

# Socialist Challenge

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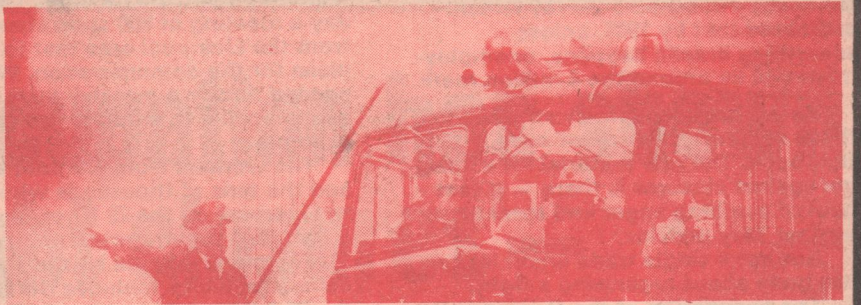
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# PAY THE FIREFIGHTERS



## IT'S WAR, pure and simple

Margaret Thatcher explained it last Monday evening, when she told her City of London audience that 'we' had to accept a drop in living standards.

By 'we' she meant working people, not the Tory bankers she was addressing.

The Tories have made a U-turn with a vengeance. The incomes policy they claimed they would never introduce has resulted in the savage 6 per cent norm — at a time when inflation is raging at 18 per cent.

The firefighters are once again in the forefront of the struggle. In every area massive support needs to be built for their struggle.

But most important is the unity of all public sector workers in a huge alliance. By breaking Thatcher's 6 per cent they can break her vicious anti-working class government as well.



# SMASH THE 6% NORM

FEW socialists can have resisted at least an inward feeling of glee at the sight of a dejected Denis Healey plodding home from the House of Commons after his defeat in the Labour leadership election.

There will doubtless be considerable delight in the labour movement that the right wing's top bully has been rejected. But delight at Healey's discomfort

## Labour leadership: don't let up on democracy fight

should not be turned into illusions about what Foot's leadership will represent.

In the first place Foot only got the majority of Labour MPs to vote for him because they see him as the person who can defuse and head off the Bennite challenge and 'unite the party'.

As Roy Hattersley put it on Monday night: 'Michael's not so left wing as he used to be.' Hattersley's statement is the understatement of the year.

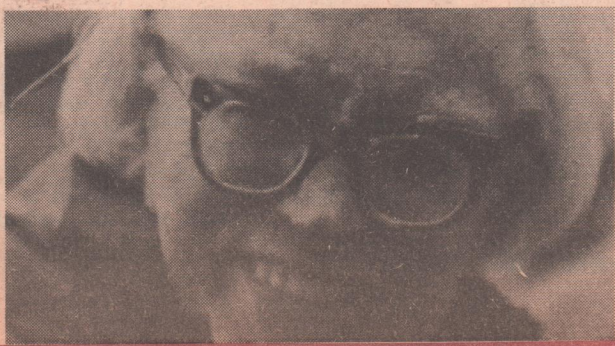
Foot has the proven record of two years as a cabinet minister in the wretched Callaghan government, when he defended the government's policy — five per cent wage limit and all — down the line.

In his first policy statements after the election result was announced, Foot fell over himself to give assurances to the right. On nuclear disarmament, for example, he pointed out that 'ideals have to be

translated into practical policies'. He discounted any talk of withdrawal from NATO.

In effect Foot has adopted Aneurin Bevan's multilateralist views on disarmament, which at the time Foot savaged in the pages of *Tribune*. Foot or no Foot, the fight for labour democracy must continue.

Any idea that the Parliamentary Labour Party has suddenly become the guardian of conference decisions and socialist aspirations is a



pipe dream. The same PLP that votes for Foot today will continue to support anti-socialist policies.

Nonetheless, Michael Foot's elevation to party leadership is a result of the shift to the left in the party. It's a sign that the right is on the run and beginning to panic.

Now the left has to ram home the advantage and ensure that the January conference breaks the power of the PLP once and for all. The fight should start now for the victor of the new election procedure to be the authentic leader of the Labour left, Tony Benn.



## 100,000 expected for jobs march

ONE of the largest demonstrations against unemployment will be held in Liverpool on 29 November. It has been called by the Labour Party and is now supported by the TUC.

No reader of Socialist Challenge needs to be told that unemployment is reaching disaster proportions.

The Cambridge Econometrics Group last week published a survey which estimated that by 1985, unless something drastic happens, unemployment will be around the 4 million mark.

As we have repeatedly stressed in these columns, the urgent need is to fightback. The raw material for a struggle against closures is there — a vast pool of seething anger and resentment against Tory policies.

But not a single trade union leader has gone about organising a fight.

The occupation of the Gardner's factory and now ICL Winsford is a vivid in-

dication of what is possible.

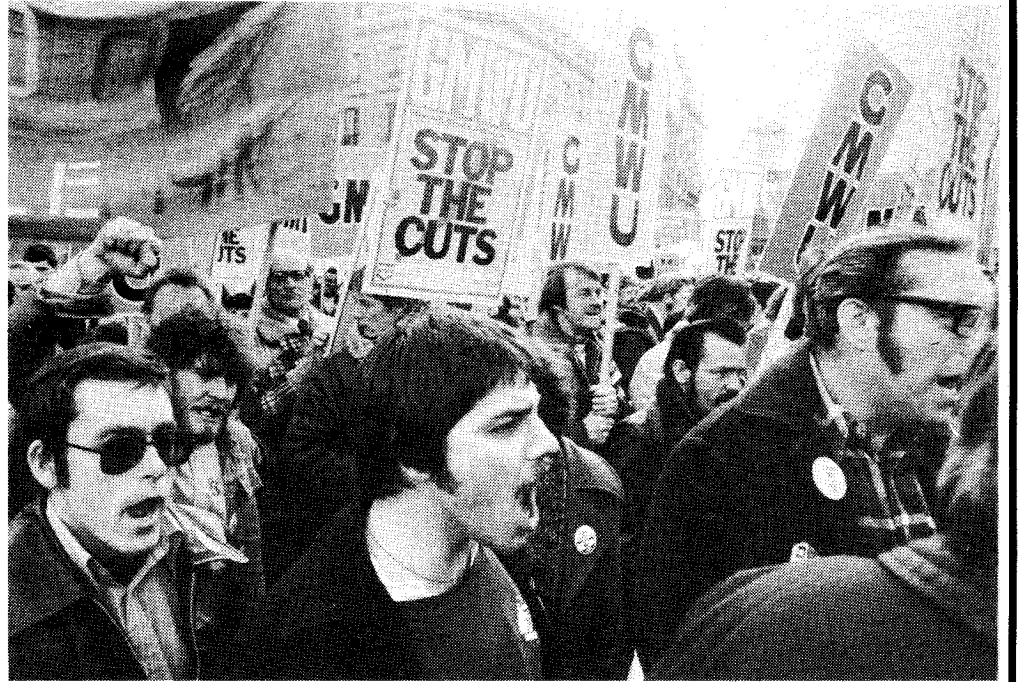
Through their courageous actions the workers of these plants have shown that resistance is possible.

These workers must lead the 29 November demonstration. By putting at the head of the demonstration workers who have taken forthright action against unemployment, the Labour Party executive can show what kind of action needs to be taken to roll back the tide of redundancies.

The indications are that the demonstration will be huge. Last Saturday a meeting of 500 shop stewards from the Liverpool area met to make plans for the demonstration. What's needed now is a massive push from every locality to emulate the Liverpool example.

The workers from Gardner's and ICL, and the tens of thousands who will go to Liverpool on the 29 November, need a firm lead for struggle from the TUC.

The march should be the start of a campaign which includes the fight for the 35-hour week and for worksharing with no loss of pay.



## 6% — Tories declare war!

SPEAKING to a pre-conference get together of the CBI in Brighton, Michael Heseltine spelled it out. 'In this period of crisis,' he said, 'sacrifices have to be made. The question is, who is going to make the sacrifices?'

By slapping on the 6 per cent pay limit in the public sector, and by the vicious cuts in every field of social expenditure, the Environment Secretary and the rest of the Tory government have given their answer to who should pay — the working class.

### Denial

Despite their denials, the Tories have introduced a full-blown public sector incomes policy. They have declared war against public sector workers, timing their announcement to prevent the firefighters getting the 18.8 per cent due to them under the 1978 agreement.

Al Walker, vice chairperson of Liverpool NALGO and a member of the Liverpool local authority shop stewards committee, told Socialist Challenge: 'The Tories have declared war on the public sector with the six per cent norm.'

'To fight it we need an alliance of all public sector workers. The manual workers' claim is in, but as yet no reply has been made. The water workers also have their claim in. What's needed is a joint fight by all these groups, rather than taking on the government one by one.'

### Claims

'In Liverpool we've discussed the fact that NALGO's claim comes up at a different time of year from that of other public sector workers. This is silly. We should all go in together. At the moment we obviously need the maximum solidarity and support for the firefighters.'

The Tories' 6 per cent pay



'At a time when inflation is 18 per cent a pay limit is just not on'

ceiling reveals the extent of the crisis they are in. Despite stringent monetarist policies, including punitive interest rates that are driving hundreds of companies to the wall, the money supply is still growing.

Inflation is still a whopping 17 per cent — hence the need for drastic action on public sector pay; hence the extra £2,000m cuts.

The Tories' action against the firefighters is the most shabby betrayal of an agreement seen for a long time. Even many of the local authority employers are appalled by the government's action.

Drastic anti-union action by the government and employers requires a drastic response by public sector workers. Rather than just sit and wait for the firefighters, the whole public sector needs to go into action to defeat the 6 per cent.

As Al Walker points out, the claims of all public sector workers should be co-ordinated. In particular, the local authority manual workers and the water workers should bring their claims forward.

The NUPE leadership should be forced to end its 'wait and see' attitude and

push forward the public sector claims.

In the localities we need an alliance of public sector workers. Once again, the example of Liverpool, where there is a joint shop stewards committee for all local authority workers, is one which should be copied.

The call made by the South-east medical branch of ASTMS on Monday evening for an alliance of all public health workers to co-ordinate the fight against the 6 per cent is also a good step in the direction of joint action.

Branch secretary Janet Maguire says: 'At a time

when inflation is 18 per cent a pay limit is just not on. There's no choice — either we unite to fight it or we will suffer a huge reduction in living standards.'

A united fight against this Tory incomes policy, a policy which they said they'd never introduce, would be irresistible. To get that united fight the TUC should be recalled to prepare the struggle.

The last winter of discontent not only broke the 5 per cent pay norm; it rocked the stability of the government. A second version can repeat the operation with fatal consequences for the Tories.



Chopper Heseltine

### CBI demands more cuts

By Pat Kane

BRITAIN'S bosses want more cuts. Michael Heseltine, the Tory Environment Secretary, was given rapturous applause when he told the audience at the CBI conference that even more cuts are on the way.

The imposition of the new 6 per cent pay policy for the public sector is yet another example of the Tory axe. The cash limits system has now been extended to cover wages as well as services, and thousands of redundancies in the public sector are now on the cards.

The success of the recent anti-cuts conference staged by Lambeth Labour councillors and town hall trade unions has laid the basis for uniting the fight against cuts.

Ray Varnes, vice president of London NUPE, says: 'Our divisional council will be meeting Ted Knight and the other Lambeth councillors to discuss the follow-up to the conference. We'll be supporting any action taken by the Lambeth councillors to stop the cuts.'

'The conference opposed rate rises, and we will be campaigning to make sure that there are no massive rate rises to cover for Tory cuts.'

The steering committee elected by the conference holds its first meeting in Lambeth on 23 November.

Hopefully the decisions of the conference will be publicised for the anti-Tory demonstration on 29 November. Socialist Challenge will be campaigning for other labour movement organisations to adopt the measures supported at the Lambeth conference.

All photos: G. M. COOKSON [Socialist Challenge]

## On the road to Liverpool

**THE Right to Work Campaign is organising a march from Manchester to Liverpool from 25-29 November.**

The March is sponsored by the Gardner's shop stewards committee who are also sending a delegation of Gardner's workers on the march.

On the road to Liverpool, the march will be campaigning for the 29 November Labour Party demonstration against unemployment and visiting factories and workplaces along the route to raise money and support for the Gardner's sit in.

To get the march on the road the organisers urgently need:

1. NAMES of unemployed in your areas who'd like to go on the march.

2. VOLUNTEERS with cars, vans, minibuses or even motorbikes to drive delegations to factories, workplaces and meetings on the march.

3. CASH — We need £25 per marcher. Official letters of appeal are available from the Right to Work Campaign, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

All volunteers to help organise the march should phone 01-986 5491.

By Redmond O'Neill

**THE Gardner's occupation in Manchester is the first major fight against the present round of redundancies in the engineering industry.**

Money is coming in — £16,000 has been raised in factory collections around the country, and the North Manchester AUEW district has voted for a weekly levy to support the Gardner's workers.

But money alone cannot win the dispute.

Management has gone on to the offensive with its decision to organise a company ballot on a return to work, while local and national union officials have

## Bosses try ballot to end sit-in

been scurrying around looking for a compromise.

In a letter to all the Gardner's workers, John Tocher, the Engineering Confed's district secretary, said that the ballot was wrong because there was no agreement on 'severance payments for members who wish to volunteer for either redundancy or early retirement. Only moderate offers have been made at present.'

### Ballot

This is hardly a confident call to the Gardner's workers to

maintain their refusal to sell each other's jobs.

Tocher doesn't even reject management's terms of reference — that 550 jobs must go. He simply calls for negotiations on the terms.

Workers are urged to reject the ballot, not on the basis of a fighting policy on unemployment, but out of 'loyalty to the trade unions and their fellow workers'. If the Gardner's workers see no prospect of victory in this dispute, no amount of loyalty will prevent them voting for a return to work.

The myth of ballot democracy

also has to be tackled head on.

The strength of the trade union movement lies in its collective organisation, the involvement of all members in decision-making following full discussion and the ability to act together on that basis.

Secret ballots, whoever organises them, cut across that collective strength. Workers have to decide their vote alone at home, cut off from their co-workers, and with no counter to the media's anti-strike propaganda.

The best response to the ballot would be to strengthen the

democracy of the struggle, calling meetings in every shop to explain the purpose of the ballot and involve the full membership in winning support for the struggle.

Management is not only out to end the dispute — it wants to smash the unions' power in the plant'. The convenor and the leading stewards all found they were for the chop when the redundancy notices went out last week.

The only response to this can be to up the stakes in the dispute. Gardner's should be in the front line of the TUC-Labour Party march against unemployment on 29 November. There should be a levy in every AUEW district. Tocher himself should lead the call for a district-wide day of action to support Gardner's and fight redundancy.

That's the kind of lead that Gardner's workers need.

# 'The Gardner's occupation has shown it's possible to fight closures' — ICL Worker

By Pat Kane

**WORKERS at International Computers Limited in Winsford, Cheshire, have followed the example of Gardner's and occupied their factory.**

ICL announced 2,500 redundancies last Friday, including the complete closure of the Winsford plant. The company forced through 1,500 redundancies earlier this year.

Andy Blondell, ASTMS chairperson at ICL's West Gorton plant in Manchester, told Socialist Challenge: 'The Gardner's occupation has shown us that it's possible to fight against closures.'

'We learned the hard way that one of the greatest problems in fighting redundancies is the fear of isolation. We have fully supported the Gardner's occupation, and we know from experience that support from the rest of the labour movement is vital.'

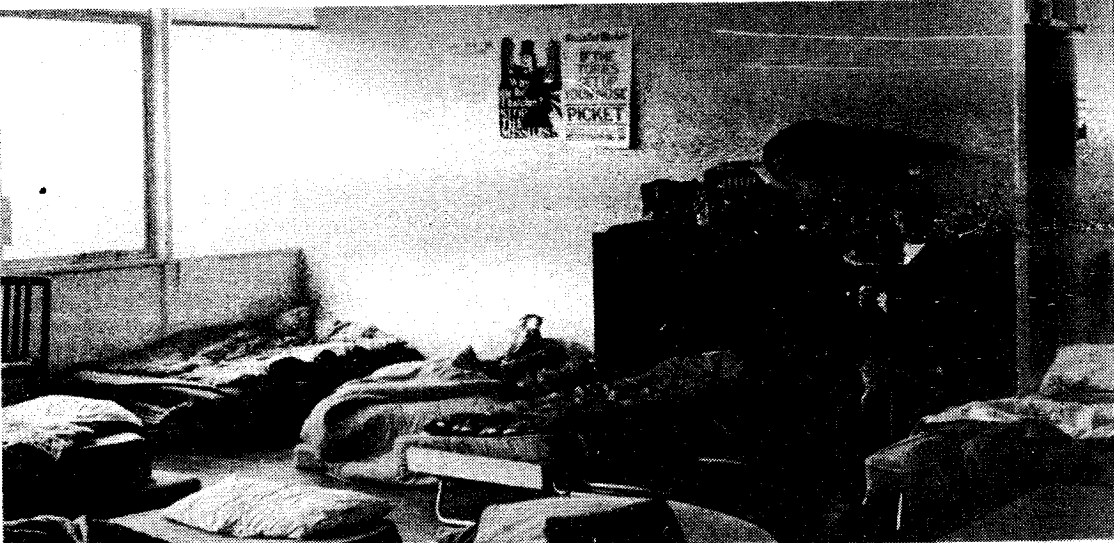
'Gardner's and now Winsford are taking on the whole of the Engineering Employers' Federation.'

'This is why our stewards will be attending the Manchester district Confed emergency stewards meeting this Friday. I'll be arguing for a day of industrial action across Manchester in support of Gardner's and Winsford. But it appears that the Confed leadership will not go further than proposing financial support.'

'I'll be arguing for Gardner's and Winsford to be leading the 29 November demonstration, because they are in the forefront of the fight against unemployment.'

'What we need is a central Manchester rally to win support for these occupations. Tony Benn should be on the platform, and the Confed leadership should be using this week's stewards meeting to launch it.'

'We have to make sure that Winsford and Gardner's become a springboard for effective action to defend jobs throughout the North-west.'



GARDNER'S workers in occupation

## Benn backs the occupation

TONY Benn has given his support to the Gardner's occupation. Last week he sent a telegram to the occupied plant, saying:

'Good luck in your campaign, which is of immense importance at this point in history. The labour movement should give you its full support.'

Since Benn isn't standing in the phoney election for the leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, he should have plenty of time to make sure that the labour movement does give the occupation its full backing.

Tom Macafee, Gardner's convenor, welcomed Benn's support, but added: 'It's time they got out of their prams. There is a lot that the

Labour Party can do.

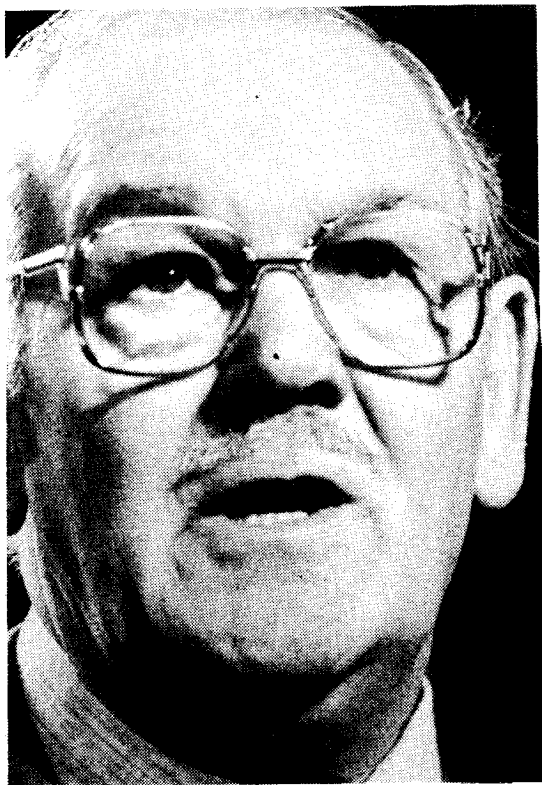
'Tony Benn and other leading left wingers should come down to the plant. They are all well aware of the situation here, and they could easily get us national press coverage and support.'

'We need this type of support right away, tomorrow preferably.'

Along with other national labour leaders, Benn will have an ideal opportunity to support the occupation at the TUC/Labour Party demonstration against unemployment to be held in Liverpool on 29 November.

They should use their influence to make sure that the people who are leading the fight to save jobs — the Gardner's workforce — are right at the front leading the demonstration.





**DUFFY:** 'Do nothing to damage the competitiveness of your firm'

## Duffy trounces Wright

By Bob Murphy

**THE result of the Engineering Union presidential election is a major blow to the left throughout the labour movement. Terry Duffy has been re-elected for life, without even the need for a second ballot.**

Duffy stood in the election on his record over the past two years.

This record has been that of selling out the national engineering pay claim fought for by 2m workers; scabbing on the struggle against the victimisation of Derek Robinson at BL, and lining up with the right wing in the Labour Party.

Duffy's victory came at a time when significant gains are being made by the left in the labour movement, and when an increasing number of workers are moving into action against the Tories' job and wage-cutting policies.

Duffy is totally against this resistance. While thousands of engineering workers are on the dole, Duffy and the right-wing executive committee of the AUEW have done nothing

about unemployment. Their main advice to AUEW members, distributed in a four-page pull-out in the union journal, is 'do nothing to damage the competitiveness of your firm'.

The presidential election result does not mean a general shift to the right in

the union — left winger Brett won the national organiser's position against right winger Sullivan by a clear margin.

In the presidential election there was a move away from both Duffy and the Broad Left candidate, Bob Wright. AUEW members did not see Wright as an adequate alternative, despite their dissatisfaction with Duffy.

The defeat for Wright is a legacy of the long crisis of the Broad Left, which started when Hugh (now Lord) Scanlon went over 'completely and utterly', as

he put it, to the camp of Harold Wilson.

By failing to chart an independent class struggle course, the Broad Left did not break from Scanlon and the Social Contract.

If there's not to be a similar debacle of the left when Sir John Boyd comes up for re-selection as general secretary next year, there needs to be a rapid shift by leaders such as Wright.

Starting a campaign against redundancy, in support of the Gardner's occupation and for mass action against the cruise missiles, are the kind of steps that are required to build the support that could defeat Sir John.

## Morning Star's head in the clouds

**'SIGNIFICANT gains for Broad Left in AUEW poll.' That was how the Communist**

**Party's Morning Star reported the result of the Engineering Union elections.**

At a time of perhaps the most disastrous electoral drubbing which the left has received in recent years, how is it possible for the CP to make such an absurd statement?

The Morning Star justifies its position by reference to the results other than that for the union

president.

The result of the presidential election, in which Duffy beat left-winger Wright by a 2-1 majority, is by far the most significant of the elections which have just been held.

It demonstrates the complete failure of the Broad Left's strategy over the past five years — a fact which the Morning Star can't admit. Thus an important defeat is written as if it were a victory. No one will be fooled.

## Duffy's rise to power

**1975 John Boyd defeats Bob Wright in election for general secretary of the AUEW. Terry Duffy scores landslide victory against Wright for a seat on the executive.**

**1977 Duffy beats Wright by 356 votes in the first ballot of the presidential election.**

**1978 Duffy beats Wright by 169,168 votes to 122,251 in the second ballot of the presidential election on a 32 per cent poll.**

**Wright wins election for assistant general secretary, defeating G Lee, the right-wing candidate, by 150,560 votes to 97,292.**

**1980 Duffy beats Wright by 126,135 votes to 58,826 in the first round of the presidential election on 24.7 per cent poll. No need for second ballot. Duffy is elected for life.**

## Would BL have closed?

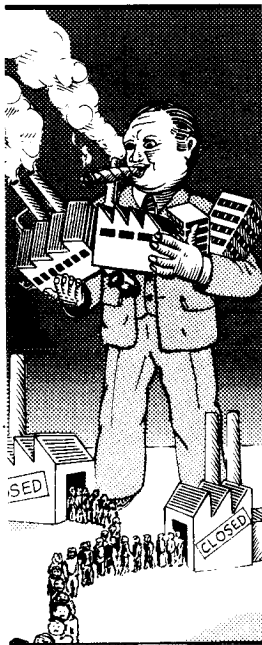
By Paul Lawson

**'THE company is bankrupt — they'll close down the plants if we strike.'**

That's what the Transport and Engineering union leaders told the BL workforce, echoing Edwardes' threat. What's the truth?

If the strike had gone ahead, there's no doubt that the company would have taken the opportunity to close down some of the plants already scheduled for closure — 13 plants involving the loss of a further 28,000 jobs.

These jobs and plants are due to go soon. Edwardes would have jumped at the chance to blame the workforce. Avoiding a strike hasn't saved these jobs. Only a fight against the company's redundancy programme will achieve that.



It wants to streamline industry, to make it more profitable and efficient, and it is anxious to break the strength of the organised workers' movement. But that is not the same thing as de-industrialisation, even if it involves closures and redundancies.

De-industrialisation proper would be suicide for the capitalist class.

Even if the threat to completely close BL was a bluff, was the money there? Surely Leyland is bankrupt and can't afford more?

## Essential

Was the government ready to close BL altogether? This threat was a bluff by Edwardes.

British capitalism needs BL. It needs it, not because of concern about the fate of the workforce, but because a continuing and viable car industry is essential if Britain is to continue to be an industrial capitalist nation. Axing BL would be a blow at the strength and viability of the whole of British capitalism. Its closure would have a tremendous knock-on effect throughout industry and especially in the Midlands.

Does all this matter to Edwardes and the Tories? Aren't they engaged in a process of 'de-industrialisation'?

## Anxious

That argument is based on a confusion. The British capitalist class, despite the strength of non-industrial sectors like banking and insurance, depends on being the ruling class of an industrialised country.

# BL struggle sabotaged again

By Pat Hickey, TGWU shop steward, SD1 Rover Solihull

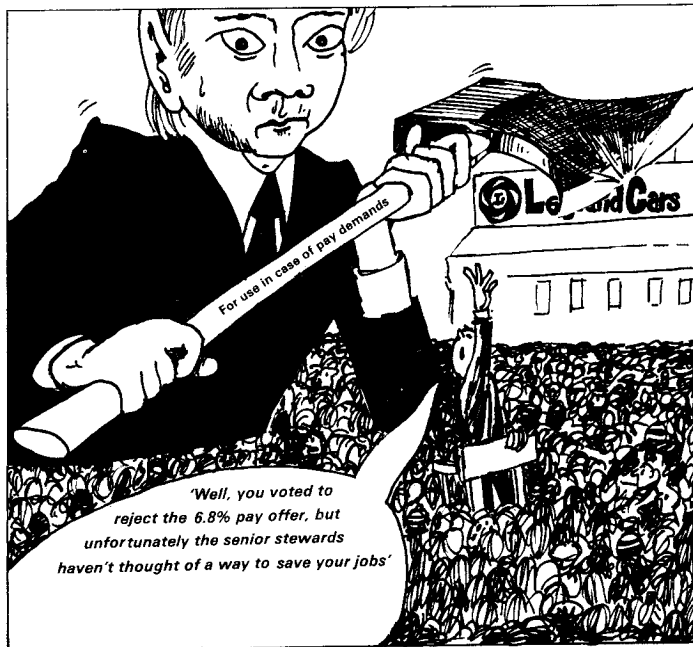
**DESPITE a two-to-one mandate from BL's workforce to reject the company's 6.8 per cent pay offer, the trade union leadership has once again caved in to the blackmail tactics of Michael Edwardes.**

For the past three years, the union leaders have blamed the membership's alleged unwillingness to fight as the reason for not confronting Edwardes's assault on jobs and living standards.

This year they had no such excuse. By 43,600 votes to 23,000 BL workers said that they'd had enough.

The usual threats had been made about plant closures, withdrawal of government money, collapse of the company, and the rest of it. The slogan of 'No money, No Metro' on the Longbridge workers' placards summed up their response.

When the senior stewards met on 3 November, they issued five days' notice to strike from 12 November. They rejected a proposal from the officials to go for a two-day strike to show the company that we were serious. Within a week the officials



had reversed their decision — this time without consulting the members or the shop stewards.

In the nursery rhyme, the Grand Old Duke of York marched his troops up and down without achieving anything. The BL negotiators managed to lose £1.25 a week in a similar exercise.

The company's initial response when the strike was called had been to offer this

amount over the 6.8 per cent to show their good intentions to increase the bonus payments.

But the trade unions refused to accept this. The management withdrew the offer, and it has not put it back on the table. The outcome is that BL workers have suffered another drastic cut in their living standards.

Ten years ago, Midlands car workers were paid £10

## Metro

At one level this is true. But if we look below the surface it's not so straightforward. In the current year, for example, BL will be paying an extra £20m in interest to the banks because of high interest rates. This amounts to £6 a week for each worker.

Ever since the Ryder plan in 1975, government has demanded that a portion of BL's financing comes from the banks. The National Enterprise Board insisted that its financing be repaid at a rate of 13½-15½ per cent interest.

The large-scale borrowing of BL since 1975 has

been part of the Ryder and Edwardes' plans to respond to the world-wide crisis of the car industry.

Cars were the first sector to be hit in the 1974-5 recession. In the current crisis, over-capacity has affected every car manufacturer in the world. They are forced to concentrate production, to reduce the number of models, to streamline.

BL is no exception. But introducing models costs money. The Metro has cost £300m to develop. The LC-10 to replace the Princess and the Marina will cost more than £500m. To this will be added the cost of

the BL-Honda Bounty.

Through investment and new models, BL believes it can become profitable again. But only if the workforce accepts redundancy and speed up.

The workforce is not responsible for that crisis, any more than the workers at Ford, General Motors, Fiat or Chrysler are responsible for the crises affecting those companies.

A wage increase to keep pace with inflation would have meant more money from the government. But a government which can afford to pay £5bn on Trident missiles and let police and

army pay shoot up can afford to pay a living wage to BL car workers.

Refusing to accept responsibility for the car industry's crisis and fighting for the pay claim on that basis would have challenged the logic of BL's rationalisation plans.

It would mean opposing redundancy, speed up, and wage cuts. It would require the demand to open the books to see where BL's money goes. It would involve fighting for work-sharing with no loss of pay.

A new leadership will have to be built to fight for these demands. Duffy, Kitson, and Hawley never will.



**EDWARDES:** workers pay through the nose for Metro

above the national average wage. Today they are nearly £30 behind. All the BL management has conceded is a commitment to 'meaningful discussions' on bonus systems.

The unions declared that they had recognised the difficult economic circumstances of the company and were as concerned as management to ensure the viability of BL.

So they recommended that the strike be called off. As a result Edwardes has once again got away with axing workers' living standards. He will use his victory in the coming months to enforce more redundancies, plant closures, and speed ups.

The meaningful negotiations on bonus systems will help him to do this.

Part of the company's plan for the coming year is to concentrate car production at two major centres in Birmingham, the Common Lane plant which makes Sherpa Vans and the SC1, which produces TRAs and Rovers.

## Opposition

On the SD1, more than 500 jobs will disappear by Christmas if management's plan goes through.

The union leadership has now given a green light for another round of redundancies and will attempt to sabotage any opposition to Edwardes. Management's success will enormously assist other employers in imposing wage cuts and job loss.

A combine-wide opposition needs to be built, based on the call for a national delegate conference to decide on a strategy for the defence of jobs and living standards of their members. This is the task which militants at BL must now take up.



**FOR THE past week** Gardner's workers have been flying round the country raising support and money for the occupation. Mick was among them: 'I've been going around the bus depots in the Manchester area. The response was good. They thought it was their fight, that Gardner's is giving a lead in how to fight for jobs.'

'They're threatened with 150 redundancies on the buses, and some of them think Gardner's shows which road they should take — industrial action to defend jobs. It's true, too; of the thousands facing redundancies all over the country we're the only ones taking action.'

'When you go round you've got to have the arguments against unemployment. But it's not so difficult to show what's wrong with a situation where ICI can sack the people who've been producing the wealth that has given them a profit every year for

## 'The union should encourage us to get involved because sooner or later it'll be our factory' Gardner's apprentice

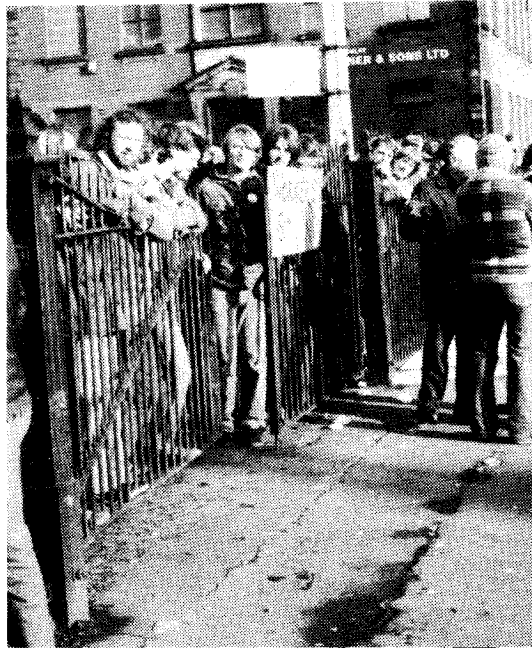
**ONE of the most striking things about the Gardner's engineering factory is that, like the workers in the Lenin shipyard in Poland, the majority of workers are young. Redmond O'Neill talked to Mick Smethurst, a third year apprentice in the toolroom, about the strike and the role of young workers in it.**

the last 55 years.

'They argue that they have to sack people because people won't buy their products. But look around — can anyone really believe that people don't need things like washing machines, fridges, engines, or decent houses.'

'Also if you throw people on the dole you only make it worse because less people can afford to buy things anyway.'

'We've had a lot of support from the places we've been visiting. But I think the union leaders should be going to the shop floor and arguing for solidarity. And not just solidarity; because thousands are facing unemployment or short-time working, the union leaders should be arguing for them to take action themselves to defend their own jobs. That's the best sort of support we could get



**'It's important that young workers take a more active part in the union'**

— other factories occupying taking on Thatcher. By then it'll be too late for a lot of people. There's only one way to deal with this government — industrial

'I don't agree with people who say we should wait till the next election before

action to get them out!

## Power

'As it is, I'm worried that some trade union leaders might want to use Gardner's as a sort of experiment and just wait and see what happens. We don't need that sort of support. We need the union leaders to be touring the factories with us arguing for support and action.'

'I know some people argue that the unions have got too much power, but personally I don't think they've got enough. The unions are nothing more than the workers on the shop floor.'

'What sort of power have we got? What say do we have about how the work is organised? Who asks us about what should be produced? The only power we've got now is to withdraw our labour and that's our right if our jobs are being attacked.'

'One reason we are leading the fight is that this is a very well organised factory safety-wise and union-wise. Before the occupation the shop stewards met every two weeks and reported

back to shop meetings. That means that we're all well-informed and when it comes to the crunch people back up the shop stewards.'

'Also a lot of the workers here are quite young. I reckon there are about 200 apprentices and maybe 600 under 21 years old. I think it's important that young workers take a more active part in the union, not just in disputes but all the time.'

## Dispute

'The union should encourage us to get involved because sooner or later it'll be our factory. For example, before the sit-in we had a dispute and there were union speakers in the canteen. I can't see why we couldn't have had an apprentice speaking along with the others.'

'A lad of nineteen is going to get through to other young people a lot more easily than a bloke of 40. One of the ways young workers could be encouraged would be through setting up their own committees so they had their own reps in the union.'

Photo: KEVIN COEN

## NHS — On the critical list

**THE Treasury has just demanded a further £2bn reduction in public spending. It is against this background that NHS — Condition Critical, the latest report from Counter-Information Services, reveals the depth of the crisis already developing in the health service.**

So far health minister Gerard Vaughan has been claiming that the Tories are keeping their promise to maintain spending on the NHS. He can get away with this because the government figures are cooked to conceal the extent of the financial squeeze.

Each year the Tories promise more spending on the NHS; each year that increase and more is clawed back by the combined effects of cash limits, inflation, inadequate capital spending, and the increasing needs of a growing and ageing population.

## Squeeze

CIS calculates that the government would need to spend 10 per cent more on the NHS if it were to live up to its promises.

The Tories know what their squeeze will do to the health service. Vaughan's principal finance officer at the Department of Health, R E Radford, told the House of Commons social services committee:

'We still recognise that year by year a small amount extra is required, if you like, to stand still ... We would have a second-class health service in ten years if we gave them not a penny more; we would gradually slip behind.'

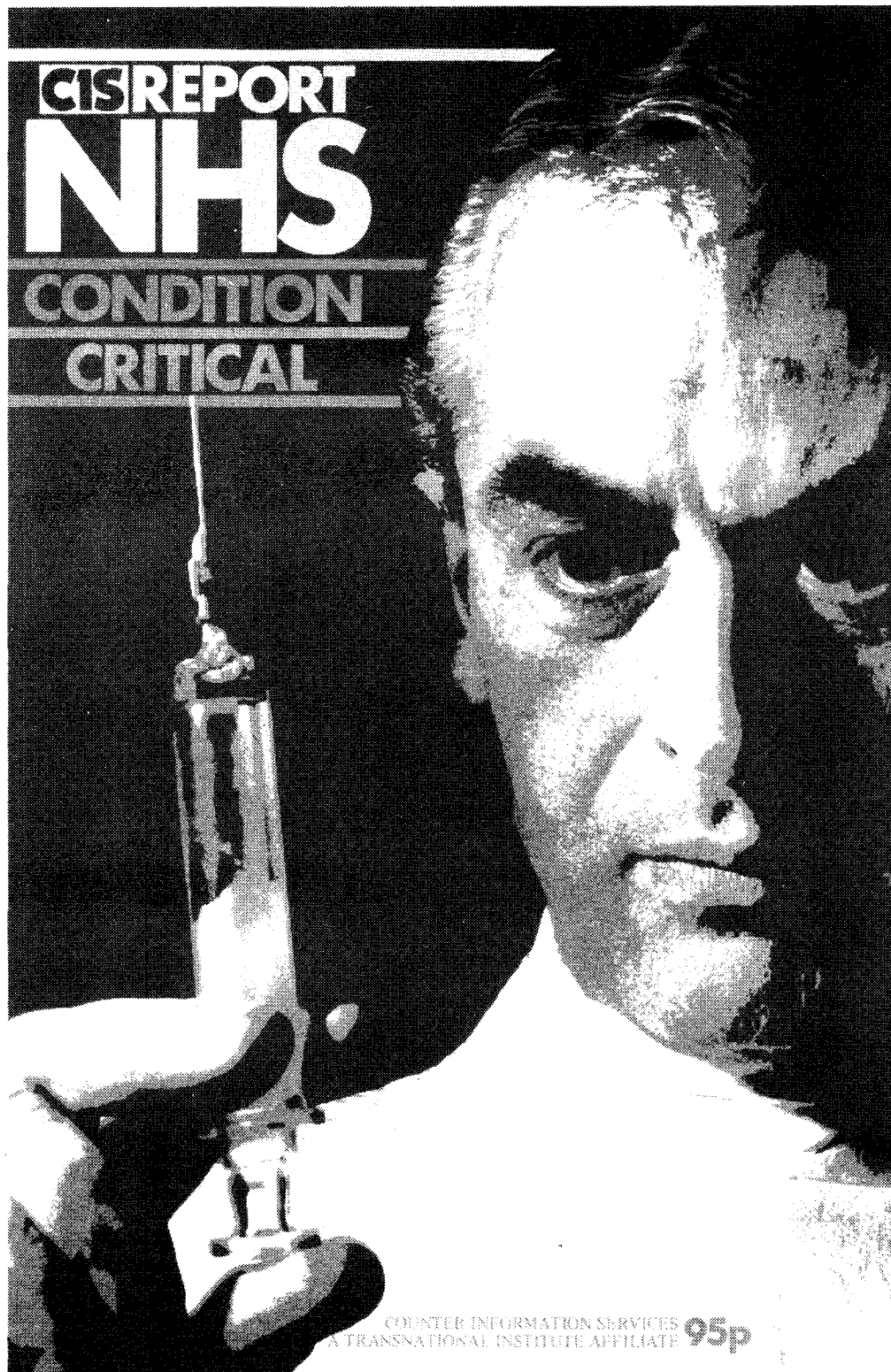
## Surplus

What they don't admit is that this is exactly what is happening.

The more the NHS is squeezed, the greater private medicine benefits. Private health insurance and treatment is already a money-spinner: BUPA, though technically non-profitmaking, has a surplus of £33m against sales of its policies of £95m.

Sheltered by the 'catch-all' NHS system, and helped by the tax exempt status of both their insurance business and the charity they established to develop private hospitals, BUPA has built up large financial reserves.

Aided by the City's eagerness to fund recession-proof in-



COUNTER INFORMATION SERVICES A TRANSNATIONAL INSTITUTE AFFILIATE 95p

dustries such as private medicine, the business is awash with cash to exploit the Tories' health axe.

Meanwhile the drug industry continues to draw fat profits from its dealings with the NHS. While patients in pain must wait months for an operation for want of basic resources, DHSS and drug company officials can get together and in effect divide up the spoils amounting to almost £1bn a year.

Their cosy — but secret — relationship is typical of the decision-making processes inside

the health service.

**NHS — Condition Critical** includes an in-depth look at South Wales. The piecemeal withdrawal of services and the random closure of wards and facilities speed the decline in health care and lead to a growing separation of the National Health Service from the people it is supposed to serve.

As one South Wales miner old enough to remember remarked: 'This is where the NHS was born, and I reckon this is where they started to kill it off.'

The underlying condition of the NHS is far worse than the officials care to admit. While the private medicine profiteers will be prepared to provide for the relatively young, the well-off and healthy — at a price — the old, the poor, and the chronically ill are seen as no more than the unprofitable end of a market.

It is these people who will pay if the Tories succeed in their plan for health in Britain.

'NHS — Condition Critical', 95p plus 25 p&p. From: CIS, 9 Poland St, London W1.

## Labour Co-ordinating Committee retreats

By Paul Smith

**'Four years to democratise the unions is too long. The Tory government is deaf and we can't survive that long.' This is how Bernard Connolly, joint craft convener from Rotherham steelworks opened the 1 November Labour Co-ordinating Committee Conference.**

The conference was called to discuss democracy in the unions and the fight against unemployment. One hundred and twenty delegates attended from trades councils, local Labour parties, and steel, mining, building, and engineering unions. Fifty delegates signed a Socialist Challenge statement calling on the conference to adopt positive policies for action to save jobs.

Nevertheless, LCC executive members were adamant in their refusal to allow any voting. The chairperson, Michael Meacher MP, even refused requests for a vote on whether the conference should be allowed to vote!

## Obscurity

Many supporters of the Socialist Challenge statement argued that the choice facing the LCC was a stark one: either the LCC would break from the traditional passivity shown by the Labour left when faced with organising directly in the unions or it would face obscurity.

To build the November 29 unemployment demonstration, to organise broad-based labour movement support for Gardner's, to help build a big lobby of the 24 January special Labour Party conference to encourage the widest possible franchise on the election of the leader — these were some of the proposals of the Socialist Challenge statement.

The LCC conference failed to give a lead on these, or other issues. The LCC leadership remain content to operate as a

pressure group on the Labour and trade union leadership.

Despite the retreat of the LCC executive much of the discussion from the floor was useful. One AUEW delegate from Manchester threw a challenge down to the left leaders. 'Why doesn't Tony Benn go down to Gardner's and launch his campaign for the leadership of the Labour Party from there?'

A woman engineering worker from Lesney's engineering factory in London explained that the segregation of the male and female workforce weakened the labour movement. 'The fact that my wages are appalling doesn't make the men's wages good', she pointed out. 'If we were able to fight together we'd all have a decent wage.' Positive action to defend women's rights was needed to win the unity of the labour movement, she concluded.



Michael Meacher

John Ingham, a miner from Sheffield, called for the unity of rank and file miners, steelworkers, and railway workers. 'No faith can be placed in Joe Gormley, Bill Sirs, and Sid Weighell to lead a fight on unemployment.'

Michael Meacher promised a future conference that would be aimed at all those campaigning against unemployment. It remains to be seen whether the LCC are capable of pulling together such a conference. The balance sheet of their political approach so far would seem to indicate that they are a long way from aiding the joint Labour Party/trade union action needed against the Tories.



## Anti-Semitism and schmultz herrings

MARK Solomons' call to combat anti-Semitism (Letters, 6 Nov) is unexceptionable, save for his remark about 'demonstrating our support for the fullest possible development of Jewish culture and identity'.

Mark rightly excludes Zionism from the 'identity' he asks us to support, but he does not elaborate on the concept of which he evidently approves.

As with the religious and cultural practices of immigrants from the Indian sub-continent, we absolutely defend the right of Jewish and Asian people to pursue their beliefs and life-style free from racial intolerance.

Support is another matter. Like Islam, Judaism involves beliefs and practices which are downright reactionary, not least in relation to women.

Among Orthodox Jews, men daily intone: 'Thank God, I am not a woman'. They are on a mountain top, rather than a pedestal, surveying a community in which women are excluded from the main rituals, segregated in the synagogue, 'unclean' during their periods, obliged to keep their hair shaved off once married, and in numerous other ways nailed to the side of their daughters and to the sink.

Islam derives many of its customs from Judaism.

Opposing racism and anti-Semitism will aid the resistance of the victims of oppressive practices within Islam and Judaism, as well as presenting them with the possibility of breaking from the social ghettos that their communities can often represent.

The survival of a distinctively Jewish identity has been undermined in those societies where anti-Semitism has become relatively dormant.

In Britain, for example, for some two decades now, the Jewish Board of Deputies and other community leaders have been decrying the tendency for those of Jewish origin to become assimilated, abandoning religious rituals and quite often, too, any identification with the Jewish community. This is not a process socialists would wish to halt.

Jewish culture, always a difficult phenomenon to define given the diverse migration pattern of Jewish people, is now so much part of Western culture that it is hard to know where to draw a line.

We can locate the origins of schmultz herring, but tracing the work of Harold Pinter or even Woody Allen to a Russian or Polish village is tricky.

It can't be pinned down to London's East End or New York's East Side, either. The cultural and political developments, including Marxism and Zionism, which flourished in those ghettos were already rooted as part of the haskalah — the enlightenment movement — among Polish Jewry. So where does a distinctively Jewish culture begin and end?

None of this, of course, should detract from our opposition to any resurgence of anti-Semitism in Britain. The Israeli government is quite cynical about the benefits it hopes to accrue from fascist attacks on the diaspora.

GEOFFREY SHERIDAN, North London

## Incoherent rubbish

WHEREAS *Socialist Worker* tends to concentrate on the lumpen end of culture — football/punk and so on — *Socialist Challenge* tends towards the lumpen-polytechnic/*Time Out* bit, with hardly anything on jazz and certainly nothing on classical music.

So I was pleasantly surprised to see Skip Laszlo's interview with Max Roach (3 Sept).

I quickly became

unpleasantly surprised.

Max Roach may well be one of the most important post-war drummers but, to be charitable, he's clearly a loonie. All his grossly inaccurate remarks are allowed to pass and are in some cases elaborated on.

I would hope that most of the article would be dismissed by your readers as incoherent rubbish. For example:

'Politically I see jazz as the natural music of democracy. European classical music is the music of imperialism — a conductor and a composer rule the rest of the musicians like slaves.'

In jazz an idea is presented to be discussed and debated like in a meeting.

The remarks about Billie Holiday's last record are deliberately misleading: Leonard Feather's objections to the record are based on the company issuing the record of a very sick woman crippled by drug addiction who died within a year.

Similarly, a record company issued Charlie Parker's 'Loverman' on which he broke down during his solo and was replaced by Howard McGhee.

Historical recordings or ghoulish voyeurism?

J BELL, London

## 'You were right... I was wrong'

SOCIALIST Challenge was right to stress the non-aggressive nature of the Soviet Union and I was wrong to assume that anti-nuclear movements in the East will reciprocate any moves by Western countries towards disarmament.

CND (and the Socialist Workers Party) base their unilateralism solely on the reciprocation of disarmament, but if mass movements in the East do not immediately take on an anti-nuclear character, this strategy will fall flat!

As it is, only the fact that there are large numbers of countries in NATO allows CND to call for total disarmament now in individual countries.

CND is an organisation which is determined to raise

unilateral slogans, but can only justify them as a tactic for getting them raised internationally, that is multilaterally. Thus CND does not come to grips with reactionary arguments for the need for a 'nuclear balance'.

This weakness goes right to the heart of CND and could be the basis of its destruction. Use of, say, a red bomb scare like the Cuban missile crisis, could split the anti-bomb movement in two!

The sophistication of the European Nuclear Disarmament campaign lies in its avoidance of the two countries which maintain the mythical 'balance', the USA and the Soviet Union.

Socialist should argue at the CND conference for a mass campaign around the topic which is not undermined by deterrence arguments — Cruise missiles, which actually destroy 'balance'. We could now have a march of over 200,000 against Cruise now!

Only the International Marxist Group has the politics to fully justify unilateralism — low profit rates will not impel the Soviet Union to destroy half the world's productive resources in a search for markets.

But the IMG needs to allay fears about what 'defence of the red bomb' means. The red bomb is for the defence of the Soviet Union by deterring attack.

We do not want to see a nuclear Soviet Union in an otherwise nuclear-free world: we would like the Soviet Union to always be one step ahead of the West in disarmament terms so as to destroy the capitalists' justifications for their own nuclear weapons.

The Soviet Union will not be rehabilitated into the hearts of the Western working class overnight, nor by simply giving up nuclear weapons. Stalinism has produced such a fear of communism in the US working class that expansionism could even be attributed to a nuclear-free USSR — particularly when US imperialism is being threatened by socialist liberation movements all over the globe.

The red bomb's role in the defence of the Soviet Union must be put into a more balanced perspective; one which reflects both the amount of protection that the US working class would give to the USSR, and encourages the US people to give greater protection.

LES HARTOP, Coventry



# Iran: to defend or not to defend.....

## No gains under Khomeini

SOCIALIST Challenge argues that the defeat of Iran by Iraq 'would mean the bloody crushing of the gains of the Iranian revolution' (30 Oct).

What gains? Apart from the fall of the Shah, what have the Iranian masses gained from Khomeini's rule? Perhaps SC should ask this question of the women of Iran, the national minorities, the workers in the oil fields?

The February Revolution in Russia brought about the downfall of the Czar — a definite revolutionary gain. This brought greater political benefits to the Russian people than the fall of the Shah brought to the Iranian masses. For one thing, the revolutionary socialist parties could function openly.

Despite this, Lenin and Trotsky took a firm line against the defencists and called for the overthrow of the Provisional Government despite the fact that

Russia was under siege by imperialist Germany. They did not call upon socialists to 'fight alongside' Kerensky through their own 'independent methods of struggle and organisation'.

Neither the Iranian nor the Iraqi workers and peasants have anything to gain from a victory under the leadership of Khomeini and Hussein.

Although Socialist Challenge may have 'consistently argued that the Iranian masses have every interest in the victory of Iran — as have the people of Iran and the whole world', it has been consistently wrong about this and has not produced a single convincing argument in support of this case.

CHARLIE VAN GELDEREN, London

Watch out, there's a red pencil about

All the letters on this page have been edited...so, please try to keep letters to 300 words.

## Depressing lack of support for Iran

I FIND it really depressing reading the letters that have flooded in to Socialist Challenge over the past few weeks against defending Iran in a war against an imperialist-inspired invasion.

We live in an era which revolutionary Marxists label as one of wars and revolutions. And yet, if imperialism attacks a revolution or even a semi-colonial government which displeases it, there are howls of 'Marxist' protest against taking sides unless imperialism is openly blatant about its involvement.

Many readers are withholding their defence of Iran until the US more openly sides with Iraq. Perhaps they should recall a few incidents in the last 30 years where imperialist involvement was obvious but not declared: \* No US marines landed to overthrow Allende; it was

all done by Chileans. We know it was hatched in Washington, but the US has never admitted this.

\* When Arbenz was overthrown in Guatemala in 1954 the invading column had no US troops in it even though the CIA planned the whole thing. (Fortunately for world revolution, a young doctor in the country drew the correct conclusions and spent the rest of his life fighting US imperialism — Che Guevara died before the CIA admitted its involvement in Arbenz's overthrow).

\* The CIA openly admit that they, in collusion with Exxon (then called Standard Oil), installed the Shah of Iran in 1953, overthrowing the Mossadegh regime. They didn't say so at the time, though.

\* In 1979 the Vietnamese invaded Kampuchea to aid the overthrow of Pol Pot, who has become the darling of US and British imperialism. At the time most Marxist currents in Europe called for taking no sides, or worse said 'Vietnamese troops must leave Cambodia' (*Rouge*, paper of the LCR, French section of the Fourth International).

The American and Japanese Trotskyists had no trouble immediately backing the Vietnamese. Now that the issue is crystal clear — if for no other reason than John Pilger's reports — the stand-on-the-sidelines Marxists look pretty silly.

It is the job of Marxists to expose imperialism, not to plead for it to act in a more open manner. Iran has, since the overthrow of the Shah, been locked in a struggle with imperialism. It is sad that most of those who have written to Socialist Challenge can't see this, and, in calling for fence-sitting, have a position, in practice, that is the same as that of their own government.

They should instead be demanding that the British government send spares to Iran for its Chieftain tanks; that the US stop supplying Iraq through Saudi Arabia, and that both powers release stolen Iranian assets.

Right now Vietnam, itself a victim of an imperialist regime, and North Korea are coming to Iran's aid. To be a fence-sitter today is not to be neutral; it aids the aims and designs of imperialism.

S PAUL, W London



## Armagh prisoner near death

By Sarah Roeloffs

**ON 30 October the Armagh Women's Prisoners' Committee warned in Dublin that Pauline McLaughlin 'will die if she is not moved immediately to a civilian hospital for emergency treatment'.**

The following evening 23-year-old Pauline was returned to Armagh prison from Musgrove Military Hospital. She had been sent to the hospital after suffering a second heart attack.

In 1976, when she began her indefinite jail sentence, Pauline weighed 9½ stone. She now weighs 4½ stone. She has lost her teeth and can hardly stand. With very little flesh left on her body, an attempt to take a blood test resulted in extreme pain when the needle hit bone.

On 31 October the daily newspaper the *Irish Press* commented: 'The transfer of Pauline McLaughlin back to Armagh Jail is a cruel and heartless decision which can only make one despair of finding any emotion other than a vindictive, militaristic attitude in the minds of British decision-takers where Northern Ireland is concerned.'

'To say that the girl has been transferred at "her own request" is misleading beyond the point of heartlessness,' the newspaper added. 'If she had

### IS NORTHERN IRELAND AN ISSUE FOR WOMEN?

Open Discussion Forum, 14 February 1981. Planning meeting to organise for the forum, Sunday 16 November, noon.

At 374 Grays Inn Rd, Kings X, London WC1. All women welcome.

asked to be sent home, would this have been done "at her own request"? Would the special category status currently at issue... have been conferred on her "at her own request"? We know the answer is that emphatically it would not.

Pauline was convicted purely on the basis of a 'confession' which the police maintain she read before putting her mark to it. **But Pauline cannot read or write.**

During her interrogation, sleep deprivation methods were used and she was repeatedly shown colour photographs of mutilated bodies. Refused

compassionate leave to attend her father's funeral. Pauline's nervous stomach complaint worsened, making it impossible for her to retain food. She vomits constantly.

Pauline was originally 'on protest' for political status, but was blackmailed by the prison doctor to end her action. Her illness has never been diagnosed and she has still not received adequate medical care.

Pauline's case graphically illustrates the barbarity of Armagh. Though much the worse because of her illness, Pauline's treatment is typical of that perpetrated by the British on Irish political prisoners.

As the *Irish Press* commented: 'Do the British authorities feel so arrogant in their confidence at being able to contain the H-Block situation that they can afford to contemplate heightened tensions in Armagh and throughout the rest of the country, or do they simply think that the Irish are less than human anyway...?'

Pauline's situation demands urgent action: \*Send emergency resolutions to the Northern Ireland Office, London SW1, and to the prime minister demanding that Pauline be immediately sent to a civilian hospital.

\*Demand that the National Union of Students act on its policy of support for the Armagh women and opposition to Dr Cole, the Armagh medical officer.

\*Use the leaflet and petition available from the Armagh Co-ordinating Committee, c/o A Woman's Place, 48 William IV St, London WC2.

\*Picket Downing St, Friday 14 Nov, 5.30-7pm.



Pauline McLaughlin

# ISOLATION!

## The British government's answer to hunger strikers

By Tom Marlowe

**THE British government has decided that the seven Irish political prisoners now entering their third week on hunger strike must die alone.**

This is the consequence of a decision announced last Thursday through the Government's Northern Ireland Office. It was a move all too typical of the cruel and heartless thinking which has been the basis of government policy on the H Blocks issue.

The seven prisoners are on a 'fast until death', in pursuit of the demands of 500 prisoners in H Block and Armagh to be given political status. This would involve allowing the prisoners to wear their own clothes, refrain from prison work, associate freely with each other, and organise their own education and recreation.

Until the end of last week each of the seven prisoners shared a cell with another political prisoner not on hunger strike. But the seven have now been moved into a special 'reserved' wing of Long Kesh and placed in solitary confinement.

### Will

The transfer is seen as the latest attempt of the government to break the will of the hunger strikers.

The Northern Ireland Office produced a squalid justification for the move, that the hunger strikers needed 'a higher degree of clinical observation than is possible in the conditions pertaining in the 'dirty' cells.'

But while this explains why the prisoners are being moved to 'clean' cells — it does not explain why it is necessary to completely isolate the seven.

Meanwhile, the government has produced 5,000 copies of a special pamphlet entitled *H Block — the facts*, which is being distributed free to journalists and to foreign embassies.

This pamphlet is an exercise in 'black' propaganda,

full of unfounded assertions and twisted facts.

In one bizarre passage it attempts to justify the squalid 'mirror search' inflicted on the prisoners when they are forced to squat naked over a mirror while the individuals' rectum is probed and searched. This procedure is necessary, says the pamphlet, because of 'frequent attempts to smuggle articles'. True or false as this assertion may be, what is not explained is why it is the H Block prisoners, and the H Block prisoners alone, who are subject to this degrading practice.

Certainly, smuggling is not unknown in Long Kesh, but neither are such exercises confined to the H Block prisoners.

*H Block — the facts* also offers evidence of the continuing intransigent attitude of the government. 'Nor is there any room for compromise,' says the pamphlet, a boast which hardly fits with another claim in the pamphlet; that it is the 'government's wish'



Some people in this country won't let Pauline McLaughlin die

that 'the prisoners will go on being treated as humanely as possible'.

For 'humanely as possible' now read 'solitary confinement.'

### Stepping up the solidarity

**TWENTY** activists of the Irish solidarity movement in Britain spent last weekend in a protest fast outside Downing Street in solidarity with the hunger strikers in the H Blocks.

As their 48-hour vigil drew to an end, around the corner in Whitehall the traditional Remembrance Sunday ceremony took place. For the first time this included remembrance of soldiers killed since 1945 'on active service for their country'.

### Minds

Northern Ireland was not specifically mentioned, but no doubt this is one of the arenas of war uppermost in the minds of the assembled politicians and generals.

While those who have been killed, tortured, and murdered by the British

Army in fighting for the right of the Irish people to decide their own future may not have been remembered in Whitehall, activity in their support is spreading throughout Ireland and Britain.

Troops Out Movement members in Norwich drew attention to the situation of the prisoners in a dramatic fashion. They hung a banner from the top of the City Hall demanding 'Don't let Irish prisoners die'.

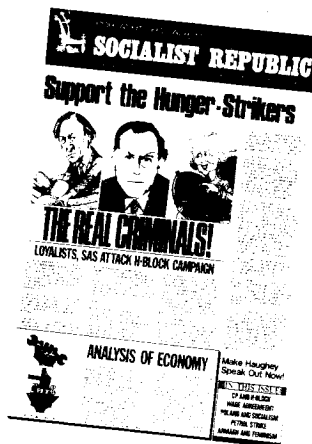
In other areas local TOM groups, Charter 80 supporters, and ad hoc committees in solidarity with the hunger strike are organising public meetings, leafletting and local demonstrations. For details ring the TOM office: 01-267 2004.

A national demonstration called by the Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland is to be held next Saturday, 15 November, starting at 1pm from the Embankment in London.

All Socialist Challenge supporters are asked to be there and join the 'Troops Out Now' contingent. A national demonstration in solidarity with the hunger strikers will be held on 7 December in London, with a national day of action three days later.



Clearing out the H Blocks



**Socialist Republic** — newspaper of the Irish revolutionary socialist organisation, People's Democracy.

### New issue just out

\* Support the hunger strikers. \* The jobs' plight of Catholic youth. \* All-Ireland workers' plan needed. \* Challenge Fianna Fail — no more secret talks. \* Will the CP march in step on H Block? \* Build the Armagh campaign.

Available from Socialist Challenge sellers or PO Box 50, London N1. 25p inc p&tp.



## 1912 – the cause

The first reading of the Home Rule Bill took place in the House of Commons in 1912. The Bill involved Britain withdrawing from all of Ireland and allowing the inhabitants of that country a limited degree of self-government.

The Bill was due to become law in 1914 but by 1913 it was becoming clear that Britain was preparing to back-track.

In the north of Ireland a minority of the population threatened an armed rebellion if Home Rule were enacted. They were supported by the Tory opposition at Westminster, whose leader, Bonar Law, declared: 'I can imagine no length of resistance to which Ulster will go in which I shall not be ready to support them.'



James Connolly

A compromise, involving the partition of Ireland, was suggested. The revolutionary Marxist, James Connolly, warned that such a scheme would mean a 'carnival of reaction' and that it would 'destroy the oncoming unity of the Irish labour movement'.

## The hunger strike, 1913

The first hunger strike in modern Irish history was undertaken by James Connolly in the course of the 1913 Dublin lock-out. This involved tens of thousands of Dubliners being locked out, or on strike for trade union recognition.

Along with Jim Larkin, James Connolly was one of the leaders of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. He had been in Dublin only two days when he was arrested after making a speech urging Dublin workers to defy a ban on a demonstration.

Connolly told the judge who sentenced him to three months' imprisonment: 'I do not recognise English government in Ireland at all. I do not recognise the King.... The only manner in which progress can be made is by guaranteeing the right of the people to assemble and voice their views.'

When in jail, Connolly was visited by a variety of labour leaders, including Kier Hardie, one of the founders of the British Labour Party. After a couple of days Connolly went on hunger strike. This protest, and the mass support it received in Dublin, quickly secured his release.

The lock-out itself eventually ended in a partial defeat for the workers, but out of it came Connolly's Citizen Army, described by Lenin as 'the first red army

# ENGLAND'S

in history'. Connolly and that army were later to play their part in the 1916 Irish Rising.

## 1917 – the cause

The 1916 Rising was defeated, its leaders were executed and its sympathisers brutally repressed. The promise of Irish Home Rule began to fade, and the partition of Ireland now seemed likely.

But the Rising awakened a great wave of national consciousness in the Irish people and by 1917 Ireland was in a state of near-insurrection.

## The hunger strike, 1917

Thomas Ashe was a commandant in the 1916 Rising. He was arrested by the British government, sentenced to death, reprieved and subsequently released. In August 1917 he was again arrested, along with other Republicans, and charged with 'speeches calculated to cause disaffection'.



Thomas Ashe

In Dublin's Mountjoy jail, Ashe went on hunger strike demanding to be treated as a prisoner-of-war. He died five days after an attempt by the British authorities to force-feed him.

A crowd of 30,000 people followed Ashe's coffin through the streets of Dublin.

**IRELAND** is on the edge of a massive explosion. The stubborn attitude shown by the Tory government over the H Block hunger strike is threatening to light a fire which could sweep through the entire 32 counties.

The passionate support for the hunger strikers which is now evident in Ireland, and in the North in particular, is reported to have caught the British government by surprise. That is a testament to that government's ignorance, for hunger strikes by political prisoners have always raised the temperature in Ireland.

This is not just because of the life or death nature of such a protest, but because hunger strikes are a dramatic symbol of the resistance to British occupation of Ireland. That resistance, and its justification, is highlighted by the history of hunger strikes.

## 1918 – the cause

In the 1918 general election, 70 per cent of the Irish population voted for Sinn Fein, which stood for complete Irish independence and unity.

The British government refused to accept this expression of popular will and when the Irish Republic was proclaimed, Britain declared war on that Republic.

At the end of a campaign of British terror, and threats by the British government to wage 'total war' on the Irish majority, the partition of Ireland was imposed. No section of the Irish electorate voted for such partition.

## The hunger strike, 1920

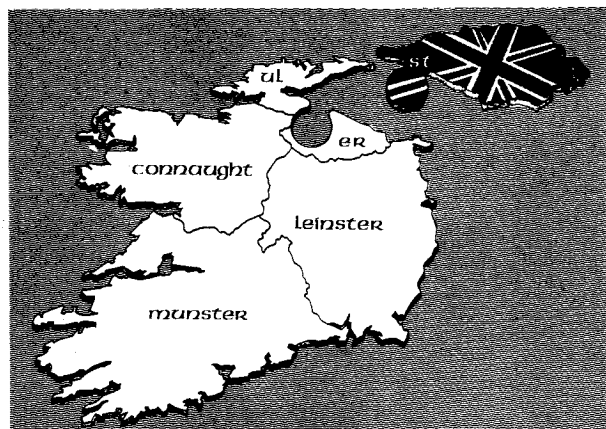
Terence McSweeney was elected as Lord Mayor of Cork, standing on the platform of complete Irish freedom from Britain. He was arrested at a council meeting in August 1920, and tried in a military court on a charge of 'being in possession of documents the publication of which would be likely to cause disaffection to His Majesty'.

McSweeney refused to recognise the right of the court to even exist in Ireland. When convicted he went on hunger strike. He was transported to Brixton prison in London where, after 74 days on hunger strike, he died.

Terence McSweeney left these words: 'The contest on our side is not one of rivalry or vengeance, but of endurance. It is not those who can inflict the most but those who can suffer the most who will conquer.... It is conceivable that the army of occupation could stop our functioning for a time. Then it becomes simply a question of endurance. Those whose faith is strong will endure to the end in triumph.'



# WEST PRISON



**GEOFF BELL** examines these developments and outlines why the H Blocks of Long Kesh are just a recent addition to a larger prison whose population has been guarded and brutalised for generations. The name of that larger prison is Ireland.



Terence McSweeney

The partition of Ireland resulted in a northern Irish state in which the Catholic population was consciously discriminated against because of its political opposition to the existence of that state.

In 1968 a civil rights movement took to the streets, demanding an end to all discrimination. The Unionist regime in the north of Ireland attempted to repress it, and then buy it off with a few partial reforms.

All this failed. And when in 1969 the Catholic working class in Derry defeated the north of Ireland police after four days of rioting, the British army was sent in.

The demands for civil rights were answered in 1971 by the internment without trial of opponents of the Unionist regime, and in 1972 by the shooting dead of 14 anti-internment demonstrators. Such actions emphasised that, once more, Britain was at war in Ireland.

## The hunger strike, 1972

In May 1972 veteran Republican Billy McKee led a hunger strike in Belfast's Crumlin Road jail in support of the demand that all political prisoners in the north of Ireland should be treated as prisoners of war.

This involved the prisoners being allowed to wear their own clothes, refrain from prison work, mix freely, and organise their own education and recreation.

At its peak, the strike was supported by 70 Republican and 40 Loyalist prisoners.

In the Catholic working class areas of Belfast there were mass rallies and some rioting in support of the prisoners. After just over a month the Tory government gave in and granted all the prisoners' demands. The government explained that its change of attitude was to 'relieve the tension'.



Over 3,000 have died in the north of Ireland in the latest eruption of the British/Irish conflict.

On one side is the British government, backed up by self-styled 'Loyalists' who continue to defend the partition of Ireland. Their leading adversary is the Provisional IRA, which a leaked top-secret British Army document admitted in 1979 'has the dedication and sinews of war to raise violence intermittently.... For the foreseeable future... the movement will retain popular support sufficient to maintain secure bases in the traditional Republican areas'.

One reason for such 'popular support' is the violence inflicted upon the Catholic community by the British Army and other security forces. An aspect of that violence is the treatment handed out to Republicans while they are in police or prison custody. Such methods of 'interrogation' have been denounced by the European Commission of Human Rights, the European Court of Human Rights and Amnesty International.



The main political party in the north of Ireland's Catholic community, the Social Democratic and Labour Party, now calls for British withdrawal. So, too, does the present Irish government. At a fringe meeting during the 1980 Labour Party conference Tony Benn expressed similar sentiments when he said: 'the sooner we withdraw from Ireland, the better'.

## The hunger strike, 1980

The 'special category status', granted by the Tories in 1972, was abolished by the Labour government in 1976. The change was part of the British government's attempt to portray Irish Republicans as 'criminals', and was accompanied by increased repression of the Catholic community.

But although the Northern Ireland Secretary of State, Roy Mason, could boast in 1977 that 'the net is closing on the terrorists', the net did not close.

The British authorities became increasingly desperate, 'confessions' were beaten out of prisoners, who were then tried in juryless courts.



Photo: REPUBLICAN NEWS

Sean McKenna on hunger strike now

When convicted by such a warped system of justice many Republicans refused to accept the new 'criminal' status imposed on them. They declined to wear prison uniforms and instead were offered nothing but a blanket to wrap around them.

After four long years the prisoners took what they felt was the last step open to them in their campaign to be recognised as prisoners of war: they went on hunger strike. On the eve of that strike, 25,000 people demonstrated in Belfast in support of the prisoners' demands.



The 1980 hunger strikers declared: 'While the Irish nation remains unfree, partitioned, and at war with an alien government, torture in the prisons and oppression on the streets will always exist'.

Such words are not mere rhetoric. The hunger strikers mentioned here are just a few of many. The conflicts mentioned here are only a few examples of the consequences of the British occupation of Ireland.

There will be no peace in Ireland while that occupation exists. No guarantee can be given that as soon as Britain leaves there will be immediate peace, instant Irish unity, or the automatic coming-together of the Irish working class.

But what can be said is that none of these will occur until Britain leaves Ireland. Accordingly, building a mass movement around the demand for the immediate British withdrawal from Ireland is the best contribution that can be made to the cause of Irish peace, and working class unity.



SC Sales

**ABERDEEN:** SC sold Saturdays outside C&As — for more info ring Colin, 574060.  
**BATH:** SC on sale at 1985 Books, London Road, and Saturdays 2pm-3pm outside the Roman Baths. Phone 20298 for more details.  
**BIRMINGHAM:** SC on sale at The Ramp, Fri 4.30-5.40, Sat 10-4. For more info phone 643-0669.  
**BRADFORD:** SC available from Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.  
**BRIGHTON:** SC sales regularly every Sat outside Open Market, London Road, from 11am-1pm.  
**BRISTOL:** SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. For more info contact Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpellier, Bristol 6.  
**BURNLEY:** SC on sale every Sat morning 11.30-1pm St James St.  
**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.  
**CHESTERFIELD:** SC supporters sell outside Boots, Market Place, Saturdays 11.30am-12.30pm.  
**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.  
**EDINBURGH:** SC sales every Thursday 4.15-5.15pm Bus Station, St. Andrews Square; Saturday 11.30-2pm East End, Princes St. Also available from 1st May Books, or Better Books, Forrest Rd. For more info on local activity write to SC c/o Box 6, 1st May Bookshop, Candlemaker Row.  
**ENFIELD:** SC available from Nelsons Newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.  
**HACKNEY:** supporters sell SC every Saturday morning at Ridley Road market ES.  
**HAMILTON:** SC on sale 8-11 every Sat, outside County Bar Almada Street, every Sat outside Safeway 1.30-5. For more info contact Paul, 17 Clyde View or John at 54 Eliot St, Hamilton.  
**Huddersfield:** SC supporters sell papers every Saturday 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.  
**KILBURN:** SC sales every Sat, 10am in Kilburn Square.  
**LAMBETH:** SC available from Village Books, Streatham; Tethric Books, Clapham; Paperback Centre, Brixton; Oval tube kiosk. Also sold Thur and Fri evenings and Thur mornings outside Brixton tube.  
**MANCHESTER:** SC supporters sell 11-1pm Sat at OLDHAM outside the Yorkshire Bank, High St; at BURY in the shopping precinct and at Metro Books; at BOLTON in the town centre; and in MANCHESTER outside the central reference library in St Peter's Square and at Grassroots and Percivals Bookshop. Tel: 061-236 4905 for further info.  
**NEWHAM:** SC sale every Saturday, 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Market, Upton Park.  
**OLDHAM:** SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities. Tel. 061-682 5151.

**OXFORD:** SC supporters sell every Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.  
**STOCKPORT:** SC sold every Saturday, 1pm, Mersey Way. Can be delivered weekly: phone 483 8909 (evening), 236 4905 (day).  
**SWINDON:** SC on sale 11-1 every Sat., Regent St (Brunel Centre).  
**TESSIDON:** SC on sale Sat lunchtime in the Cleveland Centre, and in Newsfare, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and outside Woolworths on Stockton High Street.  
**WOLVERHAMPTON:** SC sales on Thur/Fri at Poly Students Union from noon-2pm and British Rail 4.30-6pm; an Saturday near Beatties, town centre from 11am-2pm.

Is your town or city mentioned above? If not, why not send in details to the Socialist Challenge sales column.

International Marxist Group notices

**NALGO FRACTION** Sun 16 Nov 12-5pm, National Centre. Agenda: the turn; perspectives; Cruise; women's liberation.  
**POEU FRACTION:** Sat and Sun 6/7 Dec in Leeds. Agenda: perspectives; Labour Party; women's liberation. Details of venue later.  
**CPSA FRACTION** Sat 22 Nov, 12.30-5pm National Centre. Agenda: the turn; perspectives; Cruise; women's liberation.  
**RAIL FRACTION:** Sat 13 Dec, 1-5pm at national centre.  
**WOMEN'S LIBERATION FRACTION:** 22/23 Nov — venue to be announced. Also a 'Women and the Turn' day school the same weekend. Cdes involved in the work and from the TU fractions to attend.  
**CND Conference** caucus for all IMG cdes attending conference on Fri evening 13 Nov. Phone Jude at national centre for details.  
**IMG WOMEN'S LIBERATION NOTES:** Is your branch receiving them every week? If not write to women's organiser at the centre. And why not send in a report for inclusion in the bulletin? All contributions in by Monday each week. Ring Judith on 01-359 8371 to discuss a visit from the IMG women's organiser this autumn.

**IMG MEMBERS:** We urgently need you to fill vacancies in a variety of technical posts in National Centre. Any cdes interested ring Penny on 01-359 8371.

Socialist Challenge Events

**MANCHESTER** Socialist Challenge public meeting on Thur 20 Nov, 7.30pm. 'Revolution in the Caribbean', Star and Garter pub, Fairfield St, nr Piccadilly Station.

REVOLUTION FOR A UNITED REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH ORGANISATION

**NATIONAL STUDENT FRACTION:** Sun 30 Nov in the North West — exact venue to be decided. For all student comrades.  
**COLLEGE MEETINGS:** Cruise missiles and Charter '80 meetings should be arranged as soon as possible. Speakers and dates arranged by Ann (01-359 8371) or Stephanie (021-359 5921).  
**GAY LIBERATION FRACTION:** Sat 6 Dec at National Centre 11am. Write for details to Paul, c/o PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Other THE BOOKSHOP

Michèle Barrett  
**Women's Oppression Today — Problems in Marxist Analysis**  
 Verso Editions, £3.95

In this book Barrett assesses the challenge that the women's liberation movement has posed to the existing scope of socialist politics and discusses the common future of Marxism and feminism.

Coventry, Liverpool, Newcastle, and North Tyneside Trades Councils

**State Intervention in Industry — A Workers' Inquiry**  
 £2

This inquiry, which is one of the first of its kind, looks at the last government's industrial policy and concludes that workers must rely on their own power and not on politicians to find alternatives to sackings and unemployment.

Helen Caldicott  
**Nuclear Madness**  
 Autumn Press, £2.50

Caldicott gives an informative and readable account of the hazards of nuclear power and weapons, and outlines what should be done about them.

Available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, London N1 2XP. Tel: 01-226 0571. Please add 15% if ordering by post.

WE'RE LAUNCHING



Annily Campbell, secretary of Birmingham and West Midlands CND:

*'THE anti-nuclear movement and CND especially have grown rapidly in the last year. But nobody would know that from the low-key coverage of most of the establishment press. Their garbage propaganda has to be challenged by a paper that gets behind the headlines to the real issues. Socialist Challenge has consistently taken up the disarmament argument and advertised demonstrations and initiatives. The recent cetrespread, the appeal to involve youth in the campaign, and the call to build CND as a mass movement were very important.'*

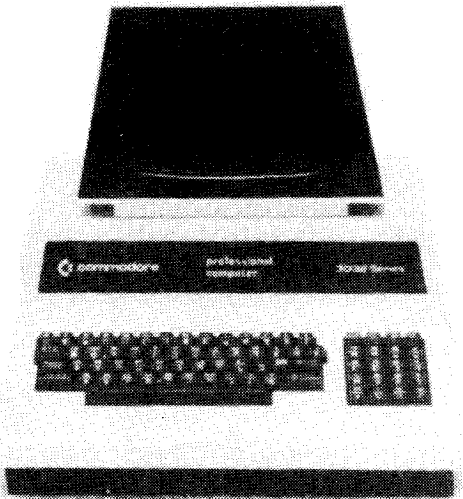


Photo: Newsline.



Vanessa Wiseman, president of Lambeth Trades Council:

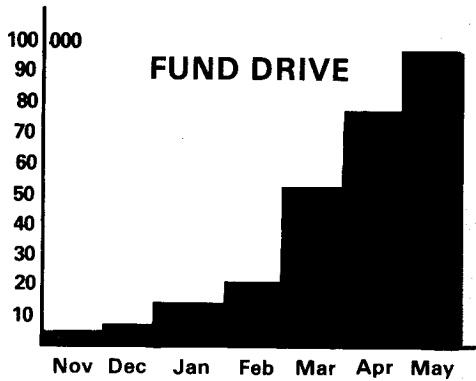
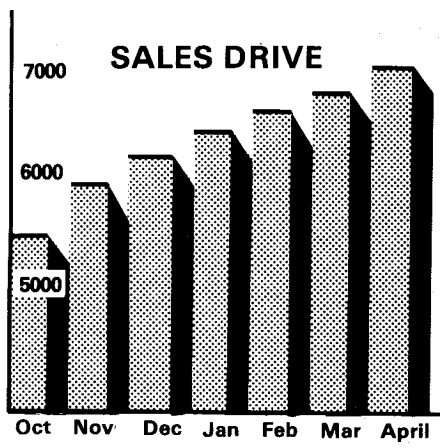
*'THE Lambeth anti-cuts conference on 1 November was a tremendous success. It gives us a great chance to launch a national fightback against the Tory cuts. Socialist Challenge supporters played a major role in building the conference, and its fringe meeting drew 70 people to discuss the policies needed to take the campaign forward. I urge everyone to support the Socialist Challenge sales and fund drive — it's the best paper on the left.'*

**SOCIALIST CHALLENGE** is embarking on its most ambitious project — a national £100,000 fund drive linked to a huge sales and subscriptions drive. These optimistic targets stem from our firm belief that more and more working people are looking for a socialist solution to the crisis.

Never before has there been such a crying need for socialism across the world. Never before have the stakes in the fight for socialism been so high. HMS Britain, with Thatcher at the helm and Reagan in charge of the fleet, is being turned into a gigantic floating target.

And why? So that the arsenal of destruction commanded by the Pentagon and our own military chiefs can be turned against the rising tide of revolution in the rest of the world.

The right-wing labour leaders support the arms race. David Owen, Terry Duffy and Shirley Williams not only support NATO, they take its money to organise inside the labour movement in support of NATO policies.



Send us a vote of confidence

TWO weeks ago the London Evening News ceased publication. Despite selling 450,000 copies, it was losing money. The paper's advertising revenue — the hidden subsidy capitalist firms make to our 'free press' — was no longer paying the bills.

Socialist Challenge has no advertising revenue — except for the few pence we receive from our 'What's Left' column. And we aren't likely to get any from the capitalists — a doomed class doesn't take kindly to paying its own gravediggers.

We can only turn for help to you, the reader, not only for money — but to ask you to take out a subscription. In fact we want a thousand subscriptions by next January.

Security

Why subscribe? In a word, security. You'll be secure in the knowledge that you won't have to rely on some chance meeting with an SC seller at work, in the pub, at a meeting or a shopping centre.

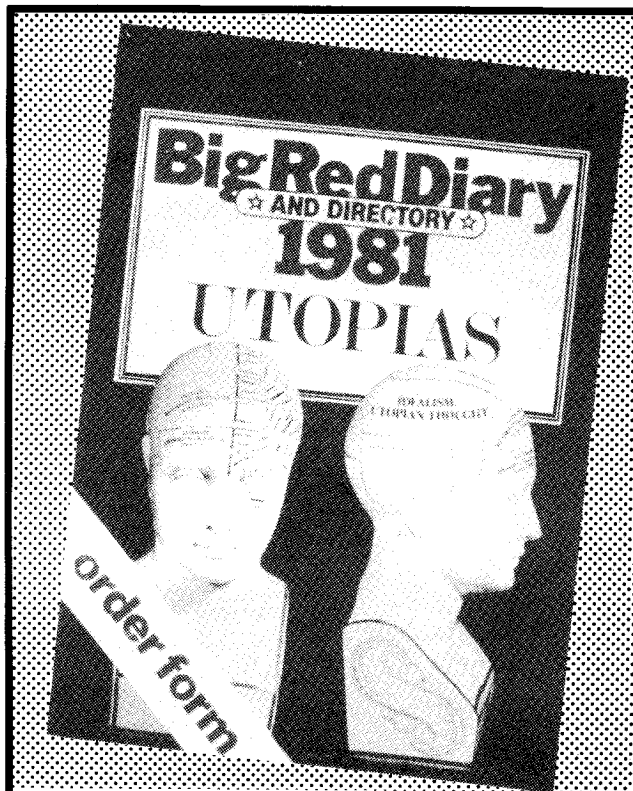
And we'll have the security of knowing that every six months we'll receive £6,500 — yes six thousand, five hundred pounds — as appetising a lump sum as any bank manager could wish for.

No more guess work (or ulcers) for our accountants and a paper with a financially sound future for you.

But we aren't just asking those of you who have difficulty in getting the paper to take out a subscription. We want readers who do get the paper regularly every week to subscribe as well — a subscription will be a vote of confidence in the paper, a message of support such as you would send to Gardner's or Grunwick's.

Offer

Now you know what we need we would like our committed supporters to themselves campaign for subscriptions.



Special offer

**Big Red Diary 1981** — free with a one-year sub to Socialist Challenge. This year's diary has 160 pages and many colour illustrations. It also includes two new features:  
 ★ Britain under the Tories: an annual review of life

under Thatcher  
 ★ Red Directory: contact addresses for over 1,200 campaigns and organisations

Plus, the Diary itself. This year it takes a lighthearted look at Utopias, putting you in the picture about Thomas More, Marge Piercy, Robert Owen, Ursula Le Guin, and many more.

Send one as an Xmas present to a friend or relation — and take advantage of our special Big Red Diary free offer.

Get your stewards' committee, trade union branch, Labour Party, or student union to take out a subscription. Get your local library to take it — the growing number of unemployed need to read our paper when they visit the reading room to know what to do about their plight.

All IMG members, all Socialist Challenge supporters, all regular readers — dispatch your £6.50 today. Keep us informed of your plans and successes.



STILL AVAILABLE: the badge that shows where you stand on Thatcher's war-mongering. 20p plus 10p p&p. Send to Hackney Socialist Education Group, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.



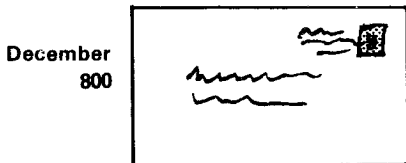
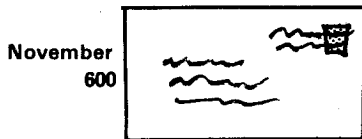
# FUND DRIVE '81

Nor can we wait till 1984 to elect a left Labour government. The fightback against the Tories has to begin now. A new fighting leadership has to be built inside the working class movement. And the battle has to be fought against the capitalists on an international scale. That's why Socialist Challenge supports the Fourth International — an international revolutionary party.

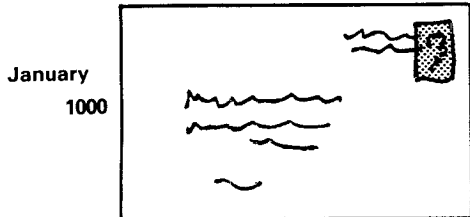
To spearhead this fight for socialism we need organisation. We need sellers for the paper, campaigners for our ideas, resources to produce propaganda, and organisers to put it into practice. We need a weekly paper arguing for socialist solutions to the crisis.

Our £100,000 fund drive is the largest fundraising project we've ever launched. We want to buy a building to house our paper: a national centre, fully equipped with a professional printshop and bookshop, and a computer system for our accounts and subscriptions.

We aim to produce a regular theoretical review to strengthen our fight for socialist ideas, together with a series of pamphlets and an educational service linked to our national



## SUBS DRIVE



bookshop. We shall also be setting up a series of district centres for local readers of the paper. In other words we want to build a professional revolutionary organisation of the working class around our paper.

## Socialist Challenge

I would like to meet Socialist Challenge supporters in my area.

I would like a special introductory sub to Socialist Challenge (10 issues for £1).

I would like a year's sub to Socialist Challenge and a free 1981 Big Red Diary (for £12.50)

I enclose a donation to the Fund Drive .....

Name .....

Address .....

Please tick the appropriate box and send to: Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

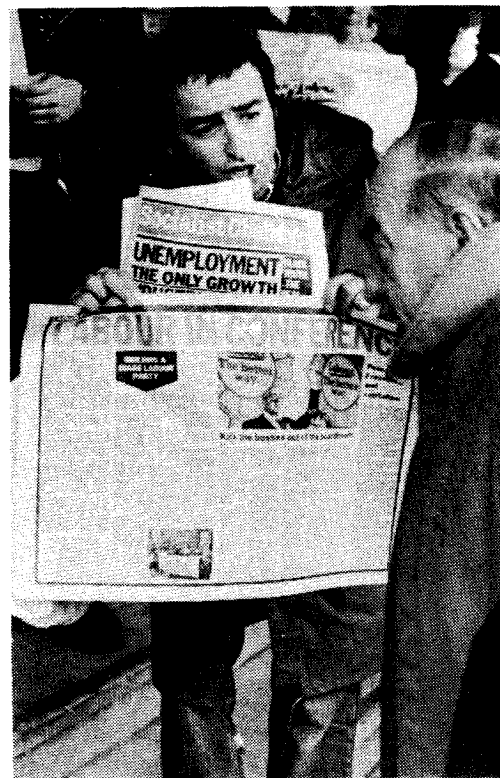


Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

## Extra, extra!

ONE extra paper to sell! That's what we want all our readers to ask for when they make their next purchase of Socialist Challenge!

We are convinced that there is a broader audience for the paper. It exists in the Labour Party, where the divisions between left and right are deepening. It exists among CND supporters, as the massive Socialist Challenge sales at the recent national demo showed. It exists in the trade unions, as the necessity for working people to defeat the Tory government becomes increasingly apparent.

We want to reach out to all the people who are beginning to see the need for socialist solutions to their problems. And we have to rely upon you to help us!

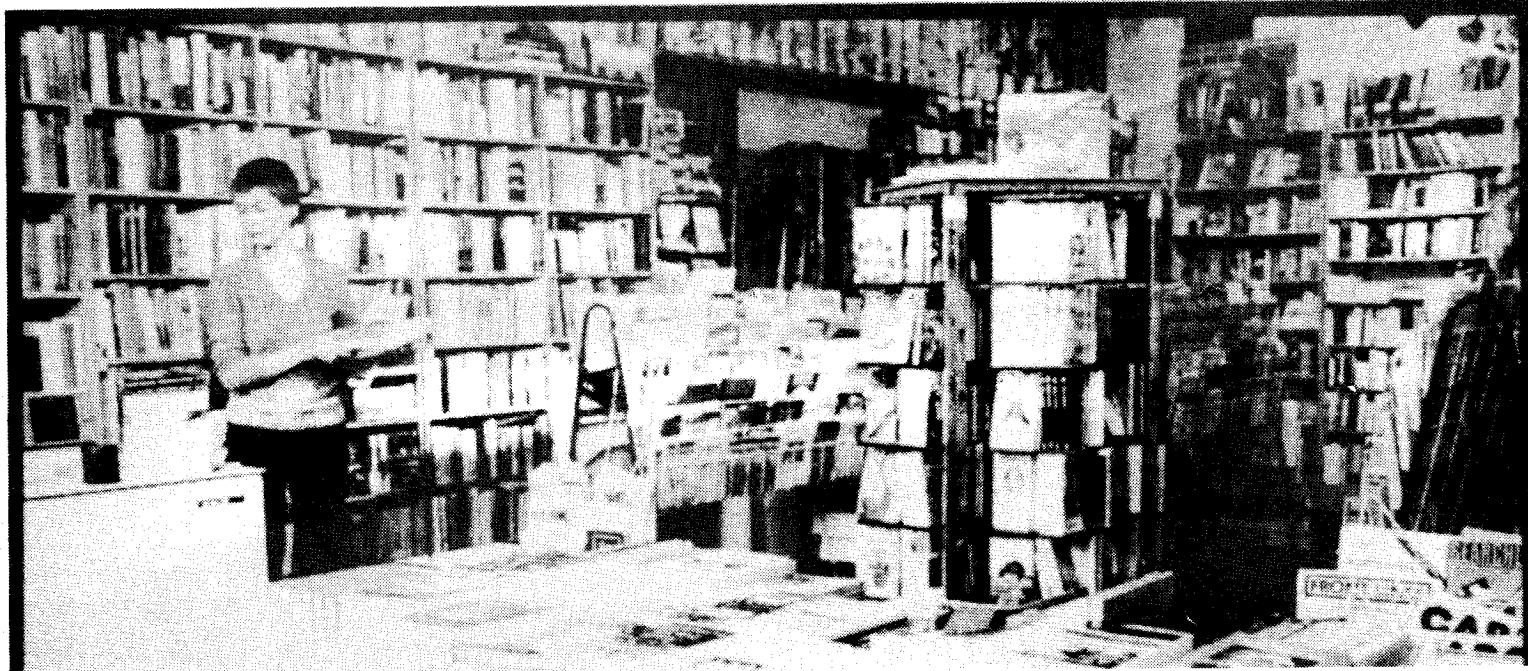
If you belong to a supporters' group, why not think about new ways of selling the paper and increasing your current order. Some of our supporters do regular pub runs, or have started estate sales.

Back copies of the paper have been distributed to houses and flats to be followed up later with an offer to make a regular delivery. The same method has been used on dole queues.

Have you checked that you cover all the important trade union and Labour Party meetings in the area, such as trades councils, shop stewards committees, and GMCs? Do you sell regularly at your local CND meetings?

Are there extra sales to be picked up at your workplace, in the campaign meetings you attend, or among your friends?

We aim to sell an extra 1,500 papers a week by next May. The first stage is an extra 750 sales by the special Labour Party conference on 24 January.



The Other Bookshop, Upper Street, Islington

## This tour is dangerous — to war-mongers

MICHAEL Foot must have been reading Socialist Challenge. On TV last week he announced that the two key issues he would fight on if he were leader of the Labour Party are unemployment and the arms race!

While Foot won't be speaking at our 'Jobs not Bombs' meetings around the country, those in the forefront of these campaigns against the Tories will be.

Socialist Challenge's speaking tour aims to popularise the idea that workers need jobs not nuclear weapons. The £5bn spent on Trident could be used to create jobs for hundreds of thousands of workers languishing on the dole.

The same thought must have crossed the minds of many American workers. There are 8 million unemployed in the USA, but the Pentagon plans to spend upwards of \$100bn on a deadly new toy — the MX missiles system.

Our speaking tour is dangerous, too: dangerous to the war-mongers and the bosses! Help us spread our message, come to our meetings and listen to activists from the anti-missiles campaign, to workers struggling against

## 'Jobs not Bombs' Tour

28 Oct, Leeds  
5 Nov, Edinburgh  
11 Nov, East London  
12 Nov, West London  
12 Nov, Birmingham  
13 Nov, Newport  
16 Nov, Leicester  
20 Nov, Nottingham  
23 Nov, Newcastle  
25 Nov, Wolverhampton  
26 Nov, Liverpool  
27 Nov, North London  
2 Dec, Wandsworth

### NEWPORT

Thur 13 Nov, 7.30pm  
William IV pub, Commercial St, Town Centre.  
Socialist Challenge & Revolution Youth speakers,

### LEICESTER

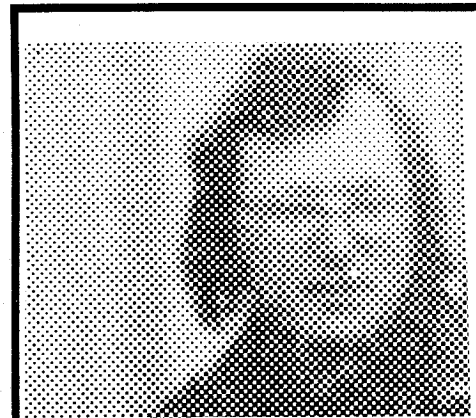
Sun 16 Nov, 7.30pm  
Richard III pub, Highcross St, Leicester.  
Gardner's speaker plus local trade unionists

### NOTTINGHAM

Thur 20 Nov, 7.30pm  
International Community Centre, Mansfield Rd.  
Speakers include trade unionists

unemployment, and hear the socialist case for a revolutionary alternative.

Kick Out the Tories badges — 20p each, bulk rates available. Write to: Other Bookshop, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.



## Steve Griffiths, AUEW convener, Rover SDI, Solihull:

'ARGUMENT and analysis — that's what Socialist Challenge is increasingly known for. The labour movement faces a thorough-going offensive with Thatcher as the commander-in-chief and the employers as her generals. Maybe there are cracks in the monetarist strategy but we cannot wait for the ruling class to lose its nerve.

'We need answers now to problems like job loss, low wages, and poor social services. Here at Leyland, workers fear the sack. They need answers on how to tackle Edwardes and union officials like Duffy.

'We need a paper that gives an all-round answer to the socialism of Tony Benn, based on living examples of collective action like Nicaragua and Poland. We need a Marxist answer. A paper attached to our movement, the Fourth International, should be in every socialist's and activist's hands.'

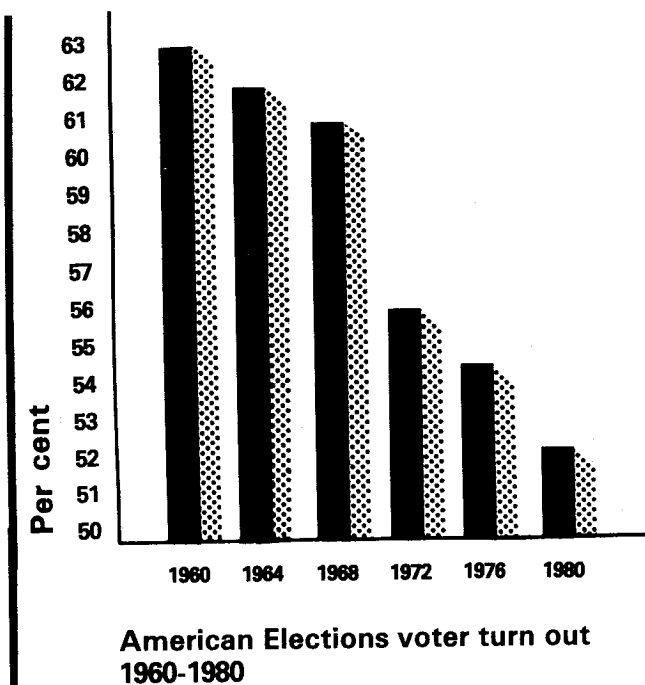
## Loretta Loach, Troops Out Movement, officeworker:

'FOR those of us involved in Irish solidarity work in Britain it is a constant effort to find out what is really happening in Ireland. The lies and distortion of the British media is something we have to consistently fight against.

'Socialist Challenge helps us in that fight. Its detailed coverage of Ireland is reason enough for supporting the paper — financially and by any other means.'







## Twenty six per cent elect Reagan in USA

**'A REPUDIATION of liberalism by an increasingly conservative society' — that was how *Now!* magazine described Ronald Reagan's 'landslide' victory in the US presidential elections.**

Most of the media has accepted this assessment, and Reagan's victory will certainly bring no joy to workers anywhere in the world. But the theory of the mass 'landslide' swing to the right is a myth.

In fact it was the lowest voter turnout for more than 30 years, continuing the decline since the 1948 election. Reagan won a lower percentage of the votes than

Nixon in '72, Johnson in '64, and Eisenhower in '52 and '56.

He was elected in fact by a mere 26.5 per cent of the electorate — three out of four Americans either voted for someone else or didn't bother to vote at all.

If there was any landslide at all it was not for Reagan but against Carter. The social groups that helped him to win the presidency in '76 deserted him. He still won 80 per cent of the black vote, but far fewer blacks voted. His share of the blue collar vote dropped from 62 to 49 per cent, and he won a much smaller share of the female vote than expected — only 45 per cent to Reagan's 46 per cent.

It is hardly surprising that these people deserted Carter. There are now 8.2m

registered unemployed in America; inflation is running at 12 per cent. When Carter defended his jobs' creation programme in the great televised debate, Reagan was able to reply that 52 per cent of black youth in Detroit were unemployed.

And Carter's attempt to present Reagan as the war-monger hardly squared with his own administration's decision to pump up to \$100bn into the MX missile system.

It is clear that American workers are more dissatisfied than ever with the two-party system. The American Socialist Workers party, co-thinkers of the Fourth International, received a greater response to their call for the formation of a labour party than ever before in their campaigning.

Their presidential and local campaigns brought them into contact with hundreds of thousands of peo-

ple. The SWP was on the ballot in 28 states, two more than in 1976, although the undemocratic voting system ruled them off the ballot in two major states, California and Texas.

While their overall presidential vote had not been announced as we went to press, they scored some impressive local totals. In Newport News, Virginia, where a major workers' struggle took place last year, the SWP candidate for Congress, Sharon Grant polled 10 per cent of the vote in a two horse race with a Republican.

No less a 'revolutionary' than Edward Heath explained on television on polling night that Reagan had won by promising the same as Carter did in 1976 — to solve unemployment and inflation and to increase defence spending. 'It's quite impossible to do all three,' Heath added. It won't be long before Americans want to dump Reagan too.

## The 1956 Polish workers' revolt

*The workers' revolt in Poland today is not the first struggle East European workers have undertaken against bureaucratic leaders: in 1956 a similar movement occurred.*

*Although Russian troops marched into Hungary in October of that year, they did not enter Poland; the Polish leaders put on a 'liberal' face to head off the movement. Below we reprint excerpts from an article from Rouge, the French Trotskyist weekly, on the Polish events of 24 years ago.*

On 23 June 1956 several thousand workers from a factory in Poznan met to protest their working conditions. They sent a delegation to Warsaw but nothing came of it. Strikes broke out. The first anti-bureaucratic revolution in Poland had begun.

On 25 June the militia opened fire on a workers' demonstration from the locomotive factory in Poznan. Forty-four workers were killed. In the following days, and especially on 28 and 29 June, the whole of the Poznan working class took to the streets.

Despite ferocious repression, the agitation continued all summer. At the Seventh Plenum of the Communist Party of Poland, Gomulka, eliminated from the leadership in 1948, was rehabilitated.

### Triumph

On 21 October, under the pressure of the people and against the opposition of the most openly pro-Soviet wing of the party, Gomulka became first secretary of the PCP. He promptly dismissed the leading pro-Stalinists of State and party. On 24 October 350,000 people acclaimed Gomulka in Warsaw. Popular enthusiasm was at its peak.

Workers' councils, the expression of socialist democracy, first made their appearance at the Zeran car plant in September. They spread throughout industrial Poland, encouraged by Gomulka's political triumph.

In November 1956 the Polish parliament adopted a law recognising the councils'



Wladyslaw Gomulka (top) and below addressing 240,000-strong crowd in Warsaw on 24 October 1956

## Our History

right to manage the factories. On 18 November Gomulka signed an accord with the councils: the USSR agreed to cancel debts and deliver wheat, but maintained an important military presence.

The movement of the Polish workers' councils — there were more than 4,700 by the end of 1957 — ignored the limits which the liberal wing of the bureaucracy wanted to set. Workers began to replace the administrators of the Gomulka government with managers of their own choice,

constituting themselves, little by little, as 'the sole workers' representation within the factories'.

They began to influence working arrangements, productivity, bonuses and wages.

Nevertheless, from May 1957 the government changed its tactics and began to denounce the workers' councils as the expression of 'anarchist utopia'. In May 1958 the newspaper *Pro Postu*, the organ of the intellectuals and the 'October Left', was banned.

The workers' councils were replaced by 'conferences of workers' self-management', which restored the political responsibilities of the workers' councils to the holy bureaucratic trinity: the party, the official union and the economic leadership.

All the gains of the October revolution were liquidated: the workers' councils were rendered powerless and the opposition crushed. Jacek Kuron (KOR) acknowledged later: 'The only possibility for the development of the revolution was the formulation of a proletarian class programme and the organisation around it of a movement fighting against the power of the liberal bureaucracy.'

## Repression sweeps El Salvador

By Davy Jones

FELIX Olloa, Rector of the National University of El Salvador, was due in Britain this week to expose the repression in his country. He never arrived. He was assassinated, becoming the 8,000th victim of political violence in El Salvador this year.

Since January the country has been ruled by a reactionary junta of industrialists and army officers backed by US imperialism. They are fighting a ruthless civil war against the broad based Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR).

El Salvador is not a 'banana republic'. It is the most industrialised country in Central America with mining, manufacturing, petroleum refining, food processing and clothing industries. More than 70 per cent of all industry is owned or partly owned by US corporations. And the USA has pumped in \$5.5m in military aid to the El Salvador regime.

Meanwhile the population live in poverty. Ninety per cent of the population own just 20 per cent of all the land. Ninety two per cent of the population receive only half the national income. Only 16 per cent of the economically active population have work all the year round. The regime aims to keep things that way.

All opposition to the regime is being systematically liquidated by the police and army or right-wing goon squads under their protection. The election of Ronald Reagan as American president is likely to reinforce US involvement in this campaign of repression.

It is therefore very timely for the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign to have published a new pamphlet entitled *El Salvador — the Latin American Vietnam*. The pamphlet is excellent, full of facts and figures on the history and current situation in El Salvador. It can be obtained from: El Salvador Solidarity Campaign, 29 Islington Park Street, London N1. It costs just 50p.

## EL SALVADOR





## Real to reel

By Geoffrey Sheridan

**TWO young people meet, after a fashion. At a bus stop a young man and woman wait.**

Through his mind runs the macho culture of the TV serials, cheap novels and comics: *Joe Clancy was a cop who liked working alone*. Through her mind parades the romantic nonsense of the TV serials, cheap novels, and teenage girls' papers: *Falling in love was never easy at the best of times*.

Interspersed with this mythic world is the halting dialogue of a street encounter.

'Are you busy tonight?' he shyly enquires. 'Get lost,' she replies. He didn't take that garbage from anyone, he thinks. A little tremble of excitement fluttered in my heart, she imagines.

Thus the two-tiered episode continues — the string of clichés of the fantasy world conjured up by the media, and the rough and tumble of an actual conversation.

When his approach is definitively rebuffed, he considers: *Save your tears,*

*amigo, San Francisco is one tough place*. She concludes: *Love shone all around me and the world seemed to be singing with happiness*.

This vivid sequence is part of *Young Once*, the first of Thames TV's four-part 'Viewpoint 2' series for schools, which shows how various social groups — young people, blacks, trades unionists, and those on welfare — are presented and represented in the media.

Produced by Alan Horrox and Stuart Hall, and using a wide selection of TV and cinema footage, together with newspaper



reports, the programmes unravel a variety of the presumptions that lie behind the media's supposed 'neutrality'.

All the classics are there: black people as a problem, trades unionists as mindless militants victimising a mythic 'public', the unemployed as scroungers.

At the end of each programme is the IBA's compulsory balancing act, with newspaper editors and programme controllers trotting out their rationalisations.

One of the most telling comments is from Gus MacDonald, head of features at Granada TV, who says: 'I think we can look forward to a lot of industrial trouble over the next two years.'

'That will be the test of television's objectivity, because standing as we do in the brokers' role at the centre of society, it will be difficult to represent all those attitudes inside those battles which will undoubtedly come.'

'It's noticeable,' says Alan Horrox, 'that in the mass media's view of itself there is some material which looks at the patterns of treatment and perspectives

of various groups. This mostly goes out in educational broadcasting, for schools and the Open University, which is fairly marginal.

'But there is little coverage by the mass media of the patterns of their ownership and structures, and this programme is no exception.'

## Permit

While the television authorities are occasionally prepared to allow examination of their own bias — at ungodly hours — what they never permit on the screens they control is any comment or analysis of the roots of that bias.

But these programmes admirably disclose a bunch of the biases.

'Viewpoint 2' is on ITV at 9.30am on 12 Nov, and between 11.34 and 11.59am on 19 Nov, 26 Nov and 3 Dec

## Hot off the presses

**IN THIS new, regular column, RIC SISSONS thumbs through the radical and feminist publishers' catalogues and spills the beans on what you can expect to find on the new books shelves.**

**All these titles will be appearing in the next few weeks and some will be reviewed later in greater depth. All are paperback.**

### General

Publishing is in crisis. Christmas is a time of heavy book buying and the radical and feminist publishers have both eyes on the 'market'. With the festive season in mind, Ink Links have produced *The Book of the Year*. (£5.95)

Edited by the SWP's Dave Widgey, it is a mainly photographic record of the past year in under 200, large format pages. Text is added by EP Thompson, Angela Phillips, John Pilger, and others.

This year you again face the agonising choice of two diaries. The 1981 *Spare Rib Diary* (£2.50) is being produced jointly with the new feminist publishing house, Sheba. After last year's sell-out the print run has been upped to 20,000.

While the familiar *Big Red Diary* (Pluto £2.00) takes as its theme utopias, it also includes a new innovation — the red directory — containing 1200 entries of organisations and campaigns.

### Culture

Peter Fuller, an occasional contributor to this paper, has two titles due out. Both are under the Writers and Readers imprint. *Seeing Berger* (£1) is a reevaluation by the former pupil, Fuller, of John Berger's influential work *Ways of Seeing*.

Also expected is *Beyond the Crisis in Art* (£2.95) in which Fuller investigates the failure of post-modernist art.

### Economics

Two books catch the attention. Firstly, Bob Rowthorn's highly acclaimed collection of essays, *Capitalism, Conflict and Inflation* (Lawrence and Wishart, £3.95). This work has recently been awarded the Isaac Deutscher memorial prize.

Secondly, *The Alternative Economic Strategy*

## Read any good red books lately?

(Conference of Socialist Economists and Labour Coordinating Committee, £2.50). This is not a critique of the AES but as the blurb states 'the detailed analysis underlying this strategy'.

### Politics

The annual *Socialist Register* (Merlin £3.60) always contains some enlightening and provocative essays. This year should be no exception. Of particular interest will be Ralph Miliband's 'Military intervention and socialist internationalism', which examines how the left responded to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and how it might alter any political characterisation of the East European states.

Other noteworthy pieces are an analysis of the 'Economic crisis' by ex-SWP member and *Guardian* correspondent John Palmer; Stanley Aronowitz on 'The labour movement and the left in the USA'; and Jane Jenson's study of 'The French Communist Party and feminism'.

Maintaining an international theme, Pluto are bringing out a sensational samizdat account of the ecological crisis in Russia, entitled *The Destruction of Nature in the Soviet Union* (£2.95). At a more theoretical level New Left Books are publishing a third work by Göran Therborn, *The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology* (£2.25).

Undoubtedly more

material will soon be available on the question of nuclear weapons. One of the first is an American book published in England under the Spokesman imprint. *The Game of Disarmament* (£4.25) is by Alva Myrdal — a former Swedish Minister of Disarmament and contributor to the recent Penguin special, *Protest and Survive*. Although it comes with a recommendation from Willy Brandt it should contain some useful information.

If NHS: Condition Critical (CIS 95p) is as good as the last five Counter Information Services reports then this will arm militants with all the latest material on the crisis in the health service.

### Sexual Politics

Here there is a good and varied choice. From Virago comes a slightly unusual feminist, historical, cookery book. *Bombers and Mash* (£4.95) is the first, real account of the role and lives of women on the 'domestic front' during the 1939-45 war. Plus recipes!

Women's participation in a very different war is examined in Stephanie Urdang's *Fighting Two Colonialisms* (Monthly Review £3.55). This is an account of the role of women in the liberation movements in Guinea-Bissau.

*Learning to Lose* (Women's Press £3.25) is a collection of essays on sexism and education. Importantly it includes classroom suggestions, teaching aids, and detailed bibliographies all of which would come in useful for teachers, parents and students.

**Homosexuality: Power and Politics** (Allison and Busby £3.95) is a strong, pathbreaking collection of 17 essays on the gay and women's movements. One article in particular should be of interest to Socialist Challenge readers. Written by a former member of the International Marxist Group and entitled 'The Sects and Sexuality' it makes a highly critical assessment of the collision of Trotskyism and gay liberation.

Lastly, New Left Books offer us *Women's Oppression Today*. (£3.95) This excursion into the theory and politics of socialist feminism has been written by Michele Barrett, one of the *Feminist Review* collective.

Perhaps one or many of these books will be of interest but you can obtain all of them from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, London N1.



## Freedom fighters, Latin American style

By Stuart Piper

**TWO new films are available which should be used as widely as possible by those building solidarity with the struggle for freedom in Latin America.**

*El Salvador, Revolution or Death*, a documentary made for Dutch TV, combines far more thorough analysis and powerful images of popular struggle than anything shown on TV in this country. It's not to be recommended for the over squeamish; the scenes of repression are genuinely horrifying.

But the film goes much further than the shock-horror format. Putting footage of the massacre at Archbishop Romero's funeral beside interviews with workers and peasants, and linking these with imaginative cartoon explanations of El Salvador's social structure, the film leaves you with a powerful gut feeling — not of horror — but of anger.

And it's not blind anger, but anger with knowledge, and a deep desire to

do something about it.

The working people of Bolivia are organising resistance to the latest right-wing coup in Latin America. A new Bolivian feature film, *Chuquiago*, explains the kind of society which produced both the coup and the popular struggle which the generals are trying to repress.

Four overlapping stories give us the lives of the four main classes in Bolivia's capital city, La Paz (called Chuquiago in the Indian language).

The film presents a deeply human picture of social forces which can be seen repeated, with local variations, throughout Latin America. They are the same social forces which, differently combined, have produced both the brutal dictatorships of the southern cone and the prolonged people's war now steadily advancing through Central America.

*El Salvador, Revolution or Death* (41 mins colour) and *Chuquiago* (87 mins colour) can be hired in 16mm from: The Other Cinema, 79 Wardour St, London W1V 3PH. Tel 01-734 8508/9

### The Tory Press and How To Fight It



NOW OUT — the 2nd edition of Socialist Challenge's highly popular pamphlet 'The Tory Press and How To Fight It'.

If you gritted your teeth at the coverage of the Labour Party conference, and thrilled at the TUC decision that media workers should ensure the right of reply... this pamphlet is for you.

Single copies 10p plus 10p p.p.; multiple orders at 8p a copy pre-paid post free, direct from: Socialist Challenge, 328 Upper St, London N1.





Lord Denning

## Appeal Court cuts back abortion rights

By Jude Arkwright

**THE infamous Lord Denning has now taken up the unrelenting cause of the anti-abortion lobby.**

The Appeal Court has ruled in favour of the Royal College of Nursing's proposal that nurses should no longer be required to perform prostaglandin abortions.

These are carried out with the permission and overall responsibility of a doctor, as with many other non-surgical procedures.

Prostaglandin is used in the late stages of pregnancy and accounts for about 7,000 of the annual 142,000 abortions. The British

Medical Association estimates that the court's decision will involve a drastic cut in the number of abortions.

This is exactly what the defeated Corrie Bill attempted — to restrict the availability of late abortions.

The surgical alternative to the prostaglandin method is a hysterotomy which — like any other form of surgery — can be risky and may mean that any future pregnancy could require a caesarian operation.

No woman wants to have a late abortion of any kind but the simplest and safest method is the best. In most cases women are forced into late abortions because of the delays and lack of facilities, and the

prejudices which exist.

The DHSS is planning to appeal to the House of Lords against the decision, but in the meantime nurses will be under pressure not to perform prostaglandin abortions.

No one should be deceived as to what this decision represents. Lord Denning said: 'The nurses are dedicated to preserve life, yet here they are called upon to destroy it.'

What rubbish! It's women's bodies and women's lives that are affected and no one (nurses, doctors, politicians or Lord Denning) has the right to decide for us by withholding medical facilities in this way.

The Nurses for a Woman's Right to Choose group will be taking this up at its next meeting. What is needed is a huge campaign to force the DHSS to oppose the judges' reactionary decision.

## Should a man be allowed to rape his wife?

By Valerie Coultas

**JOHN Stuart Mill in 1869 pointed out that the absolute power that a man had over his wife allowed him legally to commit any 'atrocities except killing her'.**

Times have changed since the Victorian era when

women were regarded as their husband's chattel, but by how much? The response of some lawyers to the recent proposal from the Criminal Law Revision Committee, that a wife should be permitted to prosecute her husband for rape has been one of outrage.

The view still persists in our society that a woman's body belongs to her husband.

Robin Day, discussing the issue on Radio 4's

*World at One*, reiterated this view when he said: 'But a wife consents to live with her husband, surely she has consented to have sexual intercourse with him.'

If you are an unmarried woman and a man sexually assaults you, it is possible to prosecute him for rape.

To decide to do this takes a lot of guts, and it requires even more courage to go through the medical examination and stand up in court and answer the defence lawyers. They will calmly insinuate that you were asking for it, as women — normally 'delicate', 'passive' creatures sexually — who get raped are wellknown to be 'whores'.

A lot of unmarried women shy away from this ordeal.

But if you are married and your husband rapes you, there is presently no legal redress at all. Even if you can prove violent assault, legal remedies are inadequate as they stand. Police are reluctant to intervene in 'domestic tiffs'. The woman is usually persuaded to bring a private prosecution, which makes life at home with the defendant rather difficult.

## Rights

Even if a woman is living apart from her husband and he returns to claim his marital rights against her will, she still has no rights in law to protest.

It is absurd that in the 'private' sphere of the home men are exonerated from behaving with the dignity they are ordinarily expected to show.

Women should be allowed legal redress for any kind of sexual intimidation at home.

A man should not be authorised to rape his wife. There is no reason, as the report seeks, for cases to be vetted by the Director of Public Prosecutions to make sure that the 'courts' time will not be wasted'.

The public prosecutor should make the prosecution, rather than the woman herself, because rape is a crime not just against an individual woman but against society as a whole.

## Fuss

The attitudes that prevail in our society mean that women are very reluctant to make a fuss about rape. It's high time that women *did* make a fuss about sexual freedom in the home. The law cannot be changed too soon.

Other proposals made in the Working Paper on Sexual Offences (HMSO) include the suggestion that the laws restricting intercourse with young women between the ages of 14 and 16 should be relaxed; and that anal intercourse between consenting adult men and women should no longer be a crime.

## Consent

Commission members could not decide whether the homosexual age of consent should be lowered to 16 or 18, but they all favoured lowering it from 21.

The report says that the laws on incest should be retained, but it invites views on whether incest between consenting adults should continue to be a crime. What do you think?

## SPUC bugs Scottish NAC

**NO ONE** took much notice of two people tape-recording sessions of the recent conference of the Scottish National Abortion Campaign. On the second day of the conference, however, it was discovered that they were from SPUC, the anti-abortion group.

But the tapes will not make happy listening for the SPUC eavesdroppers. Over 90 delegates from women's groups and political parties attended the conference held on the 1/2 November at Stirling University.

An overwhelming vote was taken in favour of setting up a Scottish steering committee to link up all the NAC groups and affiliates in Scotland. This was felt to be necessary because of the significant differences that exist between England and

Scotland — abortion is still illegal in Scotland except under exceptional circumstances — and because of the need to break down the isolation of the local groups.

The recurring theme of the workshops was that it was time for NAC to go over to the offensive — to take the initiative in approaching organisations and groups, and to make abortion an issue in the reselection of Scottish Labour MPs.

gays are a threat to children is created through ignorance and fear.

Clwyd County Council has even announced that it would refuse to employ homosexuals to work with young people. Gay teachers who keep their jobs are subject to lesser forms of discrimination such as lack of promotion or appointment on temporary contract.

The conference will look at three main areas: the need for gay teachers to 'come out'; the need for the teaching unions to support gay teachers; and the fact that homosexuality is totally ignored in most school curricula.

The conference is at Sheffield Polytechnic students union, Pond St, Sheffield. Phone Pete Bardsley for details on 0742-680464.

## Gay teachers discuss increased attacks

**A NATIONAL** conference for gay women and men teachers will be held in Sheffield on 15/16 November.

The 'Gay Teachers' Group is appalled by the increase in discrimination against gay people working with children. Several have recently lost their jobs though there was no evidence of any improper behaviour. The myth that

# TUC discusses positive action for women

By Denny Fitzpatrick

**WHO** noted 'the deterioration of women's earnings and their reduced employment opportunities'. Who argued that 'although the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts have been in force for five years very little progress has been made towards equality for woman at work'?

Who resolved 'to pursue vigorously a campaign for real equality for women recognising that new strategies are required to establish genuine equality of opportunity'?

Well, it's the 1980 TUC conference and on 18 November they have organised a special conference 'to examine the possibilities of positive action for women'.

## Measures

This is a really welcome step for trade unionists to begin to consider. Positive action means thrashing out those special measures which go beyond removing formal barriers to equality and taking steps to guarantee that women can take full opportunity of equal opportunities.

The conference discussion document outlines two ways of campaigning for positive action. First, voluntary agreements can be drawn up between trade union negotiating committees and the employers. Such discussions would draw up a positive action programme for that particular industry.

## Targets

The second is to campaign for a mandatory policy obliging employers to take positive action to increase women's representation in the workforce at all levels.

The paper presented to the delegates draws heavily upon the experience of the affirmative action programme in the United States, where the law makes it compulsory for federal employers to set goals and targets for the hiring of women into traditionally male jobs.

Although both options are open to discussion it is clear



### Campaign meeting called

**POSITIVE** action to ensure that women can work in any job they choose was one of the main ideas to emerge from the Women and Manual Trades conference in London last weekend.

The conference decided to call a meeting for all those groups and organisations prepared to fight for action on women's jobs. It will be held in London on 24 January.

Delegates to the TUC Positive Action conference who are involved in WAMT will be using the opportunity to win support for the meeting to discuss and plan how to fight on jobs.

Anyone interested should contact Ginny c/o WAMT, 40 Dale St, London W4.

that a mandatory policy is not seen as applicable to Britain. The document says that 'such an enforceable programme runs completely counter to the British tradition of voluntarism'.

We don't agree. We think that fighting for positive action in the work place and for legal changes to enforce positive action at the point of selection for jobs are complementary.

Local trade union negotiating committees have a major role to play in ensuring that employers do set goals

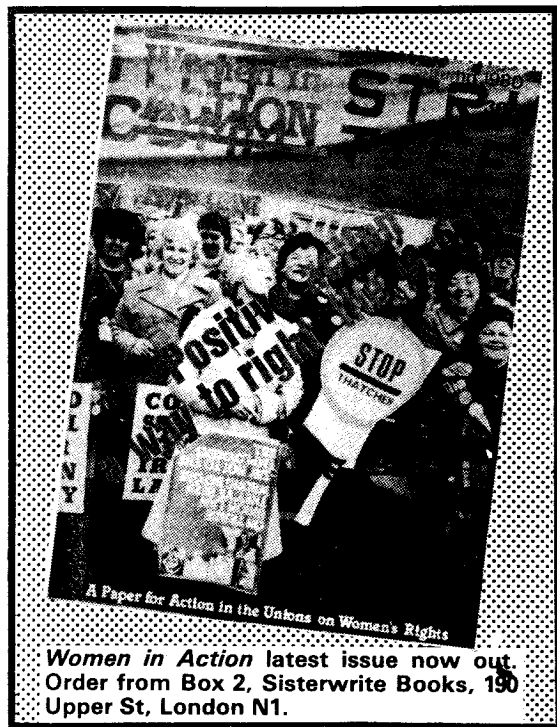
and targets to get women into traditionally male jobs.

But voluntary agreements of this kind will be subject to wide regional and local discrepancies. The case for stronger backing at the level of the law to reinforce what trade unions achieve is obvious.

A campaign to force employers to set goals and targets for women means fighting to change the Sex Discrimination Act to allow for positive discrimination for women. A change in the law in women's favour can be a real boost — as the thousands of women in the United States who came forward for jobs under affirmative action programmes can testify.

The TUC conference to discuss all this is very welcome. With the current attacks on a woman's right to work, positive measures such as the ones outlined in the TUC document will be vital to stop women workers going to the wall.

Hopefully delegates will agree with us and will go back to their unions and workplaces and draw up demands for positive action in local and national negotiations as well as fighting for legislation to force employers to take positive action.



Women in Action latest issue now out. Order from Box 2, Sisterwrite Books, 190 Upper St, London N1.



# CND: Build on the success of 26 Oct

By Jude Woodward

AFTER organising a highly successful 80,000-strong demonstration through London against Cruise and Trident missiles, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament can expect an exciting national conference in Leeds on 15-16 November.

Delegates from all over the country will want to know what CND is planning to carry forward the campaign.

There can be no doubt that the main task facing the conference is to build on the magnificent October demonstration and draw even more people into an active campaign against Thatcher's proposal to site Cruise and Trident missiles in Britain. A motion from Wolverhampton CND puts this forward.

That there were few trade union banners on the London demonstration indicates that the most important step for CND is to launch an urgent fight in the trade union movement to win its support. At the end of the day this will determine the success of the campaign.

## Stand

Next year's TUC must be won to taking a clear stand against the missiles, rather than the present wishy-washy policy of 'encouraging an understanding of the need for peace'. If the trade union leadership is really interested in peace then it can prove it by opposing Cruise and Trident.

The Labour Party conference voted to oppose the missiles, and Michael Foot has declared that he wants a campaign against them. These fine words have to be turned into action.

It's not just that the support of the trade union and labour movement would be convenient for the campaign; without it no campaign against Cruise and Trident can hope for success.

## Motion

A motion to conference from Hornsey CND calls for the campaign to be based in the labour movement. This motion should be approved by conference and action planned to turn it into a reality.

**Where to from here?  
CND meets in conference this weekend**



Photo: GEOFFREY SHERIDAN (Socialist Challenge)

One of the first opportunities for CND to do this comes with the labour movement conference against the missiles called for March next year. This conference can attract delegates from trade union and Labour Party branches up and down the country.

It is sponsored by several Labour MPs, including Tony Benn, together with a number of local and national campaigns. Labour CND has already decided to sponsor and support the conference.

As well as supporting this conference, CND needs to set itself the task of ensuring that the next national

demonstration against the missiles is called jointly by CND, the Labour Party and the TUC.

The large number of young people on the London demonstration was noted by everyone. They want a future and they are not prepared to die in a war of Thatcher's making.

CND has taken the best step to ensure the youth are involved by relaunching Young CND and publishing *2nd Generation*, a special broadsheet for young campaigners.

The youth attracted to Young CND have to be brought into the centre of the campaign, and their

readiness to take action used as the dynamic core of the campaign as a whole.

CND knows better than anyone that relying on SALT talks and international negotiations have only ever had the effect of stepping up the arms race. But a huge series of mass actions against the missiles can put a stop to Cruise and Trident.

It can also ensure that CND is at the head of a campaign of even greater proportions than anything it saw in the early '60s, organising forces that can strike a real blow against the war-mongers.

## Anti-Nukes actions planned

By Chris Church

THE Anti-Nuclear Campaign held its conference in Sheffield last weekend.

It is less than a year since the campaign was formed but already over 170 organisations have affiliated, including a large and growing number of trade unions at national and branch level.

The conference showed that the ANC is united in working against all aspects of the nuclear cycle, including mining, power stations, and waste dumping, as well as against nuclear weapons.

Progress has been made in publicising the link between the civil and military nuclear issues, and in giving the previously disparate anti-nuclear groups a political role.

Plans that emerged at ANC's conference include a major 'Carnival-type' event in the summer as a national focus, tied in with other political and cultural events; a campaign to prevent planned government relaxation of radiation safety standards; and opposition to new power stations and premature closure of coal-powered stations.

The ANC is also helping to coordinate an international week of action against multinationals that play a role in the nuclear cycle. In Britain the main target will be Rio Tinto Zinc, stressing its illegal uranium mining activities in Namibia.

The ANC sees the nuclear issue as a problem for everyone, and hence argues that both civil and military nuclear development must be opposed wherever it is planned. Further information on the ANC at its new office: 256 Battersea Park Road, London SW11. Tel 01-223 9115.

## Arguments for Socialism



By Brian Grogan

MANY people on the left use the term 'bureaucrat' as a swear word for anyone who behaves in an undemocratic way.

Union leaders enjoy a standard of living quite beyond that of most workers. Len Murray has a salary of almost £15,000. This is about par for the course, but, there's more besides.

There are the expense accounts the union grants them, fees from conferences here and abroad, lectures to employers' organisations and for appearances on TV programmes.

Many top officials are members of government 'quangos', advisory commissions, and on the boards of nationalised industries. Some, like Joe Gormley, are on the board of private companies.

## Privilege

We call these people bureaucrats because they defend their privileges and not the interests of the majority of their members. They are the employers' cops inside the workers' movement.

Their function is to collaborate with individual employers and the government, and to play this role they have to have influence among ordinary workers.

It is their different methods of maintaining that influence which explains the difference between the various top officials. These differences between Moss Evans and Terry Duffy are important, but basically all of them start from how best to maintain collaboration with the employers and their own position of privilege rather than the interests of their members.

## Scab

Frank Chapple, the leader of the EEPTU, can simply refuse to back actions, openly destroy rank and file struggle, or directly scab as in the lagers' dispute.

Moss Evans often has to head up struggles in order to keep them under control. This was the case with the Ford and other disputes during the 'winter of discontent'.

Even Chapple sometimes has to take action against the bosses, as with the power workers, and it was primarily the 'left' Moss Evans who openly smashed the action of BL workers last year.

The bureaucrats will fight against anything which directly affects their power and influence. This was the case with the Industrial Relations Act which Heath attempted to impose and which the unions opposed almost unanimously.

## Fight

The difference with Prior's present legislation is that it is designed to affect the bureaucracy as little as possible while shackling the ability of the rank and file to fight. This is why Duffy and Chapple can say that they will comply with the legislation.

Whether they will be able to do this depends on whether the rank and file can launch a fight which the bureaucrats are forced to support.

Sirs headed the steel strike because he had to or he would have lost his influence. But throughout the strike he attempted one compromise after another. The eventual settlement was much less than what was possible given the solidarity and determination of the strikers.



Len Murray

Moss Evans headed the Ford strike, but he accepted a number of strings which penalised workers even though Ford had been brought to its knees.

The bosses would have been in a much worse position without the bureaucrats. They will appreciate the advantage of having workers represented by bureaucrats rather than rank and file leaders.

Bureaucrats cannot be won by arguments away from their present ideas, as rank and file workers can be. Individual bureaucrats could be won to the side of working class power, but as a layer, bureaucrats depend on the maintenance of the present system for their privileges. Without capitalism, their role disappears.

To make the unions instruments of the class struggle, the bureaucracy will have to be defeated and replaced.

Whether they are left or right does make a difference to the confidence of workers. Socialists want to promote this confidence. But understanding the limits of this divide is vital.

This is why the policy of socialists has to be to build a new left wing, which relies on rank and file action for socialist aims.

## Action

This approach does not mean that militants can simply denounce the bureaucracy and then ignore them. The majority of workers see bureaucrats as their legitimate leaders. They are more confident and more prepared to struggle if the bureaucracy calls official action.

So socialists support any faltering steps the bureaucrats are forced to take under the pressure of the rank and file. Indeed we take the lead in fighting for united action with them.

In this way the militant minority can best influence the mass of workers. In such united action the real limits to which the bureaucrats are prepared to go can be shown in real life to the majority.

If a class struggle alternative exists this will lead to a weakening of the influence of the bureaucracy, their loss of leadership to the militants and socialist, and eventually to its final defeat.

## The march of shame

By Paul Winston

ON Wednesday 12 November generous hosiery industry employers gave their workers one hour's paid leave to march through the streets of Leicester.

They were marching on a class collaborationist 'Buy British' march called by the National Hosiery Workers Union and supported by the bosses' Knitting Industries Federation.

Speakers included Harborough Tory MP John Farr and Labour MPs, including Tribune Jim Marshall — despite calls for him

to pull out from Leicester South Labour Party.

Speaking of the march Harold Gibson, national president of the Hosiery Workers Union, said: 'We will not be marching under an anti-government banner although we are demanding changes and more help'.

John Harrison, a director of the KIF, and other employers were also participants in what the *Leicester Mercury* described as a 'march of patriotic pride and concern for jobs'.

## Jobs

The Leicester left tried to construct a united front against the reactionary nature of the march while at the same time attempting to

get through to workers on the march who are concerned about their jobs.

Socialist Challenge supporters took part in a joint effort to leaflet on behalf of the Right to Work Campaign and a meeting is being held this Thursday, 13 November.

## Low

Because 70 per cent of the Hosiery Union are women, many of them Asian, who work for low wages at high productivity, Socialist Challenge supporters produced, in collaboration with Socialist Organiser, a Woman's Fightback leaflet for distribution to women marchers.

## Kingston rallies against the cuts

By Paul Seligman

WHEN Kingston Campaign Against the Cuts booked the biggest available hall for a rally on Tuesday of last week, there were doubts about whether the 500 seats could be filled. They needn't have worried.

In the event hundreds had to stand in the aisles and others could not be admitted.

Local speakers were

followed by a play from Broadside Mobile Workers Theatre, *The Cut Price Welfare State Show*. This stressed the effects of the cuts on women, and these sections of the performance were particularly appreciated.

Tony Benn, the guest speaker, covered most of the reasons for opposing the Tory government. The loudest applause followed his remarks opposing nuclear weapons, and his call for accountability of the Labour Party leadership.

Most people at the rally wrote down their name to be contacted about future activities, and the collection raised over £100, so the anti-cuts campaign in Tory-dominated Kingston-upon-Thames received a real boost.

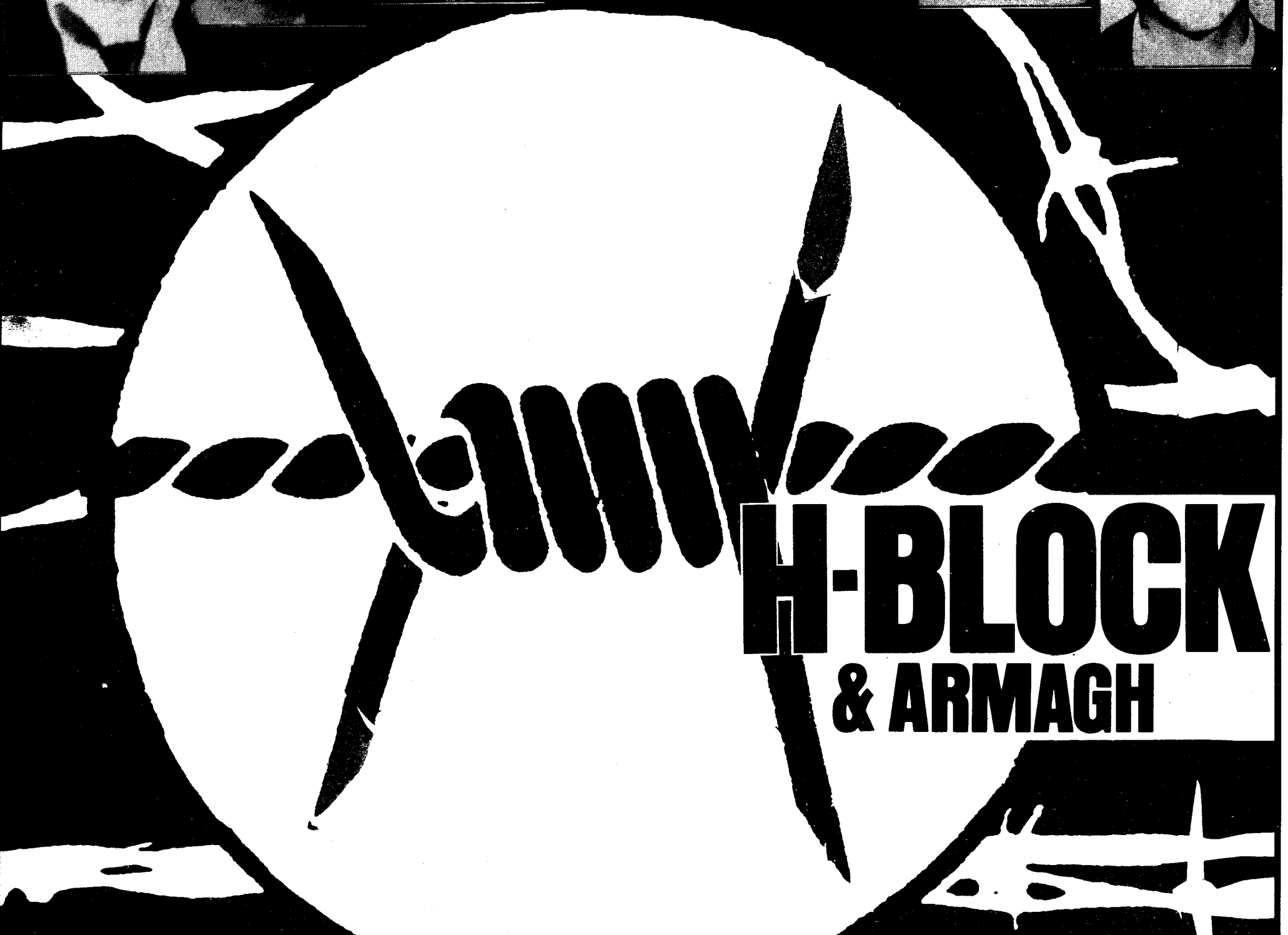


**Socialist  
Challenge**

**TROOPS  
OUT  
NOW**

*Demonstrate Saturday  
15 November  
Assemble 1pm,  
Embankment*

**Don't let Irish  
prisoners die!**



**H-BLOCK  
& ARMAGH**