

Socialist Challenge



INSIDE

★ ★ ★
Tony Benn
on America
page 5

★ ★ ★
Iran/Iraq
war
pages 2-3

★ ★ ★
Labour and
the bomb
page 4



★ ★ ★
Conspiracy
against
Nicaragua
page 12

★ ★ ★
Right to
Work march
page 15

★ ★ ★
Inside Long
Kesh
page 13

★ ★ ★
Leicester:
racism and
the crisis
pages 8-9



Labour right threatens party unity

What is Shirley Williams running away from?

SOCIALISM!

'LEFT FASCISM' — that's how Shirley Williams, hero of the Labour right, described the fight for democracy and left policies last Monday.

In a ranting speech at the so-called Campaign for Labour Democracy meeting at the Labour Party conference, Williams declared war on the left.

The attack of hysteria being suffered by the right-wing's Gang of Three is a direct consequence of the surge inside the party for more democracy and socialist policies.

British capitalism is in its most serious crisis since the 1930s. The Tories in their own way have a radical programme for dealing with this crisis — unemployment, lower wages, social welfare cuts.

These add up to a drastic decline in the standard of living of the working class. The Tories hope through these measures to boost profits and get out of the crisis.

The only alternative to this is a socialist programme — of nationalisation, planning of investment, and workers' control. These measures would

provide a basis for overcoming the crisis in the interests of working people, not profits.

Shirley Williams and her co-thinkers Owen and Rodgers want none of that. They cling to the belief that it is possible to continue with the policies of 'welfare capitalism'.

Dreams

This is the idea that capitalism can go on providing the goods without major changes; that by tinkering about with a few industries and services living standards will improve. Such a view could pass for 'realism' in the 1950s and '60s.

Today it is a pure day dream — and the ranks of the Labour Party know it full well. That's

why they're stepping up the fight for left policies and democracy within the party so that its representatives can be held accountable.

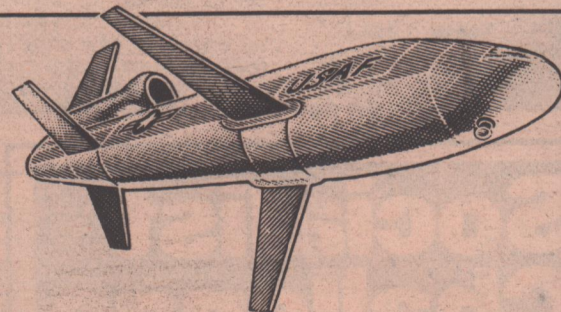
Fury

It would be a mistake to believe that the fury of the Gang of Three and their threats to leave the party mean that the left has won the fight.

So long as the fight for inner party democracy is not won, the spectacle of a new Labour government, led by Healey and defying conference decisions, remains a real possibility.

Defeating the right means organising to fight against the right both in the Labour Party and the trade unions. It was Engineering Union leader Terry Duffy and the leader of the electricians, Frank Chapple, who shared the Gang of Three's platform in Blackpool on Monday.

* Organising against the right — see pages 6 and 16



MARCH AGAINST MISSILE MADNESS

Sunday 26 Oct

Assemble 11am Hyde Park
Rally 2.30pm Trafalgar Square

Organised by CND



Why we defend the Iranian revolution

'MAD mullahs', 'madman Khomeini' — that's the impression of Iran given in the bourgeois press.

Many people who were happy to see the departure of the Shah have been disappointed and disillusioned with the Khomeini regime. The tyrannical Shah seems to have given way to an obscurantist clerical autocracy.

So why do we say 'Hands off Iran' and defend the Iranian revolution? Is there really anything to choose between Iran and Iraq?

The Khomeini regime in Iran is not the product of a palace coup, but of a massive mobilisation of the Iranian people. The revolutionary upsurge which finished off the Shah was one of the most remarkable of all time. Such was the strength of the Shah's army, with its huge amounts of American-made weaponry, that he was thought to be virtually impregnable from popular uprising. His secret police force, SAVAK, was one of the most efficient, and certainly the most ruthless in the world. Opponents of the Shah were hunted down across the world by SAVAK.

The Shah fell, despite the strength of his repressive forces, because millions of people came out onto the streets and were prepared to defy anything that the Shah could throw at them. The Iranian revolution was a dramatic proof that the hearts and minds of people, not weapons, are what counts.

The victory of the revolution struck a dreadful strategic blow to US imperialism. Their local policeman, the Shah, and his regime had fallen. American interests in the whole of Western Asia and the Middle East were threatened.

The revolution's victory also represented an immense victory for the Iranian masses themselves. In order to really liberate themselves from imperialism it is necessary for the workers and peasants to go much further in an anti-capitalist direction than has so far been achieved. But in order to start travelling that road the first step was to get rid of the Shah.

The removal of the Shah has thrown the future of the country into the melting pot. The mullahs, led by Khomeini, want a fundamentalist 'Islamic' regime. But such a regime has no real social programme for dealing with the increasing economic and social chaos.

The pro-Western bourgeoisie realises that no direct rapprochement with the West is possible, but want to gradually push the clerics aside, rebuild the bourgeois state and cement a tacit alliance with the West.

Since the fall of the Shah there have been many steps forward by the masses themselves. In many factories, even some of the oil refineries, the workers have formed *shoras*, delegates' committees, to push forward their demands. Often they have won increases in pay and other gains. In some of the rural areas, peasants have seized the land. These steps forward would have been unthinkable under the Shah.

At the same time, the religious leaders have tried to push forward reactionary social measures. But their power is by no means assured. There is no systematic repression which would rob the masses of all their gains.

Only a workers' republic in Iran can finally free the masses from the last vestiges of the hold of imperialism. But a victory by Iraq and its imperialist backers would only set back the revolutionary process.

That's why we call for defence of Iran in the present war.

A COUNTER INVASION

By Phil Hearse

THE attack on Iran by Iraqi forces constitutes a counter-revolutionary invasion which should be opposed by all socialists.

That's the only conclusion that can be drawn from looking at the development of the political situation in the Gulf area over the last couple of years.

The evolution of the Iraqi Baathist regime is typical of many bourgeois or petty-bourgeois nationalist regimes all over the world. Starting out with a 'leftist', anti-imperialist image the regime has progressively moved to the right.

The new president, Saddam Hussein, has cemented a new alliance with the ultra-reactionary regimes in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan — shearing the regime's previous alliance with radical Arab nationalist regimes in Libya and Algeria, and distancing itself from the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Imperialism

Politics abhors a vacuum. Since the fall of the Shah, imperialism's grip in the Gulf region has been severely weakened. The Shah and his massive American-equipped forces functioned as the *gendarme* of the Gulf. They were the guarantors of pro-Western stability in the region.

It was the Shah who sent his forces into Oman to fight against the revolution there. So long as the Shah was in power the Gulf was safe for the West.

But with the fall of the Shah's regime the hold of imperialism in the region was

severely weakened. The new Iran represented a break with American interests; rather than acting as the catspaw of US imperialism, Iran is locked in conflict with the US over the hostages.

Policeman

It is into this vacuum that Saddam Hussein has now stepped. Apart from forging an alliance with the reactionary Arab regimes, Hussein has been busy 'normalising' relations with the United States. Carter's bellicose security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, commented recently: 'We see no fundamental incompatibility of interests between the United States and Iraq'.

Through the weakening of the Iranian regime, and effective control of the northern end of the Gulf, Saddam Hussein hopes to establish himself as imperialism's new policeman for the region, and thus to become a prominent leader of the Arab world. That's the meaning of his attack on Iran.

Deposed

In order to appear a 'patriot', the Shah's son in Cairo offered his unconditional support to the fight against the Iraqis, 'to the last

drop of blood'. But the real attitude of the hangers-on of the deposed regime is much better summed up by Sadat's statement: 'Now is the time to bring down Khomeini'.

Plotting

The forces loyal to the ex-Shah's family have been discussing the possibility of bringing down Khomeini in a counter-revolutionary coup. Several of the Shah's generals — led by Oveissie and Palizban — together with former premier Bahktiar, have been camped in Baghdad for some time, plotting the possibility of a return to power. Whether the Iraqi invasion will give them the opportunity to try to overthrow Khomeini remains to be seen.

It seems extremely unlikely that the invasion of Iran was launched as a result of direct collusion between Baghdad and Washington. The increasing coincidence of interests between US imperialism and the Iraqi regime doesn't make their interests identical.

Oil

For most Western countries the threat to oil supplies is serious, although the United States itself gets a negligible amount of oil from Iraq and none from Iran.

Moreover, despite Saddam Hussein's aim to establish himself as imperialism's gendarme in the Gulf, the whole conflict has a potential dynamic towards destabilising the region.

Nonetheless, there is little doubt about which side imperialism will support, or where Western sympathies lie.

Mass mobilisations, not reliance on Khomeini

By Brian Grogan

THE UNILATERAL attack and invasion by Iraq on Iran represents a new danger for the future of the Iranian revolution. We call for the defence of Iran and the immediate withdrawal of Iraqi troops behind the pre-war borders.

Defence of Iran involves the duty of socialists to fight alongside the Khomeini regime against any attempt by Iraq, or the Iranian counter-revolution to overthrow it.

It is the task of the Iranian masses themselves to settle accounts with Khomeini and the Bani-sadr regime.

But this defence of the Iranian revolution does not mean support to the leaders and institutions of the 'Islamic Republic'. On the contrary, we fight for a socialist alternative perspective as the best way of defending Iran.

We agree with Khomeini on this need for 'an army of 20 million'. But this will be most effective in defending Iran by

mobilising the Iranian masses in democratically organised militias and the establishment of rank and file committees in the armed forces.

Khomeini's present policy of boosting the military hierarchy does nothing to deal with the fact that this hierarchy is interested in fomenting plots and coups against the revolution.

Such a state of affairs can only aid Iraq. What's needed is a real purge of reactionary officers through rank and file initiative, and the putting of the rest of the officer corps under the control of the rank and file committees.

How does Khomeini propose to mobilise the half of the population which is non-Persian? The granting of self-determination would generate mass enthusiasm of the oppressed nationalities behind the fight to expel Iraq, as well as maximising the mobilisation of the Iraqi masses against the Baathist reactionaries.

The task of defending the gains of and deepening the Iranian revolution go hand in hand.

Socialist Challenge

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Name..... Age.....
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Union.....

REVOLUTIONARY

Iraqis aim to become 'new centre of gravity'

By Tom Marlowe

PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein of Iraq has a high opinion of himself.

In a two-page advertisement, placed by the Iraqi government in the *Observer* in July, he was described as having 'obviously inherited the two fountains of Eastern wisdom: the shrewd experience of his rural folk and the ancient experience of his nation'.

This self-promotion concluded:

'Iraq was more than once the springboard for a new civilisation in the Middle East and the question is now pertinently asked, with a leader like this man, the wealth of the oil resources, and a forceful people like the Iraqis, will she repeat her former glories?'

West

The Iraqi invasion of Iran is, at its most simple, an attempt by Hussein to recapture these 'former glories'. The Iraqi president is out to make a name for himself.

His aim is to ensure that, as the advertisement in the *Observer* put it, 'Baghdad becomes the new centre of gravity in the area.'

Ever since the fall of the Shah, Hussein has seen the possibility that he can dominate the Middle East and Gulf areas.

To do this he has dropped some of the socialistic and revolutionary claims of the allegedly far-left regime he has stepped up repression internally to try and secure his position, and he has moved away from his former ally the Soviet Union and closer to the West.

Fervour

His Iranian adventure is part of this same process: to present his regime, as the *Guardian* recently put it, 'If not as America's gendarme in the Gulf, at least as the guarantee of stability in the vital oil-rich region'.

This is why Hussein's invasion of Iran has been hailed by, among others, the royalist regimes in Jordan, Morocco,

and Saudi Arabia, all of whom are much more under the influence of US imperialism than Hussein is prepared to admit he is.

Hussein has been moving closer to these right-wing Gulf regimes. It is not simply a case of the Iraqi president seeing himself as the new Middle East leader; there is also a common interest in safeguarding the whole area from the type of revolutionary fervour which swept Iran.

That is why, for instance, Hussein recently signed an agreement with Saudi Arabia pledging to exchange information on 'subversives'.

According to Amnesty International Iraq executed 257 such 'subversives' between January 1978 and December 1979.

Bigotry

The victims included police and army officers, but also Kurdish guerrillas and at least one very prominent trade unionist, Badan Fadil Araibi, who was executed last August.

Hussein is reported to have personally attended some of these executions.

As well as these killings Iraq recently expelled approximately 35,000 of its own citizens, many of whom were Shi'ite Moslems, members of the same sect as Ayatollah Khomeini.

In choosing to discriminate against the Shi'ites, Hussein's motive did not stem from bigotry. Again, his fear was that the Shi'ites would be too open to the type of sentiments which swept Iran.

Business

His own regime has tended to move in the opposite direction. The members of the recently elected Iraqi national assembly were, according to *The Times*, 'rather too representative of big business, the high court, and the security forces'.

That is a long way from the socialism claimed by Saddam Hussein. He has said, 'Whoever tries to climb over our fence, we shall climb over his roof'.

Last week, while fencing in his own people, he chose to climb on Iran's roof.



Saddam Hussein: wants to become imperialism's new gendarme in the Gulf

Iraq's alliance with the Shah

IRAQ's turn towards the West dates from 1975, when a new treaty was signed with the Shah of Iran.

The Shah agreed to stop all aid to the Kurdish rebels in Iraq in return for the division of the Shatt al-Arab waterway and renunciation of Arab sovereignty over three islands in the Gulf seized by the Shah in 1971.

This agreement had far-reaching consequences. Iraq also agreed to halt its 'subversive' propaganda in the Gulf emirates and the Arab minorities in Iran, to cut the flow of arms to South Yemen and thence to the Dhofar rebels fighting against the Sultan of Oman, and to stop aiding the rebels in Baluchistan.

At the same time Iraq began to open up its economy to foreign capital.

The net result was a growing pattern of collaboration between the Iraqi regime and the Shah. Numerous Iranian oppositionists who had sought refuge in Iraq were handed over to the Shah's executioners. Finally, as the revolt in Iran assumed mass proportions in October 1978, Iraq expelled the Ayatollah Khomeini as a token of goodwill to the Shah.

Its present actions are thus part of a logical sequence of events.

US build-up — nothing to do with peace-keeping

IRAQ'S invasion of Iran comes in the wake of a massive military build-up in the region by imperialism. US forces stand poised to take advantage of any pretext to intervene and throw back the forces of the Iranian revolution.

This build-up began almost a year ago, following the seizure of the American embassy staff in Tehran as hostages for the return of the Shah. One of its first expressions was a joint naval exercise by the US and British navies.

Today the British navy is again playing its part. On Sunday it was reported that the missile destroyer *Covenry*, accompanied by an auxiliary tanker, was on its way to join a possible 'peace-keeping' force off the Straits of Hormuz.

US plans involve the establishment of a Rapid Deployment Force using a series of military bases in Kenya, Somalia, Oman, and Bahrain. These would back up the major strategic alliances the US has forged with Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

There are 10,000 American military and civilian personnel involved in the Saudi defence forces. Egypt is a more recent ally, but in February a Pentagon

negotiating team agreed to provide 40 F-16 jet fighters and 250 M-60A3 tanks as part of new military credits expected to reach \$4 billion over the next five years. Carter has also agreed in principle to supply Egypt with F-15 fighters, the most advanced jet in the US arsenal. And negotiations began earlier this year for the production of F-5 jets and Bell 214ST helicopters in Egyptian factories.

Brigades

The main runway has been extended from 8,000 to 12,000 feet to allow it to take B-52 bombers, and extensive naval support facilities have been constructed. The latest addition to the armoury on Diego Garcia are five rehabilitated transport ships carrying the tanks, armoured personnel carriers, trucks and ammunition which a marine amphibious brigade would need.

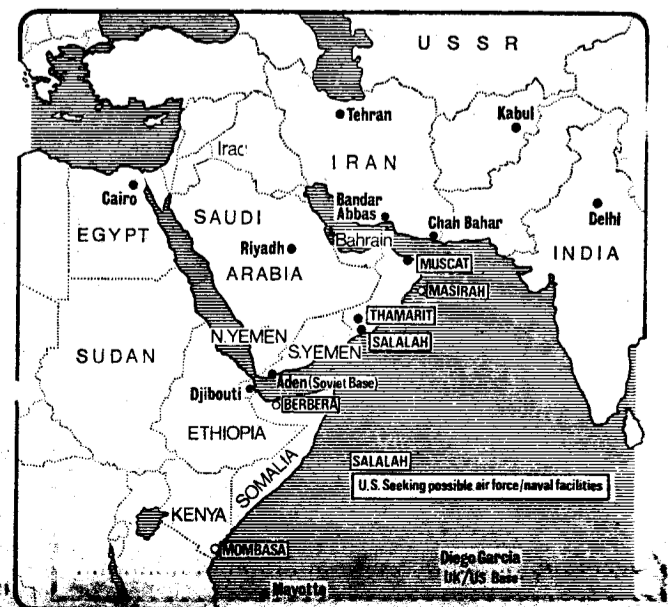
This Rapid Deployment Force has nothing to do with 'freedom of shipping in the Persian Gulf and the Straits of Hormuz'. A demand for guarantees to this effect was put forward by the Soviet Union in 1975 as part of the discussions on detente and rejected by the West.

The US military build-up in the region has one purpose only: to reimpose the imperialist yoke which was shaken off by the Iranian masses in February 1979 and prevent further revolutionary upheavals.

Hostages

It was Egypt, of course, where the Shah finally found refuge before his recent unlamented death. And it was from Egypt that Carter's abortive mission to rescue the hostages set off.

The aircraft involved in this adventure refuelled on their way at an airfield in Oman. There is no problem for imperialism here — all three arms of the Omani forces are commanded by regular British officers.



THATCHER'S mania for warmongering — including the spending of billions on Trident and stationing Cruise missiles across the country — has met with little support in the labour movement. The huge number of motions on disarmament going to this year's Labour Party conference are evidence of that.

Since the first atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Labour leaders have thrown themselves behind each move to step up the nuclear arms race. Clement Attlee, Labour prime minister from 1945 to 1951, was one of the first to welcome the use of the bomb against Japan.

Labour and the bomb

It was during the 1950s that the debate over disarmament raged inside the Labour Party. Although only a small right-wing minority openly opposed the aim of nuclear disarmament, the Labour leaders (even the 'left') formed a block against any immediate practical steps.

The real differences were between this block and those rank and file Labour Party members who favoured immediate British disarmament. Aneurin Bevan, leader of the Tribune Group 'lefts', only disagreed with party

leader Gaitskell on whether nuclear testing should be stopped or merely suspended.

It was Bevan who argued against a motion put up by Norwood Labour Party to the 1957 conference calling for unilateral British nuclear disarmament. He led a whole section of the left into a coalition with Gaitskell and the 'multilateralists' — who argued that British disarmament had to wait until there was a full negotiated disarmament between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Then, as

now, multilateralism simply meant 'do nothing'.

In 1960 those who favoured 'unilateralism' were backed by powerful trade union forces — the Transport and General Workers Union, the Tailors & Garment Workers, the Fire Brigades Union, and the construction union, the AUBTW, together with most of the constituency Labour parties. With support of this kind it was relatively easy to make unilateralism into official party policy. The right wing were horrified.



Aneurin Bevan: he called opposition to NATO 'an emotional spasm'

Gaitskell announced that he would 'fight, fight and fight again' to get the policy changed. A massive

campaign was launched under the name of the Campaign for Democratic Socialism. Large subsidies

from British business and the CIA were made available to overturn the 1960 conference decision. By 1961 they were successful.

With leaders like these it is not surprising that when a motion in favour of abandoning all of Britain's nuclear armoury was adopted by the 1973 party conference it was cynically ignored by the Labour government.

Today the fight is on in the Labour Party. The immediate demand is a commitment to cancel Cruise and Trident and backing for a campaign to this end — but Labour's past shows it would be foolish to expect enthusiastic support from those who lead the party now.

Lothian Region defies 'Square Leg'

By Duncan Smith

WHILE NATO's war game 'Crusader 80' goes on in Europe, in Britain the government has been carrying out civil defence and internal security manoeuvres to test the state's preparations for war. These manoeuvres have been code named 'Square Leg'.

The ruling Labour group on Lothian Regional Council caused a stir recently by refusing to go along with these manoeuvres.

Immediately three leading Tories rushed to the Court of Session to get an interim interdict (the Scottish equivalent of an injunction) forbidding local government officials from obeying the Labour council's instructions. So much for democracy in local government!

But the stand of the Lothian Council was warmly welcomed at a recent meeting of Lothian Against the War

Drive (LAWD) in Edinburgh. George Kerevan, speaking as a delegate from the trades council, pointed out that civil defence was a sham — working class people would not survive a nuclear war.

Operation Square Leg, he said, was designed to test out the bunkers where the establishment would go in the event of war.

Tom Fenton, chairperson of Lothian Region Labour Party, took up this theme when he said that the real purpose of the exercise was to accustom British people to the possibility of war.

LAWD is a new organisation but has more than 50 active members. It was agreed to make the sole basis of support opposition to nuclear weapons — other demands like opposition to NATO could be raised as the movement gathered support. The meeting decided to organise transport to both the Glasgow demonstration on 25 October and the London CND demonstration the following day.

'2, 4, 6, 8 - We don't want to radiate'

By Geoff Bell

IN a noisy colourful demonstration, 2,000 people marched against the missiles on Sunday in Blackpool.

The demonstration was calling for support for the plethora of resolutions to Labour Party conference attacking the siting of Cruise and Trident missiles in Britain.

Glasgow

Over a dozen Labour Party banners were carried on the march and constituencies as far away as Glasgow were represented. The demonstration, organised by Manchester Against the Missiles, was also supported by contingents from CND, END, the Communist Party and the IMG.

Youth

But the highlight of the march was the large number of youth who took part, many of them under the 'Youth Against the



Missiles' banner. It was this contingent which carried the most popular slogan: '1, 2, 3, 4 - we won't die in Thatcher's war, 5, 6, 7, 8 - we don't want to radiate'. This chant was taken

up by the whole march and at times even drowned out the bingo callers on Blackpool's promenade.

Speakers

Two members of Youth Against the Missiles were among the speakers on Blackpool sands at the end of the march. One of them, Gillian Whitworth, warned that 'it is the future of the youth that Thatcher is signing away when she orders her Cruise missiles'.

Beginning

Other speakers emphasised that the demonstration was only the beginning of the campaign against the missiles. Salford MP Stan Orme demanded that 'the Labour Party go out on the streets as a party and campaign the length and breadth of this country against the missiles'.

Colin Barnett of the North West TUC called for a labour movement conference to organise such a campaign — a theme echoed in the closing remarks by Dick Withcombe of Manchester Against the Missiles.

Conference

By the time the conference had opened the next day, a host of sponsors had agreed to support this anti-missile conference. These included MPs Frank Allaun, Stan Orme, Bob Hughes, Eric Heffer, Joan Maynard, Ken Easton, Dennis Skinner, Reg Race, Stuart Holland, Ernie Roberts and Alf Dubs.

The campaign against the missiles received further encouragement when the National Executive of the Labour Party agreed to recommend support for resolutions calling for unilateral disarmament.

Missiles campaign launched in Newcastle

By Pete Tattersall

THE BASIS for a campaign against the missiles in Newcastle was established by two big meetings — a meeting with EP Thompson a month ago which attracted over 700 people, and a rally on 13 September in Eldon Square attended by 500 people.

In order to bring together the opposition to the missiles a meeting was held on 17 September. Despite the fact that the meeting was advertised by word of mouth only, about 300 people turned up — we had to move to a pub with a larger room, but even then we had to use an overflow room upstairs!

The organisers of the meeting explained that there was no structure, no officials, not even an agreed name for the movement on Tyneside. What we did have was 300 people and £80.

The meeting eventually split up into seven groups, according to the districts in which people lived. Arrangements were made for locality meetings and for mobilising to attend the CND national demonstration on 26 October.

Newcastle Socialist Challenge meeting

The War Drive and the fight against the Missiles

Sunday 5 October 8pm Barbarellas (upstairs) Cloth Market.

Speaker: Steve Potter (IMG, National Secretary)

Aberdeen youth organise against missiles

ABERDEEN CND recently organised a successful public meeting. Revolution Youth supporters realised that a large proportion of the audience were young people. So on the next Wednesday, 17 September, they organised a 'Youth Against the Missiles' meeting.

To their surprise 70 people turned up. At the meeting they discussed the causes of the arms race, the meaning of the American war drive, and so on. The meeting decided to hold

weekly Youth Against the Missiles meetings.

The next big activity which Aberdeen Youth Against the Missiles is building for is the Peace Festival being organised by Aberdeen CND for 11 October where Youth Against Missiles will be having their own stall.

Anyone in the Aberdeen area interested can come along to the YAM open meetings, held every Wednesday evening, 7.30pm at the Music Hall, or write to YAM, c/o 5, Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen.

Early days for a US Labour Party

What were your impressions of the United States after your recent visit?

The convocation at Williams College was about the future of capitalism. There was a panel with the president of Dupont, the chairman of the American Stock Exchange, the vice-president of Ford, and the former chief economic adviser to President Nixon.

On the previous evening I gave a lecture on the future of democratic socialism. I took the opportunity of giving this lecture to about five hundred students, and then taking part in the panel.

What was so interesting and in a way amazing to me was that it was exactly like talking to a university audience here. The response on the power of corporate capitalism, Wall Street, and the risk of war was received in exactly the same way as if I was talking to the Labour Club at one of the London polytechnics or something of that kind.

On the panel, all the American businessmen were saying that the government should get off their backs, and productivity was low, and all the stuff that we've heard here for 20 years. The argument I put forward, which was that we don't accept capitalism as it's structured in the West, produced a very positive response.

There's another conference in December which I'm going to, called 'The conference on Euro-Socialism and America', where they have invited a lot of trade union people and so on. This will also be a big event. My impression is that in the United States now there is a considerable interest and curiosity in what we are saying in the Labour Party in Britain.

Do you think there is a serious prospect of establishing an American labour party?

You have to be careful about expectations of that kind. I think what is happening, and the tactics of this may well be right, is to try to form a socialist tendency, a genuine socialist tendency, within the Democratic Party. There's a big debate going on as to whether socialists should link themselves with Barry Commoner's ecological group or whether they should try to form it around the Socialist Workers Party or whatever.

Given the context of American society, I think the right thing to do at this stage is to form a labour representation committee and a socialist fraction within the Democratic Party. I believe these are the tactics that Michael Harrington's group and others are pursuing.

'They've caught the ageing process of capitalism'

It's very early days. It's a bit like Keir Hardie going to the Dundee Congress of the TUC in 1888, when he was denounced for his pains. But I would have thought that was the stage of development in America.

If you try and do it outside, separate from the existing structures, I've no doubt whatsoever that you could have a bright flame of socialism burning: the question is how many people would be influenced by it? But I can't pretend to have followed this very carefully.

Don't you think that this would be in conflict with the interests of Jimmy Carter? Oh yes, there's no question of this. Jimmy Carter represents

TONY BENN spent three days in the United States last month at the invitation of Williams College, in Williamstown, Massachusetts, where he gave a lecture and took part in a panel discussion.

Pat Kane and Hugh Richards asked him about the state of America, his views on the possibility of forming a labour party there, and the new anti-war movement.

Benn on America



an extreme fiscally conservative element within the Democratic Party. This is widely recognised, if you read some of the literature.

But at the same time I think that there is a merit in starting something within a party which, if it can have an influence, will go well beyond the range at this stage of a socialist party outside the existing structure. That is a tactical decision; it's not for me to decide.

What rôle do you think the trade unions can play in the formation of such a party? It would be extremely important in world labour movement politics if the American workers formed a labour party.

It would be, and I think the plan is to try to do it from within the Democratic Party where there have been some links with the trade union movement. The American unions have a fairly strong socialist tradition within them, going back to the Wobblies. But it's weak, and its leadership has been very conservative in recent years under Meany

desperately conservative.

But at the same time it's bringing the socialists and the progressive trade union people together under the auspices of Harrington and the others, who are prepared to give it a push.

This seems to me to offer the best hope. At this stage you want to encourage its growth everywhere in the United States — you don't want to fix it rigidly in one place — so that we can see where it grows most strongly.

In the end, of course, if there was a move towards labour representation of an explicit character with a socialist inspiration within the US, it would be enormously significant.

In this country I'm pretty clear, as you would appreciate, that the right thing to do is to operate through the Labour Party. If you're saying that about the American Democratic Party you're saying something that has far less inherent validity.

You are in favour of the principle of establishing a labour

party?

Of course, but I still think you have to look at their stage of development. What is so interesting is the extent to which for years they have been talking about the 'British disease', now I think they appreciate that they've caught it themselves. What they've caught is the ageing process of capitalism.

One of the things I found interesting about going to the seminar at this particular college is that they had an identical seminar in 1932 and the participants were Jacob Winer, the American economist, William Z Foster, secretary of the Communist Party, and Norman Thomas. Could you imagine a single American college today which would agree to have the present secretary of the Communist Party to speak at their convocation?

At the moment there is great curiosity about socialism in the US, just as there is in Britain. Even people who make no claims to be socialists are so frightened by what they are seeing happen that they are reading and are anxious to listen to an alternative analysis. That's about all you can say.

What rôle do you see the American unions playing in the formation of a labour party?

It should be a very big rôle, but of course they are weak, and they have had in the past a collaborative tradition among some of the leadership which has diverted them from examining the real nature of the problems facing them — exactly the same as the trade union movement had in Britain in the 1880s, and indeed there has always been a collaborative tradition within the British trade unions.

After all, there are six million trade unionists who are not yet affiliated to the Labour Party, apart from anything else.

What were your impressions of the anti-war movement in the United States? There was a demonstration against Cruise missiles taking place in Massachusetts while I was there.

I would guess from reading such left-wing papers as one can get hold of, and they are few and far between, that ex-

actly the same arguments that are taking place here are taking place there, but in more of a minority position.

Of course, it is a bigger thing in America, which is the dominant capitalist country in the world, to come to terms with demands for transformation there. It's very much behind our own development.

What was interesting was the response to what I said, which was an uncompromising speech of the kind that I might make here; and secondly, what was being said by the industrialists, bankers, and economists when there was a big student audience present.

Did you get any feeling of the Vietnam syndrome — the inability of America to intervene in Nicaragua or El Salvador?

I believe that the frustration of American power is one of the dangerous factors in the American situation, rather like in 1956 with the frustration of the anti-colonial movement leading to the Suez operation.

But it's a great mistake to think that capitalism is about to collapse. One of the difficulties for the left is supposing that the first time capitalism runs into difficulties, either at home or abroad, that the whole thing is about to be toppled. I don't believe that.

On the other hand, one has to be clear that it's much less impregnable than it thinks it is; that the way in which you change it is by opening up issue after issue after issue, and then gradually changing people's perceptions.

Potentially capitalism is very strong but when it really comes under challenge it moves sharply to the right to defend itself. On the other hand it isn't so powerful that we should be pessimistic about the possibility of transforming it. It clearly is vulnerable and at the same time has considerable capacity for the defence of its own interests.

'The frustration of American power is one of the dangerous factors in the American situation'

One of the tragedies of the Cold War and the polarisation involved is that the military are really in a very dominant position in both East and West.

Whether Brezhnev wanted to go into Afghanistan I wouldn't be absolutely sure; whether the military said if you let this one go down you'll really be in difficulties. I should think it was touch and go whether they intervened in Poland on exactly the same basis, and in Czechoslovakia, and similarly.

Similarly in the United States I would assume the military have an enormous influence over the decision-making of the president.

Decolonising is a problem because once you start decolonising where do you stop? To what extent are you then taken unawares? This is the Russian problem as well. If the Polish events get out of control, what happens if it takes place in East Germany?

This is the moment when strong systems are very vulnerable to the sudden cascade of the Prague Spring or whatever. And then they are driven in desperation to a sudden counter-stroke that can put the whole thing back again.

There is an audience to hear another analysis at this stage, that is the most important thing in America.

Stepping up the fight for socialist policies

By Paul Smith

ON 1 November the Labour Co-ordinating Committee is holding a conference to discuss organising in the unions. First priority in the statement put out by the LCC is given to the Tory attack on the trade union movement.

It says: 'The entire strength of our movement — unions and party — must unite to fight the Tory strategy and ensure the election of a Labour government committed to socialist policies.' This sums up the LCC approach, and it's a good ideal

Power

But the only real guarantee of pressure on the Labour Party to adopt specific socialist policies is a successful fight against the Tories. And it is the trade unions which have the power to stop the Tories dead in their tracks.

It's in the direction of encouraging mass action against the Tories that we need to turn the attention of this important LCC conference.

Missile

The anti-Tory struggle is gathering strength. A mass action campaign against Thatcher's missile madness is underway, and there is growing support for a conference of the trade unions and the Labour Party to discuss industrial action against Cruise.

The dockers scored a straight victory against redundancies, and more recently the workers at a Manchester engineering factory, Gardners, have taken industrial action against proposed job cuts.

Support for battles such as these is the best way to win the fight for socialist policies in the Labour Party. In other words the Labour Co-ordinating Committee should not only adopt socialist policies — against Cruise, on unemployment, supporting women's right to work — but it needs to fight to apply them, here and now, in the struggle against Thatcher.

Incomes

Both the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party conference have passed many resolutions about the policy of a future Labour government, including, in the case of the TUC, a commitment to a five-year incomes policy! With such a commitment, Callaghan, Evans, and Duffy oppose the anti-Tory struggle now. LCC policies challenge those of the right wing.

But to be effective against the right wing of the workers' leadership, the policies have to be carried out in practice. An encouraging move in that direction comes towards the end of the LCC statement: 'In practice we wish to discuss if there is a role for a Labour Party rank and file trade union organisation.'

Role

There is! If this organisation were based on mass action against the Tories, drawing together those in Defend Our Unions, the Liaison Committee for the Defence of the Trade Unions, and those throughout the labour movement already convinced of that perspective, than there certainly would be a role for it to play.

LCC Rank and File Trade Unionists Conference

Leeds University Saturday
1 November 10.30am

Agenda:

11.00am, **Unemployment and the Right to Work.** Speakers include Bernard Connolly, Roger Griffiths, and Stuart Holland.

2.00pm, **Demands and Policies.** Speakers include Eddie Loyden and Audrey Wise.

4.00pm, **How do we organise in the movement?** Speakers include Tony Banks, Peter Hain, and Anne Cesek.

For credentials write to LCC, 9 Poland St, London W1 enclosing £1.25 per person.



Marchers against the missiles lobby the party executive last Sunday

Photo: News Line

The left's hollow victories

Labour Party conference

By Geoff Bell
in Blackpool

THE ANGRICEST words at this week's Labour Party conference were heard on Monday night. They were spoken at a fringe meeting organised by the right-wing Campaign for Labour Victory.

They were the sentiments of David Owen, ex-Foreign Secretary, friend and helper of the mercifully dead Shah. Said Owen: 'Everybody knows this conference is going to be extremely bad, with resolutions which should never be passed by a democratic socialist party.'

'It's time the compromise ended and the fight began. There will be people who say that we are paper tigers, that we will accept it. We will not. There comes a time when you have to take a stand.'

Owen was reacting to the many resolutions which had been passed by conference, or looked like being passed later in the week.

Motions calling for increased nationalisation, 'a substantial cut in arms expenditure', the immediate introduction of a wealth tax, the abolition of private education, withdrawal from the EEC and unilateral nuclear disarmament are among them.

Frenzy

That a Labour Party conference could endorse, in some cases, overwhelmingly, such motions almost sent Owen, one of the leaders of the Labour right, into a state of frenzy.

At the same CLV meeting

his co-right winger, Bill Rodgers, was equally bitter. Rodgers complained that events in Blackpool this week added up to the worst Labour conference for 30 years.

Leave

With a contemptuous arrogance that has come to characterise the Labour right he observed: 'I've been to 20 Labour conferences, I'm always reluctant to come and happy to leave. I sometimes wonder whether the three-year rule ought to apply to Labour conferences.'

The despair obvious in such remarks suggests that events in Blackpool represent an unqualified victory for the Labour left. That would be a dangerously mistaken verdict.

True, the most socialist motions for years have been carried. The undisputed leader of the Labour left, Tony Benn, went even further than the motions when he advocated a one-month timetable for the next Labour government.

This would include abolition of the House of Lords, withdrawal from the EEC, and a programme of nationalisation. And on top of this the right failed to make any inroads into the leftist majority during the elections for the NEC.

But the perspective in which all this should be seen was summed up in remarks made from the rostrum by Ken Livingstone, a member of the Greater London Council. During the debate on transport, which again pro-

duced radical motions, Livingstone said:

'There's not going to be a single vote against these policies here today. It's the sort of motion that the party has supported for years. The question is: What are we going to do about it?'

Livingstone went on to make the point that the democratic internal reforms were needed to give the left resolutions full effectiveness, 'otherwise,' he said, 'we're just talking today.'

When Livingstone spoke, and when Socialist Challenge went to press, it seemed unlikely that all the reforms would be passed. Only mandatory re-selection of MPs had a better than even chance.

The consequence of the failure on the other two issues — the method of selecting the party leader and control of the manifesto — means that whatever motions are carried they will be little more than pious statements of principle.

Cosy

When Jim Callaghan spoke on Tuesday morning, he admitted as much. 'Policies can't be laid down in advance,' he said.

The meaning of such remarks is that whatever left victories are won at Blackpool they remain victories in sentiment only. The cosy militant atmosphere of the fringe meetings will not ensure the victory of the left in the Labour Party, even less the return of a left Labour government.

A question noticeably dodged at last year's conference in Brighton — the undemocratic nature of the block vote — caught up with the left at Blackpool. That vote ensured defeat of the left on a number of crucial issues,

such as the carrying of the three-year rule, which means that issues discussed at this year's conference cannot return to conference for three years.

Consequently, Tony Benn, Joan Maynard, and a few others have begun to offer tentative criticisms of the block vote and the trade union bureaucrats who wield them. 'I would like to see,' said Joan Maynard, 'the trade union movement lead the fight for reforms in the party.'

Opinion

The conclusion of such opinions is that the Labour left needs to organise its forces, organise and intervene against the right in the trade unions and promote every action in the trade unions on any issue which is relevant in the fight against the Tory government.

Tony Benn said on Sunday night that this week would be 'of supreme importance' for the Labour Party. That is true. Some of the questions which constitute that importance remain unresolved. Nevertheless a watershed was reached at Blackpool this week.

The heady optimism on the left evident at Brighton last year was absent. It is obvious that it will take more than oratory and radical resolutions to win a future Labour government to socialism.

With the prospect of Healey as the new Labour leader, the fight will not only have to go on — it will have to be intensified and be organised on every level in the labour movement.

The right wing may be licking its wounds, but the left needs a whole new armoury to make those wounds fatal.

Serious case for European disarmament

YOUR FEATURE on the disarmament movement (18 Sept) was a welcome piece of serious political analysis.

I was surprised, however, to find Redmond O'Neill concluding by dismissing the campaign for a nuclear-free Europe as effectively a weapon in the hands of Carter and Thatcher. The case for European Nuclear Disarmament (END) is much more serious than that.

Many socialists would agree with Redmond that the first fault lies with the USA. But the technology of modern warfare is so overwhelming that socialists must re-examine their attitudes to war.

A conventional war, involving 'ordinary' explosives, bullets, and bayonets, might result in victory for a socialist state. That state would, however bureaucratic and inhumane, deserve our support.

But a nuclear war! If ever nuclear weapons were used, the effects would be quite different from those of conventional war. Put bluntly, nuclear war would mean the end for the working class.

It would put an end to capitalism, and bureaucratic socialism, and replace it by — at the very best — a new tribal society.

Why limit our demands to Europe? In the first place, because Europe is again becoming the cockpit of world militarism.

At the moment, the cocks are strutting around in the guise of 'crusaders'. They are about to deposit Cruise and the SS 20 on European soil: weapons that are of limited range, and can only be used within one 'theatre'.

If we can refuse these weapons, not only do we reduce the options for militarism, but we might even inspire others to do the same.

Our position is clear: a huge END meeting at Newcastle last month voted overwhelmingly in support of the Polish strikers — that is the logic of the END argument.

Without the basic democratic organisations of working class protest, you can't campaign against bureaucracy or militarism.

The Polish victory was heartening. But no Socialist Challenge reader will trust the Polish government for one moment.

It is because we do not trust these veteran manipulators that END is looking for a nuclear-free zone that will run from Portugal to Poland.

So clearly we are taking sides; where we differ from Redmond O'Neill is in our refusal to rely on governments.

I don't want to end with that raspberry. The great value of Socialist Challenge, despite the much-bewailed but occasional obscurities, is the way it has acted as a forum for serious, principled, non-sectarian debate among socialists.

I hope that the new paper will extend that debate by publishing more material from comrades in the Warsaw Pact countries.

Surely we were mistaken to have known so little about Polish discontent before the strikes? And surely we ought to know a good deal more about the real peace movements of eastern Europe.

JOHN FIELD, Sheffield

Don't support Russian bomb!

WHILE recognising that the present threat of war comes from the adventures of a declining imperial America, does it necessarily follow that

socialists should support Russia's nuclear weapons? To say that Russian missiles deter an American first strike is to accept the logic of deterrence on which Western imperialism bases its own case for such weapons.

Does Socialist Challenge really believe that the deep economic and historical forces which impel capitalism towards war are negated by a few hundred SS-20s?

Defence of the workers' states is not coincidental with every step that the ageing policemen (sic) in the Kremlin take to protect their miserable hides. We surely do not support the KGB and censorship which the Stalinists claim is necessary to counter CIA subversion.

The Soviet nuclear weapons industry is the prime material base for the military wing of the

Soviet bureaucracy.

At the expense of pathetic living conditions for millions of Soviet citizens, massive resources are diverted for the real purpose of supporting the generals in power and prestige.

To call for an end to the 'workers' bomb' is to strike at the privileged caste in the Soviet Union.

Russian nuclear disarmament, far from increasing the likelihood of an

American first strike, would remove the very excuse the American ruling class uses to whip up chauvinism in the American working class.

For the only guarantee that we will see socialism rather than Armageddon is not the 'workers' bomb' but the success of the American working class in disarming the mad people in the Pentagon.

GEORGE KEREVAN, Edinburgh



Why I hate the Tories - OAP

FOR those of you who don't remember the '30s and who grew up with full employment, let me tell you what it was like.

I was nine years old when my father was made redundant. There was no severance pay, but a very severe means test.

The wife of an unemployed man could only keep her wedding ring — no other jewelry was allowed.

Everything had to be sold or pawned except for beds, bedding, chest of drawers upstairs and table and chairs downstairs.

On top of that there was just a small amount of money given for food. There was no national health; I needed treatment on my spine and

knees, but I didn't get it — that's why you see me as I am today.

I also suffered from malnutrition — it left me with no enamel on my teeth and a poor constitution.

I was 13 years of age when my mother died aged 34 — it was too late when the powers that be gave her a small amount of money for a doctor.

At 13 years of age I had to take on a 6-roomed house with 4 younger children, the youngest one being 3 years old, with a brutal father.

There were no social workers, so no help for me and no protection against my father.

In our street in South Wales there were only three men in work. When the Jarrow march took place,

everyone on the street gave money for the food and boots for the marching men.

It's no disgrace Mrs Thatcher being a grocer's daughter. But she never had to borrow four slices of bread to send the children to school on dole day, she didn't have to have soup for dinner six nights a week at the soup kitchens.

She didn't have to keep getting out of bed on cold winter nights to replace the jumble sale coats which we used when the blanket wore out.

Just like today we had a Tory government, that of Mr Baldwin. For God's sake we must stop Mrs Thatcher sending us back to the 1930s. Let's all stand up and be counted.

LYNN M TROWBRIDGE, Pensioner

END another ANL?

THE article 'Don't Die for Thatcher' (18 Sep) was in many ways informative and praiseworthy, tainted only by the ill-informed and distorted criticism levelled at Edward Thompson and the European

campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

It seems that both the left and right have failed to understand Thompson's perception which is that such

a campaign for the removal of the European theatre of war from the nuclear strategic thinking would not be achieved by politicians. It has to be won by mass movements, each challenging their state and, by implication, the collaboration with capitalism and Western imperialist policies.

The one common factor

which can bind such campaigns East and West is the existence of nuclear arms as a common threat to ordinary people in which no side wins and all workers stand to lose.

The unity in Europe against nuclear arms-building lies in the international solidarity of the popular masses against their oppressors right and left.

END is a conscious attempt to avoid appealing to British chauvinism or anti-communism by extending the demands for a nuclear-free zone East and West.

To assume that the demands end there for any of us, or that we are therefore tainted with Eurocentricity, or that we are indiscriminately appealing to pro-imperialists is only to be expected from many of the left who have so far kept a cynical distance from active campaigning.

This attitude fills me with shame, anger, and not a little irritation; comrades have failed to learn the lessons from similar attempts to build popular movements capable of challenging the state. Ever the cry is that such movements are reformist or opportunist.

The Anti Nazi League came under similar criticism in its early days for daring to appeal to the widest possible audience on the simple ticket of kicking out the Nazis.

In spite of its short life however, and against all the 'clever-sounding' criticisms of the left, the ANL achieved more in exposing and combatting racism and fascism than any of the left parties have ever done alone.

END represents a political direction to be fought for within the broader peace movement and from which the current dynamic for nuclear disarmament is erupting. It is to be hoped that from this initiative the organisation will take shape.

Success or failure will ultimately rest with the amount of energy and support generated by the working class.

JENNY LONG, Socialist Challenge and END

Examine the New Jewel

I WOULD like to suggest that as part of the changes taking place in the format and content of Socialist Challenge greater emphasis should be placed on the unfolding Caribbean revolution.

The struggle for world socialism has marched forward with 'seven-league boots' in Grenada and Nicaragua with the overthrow of the dictators Gairy and Somoza.

The workers' and peasants' governments of these two countries are striking blow after blow at the imperialists and their own national bourgeoisies. The mobilisation, education, and organisation of the masses for their own class interests is proceeding apace there.

It will be of no small interest to radicalising workers in Britain (especially black workers) to learn how these governments are able to effect great improvements in the conditions of the workers and the oppressed despite the very meagre resources at their disposal.

This contrasts starkly with Britain where workers have to battle tooth and nail just to maintain our standards of living and defend our democratic rights.

Revolutionists at the industrial workplaces will also find it extremely useful to be able to follow these revolutions at first hand. The Grenada government publishes a weekly paper called Free West Indian which can be obtained through the Grenadian High Commission in Trafalgar Square.

Another important journal is the English-language version of the Cuban paper Granma.

There has never been an opportunity before for English speaking workers to follow events as they unfold in a socialist revolution in an English-speaking country.

My advice is to subscribe to Free West Indian, read it, and discuss with your fellow workers the problems that arise and how the People's Revolutionary Government of Grenada tackles them.

If talking 'socialism' and 'class struggle' on the job is very important then talking 'socialism' and 'revolution' is an opportunity not to be missed.

RAY DAVIS, London SE24

Excellent explanation

I WANT to commend you on your issue of 18 September which I obtained at the Newbury anti-Cruise demonstration.

In particular the excerpt from Redmond O'Neill was an excellent explanation of the nuclear arms race which exposed its true anti-Soviet and imperialist logic.

And its call for solidarity with 'Third World' revolutions was matched by your coverage of the momentous El Salvador struggles.

The most applause at Greenham Common was in response to Joan Lester's expression of outrage against Mrs Thatcher's call for increased arms sales abroad.

So I hope such piercing analysis and your support of liberation struggles can intensify in the new SC.

SIMON FARTHING, Southampton



Test for the Labour Party

JIM Marshall is the Labour MP for Leicester South, which includes the Highfields area. In the 1979 general election all three Labour MPs in Leicester retained their seats. Jim Marshall also increased his majority substantially.

This increase was in large part due to the Asian vote in the Highfields area. Not surprisingly, the Conservative Party is now running around looking for Asian candidates to put up in the 1981 local government elections.

Leicester South Constituency Labour Party officially opposes all immigration controls and has passed a number of resolutions against racism and the National Front. Since the incidents in July and August, West Indian youth have been attending ward meetings to ask for support.

Now the good resolutions have to be turned into active support, especially in building for any demonstrations called by the newly-formed defence committee.

Jim Marshall spoke at the Indian Independence Day celebration in Leicester on 17 August. Britain's immigration policy is 'the worst of all possible worlds', he explained.

The harassment of aliens and Commonwealth citizens begins at the port-of-entry, and continues after they are settled here. Now we hear that the Home Office is collecting details of minor offences committed by these people.

After the meeting he referred to the behaviour of the police in Highfields, blaming them for the growing disillusionment of young blacks. He also blamed unemployment for causing these problems, describing it as 'one of the malignancies that could disrupt good race relations'.

LEICESTER: RACISM THE CRISIS

THE East Midlands city of Leicester has traditionally been known as the 'city of a thousand trades' because of its prosperity and the diversity of its industry. Thriving hosiery and knitwear, boot and shoe, and light engineering industries were more recently supplemented by newer factories, such as Walkers Crisps.

This diversity of industries offered a large range of skilled and unskilled jobs, rarely affected by recessions and slumps. This prosperity, combined with the small size of the factories, has led to a fairly unorganised and weak trade union movement. Despite this, all three Leicester constituencies returned Labour MPs in the last election.

But Leicester is hardly solidly Labour. Until recently it boasted one of the largest branches of the National Front. The splits inside the NF have reduced its level of activity, and the local branch is now split between the NF and the New Democratic Party.

The availability of jobs in Leicester has attracted a large number of West Indian and Asian workers to the city, who are mainly settled in the Highfields and Belgrave areas of the city. These workers are mainly concentrated in unskilled jobs, with Asians especially working in the hosiery and knitwear industries.

For the first time Leicester is now experiencing increasing unemployment problems as the recession hits particularly at the hosiery and knitwear industry.

This dossier on the situation has been prepared by the Leicester branch of the International Marxist Group.



Police turn dogs on anti-Nazi demonstrators in Leicester, April 21 1979

Black youth lead the fight

THE large immigrant community in Leicester has a tradition of self-organisation, but it is the black youth who are leading the fight against the increased racist attacks, against the new aggressive approach of the police, and against attempts to make the black community pay for the growing crisis.

Their radicalisation is developing in different ways in the different communities.

The West Indian population is relatively small in numbers, and has always lacked any organisational or political cohesiveness.

It has played little part in Labour Party or trade union organisation. This is reflected in the fact that among West Indian youth, who were the first to face problems of unemployment and police harassment, the response has mainly been a cultural one.

The most conscious

West Indian youth tend to be involved in self-help projects of a cultural and recreational nature to express and fight for an identity and for solidarity among themselves.

The Asian community arrived later. But despite a great number of ethnic and religious divisions, it had, and still has, a tradition of community and political organisation.

The strong ethnic and religious groups tend to be inward looking, and controlled by the elders of the community.

While the Indian Workers Associations ally

themselves with the Labour Party, and give it electoral support, they tend to pay much closer attention and follow themselves the political differences and events in the sub-continent itself.

It is the Asian community which has had to bear the brunt of the state racism embodied in the Immigration Acts, which have affected most members of the community in one way or another.

Lobby

The response of the traditional organisations has consisted of lobbying and applying pressure on politicians and so on, in an attempt to win improvements in their position.

The Asian youth, who now face the problems of unemployment, are fast

radicalising. They tend to ignore the traditional organisations.

Instead they have chosen to develop their own organisations with clearer politics, as can be seen in the number of Asian Youth Movements that have appeared.

The increasing willingness of both the West Indian and Asian youth to take militant action was perhaps best seen in the numbers of black youth on the anti-National Front demonstration in Leicester on 21 April 1979.

Both communities clearly understand, however, that the National Front is not the main danger, directing their fire against the activities of the police and the working of the Immigration Acts.

The tension with the police reached a new high-point during July and August this year with a number of incidents in the Highfields area.

Shadows

On the night of 28 July, a car belonging to a couple of plain clothes police was vandalised — probably by youth who objected to them sitting listening in a local West Indian pub night after night.

A series of incidents followed, involving West Indian youth and the police. Finally police with riot shields ended up chasing shadows through the St Peters estate in the early hours of the morning.

Seven West Indian youth were arrested, and six were charged — one with assault.

A few days later the

police sealed off a street in the area and arrested one West Indian youth who was moving his stereo equipment — they claimed it was stolen.

Since then the person involved has produced receipts for all the equipment and the police have been forced to release him.

These small incidents reveal the beginning of a new trend in the approach of the police to the black community. They are confident they can handle the black youth as they like and get away with it.

Scum

We have to shake that confidence by showing that they cannot get away with treating black youth like the scum of the earth.

We support all the initiatives taken by the black youth organisations; we support them in demanding black self-defence, support all their independent organisations, defend them against police attacks, oppose the immigration laws and back them in fighting for the right to work.

YOUR TOWN

Racism, industrial decline, mass unemployment, how the labour movement is organising — or failing to. These could be themes for an article about your area.

If you would like to submit an article, please contact Socialist Challenge.

'The e don't l of bla

THE Leicester Asian Organisations, set up by Asian youth groups, are beginning to face black youth

Later it changed to Youth Movement, which should be to unify the ethnic groups and hopes to bring out We interviewed Youth Movement to facing black youth

What do you make of recent events in Leicester? We have to start from a perspective that blacks are no longer regarded as desirable in the British state. These are just a dress-rehearsal for forced repatriation by government.

This makes our fight rather difficult. The British state is an enemy as powerful and dangerous as the National Front.

What difficulties do you face in organising the youth?

Firstly we have the traditional problem of hostility between Asians and West Indians. There is also hostility between groups of Asians within the overall community.

This is being overcome to a certain extent. Some West Indians and Asians, mainly from the Indian sub-continent, are beginning to realise they are divided among ourselves.

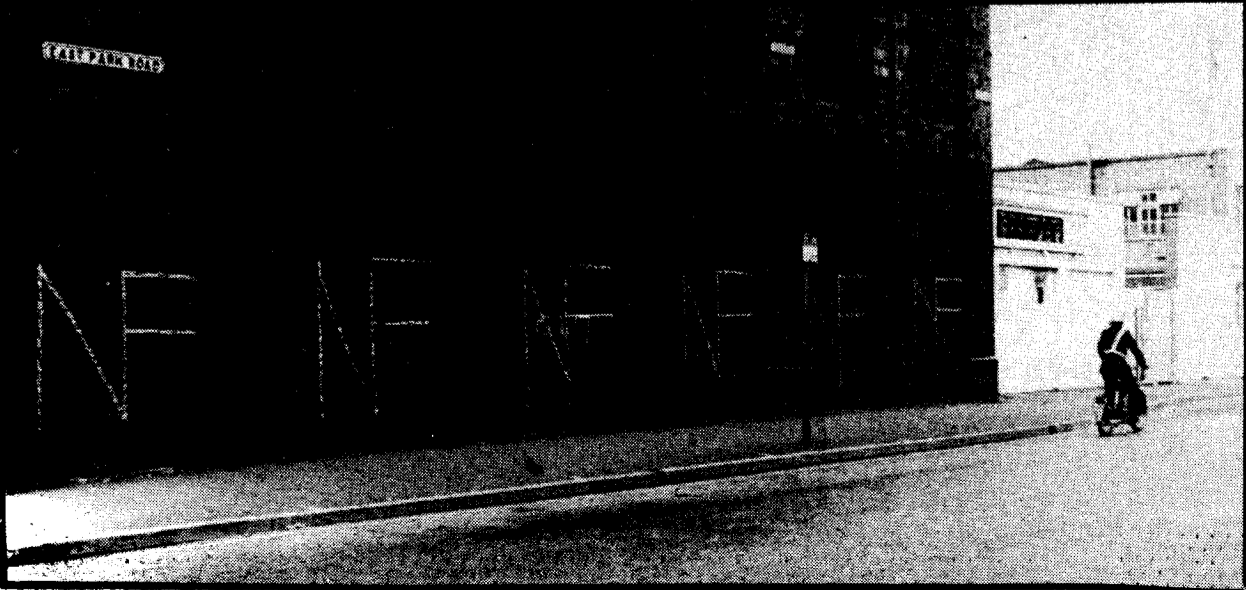


Photo: Alex Boyle (Socialist Challenge)

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Photo: Alex Boyle (Socialist Challenge)

THE Highfields area of Leicester is one of those typical old inner city housing areas. Once fashionable in the late 19th century, it has declined over the years until it is now one of the main areas for cheap houses and flats. Recently it became a housing action area and various housing co-operatives and the council are making improvements.

In the early 1970s the council built the St Peters estate in the area. As can be seen from the photograph it is a prime example of municipal planning at its worst. For decades it has mainly housed the immigrant

communities — after Jews came the Poles, and today it mainly houses West Indians and Asians. The majority, however, are Asians, both from the sub-continent and from East Africa.

On the whole race relations have been good. The National Front in Leicester has mainly been involved in electoral activities, and the police have adopted a low profile 'community' approach. But black youth have never escaped harassment — and recent events show that the attitude of the police is changing.

Existing organisations have the confidence of black people'

Youth Movement was originally formed around different ethnic groups. It brought out about 400 Asian youth to act as an umbrella for a number of different ethnic groups at a National Front demonstration last year.

It is named after the Leicester Asian Youth Movement, reflecting a feeling that its main task is to bring Asian youth rather than simply black youth within the community. It was first published in a monthly paper from November. It is a member of the Leicester Asian Youth Movement and outlines how they see the problems in the town.

it makes it easier for the state to smash us. But among the older generation especially this animosity persists.

A similar problem is that the political organisations of black people are lagging behind the general radicalisation. The existing organisations, whatever they claim to the contrary, do not have the confidence of black people.

The mood of most blacks as a result is evolving towards cynicism with life in Britain — a fatalistic attitude which tends to mean that they believe it is futile to organise.

What do you think about working within the existing labour movement, which is predominantly white?

Obviously the vast majority of black people are organised within trade unions and vote Labour. But what we tend not to do is play a leadership role within these organisations, which is prob-

ably a result of the fact that a majority of older Asians have problems speaking English.

With younger Asians the problem is slightly different. Most of them have seen the inactivity of the labour movement on the question of racism.

Indeed, during the dispute at Imperial Typewriters, which mainly employs Asians, it was felt that the official trade union movement rather than actively opposing racism was passively supporting it.

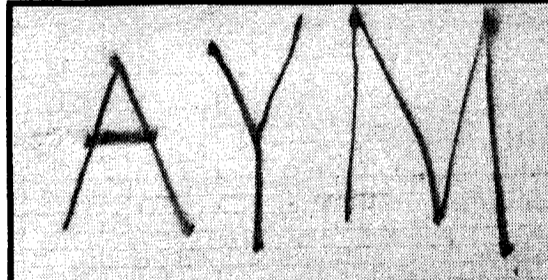
The whole concept of black and white workers joining together to fight racism is still a rather unrealistic proposition at present.

So do you think black people should write off the labour movement?

No, not at all. What I do say is that some revolutionaries make absurd claims about the intrinsic anti-racism of white workers — as if there is some magical power which will make white workers and the labour movement help black workers against their common enemy, the bourgeoisie or the capitalist system.

The reality is much more complicated than this. The basic problem is that the revolutionary left is too weak, and too divided, to combat reactionary ideas within the labour movement.

Some organisations run away from this problem by glorifying the working class. Black workers, realising this, become frustrated and some of them, perhaps sub-consciously, seem to blame the revolutionary left for the racism among white people.



What are the main political tasks facing black people, in your view?

Apart from the general idea of organising autonomously, which is a crucial fight, there are problems.

The first problem is overcoming the divisions between the Asians and West Indians, which make it so much easier for us to be attacked.

Then we have the problem that certain organisations and individuals have fallen into the trap of becoming parasites on the Community Relations Councils. Rapidly their sole purpose becomes to live off the state.

So they get alienated from the youth, who experience racism at its ugliest in police brutality, unemployment, and so on. The problem for us is to build an organisation whose resources are independent of the CRC.

I find the idea that we should use the CRC as an easy way to build an organisation quite ludicrous. That way you only get trapped in the web set up by the state to buy off militants.

One response to this is that the Asian Youth Movement and RADDLE (an organisation of West Indian youth) have decided to initiate a black defence committee which will try to put out counter-propaganda to that of the police, organise meetings, raise money for fines, and organise a demonstration. At present we could get about 500 Asian and West Indian youth out on a march.

Photo: Alex Boyle (Socialist Challenge)

10 Oct: make the Tories tremble

By Jude Woodward

A THOUSAND POUNDS for the jobs fight! That's what Sheffield city council has decided.

The council is giving anything up to that figure to pay the fares of any Sheffield jobless who want to go to Brighton on 10 October to tell Thatcher what they think about her government's unemployment policies.

There's no doubt that Thatcher will get a rough ride on Friday 10 October. The Sheffield jobless will be linking up with unemployed youth from around the country who will have marched from South Wales to strike a blow against the Tories.

Miners

And that's not all. The Miners' Union in South Wales has agreed to sponsor the day of protest. At a mass meeting involving several pits, they also decided to organise coaches to take miners from South Wales to Brighton.

Workers from Birmingham's Rover and Longbridge BL plants, who are on short-time working, will also be coming to Brighton by coach.

From across the country steelworkers, Transport Union members, carworkers, civil servants, fire fighters will all be going to the protest out-

side the Tory Party conference.

The official backing for the protest from the Transport Union executive opens the way to approaching shop stewards and rank and file members locally to raise the event in their branches and organise transport to Brighton.

There will be contingents from Scotland and from the North of Ireland, from Liverpool and from Newcastle, South Wales and Birmingham, and from many other areas. Thousands of trade unionists — in work, on short-time and jobless — will be in Brighton to give expression to the growing mood of anger against Thatcher's policies.

Fed up

Thousands will be there because they are fed up.

Fed up with economic policies that slash away at

jobs while protecting profits. Fed up with policies that cut living standards and have no effect on inflation. Fed up with new laws that will give cops the right to harass and imprison workers who struggle against these efforts to make them pay for the crisis.

But they won't just be fed up, they'll be determined. Determined that Thatcher

will not succeed in breaking up the organised strength of the trade union and labour movement through her divisive and anti-working class programme.

The picket and lobby on 10 October will show Thatcher that she is going to meet firm resistance; that policies like those of this government will provoke increasing con-

frontation with the working class movement, until the Tories are finally kicked out.

So the protestors will have a thing of two to say to the TUC leaders, too. If the union leaders who are anxious to chat to Thatcher think they can back down in the face of the Tories' offensive, the thousands in Brighton will be there to remind them that if

they don't give a lead then we will find others who will.

Moss Evans has supported the day of protest in Brighton, but he didn't place himself at the head of a militant fight against Edwardes' Tory plans for the run down of BL. He had better do more in future — talking to the Tories won't stop workers fighting against job loss, and cuts in real wages.

The growing movement against the Tories needs policies that can answer Thatcher's offensive. That's why Socialist Challenge supporters on the protest will be calling on the trade union and Labour Party leaderships to back a struggle for a reduction in the working week.

35 hours

Shorter hours, with no reduction in pay, mean more jobs for everyone. We need a campaign of action for the 35-hour week, already passed by the TUC, and full support from the TUC to all struggles against redundancy.

The next step after 10 October is the Labour Coordinating Committee's trade union conference on 1 November, where rank and file members of the trade unions and Labour Party will have a chance to get together and discuss the way to take forward a struggle against the present right-wing leaders, or force them to lead a real fight on jobs.

The protest in Brighton on 10 October is a big opportunity to show the Tories that we mean business. As one Right to Work marcher has put it: 'If Thatcher doesn't watch out she'll find herself pushed off Brighton pier.'



Victories in jobs fight

By Paul Smith

THE proportion of Britain's working population now unemployed is 7.4 per cent. Since 1979 unemployment has increased fastest in Wales and the West Midlands.

During the past 12 months the number of jobless has increased by 59 per cent in the West Midlands, compared with the national average of 41 per cent. Employers, unions, and commentators agree that manufacturing is bearing the brunt of the recession.

The sections of the workforce most hit by redundancies are immigrants and women.

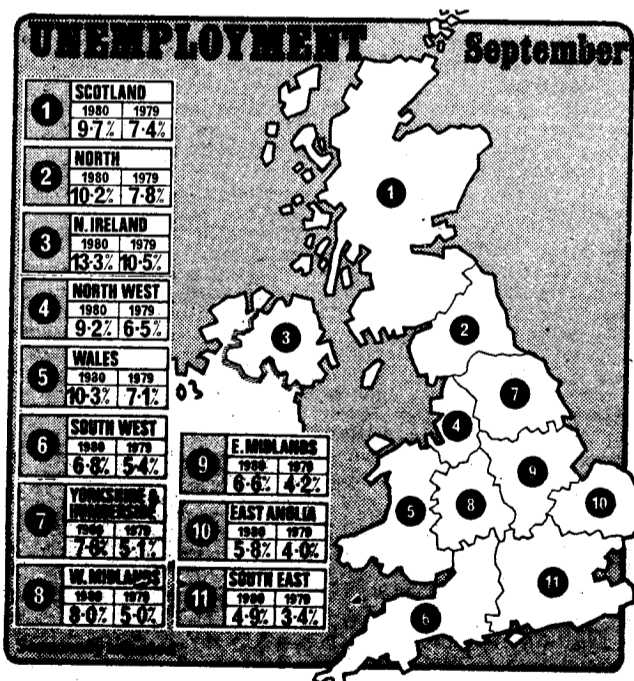
A report covering unemployment in West Europe issued by the European Trade Union Research Council at the beginning of September showed that women workers often did not appear in unemployment figures. Where they did, they were proportionally much harder hit than their male counterparts.

Misery

The report also pointed out that 'probably more than 2m immigrant workers have been squeezed out of the European economy over the last two years.'

There is, of course, no way of measuring the human misery behind the statistics.

In Britain there have been many false starts in the battle over jobs. Thatcher argues that lack of hard work causes unemployment. This is not so



...with unemployment soaring 41% in the past year

convincing for the 60 women who are about to be sacked at Allard's, near Hull. They gave up their summer holidays to keep production going.

Transport Union leader Moss Evans calls for import controls in the new TGWU booklet *Control Imports Now*. British markets are saturated with cheap foreign goods, therefore British companies make no profits and have to sack workers — that's how the argument

runs.

Courtaulds has axed 10,000 jobs in the past six months, making a total of 22,000 in the last 18 months. But in the last financial year, Courtaulds made £68.1m profits compared with £64m in the previous year.

Courtaulds management does not blame cheap imports for the current crop of closures. They admit they are caused by 'a modernisation programme'. Increased redundancies, plus increased

production from those who are still at work, means jacked up profits.

The employers are interested in protecting their markets, so sometimes they will make alliances with the trade unions in order to get measures that protect those markets — like import controls. But as the Courtaulds example shows, the employers are not driven by a desire to save jobs — they are driven by a thirst for profits.

Profit

Less workers doing the same amount of work means more profit. Saving jobs comes a poor second.

But there are examples of victories after fights to save jobs not achieved by increased exploitation or by alliances with management.

The first is the docks. The 178 jobs saved in Liverpool established a vital principle for every trade unionist — work or full pay. The dockers are not responsible for capitalism's crisis and they refused to accept the brunt of its effects.

Strong

In British Oxygen, the national stewards committee is leading a fight for the 35-hour week with no loss of pay and no cuts in the number of jobs. Both groups of workers have strong and healthy rank and file organisation.

Both the dockers and British Oxygen workers start out from taking no responsibility for the crisis. Two vital lessons for the jobs fight.

Cuts conference support builds up

By John East

THE CONFERENCE called for 1 November to discuss how to defeat the Tories' attack on local government has been gaining wide support over the last three weeks.

To date, 44 organisations are sending delegates, including 19 constituency Labour parties, 8 Labour groups, two national trade unions, as well as district committees and local branches.

In Lambeth, where the call for the conference originated, left wingers in the Labour Party, including Socialist Challenge supporters, are active on the mobilising committee and have won the committee to the demand that Labour councils should refuse to make cuts or raise rents or rates, as well as demanding support for public sector workers taking action to defend services.

Delegates who support Socialist Challenge will be putting amendments calling for industrial action to back

councils who take these measures, as well as demands over staffing levels and overtime working.

All Labour Party members and public sector workers should raise the possibility of delegating their CLP or union.

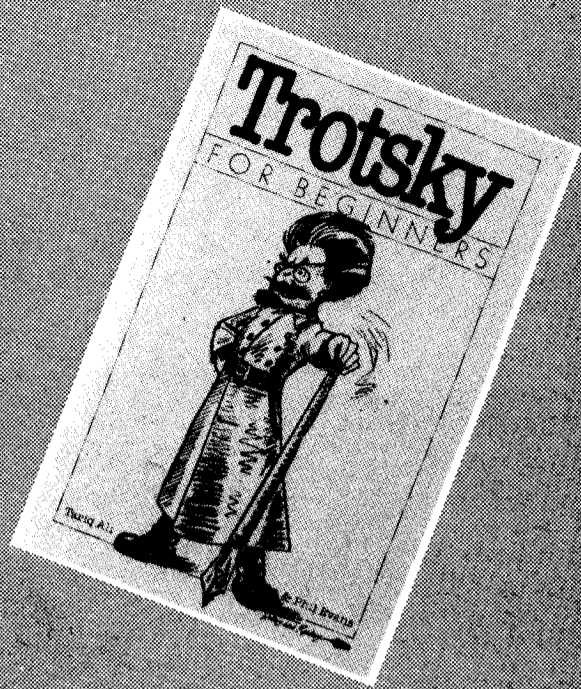
There will be a meeting for all delegates who support Socialist Challenge on 25 October to discuss how to win support for the conference.

All information about the conference from: Conference Planning Committee, Room 103, Lambeth Town Hall, London SW2.

Organisations so far delegated to the conference:

- | | |
|--|--|
| TGWU | Labour Group |
| UCATT | Lewisham Labour Party |
| Bishop Auckland CLP | Lewisham East CLP |
| Ilford North CLP | Moss Side CLP |
| Aylesbury CLP | London Borough of Sutton Labour Group |
| Lincoln City Council Labour Group | Inner London Poly NALGO |
| Northampton South CLP | ASLEF: Selhurst branch |
| Battersea 2 Branch AUEW | Camberwell AUEW |
| NE Derbyshire District LG | Fisher Controls Jt Shop Stewards Cttee |
| West Darby (Liverpool) CLP | Lewisham |
| AUEW London South District Committee (Eng) | South Yorks County Council Labour Group |
| Tower Hamlets Highways Shop Stewards Committee | Broadland District Council Labour Group, Norfolk |
| TGWU Bramlets Parks Shop Stewards Committee | Rochdale CLP |
| Coventry SW CLP | Scarborough CLP |
| Lincoln Labour Party | Reading North LP |
| Southwark NALGO | TGWU 1/338 |
| Pontypool CLP | UCATT London 8 branch No. PG 158 |
| London Co-Op Education Cttee | Erith and Crayford CLP |
| Northampton Borough Council Labour Group | Local Authority Convenors (BTOC), Finchley CLP |
| Chelmsford CLP | Jillington Central CLP |
| Bromley Labour Group | Dulwich CLP |
| Bournemouth District Council | |

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Don't forget our offer of a free copy of *Trotsky for Beginners* by Tariq Ali and Phil Evans, with a year's subscription to the paper. These offers will not last forever — so take out your subscription now.

NO CRUISE, no Trident, cut arms spending — these are the slogans of the CND demonstration being organised for 26 October in London

The demonstration will undoubtedly be one of the largest for years. Already national CND has distributed 100,000 leaflets and is printing 100,000 more.

All Socialist Challenge supporters and IMG branches must seize the opportunity that the build-up for this demonstration provides to build the local campaign against the missiles. But they should also be using the opportunity to hold their own forums and discussions to explain the origins of the US war drive, and how it is imperialism which produces the threat of war.

Socialist Challenge supporters in Manchester recently organised a series of meetings in all the localities, using the film *The War Game* to start discussions. Similar meetings have been organised by Socialist Challenge supporters in Reading, Newcastle and other towns recently.

Every IMG branch and Socialist Challenge supporters group should do the same before 26 October. It is also very important that Revolution Youth and IMG supporters in the colleges organise meetings there.

We want all our English and Welsh supporters to be on the 26 October demonstration, and our Scottish supporters to be at the Glasgow demonstration the day before. Mobilising material can be obtained from CND, 29 St. James St., London WC1. ALL IMG branches must send a representative to the national fraction to discuss this work on 12 October — for details ring 01-359 8371



RALLY AGAINST THE MISSILES!

Thursday 23 October, 7.30pm

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Adm. 75p (50p unwaged)

Organised by International Marxist Group, British section of the Fourth International

SC Events

HACKNEY SC forum: 'What strategy for the anti-nuclear movement?' Speakers: Mike McNair (IMG) and CND representative invited. Tues 7 Oct, 7.30pm, Dalston Library, Dalston Lane, E8.

MANCHESTER SC public meeting: 'War in the Middle East'. Thur 9 Oct, 7.30pm, Star and Garter pub, Fairfield St, nr Piccadilly stn.

STOCKPORT IMG open meeting: 'Trotsky for Beginners'. Thur 9 Oct, 7.30pm, phone 236 4905 (day), 483 8909 (eve) for details of venue.

TESSIDE: SC supporters meeting: 'The economic crisis and the socialist alternative'. Speaker: Steve Potter (SC editorial board). Thur 2 Oct, 7.30pm, Borough Hotel, Corporation Rd, Middlesbrough.

SC Sales

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.

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

STOCKPORT: SC sold every Saturday, 1pm, Mersey Way. Can be delivered weekly: phone 483 8909 (evening), 236 4905 (day).

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

TESSIDE: SC on sale Sat lunchtime in the Cleveland Centre, and in Newsfare, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and outside Woolworths on Stockton High Street

IMG / RY Notices

STUDENT FRACTION for all RY and IMG students. To discuss perspectives for new term. Sun 5 Oct, 11am, UCL Students Union, Gower St, WC1. Contact Ann, 359 8371, for more information and bulletin.

ENGINEERING FRACTION, Sat 11 Oct, 11am-5pm, Manchester Centre. All cdes in CSEU unions urged to attend. Agenda: perspectives; organisation of fraction; women's liberation.

NALGO FRACTION, Sun 16 Nov, 12-5pm, National Centre.

NATIONAL CRUISE MISSILES FRACTION

EVERY branch should send a representative to this vital fraction. There will be discussion of CND, an assessment of the Labour Party demonstration, and future perspectives. If no one in your branch is presently responsible for this work a member of the branch committee should be asked to attend. A pooled fare will operate.

11am — 6pm, Sunday 12 October. Ring 01-359 8371 for venue or see special mailing with the papers.

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.

INTERNATIONAL Contraception, Abortion and Sterilisation Campaign. International Women's Forum on abortion and contraception rights in the Irish Republic and Portugal. Irish speakers from the Right to Choose Group in Dublin, and Maria Antonia Palla, president of the NUJ in Portugal. Fri 3 Oct, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London WC1.

NATIONAL Festival for Women's Rights — Against Tory Attacks. Planning day to make final decisions on, i) whether this event should be on International Women's Day weekend; ii) whether it should be women only. We want this event to reflect a broad cross-section of women activists, so make sure you and your group/organisation are represented. Sat 4 Oct 2-6pm at Intensive English School, Star St, London W2.

NO NUKES Music is making October the month of 'Operation Cruise Endo'. Opening with Protest Party at Action Space, 16 Chenies St, London WC1. Thur 2 Oct — Inner City Unit, Nik Turner, Thompson Twins, Local Heroes; Fri 3 Oct — Directions, Essential Logic, Lucys; Sat 4 Oct — Doll by Doll, Significant Zeroes, The Papers. Tickets £2, unwaged £1.50 per night. Also at Old Queens Head, Stockwell Rd, London SW9 (near Stockwell tube). Fri 3 Oct — Blast Furnace Revenge, The Rest — 60p.

PROGRESSIVE Film Society: premiere of *The Voice of Kurdistan*, by Kurdistan Film Collective. A film on Kurdistan and the Kurdish liberation movement, mainly in Iraq, from 1974 to 1979. At Manning Hall, University of London Students Union, Malet St. 14 Oct, 7pm.

WOMEN IN ACTION — new issue on sale now, price 30p. Articles on Positive Action, Abortion, Employment Act and more. Orders to Box 2, Sisterwrite Books, 190 Upper St, London N1.

WOMAN student seeks accommodation in Lambeth area. Phone Mary 01-348 5710.

CIVIL Service creche campaign national conference. Sat 11 Oct, 2pm, at Kingsway Children's Centre, Kingsway Hall, 175 Kingsway, London WC2. All civil servants welcome. Creche provided.

Chartist

Autumn Issue

Dreaming of Socialism

Features: Pathology of Socialism
Flying Lizards
interview
Drugs and the Left
Politics of Death

Plus: Monitor, Survey, Observations and Reviews. 32pp, 65p from Chartist Publications, 170 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 or from left shops. £3 per annum, 5 issues.

JAILHOUSE ROCK

By Geoff Bell

McVICAR deserves a few comments in a socialist newspaper because it is something of an exception for the British film industry — it's about working class people.

Not very pleasant or representative working class people, but they're there nevertheless, dressed up in the shape of East London gangsters, prison warders, and a crooked cop. It's easy to tell all these folk are meant to be working class because they say 'fuck' and 'shit' all the time.

The film tells the story of a few months in the life of John McVicar who was described as the most wanted man in Britain in 1970 when he escaped from prison. Really it's little more than a tough adventure film.

Vicious

This annoyed many of the professional reviewers of *McVicar*. Most complained that the film offered no explanation of his subsequent transformation — how the foul-mouthed, vicious tough depicted in the movie ended up as the closing credits tell

the audience, with 'a first class honours degree in sociology. He is now a journalist and broadcaster.'

Only one short scene in the film, when McVicar is seen reading a Penguin paperback, gives any hint of such academic aspirations. For the rest he is just 'a mug, someone who's spent most of his life in nick'.

It is not all that surprising that McVicar 'came good' in the end. For what the film does show is that it is not the easiest thing in the world to survive in the type of environment McVicar grew up in.

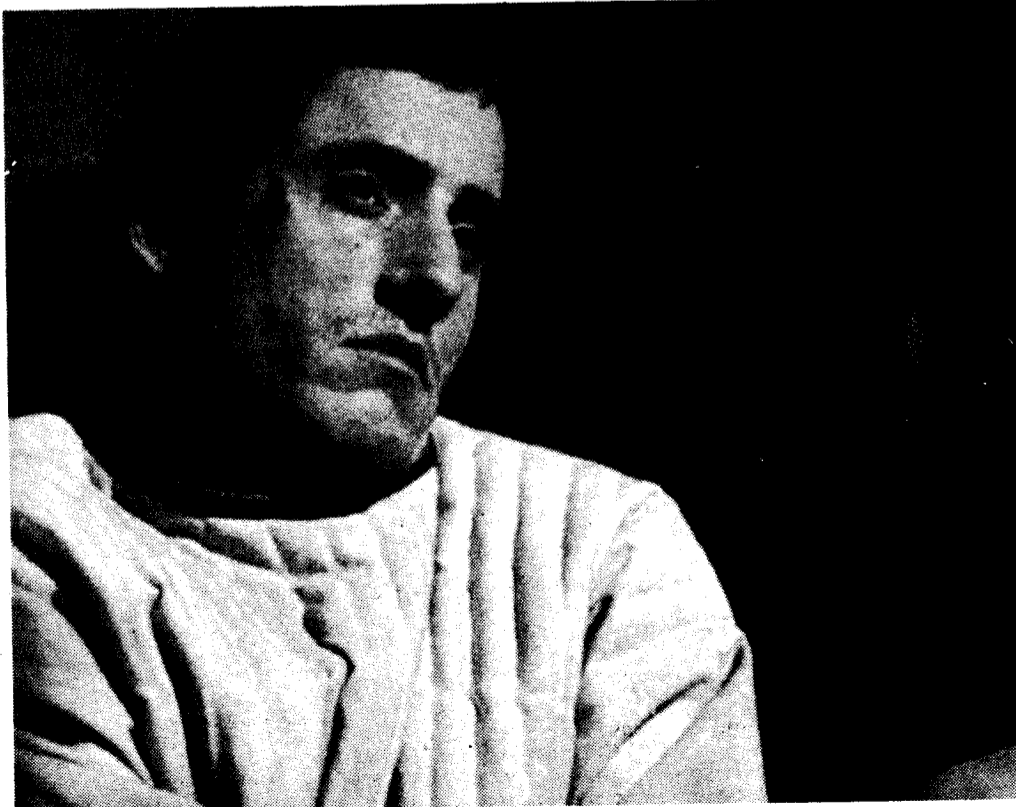
'What else can I do?', McVicar asks his wife on one occasion. No answer is forthcoming.

Liberal

Not that the film is one of those worthy liberal attempts to explain how bad background makes easy criminals. The intent, it seems, is simply to tell it as it really was.

This means the prison inmates fist fighting the warders, then scheming against each other, and the criminals doing likewise.

There is no hint of a sense of collectivity in the criminal fraternity. No class consciousness is possible here: it is, after all, the proletariat at its most lumpen.



The real McVicar is presumably happy enough with this characterisation. He was technical adviser to the film and has been promoting it.

Playing him is Roger Daltrey of The Who, who has been quoted as saying that he wanted to make the movie

because only his rock talent prevented him from ending up like the unreformed McVicar.

And for those who want a message, that will do. At least the makers of *McVicar* stop short of patronising the people they depict with some fancy philosophical interpreta-

tion. And at least the prison warders and the cops are shown to have as little morality as those they repress.

If you have nothing better to do, *McVicar* is worth a look in. It is, be warned, extremely macho — but then so is the world it shows.

By Martin Meteyard

A CAMPAIGN of lies and slander against the revolution in Nicaragua has begun in Britain. And it has brought together some strange bedfellows, ranging from the TUC general council to millionaire James Goldsmith.

The TUC first. Two paragraphs in the general council's report to this year's congress were devoted to Nicaragua (point 305). Did they pledge support to the huge social gains notched up since the overthrow of Somoza in July 1979? Not on your life.

The TUC general council had different priorities. Instead it felt duty bound to focus attention on allegations 'that the Nicaraguan government was using intimidation to eliminate all national trade union organisations except the CST which the government itself had established'.

IT'S A LIE.

So much is the Nicaraguan government trying to 'eliminate' other trade union organisations that on 21 April it announced that *five* trade union federations would be represented on the new Council of State. Out of a total of eight representatives from these federations, only three were allotted to the CST — which in any case was not established by the government but arose out of the Sandinista workers committees which sprang up during the revolution.

Literacy

Of the other five, two went to the CGT-i, which is led by the main pro-Moscow party; one to the Stalinist-led CAUS federation; one to the Confederation of Trade Union Unification (CUS) — even though its leaders have received aid from the CIA-linked American Institute for Free Labour Development; and one to the Confederation of Nicaraguan Workers (CTN), which is controlled by an anti-communist Christian Democratic current. Now that's some intimidation!

What was at the root of the TUC's worries? Well, apparently two unions had written 'proposing that the TUC should support a literacy campaign being conducted in Nicaragua which was supported by the CST and by War on Want in Britain'.

Teach workers to read? What an outrageous idea. Bound to lead to trou-

Unmasked

The conspiracy against Nicaragua



Sandinista leader BAYARDO ARCE

ble later on. And so these worthies concluded that 'they should not associate themselves with War on Want or the CST, and agreed that the campaign should not be commended to unions'.

But did they think it up by themselves? The answer is no. The head of the TUC's international department is one Michael Walsh. His last job was in the Foreign Office. And when these allegations against the CST had to be checked out, he told Anna Coote of the *New Statesman* that he'd gone straight to the top: to the British government.

Thatcher

Another who is close to the British government is James Goldsmith, publisher of the weekly *Now!* magazine. Only last month he was able to entice the leader herself to speak at the *Now!*

annual dinner. Thatcher told the assembled guests that she was delighted to come 'because it enables me to identify myself with innovation and enterprise'.

Standards

'Innovation' is a good way to describe the journalistic standards of *Now!* magazine — and of Goldsmith in particular. For in the same issue as the report of this beanfeast was a revealing column by the publisher himself. After trying to play down the torture of Claire Wilson and José Miguel Benado in Chile, he went on to claim that Nicaragua was characterised by 'Twelve thousand political prisoners, 600 disappearances, mass execution...'

IT'S A LIE.

Just two weeks later, in its issue of 26 September, *Now!* itself put the number of political prisoners at only 6,500 — and that figure came from the US State Department! So what happened to the other 5,500, Goldsmith?

And who are these 'political prisoners' anyway? Well, *Now!* has to admit that they are 'most of them former National Guardsmen or officials of the Somoza government'. And what did they do? Just murder 30,000 people during the civil war. That's all. So they're 'political prisoners' — unlike the blanketmen in the H Blocks of Northern Ireland, of course.

Many people might think that these Somoza rabble are lucky to be still alive. But a little fact which *Now!* forgets to mention is that one of the first things the terroristic Nicaraguan government did was to abolish the death penalty.

What is more, it has maintained this



Now! publisher JAMES GOLDSMITH

stand against popular pressure after the cold-blooded torture and murder by Somozists of an assistant in the literacy crusade. Council of State president Bayardo Arce explained that the best defence of the revolution was its 'undeniable generous character'.

And that's just why Goldsmith and his Tory cronies are so desperate to smear and slander the Nicaraguan revolution. For decades they have been able to rely on the image of Stalinism to put working people off the idea of socialism. Now examples like Nicaragua are making their task very much harder.

That the TUC should be part of this campaign is a scandal. They speak in our name, and will be heard as such by the people of Nicaragua.

Dissociate

Resolutions should be forwarded to every union executive demanding that they dissociate themselves from the general council's report and campaign for aid to the Nicaraguan revolution. This should go alongside affiliation to the Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign, which can be contacted at 20 Compton Terrace, London N1.

Only in this way can we silence the Tory lie machine and spread the real message of the Nicaraguan revolution: that working people, once in power, can build a new society which involves and benefits the vast majority of the human race.

*For the truth about Nicaragua, read the extensive and carefully documented reports published weekly in *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*. Annual subscription £18 or sample copy 50p (inc. postage) from: IP/I, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Polish regime set on undermining democracy

By John Marston

POLAND'S new free trade union movement last week presented its statutes for official registration. Afterwards three thousand people joined strike leader Lech Wałesa for a victory march through the streets of Warsaw.

A historic moment, you might think. But all but one of Poland's daily papers failed to mention the event.

The continued suppression of news about the free trade unions is just one of several ways in which the regime is trying to regain the ground it lost during the August strike wave.

Another is its hold over the official trade union structures. In a move of breathtaking cynicism, the official union federation has now renamed itself 'independent and self-managed trade union'. In response the free trade unions have taken the name Solidarnosc (Solidarity).

But that's not the end of the problem. Unions are transferring wholesale from the official federation to Solidarnosc as a simple manoeuvre to undermine its effectiveness. As one activist commented: 'These organisations are run by the same people as before — it's a matter of new labels for old bottles.'

This theme was taken up last week in a statement by leaders of 70,000 workers in the Warsaw area:



Gdansk workers in front of crossed-out sign for official union

'We have noted recently that the old trade union councils are setting up unions and describing themselves as independent... this is being done under orders from higher authority and not through voting by general assemblies.'

This emphasis on the importance of workers democracy suggests that the strike leaders are aware that this is their best weapon for frustrating

the manoeuvres of the regime.

But they have also had to cope with official attempts to slander the new union's advisers in the Social Self-Defence Committee (KOR). One of KOR's leaders, Jacek Kuron, was accused last week of calling for the burning of Communist Party headquarters and the hanging of party militants. In fact he had merely warned in a TV inter-

Forums on Poland

Socialist Challenge forums on Poland featuring Steve Griffiths and Richard Rozanski (recently returned from Poland) and Oliver MacDonald (editor of *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*).

Thur 2 Oct
EALING/SOUTHALL. With Richard Rozanski and Oliver MacDonald. Phone 571 5019 for details.

Fri 3 Oct
BRISTOL. With Oliver MacDonald. Phone Harriet on 33567 for details.

LIVERPOOL. With Steve Griffiths. The Bluecoat Chambers, School Lane, Liverpool 1 (behind Littlewoods), 7.30pm.

Weds 8 Oct
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD. With Oliver MacDonald. Phone Mick on 41037 for details.

Thur 9 Oct
BIRMINGHAM. With Oliver MacDonald and Steve Griffiths. Committee Room 1, Digbeth Civic Hall, 7pm.

Weds 15 Oct
BRENT. Debate with speakers from the International Marxist Group and the Communist Party. Phone Tessa on 359 8371 (day) for details.

COVENTRY. With Steve Griffiths. Phone 461138 for details.

WOLVERHAMPTON (town). With Richard Rozanski and Oliver MacDonald.

Thur 16 Oct
WOLVERHAMPTON. With Richard Rozanski. Poly Students Union, 1pm. Organised by the Socialist Society.

Weds 22 Oct
YORK. With Richard Rozanski. Phone Tony on 413258 for details.

view in July that mass anger could take this form if the government used force against the strikers.

Solidarnosc was quick to answer this attack, declaring: 'We regard the slandering of mutants and persons working with the independent and self-managed unions as an action directed against these unions and a violation of the Gdansk accords approved by the workers of Poland as a whole.'

But the government's most recent sally has found a weak flank. Last Friday the CP paper *Trybuna*

Ludu accused Wałesa of lightmindedly invoking the possibility of strike action and 'evading' the complexity of Poland's economic problems.

This new attack confirms that the strike leaders cannot carry on claiming that their movement is not political for very much longer. Their every demand raises the question of who determines and controls the economic plan. International solidarity can give the new workers movement in Poland the confidence to take up this challenge.

'At times you felt like crying'

The third and concluding part of Joseph Maguire's account of life in H-Block.

It is now just over nine months since Joseph Maguire was released from H Block, yet he can't stop thinking about the time he spent there. This is the last part of the account that he gave to three members of the Troops Out Movement.

Joseph Maguire spent a total of three and a half years on the blanket at Crumlin Road Prison in Belfast and in the H Blocks at Long Kesh, subject to incessant body searches and other degrading treatment because he demanded the status of political prisoner.

He thinks it's about time people in Britain exercised their power to bring an end to the war — by pulling the troops out.

AT CHRISTMAS I never got any Christmas cards. The two fellows next door got a Christmas card. And that night, before 12 o'clock, he said: 'Swing your towel.' We would put a not on the end of the towel and swing it out of the door, and he has his arm out and he would catch it, and then he'd rap the wall: 'Got it.' Then he'd rap my wall: 'Put your arm out.' And I caught it.

For instance, for entertainment, men would think for a couple of days on a book they'd read. One man, Bobby Sands, had read *Trinity* on remand, and it took him three nights to think it, to get it together in his head. And he told *Trinity* out the door.

'I've heard about two hundred books, but I've never read them'

The Christmas card that they got, they cut the top of it — it just said 'Christmas Greetings'. It was in a wee small envelope which they'd made themselves. The stamp was drew with a wee piece of pencil, with a robin redbreast on it. And when I took it out, inside it they had drawn, with a wee piece of pencil lead, a Christmas scene, just like a wee Christmas card, and they had written on it in Irish, 'To Joe, from the blanket men in H3.'

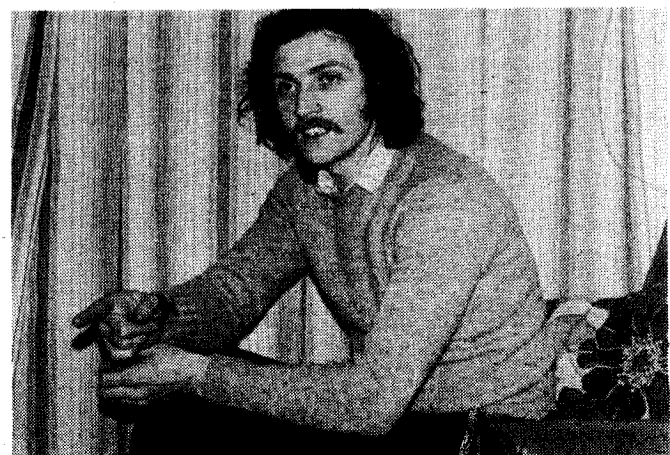
I couldn't get it out — it was sorrowful, not being able to get it out, because it was a wee token of them inside.

Sometimes I feel like it has affected me. I'm awful edgy, and I tend now — my wife notices it more than anything — when I'm talking about anything I tend to explain it in detail. And I have a habit of saying, 'Are you listening?' And how I've developed that is, you're talking through a wall, or through a door, and you're always assuring yourself that somebody's listening to you.

When you're talking like that, you're trying to give somebody a mental picture. I can talk to you here now and I can maybe lift my hands, and you can interpret it better. But if I was shouting to you through the door, it's hard for you to get a mental picture. So therefore we describe everything perfect.

This was about 11.30 at night it started. Everyone was lying on top of their mattress. Bobby had a blanket on standing at the door, shouting out the door. If you shout loud enough, the whole wing can hear you. So he stands shouting, telling the story of *Trinity*, every detail. He starts describing the area, the weather, the description of the people who are involved, their names.

And his book lasted for eight nights, for two hours every night, and he finished up every night at an exciting part. And for two hours after he had finished, that was the talk, talking about the book, what he had already told.



JOSEPH MAGUIRE



Inside a woman prisoner's cell. Picture smuggled out of Armagh jail.

I've heard about 200 books, but I've never read them. And we had lectures — Irish history from as far back as the clans right up to the present day. It lasted weeks. And then we had European history, and different histories of other countries.

When we get a visit, and we get any news, that night straight after the rosary everyone would be at the doors. All the ones who had visits would in turn shout out what news they had heard. This is the way we get it together.

I can't stop thinking about when I was in the Blocks. I know what they're doing now. There's maybe a debate or something, or they're just sitting and everybody's talking among themselves, shouting out the windows or shouting out the doors.

And some nights they'll all be standing at the windows, just looking at the sky, because you can see nothing else but the sky, because there's just wire

and timbers, and you can just look up. At night it's the sky, the stars and the moon.

And maybe the fellows on the other side of the wing, who can't see the moon, or a big bright star — somebody on the side that can see it would shout, 'You want to see the full moon that's out tonight!' And he would shout, 'Ah shut up, you're wrecking me!' because he can't see the full moon. We'll see it in another two weeks when we get moved round there.

And then during the day, it's the birds. The birds like maggots in your cell. You wake up in the morning and you lift your mattress, and there's hundreds of them under you for heat. At times there's been wee birds in our cell, in the corner eating the maggots.

I remember the day a robin redbreast landed in the yard on the side. And the fellow that spotted it looked down and shoved his mate and woke him up, and said, 'Shush' for him to be quiet. 'Robin in the yard,' he said. So he rapped the wall. Once you rap the wall, it's a message. And the other fellow on the other side just got down and said, 'What?' and listened.

So it just went right down the line, 'Robin in the yard.' And everybody knew, but nobody would shout, and everybody just got up to the windows and they were all standing looking at it.

I never knew them before — greenfinches, wagtails, magpies, all the different names. Even we had a seagull that landed in our yard, and it walked backwards. That's a hundred! A hundred is an ex-

pression — it's a *cead*, it's a hundred per cent. When this seagull landed it walked backwards, it couldn't walk forwards, that's honest to God. So I always watched out for it.

It was hard when I was there, I never had it easy. From when I've got out, I can see it now, worse. It frightens me

now, looking at them. Looking in and saying, I was living like that.

The people that call them criminals are blind, because criminals are individuals, and they do things individually. My personal opinion is that a criminal will do anything to get it handy in jail, get the remission off and get out. At times you felt like crying — there's men did cry at nights — but I would never ever criminalise myself.

'At times there's been wee birds in our cell, in the corner eating maggots'

You see, when we were moved, we were all beaten, 46 men. Once we arrived in the cells, they would just shout, 'Is everybody over?' And they said, 'Yes', and then we'd have all sung, we'd have sung a song. And all those 25 or 30 screws who were only after putting us through the mirror search, beating us and degrading us, had to listen to us all singing. We sang in defiance of their search, of what they were doing to try and get us off the blanket.

Personally I have no animosity for people in Britain, and never had. But I feel that the people in England should wake up to the reality of the whole situation here. I think if they expressed themselves about their government's involvement in Northern Ireland, they themselves could bring an end to the troubles. And when you're bringing an end to the troubles, you're bringing an end to injustice.

Ireland is Ireland and it belongs to us. It's just like me moving into your house with a gun and saying, 'I'm living here.' You don't want me to live there, but I'm living there because I've got a gun and I'm occupying your house. The British army is occupying Ireland, it's just the same. The only thing that will ever end it is a total British withdrawal.

Charter 80 action plan for campaign

By Sarah Roelofs

200 people attended the founding rally of Charter 80 in London on Saturday 27 September. Gerry Fitzpatrick of the Charter 80 Co-ordinating Committee announced a five point action plan for the campaign, which it is hoped will give a major boost to the campaign for the prisoners of Armagh and Long Kesh.

The proposals include: 1) A big drive for sponsorship in the labour movement and in all the mass movements; 2) A nationwide speaking tour in the last week of October and the first two weeks of November. The tour, sponsored by the Armagh Co-ordinating Committee, the SSA, and SWSO, will be primarily aimed at the campuses, but will also involve town meetings; 3) A day of action on 10 December, International Human Rights Day; 4) A delegation to H-Block and Armagh around Christmas time; 5) A demonstration on 1 March 1981 — the fifth anniversary of the abolition of political status.

Among the speakers at the rally were Margaretta D'Arcy of the Armagh Co-ordinating Committee, who has just been released after serving three months in Armagh, and Irish trade union leader Kevin McConnell. Notable among the messages of support was one from the prisoners in H-Block giving their full support to Charter 80 and the campaign it is launching.

Tories climb down on Welsh TV channel

By Stephen Bell, Gordon Gibson and Barry Wilkins

TORY policy to wipe out the Welsh language suffered an embarrassing defeat last week.

After months of sticking firmly to their policy of dividing up Welsh language coverage between BBC2 and the new IBA second channel, they have now agreed to concentrate the coverage on ITV2. This will allow real programming of the language at peak viewing time — lifting the siege on the language just a little.

This climb down came in the face of continuing acts of civil disobedience in Wales. It reveals the weakness of the Tories in Wales, where they only control 11 out of the 36 constituencies. The victory may seem of little significance to socialists in England, so it is worth taking a look at what's been happening to the Welsh language.

During this century Welsh has declined from being the majority language in the 1901 census to the situation today where it is spoken by only one in five people in Wales. Welsh has been the victim of the need for a single language for the purposes of commerce and administration.

Traditionally it has been the nationalist movement that has fought most vigorously for the language, but now the workers'

organisations are increasingly raising policies in its defence. Both the Welsh Council of Labour and the Welsh TUC have supported the need for a fourth channel with a high proportion of Welsh language programmes.

In the last ten years surveys of such anglicised areas as Cardiff and Newport have revealed a majority of parents wanting their children to learn Welsh.

Nationalists

Nonetheless, the main force behind this victory has been the nationalist movement. Plaid Cymru organised 2,000 people who refused to pay their television licences. The Welsh

Language Society organised numerous pickets, television studio occupations and other actions. And the declaration by Plaid president Gwynfor Evans that he would fast to death for the fourth channel hardened out the movement more than anything else.

The main response from the Labour Party leaders has been sour grapes. Alan Williams MP called on Nicholas Edwards, Tory Secretary of State for Wales, to resign for giving in to 'blackmail'. All the noises from the direction of Transport House are similarly disgruntled.

It's true that some aspects of Plaid's campaign were sectarian to the Labour Party, but the best response to this would have been an all-out effort to get Labour Party members to campaign for Welsh on the fourth

channel. This is official Labour Party policy.

Instead, the day before the Tories' climb down, the Labour Party gave a press conference condemning Evans' hunger strike and calling for a fifth channel. A fifth channel would be a fine thing, as would a sixth and seventh, but let's start with Channel Four!

In future we will have to fight for joint nationalist and Labour action in defence of the Welsh language. The next step is to fight to extend Welsh broadcasting still further. Ultimately no trust can be placed in either the IBA or the BBC — we need an independent broadcasting organisation made up of representatives of the working people of Wales, to ensure a service really tailored to their needs, Welsh and non-Welsh speaking alike.

Jimmy Reilly

JIMMY REILLY, a leading national spokesperson for Sinn Fein, died on 26 September, aged 54. Before his death he had been charged under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and just recently released from custody. Comrade Reilly was a determined revolutionary militant who will be greatly missed in both the Irish Republican movement and the British labour movement.

ITALIAN BOSSES ON THE RUN

By Bob Murphy and Steve Potter

THE FALL of the Italian government last weekend and the decision of the giant car firm Fiat to suspend its decision to sack some 15,000 workers at its Turin plant is being hailed as a victory by the Italian workers.

The government fell as a result of its austerity policies failing to gain a majority in the Italian parliament. But the backdown by the Fiat bosses emphasises that the Italian ruling class were not confident that they could be implemented against the new rise of workers' struggles in Italy.

The struggle against the redundancies reached a high point on Wednesday last week, when a mass demonstration of 100,000 workers took to the streets of Turin. In a mass meeting later on at the Mirafiori plant, part of the Fiat complex, workers heard speakers from their union, the FLM, and political tendencies including the



LCR, the Italian section of the Fourth International.

While Communist Party leaders of the FLM were loudly applauded, the only other speaker to gain applause was the LCR speaker who called for a general strike

throughout the country in solidarity with the Fiat workers and a 35-hour week.

Recently support has been growing among the Italian shop stewards for the 35-hour week. Industrial action by the Fiat workers for this objective would have a huge impact —

both in Italy itself, where Fiat boss Agnelli is also the head of the Italian employers' federation, and internationally.

Fiat has been making preparations for the sackings for some time. The official figures published last month

show some 380,000 unsold cars. In August Fiat was put on a three-day week.

The bosses go on TV with stories of how one Fiat worker produces just 12 cars in the time it takes a Japanese worker to produce 40. They propose three things to change this — government assistance; agreements among European car producers to fight Japanese exports; and speed-up and redundancy.

The response of the Communist Party has been pathetic. They propose as a solution the introduction of new technology, a move away from Fiat's big factories to smaller units, and a decrease in the number of cars produced.

Alternative

The CP argue that redundancies are unnecessary and are a consequence of bad management; the alternative, they claim, is short-time working, early retirement, and similar measures.

In other words they, too, see Fiat's crisis as being solved at the expense of the workers. There's no need to delve deep into the whys and

wherefores of the CP's position, for it was spelt out by one of their leaders recently. 'We don't want to nationalise Fiat', he said, 'we want to help Agnelli solve his problems'!

While the fall of the government and the suspension of the redundancy notices at Fiat mean that there will be a delay in the coming confrontation between the Italian workers and their ruling class, the next months will be a period of preparation for both the bosses and workers.

International solidarity will play a major part in helping the Italian working class, led by the Fiat workers, to win. Links exist at a rank and file level between the Fiat workers and their SEAT brothers and sisters in Spain.

Delegations of workers from other car combines have already visited the Fiat factories to discuss common problems. Top of the agenda was the necessity for a coordinated European wide campaign to win the 35-hour week in the industry.

Messages of support can be sent to the Fiat workers at FLM, Corso Unione Sovietica, 351 Torino, Italia.



Manchester marches for Gardners

THE fight against redundancies at Gardners, the second largest engineering plant in Manchester, is gathering strength. The Salford labour movement is giving strong support for the stand of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee and the Gardners' mass meeting in their opposition to job loss. A mass meeting on 2 October will decide on action in the face of management's continued demand for 500 redundancies.

A knife in black shoulders

By Philip Lindsay

'A knife is about to be stuck through black shoulder-blades.'

That's how black leader and prominent Labour Party member, Rudy Narayan, described the Tory White Paper on Nationality.

He was speaking at a public meeting in Brixton on 10 September, organised by the Campaign Against Racist Laws. About 100 people, many representing black and labour movement organisations, attended the meeting.

Pointing out that this is 'a highly critical time in the life of black people in Britain', Narayan called for the strongest possible campaign to be waged against the proposals of the White Paper. He also criticised the Labour Party leaders for helping pave the way for the

paper and called for a change in its policy.

Labour MP John Tilley, John Plummer from the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants and Mike Rodney of CARL also spoke.

Written greetings were received from Labour MPs Tony Benn and Jo Richardson and local Labour leader Ted Knight. Richardson's message called for all our energies to be 'geared to fighting' the White Paper's proposals and 'supporting CARL in its activities.'

Local CARL groups are being set up in a number of areas, with support from Labour Party and trade union branches and black organisations. Following on from the 15,000-strong demonstration called by CARL in London last November, the possibilities for building mass resistance to new racist attacks are very good.

For more information about CARL and its activities contact: CARL, Mansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5.

Birkenhead debate on the Irish war

By John Nolan

IT WAS a minority at a conference organised by Wirral Trades Council who argued that British troops should stay in

Ireland until 'links can be built between Loyalist and Republican workers'.

The majority of delegates at the conference on the war in Ireland, held on 20 September, regarded the presence of British troops as a barrier to working class unity in the north of Ireland.

This conference was held despite a ban by the TUC on any resolutions being passed. None of the pro-

mised TUC and Labour Party speakers turned up for the conference.

It gave unanimous support to Wirral and dozens of other trades councils which have condemned the TUC's expulsion of Tameside Trades Council because it had organised a discussion on the Irish war.

Delegates considered that the Troops Out Movement should be built into a mass movement, by taking its demand into the Labour Party and trade union branches.

Capital Radio faces strike on pay

CAPITAL Radio may be 'in tune with London', but it's certainly not in tune with its staff.

They have refused to accept a wage offer of between 14 and 17 per cent, and have refused to give in to

management's intimidation tactics.

More than half the staff from all departments are out on strike, and a daily 14-hour picket line is being maintained.

When shop stewards rejected the management offer Brian Morgan, Capital's chief negotiator, sent an individual letter to each member of staff saying that they should inform him — on an individual basis within one day — whether they accepted his pay offer or not.

The letter threatened that all those who failed to comply would not have their eventual pay rise backdated.

He also claimed that the shop stewards had recommended acceptance, which

was quite untrue.

ACTT, the chief union involved, called a strike, which now has the support of both Equity and the NUJ. Many of Capital's services are being affected, with air time being padded out with repeats and more needle time.

Helpline, its 24-hour telephone advice service, is out of operation, as are most of its best programmes, like the Sunday afternoon youth programme, *Hullabaloo*.

At present the dispute is deadlocked, with nothing but threats from management and stern resistance from the unions. The strike will continue until management drop their victorian attitudes and 'come up' with something better.

Council workers fight off Redundancies

By Alan Walker, Liverpool NALGO (in a personal capacity)

COUNCIL workers in Liverpool recently defeated moves to sack 600 workers in the direct works section.

Following the May local elections, the Liberals and Tories combined to re-allocate £6m from direct works to other areas and to authorise the serving of redundancy notices.

Such attacks had been anticipated. The Liverpool Council Shop Stewards and Staff Representatives Committee, representing the 30,000 workforce, had been in existence since the election of the Tory government.

Its immediate response was to call for all-out strike action in the event of redundancies in any one department, and a one-day strike by all council workers to lobby the next City Council meeting.

The Liverpool NALGO branch immediately began a programme of selective action including refusing to send out redundancy notices and boycotting private contractors.

High points of the dispute were a walk-out by workers in the city lighting department demanding that apprentice sheet metal workers whose training had finished be given permanent jobs. Then all rent collection offices were closed in protest against scabbing by senior management.

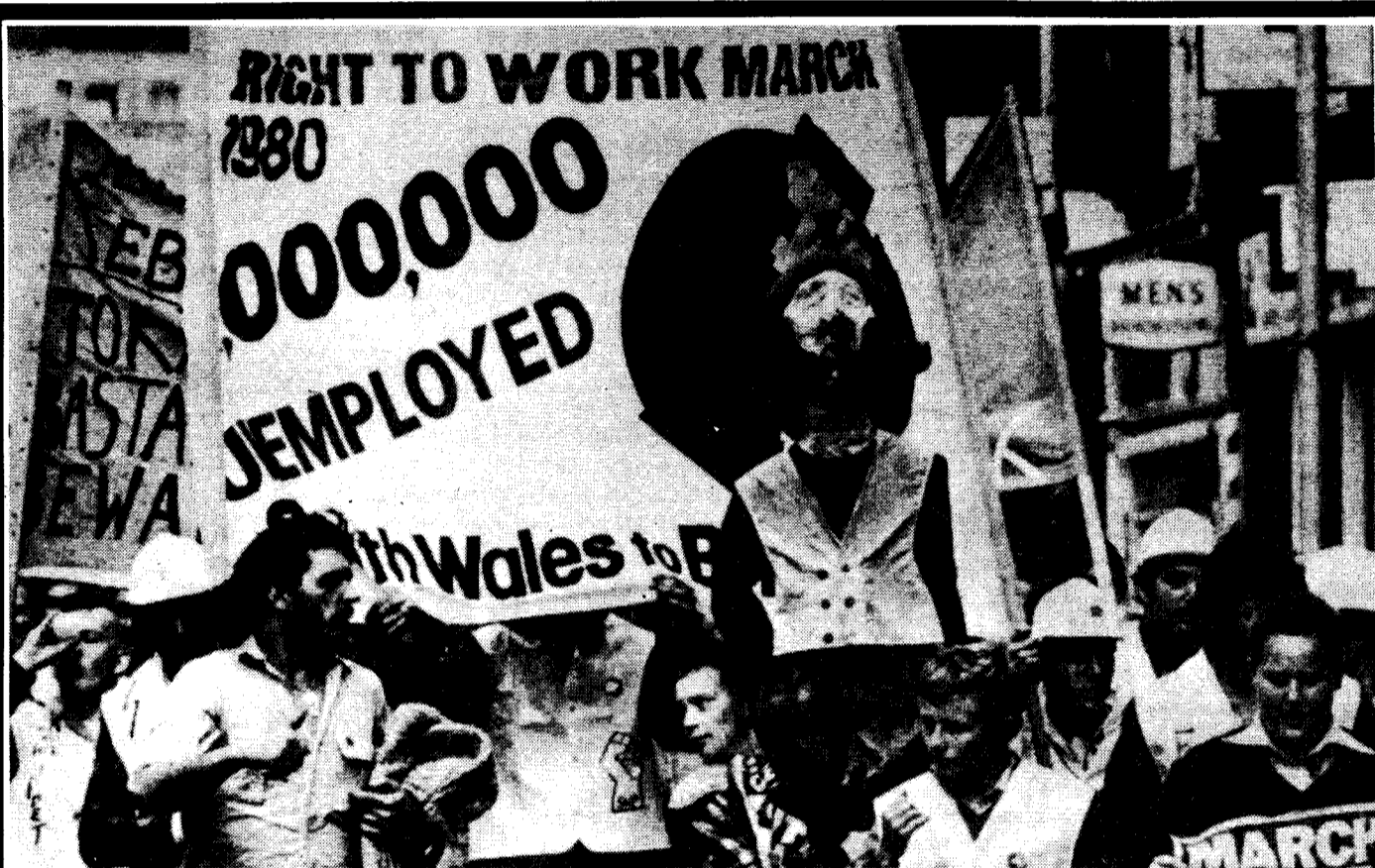
On the 10 July, 2,000 workers attended a mass meeting to support the day of action, and 5,000 lobbied the Council on 23 July in pouring rain.

By mid-August the job-cutting plans were in shreds. The Liberals did a complete about turn and gave the no-redundancy guarantees the unions were looking for.

After being given a

bloody nose this time, the Liberals will shy away from similar attempts to sack workers in the months ahead. However their job cutting policies continue by cutting services, increasing charges and, the most sinister of all, refusing to fill vacant jobs. In the last five years 3,000 jobs have been cut by this policy.

Militants in Liverpool won't be resting on their laurels after their recent victory, but will be continuing the fight to reverse all cuts and to get rid of this rotten Tory government. That involves national perspectives and actions and that's why I'll be urging my branch to send delegates to the Lambeth conference 'Local Government in Crisis'.



Big reception for jobs marchers

By Graham Atwell

IF it hadn't been for the marchers, luminous orange jackets I'd never have found the 1980 Right to Work March as it gathered in pouring rain and mist in Port Talbot last week. But as we set off through the half derelict Port Talbot steelworks spirits rose and the weather responded.

There were more than 200 of us from all over the country: young, old, punks, skinheads, rastas and mods. As Paul Jones, a young engineering worker from Maesteg who'd been made redundant only the week before, told me: 'We're here to protest at Thatcher's government which is vandalising Welsh industry and throwing us on the scrapheap'.

The reception for the march was almost unbelievable. At Bridgend women workers from Miles Laboratory left their factory to greet the march, while delegations of marchers visited seven local pits collecting money and discussing the fight against unemployment. The mayor of Rhondda joined us to march through the valleys and many bystanders joined in anti-Thatcher chants.

Despite lack of enthusiasm for the efforts of the catering crew, and despite many blisters, the marchers are determined to reach Brighton. 'We'll kick Maggie Thatcher off the end of Brighton Pier', is the most popular chant, and with the support for the demonstration in Brighton growing daily it almost seems possible.

The South Wales miners are organising special coaches from local pits, while the support from the TGWU and ALSEF executives has boosted the campaign.

The lodge secretary of Penrhweiber lodge of the NUM explained to a meeting of marchers and miners at the pit head why the 1980 Right to Work march is so important.

'We need to link up the employed and unemployed workers. The unemployed have not got the strength and muscle, the employed have. This march is a symbol of that link for the next fortnight. Someone's got to demonstrate to Thatcher and the Tories what people feel. The only way to make that known is to demonstrate. For that the Right to Work march is to be commended.'

'Welsh miners and Welsh people have no intention of being taken back to the '30s. The message from this colliery, from a mass meeting, is we won't let ourselves be taken back to those days. Let Maggie know this message as loudly as possible.'

ADWEST — police evict strikers from Transport House

By Kate Howard

AFTER the mass picket outside the ADWEST factory on Monday 22 September, 30 strikers and supporters went to Transport House to demand that their 19-week-old dispute be made official.

During their stay, the strikers put their case to Rod Todd, Deputy General Secretary, and Fred Howell, national officer for power and engineering — who said he'd known nothing about the dispute (after 19 weeks!).

On Monday evening Moss Evans finally offered the strikers... a half hour meeting with him in

Blackpool on 29 September! This was rejected and Alex Kitson then insisted that non-



T&G members leave the building, threatening that 'measures would be taken' if they did not.

Minutes later he was back — with a chief inspector, an inspector, a sergeant and six police who threw out the 'trespassing' Adwest supporters. Two T&G members and the sacked AUEW steward Martin Kaufman spent the night

in the building.

Fellow union members who tried to get in to talk to them the next morning were refused admission, and early on Tuesday afternoon the remaining workers were thrown out, again by the police.

Meanwhile, back in Reading on Wednesday 24 September, Danny Broderick, the Adwest convenor arrested on a

previous mass picket for standing alone in the factory gateway and insisting on his right to picket, was found guilty of obstruction and fined £50.

The lessons of this week's events are clear: police can now arrest any picket and obtain a conviction. And when they're not busy doing that, the trade union leadership will keep them occupied by getting them to do their dirty work for them!

But, as Danny Broderick stated in the dock:

'Hundreds, if not thousands, of workers may be prosecuted in the future, but magistrates and police can't stop workers fighting for their rights.'

Organising in the Unions

Spreading red among ½ m white collars

By Hugh MacGrillen

THE Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs, with over 450,000 members, is the sixth largest union in the country. It has a varied membership drawn from engineering, chemicals, banking and insurance, the universities, NHS and many other sectors.

Formed only 12 years ago, the union rapidly cashed in on the willingness of white-collar workers to organise by a combination of sharp recruitment tactics, aggressive workplace bargaining, and skilled manipulation of the media.

During this period the union machine was solidly under the control of the Broad Left.

Red Collar, as an organised left current in ASTMS, developed in response to the now familiar story of a swing to the right in the union coupled with the failure of the Broad Left to organise open and democratic left-wing opposition.

As the effects of the TUC/Labour Party Social Contract began to bite, the Broad Left, instead of turning to the membership and fighting the failures and betrayals, went on in the same old way — trying to control the official union by electoral manoeuvring and juggling with the constitution, divorced from either political base or programme.

Red Collar has two main tasks. The first is to get ASTMS policy changed by campaigning at various levels of the union structure. But at least as important is to give these policies life by mobilising the rank and file in the workplaces and branches.

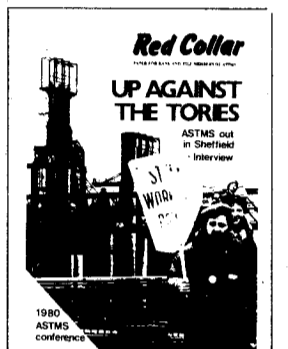
As part of this process, we have had to oppose various attempts at victimisation of union activists by our own national officials.

Every year the annual conference passes many good motions — a legacy of Broad Left influence — but unless pressure is brought to bear on the National Executive Committee to do something about them, they just get consigned to the archives.

Forgot

For example, in 1979 conference passed a resolution for a campaign for workplace nurseries — against the NEC's will. But subsequently the NEC just forgot about the resolution.

To control the leadership more effectively, we are fighting to make the union structures more democratic. Red Collar is in favour of the election of union officials and wants to see the active participation of workplace groups in the



running of the union.

Promoting independent working class organisation and action, instead of relying on the union bureaucracy is a key task.

Red Collar has a regular quarterly journal which takes up key campaigns, gives reports on struggles and provides some background analysis.

It is an important role of the paper to break down the monopoly of information of the bureaucracy, to report defeats and sell-outs as well as successful struggles — to learn from them for the future.

At its last national conference, Red Collar accepted a programme which outlines how the interests of the rank and file members can only be defended by refusing to accept any responsibility for the capitalist crisis.

Campaign

Whether the threat to jobs originates in a crisis in a specific industry or in the introduction of new technology, the answer has to be a campaign for a shorter working week.

In order to defend the standard of living of union members, it is necessary to support wage struggles and defend the welfare state, by campaigning against all cuts.

To be effective in these struggles we need to defend trade union rights which are seriously threatened by the Employment Act; the Defend Our Unions Code of Practice is part of Red Collar's programme.

We also have to argue against import controls and the other proposals of the 'Alternative Economic Strategy', to which the union leadership is strongly committed.

For further information about meetings, local activities etc. please contact Red Collar, c/o 9 Countess Road, London NW5.

Socialist Challenge

The picket line they're determined to bust

THE 27 laggers at the Isle of Grain construction site in Kent have been on strike for 14 months. The reason is that they refuse to accept a wage cut of £50 a week.

The militancy of the laggers, who are members of the General and Municipal Workers' Union, ensured that they received high bonus rates on the power station construction site.

The Central Electricity Generating Board wanted standard bonuses, to put a stop to on-site bargaining and cut costs.

Engineering and electrician union leaders were happy to go along with this, because it put negotiating power into the hands of full-time officials and removed it from the rank and file.

These leaders set about defeating the laggers with a vengeance. AUEW general secretary Terry Duffy, John Baldwin of the AUEW's construction section, and electricians' leader Frank Chapple organised the training of scab laggers and installed them on the Grain site.

Chapple, in a letter to Len Murray, described this overturning of a basic tenet of trade unionism as 'a matter of principle'.

In Milford Haven, the EETPU and the AUEW have signed deals to provide laggers for two petrochemical sites. Members of the GMWU, the laggers' union, are excluded.

This is the background to the dispute over which the engineering and electricians' unions now face expulsion from the TUC. The expulsion should be carried out, but this doesn't mean that the TUC can be depended on to win the battle.

It was David Bassnett, leader of the GMWU, who agreed that the dispute should not be raised at the Trades Union Congress last month, because the debate might have been somewhat unseemly.

To support the laggers, send messages and donations to: Isle of Grain Strike Fund, 112 Whitebarn Lane, Dagenham, Essex.

DUMP THESE SCABS!



ELECTRICIANS' leader Frank Chapple: he describes the striking laggers as 'bandits'

By **Geoffrey Sheridan** *Isle of Grain ... now Milford Haven*

ONE anonymous member of the TUC's General Council is reported to have said: 'Chapple really gets up Moss Evans' nose.'

Of such irritants, if we are to believe the mass media, are bureaucratic purges made.

The Electricians' Union leader, removed from the Finance and General Purposes Committee last week by 21 votes to 12, is a banner bearer for the right wing, and hence for the media his unseating has all the hallmarks of dictatorship in the making.

No one who has any love for democracy in the labour movement should shed any tears over the removal of Frank Chapple from the TUC's 12-strong 'inner cabinet'.

Abolish

Under his leadership, the EETPU has abolished the election of full-time officials, who are now appointed by the executive. These officials can stand for election to the executive, and the union's rules restricting canvassing put these candidates in particularly advantageous positions.

Decisions of the union's two-yearly conferences are no longer binding on the executive, which last year overturned a motion unanimously passed by the conference by making deals for EETPU members to obtain private medicine.

Branches which support left-wing activities, such as the Right to Work march, can be suspended, as happened in Cardiff.

But it was not defence of internal union democracy which prompted the TUC leadership to dump Chapple. The General Council is hardly a bastion for upholding the principle of accountability of the labour movement leadership.

Dispute

Two issues have led to the noose tightening on the TUC's most vociferous right-wing ideologue: the Day of Action, and the Isle of Grain dispute.

The TUC did little to build the 14 May Day of Action. When it should have been campaigning up and down the country for a one-day all-out strike against Thatcher's



TERRY DUFFY, Engineering Union general secretary: he helped to organise scabbing on the Isle of Grain

policies, its general secretary was on holiday in Madeira.

But Chapple took advantage of Fleet Street's columns to join the media's 'Day of Shame' strike-breaking campaign, and that meant he was publicly putting up two fingers to the General Council, which had taken its cue from a motion passed at the 1979 Congress.

The 27 laggers at the Isle of Grain power station construction site, who went on strike last year to defend their bonus rates, have been described by Chapple as 'bandits'.

Along with his right-wing co-thinkers in the leadership of the Engineering Union, the electricians' leader has mounted a scabbing operation on the site, and this has brought him into direct conflict with the laggers' union, the General and Municipal Workers'.

Both the EETPU and the AUEW now face expulsion

from the TUC over the issue. This should certainly be supported by socialists, but why should a majority of the General Council be concerned to uphold a fundamental principle of trades unionism at this time?

The trade union leadership is in a quandary. While the TUC pleads with Thatcher to talk to them, such talks merely provide an excuse for not building the one thing that can defend working class interests — mass action to bring down the government.

Fear

Behind this lack of action lies a fear of the alternative to Thatcherism. Since the post-war boom years, the trade union leadership has based itself on negotiating for pay rises and reforms. The deepening crisis of the late '70s put paid to such oppor-

tunities. As their support for the Callaghan wing of the Labour Party shows, the TUC leaders still cling to the 'respectability' of an incomes policy and open compliance with big business.

But they sense the dangers. For the first time in the post-war years trade union membership is falling. Small unions are facing sharp financial problems. With unemployment at 2m and rising, the credibility of the TUC is at stake.

Moss Evans is at pains to say that there is not a purge of the right-wing union bureaucrats. There ought to be, but if that is to succeed the TUC has to campaign among the rank and file in the EETPU, the AUEW, and the other right-wing strongholds for the members of these unions to turf out their leaders.

And it needs to adopt the policies which can confront Thatcherism head on.

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