complete it was sold at a knock-down price to Mexico's vice president, who rents it out for discos and conferences to raise the cash to finish the rest.

The Mexican economy was built like the Hotel Nacional. Under the banner of 'national pride' incoming president Miguel de la Madrid has inherited a tottering, half-built economy with a splendid frontage and no cash.

The world press once backed the 'spendthrift' policies of the former president Lopez Portillo, whose organisation the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), has monopolised the government for fifty years.

Now it denounces these policies. But they are coming adrift, not because of the PRI's stupidity but because of the bankruptcy of the big western powers, to whom Mexico is in debt up to its neck.

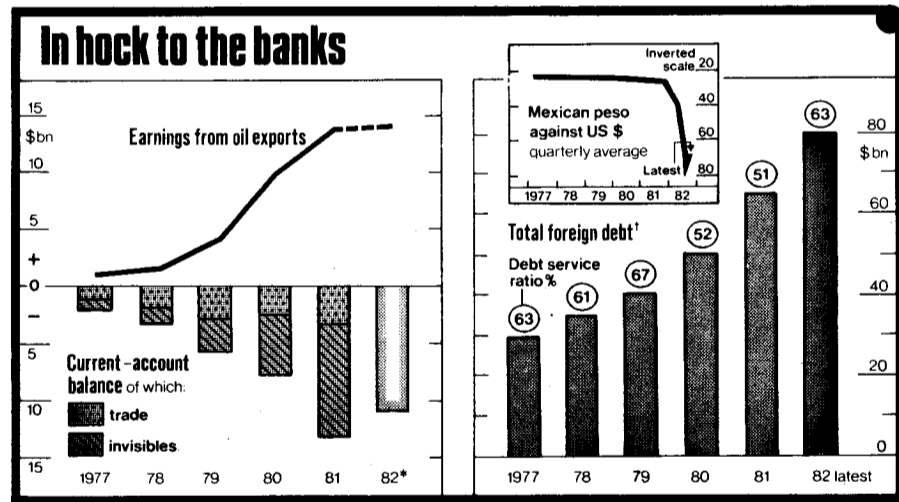
The PRI followed a more astute policy than almost any other third world bourgeoisie. Unlike in the Arab sheikdoms, oil income was not used to finance the exotic pleasures of a tiny clique but to try and create a broad new middle class. With subsidised petrol at an incredible 20p per gallon, a car became the dream of every downtrodden street seller — an entry ticket to an imitation gr-

ingo consumer paradise. State money brought off political opponents and fed this growing middle class by pulling it into a vast network of corrupt officialdom, beholden to the PRI and used by it alternately to repress and corrupt.

Right

The new middle class should, in theory, have spent its money to furnish the demand on which indigenous Mexican industry would spring up. But where would the capital come from to finance the new industry? And where would the technical know-how and access to markets come from?

The PRI used the time-honoured Western bankers' prescription: borrow by mortgaging oil, and use it to attract the multinationals with cheap grants and cheaper labour. Land-hungry peasants were driven to the shanty towns by cash-crop 'agribusiness': there swollen slums furnished endless cheap labour for gigantic Volkswagen and Renault plants.



Mexico's debt burden becomes intolerable: the peso crashes

Why didn't it work? Because the entire country is now in hock. US bankers now claim 56 cents in every dollar of oil sales. Sixty per cent of foreign trade goes to service these leeches. Paradoxically, the very thing which attracted the new industries to Mexico — cheap labour — meant that the demand for goods within Mexico could not sustain the new expansion.

Slump

While the middle classes darted around the city's eight lane highways in their second-hand Volkswagens, the workers, shantydweller and agricultural workers were lucky to find their next meal. The economy was based on foreign demand for consumer products made with cheap labour by foreign multinationals. Mexico failed to escape the iron grip of

dependence on foreign capital.

Once the slump began to bite into world demand for these products, the Mexican government was left, as the *Economist* succinctly put 'without a bean'.

Mexico's bankruptcy is sending shockwaves through the world's big cities — but not out of concern for the people who must now suffer a 70 per cent devaluation and stringent austerity to meet IMF conditions for renewed credit. Nor, indeed, do the bankers really fear that Mexico will not pay up.

Rhetoric

What terrifies them is the prospect of imposing these austerity measures, at the behest of the USA's financial barons, on a people who have been educated in the PRI's rhetoric about 'national independence'. They are

worried the people will see the PRI bending its knee before the USA — while on their doorsteps the peoples of Central America are struggling arms in hand against the same oppressor.

Action

If the Mexican working class — now over half the population — decide to break with their capitalist mentors this could lead to a mighty revolutionary explosion whose effects would be felt from California to New York City.

In July's election a million votes were cast for the revolutionary slate headed by the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT), Mexican section of the Fourth International. If this growing demand for class independence expresses itself in action, the bankers will have cause to tremble.



Trotskyist at recent revolutionary election rally in Mexico

Ruth First

'Renew our support for her struggle'

THE assassination of Ruth First in Maputo on 17 August represented a new level of aggression and audacity on the part of South Africa. Although many militants have been killed — by letter-bomb or other means — this is the first time that someone of Ruth First's stature on the international scene has been made the target. 'If the South Africans are allowed to get away with this,' said Mike Terry, secretary of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, at the picket to protest the murder, 'then they can get away with anything'.

The assassination of First and the attempted assassination of her colleague, Braganca (his bomb failed to go off) follow in the wake of the bombing of the ANC office in London, a renewed full-scale invasion of Angola, and mounting subversion and destabilisation in Mozambique. The key area of Western response to South African aggression is the negotiations on a settlement in Namibia. From the line taken by the five Western powers in these negotiations, the South African regime judges the protection extended by the West to South African dominance of the subcontinent and to the apartheid system itself. First's assassination is one more act of defiance to international opinion, and it must not go unanswered.

But who was Ruth First? She lived in Britain since being forced into exile from South Africa in 1964. At the time of her

assassination in Mozambique, where she had helped to establish the Centre of African Studies at the University of Maputo, she was still on secondment from the University of Durham. She used to live in London, in a house in Camden Town still occupied by members of her family.

Her husband Joe Slovo is a leader of the military wing of the ANC and lives in Africa, but her mother and three daughters are resident in Britain.

She was well known in this country, as a scholar, an author, and as a propagandist in the solidarity movement. She travelled frequently as an invited speaker and conference participant. Her interests and reputation as a critical thinker extended beyond southern Africa — among many other activities she was recently a member of the International Tribunal on Eritrea, and co-authored a study of Olive Schriener, an early socialist feminist.

She made her reputation as a writer and in politics as a political journalist exposing the brutality of the apartheid system, in a series of publications which were banned by the authorities. She joined the ANC and the Communist Party, and was jailed. She wrote an account of her experiences in solitary confinement, *117 Days*, which was published by Penguin and made into a film on British television.

In exile, she continued as a political activist in the liberation movement but also researched and published further books on Africa. She became an important scholar in African studies, and helped to found the *Review of African Political Economy*, an independent Marxist journal.

In their statement on her assassination, her co-editors on the *Review* said: 'this premeditated murder killed a woman who by her intellect and ability to analyse and publicise was seen by the South African regime as a dangerous enemy. It is shocking but instructive to remember that to clarify issues and speak out fearlessly are regarded as serious crimes by those who killed this remarkable woman.'

Memorial activities for Ruth First and further protests are being organised. For further details and



Demonstration against South African murder of Ruth First

to contribute your own suggestions, contact the ANC, Anti-Apartheid Movement, or the *Review*. In the meantime the issues should be widely publicised. Trade unions,

Labour parties and other organisations of the labour and student movements should send telegrams of protest and demand action by their MPs to identify South

Africa as the assassin and force the British government to cease its collaboration.

In honouring the memory of Ruth First and sharing the grief of her

family and friends we must renew our support for the struggle in whose cause she was murdered.

Erica Flogg

Novel exposes Kenyan government

'Devil On The Cross' by Ngugi Thiongo. African Writers Series. Heinemann Educational Books. £2.50

NGUGI Wa Thiongo's latest novel 'Devil on the Cross', written secretly on pieces of scrap paper while the author was detained without trial in 1978, is a brilliantly composed and devastatingly accurate attack on the continued imperialist domination of Kenya. Dedicated 'to all Kenyans struggling against the neo-colonial stage of imperialism', the book's wide readership and popular acclaim will have caused considerable loss of sleep within the ruling circles of President Arap Moi's KANU regime.

Originally published in the Kikuyu language as part of Ngugi's and other progressive Kenyan writers' quest to reclaim and build on their native culture, the novel's imagery draws heavily on traditional poems, stories, and songs. These emphasise the long history, and deep roots, the struggle for self determination and equality in the lives of the workers and peasants.

The book opens with the central character Wariinga sacked from her job as a secretary for rejecting the sexual demands of her boss, and unable to find any other work in Nairobi, returning to her home town.

The story follows her fight to control her own life and her refusal to passively accept oppression and exploitation. In this Wariinga mirrors the Kenyan people's own traditions, from the fierce resistance to the initial British invasion, through

the 'Land and Freedom' rebellion of the Mau-Mau, to the present fight against neo-colonialism.

The centerpiece of the tightly knit plot is a competition called by the International Organisation of Thieves and Robbers (headquarters New York) to select seven outstanding local experts in modern theft and robbery — the prize consisting of bank loans and directorships.

The competitors' speeches boasting of their prowess and experience in the art of exploitation and their suggestions on how to squeeze even more from the Kenyan people are a cleverly written and highly amusing lampoon of the ruling elite.

The novel's politics uphold one of the main tenets of the theory of Permanent Revolution, that only the workers and peasants are capable of going the whole way in the battle against imperialism.

Kenyan

By S McBirney

This is illustrated symbolically by Wariinga's recurrent nightmare of a white devil, vanquished and put on a cross by the masses, being brought down and revived by black men dressed in suits and ties. The fight of the mass of Kenyan people to get rid of this imperialist 'devil' and his local 'disciples' is the novel's major theme.

Devil on the Cross is published in Britain at a time when the Arap Moi regime, a key element in imperialist strategy for East Africa, is looking increasingly shaky. Facing severe economic difficulty Moi has announced a crackdown on 'subversion' and 'foreign ideologies', formally abolished the right to form opposition parties, closed three colleges after anti-government demonstrations, and detained eight lecturers without trial.

When Ngugi wa Thiongo himself was detained international protests and publicity including pickets of the Kenyan High Commission in London, played a part in his eventual release. This excellent book should help to acquaint socialists in Britain better with the struggles of the Kenyan people and also act as a stimulus for solidarity with those facing repression.

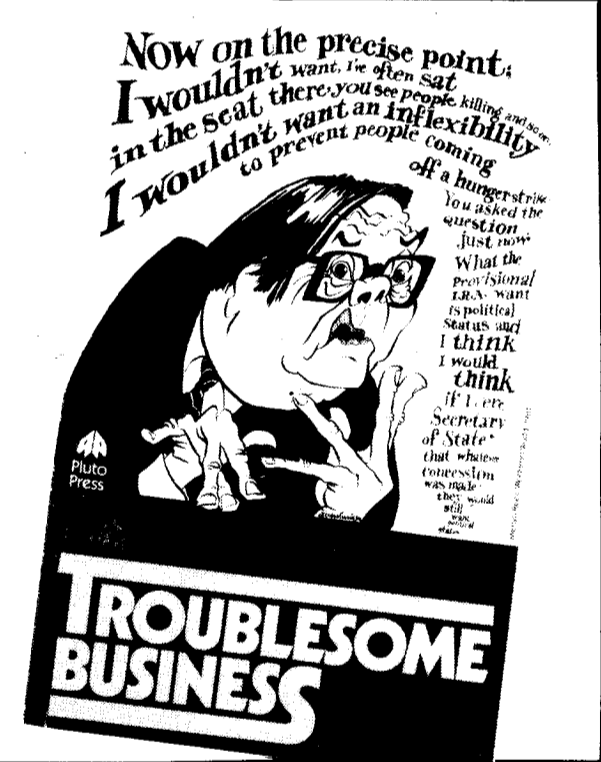
Also *Detained* — a writer's prison diary A.W.S. 240 Ngugi wa Thiongo.

TROUBLESOME BUSINESS by GEOFF BELL, former staff writer for Socialist Challenge deals with the history of the Labour Party's attitude towards the Irish national question.

Geoff reviews the Irish policies of all its prominent leaders from Ramsay MacDonald to Michael Foot and Tony Benn.

The author who also wrote the book *The Protestants of Ulster* which the Irish press described as 'well researched, thoroughly documented, packed with fact, a compact history, a sharp and cool analysis' has again come up with the goods.

Make sure you get your copy of **TROUBLESOME BUSINESS**, Pluto Press, £4.50. Order from Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St., London N.1.



Come to the ... INTERNATIONAL 'Debating Socialism' Weekend

A weekend discussing a socialist programme for the British crisis 23/24 October, Kingsway Princeton College, Sidmouth St., off Grays Inn Rd., Kings Cross, London WC1.

Programme includes Ernest Mandel on the crisis of world imperialism; - John Ross on the break up of British politics; Ken Livingstone, Francis Morrell and Alan Freeman on the new Labour left; Bea Campbell and Val Coultas debating *Sweet Freedom* and Womens Liberation; Mike Davis on 'Exterminism and Cold War'; John Harrison on the British Economic disaster; Chris Harman debates John Ross on the Labour Party; Pat Hickey debates John Deason on the trade unions; Perry Anderson and Bernadette McAliskey also invited.

Book this date in your diary now. October 23/24



Speaking at the conference. Clockwise Ernest Mandel, Pat Hickey, John Deason, Bernadette McAliskey

Socialist Challenge

15,000 dead: made in USA!

By Nick Robin

ISRAEL, with a population of around 3.5 million people, has for a long time got more US military equipment than any other country. Reagan's budget request for 1983 included \$7bn in 'assistance programmes for the Middle East (compared with \$500m for Central America). Of this, Israel is to receive \$2.485bn of which \$1.7bn is military. This means that this tiny (but expanding!) country will get a staggering 23 per cent of all such 'aid' to US allies worldwide. Furthermore, of this \$1.7bn military 'assistance', \$500m is in the form of credits, which means it will not have to be repaid, not as money or goods anyway.

Of course Israel by invading the Lebanon has repaid its US sponsors in a different way — with the blood of the Palestinian and Lebanese people. It has also given the US military the chance to test out on human beings the most barbarous and horrific weapons from their arsenal. The Palestinians and Lebanese have been used as guinea-pigs.

The following tables from the *New Statesman* tell their own horrific story.

As you can see in the first three months of

US arms deliveries to Israel			
Three-month period, January-March, 1980, 1981, 1982			
	1980	1981	1982
Aircraft	22,306,000 (2 F-16A and spare parts)	142,454,000 (14 F-16A and spare parts)	187,604,000 (10 F-15A and spare parts)
Vehicles & weapons	1,704,000 (10 armoured cargo carriers, 2 anti-air artillery guns)	17,000 (Truck parts)	20,410,000 (14 tank recovery vehicles, 19 self-propelled 155-mm Howitzers)
Ammunition	278,000 (Heavy artillery cartridges)	1,068,000 (Heavy artillery cartridges)	6,752,000 (Guided bombs and other ammo)
Missiles	16,000 (Chaparral spare parts)	3,179,000 (6 harpoon anti-ship missiles)	127,000 (Chaparral spare parts)
Misc support eqpt.	11,000	—	198,000
Training, maps, other assistance	412,000	1,300,300	2,631,000
Total	24,727,000	148,018,000	217,695,000

Figures in dollars. Source: US Defense Security Assistance, Washington

this year while Israel planned the invasion of Lebanon, they received \$217,695,000 worth of military equipment from the US, 10 times as much as in the same period in 1980 and 50 per cent higher than in the first quarter last year.

These deliveries included ten F-15 aircraft, 14 tank recovery vehicles, 19 self-propelled 155 mm Howitzers, and over \$6 million worth of bombs and ammunition. This was either a remarkable coincidence or the US willingly financed and backed up

the Israeli preparations for the invasion.

Perhaps this is what US Defence Secretary Casper Weinberger meant in Congress earlier this year when he explained the budgetary requirements for the Defence Department in the coming year: 'To meet the challenge of this dynamic environment (the Middle East), we must develop robust and flexible programs to support US policy objectives'. Robust, flexible ... and genocidal.



Israeli guns and American money did this

What Socialist Challenge Supporters can do:

- Campaign in your Labour parties for public meetings in support of the Palestinians and Lebanese people

- Push for emergency motions to the Labour National Conference demanding unconditional withdrawal of Israel from Lebanon and support for the Palestinians.

- Organise factory tours/meetings in solidarity with Palestinians and Lebanese with Palestinian, Lebanese and anti-Zionist Israeli speakers. (Phone Socialist Challenge if you need help with this).

- Organise Socialist Challenge public forums and let the paper know about activities in your area.

Solidarity Events

Birmingham Solidarity Campaign with Palestinian People — phone (021) 643 5904 or (021) 692 1765 for details of activities. Demo against Israeli invasion, 11 September (details later).

London Labour Committee on Palestine (LCP), open meeting 3 September, County Hall at 7pm. Labour Party Conference — LCP meeting at Queens Hotel, South Promenade. 28 September, 6.30pm.

Brent East CLP public meeting, 15 September 7pm, Anson Hall, Anson Rd., NW2. Speakers, Ken Livingstone, Chris Khamis, Nira Yuval-Davis and Alf Filer. **Palestine Solidarity Liaison Committee** meets every Tuesday 6.30pm at Oxford House, Derbyshire St. E2.

Medical Aid to the Lebanon fundraising event; 29 August at 7.30pm, Bloomsbury Theatre, Gordon Street, London WC1. Featuring: Ekome, Britain's top African Dance and Rhythm group; Al Gabal, Palestinian Folk Group; Palestine Film on Our Land. Entrance £3.50 waged, £3.00 unwaged.

Who to get in touch with for national information:

Palestine Solidarity Liaison Committee, c/o THIS, Oxford House, Derbyshire St., London E2.

Labour Committee on Palestine, c/o 28 Carlton Mansions, Holmleigh Rd., London N16.

Socialist Challenge FUND DRIVE '82

Every mile a winner!

Steve Faulkner, our marathon runner, is still limbering up for the September 'People's Marathon' in Birmingham. As you may remember he intends running the full 26 miles of the course. Now he is doing the hard work all you have to do is encourage him and nothing will do that more than sponsorship.

Every time he passes the mile post that could boost Socialist Challenge finances and Steve's morale. Come on, put your money on Steve — get sponsorship forms and details from SCD PO Box 50 London N.1, or Other Bookshop, 137 Digbeth, Birmingham.

Below we print our table on the week's wages campaign. We got to £11,235.40, which is not bad, but the holidays slowed up our income this month.

Unfortunately our creditors like the landlords, the electricity board, telephone company, and all those other people who want money appeared to have stayed at home just to pester us.

So if you still have not paid to this fund please do so now. We have got our backs to the wall and are in urgent need — make sure you do not let the struggle down: send us your share of the wages campaign.

Weeks Wages Campaign

W.London	£ 1009.00	Scotland	1047.30
E.London	891.00	N.East	305.00
N.London	675.00	Yorkshire	448.00
S.London	777.55	E.Midlands	343.00
Brent	1260.00	W.Midlands	50.00
Birmingham	1045.00	North West	190.00
Manchester	1175.55	Individuals	780.00
S.Wales	780.00		
Oxford	180.00	Total	£11,235.40

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SPECIAL OFFER

For readers who take out a year's inland subscription we are offering a free copy of Alan Freeman's new book **THE BENN HERESY**. The book normally costs £3.50

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