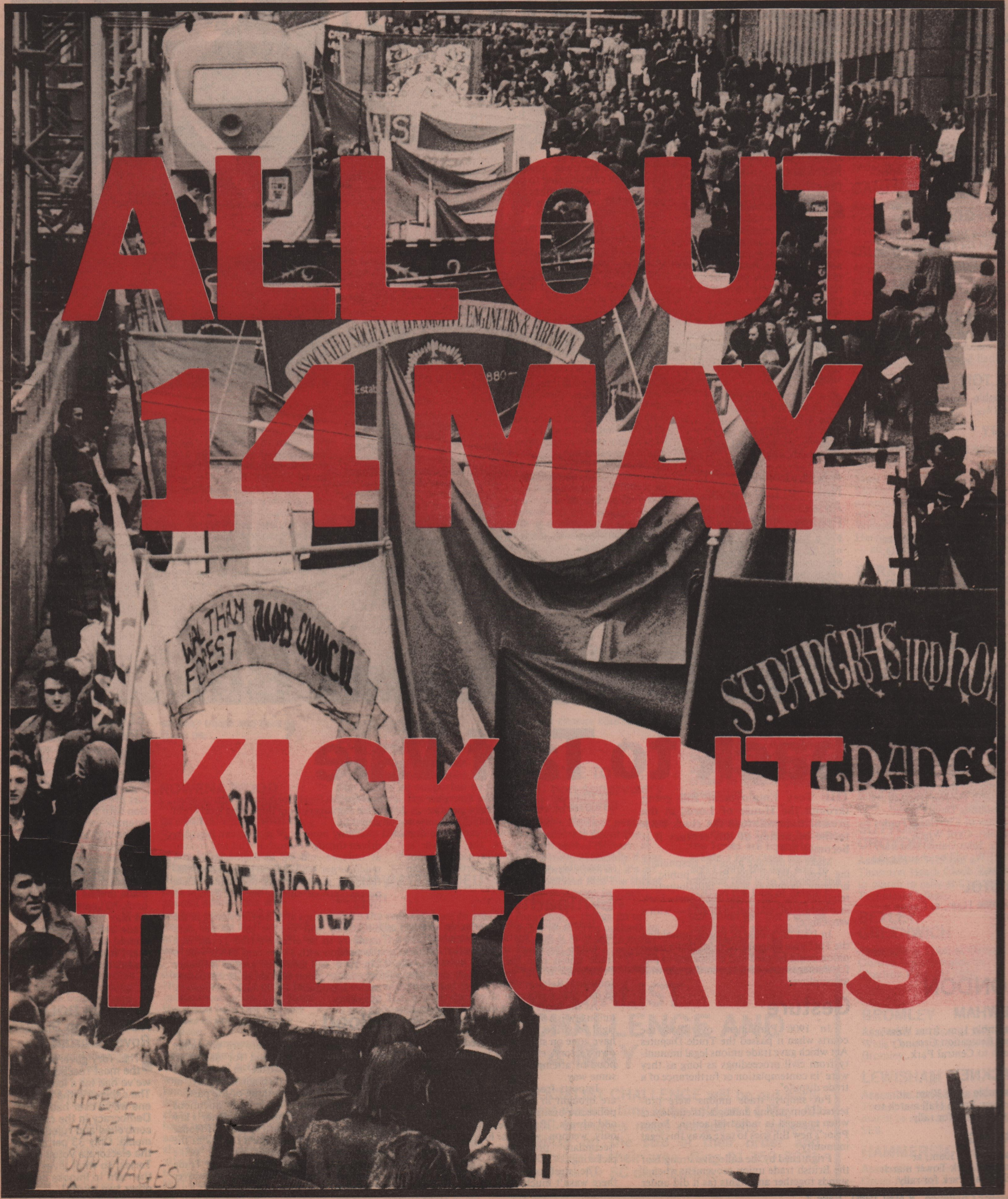


Socialist Challenge



**ALL OUT
14 MAY**

**KICK OUT
THE TORIES**

What's going on...

STRIKE A BLOW AGAIN

NEWPORT

Assemble 2.30pm, at Transport House, Cardiff Road, march to John Frost Square for rally.

MANCHESTER

Assemble 10.30am, All Saints, Mancunian Way.

SALFORD

Assemble 10am, Liverpool St (near Gasworks) to join Manchester demo.

STOCKPORT

Assemble 11am, Heaton Norris Rec.

ALTRINCHAM

Assemble 12 noon, for open air rally at Broad Heath Industrial Estate.

TRAFFORD

Assemble 10.30am, at Old Trafford for Car Cavalcade.

ROCHDALE

Assemble 12 noon, at the Shopping Centre.

PORTSMOUTH

Assemble 10.30am, Alexandra Park, march to a rally in Guildhall Square.

BOLTON

Assemble 10am, Queens Park Spa Rd.

BURY

Assemble 10am, Town Hall.

LEIGH

Open air rally, Library Square.

BATH

Assemble 11.30am, to picket Pitt House, Tory Party HQ, Laura Place, Bath.

HEMEL HEMSTEAD

Assemble 10am, at Gatesbridge Park to march to a rally in Times Square.

EDINBURGH

Assemble 2pm, at Waverley Bridge to march to a rally at Usher Hall.

MIDDLESBOROUGH

Assemble 1pm, for mass rally at the Town Hall. Public meeting 9 May at 7.30pm at AUEW Hall called by local Campaign Against the Employment Bill. Speakers include John Deeson (Defend Our Unions), Dave Carter (secretary of Cleveland Trades Councils), Cyril Wheat (ISTC). John Gains, Secretary of AUEW, will be chairing the meeting.

BRISTOL

Assemble 11am, at Canon's Marsh.

LONDON

NEWHAM

Assemble 1pm, from West Ham Recreation Ground march to Central Park.

HACKNEY

Assemble at 10.30am, at Hackney Town Hall march to Victoria Park for rally.

EALING

Assemble 11.30am, at Hamwell Clock Tower march to Southall Park for rally.

JUDD ALSOP, Bolsover Colliery, Nottingham area NUM

“The miners should have come out with the steelworkers, never mind on 14 May. The trade unions are divided all the time. It's solidarity and unity we need. Same as for the 14th. It's the rank and file who have to push for this. While we don't have total recall, the trade union leaders won't bother to mobilise people.”

IAN HARRISON, Markham Colliery, North Derbyshire

“What should have happened was a national call for the TUC leadership. They could have mounted a serious propaganda campaign around the pits but haven't. Militants have got to get together to force the leadership into action.”

B MAUDE, Faceworker, Bolsover Colliery

“I shan't be going to work on the 14th as the 'grabbers' will (the 7 day week men in the pit). The executive should have called everybody out.”

A STEVENSON, National Graphical Association, Benrose Printers, Derby

Fresh from being locked out over his national wage claim, Stevenson was very bitter about the Tories.

“They're just looking for an excuse to attack militants — everybody should come out on 14 May.”

Labour and Murray must give a lead

THE British Oxygen depot in Hackney, East London, will be closed on 14 May. Every worker will be out on strike.

Convenor John Walsh and deputy Convenor Mickey Boulter have asked the workforce to join the march and rally called by Hackney and Tower Hamlets trades councils in Victoria Park.

Through the trades council they will be campaigning to get as many trade unionists as possible out on strike on that day.

“Although BOC made £235m profit last year, after deductions the shareholders received “only” £19m. BOC shareholders are paying for more money. In a recession this can only mean one thing — cutting labour costs, making sure the workers and not the shareholders suffer.”

Abroad

John Walsh points out that a few BOC workers think they are ‘untouchable’ because they supply 80-90 per cent of the gas to British industry and if they went on strike everything would come to a halt.

“But what people have to realise is that if the Employment Bill goes through, when they import gas from abroad the dockers will not be allowed to boycott it and BOC workers will face imprisonment if they picket the courts.”

Mickey and John have strong feelings about Len Murray's role in building for 14 May. “Every union looks to Len Murray for guidance. He's the figurehead of our

movement,” John argues. “He knows the extent of the cuts, he knows how people are suffering under the Tories — he's the leader and he should lead.”

“If he got out the facts there would be no problem. But what does he do? He's not prepared to stick his neck out and say that 14 May is a political issue. He says: “I'd like you to come out but I'm not going to tell you to come out because that would be a general strike”.”

Realise

“When people feel the full effects of the Tory cuts and the Employment Bill,” says John, “they'll soon realise that the only way to stop this Tory government is to bring it down.”

The TUC's vacillation has not only given ammunition to the Tory press and the bosses who are pushing for injunctions to stop people striking on 14 May, but it has encouraged some trade union leaders to be indecisive. This even applies to the largest trade union in the country which John and Mickey are members of, the TGWU:

“Moss Evans has not said “I am calling my members out”,” Mickey says. “He expects members to respond.” He believes that the ‘left wing’ national executive of the TGWU had some members on it who were too soft on the Tories.

John, as a life-long Labour voter, insists that the Labour Party could play a vital role in making 14 May a success — if it put its mind to it.

“Callaghan has not shown a



great deal of interest in building for the Day of Action. It seems as if they don't want us to come out. Even in Hackney, where we've got some left MPs like Ernie Roberts, they've not been round enough helping to get trade unionists to understand the issues involved.”

The last Labour government was very unpopular with the BOC workers in Hackney because it refused to carry out Labour Party policies. John has a clear answer to this: “If the Labour MPs who've been elected to Parliament to oppose the Tories and carry out socialist policies don't do their job properly then the people in

the trade unions have got to do it for them.”

Industrial action has to be used to make the voice of working people clear, he added.

But John and Mickey are also interested in creating a new labour party. “We need a people's party,” says Mickey.

“The militants in the trade unions will eventually have to form their own party,” adds John. “The socialist groups will have to join up with the trade unionists to form a new workers party.”

“We've got to join together because we're not going to get anywhere with the Tories if we're doing it separately.”

The Employment Bill: back to Taff Vale

THE Tory Employment Bill going through the House of Lords at the present time will turn the clock back to the beginning of this century if it becomes law.

Make no mistake about it, despite having been sold to the British public as bringing ‘common sense’ into industrial relations, the Bill brings the courts back into industrial relations in Britain — with a vengeance!

In 1901 the House of Lords, upholding the Taff Vale judgement, ruled that a trade union could be sued and compelled to pay for damages caused when in dispute with an employer.

Gesture

In 1906 Parliament overruled the courts when it passed the Trade Disputes Act which gave trade unions legal immunity from civil proceedings as long as they were ‘in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute’.

Put simply, trade unions were protected from paying damages to employers when engaged in industrial action. James Prior's new Bill tries to take away this legal immunity.

Frightened by the collective strength of the British trade union movement when it stands together and fights (as it did under

the Heath government), the Tories are out to reduce picketing to a mere gesture.

Trade unions will no longer be immune from the law if the courts can prove that either the ‘motive for the dispute is extraneous’ or the tactics used are not ‘reasonably capable’ of furthering the union's side of a dispute.

Sympathy

Judges will be asked to decide what is and what is not ‘lawful’ industrial action.

Given their lack of sympathy for the trade union case the likely outcome to Prior's law is that unionists, as with the Industrial Relations Act, will end up going to jail if they picket at all effectively.

At the heart of this dispute over trade union law is a basic democratic right — the right to strike. Once a group of workers have gone on strike and closed down their own factory, employers immediately respond by attempting to break the strike in some way.

Imports from abroad are used; goods are brought in from other factories; the police are brought in — even the army — and always, if possible, the courts. The only weapon workers have to combat ‘secondary’ production is ‘secondary’ picketing.

The steelworkers soon realised that there wasn't much point in standing out-

side British Steel Corporation plants when their employers were importing steel from abroad.

A tiny number of pickets can be easily driven through by scab lorries and treated as ‘unrepresentative’ by the local police. A much larger body of workers is more difficult to challenge, as the Sattley Gate picket showed during the 1972 miners' strike.

Closed shops are also threatened in the bill. They will require an 80 per cent majority to be effective (the Tories won the election with 33 per cent of the vote!). The press will gain even greater influence over trade union affairs as secret ballots are introduced through financial incentives.

Blood

Already the employers are screaming for Len Murray's blood for daring to organise a political strike on 14 May. If this Tory Bill goes through such Days of Action will become a thing of the past.

Thatcher has made her intentions clear. If she can get away with Prior's law she will definitely return to the 1901 House of Lords ruling and make it the law of the land that unions should pay for strike damage from their own funds. Trade unionism will take a long time to recover from that.

EDDIE COULSON, Divisional Council Chairperson, NUPE

“In the year since the Tory government was elected, it has presided over an inflation rate that has doubled, unemployment that is likely to reach over two million, cuts that are destroying many of the basic services of our society and legislation designed to emasculate the trade unions and set them back 70 years. By striking on 14 May the mood of the trade union movement should deflect the government from its disastrous course.”

GRAHAM DOLE, AUEW Shop Steward, Rover, Cardiff

“This Tory government is the most reactionary one we've had for a long time. The cabinet is the richest one we've ever had. Democracy in the country is controlled and ruled by the media. Only 33 per cent of the electorate voted for the Tories, so what gives them the right to impose on the other two thirds?”

AGAINST THE TORIES

10 reasons to strike

WITH one week to go, the Tory establishment is becoming more and more hysterical about the 14 May TUC Day of Action.

The *Express*, *Mail* and *Sun* have devoted pages to attacking 'Lenin Murray', and Tory MPs have urged employers to sue trade union leaders who call for strike action.

Jack Dromey, regional secretary of the South East Region TUC, summed up the importance of the day for the British trade union movement when he told the *Daily Mirror* last Thursday: 'A major response will be a morale-booster to our members. A poor response will give heart to the Tories.'

Below Socialist Challenge gives ten reasons why you should be striking on 14 May as the first step to kicking out the most right-wing government Britain has seen since the war.

1.

The Tory Government has no mandate to carry out its present policies. No-one voted for one and a half million people on the dole, an inflation rate of 20 per cent, the destruction of the welfare state, and £1 prescription charges.

2.

James Prior's anti-union bill, which is going through the House of Lords at the present time, threatens one of the most basic rights that working people in this country have — the right to strike and protest at unfair treatment by employers.

While employers are allowed to collude with one another, with the police, the

army, and the government to crush workers' protests, trade unionists who take solidarity action will face imprisonment.

3.

The first British government ever to be led by a woman has unleashed a ferocious attack on female equality. Working women are being hit particularly hard. They are losing their jobs three times faster than men; despite the Equal Pay Act their wages are falling in comparison with men's; and the cutback in social services — nurseries, home helps, free school meals and school milk — has hit women particularly hard.

The Employment Bill contains clauses that will make it harder for every woman to

return to her job after having a child.

4.

The Tories aim to make black people's lives a misery. Immigration has already been reduced to a minimum. Now the Tories intend to keep black families apart and to stir up racial hatred against those black people already settled here as a way of directing the wrath of white workers away from the real cause of unemployment — the capitalist system.

5.

The much talked about 'tax concessions' that the Tories promised have turned out to be an excuse for income redistribution from the poor to the rich. While those without work will have their earnings-related benefit chopped, those at the other end of the income scale will receive massive tax concessions.

6.

While the Tories claim that times are hard and that the publicly-owned industries must be run more efficiently, they are squandering £2 million for the services of an American capitalist who will receive his money only if he successfully puts enough steelworkers on the dole.

7.

The new Housing Bill that is passing through Parliament at the present time gives private landlords renewed powers over



private tenants and, along with the collapse in council house building and the sale of council houses, will make it more and more difficult for young people to find homes.

8.

For the first time since the '30s those who are thrown out of work face a cut in unemployment benefits, and earnings-related benefits are to be scrapped. Clothing grants are being discontinued and additional allowances for laundry and heating costs for the elderly and infirm have been reduced.

So concerned are the Tories about saving money that they are employing a thousand new staff to 'snoop' on the employed while sacking civil servants in the inland revenue who could 'snoop' on the thousands of businessmen who fiddle their tax returns every year.

9.

Thatcher is the most outspoken European supporter of Jimmy Carter's war drive. Despite 'hard times', she has increased defence expenditure by £2 billion, invited America to deploy 160 Cruise Missiles in Britain and is pushing Britain into a new 'cold war'.

10.

This government was never endorsed by the industrial centres of Britain — the North, South Wales, and Scotland. It won its 'majority' from voters in the South of England. The latest council elections have confirmed popular discontent with Tory policies after only one year in power.

Ordinary people in England can see what this government is out to do. It wants to make working people suffer the brunt of the economic recession. It is indeed a government of the rich, by the rich, for the rich.

We say that 13 million trade unionists *do* have the right to protest at the policies of the Tory Government, they *do* have the right to strike and demonstrate on 14 May.

The Tories have taken no notice whatsoever of the polite and feeble protests that Labour MPs have made in Parliament. If a government ignores the wishes of the vast majority of people there is only one thing to do — get rid of it.

14 May must be a huge success to build a movement that can kick out this reactionary bunch of landlords and businessmen and the woman who stands at their head.

The government is led by big business and they make the decisions. All trade unionists should take the day off on 14 May and turn up at their local rallies.

I see 14 May as another stepping stone to a general strike. No way is the Tory government going to change its spots.

STEVE PILLEY, ISTC National Craft Co-ordinating Committee

I think MacGregor's just been sent in to de-nationalise steel without having to go through Parliament and get a Bill on it. They plan to sell off all profit — making firms to private industry and a lot of jobs will go in the process.

If you're a millionaire you're OK at the moment, but if you're normal working people you're not. The Employment Bill's going to get rid of union power and the solidarity of the working class.

If people don't show their solidarity with the unions on 14 May the government will think their union is not very strong and when their next pay rise comes round the employers will think they're

an easy touch and take them on.

ROWENA WOOD, teacher at a comprehensive school in Southall

The Tories in Ealing are attacking education by cutting down on staff — 184 jobs are going. Even the Tory council admits this will worsen educational standards. Dinner staff and cooks are going to lose their job, as well as teachers.

Teachers feel very angry about these attacks. The NUT is refusing to cover for unfilled vacancies. Last term the union held two half day strikes in protest at Tory policies.

NUT members here have already voted to support the TUC's Day of Action. Last week in Nottingham a teacher was sacked for carrying out official NUT policy on class size. 40 more teachers have been sacked out in the same county. Teachers are shocked by the scale of these attacks and are being forced to take a stand, despite the NUT's claim to be 'non-political'.

JOHN BOTTING, POEU London

Any call from the trade unions for all-out strike action should be supported by the workers. The only way to get rid of this government is by mass action by workers themselves.

JOHN WATTS, POEU London

It's the only right we've got left — the right to strike on 14 May. The workers have got nothing and the Tories have got it all. They even want to take away our right to strike with their legislation. The TUC call for 14 May is not enough but it's a start.

TONY HARDING, Deputy Chairperson, BOC, Hackney

I've voted Labour all my life. We need a Labour government in power but in fighting the Tories we've got to show the Labour Party that when we put them back we want them to fight for the workers, they'll have to do what we elected them to do

and not change course in mid-stream.

MARLENE TOVEY, ISTC non-supervisory staff, Llanwern

Locally, Caldicot people are complaining about the price of school dinners; at 50p a time, especially if you have three children, it's an awful lot and also the threat of redundancies in steel.

Prices of food are rocketing — things go up every week. The cutback in education is going to mean more children are deprived

of a proper education. My personal grievance was with the mortgage rates when they went up to 15 per cent in January. I think the increase in medical charges is disgusting.

I think we should stand together on 14 May because the Tories are trying to create a two class society and I think the only way to combat this is to support the TUC on the Day of Action. We've had no directive from our union yet, but I will be coming out and going to the Newport demonstration.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE AND 14 MAY

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE will be out early next week in time to be sold on 14 May. All IMG branches must consult the national centre on the size of their order and delivery to their area. Ring 01-359 8371 and ask for SC distribution.

HOUNSLOW

Assemble at 12 noon, at The Grapes, Hayes march to Southall Park.

HILLINGDON

Assemble at Uxbridge Town Centre at 11am, march to Southall Park.

LAMBETH

Assemble 11.30am, at St Mathews Meeting Place, march to rally at Imperial War Museum. Lambeth NUT rally at 10am, Ritzy Cinema, Brixton. Lambeth NALGO rally at 10am, ACE cinema, Brixton.

SOUTHWARK

Assemble Camberwell Green, 11.30am, march to rally at Imperial War Museum.

CAMDEN

Assemble 12 noon, Bidborough Street, march to Hawley Rd, NW1.

ISLINGTON

Assemble 12 noon, Archway, march to Peoples' Festival at Highbury Fields.

BARKING/DAGENHAM

Ford Workers are assembling at 12.30pm at Mayesbrook Park, Goodmayes. Checkers Lane to march to Mayesbrook Park for a rally where Len Murray will be speaking.

NORTH-WEST LONDON

Mass rally at Wembley Stadium, 1pm. In Barnet assemble at Burnt Oak Broadway/Stag Lane; in Brent at Willesden Green tube, and in Harrow at Harrow civic centre — all at 10am.

BERKSHIRE

Mass picket at Chix 6.30am followed by rally in Slough at 10am.

WESTMINSTER

Print unions assemble at 12noon at Clerkenwell Green to march via Fleet Street to a mass rally at Central Hall at 2.30pm.

HARINGEY/ENFIELD

Assemble at 10.30am at Mid-dlesex Polytechnic, Queens Road to march to Pymme's Park, Edmonton for rally.

SUTTON/CROYDON

Assemble at 11.30am at Thornton Heath Clock Tower to march to rally at Croydon Technical College.

BEXLEY/GREENWICH

Assemble at 11am at General Gordon Square march to Charlton Park for rally.

BROMLEY

Assemble at 11am at HG Wells Centre, St Marks Road, Bromley.

LEWISHAM

Assemble 10.30am at Clock Tower, Lewisham High St march to rally at Douglas Way SE8.

HAMMERSMITH

Assemble Shepherds Bush Green for rally.

Behind the embassy siege

John Leadbetter

THE ICE-CREAM vans and hot-dog stalls down by the Albert Hall were doing a roaring trade over the Bank Holiday week-end. A constant trickle of curious sight-seers picked their way round the police cordon surrounding the Iranian Embassy.

Everyone seemed to be supporting someone; but nobody seemed to give a second thought to the Al-Nassar martyrs, holed up in the Embassy and facing the organised strength of the Metropolitan police and, as it turned out, the Army.

Yet behind the rumours and counter-rumours which surround the seizure of the Iranian Embassy lies the continuing struggle of Iran's national minorities against the Tehran government.

Outlook

Whatever the political outlook of the activists who seized the embassy, the Arab movement in Khuzestan (the area which they refer to as 'Arabestan') is a just struggle by an oppressed people attempting to shake off the shackles of Persian domination.

This oppression has been with the Arab people since the British government installed Reza Khan as shah in Iran in 1924.

The oppression of Arabs in Khuzestan is linked to the existence there of the majority of Iran's oil reserves. For centuries the Arab people formed a majority of the area's population.

But the development of the oil fields by the Tehran government and British and American oil companies led to a massive influx of skilled workers and managers from the dominant Persian stock.

Arabs

Arabs were pushed down to the lowest positions and a vicious policy of 'persianization' was imposed on them, pushing their culture underground and outlawing even the right to have an Arab name.

The overthrow of the Shah led to an upsurge of Arab struggles in the area. Demands for complete cultural freedom were linked to a desire for greater regional autonomy and for a programme of development for Khuzestan to provide jobs and schools, to be financed out of oil revenues.

Bombs

Khomeini and Bazargan couched their reply in the shape of gunboats and bombs. Hundreds of Arab activists were killed, many others imprisoned and summarily executed by Islamic kangaroo courts. Among those imprisoned were the 14 Trotskyists in Ahwaz.

This wave of repression retarded the Arab struggle for the rest of the year. But since January there have been growing signs of renewed activity.

Demonstrations have again taken place in Khorramshahr

and Abadan, demanding the return of a religious leader who disappeared last July.

In Masjed-e Suleiman, unemployed youth have demonstrated in front of the government offices demanding jobs, and they have fought pitched battles with the pasdars (revolutionary guards) sent to disperse them.

Oil

The resurgence of the Arab nationalist movement coincides with the renewal of workers, struggles throughout the region, with strikes and demonstrations taking place in the oil and steel industries in Ahwaz.

The government in Tehran has attempted to discredit the demands of the Arab movement by talk of Iraqi plots to take over Iran's oil fields. In much the same way, the struggles of the Kurdish people have been slandered by Khomeini, Bazargan, Ghotbzadeh and Bani Sadr, who accuse them of being CIA spies, agents of US imperialism or of Iraq.

But while it may be true that both movements receive material aid and support from other Kurds and Arabs outside Iran, both movements seek to rectify years of oppression by fighting for their emancipation within Iran itself.

Socialists around the world should not for one second hesitate in supporting the just demands of the national minorities for the right of self-determination against Iran's Islamic government.

Embassy

But the occupation of the embassy also raises questions about methods of struggle. The Al-Nassar Martyrs have, however briefly, raised the plight of Arabs in Khuzestan and more particularly drawn attention to the overfilled jails around Ahwaz and Khorramshahr.

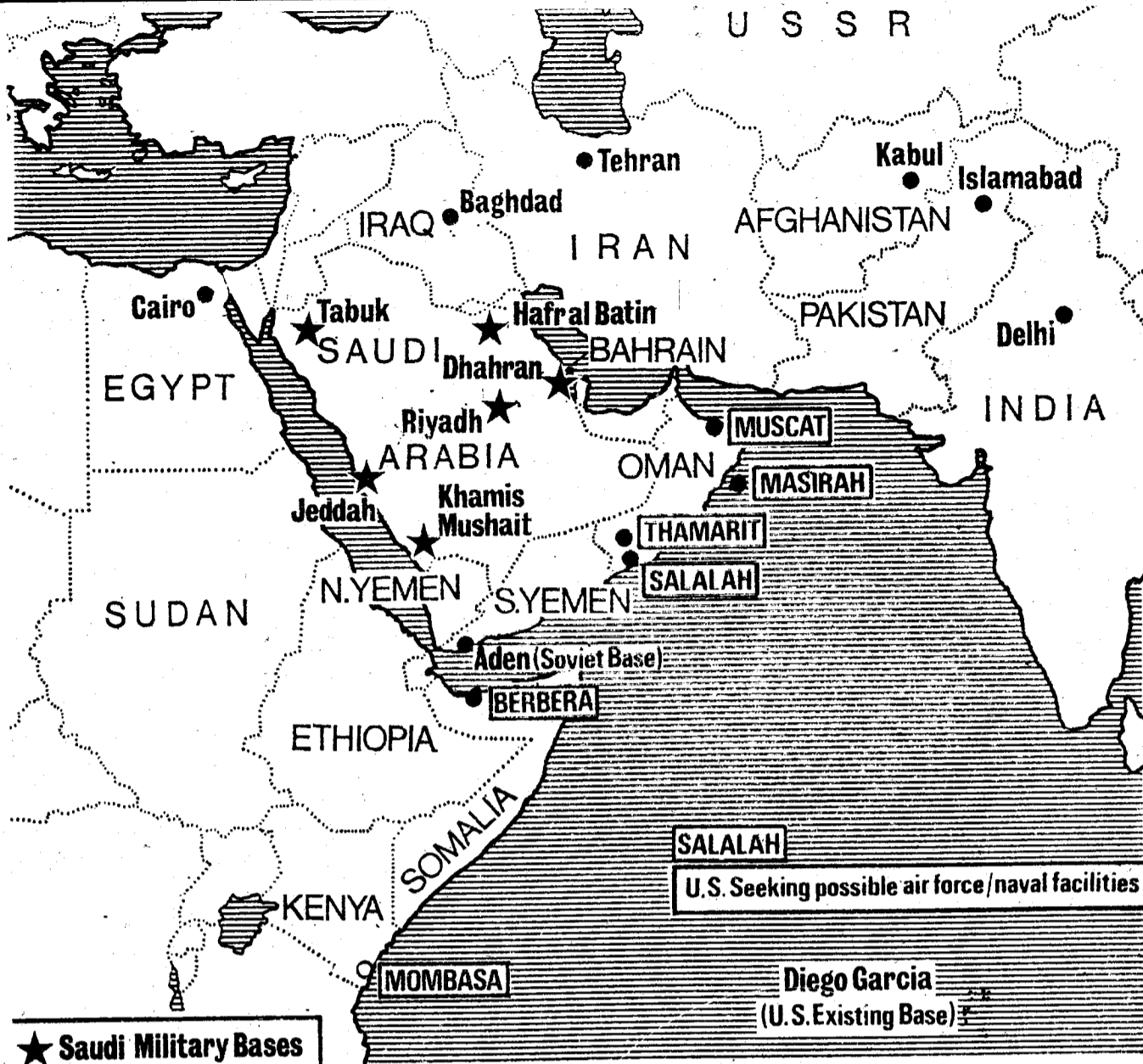
But Marxists should ask how far the activists who were in the embassy have carried forward the struggle in Khuzestan. Their demands have brought threats of massive reprisals against Arabs from Iranian Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh.

Rooftops

The liberation of the Arab people from oppression and exploitation will not be won on the streets and rooftops of Kensington and Knightsbridge.

They will be won by the mass activity of the Arab masses in Khuzestan itself, together with the oil and steel workers, the Kurds and Azerbaijanis, and all the working people of Iran.

What can be done in this country is for British socialists and trade unionists to say No to US and UK aggressions against the Iranian people, and at the same time to refuse to condone the repression of all national minorities and the oppressed by the Islamic government.



Needed: the storming of the House of Saud

OF ALL the events which have happened in the Middle East and South-west Asia in the last turbulent twelve months, the one that probably frightened Western imperialism most was the storming of the Mosque in Mecca last November.

It was because this apparently bizarre example of infighting between the various branches of Islam was the first sign of open revolt against the despotic royalist regime in Saudi Arabia.

The US, and indeed Britain and the rest of the Western Alliance, need the present ruling clique in Saudi Arabia more than any other regime in the entire world. The grovelling Tory Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington apologised to the Saudis for the showing of the television film 'Death of a Princess' is just one example of the lengths to which imperialism will go not to offend the House of Saud.

The reason can be summed up in one word — oil. Of all the world's suppliers Saudi Arabia is the largest source of

Western oil imports.

But the time has gone when the regime in Saudi Arabia could be relied on to do anything the US told them to.

The Iranian revolution changed all that. First, it showed that whatever the level of US backing for an unpopular regime it was not immune from being overthrown. Second, the revolution itself has affected popular feeling throughout the region.

Saudi Arabia is not Iran. It is less industrialised and consequently does not have the same level of urban poverty which helped fell the Shah. But there have been signs that the Saudi princes are not as free as they once were to act as imperialism's puppets. The events in Iran have caused disturbances in Saudi's Eastern Province. The breakout of internal dissent expressed in the events in Mecca last November was rooted in the same anti-Western feelings which swept Iran.

There is also dissention within the Saudi ruling clique. Sheik Zaki Yamani, the oil minister has referred to 'young

Turks' in the kingdom who want to halve the amount of oil being produced in the country.

For the survival of the regime some of the young princes feel that Saudi Arabia has to distance itself more from the US.

At the same time the government relies on US backing more than ever. It is this contradiction which means that Saudi Arabia is no longer the 'bastion of stability' it was once dubbed in the American Congress.

Accordingly King Khaled's government has been happy to welcome Iraq in a new partnership to promote Western interests and oppose the Islamic revolutionaries.

At Arab councils Saudi Arabia and Iraq now tend to speak with one voice. But in seeking a unity of Arab reaction the popular hostility the two regimes are now storing up for themselves may, in the final analysis, being their downfall.

The Iraq connection

'IRAQ masterminded the seizure of the Iranian embassy in London and probably provided logistical support for the operation.'

No evidence has as yet been produced to substantiate this claim in Sunday's *Observer*. But what is Iraq's role in the crisis in South-west Asia?

According to an article in the *Guardian* in February, President Saddam Hussein Takriti of Iraq is out to 'present his regime, if not as America's gendarme in the Gulf, at least as the guarantor of stability in the vital oil-rich region'.

Just what this 'stability' amounts to is two-fold. First it is to drop the 'progressive' impression which Hussein has until recently been trying to create.

In turning his regime more into the orbit of US imperialism, Hussein is turning on his erstwhile allies, the pro-Soviet Communist Party. The Communists, Hussein said recently, are a 'rotten, renegade, atheistic storm that has broken over Iraq'.

This statement was accompanied by a fierce campaign of repression against not only CP members but against all oppositionists.

Most recently this has manifested itself in the expulsion from Iraq of members of the Shi'a branch of Islam, which in Iran is the power base of Khomeini.

But expulsions are not just aimed at preventing the spread to Iraq of Shi'a radicalism.

They are also seen as helping to spread chaos in Iran itself. A vast influx of refugees will, it is hoped, increase the problems facing Khomeini.

This is the second part of Iraq's role as the 'stabiliser' to 'de-stabilise' Iran, not just out of the interests of the Iraqi regime, but out of the interests as well of Western imperialism.

In pursuit of these aims Iraq is arming and assisting any Iranian oppositionists to Khomeini. Sabotage teams are being sent into Iranian oilfields, most of which lie in the Khuzistan area of Iran.

The campaign against Iran is not confined to creating havoc internally. The attempted assassination of Iranian Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh while on a tour of Arab states last week was

almost certainly undertaken by Iraqi agents.

Where does the United States fit into all this? Obviously the US shares with Iraq the 'destabilise Iran' aim. But the links between the US and Iraq are more concrete than shared opinions.

It has now been suggested that the team given the primary role in freeing the American hostages in Iran, backed up by ill-fated US forces, was trained in Iraq in association with the CIA.

Six weeks ago White House chief of staff Hamilton Jordan paid a secret visit to Iraq as part of the build-up to this operation.

All of which makes it very clear that Iraq is no friend of the Iranian, or any other masses.

Anti-imperialism, not neutralism

By Phil Hearse

The growing international crisis is bringing home to people in Britain the danger of nuclear war. No wonder, then, that a campaign against nuclear weapons and nuclear alliances is being seriously discussed on the left.

Not only the international situation, but the siting of Cruise missiles in Britain, and the rise of the anti-nuclear movement has promoted this trend. Socialist Challenge has argued consistently that the threat of war arises not merely from the existence of nuclear weapons, but from the increasingly aggressive military posture of world imperialism — and especially the United States.

A new campaign has just been launched which aims to focus the increasing alarm about the possibility of nuclear war. This campaign, 'For a Nuclear Free Europe', has been launched by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, with the support of a number of leading Labour MPs. The prime movers of this campaign are Ken Coates of the Russell Foundation, and E P Thompson, well known historian and author of the recent CND pamphlet *Protest and Survive*.

There is absolutely no doubt that a campaign against the United States' war drive and the placing of Cruise missiles in Britain is vitally

needed. The upsurge of imperialist militarism is being reflected in the increasing proportion of the British budget being spent on defence by the Thatcher government.

But the campaign proposed by the Russell Foundation is seriously misguided in its approach; it threatens to seriously demobilise any attempt to build a movement based on anti-imperialist opposition to militarism.

The statement circulated by the Russell Foundation says: 'We do not wish to apportion guilt between the political and military leaders of East and West. Guilt lies squarely on both parties.' In line with this, the statement appeals equally for disarmament of both the USSR and the USA, and appeals for a 'united, neutral, and pacific Europe'. This approach completely misunderstands the nature of the world crisis and how to fight the war threat.

CND Experience

In fact the campaign of the Russell Foundation is an attempt to resurrect the politics of the early CND; neutralism and pacifism. But in fact these politics are a regression from the political stance which many CND supporters came to adopt in the early 'sixties.

CND started in 1957 as a movement which

concentrated on the intrinsic evil of a particular type of weapon. But in the early sixties, after the US blockade of Cuba, the US-backed invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs, the murder of Patrice Lumumba and the repression of the Congolese revolution by CIA-financed mercenaries, and the re-starting of serious hostilities between the Americans and the liberation movement in Vietnam, large numbers of CND's supporters moved towards anti-imperialism.

This transformation was completed by the decline of CND and the rise of the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, which broke with the politics of appeals for 'peace' and militantly identified itself with the Vietnamese struggle against US imperialism.

The equals sign that the Russell Foundation draws between the USSR and the USA is completely wrong. However much we oppose the ruling bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, the arms effort of the USSR is overwhelmingly defensive.

The revolutions in progress in Iran, Nicaragua and El Salvador threaten not the interests of the USSR but those of American imperialism. It is the United States, not the USSR which wants to resurrect its role as world cop,

trampling on progressive movements the world over. The Russell Foundation appeal completely fails to register the differing social systems in Russia and America which lead to a completely different military posture on a world scale.

Which campaign?

The campaign that needs to be built against the threat of war is not the one being launched by comrades Thompson and Coates. The threat to working people in Britain arises from Britain's membership of NATO; it arises from Britain's increasingly strident alliance with the major centre of imperialist militarism — the United States.

The fight we need is not one of appeals to the major powers to disarm, but a campaign which unites those in Britain prepared to fight for opposition to the placing of Cruise missiles; British withdrawal from NATO and complete hostility to the military adventurism of the United States.

These are the slogans, and not those of utopian pacifism and neutralism, which need to be raised on the Labour Party demonstration against the Cruise missiles taking place in London on 22 June.

By Pat Hickey

WITH the return to work at Jaguar last week, the main fight against BL management's imposition of the 5 per cent pay deal and the 'slaves charter' is ended.

Yet the fight is not completely over. The company has not yet implemented all aspects of the document in the plants.

At Cowley and Longbridge, for example, management has been careful to move slowly, so as to reduce the likelihood of a BL-wide strike. However, with the main struggle ended, it can now press ahead throughout the combine.

The successful imposition of the document represents a major breakthrough for BL management in its attack on shopfloor organisation at BL.

Staffing

The end of mutuality on such questions as manning levels and mobility will seriously undermine the shop stewards' organisation. The stewards have been traditionally responsible for negotiating all aspects of staffing levels and conditions in their sections. The document goes a long way towards ending that role.

It removes bargaining on many such issues, not just from section level but also from plant level. All local agreements and practices are superseded by it.

To quote the 92-page document: 'The agreement is in full and final settlement of all outstanding claims. It supersedes all other agreements, customs and practices relating to subjects contained within, except those resulting from the relevant agreements between the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and the Engineering Employers Federation.'

In other words, the only negotiations that Leyland want to engage in are at a national level between union officials and BL, either through the Confed or the Joint Negotiating Committee.

Clause

The document also contains a comprehensive 'no strike' clause which has been reinforced by the conditions of the return to work. Although the action has been taken after all procedures had been exhausted, the company threatened to sack those on strike.

This is unprecedented in post-war trade union struggles.

Taken together with the victimisation of Derek Robinson, it is a major attack on any attempt to mount even verbal opposition to BL plans.

There can be no clearer demonstration of the treachery of the trade union bureaucrats. They have not merely refused to fight but

LEYLAND - NOT OVER YET



actively connived at achieving management's objective.

There is a naive view that the hold of the working class bureaucracy will be broken when they have been 'exposed'. Unfortunately for this view, the response of most of the plant leaderships has not been to contest the bureaucracy but to go along with it.

The *Morning Star* hailed Moss Evans' sell-out as a victory, and leading Communist Party convenor Jack Adams refused to call

out Longbridge.

The agreement between BL and the unions will strengthen the hold of the bureaucracy in the Joint Negotiating Committee and will involve them and the plant leadership in participation.

Taken in conjunction with the weakening of shop stewards' organisation, the net result will be to increase the role of the bureaucracy and reduce independent shop floor activity.

The struggle to build a

fightback in BL is made harder by that betrayal and defeat. Yet a fightback has to be built. An extremely hopeful sign was the response of BL membership to the implementation of the deal.

Within a week of the 19 April deadline more than 18,000 workers were on strike. There was every prospect that the whole of BL would be shut down within a week, despite the national officials.

From the beginning, Engineer-

ing Union president Terry Duffy had openly scabbed by instructing his members to accept the deal and across the picket lines. Transport Union general secretary Moss Evans refused to call a national strike and attempted to achieve the same thing as Duffy, although Evans appeared to be more militant by promising to back any section which took action.

When this showed every sign of leading to an all-out strike, he

issued a call to return to work.

Behind the bluster, the truth was that no section of the bureaucracy and only a minority of the plant leadership were prepared to face the political problems posed by an all-out fight in BL. They had spent nearly seven months negotiating to avoid such a prospect.

At the end of the road, when Edwardes issued his ultimatum, the convenors' conference still refused to call a strike, and left the decision to the officials. Thus the bureaucracy had a free hand in carrying out its sell-out and was able to derail the struggle at a stroke.

The sell-out is a defeat. But the trade union organisation in BL has not yet been destroyed. As the response of the membership showed, the basis of a fightback remains.

Building that fightback will require much more than calls for more militancy. Firstly, its objective will have to be the replacement of the present leadership in the plants and the establishment of a combine leadership.

The present leadership is unreformable and must be replaced. A combine-wide response is essential for an adequate fight against Edwardes.

Second, we must develop the political answers to the company's propaganda that all this is essential for BL's survival. The workers' response will need to be based on the position of 'no responsibility' for the crisis and nationalisation of the car and component industry under workers' control.

In the coming months the deepening crisis of the industry will underline the arguments of both the reformists and the company that sacrifices today means jam tomorrow. By presenting a clear alternative to the policies of the present leadership a new one can be formed.

The Leyland Action Committee played an important role in the struggle against the document and will continue to oppose its implementation. But it must now set itself the longer-term project of building an opposition across the combine.

The national conference called by the Leyland Action Committee for 7 June will be a first step in this direction.

Abortion: time to take the offensive

AFTER the successful conclusion to the campaign against Corrie's anti-abortion Private Member's Bill, the pro-abortion movement is faced with some important questions about what to do next.

This issue will be at the centre of the discussion at the National Abortion Campaign conference to be held in Leeds on 17 and 18 May.

For the past months the attention of pro-abortion campaigners has been concentrated on defending the '67 Act against the encroachment planned by anti-abortionists.

Unlike previous campaigns against restrictive legislation, the campaign against Corrie began to realise the potential to win support in the labour movement for 'a woman's right to choose'.

Although essentially a defensive campaign, it organised thousands of people and won many new supporters, particularly in the labour movement.

The fact that the TUC was forced to call a demonstration on abortion on 28 October — not an issue of traditional trade union concern — is a major advance for the whole working class in Britain.

For women fighting for their right to choose, it opened up the possibility of campaigning in a new way. Abortion had the TUC's approval as a legitimate area of trade union concern.

The existence of the Tory government was a prime factor in pushing the TUC to fulfill its promise of a national demonstration against attacks on abortion rights.

Despite Corrie's Bill being deprived of the official support of the Tory government, its speedy progress through the early stages in Parliament was facilitated by the large number of Tory MPs and the tacit support of a high proportion of Thatcher's cabinet.

If anyone really thought that a Tory woman prime minister would improve the general position of women, the Corrie Bill rapidly disabused them of that notion.

Women's jobs, health, aid with childcare, and incomes are all under attack. Many Tory ministers make no secret of thinking that women have a cheek to expect to work rather than staying at home.

Even the defeat of the Corrie Bill has not stemmed the attack on abortion rights. The Department of Health has been using various back door means to limit the functioning of the '67 Act.

The London Pregnancy Advisory Service has had its licence renewed for just 3 months — on the trumped-up grounds that it did not have written authority for its advertising!

If the pro-choice movement sits back and rests on its laurels after the defeat of Corrie it will not be long before women's limited rights to fertility control are once more under severe attack.

The '67 Abortion Act does not give women a legal right to choose when or whether to have children. The Act is restrictive in that a woman has to prove to two doctors that she has 'grounds' for having an abortion; the right to have abortion in any circumstances ceases after the 28th week of pregnancy; and the National Health Service is not required to provide facilities for abortion.

This is before considering the restrictions on the right to choose that flow from inadequate contraceptive or abortion information, unhelpful or downright anti-abortion doctors, and so on.

The inadequacies of the present Act have led most pro-choice campaigners to see the fight for better legislation as a necessary step towards winning real choice for women.

NAC has been committed in principle to fighting for positive legislation to create a woman's right to choose in law. Now is the time to really start campaigning for it.

The Abortion Law Reform Association aims to introduce a Private Member's Bill that would provide for women's choice up to 12 weeks. The association is prepared to concede ground at the upper end of the present time limit and may even favour a 24-week limit on legal abortion.

The problem with such a Bill, and ALRA's position in general, is that it concedes ground on foetal rights.

It does not seek to extend the present time limits because the foetus would be 'viable'; it may even agree to a reduction of the time limit because



Anna Raeburn and Maureen Colquhoun protesting outside the Houses of Parliament earlier this year against John Corrie's restrictive bill.

foetuses are now 'viable' earlier.

As science allows foetuses to survive earlier and earlier, rather than this allowing women more right to choose about children, they have less and less right to choose.

An ALRA-type Bill, although it might embody a limited gain, is very dangerous to women in the long term.

NAC is in favour of legislation that completely decriminalises abortion and leaves the choice entirely up to the woman.

There is still a long way to go to win general support for NAC's positions on a woman's right to choose.

It is highly unlikely that any individual MP would agree to take up such a Bill in the present political situation. It is also unlikely that with the present composition of Parliament such a Bill would even get through its first reading.

The only situation in which such a Bill would have a real chance of becoming law is if the Labour Party, or a future Labour government, supported it and if there was also widespread support for it in the trade unions and the broad labour movement.

It is the fight to win this kind of support that is now on the agenda for NAC. The labour movement conference on positive legislation, planned for early next year, should be a major focus for this fight.

The NAC conference should endorse the call for this conference and begin the fight for delegates to it over the summer.

A really big conference in the new year could once more put the fight for abortion rights on an offensive footing.

It could also put pressure on the Labour Party to take a clear position on women's choice in its next manifesto.

NAC can make capital from the increased commitment to the struggle for abortion rights of some Labour MPs, such as Jo Richardson, to step up pressure within the Labour Party.

Positive legislation can be a dynamic element in NAC's propaganda and education work. The opportunity should not be allowed to slip by.

Immediate campaigning activity cannot be focussed on preparing for a woman's right to choose Bill now — such a Bill is the object of a long-term fight. But there are possibilities of improvements that can be fought for now.

The mandatory provision of abortion facilities on the NHS could be accomplished by a change to the 1977 NHS Act. There is definite support for a campaign to this end, from Jo Richardson to local community health councils.

It would not only expose the inadequacy of the present legal and medical provision for abortion and the need for women's choice, but it could link up with those forces fighting cuts in the health service.

A campaign on facilities might focus on a Private Member's Bill if that became a possibility. It could place demands on the present government and aim to win mass support for such a Bill in the labour movement.

If the NAC conference commits itself to a programme of education and activity on these issues then another step towards women's choice could soon be on the agenda.

Solidarity wins Chix strike

THAT would be a great headline to see — if only it were true! Many people reading this article might think that there is nothing they can do to help win this strike. But there is.

The Chix strike is a strike of Asian workers, mainly women, for union recognition. One of the main problems for the strike has been in trying to make it a national issue in the same way that Grunwick and Trico became national issues.

A step towards overcoming this can be made by circulating strike bulletins and collection sheets as widely as possible in the Labour Movement. Collecting money for the strikers isn't very difficult or time-consuming, but it makes a lot of difference to men and women on strike pay of only £10.50 per week.

Second, you can develop the blacking of goods going into Chix, which continues to be run by scab labour. Below we publish a list of companies which supply goods and materials to Chix. If any of these firms are in your area, discuss how you can make contact with the workers there and urge blacking.

Third, you can write to the strike committee to get a speaker for your local trade union branch.

Even the smallest contribu-

tion can help tip the scales against the Chix management. Help make the headline a reality!

Organise to get these firms to black Chix supplies.

Gloy Starn Transport, Chapeltown, Sheffield.
Tom Broom Transport, Leek, Staffs. (Peter Brown, 11 Edge Hill Rd, Leek, is a TGWU member)

F & M Dobson, F Dobson Group, Meadowfield Industrial Estate, Ponteland, Northumbria. (Sweets)

Thamesbrook Transport, Buckingham Avenue, Slough.
Blonds of London, 800 Lea Bridge Road, London E10. (Sweets)

Alma Confectionary, Lido Works, Esplanade, Kirkcaldy, Scotland.
CPC (Division of Corn Products Ltd), Trafford Prk., Manchester, (Starch)

Croda Food Ingredients Group Ltd., Moss Bank, Widnes, Lancs (Gelatine)

Crompton Electric/Oxford Electrics (Division of Hawker Siddeley), Oxford (Engineering).

Country Storage, Farnborough Avenue, Slough. (Engineering)
Thos. S Nutt, Unit 4, Newbridge Ind. Estate, Whitby Road, Brislington, Bristol (Pig Food Suppliers)

Support Chix!

- * Join the picket, from 6.30am each day. Chix is on the Farnham Road on Slough Trading Estate.
 - * Get Chix boycotted by shops (sweet cigarettes and bubblegum)
 - * Collect money for the strikers
 - * Raise Chix in your trade union or LP branch, take collections and send messages of support.
 - * Organise in your area to get people to support the boycott of supplies to the factory.
 - * Organise a support committee in your area.
- Donations and Messages of support to: Mohammed Anwar, 271 Goodman Park, Slough, Berks.
Information and offers of help to: Jerry McMullen, Regional Official, GMWU, 154 Brent Street, London NW4. Tel: 01 202 0071.

14 May — TUC Day of Action

DEMONSTRATE OUTSIDE CHIX
starting at 10.00am

Organised by Slough Trades Council & Berkshire Associating Trades Council.

WOMEN'S PICKET AT CHIX
Wednesday 21 May, from 6.30am.

National Women's Festival

WHEN even glossy magazines like *Company* find it necessary to run feature articles on 'Why Maggie Thatcher is a menace to women', then it is more than time for women to forcibly express their opposition to this anti-woman and anti-working class government.

A 'National Women's Festival against Tory Attacks' is being planned as a major step in demonstrating this opposition.

The festival is planned to take place in October and is organised by an open planning group supported by NAC, Rights of Women, Women in Action, Fightback for Women's Rights and other local and national women's campaigns, groups and organisations.

The aim of the festival is to bring together all women in trades unions, women's groups, students' unions, young women organising in schools, campaign groups and so on which are fighting back against the Tory attacks. The festival would illustrate how all these attacks are linked to the Tories overall policies.

The next planning meeting, to which all women are welcome, will take place at 5.30pm on 11 May at 374 Grays Inn Rd, London EC1.



WOMEN in Action has produced a new fundraising badge, in pink on purple, 20p plus 10p p&p.

The spring issue of *Women in Action* is still available cost 25p plus 10p p&p. The next issue is planned to be out in August, focussing on a woman's right to work.

Both are available from: Box 2, Sisterwrite Books, 190 Upper St, London N1.

The writing on the wall

FOUR people were held in custody in various London prisons last week. Their crime? — writing the slogan 'Housing not Crowning' on offices of the Dutch-owned KLM airline.

The four daubed the offices on Tuesday of last week in solidarity with the protests being staged in Amsterdam concerning bad housing and the extravagance of the coronation.

The arrests took place after a dramatic car chase through London's West End. Those charged in London were squatters' champion Piers Corbyn, Bernhart

Matz, Louisa Ferguson, and Ricard Jiventas.

They were not released until Friday morning, after being charged with criminal damage.

In Amsterdam itself over 10,000 people took part in demonstrations against the coronation. Over 40 towns in Holland saw some sort of protest action.



'Illegal immigrant' — the concept has to go

By Jenny Flintoft

SONU Varkki is six years old. A happy child, the only shadow over his life until recently was a visit to India, where British-born Sonu, lacking immunities, contracted several serious diseases, returning home so ill it took him 2½ years to recover.

But now an even more serious threat looms: his parents, Meena and Juno, face an impossible, agonising choice — leave Sonu here alone or take him back to India, where doctors think he is unlikely to ever lead a normal, healthy life.

Although they are in Britain legally, Meena and Juno are about to become two more victims of this government's deportation fervour.

They have lived here for seven years, selflessly devoting themselves to helping local Asians in Camden, North London.

Speaking between them six Indian languages, and excellent English, they are uniquely placed to support Asians with problems they couldn't take to white social workers.

Camden Council for Community Relations says: 'They have devoted themselves to full-time voluntary work with a remarkable lack of concern for their own comfort and security.'

The local Asians, hearing that their means of moral sup-

port may be removed, are bewildered and heartbroken.

The Varkkis naturally feel bitter that, while white Commonwealth citizens entering, like them, as tourists, frequently obtain permanent residence, it has been arbitrarily denied them.

'It's so racist,' says Meena. She dreads returning to India. 'It's very hard for a woman there. What kind of job would I get?'

She tries to prepare Sonu for it, but he won't listen. He screams if they speak Hindi. 'He's been difficult and aggressive lately. It's the insecurity.'

The anguish of the Varkkis is yet another reason why we have to fight for a society in which the concept of 'illegal immigrant' does not exist.

A campaign has been formed to oppose the Varkki deportation. For details of its activities and what you can do to help, write to: 220-222 Belsize Road, London NW6. Tel 01-328 4523.

The NUR leaders are willing to talk about the open station concept, which involves withdrawal of ticket collectors and some booking clerks.

The guards in Scotland who refused to accept extra commercial duties were not forced back by management but by the union. Guards at King's Cross have found themselves in a similar position over one-person operation of the new local electric trains.

Along with management, the NUR leadership believe that salvation for the railways lies in new technology and greater 'efficiency', with a consequent huge reduction in staff. NUR membership has fallen by half since nationalisation in 1948.

The pay deal will be turned into a victory or a defeat, depending on whether the rank and file can force

By Robin Duncan NUR and Stuart Horton NUR

THE press has tried to portray the railway pay settlement of 20 per cent as a massive victory for rail workers. In fact, rail remains a low pay industry.

For years we have been at the tail end of the pay scale, and we have now been forced to settle for less than everyone else.

The NUR executive was concerned to remove productivity from the national pay agreements, but such deals are on the way.

The '79 and '80 agreements involve closure of freight yards and parcel depots.



HM Government may kill these patients

By Geoffrey Sheridan

THE Merton, Sutton, and Wandsworth area health authority has a plan. It wants to move over a hundred elderly patients from St Benedict's Hospital in Tooting, SW London, to the nearby Bolingbroke Hospital.

It has to be said that this is not out of consideration to the patients. Last October the authority decided to cut £6.5m from its spending plans, involving the loss of 730 beds.

From the Tories' point of view, it has done quite well. It has already laid waste to the Putney Hospital, the Cumberland Hospital, the Belmont Children's Unit, and Queen Elizabeth House.

Four other hospitals in the area, including St Benedict's, are waiting for the axe to fall.

The staff at St Benedict's are not waiting patiently. On 15 November they occupied the hospital, and since then they have been gathering support in the local labour movement, the community, and among GPs.

'The objective,' says Arthur Hautot, a porter at St Benedict's and secretary of the occupation committee, 'is to keep the place open.'

'We're not fighting for our jobs. We could get jobs in other local hospitals. We're fighting for our health service.'

Their evaluation of the AHA's plan was simple enough. A team from St Benedict's went over to the Bolingbroke and found that the corridors weren't wide enough for the equipment needed for geriatric patients. Baths and toilets were not suitable for the device used to lift patients.

Now the union at the Bolingbroke has agreed not to accept any patient from St Benedict's, and ambulance staff have agreed not to move them out.

The occupation committee is organising as best it can.

Last Sunday an open day was held so that local people could take a look round. A support committee meets weekly, with representation from Wandsworth Trades Council and Wandsworth Fightback.

As part of the local activity for 14 May, a march will go from St Benedict's to a carnival on Clapham Common.

The majority of the patients are in their 70s and 80s, and some don't realise what is going on. Some certainly do.

One elderly woman was asked by a professor of geriatric medicine if she would mind being moved to the ground floor so that it would be easier to get her out in case of fire.

'I've been here for 32 years,' she told him, 'and no one's ever suggested that before. What do you think I am, stupid?' It's not the danger of fire that is putting her life at risk. HM Government can and does kill.

Help to: Arthur Hautot, Secretary, Occupation Committee, St Benedict's Hospital, Church Lane, London SW17. Tel 01-672 2231.

Row over rape debate

CHARLES Kennedy is the student union president at Glasgow University. Last Friday he authorised a debate in the bar entitled 'Rape — a Female Fantasy'.

Explaining that 'it was not a serious discussion' and that rape figured in the title merely to 'pull in a crowd', Kennedy met with opposition from 200 students at the university and violent clashes ensued.

Tim Heath, one of the protesters, said: 'At least four women have been raped around here in recent months'. He did not think that rape victims would find it amusing to have their experience trivialised.

Printworkers battle over pay and hours

By Hilary Driver, London region NGA

IN PORTSMOUTH last week 40 printers from the local evening newspaper occupied the press room and stopped the printing of the scab paper.

Many pickets belonging to the National Graphical Association have been arrested on picket lines around the country after being locked out by management.

The lock-outs followed the breakdown in negotiations between the NGA, the British Printing Industries Federation, and the Newspaper Society. The union is demanding a minimum basic wage of £80 and a 37½-hour week.

While the issue of pay and hours sparked off the industrial action and subsequent lock-outs, under the surface there is a lot more at stake.

The employers want to restructure the industry to bring in new technology. To do this they need to break the organisation of the print unions.

Although a majority of employers in the printing industry have now made interim agreements with the NGA, the Newspaper Society bosses who run the local and provincial press are taking a much harder line.

This is why the dispute has flared up around local newspaper publishers, such as the Wolverhampton *Express*

and *Star*, the *South London Press*, and the *News* in Portsmouth.

The Tory Employment Bill will strengthen the employers by undermining the pre-entry closed shop.

Unfortunately, the print unions have been weakened by the craft-consciousness tradition of the unions. Although SOGAT, SLADE and the NUJ have become involved in the dispute their response has generally been uncoordinated.

The need for a single union in the print industry is burning.

Whatever the outcome of the present dispute, lack of unity will mean that it is likely the bosses will succeed in restructuring the industry at the expense of the workers.

WOLVERHAMPTON'S SCAB EXPRESS

By Pia Feig

'IT's a sign of the times,' said one of the print workers locked out at the Wolverhampton *Express* and *Star* on the picket line last Friday.

While other local papers have either settled with the NGA or ceased printing, the *Express* and *Star* is the only one being produced with scab labour.

Management has used its Wolverhampton monopoly and high profits to introduce some of the newest printing technology in the country. Up to now this has been done with NGA agreement.

While the compositors are well paid and do a 37½-hour week — one of the demands of the national dispute — there is a shrinking workforce, with no new apprentices having been taken on for several years.

By smashing the power of the print unions, *Express* and *Star* management could introduce even further automation which would need only a few semi-skilled staff.

Tele-ad personnel have already been trained to input copy, and these non-unionised staff are working during the lock-out.

That the issue is one of union power can be seen from the mass pickets, with NGA members coming from far and wide — Bristol, Milton Keynes, Liverpool and Bournemouth. They are in a militant mood.

The police have also realised the importance

of the dispute and have tried to smash the pickets

They are pulled violently away from the vans or they have their heads smashed against van doors. In the first week of the lock-out 36 people have been arrested.

But the picketing is having an effect. While the paper is being printed it is reduced to a single edition of only 30 pages, with bad photographs and reprints of old adverts.

Support for the NGA is growing. Soon after the lock-out 27 members of the National Union of Journalists chapel were suspended for disobeying their union's directive not to work with scab labour.

On Friday morning SLADE instructed its members not to cross the picket line. That night the Labour group on the local council passed a resolution to break off all relations with the *Express* and *Star*.

Alec Bowater, the NGA father of the chapel on the paper, thinks the lockout will soon be over. He considers they will be going back victorious and that the struggle over new technology and protection of jobs will then be more on union terms.

*IPC, the magazine giant, is among those hit by the NGA dispute. With its publishing schedules disrupted, the company has cut its wage bill by locking-out 1,500 journalists.

The journalists had been working to rule over their own pay dispute, and are now resisting the lock-out.

the leadership to refuse productivity deals.

Rail workers will need all the solidarity we can gain in our fight to protect jobs. That's why we have to strike on 14 May.

The lead given by NUR general secretary Sid Weighell has not been clear. While he initially called for a full strike on 14 May he has now backed down and merely endorsed the TUC's vague proposals. Some members have been instructed to stay at work. The strike has to be all out.

Books are weapons

'BOOKS are weapons. Don't let the Tories disarm you!' That's the message on a placard outside the central library in Hemel Hempstead, which for the past few weeks has been occupied on Saturday afternoons.

Libraries are just one of the targets for the council's cuts, with a cut-back in opening hours, the closure of branch libraries, and the reduction of the trailer service to rural areas to one day a week.

The occupation is being used to publicise all the Tory cuts, and to build resistance.

Hundreds of signatures have been collected during the occupation, and the Dacorum Campaign and the Cuts, which is leading the action, is involving local organisations and broad participation in the campaign.

EXPOSED! BRITISH

A BRITISH Army captain was seriously injured when his booby trapped car exploded in the North of Ireland town of Enniskillen on Wednesday of last week. The captain was no ordinary soldier; the British Army has admitted he was an intelligence officer.

He was also reported to be one of the select intelligence officers who have had direct access to the Tory Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Humphrey Atkins.

The Provisional IRA has claimed responsibility for the explosion, but the severe wounding of the unnamed captain has once more highlighted the presence and role of British spies in Ireland.

Drawing on material so far unpublished in Britain, GEOFF BELL examines this spy network.

THE story goes that last November the British Army regimental commanders in the North of Ireland were summoned to a special security meeting at Stormont Castle, the administrative centre for the British government in the North of Ireland.

Once there, the Army top brass were subjected to a speech from Sir Maurice Oldfield, the former boss of MI6 who had recently been appointed security supremo.

Oldfield promised his audience that within six months the IRA would be well on its way to defeat, thanks to changes in security he was making.

That was six months ago and the attack on the Army spy in Enniskillen last week symbolises the false dawn offered by Oldfield.

Computers

Yet according to the fantasies conjured up in spy thrillers, the IRA should have been defeated long ago.

There is the fact that British occupation forces in Ireland have four spy agencies operating: the police special branch, MI5 (Military Intelligence 5), MI6 (Military Intelligence 6), and Army Intelligence.

These are backed up with a vast array of technical equipment. Most notorious is the Army computer at its headquarters at Thiepval barracks, Lisburn, seven miles from Belfast.

Details of over 60 per cent of the population of the North of Ireland are on 'tape' in the computer's memory bank. Everything from the colour of their wallpaper to their national insurance number is recorded.

One of Oldfield's innovations is to set up military posts which, it is hoped, will amass new information for the computer. The aim of these is to spy on entire communities.

An observation post has recently been set up in the Whiterock area of Belfast, which overlooks the Catholic ghetto of Turf Lodge and Ballymurphy. Similar posts have been constructed at the Royal Victoria Hospital on the Falls Road, which was one of the causes of the recent strike by workers at the hospital.

Helicopters

Backing up such 'information gathering' units, the Army has increased the use of helicopters — a practice recently introduced by the police in Britain when tracking and photographing demonstrations.

Such activities are not, strict-

ly speaking, illegal. They can be classified as 'surveillance' and are supported by uniformed Army activity on the ground.

This mainly takes the form of raids on houses in the Catholic community. In a raid earlier this year the Army admitted that in one session alone 604 houses were 'visited'.

Tapping

This figure was quoted in a recent series in the *Irish Times*, which went into some detail concerning the activities of the real, professional spies. Most of their activities certainly are illegal. For example:

'Ordinary mail is intercepted on a large scale. A variety of means is used ... One ingenious method employs a needle which is inserted through a gap in the envelope; it is then rotated at very high speed, rolling the letter up so that it can be extracted, read and replaced.'

Other such operations include the inspection of social security files, obtained through 'contacts' in social security offices, the tapping of telexes, and the examination of bank accounts.

Since all this is illegal, information gained in these ways cannot be made public — for instance, in attempting to gain a conviction in court, juryless though those courts are in the North of Ireland. Accordingly other 'evidence' is manufactured.

Informers

One former army intelligence officer is quoted in the *Irish Times*: 'When you had an arms find you simply retained some pistols and ammunition. When there was somebody you were sure was a Provo, you did a house search and planted it. Then the Provo would be given a choice of going inside or working for intelligence.'

The planting of evidence is fairly common in most countries, but the special characteristic of its use by the British Army in the North of Ireland is that such practices are officially arranged by brigade intelligence units; in other words it is official Army policy.

Despite such 'fittings-up' and the complex technological machinery employed by the security services, the Army claims that it is informers who supply 80 per cent of the information which they find useful.

According to one source quoted in the *Irish Times*, 'Official IRA members are particularly useful in passing on information on the Provisionals and IRSP' (Irish Republican Socialist Party). This would tie in



The agencies

Military Intelligence 6 (MI6)

Theoretically, MI6 shouldn't be operating at all in the North of Ireland; its brief is limited to foreign countries.

But the agency was drafted in after the poor quality of Special Branch and Army intelligence had been exposed during the internment operation in 1972, when less than a quarter of those picked up in the initial swoop were members of the IRA.

Around 20 MI6 spies operate in the North at any one time. They usually come as civil servants, although other covers — post office workers, journalists, insurance agents — are also used.

MI6 also operates in the South of Ireland where it is particularly keen on phone tapping. It has extensive files on Southern Irish politicians and has informers and agents in the Irish police, army and civil service.

The 'Six' is regarded as the sophisticated branch of British intelligence. It is more concerned with monitoring the Provisionals and evaluating political developments than simply securing the arrest or liquidation of IRA members.

It was MI6 which recruited the Littlejohn brothers to infiltrate the IRA in 1973. The brothers were subsequently arrested for armed robbery in the South of Ireland.

The London headquarters of MI6 is at Century House, near Westminster Bridge, in Lambeth.

Military Intelligence 5 (MI5)

MI5 was deployed in the North of

with the Officials' pro-partitionist policy.

It is not just the Catholic community in general or the Provisional movement in particular which are the targets of the 'dirty tricks' employed by British intelligence.

The RUC Special Branch is fond of tapping the phones of

Ireland in 1973 after MI6 had been discredited in the Littlejohn fiasco. Many of its operatives are former police officers. They are seen as the 'plodders'.

Its staff are scattered throughout the North of Ireland; most of the agency's officers serve undercover in police or civilian liaison.

MI5 is meant to have a special responsibility for spotting death plots against British VIPs, or bombing campaigns in Britain, but in this it has been singularly unsuccessful.

The 'Five' has an office at British Army HQ at Lisburn, near Belfast, but its own centre is at Rover House, High Street, Belfast.

MI5 agents tend to be very right wing. Both they and MI6 have 'doubles' in each others agency to keep an eye on what the others are up to.

British Army Intelligence

Intelligence in the British Army operates on a number of different levels:

1. Each battalion in the Army (about 550 personnel in all) has an intelligence section. This is made up of 35 soldiers, including three officers and six NCOs. On top of this the three North of Ireland brigade areas have a permanent intelligence unit, which is about 20 strong and usually headed by a major.

In overall control is the headquarter's intelligence unit at Army HQ in Lisburn. This is around 50 strong and is commanded by a lieutenant-colonel or a full colonel.

2. Special Military Intelligence Unit.

bourgeois politicians. Among those who have suffered in this way are Social Democratic and Labour Party politicians, John Hume and Gerry Fitt, as well as Loyalist figures such as Ian Paisley.

Further afield, MI6 — the espionage outfit responsible for foreign countries — has a long

record of spying on bourgeois politicians in the South of Ireland. These spies usually operate under diplomatic cover from the British Embassy in Dublin, although other disguises have been used.

The thickest file MI6 operatives in Dublin have is on Charles Haughey, the leader of

This is mainly centred at the RUC Castlereagh barracks — infamous for its use of torture. SMIU is especially responsible for liaising with the RUC.

3. Special Air Services (SAS). The presence of the SAS was first acknowledged publicly by Harold Wilson in 1976, although it had been operating for some time before.

The SAS concentrates on surveillance using undercover patrols and 'forward observation posts'.

It was a unit of the SAS which last year murdered John Boyce who went to graveyard in which guns were hidden. The SAS, suspecting him of being a 'terrorist' shot Boyle in the back.

4. Special Duties Teams. These are closely associated with the SAS, but tend to run special projects.

The teams received a good deal of publicity some years ago when they were discovered running a laundry, bookshop and massage parlours in Belfast as part of their 'information gathering' operations.

All were spotted by the IRA. Captain Robert Nairac, who was captured and subsequently executed by the IRA in South Armagh, was a member of the Special Duties Team.

Special Branch

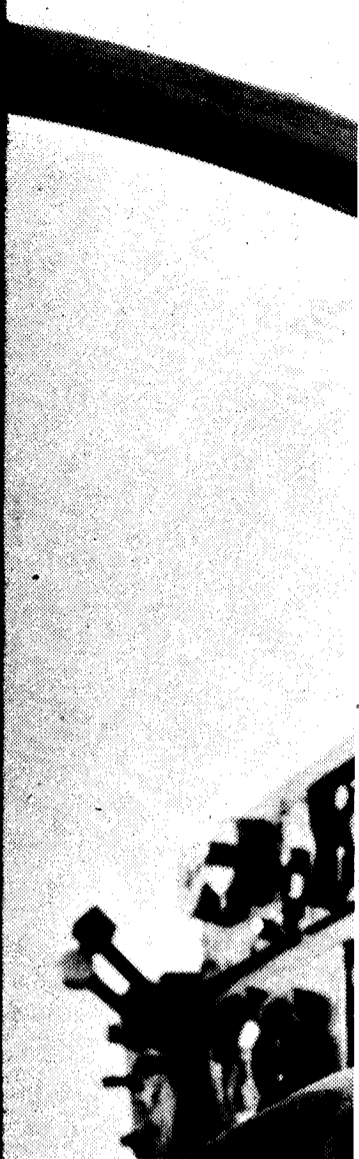
The Special Branch is regarded as being the most incompetent of the lot. It uses the less 'sophisticated' techniques to extract information — such as torturing suspects.

According to an answer to a parliamentary question given in 1978, there are 27 members of the RUC Special Branch.

the 'Republican' wing of the ruling Fianna Fail party who recently became the prime minister. Extensive details of Haughey's private life are apparently on file.

Occasionally MI6 agents have been caught. The most notable example was that of John Wyman, who was exposed

HSPYS IN IRELAND



somewhere else, all will be well and the 'enemy' will be defeated.

But when that is applied to the Republican-minded community in the North of Ireland the theory falls apart. It is not simply that the Provisionals' much-publicised 'cell structure' is an effective guard against infiltration.

The main point is that the British Army is so detested in the Catholic ghettos that however many letters in and out of those ghettos are opened, however many spy posts are erected on the edges of those ghettos, however many raids are mounted, or false ammunition planted, the determination of the inhabitants of those ghettos to resist remains.

James Bond may be able to defeat the individual gangster, or his counter part in some other intelligence service, but he cannot defeat a whole community.

Truth

In one way the relevance of the British spy machine in Ireland lies in Britain itself. As an MI5 operative told the *Irish Times*: 'Be clear on one point above all else. The intelligence world is not answerable to Secretaries of State. It is accountable to nobody — not the Prime Minister, not Parliament, not the courts.'

And in this context an article last August in the *Daily Mail*, written by its defence correspondent, stated 'But the truth is that the Army has had to go into the Big Brother business in Ulster' and, concluded the article, the British Army officer 'does not forget his skills when he leaves Ulster.'

'The result has been to produce a special breed of Army officer... he is politically conscious and he is quite prepared to criticise his political directives.' Not only criticise them, but act against them as well. And not only in the North of Ireland, but in Britain as well.

Voices for Withdrawal

A forum on Northern Ireland
Saturday 14 June, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London WC1

Speakers include: Clive Soley MP, Ernie Roberts MP, Peter Hain, Bernadette Devlin-McAliskay, John Arden.

Delegates £2, Observers £1.
Details from the organisers: Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland, c/o Youth Office, National Liberal Club, 1 Whitehall Place, London SW1.

'specific and calculated plan ... by means of ruthless and indiscriminate violence to foment inter-sectarian hatred and ... chaos.'

What MI5 didn't tell Wilson, though they knew this to be the case, was that this IRA strategy was envisaged as a contingency plan to be put into operation only in the event of a wholesale Loyalist attack on the Catholic ghettos.

Network

As one former British spy in Ireland has put it: 'Sometimes we told the Secretary of State we knew things that really we didn't; sometimes we pretended not to know things that we did. From an intelligence point of view politicians can be manipulated quite easily.'

Britain's spying network in the North of Ireland is at times limited in its effectiveness because of differences between the various branches. There is no love lost between Army Intelligence and the Special Branch, nor between MI5 and MI6.

Someone who worked with both MI5 and MI6 described the difference this way: 'Five does tend to be very right wing ... they're the type who read the *Daily Telegraph* and think it's gospel. Some in Six take the *Guardian*, on the other hand...'

The competition between the various spy agencies is one reason for their limited success. But it is only a minor one. The whole theory of intelligence operation is that if the right informer is found here, the right dirty trick done there, the right member of the IRA assassinated

Who's Who?

DAVID WYATT is under-secretary at the Northern Ireland Office, officially in charge of 'politics and information'.

He is on secondment from the Foreign Office and is widely suspected of being a member of MI6, which is under Foreign Office control.

One of Wyatt's predecessors in this post was James Allen, who held the job in 1974-5. Allen was almost certainly in MI6. Wyatt served under him.

The post of under-secretary in 'politics and information' was created in 1972 when MI6 was first drafted in to the North of Ireland. Wyatt works from Stormont Castle.



SIR MAURICE OLDFIELD is former head of MI6 and now 'security co-ordinator' in the North of Ireland. Appointed last October and taken out of retirement at a time when tensions between the Army and RUC, and the Army and the British government were at their height.

Oldfield played a similar 'co-ordination role' during the post-war Malaysian 'emergency' when he oversaw activities of MI6, the Army, Special Branch, and police.

Oldfield now heads a 'think tank' made up of about 20 people including an RUC assistant chief constable and an Army brigadier. He also works at Stormont Castle.

COLONEL B M FRANKS is head of the British Army's Special Air Services (SAS). The SAS has links with MI6, occasionally performing operations on its behalf.

BRIGADIER JIMMY GLOVER is the Army's No 2 in the North of Ireland and Commander of Land Forces.

Glover heads the Defence Intelligence Staff and is assumed to have overall responsibility for Army intelligence in the North of Ireland.

Glover was the author of the famous 'Document 37' leaked to the IRA which detailed the Army's assessment of the IRA saying that it would be able to 'raise violence ... to at least the level of 1978 for the foreseeable future'.

Glover is stationed at the Army HQ in Lisburn, seven miles from Belfast. Known to enjoy watching films of demonstrations.

DENIS PAYNE and IAN CAMERON were sent to spearhead MI5 operations in the North of Ireland in 1973.

They took over from two MI6 officers, Craig Smellie and Denis Payne, who were the scapegoats for the Littlejohn fiasco. Whether Payne and Cameron are still in charge of MI5 in the North is unclear.

in 1976 for trying to bribe information from the Southern Irish Special Branch.

But some Southern Irish police officers have been very co-operative. A senior member of the force apparently passed on Irish police files on Provisionals to British Army intelligence.

Most of these activities are officially sanctioned by the British government. But the intelligence agencies have often implemented their own political 'line'. One example was the Loyalist strike in 1974 which brought down the 'power-sharing' government. A former intelligence officer told the *Irish Times*:

'We didn't want to get caught in the middle between the Prods and the Provos ... we advised (Merlyn) Rees not to move against the strikers ... some of us also hoped that the strike would make progress and Wilson and Rees would be defeated.'

'And we hoped that if power-sharing failed, the United Kingdom population would say Ulster had had its last chance politically and would advocate an all-out effort for military victory.'

Wilson

In pursuit of this general pro-Loyalist line, MI5 has often fed British politicians 'disinformation'. When internment was being phased out, the Army and MI5 combined to falsify the figure of ex-internees who were supposedly engaging in violence. The real figure of between 20 and 25 per cent was doubled in an attempt to persuade Rees to halt the releases.

On another occasion MI5 fed Harold Wilson details of an IRA plan to simulate Loyalist attacks on Catholic areas and thus spark off large-scale street fighting.

Wilson told the House of Commons, on the basis of this information, that the IRA had a



Harold Wilson pictured here, in 1974 with General King, at the time the head of the British Army in the North of Ireland. Intelligence officers in the Army plotted against Wilson's Irish policy in the same year, believing he was too hard on the Loyalists.

Last week we explained the impasse faced by the traditional PLP-based left. It tries to base itself on constituency activists, who are the weakest section in inner party struggles. It runs headlong into the trade union block vote. It is forced into compromises by the bureaucracy, which leaves the right wing a free hand.

The left can only break out by linking up with the trade union rank and file, in a struggle which is directed not only against the right in the Parliamentary Labour Party but also against the trade union bureaucracy. This is what the NEC lefts, including Benn, refuse to do: which is why the 31 May conference will confine itself to fine words without any action.

But does this mean the Labour Party should be ignored? It is in deep crisis. A far-reaching debate on policy and democracy is going on. What affects is this having? Will new currents emerge which can break out of the old impasse?

Struggles

Of course these struggles have happened before. Every time the Labour Party leaves office there is a furious post-mortem. But this time there are important differences.

The capitalist crisis is much sharper. There is less room for 'limited reform'. Working class pressure for radical change is much greater, and is coupled to a mood of struggle. Workers are not prepared to accept left reformist excuses for a lack of action.

Until 1974, opposition forces were led by the Liaison Committee in Defence of Trade Unions, which built an alliance of left parliamentarians, left bureaucrats, and rank and file trades unionists. But this opposition never broke free of the political hold of the left leaders.

When the PLP-left fell in behind the social contract, no movement existed that could challenge this betrayal.

But by 1978, many workers were fighting Labour's austerity policies regardless of the lack of leadership from either the 'lefts' or the Communist Party. This was particularly the case in the public sector, which has a big impact on the Labour Party because of its connection to both central and local government.

This effect has been heightened by the cuts. Local Labour Parties face the awkward fact that they can only defend local services by organising against central government. Extracting minor concessions from the local state by winning council posts is less and less effective. Cuts committees are taking an ever more uncompromising stand towards Labour councils.

Discipline

But does this mean that we should fight only in the unions, and not try to discipline the LP? This is the perspective of our comrades in the Socialist Workers Party.

The error of this policy is clear once we ask ourselves what is needed in the unions. The urgent need of the hour is a massive, united left in the unions — a new Minority Movement. The scabbing of Duffy, Sirs and Evans makes this an absolute priority.

Such a left, especially with a strong organised revolutionary presence, would not fall prey to the manoeuvres of the reformists if it was based on a commitment to struggle and equipped with policies to defeat the Tories. The SWP partially recognise this itself in its approach to unity with the CP in the unions.

But such a left cannot afford to ignore the Labour Party! Isn't social democracy just as important as the CP, and in fact more important given its size, the decline of the CP, and the fact that the CP only acts as the Labour Party's 'industrial organiser' in any case?

But if rank and file, social democratic workers are to take part in organising union resistance, it is essential to draw the Labour Party into the work of organising in the unions. Trades unionists must try to

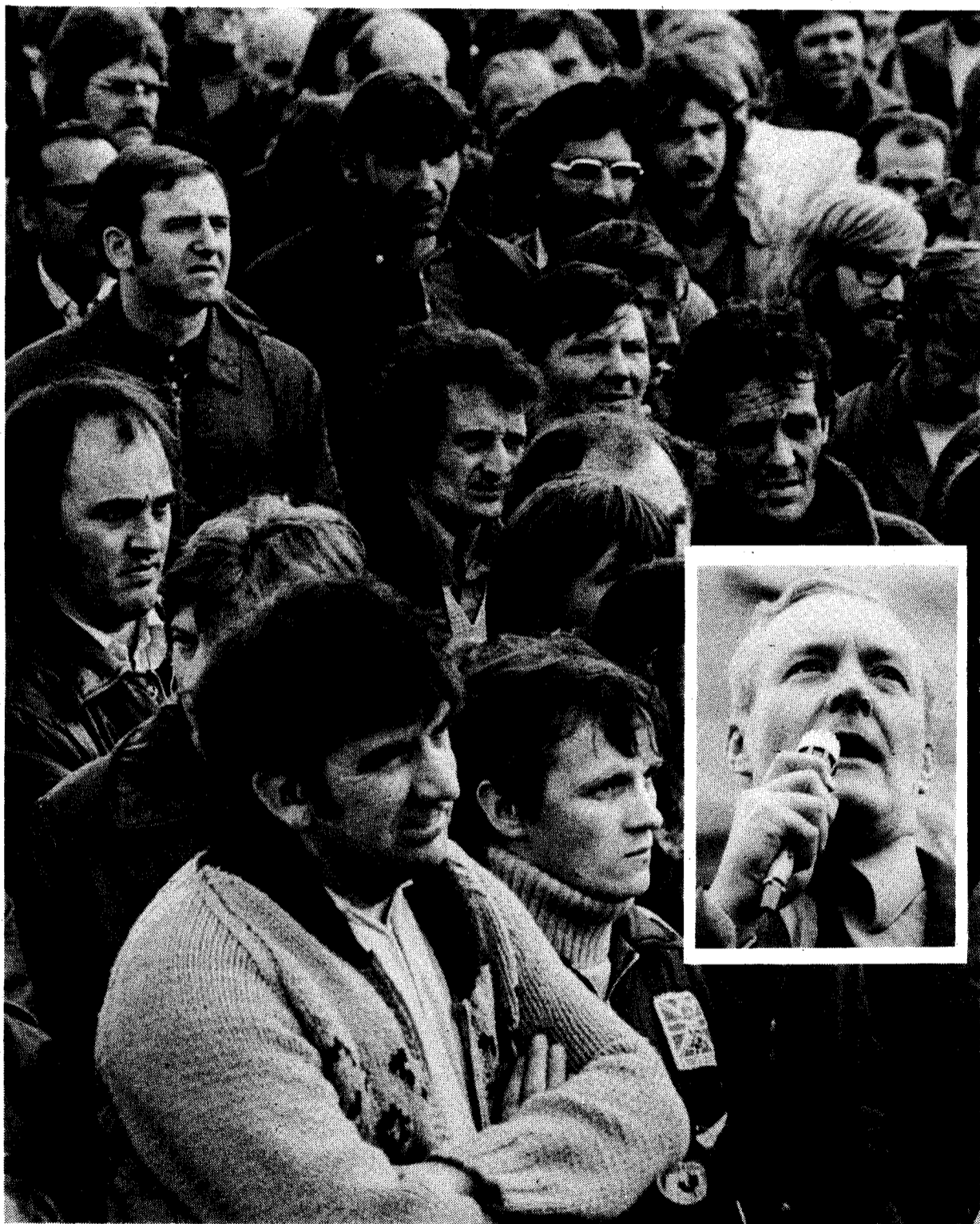
The Labour left and the trade unions

A SPECIAL Labour Party conference will be held on 31 May, and a lobby of trade unionists, backed by Socialist Challenge, will be calling on the party to make a commitment to build and support mass action to get rid of the Tories.

Socialist Challenge also supports the proposals made at the Labour Co-ordinating Committee that direct links

between the Labour Party and trade union activists should be encouraged to plan direct action.

In the second of two articles, ALAN FREEMAN looks at why we argue for links between trade unionists and Labour Party activists despite the limitations of even the 'left' leaders of the Labour Party.



weaken the hold of the Labour right in the unions and ensure that the Labour left join in.

To do this we need to link up with Labour Party activists who are prepared to back us. A mood exists in the constituencies for such a link-up. Ordinary Labour Party militants want to break out of the electoral ghetto in which the PLP has imprisoned them. They want to see a campaigning, mass party.

That is why the initial meetings of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee have been so successful, with several hundred attending each successive regional conference.

The LCC was the only left current that committed itself to some form of

action, however limited. Its draft policy statement opens:

'We are committed to fostering rank and file action throughout the Labour movement, believing that it is primarily through local CLP campaigns, shopfloor struggles, and the mobilisation of working people that a movement can be created to push through the necessary changes.'

We believe that this declaration expresses a widespread desire in the ranks of the party and unions, for united action by the unions and the Party, against the Tories and all their policies, which should be given positive form. That is why we support the call for a lobby of 31 May, for a trade union conference to follow, and

all other actions that can turn this desire into a real and living movement.

Even more dramatically, mass movements of women, blacks and youth have sprung up, expressing themselves in mass campaigns like NAC and the ANL. The Labour Party has had to trail uncomfortably behind them, powerless to control them, but forced to support them.

In short, Social Democracy faces a serious challenge to its leadership of important mass movements.

This combination of a crisis of perspective, increasing mass action, and loss of leadership has made the Party's crisis much more acute. Local activists are being drawn into mass

campaigns on racism, women's rights, and the cuts. Councils have begun to organise or release their employees to take part in anti-Tory demonstrations.

The Labour Party has taken initiatives to identify with political mass movements. It called the 28 November anti-cuts demo. It backs anti-racist demos and is calling an anti-war march in June. Callaghan was even forced to come out in support of the 14 May day of action.

These moves must be welcomed. They add vital new forces to the struggle. Millions of Labour supporters can be won to take part in actions where they would otherwise hesitate.

But a simple question arises. Why wait for such developments?

The Labour Party commands the support of the unions. It is the only working class party able to form governments or council administrations. Its presence in struggle, when that happens, gives an enormous added boost. It is wrong to leave this to chance.

Force

We say that trades unionists should fight for the Labour Party to commit itself. We should use our right to send delegates to local party bodies to force it to put resources behind our struggles. We should demand that local council Labour groups refuse to collaborate with cuts. We should fight for non-affiliated unions, like NUT and NALGO, to affiliate to raise the same demands. We should fight to control the block vote, paid for by our political levies and abused by our leaders without a thought for the rights or needs of their members.

Above all we should demand that the Labour Party come off the fence and join in a united mass movement to kick the Tories out now, without waiting until it is too late.

What do the rest of the left say and how do we view it? Of course there are dangers. If we give unconditional support to Labour, and simply become embroiled in a purely internal struggle to change the party, we would place our future struggles at the mercy of the PLP once more.

We would lose vital weapons — our ability to determine the demands of the struggle and to impose them on the leaders. We would lay the ground for another social contract government.

That is why the fight to discipline the Labour Party must begin from the organisation of the trade union rank and file. There must be no compromise for the sake of some inner-party or parliamentary manoeuvre. The needs of the working class must come before the needs of the Labour Party.

Oppose

That is why we oppose any strategy, such as that of the *Militant*, but also of the Labour left, that tries to direct the movement into a fight for a left parliamentary programme, conducted through the party's electoral machine.

We need policies to defeat the Tories, this is true. But those should be policies for action, not for procrastination. We should not concentrate on what the next Labour government may do, but on what the present Labour Party is doing. The commitment we demand of a future government flows logically from our present needs.

The most important task is to develop a struggle around those needs, and to create such a movement in the unions that the next government will either be forced to recognise its demands, or cede to another government that will do so.

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'Why we left the Young Communists'

THE YOUNG Communist League, the youth section of the Communist Party, is the largest youth organisation to the left of the Labour Party. It is not finding it easy to stay in that position.

Its membership in November 1976 was 1,976. A year later it had fallen to 1,663, and it fell again to 1,282 in 1978. Little over five hundred people re-registered for membership at the beginning of this year.

Assessing that this decline in membership simply proves that young people in Britain are not interested in socialist ideas, the YCL's response was to still further reduce its left 'activist' profile.

Diluting its class politics, however, has not retrieved the YCL's falling membership. Two members of Revolution, **NIGEL WILSON** and **MARTIN WRIGHT**, used to be members of the YCL. They explained why they aren't any longer.

Why did you join the YCL?

Martin: Because the YCL is more active than the Labour Party Young Socialists it is often the first organisation that people come across.

People think of communists as having a tradition of struggle and only hear of the Communist Party. At first you just don't hear about other left organisations.

But it is only in name. When I joined the YCL I knew I wasn't go-

ing to join the Labour Party, like my mum and dad. It had to be something better. I thought that the YCL would be something better.

Nigel: My reasons for joining were similar. I thought the YCL would be more active and political.

There is another quite common reason why young people join the YCL, which is that their parents are members of the Communist Party.

Did the YCL live up to your expectations?

Martin: Once you are in you find that it gives you no political education — the meetings are purely organisational. There's lots of talk about action but nothing ever happened.

The only political discussions were after the meetings. The meetings never discussed Ireland or things like that.

You really get the impression that a lot of YCLers are just ashamed of their politics. Many of them don't take seriously all this nonsense about democratising the police and forging alliances with Guides and Boy Scouts, so they won't talk about it.

Why do you think the YCL is so inactive?

Martin: The main reason is that its politics are so boring and undynamic. For example, on Ireland, the YCL doesn't call for troops out, so it hasn't got anything to get out and fight for.

In Revolution we fight for Britain to get out now, and on that basis we organise demos, pickets of army recruitment centres, and so on.

Or again on anti-fascism, the YCL ignored anti-fascist demos when the rest of the left was marching in places like Lewisham and Brick Lane.

In Leicester they pushed off with the Church and MPs while the rest of us stayed to fight.

Also they increasingly see politics as a matter of convincing individual people, rather than getting out on the streets and involved in struggles — which is how people really change their ideas.

Nigel: They have the conception of building the 'broad democratic alliance' and this really means chumming up to people in the establishment.

You won't get an alliance with girl guides, Young Liberals and the Church by getting involved in militant anti-fascist demos, so you spend all your time running around after these people instead of getting across to working class youth.

The YCL thinks that Young Liberals, and even young Tories are all really 'revolutionary' at heart. In fact they think they can recruit more people from the 'right' than from what they call the 'ultra-left' — groups like Revolution and Rebel.

They don't think anyone to the left of them has anything to say at all.

Martin: The YCL's kind of politics is inherently boring. The main thing they say is that you can't have the working class seizing power because it will annoy everyone else — hence the need for the 'broad democratic alliance'.

Instead of fighting for a real socialist alternative you try and compromise with people like small capitalists so that they can get unity.

Nigel: Everything has to be 'gradual' and 'slow change'.

But youth aren't attracted to everything being slow, they want to do things now.

Martin: Youth aren't inspired by compromises. Youth want definite militant answers one way or the other — if the left doesn't present clear, uncompromising attitudes some will turn to the fascists.

Lots of older people think that they won't get socialism in their lifetime. But us youth think that we will, and we want to fight for it now.

When the YCL does lead something it has to hold back the youth they are supposed to be leading — like they sabotaged attempts to organise actions, demos, and so on when they led the National Union of School Students.

Why did you leave the YCL?

Martin: It wasn't so much the politics as their effect — the boredom — that made me leave. Of course that was connected to politics, although I didn't see it at the time.

Also the YCL is full of older people, whereas Revolution is much more of a youth organisation. I joined Revolution because it is active and militant and I got politically educated once I joined.



Photo: JUDE WOODWARD (Socialist Challenge)

Nigel: The reasons are similar for me. They said they were internationalist and had links with Comsolom (the Soviet youth organisation). But they weren't really interested in what was happening there.

Take Afghanistan — they look at what's going on with interest but they don't think it will affect them. We've had a real discussion about Afghanistan in Revolution.

Revolution approaches things from a completely different angle.

What should Revolution do about the YCL?

Martin: We should fight for action with the YCL in Youth Against the Tories. Too often get away with saying they're things without doing anything.

It is in united action that best to discuss our political differences — for example, they don't we have to wait for a general election to kick out the Tories.

We say we can't wait years, the union leaders should organise a general strike to them out now.

Nigel: We'd also like to invite Y members to come along to our conference to see how we approach fighting for socialism.

Saturday/Sunday 17-18 May

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at

The University of London Students Union
Malet Street, London WC1
(5 mins from Euston Station)

Guest speakers; discussions; workshops; films; gig and disco; and much more besides.

Defend Alan Thornett!

Newsline, paper of the Workers' Revolutionary Party, has launched a new slander campaign against Alan Thornett, a leading militant in BL's Cowley factory and a leader of the Workers Socialist League.

The smear tactics of the WRP amount to the suggestion that the WSL is not a political tendency, but a bunch of provocateurs.

Two documents have been published in *Newsline* to suggest that Thornett is a provocateur who is 'loving up to the Pabloites'. Both of these documents have been stolen, one from Thornett himself, and one from the International Marxist Group.

The document stolen from Thornett's house in December 1977 was a letter from a police college asking Thornett to attend a seminar on conflict in society. Such letters are sent to numerous people in public life; it is ludicrous to suggest that Thornett is in any way either friendly to or an agent of the police because he received such a letter.

The document stolen from the IMG headquarters was a personal letter from Thornett to Tariq Ali, enclosing some political documents

and details of a public meeting. After the disappearance of this letter, evidence of forcible entry was found.

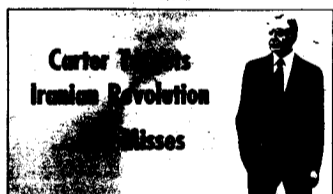
Why is the WRP reverting to these slander methods? The answer has to be sought in the fate of a once-Trotskyist organisation which has degenerated into a lumpen sect. More and more the WRP has come to rely on funding by a few petty-bourgeois 'super-stars'.

The distance between the WRP and reality has become greater and greater. Today the WRP is becoming a transmission belt for some of the cruder aspects of petty-bourgeois Arab nationalism and the Khomeini regime in Iran.

Combined with this political degeneration, the WRP is becoming enmeshed in a paranoid wonderland of spies and provocateurs. This frenzy is an attempt to cover up the chronic political crisis of the WRP, which has led previously leading members like Royston Bull out of the organisation.

The slanders and smears of this vile sect against a serious revolutionary like Thornett is contemptible. The time has come when the WRP can no longer be regarded as a part of the workers' movement, let alone anything to do with Trotskyism.

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14 May issue — Special Sales Drive

EXTRA sales promised so far for next week's issue covering 14 May amount to 650 copies. Nottingham IMG has ordered a further 50 copies this week to follow the example of Brent and Lambeth.

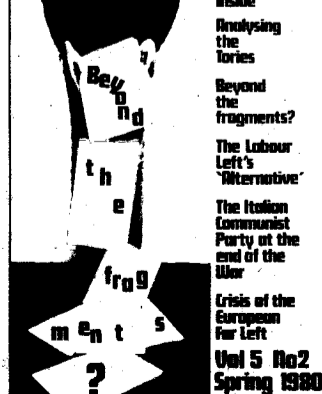
But that still leaves us a thousand copies short of our target of 6,250, the record set by the issue which was sold on the 9 March TUC demo.

IMG branches must get their extra orders in by this Friday, 9 May, as the paper will be distributed earlier than usual next week.

We still have not heard from our Scottish and Northern branches about extra orders. Rush in your orders and help us break our sales record.

INTERNATIONAL

Theoretical Journal of the International Marxist Group



OUT NOW! New issue of *International*, IMG theoretical journal. Contains major articles on the Labour left's 'Alternative Economic Strategy', 'Beyond the Fragments' and Italian Communist history. Also reviews and a reply to the SWP on the crisis of the European far left. Single issues: 85p. Subs: £3.50 for one year. From The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, London N1.

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SWAPO: 20 YEARS OF STRUGGLE

By Paul Lawson

AFTER the victory of ZANU in Zimbabwe, which established black majority rule after 80 years of white oppression, attention is increasingly turning to the liberation struggle in Namibia.

Namibia, or 'South West Africa', was a German colony, given to the South Africans as a League of Nations Protectorate in 1919. Despite the country's present legal status as a protectorate of the United Nations, the South Africans have kept a firm grip on Namibia's diamond and uranium wealth.

Since the early '60s, the South West Africa People's Organisation — SWAPO — has been waging an increasingly successful armed struggle to defeat the South African occupation. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the founding of the movement.

Minerals

The turn of the nationalist movement in Namibia to armed struggle and the impetus for the formation of SWAPO closely followed the Windhoek shootings in 1959.

The exploitation of Namibia's mineral wealth depended on a system of forced contract labour imposed on black workers. Throughout

1959 a campaign took place, organised by the nationalist forces, against the forcible removal of thousands of workers to the new township of Katutura.

Beer halls

Workers were placed under rigid control in the new township and the move was to entail massive increases in rent and transport costs. The resistance campaign culminated in December 1959 with a boycott of municipal beer halls, cinemas, and transport. On 10 December police opened fire on demonstrators, killing 13 Namibian workers and wounding 52.

In the aftermath of the shootings nationalist leaders were imprisoned, banned, or ordered out of Windhoek. A regroupment of nationalist forces led to the founding of SWAPO.

The beginning of armed struggle proved a long and difficult operation. The first major clashes between SWAPO guerillas and the South African forces did not take place until 1966. But above all it was the events of 1971-2 which transformed the Namibian struggle.

The general strike of 1971-2 began in the Katutura compound and lasted over two

months, involving more than 20,000 workers from every sector of the economy. The immediate cause of the strike were the low wages and appalling living conditions which the contract workers endured.

Most of the workers returned to their homelands; once there the workers organised themselves through local meetings, committees and mobilised support among the people.

The South Africans responded with massive repression and the strike was eventually broken. But the events of 1971-2 had carried the liberation struggle on to a new stage, consolidating support for SWAPO. Together with the liberation of Angola, it made possible a considerable extension of the armed struggle.

Regime

The South African regime and international imperialism both realise that the time has come to make some kind of 'settlement' in Namibia. Britain and the United Nations are working towards a settlement which would include the holding of elections, and the establishment of a demilitarised zone between Namibia and the SWAPO bases in Angola.

However the South African

government is proposing a series of amendments, which it appears that Britain and the UN will accept.

Intact

These include: 20 of the 40 South African bases along the border between Namibia and Angola being left intact; the disarming of SWAPO; SWAPO forces being excluded from Namibia; and the integration into South Africa of the huge Walvis Bay base area, which is the main port and has easy access to Windhoek.

This kind of settlement would amount to keeping Namibia under South African tutelage.

Large numbers of South African troops would be left in Namibia; the Rooikop base in Walvis Bay would provide the South Africans with an air-strike capacity inside Namibia; and the SWAPO forces would be effectively demobilised.

'Free' elections in these circumstances would be a fraud. The South Africans would continue to have effective control, and be able to sabotage the electoral process. In this situation, the struggle of SWAPO, both political and military will continue. So must the solidarity of the British labour movement.



SAM NJOMO, political leader of SWAPO



Behind the Cuban refugee crisis

LAST month, Roberto Padilla, the Cuban poet who was briefly imprisoned for ideological offences back in 1971, left Cuba on a three year exit visa. I was told by the Cuban film director, Santiago Alvarez, who was in London recently, that Padilla had specifically requested to be allowed to return to Cuba, and the government had agreed.

This shows that Cuba does not usually attempt to prevent people leaving, either temporarily or permanently. The right to leave Cuba is not the issue with the people who recently crammed into the Peruvian embassy compound in Havana — 10,000 according to the capitalist press, 3,000 according to the Cubans.

Last January, at the time of the first few incidents around the Peruvian embassy, the Ambassador issued a statement that was published in *Granma* (the Cuban 'Pravda') saying: 'We are not a travel agency'.

However, such statements cannot hide the fact that more than one embassy, including the Peruvian, has granted political asylum to people who can hardly be described as entitled to it.

Before the present problems with Peru the main offender had been Venezuela. In this case the issue is part of the wider problem of Venezuelan conflict with Cuba over policy in Central America. For example, Venezuela's Christian Democrat government stands accused of giving military assistance to the Christian

CUBA has not been exempt from the new waves of cold war propaganda that have been sweeping through the West.

The several thousand people who have invaded the Peruvian Embassy in Havana, claiming status as political refugees, have been used to smear both Cuba in particular and communism in general, especially in Latin America.

Peru, in the midst of an election campaign, has used the arrival of Cuban refugees in the country as a ploy against Hugo Blanco and other revolutionaries standing in the elections. 'They want to create another Cuba here, and people just want to get out of Castro's Cuba,' they say.

It cannot be denied that a large number of people want to leave Cuba at the present time, but, contrary to what the capitalist press would have us believe, the repressive nature of the Castro regime is probably not the chief cause.

In this article, MICHAEL CHANAN, a frequent visitor to Cuba, gives his view of what lies behind the situation.

Democrats in the government of El Salvador. This kind of conflict recently led Cuba and Venezuela to withdraw each other's ambassadors.

The USA has refused to accept a number of would-be immigrants from Cuba on the grounds that they were common criminals. It is clear that the same is true of many of those now jammed into the Peruvian embassy compound in Havana.

The trouble started around the Peruvian Embassy when six people crashed a bus through the Embassy gates early this month. Cuban guards exchanged shots and one of them was killed. Following this incident the Cubans removed their own guards from the embassy gates.

Other people wanting to leave Cuba are largely attempting to do so in response to a speech by Fidel Castro in which he said that Cuba didn't want people who weren't willing to be socialists.

He meant Cuba didn't want people who weren't prepared to accept and share the hardships as well as the benefits of a plan-

ned economy. Some of those who want to leave are discouraged by the country's current economic difficulties.

The hardships suffered in Cuba are nothing compared to the sufferings of the popular classes in virtually every other Latin American country. Cuba has rationing, but this is mainly due to the economic blockade of the country kept up by the USA for the last 20 years. The main aim of the rationing is to ensure an equitable distribution of food and other goods that are in short supply.

The capitalist press never fails to mention the rationing but somehow forgets to mention the blockade.

In the last few months Cuba has lost considerably through damage to its coffee, tobacco and to a lesser extent sugar crops. The main culprit is disease, but the losses in strict economic terms are likely to be recouped by the recent rise in world sugar prices.

Whichever way you look at it there has been considerable economic disruption in Cuba, but nothing like the crisis that the Western press has been

talking about. Castro's speech indicated that these problems required greater vigilance and discipline from socialists. This is precisely what many of those people inside the Peruvian embassy want to avoid.

Reports from Havana reveal that many Cubans testify that people from their own districts who have run to the Peruvian embassy are anti-social elements — individualists who refuse to adapt themselves to the collective values of socialism.

Foreign correspondents who have visited the embassy, agree that a sizeable group among these people fits that description: minor criminals running for cover. They are using the situation as an excuse.

If the Cubans have refused to cooperate with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees this is because, first, they quite reasonably do not consider these people refugees. Nobody needs to flee illegally. Everyone can leave who gets an entry visa to another country. Therefore, secondly, they regard the problem as one of bilateral relations with Peru.

Thirdly, they have themselves provided facilities to alleviate the discomfort in the compound, as well as safe-conduct passes to enable people to leave, and go home, and return later. Reuter has reported that many in the compound do not wish to avail themselves of these facilities.

Reports explain that they don't want to run the gauntlet of their angry neighbours, while pressure from some of the more aggressive of them prevents others from accepting.

BATTLE OF IDEAS

By Alain Brossat

FOR hundreds of thousands of young people who were about 20 in 1968, Sartre's ideas and writings provided an intellectual basis for a revolutionary commitment and an opening to Marxism.

This is what makes Sartre so radically different from other famous thinkers of the post war period, such as Raymond Aron and even Albert Camus. They never won anyone to revolutionary action and Marxism.

Another Zola?

From a political and historical standpoint Sartre's character is thrilling because of his relationship to politics. He was not a 'left intellectual', a 'committed writer', a classic fellow traveller, a Romain Rolland of the latter half of the 20th century. On the contrary, in his aggressive contradictory way he exemplified the crisis of this century.

What immediately strikes us about Sartre's passion for politics is that his commitment occurred very late, at the start of the Second World War, but above all during the Liberation of France (1944-5). By this time he was already a star of the arts and philosophy and this warped everything. He tried to shake off the glittering fame he had won from the world of the arts, which gave an added appeal to his political views but he was unable to do so, even after 1968. This paradox dominated the character of his commitment.

Furthermore when re-reading Sartre's biography today it is striking how little impact the cataclysmic events of the '30s had on his intellectual formation. In 1932-33, living in Berlin he wrote *Nausea*. Distractedly he noted 'Some communists and nazis shoot at each other in the Berlin streets.'

He vaguely sympathised with the Popular Front and felt some warmth for the Spanish revolution but these events, turning points in the century, did not captivate his intellectual energy. His writings during the period confirm that point. All his intellectual power was directed towards the construction of a philosophy of freedom within which a person's destiny and the individual's possible choices occupied a central position. Sartre's real politics are to be found in *Erostrate*, in *Le Mur*, and in the play *Les Mouches*.

The Group

Without a doubt the war marked the beginning of a decisive evolution in Sartre's relationship to politics. Taken prisoner in 1940 he experienced the stalag: 'What I liked about the camps was the feeling of belonging to a mass. Communication without barriers. We spoke to each other directly and equally. It taught me a lot.'

From that period the relationship of the individual to the group, within the context of historical commitment and praxis, was a constant feature of his thought — see, for example, some very beautiful passages in *The Critique of Dialectical Reason*.

During the war Sartre's commitment to the resistance was basically literary work on *Combat* and *Lettres Françaises*. When, in the agitated climate of the Liberation he threw himself into the political struggle, he found his philosophical system drawing him to explosive contradictions.

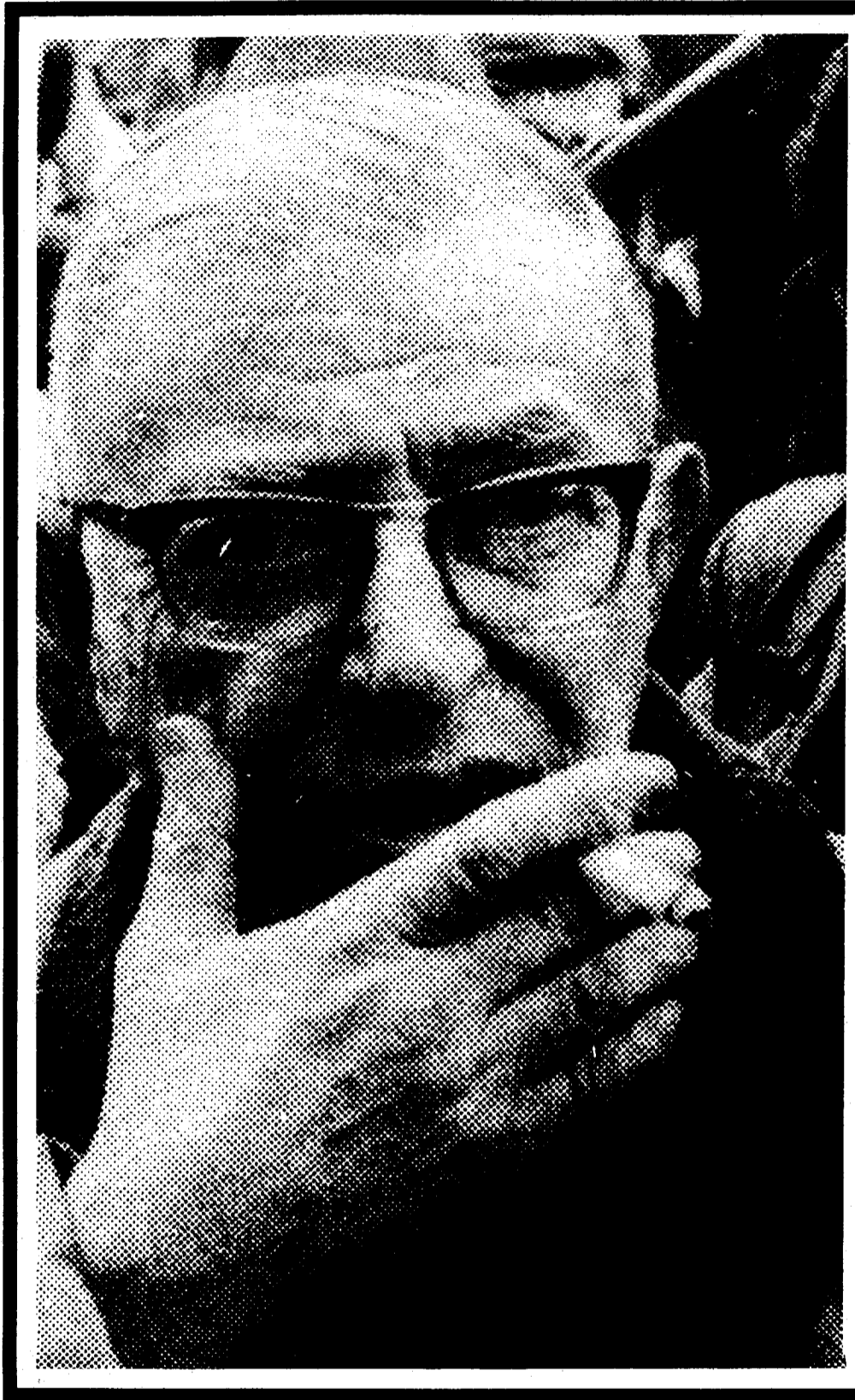
On the one hand his concept of freedom and his revulsion for all mechanical and heavily determinist thought compelled him to reject the Stalinist version of Marxism put forward in France at that time by Garaudy, Lefebvre, Desanti, Kanapa, etc. That is the meaning of a text like *Materialism and Revolution* (1946) which was his first attempt to reconcile his own philosophical views with Marxism.

On the other hand the radical character of his thought, which was sharpened still further in the post-Liberation years, took him beyond the new, national, political and ideological compromises that were being formed around the figurehead of De Gaulle.

Through the Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire (RDR) he found that it was impossible to chart a 'third way' between the two camps in the post-Yalta period. When the Cold War erupted his political thought was haunted by the philosophical idea of the necessity of choosing his own camp.

This explained his break with Aron, Camus and Merleau-Ponty. It must be stressed that these were not personal quarrels but marked Sartre's political trajectory. His writings bear this point out. In all his polemics, including the one with Merleau-Ponty, Sartre exhibited a confused realism that was dominated by his conscious will not to establish relations with imperialism and those who instigated the Cold War. He raged against a philosophy of abstention, against sheepish moralism. He pleaded for a commitment by which people would accept dirtying their hands.

'An anti-communist is a dog, there is no other way to describe them'



Philostalinism

The publication in 1952 of the first part of the famous text *Communists and Peace* ('an anti-communist is a dog, there is no other way to describe them') fell within the logic of the previous choices and defined him, until 1956, as a fellow traveller of the French Communist Party (PCF). The paradox of this text is that of Sartre's relationship to politics.

On the one hand it is a long drawn out plea in favour of the 'objective intelligence' of the PCF but at a time when the latter adopted one of its most aberrant, sectarian and isolationist super-Stalinist lines, under the cover of left phraseology, and sometimes accompanied by suicidal actions, like the famous demonstrations against NATO leader, Ridgway.

As Sartre was to later admit, in this article the magical power of words replaces coherence. It was a totally abstract text (PCF=working class, therefore...) and was augmented with furious and false attacks against the Trotskyists.

On the other hand, seen from the standpoint of the drift of the former 'revolutionary' intelligentsia of the Liberation into the camp

of the Cold War it is a text against the stream. It is a radical in a certain way given the formidable anti-communist campaign which was at its height.

Here we touch the limit of Sartre's political thought just as we will again when examining his political evolution after 1968. His commitment stemmed from indignation and moral reflex. It is not hampered by nuances or concrete analysis. It remained the commitment of an intellectual, whom fame had elevated to a pedestal, and who, on certain occasions, makes 'a gift of his person' to worthy causes. He remained irremediably outside the Group, Collective, Party, Class or Movement.

Sartre's situation was counterposed to the figure of 'the organic revolutionary intellectual' who assimilates her/himself to a historical process by identifying with the praxis of a group or class (Gramsci, Luxemburg, Lenin, Che Guevara).

However, this absence of social roots in Sartre's radicalism, gave him an ideological and political mobility which made him unpredictable. Two years after the publication of *Communists and Peace*, reacting on the spur of the moment to the smashing of the

Hungarian revolution, he published an excellent anti-Stalinist text, *The Ghost of Stalin*.

Of course this text contained many illusions: in Gomulka, on the perspective of a popular front in France; but it did analyse correctly the dynamic and the potential of the Budapest Commune. It judged correctly the crisis of Stalinism in the wake of the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party and criticised the intervention of the Russian tanks from a socialist standpoint — 'it is socialism itself that your bullets and shells were splintering'. Sartre thus freed himself from the false alternative of either supporting the Stalinist parties as they are, or falling into the camp of reaction.

With this text the bell tolled on Sartre's days as a PCF fellow-traveller. The position he took on the Algerian war only deepened the divergence. His opposition to the colonial war has contributed more than anything else to his international fame as an intransigent radical. His hard positions brought forth the hatred of the ruling class, of its pen-pushers and its bombers — 'Send Sartre to prison', 'Shoot Sartre'. But here again, behind the undoubted courage, we find a considerable lack of ideological clarity.

Sartre jumped with both feet into the boat of Third Worldism during the '60s. He accepted the idea that the Western working class had been bought off and the gross theory of violence as the major exorcist of alienation and oppression. 'In this first moment of revolt it is necessary to kill. To shoot a European is to kill two birds with one stone. It is to suppress at the same time an oppressor and an oppressed. A dead and a free man remain...' (Preface to *The Damned of the Earth* by Franz Fanon)

Which Marxism?

Underneath his mobile political views a very deep philosophical coherence exists in Sartre. At the beginning of all action, all politics, all history there is the freedom of a person, of a praxis, of a consciousness, mingled with the world. If Sartre's Marxism — its most complete form being in the preface to *Critique of Dialectical Reason* — has propelled so many young people to revolutionary action it is because at the time it was much more full of life than the heavy ideological artillery of Stalinism.

It threw a bridge between a 'miserable' subjectivity, a state of gelatinous revolt, and a possible revolutionary activity. That is why there were so many 'Sartrians' in the Union of Communist Students during the sixties.

Sartre never pursued his assimilation to Marxism to its conclusion for the simple reason that he would have found it necessary to question the very foundations of his philosophy.

This can be seen clearly after 1968. Shaken to the core by the passivity of so many intellectuals he questioned his own commitment. His response was twofold: a radical rejection of the role of the intellectual as such, and a re-evaluation of the relationship between Marxism and socialism which led him to varieties of libertarianism.

With the maoists

There is something poignant in Sartre's ultimate solution. Out of radical conviction he became a Maoist fellow traveller. They, without scruples, used him in the service of their delirious politics. More than ever Sartre found himself as the decorative trump card for politics elaborated behind his back. At this moment he declared the death of the classical, committed, intellectual.

He was the supreme caricature of the organic intellectual, a militant among the militants, full of ardour and anonymous ... Nevertheless the work with the Maoists had a rational basis. In the famous 'one is right to revolt', in the propaganda of symbolic actions, in the proclamations of abstract radicalism, there is a whiff of the perfume of Sartrean philosophy of praxis and freedom.

Beneath the failure of politics reduced to gestures we can see, again, a coherence stubbornly rooted in concepts forged half a century ago.

Despite all we have said of the failures of Sartre's politics we will never join the chorus of small-minded Marxists who treat him as a dead dog. Firstly the importance of what remains of him, of his literary and philosophical work, will not lead to accommodations with a society to which he himself was never reconciled.

Secondly under the sinuous line of his political commitment there is a basic question with which he furiously struggled for decades — what can intellectuals do for the revolution as long as the social and historical conditions giving rise to their existence and reproduction as a particular group prevail?

Making an assessment of the political commitment of the greatest radical intellectuals of this century and compare it with Sartre. You will see that in the midst of the heart-wrenching of the committed intellectual, Sartre was one of the greatest.

LETTERS

SCEVENTS

ABERDEEN: SC sold Saturdays outside C&As — for more info ring phone Colin, 574068.

BATH: SC on sale at 1985 Books, London Road, and Saturdays 2pm-3pm outside the Roman Baths. Phone 20298 for more details.

BIRMINGHAM: SC on sale at The Ramp, Fri 4.30-5.30, Sat. 10-4. For more info phone 643 9209.

BRADFORD: SC available from Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.

BRENT: SC supporters sell every Sat Morning at the Brent Collective Bookstall in the Trades Hall, Willesden High Rd NW10.

BRIGHTON: For info phone Nick, 605052.

BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. For more info contact Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpellier, Bristol 6.

CARDIFF: SC sales Newport Town Centre outside Woolworths 11-12.30; Cardiff British Home Stores 11-12.30. Also available from 108 Books, Salisbury Road, Cardiff.

COVENTRY: SC available from Wedge Bookshop. For more info about local activities phone 461138.

DEWEE: SC available from Dundee City Square outside Boots, every Thursday 4-5.30pm, Friday 4-5.30pm, Saturday 11-4pm.

ENFIELD: SC public meetings, Thurs 8 May, 7pm, 'The Middle East after Mission Fiasco'. Speaker from IMG Political Committee. At Middlesex Poly, Pounds End site.

ENFIELD: SC available from Nelsons newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.

HARINGEY: SC public meeting, 'Why the TUC should call a General Strike'. Speaker: Phil Hearse, editor, Socialist Challenge. Thur 8 May, 7.45pm, Highgate Wood Lower School, corner of Wolsley Rd and Park Rd, N8.

HIDDERSFIELD: SC supporters sell papers every Saturday 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaseworks.

LAMBETH: SC now available at kiosk Brixton tube, Oval tube, Herne Hill British Rail and Tetric Books Clapham.

NEWHAM: SC sale every Saturday, 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Market, Upton Park.

OLDHAM: SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities, Tel. 061-682 5151.

OXFORD: SC supporters sell every Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.

STOCKPORT: SC sold every Saturday 1pm Mersey Square. Tel. 061-236 4905 for more information.

SWINDON: SC on sale 11-1 every Sat., Regent St (Brunel Centre).

TESSIDE: SC sales at Newsfare shops in Cleveland Centre and on Lintshorpe Rd, Middlesbrough, and at Greens Bookstall, upstairs in Spencer Mkt, Stockton High St.

TOWER HAMLETS: SC supporters sell papers every Friday 5-6pm Watney Mkt, Sat 11-12.30pm Whitechapel tube, Sunday 10.30-12.00 Brick Lane.

WHAT'S LEFT

RATES for ads to appear in What's Left: 5p per word or £4 per col. inch. Deadline: noon Sat. prior to publication. Payment in advance.

REMEMBER BRISTOL! T-shirts (S.M.L.) £2.95. Posters (20ins x 30ins) 75p. St Pauls, Bristol, 1980 plus photo. Discount for bulk orders. SAE for our current lists. Sleeping Partners (screenprinters), 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool 1. Tel. 051-708 7466.

NATIONAL Women's Festival Against Tory Attacks. Planning meeting to organise a national festival on 18 October. Individuals and representatives from women's groups, trade unions, students' organisations and community groups all welcome. Sunday 11 May, 5.30pm at 37-41 Gray's Inn Rd, London WC1. Called by NAC, ROW, Fightback for Women's Rights, and many others.

WOMEN and Revolution in Nicaragua. Wed 28 May Star and Garter, Fairfield Street, Piccadilly, London. Speaker is woman recently returned from Nicaragua.

CELEBRATE Zimbabwe liberation. Sat 17 May, Trades Hall, 96 Dalston Lane, London E8. 2.30-5pm, film, meeting (free); 8pm Afrodisco, bar/food, £1.

IMG NOTICES

Apology

Some Fraction Notices were mistakenly missed out from last week's column. None of the fractions previously advertised has been cancelled or postponed. Below is a complete list of forthcoming fractions:

ASTMS — national fraction at National Centre, Saturday 10 May, 2pm-5pm.

NALGO — national fraction, National Centre, Sunday 11 May, 10am-5pm.

NLT — national teacher's aggregate, Saturday 31 May.

NUPE — national aggregate, Sunday 1 June, National Centre, noon-5.00pm. Fraction leaderships' aggregate, 22 June.

ALEW — national fraction, Saturday 24 June.

NATIONAL Gay Fraction. Sun 1 June in London, venue to be arranged. Agenda: debates on gay liberation printed in pre-conference DB; perspectives for gay movement; allocation of work within fraction. A document on perspectives will be available from mid-May. Anyone wanting a copy and not on mailing list inform national Centre.

London Notices

YOUTH Against the Tories. Hackney and Tower Hamlets Revolution public meeting on 'Black Liberation and the Fight Against Racism' with Tariq Ali and a Revolution speaker plus film on Namibia. Thurs 15 May, 7.30pm, Homerton Library, Homerton High St (corner of Brooksbury's Walk), E9

OPEN ORGANISING MEETING TO PLAN BROAD LEFT PHOTOGRAPHY CONFERENCE

Feminist — Workers — Community Journalism — Documentary

Date: Saturday, 10 May 1980

Time: 2:00

Place: St. Bride Institute (off Fleet Street, Near Ludgate Circus)

ALL WELCOME

Politically dishonest omission?

IT SEEMS that some of the IMG's own members are less than enthusiastic for your organisation's much vaunted pursuit of left unity. At least that is the only conclusion to be drawn from Hilda Kean's report of the National Union of Teachers conference.

It contains no mention of even the existence of Rank and File Teacher let alone its central involvement in all of the activities at the conference reported by Ms Kean.

In addition to this glaring and politically dishonest omission, the report contains a number of remarks that merit specific comment:

1. The success of the 'left' resolutions referred to was due in no small measure to the fact that Rank and File and the STA co-operated in formulating most of them. There was also a large degree of co-operation in the fringe meetings at the conference;

2. Hilda commented: 'And we haven't even begun the task of building a permanent opposition to the executive in the localities.' We'll leave her to speak for the STA, but Rank and File has more than begun that task.

We have a national organisation of classroom teachers with 500 supporters and 50 supporters' groups. Of course we have a long way to go, but we agree with Hilda that the tide is turning in favour of the militants in the union.

3. There were indeed 'only two left-wing candidates elected in the recent executive elections'. But what Hilda omitted to inform your readers is that both Pam Corr and Dick North are Rank and File supporters and SWP members.

If your readers would like a less selective account of events at Blackpool we can only refer them to the article by Nick Grant in *Socialist Worker* in which he made reference to the intervention of both the STA and Rank and File at the conference.

In conclusion we re-affirm the commitment of both Rank and File and the SWP to the only kind of left unity that matters — unity in action.

JEANNIE ROBINSON, SHAUN DOHERTY, Rank and File executive and SWP teachers fraction, London N16

Getting straight on numbers

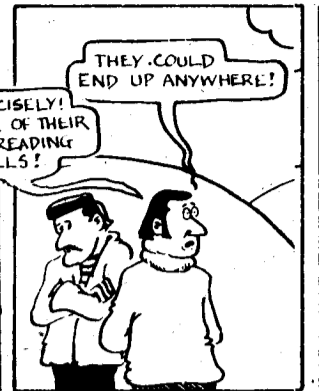
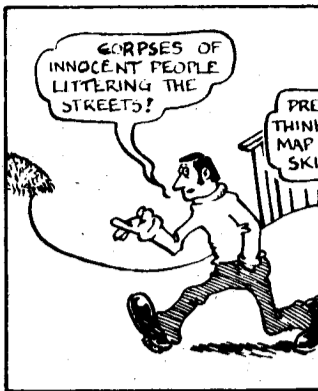
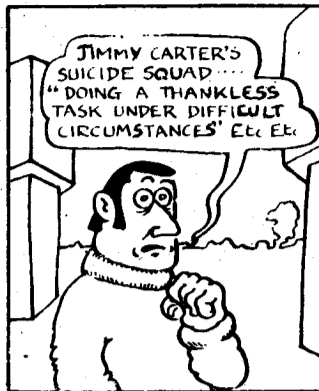
STUART PAUL (Letters, 17 April) describes as an error the claim that the Socialist Workers Party (UK) is 'the largest revolutionary organisation in Western Europe or North America' because 'an organisation usually classified as revolutionary, one that organises against the Spanish state, the LCR-LKI, a section of the Fourth International, is at least twice the size of the SWP (UK)'.

That would give the LCR-LKI over 7,000 members. Unfortunately, the LCR-LKI delegation at the recent world congress of the Fourth International was elected on the basis of only 1,500 members — and there is no point in trying to cover up this fact since the SWP (UK) were there as observers. All such over-estimations of our own forces in fact do is to distract attention from the political significance of the fight to build the FI as the only existing revolutionary International.

MARTIN METEYARD, London E5

Building the steel rank and file

I WAS somewhat surprised to see Socialist Challenge printing a letter (Clay about Real Steel News?, 24 April) which indulged in false breast beating about the



role of the SWP in the recent steel strike.

Geoff Collier objected to my judgement of the Real Steel News (RSN) project of the SWP as being a failure. He cited the local Scunthorpe case to prove the opposite, but his reference to the number of recruits made by RSN misses the point.

The real question was: What role did RSN play in constructing an alternative leadership to that of Bill Sirs? We were told that the Scunthorpe RSN 'involved a number of Labour Party members as well as non-aligned steel workers'. Good, but the very subtitle of the RSN, 'Socialist Workers Party Steelworker Bulletin', showed that the orientation of the RSN and the SWP was the very opposite of a united front approach.

What was crucial was the fight inside the structures of the unions, most especially in the strike committees. To try to impose a party bulletin on this could only undermine the development of a rank and file leadership.

A rank and file movement will be created in the struggle for leadership as began to happen in the steel strike. In South Yorkshire a small group of militants formulated the demand for 20 per cent with no strings, and when the strike began this rank and file leadership, on the divisional strike committee, took the running of the strike out of the hands of Bill Sirs. Full-time officials like Keith Jones were part of this.

In South Wales, things were less favourable, but even here a polarisation began to take place in, for example, the Llanwern strike committee.

The growth of the Caldicot picketing association (which involved JPs and councillors) to the point where, at the end of the strike, it could sponsor meetings of 300 militants to begin to organise against the closures in opposition to the sell-out policies of the union officials was another sign of the developments that occurred during the strike.

Tony Cliff's remark in *Socialist Worker* that 'No rank and file organisation existed in the strike' is not only a comment on the failure of the RSN, but a tribute to the isolation of the SWP comrades from the real development of a rank and file movement. There are none so blind as those that will not see.

If the comrades of the SWP had applied their hard and dedicated work to aid these real developments, our combined resources would have given the unofficial strike committee a much better chance to challenge Sirs' leadership of the strike.

This would have changed the course not only of the steel strike but of the class struggle in Britain today.

At the very least it would have made it more likely that the Steelworkers Charter, so dear to the SWP, might actually have been endorsed by the Stocksbridge strike committee as the comrade now falsely claims.

Comrades who are interested in the growth of the real rank and file movement in the steel strike should get the new IMG pamphlet *Lessons of the Steel Strike and the Fight Against the Tories* which will be out shortly.

BRIAN GROGAN, London

LETTERS exceeding 400 words will normally be cut to ensure that the maximum number of readers can express their views. Anonymous letters will only be published in exceptional circumstances, but real names will be withheld from publication on request.

Women's Fightback: debate

I AM rather surprised at Nelle Darlington's letter (17 April) about the recent 'Women's Fightback' conference.

Members of the IMG were present in every single workshop of the conference — we did not in that sense confine our contribution to the question of abortion.

But my own experience of the workshop that I was in — which I found was shared by many women at the conference — was that it was impossible in workshops of up to 100 people to really get down to discussing out any adequate perspectives on how to continue to fight for women's rights and liberation and against the Tory attacks.

The atmosphere of 'fight and outgoingness' that Nelle mentions was present initially, but in my view was dissipated by the way the conference was organised.

That is by the insistence of the organisers that the workshops on the five themes should not be split into smaller groups and that the only perspective put forward by the planning group was a recall conference later to decide on a structure for a national campaign.

That conception will fail to build a broad and united women's movement. The proposals put forward for organising a broad mass rally of the women's liberation movement, students, youth and the labour movement, involving women and men, should be a step towards bringing together all those women who Nelle mentions are in one way or another fighting for their interests as women.

Such an event, called for at the conference by the National Abortion Campaign and Rights of Women, is now being planned for the autumn.

The IMG will enthusiastically build this event as it will any initiative that can bring together women to discuss and act in unity on women's demands.

I am glad to say that the Women's Fightback collective is also involved and will call for all those at its conference in June to go out and build for this rally.

Just a few points on *Women in Action*. I don't understand how one sells in a 'sectarian' or 'non-sectarian' way. You sell something because you think it is important and can do a certain job better than anything else. Is that sectarian?

Women in Action is open to anyone — as was demonstrated at the conference by the number of women who came to the stall, or the meeting (announced in the plenary session), bought copies, expressed interest and are now on the mailing list.

As to whether it is by and for women trades unionists, I suggest Nelle asks the eighty delegates who bought it at the Women's TUC, or the trades councils and trade union branches that take the bulk orders to sell to their members, or the 800 who bought it at the TUC 9 March demonstration.

PENNY DUGGAN, London N1

Egypt-Israel treaty complex issue

THE article on 'The Cairo Connection' (1 May) demonstrated how fully Anwar Sadat has turned towards the USA. It also repeated and implied a popular view of the Camp David Egypt-

Israel peace treaty as 'a total betrayal of the Palestinian cause'.

For revolutionary socialists the approach to this treaty must surely be to judge whether it sets back the class struggle in the region. If we decide it does, we should mobilise as broad forces as possible to get the treaty annulled.

If the treaty is not a setback, what do we have to say about it and how do we respond to its repercussions?

We have always stated that the Arab bourgeois regimes will not defend the interests of the displaced Palestinians. To turn around now and accuse one of their number of betrayal is surely contradictory.

What Sadat did was to exploit Egypt's position as the biggest potential threat to Israel at a time of tremendous social crisis in Egypt. For the first time Israel gave up territory and dismantled settlements in return for an agreement which complemented Sadat's current inability to launch a war against Israel.

Along with other Arab states, Egypt already recognised the Zionist state. In Israel the treaty has brought into question the inviolability of Jewish settlements and so aided the opposition to the West Bank settlements which are now the centre of attention.

In Egypt the treaty was welcomed because the masses saw this as an end to dying in wars and hence, as Sadat claimed, the beginning of a better life.

On the latter, the improvements in the life of the masses are already proving to be well below expectations and this makes for an explosive combination which socialists must exploit. However, it is impossible within the limits of a letter to do justice to this complex topic.

I would like to point out that the revolutionary socialist journal 'Khamsin' is holding a series of forums in London. At the next meeting, in Room D, Birkbeck College, Malet Street at 8pm on Tuesday 13 May, a leading Palestinian speaker, Halil Hindi, will give a presentation concerning this issue within the framework of the Palestinian nationalist movement.

He will be taking up points raised by Jon Rothschild, the first speaker, who will be speaking from a revolutionary socialist viewpoint.

I would urge SC to publish the views of these two speakers as an introduction to this important debate, and I would be happy to approach the organisers of the Khamsin forums and the individuals concerned to try and facilitate this.

Nigel Ward, Hounslow, Middlesex

Richard Pryor review 'an affront'

I AM writing to condemn your decision to print Gerry Kelly's article on 'Richard Pryor Live In Concert' because it represents not only a gross attack upon the sexuality of black people, but also an affront to the work that women, gays and blacks have struggled to carry out over the last decade.

Gerry Kelly seems to see culture as entertainment, for he implies that if it's laughable then it must be good; galvanizing his reactionary ideology with vulgar pleas to the effect that 'even Trotsky had the odd loony idea.'

I am black, I am gay and I am a revolutionary Marxist and I do think that sexuality is a serious issue because my sexuality is oppressed. Yes, there can be jokes about sex but if they are an affront upon my sexuality and my people, black people, then they are just not funny.

I do not always 'go about feeling my prick' even though I am black, even though you may attribute this statement to Mrs Carter placating Andrew Young on his larger-than-peanut cock. You are racist and sexist to suggest that this should be funny.

The editors of Socialist Challenge must be equally insensitive to black, gay and women's liberation if they allowed this disgusting article to go into print. (I say article because it cannot even be graced with the status of a review because it in no way discusses the film as a piece of cultural production which is endowed with criticizable and debatable meaning.)

Kelly can have no knowledge of culture (nor sexual politics) or else he would not have written such a slur. If he had seen 'The Comedians' by Trevor Griffiths (a play about the dangerous political contradictions inherent in humour) then he would have thought twice about advising us that we might be sick when we hear Pryor's jokes: I was nearly sick when I read Kelly's article.

I am oppressed all the time by bourgeois culture — from Shakespeare to the latest TV ad — which assumes that all black men are white-women-hungry-prick-swingers. Even black American militants in the '60s took over this ideology when they thought that one of the aims of the Civil Rights Movement was to reclaim the virility which 'had been denied them by the imperialist white man.'

And it took the brilliant artistic campaign of James Baldwin to refute this self-oppressive notion when he consistently wrote how the persona of the 'black macho' is a white construct, itself a function of imperialism and not 'liberating' at all.

So the humour of Richard Pryor is one which would only appeal to all you *Time Out* trendies down in London whose peripheral radicalism makes it impossible for you to realize what racism and sexism really is; and, I'm sorry to say Gerry, your article fits this bill very well.

I must tell you that simply sending-up the whites and making risqué snipes at the white macho is not very convincing when the very same comedian turns full circle and defiles his own people by those very attitudes which he is supposed to be denouncing.

ANTHONY FRANCIS, Manchester



SORRY! The photograph on page 2 of the 24 April issue showing a pro-abortion demonstrator being arrested outside the House of Commons was not credited. It was taken by Linda Westmore.



Generations of Resistance

By Molefe Pheto

PETER Davies' film *Generations of Resistance* deals with Soweto before and after the uprising of 1976, with a sharp change in tempo and mood following the events of that summer.

To my knowledge it is the most thoroughly researched documentary on the history of the liberation struggles in South Africa, using archive material from the beginning of the resistance to white rule.

The brutality, inhumanity, and animalistic savagery of the white regime's officials, police, and soldiers comes across only too starkly. If it were not on film some of it would not be

believed — it is that gruesome. No doubt this is why such valuable material has not been shown before.

Generations of Resistance traces the black liberation struggle from shortly after the arrival of the whites in South Africa; a struggle which starts to take shape under Bambata, the great nationalist leader of the time.

The film chronicles the introduction of anti-black laws by successive regimes, and how blacks rallied against them.

By 1976, the impatience of the blacks had become quite unapologetic. Moral considerations and hopes of a change of heart on the part of the white rulers belong to history. Representatives of the Black Consciousness Movement — although they are given little time in the

— although they are given little time in the film — state their case succinctly.

As Harry Nengwenkulu puts it: 'If a slave wants to be free, he must first begin by appreciating himself.'

The interviews, from Black Consciousness supporters and the earlier leadership — mostly the African National Congress — leave no doubt about the attitudes and the anger in South Africa today.

The fault with the film is that it becomes a propaganda vehicle for the ANC. Through the commentary, too much time is allotted to this organisation — to the point of boredom. Film-makers should let the images speak for themselves.

Very little time is given to contemporary

events in South Africa. One feels the implied safety of shooting the film from outside the country. This mars authenticity.

To me the highlights were the Pondo Mountain revolutions, the women's resistance efforts, and the Black Consciousness Movement interviews. Picture-wise this is also where the close-ups make the most impact.

It is a film worth seeing.

Generations of Resistance, which lasts 50 minutes and is in 16mm colour, is available from The Other Cinema, 12/13 Little Newport St, London WC2. Tel 01-734 8508/9. The film will be shown on 9 and 10 May at the Arts Centre, Bristol.

A revolutionary love story

By Michael Chanan

ONE WAY or Another, by the black Cuban woman director Sara Gomez — who died tragically from asthma as the film was nearing completion — is a revolutionary love story. It refuses to isolate the love between two people from the social world they live in, in the way that the love stories of bourgeois cinema tend to do.

It sees personality not as something mysterious and undecipherable, but as the expression in the individual of class background, cultural inheritance and personal history. It does so, however, without suggesting that people can be reduced to these abstract causes: people remain individuals, each unique in his or her own way, to be valued as individuals. Otherwise socialism doesn't make sense.

The central protagonists are a worker at a bus factory, Mario, and a primary school teacher, Yolanda. The film is also about the problems that arise for each of them in these places of work.

In particular a workers' assembly in Mario's factory is called upon to deal with the case of his

buddy Humberto, who has skived off work for a few days. Humberto tells the assembly he went to visit his dying mother, but Mario knows that he went off to get laid.

The film is as much about the relationship between Mario and his buddy as about the love relationship between Mario and Yolanda. Humberto is Mario's *alter ego*; both come from a district in Havana which was one of the first new neighbourhoods built by the Revolution to replace the old slums. The film is about the struggle among the previously marginal classes to overcome the habits, customs, beliefs and values of the old underdeveloped society, which in the context of the new socialist ethic represents a variety of anti-social traits.

Machismo

Humberto's behaviour is that of an individualist with no sense of responsibility towards his fellow workers. This provokes a split with Mario — it is a painful process, because he is bound to Humberto by the codes of close male loyalty, 'buddyism'. This turns out to conflict just as much with the new social codes of the Revolution, which demand a wider sense of collective and social responsibility.

The film thus contrasts the break-up of one relationship, based

on old patterns of behaviour, with the formation of a new one which can only be built on the basis of new values.

Yolanda comes from within the Revolution — one of the teachers sent to the district from beyond. In spite of her own difficulties in coming to terms with this sector of society, she represents a challenge to Mario's *macho* habits — the same *machismo* which lies at the root of his buddyism with Humberto.

So this is also a kind of feminist film but in a very special sense: it sees *machismo* as one symptom among others of underdevelopment and does not set up a straight opposition between men and women which requires an antagonistic solution.

There is a great deal to be learnt from this film about Cuba and about the revolutionary process. Also about political cinema: the

film mixes fiction and documentary, fictional characters and real ones, but it never becomes obscure or difficult to follow, it never indulges in aesthetic experiment for its own sake.

It is an example of what the Cubans call 'imperfect cinema'. This is a political and dialectical concept which indicates the technical and artistic perfection are not political aims in themselves and that the political film is incomplete without the audience taking it up and inserting it into political struggle.

That is precisely the way this film should be used. It isn't going to reach you at your local Odeon, but you can book it for showing at meetings where it can be followed by discussion, from The Other Cinema, 12/13 Little Newport Street, London WC2H 7JJ 01-734 8508/9.

Women in a male world

AFTER Sue Brown's exhibition last year at Centre 181 in Hammersmith, press comments ranged from 'revolting, appalling, totally unsuitable for children' to 'fantastic' and 'beautifully made — a real turn-on'.

The deputy Mayor of Hammersmith, Ettie Crawford, said: 'I found it extremely offensive; the whole flaming thing is in bad taste. I think a number of women will be offended and men embarrassed, even if they think I am a silly narrow-minded old bat.'

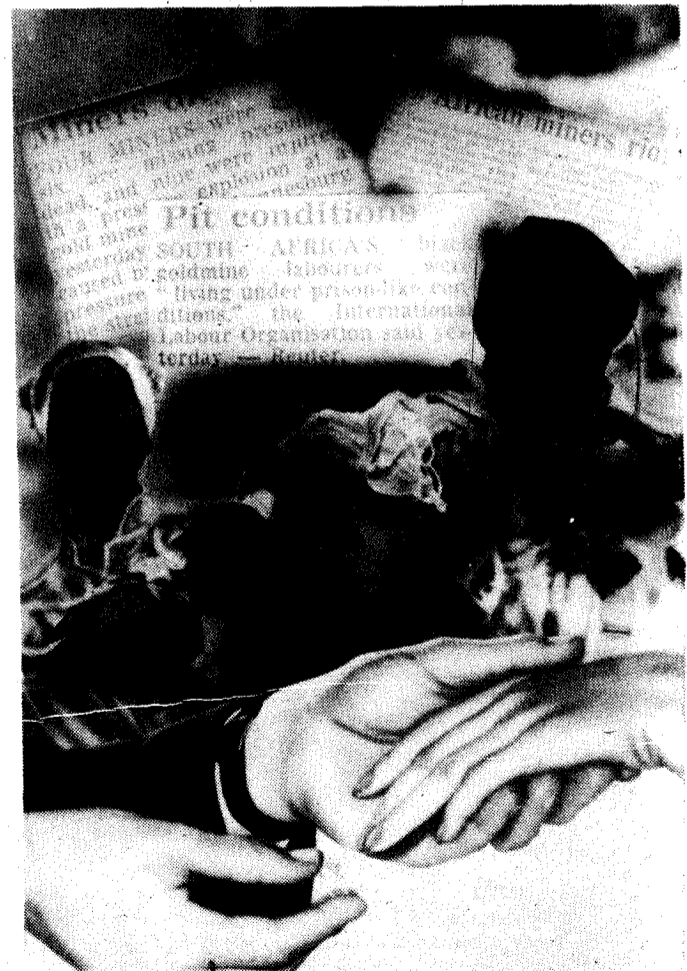
This critical appraisal was provoked by Sue Brown's portrayal of a woman's place in a male-oriented society.

Sue says of herself: 'My work is a description of how I

have felt, being a woman, through the various phases of my life as a child, growing girl, mother and housewife.

'I accept that my sculpture will not come across to all sections of the public, but equally I believe that some people — especially those who have given birth to children and who share my dislike of the way women are treated by the medical profession, health visitors, family planners and the like — will sympathise with what my art is about.'

Her new exhibition is called *Soft Sculpture* and can be seen from 1-24 May, 11am-6pm at the Pentonville Gallery, 45 Amwell Street, London EC1. Tel 01-837 9826.



APARTHEID

An exhibition of photomontages by Martin Lovis

MARTIN Lovis is an artist with a special interest in, and concern for, those affected by Apartheid. His latest work, a series of 30 colour photomontages, is an attempt to draw attention to the suffering in the area. His photo-journalistic style reflects the dogmatic justification of the supporters of apartheid and the harsh realities of life for blacks living under it.

The pictures will be exhibited at the University of London Union (adjacent to Dillons Bookshop), Malet Street, London WC1 for one week from 6-10 May between 9.30am and 10.00pm.

If you would like to obtain the exhibition for your area contact Martin Lovis c/o Anti Apartheid, 89 Charlotte Street, London W1, or telephone 01-580 5311.

New magazine for gays?

OUT AND OUT is the name proposed for a new monthly magazine aimed at filling a gap in the 'gay media'. At present there is no national radical news magazine catering for lesbians and gay men. *Out and Out* will have a committed feminist perspective and cover news, analysis, features, and reviews. Interested?

An open meeting to discuss forming an editorial collective and decide what the shape of the magazine should be is being held at 10.30am on the 17 May in the Covent Garden Community Centre, London WC2. The organisers hope that as many lesbians and gay men as possible will attend.

Further information from: Sarah Ross, 34 Cowley Road, Oxford, or Derek Cohen on 01-274 6777.

Socialist Challenge



Armagh 11 protester jailed

ANN Marie Loughran, one of the 'Armagh 11', was jailed last week.

She was thrown into prison for two months for refusing to pay a fine imposed on her after the Royal Ulster Constabulary attacked a peaceful picket of Armagh women's prison on international women's day last year.

The case of the Armagh 11 has attracted wide publicity in Ireland, Britain, and Europe.

The women were attacked by the police for staging a demonstration expressing their solidarity with women Republican prisoners in Armagh.

After a number of delays and adjournments the women were finally summoned to appear in court over a year after the original events took place.

In protest at the delay, the women refused to appear. All were fined in their absence.

Ann Marie was arrested on Saturday morning. She is now in Armagh prison and has joined the other women there in refusing to obey prison rules drawn up for 'criminals'.

The women, like their counterparts in H block, are demanding prisoner-of-war status.

The official reason for Ann Marie's arrest was that the time given to her to pay her fine had run out. But nor-

mally in the North of Ireland there is considerable flexibility between the deadline set for paying a fine and arrest for non-payment.

That belief that Ann Marie has been singled out for special treatment is substantiated by the fact that of the four of the Armagh 11 whose deadline had passed, she was the most vulnerable, having four children and being in a one parent family.

SAS—NO HEROES OF OURS

THE Special Air Service is the psychopathic scum of the British Army. Its members are murderers, sadists and torturers.

This needs to be said as the Tory government and the British media call upon us all to celebrate the killing by the SAS of three 'gunmen' who had seized the Iranian embassy in London.

Whatever the issues involved in that seizure, the 'victory' of the SAS is not one that should be hailed by working people.

Certainly the SAS was in need of some sort of morale boosting exercise.

Only last week in Belfast one of its members, described euphemistically at the time as 'a British soldier working undercover', was shot dead by the Provisional IRA.

This followed the severe wounding of another such element in the North of Ireland town of Enniskillen the previous week.

Mistake

This supposedly 'crack regiment' has not had much success in Ireland of late. One of its last recorded 'kills' was on New Year's Eve in County Armagh. The only problem was the victim was a British soldier ambushed 'by mistake'.

Earlier in 1979 another 'mistake' was the killing of 16-year-old John Boyle — shot in the back by the SAS because he was unfortunate enough to wander in the direction of an IRA arms-dump.

The other recent deaths attributed to the 'Who dares wins' brigade have been of its own members, several of whom have died mysteriously 'in training' over the last year.

Nor does it say a great deal for the SAS that it helped to train the US soldiers who crashed into each other in an Iranian desert.

But although the SAS is, by and large, a rather incompetent band of thugs its purpose is serious.

Half of them are trained solely for use in the North of Ireland. Their job

is to assassinate Republican suspects — part of Britain's 'peace-keeping' rôle.

A number of unarmed suspects have indeed been murdered by the SAS, as have been some passers-by who have strolled into the SAS's line of fire.

Oman

The SAS has performed a similar role in other countries with which Britain has 'friendly relations'. Specifically it was used by the Sultan of Oman in the early 1970s against a popular uprising this despot was then facing.

The function of the regiment is described in the British Army's 'restricted' document 'Counter Revolutionary Operations', which says that one aim of the SAS is to run 'assassination parties'.

Now for the first time the regiment has been used in Britain itself. It is unlikely that the full facts behind the storming of the embassy will ever be allowed to emerge. All that the public is told is that they have to applaud the 'heroism' of the SAS.

But the main ideologue of the SAS, Brigadier Frank Kitson, once wrote:

'It is difficult for the British with their traditions of stability to imagine disorders beyond the powers of the police to handle but there are already indications that such a situation could arise...

Us tomorrow

'If a genuine and serious grievance arose, and such might result from a significant drop in the standard of living, all those who now dissipate their protest over a wide variety of causes might concentrate their efforts...

'Should this happen the Army would be required to restore the position rapidly. Fumbling at this juncture might have grave consequences.'

Which makes it very clear that if the SAS comes for Arabs and Irish Catholics today, Brigadier Kitson is very sure whom they will come for tomorrow.

Graveyard Graphics



Pull Down the Curtain on the Tories

WITH this week's postbag our curtain takes a first faltering step to shutting out the Tories. Not before time we might add — they have been around for one year too long already.

You can help to bring down the curtain by sending us a donation, or better still by organising a fund-raising event for Socialist Challenge in your area.

We certainly need the cash if we are to continue our coverage of all the major events in the class struggle.

Our total so far this quarter is a measly £505.93. We need another £2,000 before the end of June to keep our paper afloat.

Our thanks this week to:

L Wadsted	£2
Camden IMG	£5
Bristol SC supporters	£20
Anon	£20.46
Swindon IMG	£8.50
MB	£15
K Russell	£3.50

WEEK'S TOTAL £74.46
GRAND TOTAL £505.93

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