

# Socialist Challenge

## Polish workers show their strength

Rab Bird, AUEW steward Sheffield, reports from Gdansk, 16 Dec.

**HUNDREDS** of thousands of workers are assembled here to pay tribute to their comrades killed in struggle on this day ten years ago with the erection of a special statue.

Despite the form of the commemoration which was dominated by a religious ceremony, the massive expression of working class power is ever present. Special trains have brought thousands from Warsaw, including a big contingent from the Warsaw steelworks. This response has been duplicated throughout the country.

As the workers arrived in Gdansk they marched from the station with banners proclaiming their branch of Solidarity. The whole event has been stewarded by shipyard workers. No police are in sight.

The President of the Republic is on the platform along with other notables forced to pay homage to those they had wantonly shot down in cold blood in 1970. As Walesa said in his four minute address 'No violence is now necessary. 1970 can never again be repeated'.

The workers are demanding an inquiry into who was responsible for the workers' deaths in 1970.

The official version is that only 45 workers were killed, 1,165 injured and 3,000 arrested in an effort to break the strike. Solidarity claims that many more times that number were killed.

The most despicable act was the gunning down of Gdynia shipyard workers as they poured out of the railway station in response to a government appeal for a return to work. During the rest of that day fighting and shootings went on throughout the region.

After the strike victory in August this year Solidarity appealed for funds for a monument for the victims of the 1970 events. Half a million pounds was collected for the erection of this magnificent monument on the spot where the first three workers were gunned down.

All three were shipyard workers and it is their fellow workers at the shipyards who built the monument. Its inscription reads, 'They gave their lives so that we might live in dignity.' Solidarity stands on the shoulders of its martyred dead.

Now the workers want justice. They have demanded the establishment of a commission, on which they would be represented, to investigate the power of the police, secret police, interior ministry and the Prosecutor's office. They also demand massive cuts in the budget of the repressive forces.

The authorities did everything in their power to limit today's mobilisations. They tried to get simultaneous actions in other major cities and Warsaw called off. The press put out wrong information about the event, and the Catholic hierarchy issued statements supporting the government. Their pretext is the threatened Soviet invasion.

But the workers know that there is a third choice between Soviet tanks and the Kania dictatorship. That third way becomes more possible as a Soviet invasion is made more and more difficult politically for the Kremlin.

Everyone here knows that the labour movement in the West is a big factor in the Kremlin's thinking. They want solidarity from us, not threats from NATO which reinforce the hold of the Kremlin.

# IRELAND'S TRAGEDY, BRITAIN'S SHAME

**IT NOW** seems certain that a number of Irish political prisoners will die an agonising death over Xmas.

The Tories' Xmas gift to the Irish will be coffins.

It is another tragedy for the Irish people, a people who over the past ten years, over the past hundreds of years have grown used to tragedy. That will not make the latest deaths any easier to bear, and certainly those deaths will do nothing to bring peace and justice to Ireland.

## Picture

The British media paint a picture of a bunch of crazed Irish fanatics indulging in some grotesque suicide pact.

There is nothing wrong with being fanatical about justice; about wanting the people of Ireland to rule Ireland; about arguing that those who committed 'crimes' for political reasons should be treated differently from those who kill or steal for personal gain.

The Irish political prisoners are saying that

## Captive

they could no longer suffer the atrocious, inhuman conditions in which they were held captive. For the hunger strikers, death is the only peace now available to them.

They will have been killed by the centuries-old British insistence that this country has the right to interfere in Irish affairs; by the intransigence of the present government, which arrests Irish

prisoners under special laws, tries them in special courts, and then denies they are special prisoners.

But it is not just the Tories who are the executioners, for there are those in our own labour movement who are standing by and either applauding the executions or allowing them to take place.

## Silent

People like Michael Foot, the new 'left' leader of the Labour Party who has remained silent. People like the party's spokesperson on Northern Ireland, Don Con-cannon, who last week described a very reasonable, moderate

pamphlet on the H Blocks, introduced by Ernie Roberts MP, as 'IRA propaganda'.

There are others, and it is time they, too, were named — the keepers of the Labour Party's socialist conscience. Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, Stuart Holland are among their number.

## Cause

Their silence or open hostility to the cause of the Irish hunger strikers is a contemptible insult to the internationalist traditions of socialism.

They side with Margaret Thatcher against the tens of thousands of Irish working class people who have taken to the streets of Ireland in support of the hunger strikers. They side with the Army generals rather than those who have sought to resist the occupation of Ireland enforced by those generals.

And this Xmas it is they who are as responsible as any for Ireland's tragedy and Britain's shame.

## If they die...

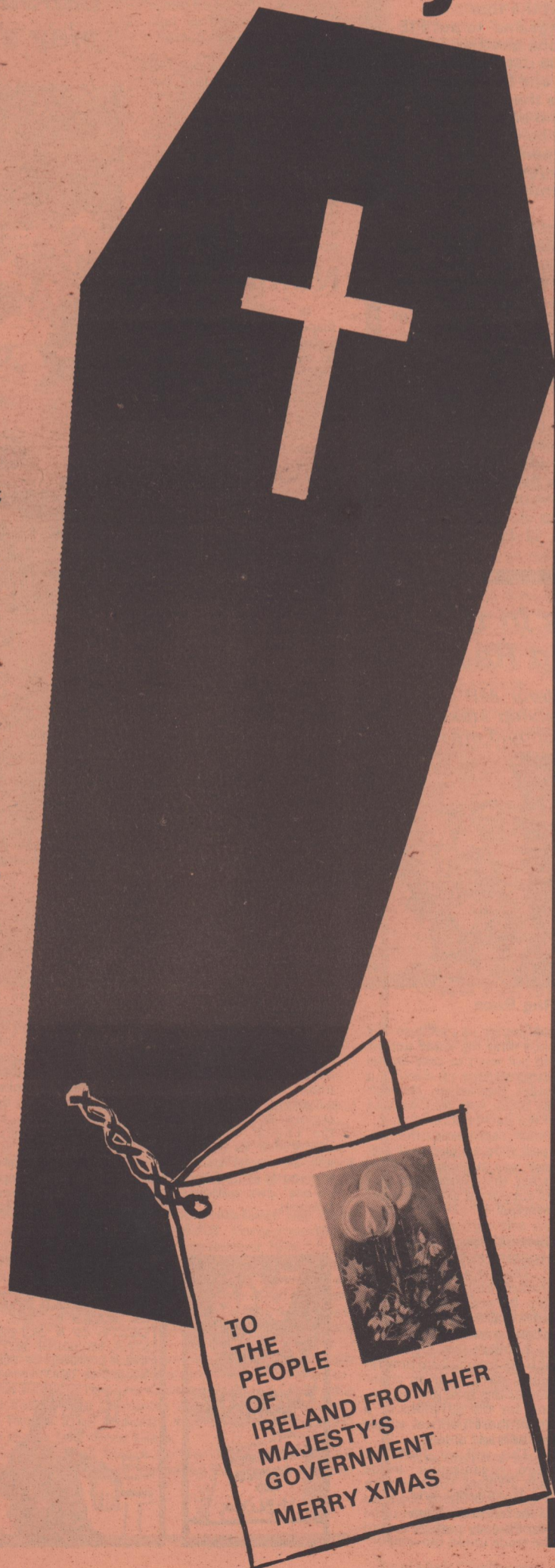
**IN THE** event of the death of a hunger striker the national Ad Hoc Irish Hunger Strike Committee will be holding a picket of Downing Street on the day the death occurs.

The committee is also calling for any local demonstration in London, on the weekend following such a death, to be nationally supported.

These demonstrations are: Sat 20 Dec, assemble Kilburn Sq, 1pm. Sat 27 Dec, assemble Hammersmith Green, 1pm.

The committee is also calling for a series of regional demonstrations on the weekend following the first death. Supporters in Glasgow, Cardiff, Liverpool, and Birmingham are asked to organise such protests.

For up-to-the-minute information phone 01-267 2004.





## Editorial Socialist Challenge

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### Oppose this show trial

ON 12 January a trial will open at the Old Bailey of four members of the Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE), who are charged with 'conspiracy to corrupt public morals'.

The trial, initiated as the result of a *News of the World* so-called investigation, is an assault on democratic rights.

The sole charge is that the four distributed a 'contact magazine' to put PIE members in touch with one another. Doubtless the case will be used for an orgy of media sensationalism and innuendo. The targets will not simply be the PIE members.

The gay movement and especially the women's movement will be under attack. 'Deviants', 'queers' and 'perverts' will be the labels used to brand everyone who challenges sexual conformity and the 'normality' of the family.

With the Tories' aim of bolstering the family, the trial will be used not only to attack the sexual freedom of young people, but their right to any form of independence.

The law being used is an horrendous one. There is no such crime as actually 'corrupting public morals'. But you can be charged with 'conspiracy to corrupt public morals' — the conspiracy laws are the most pernicious on the statute book.

Obviously there is no unanimous view in the labour movement on paedophilia or the age of consent. These questions need to be discussed. But whatever attitude is adopted, there can be no doubt about the anti-democratic intentions of this trial. Socialists must defend its victims.

Picket the Old Bailey, 12 January, noon to 2 p.m.

### 'More politics in the unions' — Reg Race MP

WE asked left-wing Labour MP Reg Race about the present leadership stakes in the party, and how the left should organise.

What do you think about the fact that Tony Benn and Eric Heffer were not elected to the Shadow Cabinet?

The failure of the PLP to elect Tony Benn and Eric Heffer shows that there is still an entrenched right-wing majority in the PLP.

Their inclusion in the Shadow Cabinet would have marked a significant shift to the left and it would then have been clear that the Shadow Cabinet contained people who were prepared to fight for conference policies.

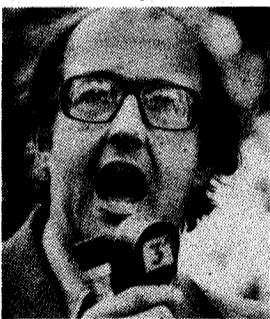
Should Tony Benn stand against Michael Foot as leader once the new election procedures are agreed?

My advice to Tony Benn is that he should stand in the election to be held under the new electoral college formula.

I believe it's important that trade unionists, constituency parties and MPs should have the opportunity of voting for a candidate who clearly stands for alternative socialist policies.

Do you think that the Labour Party conference, rather than an electoral college, would be the most democratic body to elect the party leader?

The reason that the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and the Rank and File Mobilising Committee have supported an electoral college rather than election of the leader by



Reg Race

conference is because we knew that the trade unions did not want to take on the responsibility of electing a leader themselves, through the block vote they wielded at the party conference.

In that sense the advocacy of an electoral college was a tactical device rather than something that we supported as a matter of principle.

Should the Labour left organise in the unions?

There is a long-standing problem about the relationship between political and industrial action in the labour movement.

I believe that the nature of British capitalism now requires there to be an abolition of this false distinction, and for the adoption of a much more political stance by the trade unions.

This will no doubt require organisation inside each affiliate, together with a specific bringing together of the left in Parliament, the constituency parties, and in the trade union movement.

# Democracy likely to lose at Wembley

THE special conference of the Labour Party, which will decide on the method of electing the party leader, takes place in Wembley, London in just over a month.

By Tom Marlowe

The odds are that whatever the conference decides the immediate outcome will not be as dramatic as once forecast.

The election of Michael Foot as party leader has taken some of the heat out of the debate, and Foot is unlikely to face a serious challenge to his leadership next year.

From many in the Labour Party the cry has gone out that the democracy debate should be cooled down — the important thing now is 'unity'.

## Numbers

In this respect the dispute around how the Labour Party leader should be elected has been largely reduced to a numbers game: whether the Parliamentary Labour Party should have 38 per cent, 33 per cent or 50 per cent of the vote in an electoral college system.

Few of the more prominent leaders of the left, and no major union leader, has suggested the obvious course — that if the national conference is supposed to be the supreme decision-making body of the Labour Party then it should be that conference, and not an artificially created electoral college, which should elect the leader.

It is hardly surprising that even 'left' union leaders have not taken their advocacy of 'democracy' to its ultimate conclusion and supported the right of the conference to decide.

After all, many of the ways in which these union leaders themselves cast their votes at Labour Party conferences leave a lot to be desired.

## Special

According to a survey published in last week's *Sunday Times*, only one union, the National Union of Railwaymen, will be holding a special conference to decide which way to vote at Wembley.

In other unions the decision will be left to the national executive of the union, with or without 'consultation' with branches or regions; to the delegates at the Labour Party special conference; or the decision will be based on policies previously established at the unions' own national conferences.

## Labour delegates to play a numbers game



Few of the methods chosen will allow the membership the dominant say in which way their union will vote at Wembley.

Yet those who cast the block votes at Labour Party conferences do so on the basis of how many of their members pay the Labour Party levy. In other words the votes are cast thanks to the money paid by rank and file union members.

This is why the fight for democracy in the unions and democracy in the Labour Party is part and parcel of the same struggle. There is no simple formula for how, in precise detail, the fight for democracy in

the unions should proceed, or what should be recommended as the most representative way union memberships can decide how their delegation should vote at Labour Party conferences.

Because the structures of unions vary, what might be a democratic method in one union might not be the most democratic method available in another.

For example, allowing the unions' Labour Party conference delegates to decide how the block votes should be cast is only legitimate if those delegates themselves are directly elected.

## How the main unions decided

THE decision on which election system the main unions will support at the special Labour Party conference has been made on the following basis:

Decision by the executive, or similar leading body — NUPE, EETPU, NUM, UCATT, Boiler-makers, NATSOPA, NGA, Blastfurnace union.

By executive, in 'consultation' with branches, districts or regions — USDAW, UCW (Post Office), APEX, POEU, ASLEF, Agricultural workers, sheet metal workers, ISTC.

By executive after consultation with district officials — TGWU, GMWU.

By delegate conference — NUR.  
By LP conference delegates — AUEW, NUS, Textile workers.

By LP conference delegates, plus union officials — ASTMS.

By national conference, prior to last Labour Party conference — FBU, COHSE, Furniture workers.

Undecided — SOGAT.

## LCC going nowhere

By Hugh Richards, Battersea CLP

THE annual meeting of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee took place last Sunday.

Although the LCC's aim is to make the Labour Party a mass campaigning organisation, resolutions which proposed action now to defend the working class and kick out the Tories were hastily disposed of.

These proposals were counterposed to the need for working class commitment to the Alternative Economic Strategy, while we should all wait for the next Labour government to carry out our wishes.

The fact that each supporter of the AES had a different version was no deterrent; this was considered all the more reason to support the strategy.

A resolution from Socialist Challenge supporters calling for a jobs' charter to fight for the 35-hour week, support for occupations, and a woman's right to work was rejected as 'accommodating to the recession'.

A proposal for a joint trade union conference between the LCC, the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, Defend Our Unions, and Broad Left groups was rejected as mere posturing.

The conference also dismissed a request for the committee's local government conference to be called off in favour of building the recall Lambeth conference on Local Government in Crisis.

Both conferences are scheduled for the same day. No doubt militants will choose to go to the one which plans action.

In posturing in this way, the LCC is heading away from the class struggle towards being a small pressure group in the Labour Party, counterposing propaganda for its own abstract theories to fighting for today's jobs and services.



Photo: JUDE WOODWARD (Socialist Challenge)



Women steelworkers fighting for jobs

## Will South Wales smelt the steel axe?

**CONDEMNATION** of the carve-up by Ian MacGregor, boss of the steel corporation, has been swift in South Wales.

Speaking to a Llanwern Steel Action Group meeting on Saturday — the day after 5,000 redundancies in steel in Wales were announced — Ray Davies, an ISTC branch secretary, said: 'We have to fight back. What they have done to places like Scunthorpe and Ebbw Vale is a crime. Since 1973 Ebbw Vale has been slashed from 10,000 to 3,600 and now they're chopping another thousand jobs. As a delegate to the last ISTC special conference I have written to Bill Sirs demanding a recall conference.'

### Alliance

'The other steel unions should do the same. We have to press for national industrial action. The triple alliance must get on with the job of mobilising solidarity.' Davies added: 'The closure of Llanwern and Port Talbot were definite options considered by MacGregor. He only steered clear of this because we threatened a militant response. But let's make no mistake, the axe still hangs over us — this is only a stay of execution. Our job now is to build up the militancy inside the plant.'

### Hope

Marlene Tovey, another ISTC member of the Steel Action Group, backed Davies' position. 'MacGregor's promise that the plant will be safe if we are good boys and girls is a con. They said this to plants before and they still closed them down. The message we have to take into Llanwern is to support the 20,000 steelworkers threatened today, wherever they are. I'd like to see a national strike straight away. This is the only hope we have.'

Roger Tovey, a member of the national Union of Blastfurnacemen, summed up the decisions of the steel action meeting: 'We will immediately contact the other Welsh plants — Trostre, Velindre, Ebbw Vale, Shotton, and Port Talbot — and tell them that if they take industrial action by striking or occupying we will organise support in Llanwern.'

### Plan

'We will start by throwing a picket outside the plant. We'll also contact the miners to get definite assurances that they will come out with us if we take action. We must also make sure that the Wales TUC and the British TUC make this call for industrial action national. We will contact the Wales TUC to demand that it recalls a full conference to lay plans for this now.' The Llanwern action group is now taking these proposals to a meeting to be held jointly with the Port Talbot Action Group. Representatives from the other South Wales plants hit by MacGregor have been invited to attend, in order to plan for co-ordinated action.

The Llanwern and Port Talbot groups have little faith that the steel union leaders will organise this united action without a great deal of pressure. Union officers locally responded to the reprieve of Llanwern and Port Talbot by breathing a sigh of relief that their own backyard is safe.

### Closure

George Wright, general secretary of the Wales TUC, has been quiet about his call for civil disobedience now that there are only limited closures in Wales.

By Celia Pugh

The action groups reject this complacent acceptance of devastating redundancies and plant closures in other parts of Britain.

They will contact the Yorkshire area to discuss how to exert pressure on the national steel leaders, the TUC, and the newly-formed triple alliance to organise united action.

Similar pressure will need to be brought to bear on the Wales TUC if it is to be forced to lead resistance to redundancy. A new alliance of rank and file militants from the various Welsh industries was set up on 5 December to do just that.

### Force

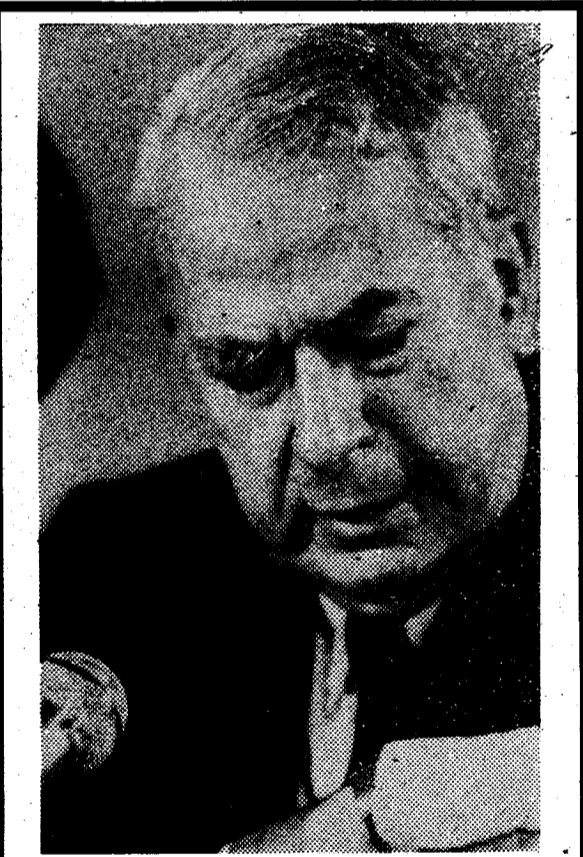
The South Wales Fightback Co-ordinating Group was established at a meeting of 40 representatives, including steelworkers, miners, seamen, rail, the public sector, and trades councils.

The group aims to co-ordinate the grassroots fightback against redundancies in South Wales, and through lobbies and demonstrations to force the official labour movement to co-ordinate industrial action across Wales.

### Mobilise

The need for such a campaign was evident when Thatcher visited the CBI in Cardiff on Thursday. A militant 2,000-strong picket greeted her with chants of: 'Maggie Thatcher, on your bike. What we need is a general strike.'

But the Wales TUC did nothing to mobilise the tens of thousands promised in the week leading up to the picket. Much grass roots activity still needs to be done before the Wales TUC and the triple alliance national union officials are obliged to act.



## Where Macgregor's axe will fall

IAN MacGregor's new closure plans will affect every steelmaking area in the country. No one is safe from the dole, and the latest 20,000 redundancies will hit areas that have already lost thousands of jobs as a result of the present economic crisis.

Since last March the BSC workforce has been reduced from 166,400 to 140,000. Forty-four thousand jobs have gone since September 1979.

With the latest corporate plan, the Normanby Park Works in Scunthorpe will close immediately with the loss of 2,500 jobs. A further 4,800 jobs will go through other immediate plant closures at Shotton, Ebbw Vale, Teeside, Sheffield and Rotherham.

The remaining redundancies will come through 'streamlining' and productivity deals. The corporation expects to chop another 5,000 jobs from the Port Talbot and Llanwern works in South Wales. The Welsh steel industry has already lost 24,000 jobs in the last three years.

Scotland will lose a further 1,000 jobs, and all other areas will face cutbacks of around ten per cent.

## Where British Steel's money goes

By Pat Kane

THE Steel Corporation claims that it will lose anything up to £600m in the 1980-81 financial year. Last year it lost £544m.

BSC is forcing through thousands of redundancies in order to balance its books. Secret BSC documents revealed by Socialist Challenge in July showed that the corporation is planning further cuts and closures.

What they also showed was that although BSC claims it loses hundreds of millions of pounds, the big banks and private industry are doing very nicely out of the crisis of the nationalised steel corporation.

Between 1975 and 1979, BSC's total losses were a massive £1,215.6m — but it paid £680.4m in interest payments over the same period. In the financial year 1978-79; the corporation paid a massive £319m in interest and other bank charges. These charges add £12 to the cost of every tonne of BSC steel, whereas the American company Bethlehem Steel pays only £2.6 per tonne.

The corporation was originally set up to provide cheap steel for private industry. Between 1967 and 1975, the corporation lost £750m through underpricing steel supplied to private industry.

## Sacrificed

BSC's problems stem from a combination of the economic crisis and stupid management decisions. In 1969 they dreamed up what was optimistically described as a 10-year plan. This was based on bulk steel production to be concentrated in five giant coastal sites. The plan envisaged that by 1980 annual production of liquid steel would be 35m tonnes.

The last year of boom for the world steel industry was 1974. World-wide production was at record levels and production actually exceeded capacity. The market was glutted with 492m tonnes of steel. The following year the market collapsed.

In 1975 steel production fell in Britain by 18 per cent, by 24 per cent in West Germany, and by 20 per cent in France.

BSC's plans had rusted away, and the corporation found itself with an industry which had the capacity to produce millions of tonnes of steel more than the market could absorb.

The corporation decided on a U-turn, and instead of expanding capacity as they had intended with the 'Ten Year Plan', its solution was to bring capacity into line with demand. The nationalised steel industry could not escape the laws of the market place.

The same problems affected the rest of the capitalist world's steel industry. The EEC's European Coal and Steel committee recommended rationalising the European industry. BSC volunteered to take the brunt of the cuts and offered to reduce its workforce by 40 per cent.

Since it was a nationalised industry, it could be sacrificed to save West Europe's private steel firms.

## Capacity

In 1978 BSC's capacity was 21.6m tonnes, it produced 17.5m tonnes, and only sold 13.5m tonnes. Bringing capacity into line with demand meant reducing the former to 15.2m tonnes in 1979.

Now MacGregor wants to reduce capacity to 14.4m tonnes. Each reduction results in thousands of redundancies. Ten years ago the corporation employed 229,940 workers. By the time MacGregor is finished the workforce will be under 100,000. It's time for the unions to say that's enough.

The steel union leaders have passively accepted plant closures, streamlining, and productivity deals that have resulted in thousands of redundancies. But the crisis of the British Steel Corporation continues unabated.

All the nationalised industries are under attack by the Tories and their supporters in the various boardrooms. Only the unity of miners, steel and railway workers can halt the deluge of redundancies in the nationalised sector and help to throw the Tories out of office.



By Des Tierney

**WITH record unemployment in Scotland, the Scottish Trades Union Congress decided to organise a convention against redundancies. Unfortunately it was more like a religious gathering than a conference to fight for jobs.**

The convention, held on Monday of last week, was attended by over 850 delegates from all sorts of organisations throughout Scotland.

The problem was that the one-third of delegates who were trade unionists were vastly outnumbered by priests, local authority officials, Chambers of Commerce representatives, and Tory Party officers.

Des Laughney, secretary of Edinburgh and District Trades Council, who was refused speaking rights, looked on hopelessly as he had to listen to a speaker from Edinburgh University Conservative Club lecturing us about the unemployment situation and the faults of the unions!

Three of the first five speakers called for an incomes policy, including Labour MP Bruce Millan, who has just been given responsibility for Scotland in the Shadow Cabinet. One of the Church ministers quaintly suggested that it might be time to reintroduce the Means Test. Another Christian suggested that those of us with jobs might give a week's wages to the unemployed.

The STUC regards these more bizarre

## Scottish Convention on Unemployment

# Talking to Tories doesn't save jobs

utterances as a small price to pay for the broad representation which it was able to get at the convention, and the agreement to set up a standing commission to put pressure on the government.

Perhaps the STUC also regarded it as a small price to pay for the support it received for its watered-down version of the Alternative Economic Strategy.

In his opening speech John Pollock, the STUC vice-chairperson, concentrated on the need to get the government to reduce interest rates, control overseas investment, and put import controls on a wide range of goods, from protective clothing to wood products.

These proposals were echoed by George Bolton, vice president of the Scottish NUM.

Import controls were needed to protect British workers against the unfair competition of other countries, he argued. Bolton did not explain what would happen if his strategy were adopted by trade unionists in other countries.

Through this smokescreen of economic jingoism, middle-class concern, and religious sentimentality, a small number of trade union delegates were able to portray the anger of the Scottish working class.

Marion Easdale of the Engineering Union's white-collar section made a powerful appeal to the trade unionists to defend a woman's right to work and to make sure that women are treated as allies in the fight for jobs and decent wages, rather than being seen

as the competitors for 'men's' jobs.

The spokesperson for the STUC Youth Advisory Committee warned that they were about to unleash the anger of Scotland's unemployed youth by marching from Glasgow to Perth to greet a Tory Party conference in the new year.

Clive Lewis of the steel union ISTC warned the Tories that the 'Triple Alliance' of steelworkers, miners and railway workers would prevent more redundancies by BSC.

If there were any highlights it was the speech of Sammy Gilmore, convenor of Govan shipyards. Sweeping aside the air of politeness which most delegates had assumed, Gilmore warned that his speech would be explicitly political.

He advised those present that there was only one force in society that could prevent redundancies and that was the trade unions, adding: 'If you don't like the way we fight, we don't need you.'

Gilmore went on to outline his solution. What we need is the same type of movement that the Polish workers have built. An ultimatum should be put to the Tories that unless they immediately institute programmes to employ the unemployed and to massively reduce the prices of basic goods and services there would be immediate and massive strike action.

It was a pity that by the time Sammy Gilmore was speaking many of the union delegates had fallen asleep with their feet and left the conference. Perhaps it was the most fitting comment that they could make on the STUC's pantomime.

## Dustcarts demo against the cuts

By Pat Kane

**London commuters received a shock on Wednesday of last week when 180 Lambeth council lorries and their crews protested against public service cuts.**

At 8.15 am they left Kennington depot in South London, heading for Vauxhall Cross. Astonished police watched as the lorries, decked out with anti-cuts posters, went out to County Hall, the headquarters of the Tory-controlled Greater London Council.

Peter Cole, transport union convenor for Lambeth, said: 'We wanted to show our concern over the threat to public services.'

The manual unions in Lambeth have decided on a week of strike action against cuts to begin on 2 February.



ing to defy the government on sales, were the left-wing councillors not willing to do the same.

He also pointed out that opposition to sales was both Labour Party policy and the decision of the 1 November anti-cuts conference, organised jointly by the unions and the councillors.

Berlin told the meeting: 'I don't fully understand how Labour Party democracy works, but surely there's something wrong in Lambeth.'

With Tory Environment Minister Michael Heseltine about to announce the new rate support grant, Ted Knight is getting ready to impose a supplementary rate rise for Lambeth.

The three Labour Party management committees within the borough will be asked to approve this rate rise at special meetings next week. Local union shop stewards view a rate rise as preferable to cuts in services and redundancies.

Ted Knight argues that Lambeth has taken a leading stand in refusing to make cuts in local services

to the public.

He says: 'The scale of cuts demanded by the government affect the needy in our community, but to axe millions of our expenditure, as Thatcher and Heseltine demand, would undermine our basic social, housing and environmental services — the very fabric of our welfare state which we were elected to protect and improve.'

### Rates

'If we have to raise a supplementary rate rise, the blame should be pinned where it truly belongs, at the door of Thatcher and Heseltine.'

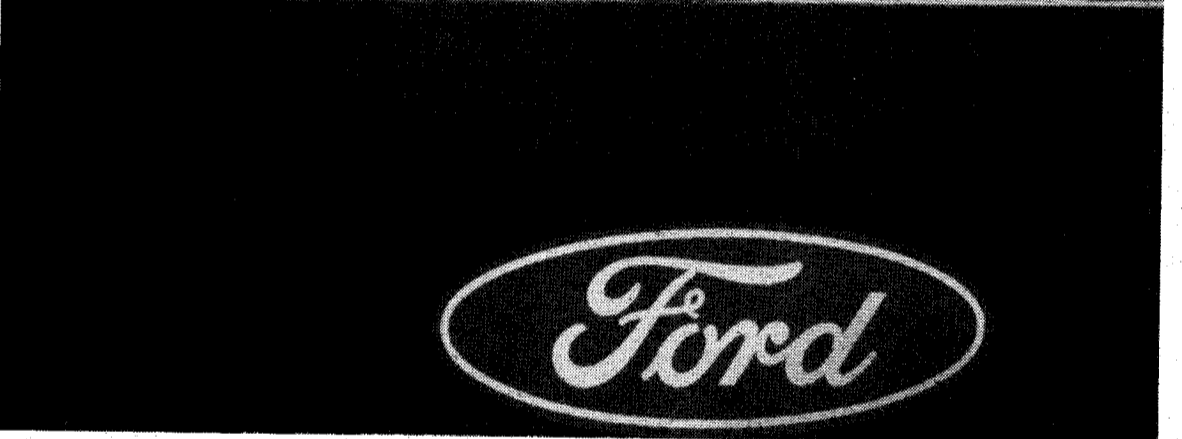
This attitude may be acceptable in wealthy areas like Mayfair or Belgravia, but in Lambeth it will be thousands of working class people who will have to bear the brunt of any supplementary rate rises.

Ted Knight is not as determined as the local trade unionists to fight against cuts. His inactivity is bound to reflect on the attendance at the 17 January conference.

### Unions

But Lambeth unions are organising against cuts. They are discussing holding a national demonstration as part of their week of action in February. One of the main aims of the conference has to be to demand that Ted Knight and other Labour councils refuse to implement Tory cuts, either through reductions in services or increases in rates.

The conference will be an ideal opportunity to support public sector workers throughout the country who are opposing cuts, and to demand that labour councillors also take a stand in the fight to save the welfare state from the Tory axe.



# Ford workers seek international links

**TWO important meetings aimed at strengthening the international unity of almost half a million Ford workers around the world have recently been held.**

The International Metalworkers Federation Ford World Auto Council met in Valencia, Spain, in mid-November. The unofficial European Ford Workers Combine met in Langley earlier this month.

Both meetings were timely. Ford is in deep crisis. In the third quarter of 1980 it lost £248m in the United States alone, where its projected losses for the year run at £2bn.

The company's response is the same everywhere: cut-backs and closures accompanied by the rapid introduction of new technology and further massive redundancies. With its ability to shift production on a global scale, international labour solidarity is the only effective barrier to Ford management's plans.

The two meetings produced quite different results. The IMF Conference was largely a bureaucrats' beanfeast. Most of those present were not Ford workers but union officials.

Of the three lay delegates in the 11-strong British delegation, one was

By Mick Drake

overtime in the event of a strike in Britain or Australia — provided such overtime was 'intended to help break the strike'. Presumably if it 'unintentionally' has that effect, it's okay.

### Results

The European Ford Workers Combine (EFWC) was a more modest meeting with better results. This informal grouping is supported by the union leaderships in Ford plants in Holland, Denmark, and Portugal; by the Communist-led unions in the French and Spanish plants; and shop floor militants in Britain and West Germany.

It decided that the number one priority in the 1981 wage contracts would be the fight for the reduction in the working week to combat redundancy and the loss of jobs caused by robotisation.

Ford is already trying to renege on the 1979 British wage agreement, which should have given reduced

working time from November of this year. Some Ford plants presently work less than 40 hours — 38 hours 20 minutes a week in Belgium, a 37½-hour week in plants where a three shift system operates — so the critical struggle is for the 35-hour week.

In opposition to nationally-based campaigns for import controls, the EFWC re-affirmed its policy of fighting for no transfer of work between plants without the agreement of the unions in the plant losing the work.

### Export

To try and export unemployment through import controls — even if they had that effect — would only divide Ford workers in the face of the company's attack.

The EFWC will also be taking up the selective representation of Ford unions at the IMF conference and fighting for the European Metalworkers Federation to organise an official international conference on a non-exclusive basis and with shopfloor delegates from the plants.

## Local Government in Crisis Conference

Central Hall, Westminster

Saturday 17 January

Open to all labour movement organisations

Credentials from: Steering Committee, Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton Hill, Brixton, London SW2

### Sales

Simon Berlin, the NALGO housing convenor, asked a packed meeting organised by the local Labour Party rank and file group last Thursday why, if his own members were will-



# Catholic church backs Polish regime

By Davy Jones

The Polish Catholic Church has issued a strong statement in support of the Polish authorities. After a two day meeting of the Polish episcopate, presided over by Cardinal Wyszynski, the Church called for an end to acitons 'which might expose the homeland to the danger of losing independence and statehood.'

Attacking the KOR (Social Self-Defence Committee) and other opposition groups Church spokesperson Father Orszulik added, 'We have in mind mainly those noisy and irresponsible statements which have been made against our eastern neighbour.'

## Showdown

Just as it preached 'moderation' to the workers in 1970, the Catholic Church has shown that it will back the regime against the workers in any decisive showdown.

It gives partial support for the oppositionists and the indepen-

dent unions to try and retain its influence over the workers as well as to win greater freedom for the Church itself.

## Banning

But the workers' leadership in Solidarity has not been scared off. The national meeting of Solidarity on 11 December called for the creation of a defence committee for political prisoners.

The meeting also protested the banning of the commercial distribution of the film 'Workers 80', which was produced by the official Polish TV on this year's August events.



The Catholic Church leaders preach moderation

Elsewhere protests against past repression are mounting. At Warsaw Univeristy a meeting was held on 13 December to discuss the student rebellion of 1968 and its suppression by the head of security at the time,

Mieczyslaw Moczar, recently brought back to the Communist Party political bureau.

And as we go to press enormous crowds are expected at Gdansk for the demonstration commemorating those killed

in the 1970 shipyard strikes. The Polish workers have a long memory. Demands for the punishment for those responsible for past repression are certain to feature prominently at the demonstration.

## Polish workers should watch out for this one

GENERAL Mieczyslaw Moczar has been voted back into the central leadership of the Polish Communist Party (PUWP). Moczar is notorious for his last period of power from 1964 to 1971 as Minister of the Interior under Gomulka.

During that period he was chiefly responsible for the anti-Semitic campaigns of 1967-8 that led to a widespread purge of almost all remaining Jews from public life. In 1968, as secretary to the party central committee with responsibility for the police and the army, he was behind the clampdown on the student revolt.

He was dropped from the political bureau in 1971 and has spent the last ten years in relative political oblivion. Ultra-nationalistic he has the support of many war partisans from his role in the underground resistance.

It is widely believed that he has been restored to prominence now as Kania's close advisor — a strongman to deal with the current crisis.

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'Dissidents Defend Themselves'

## How the Soviet Union crushed the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia 1968

By Joe Greenwood

THE development of the Polish crisis, with the growing menace of a Soviet invasion, has naturally reawakened interest in the fate of the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia 1968.

In January 1968 when Alexander Dubcek took over as party secretary from the old-style Stalinist Novotny, the illusion was still rife on the European Left that 'de-Stalinisation' could reform away the basic contradictions of the East European regimes.

wilderness. Dubcek and other leaders such as Josef Smrkovsky began to talk of 'socialism with a human face' and an end to the use of repression in political life.

The tight press censorship was relaxed, and Czechoslovak newspapers



Czech workers' resistance to the Soviet tanks

and was immediately denounced by Soviet propaganda as 'counter-revolutionary'. The manifesto proposed democratisation from below rather than the timid goals and bureaucratic

methods of the Action Programme.

At the same time there was unofficial talk of independent political parties; the appearance of semi-political groups like the club

of ex-political prisoners; and revelations in the press about the past role of the Soviet Union in Czechoslovakia. All these developments convinced Moscow that the time had come to put an end to the ex-

periment.

Indeed the decision to invade had already been taken when Brezhnev was photographed hugging Dubcek at the Bratislava 'peace' meeting in early August.

For the next three weeks Dubcek cut a very sorry figure. He denounced the '2,000 word manifesto' and applied all his braking power to the independent movement for democracy. But he still could not fully placate Moscow through a turn to repression, without totally discrediting himself and giving up all hope of a solution to the social crisis.

When the Soviet invasion came on the night of 20 August, a stunned Dubcek could only wait to be taken away. After much soul-searching and being subjected to the crudest forms of pressure by his Soviet kidnapers, he finally signed the 'Moscow Agreement' on 26 August, thereby accepting that the Kremlin should dictate the future course of events in his country.

## Disowned

It was left to the party activists, drawing on mass popular support, to organise the clandestine Fourteenth Party Congress which the invasion was designed to prevent. In the following months these same activists, together with non-party students, workers and intellectuals, organised the myriad forms of resistance to the occupying power.

In the end however they were disowned and deserted by the party leadership at the most crucial points. When Husak's era of 'normalisation' began in April 1969, the lack of leadership in previous months left the movement powerless to resist Dubcek's dismissal and the reversal of the remaining gains of the Prague Spring.

Technically the Kremlin's operation in Czechoslovakia was a re-sounding success. But it resulted in its prestige in the international labour movement sinking to an all-time low, and the Western Communist parties entered a period of crisis from which they have still not emerged.

## Our History

Dubcek himself genuinely believed that his 'enlightened' wing of the apparatus could win mass support and resolve the economic crisis — all without bringing into question the 'leading role' (ie. the political monopoly) of the Communist Party.

The Kremlin bureaucrats, tired of Novotny's impotence and dead-end posturing, could see no immediate alternative to cautiously backing Dubcek.

In April 1968, after three months of resisting pressure from the Novotnyites on the one hand and the masses on the other, the Dubcek leadership published its famous Action Programme. This programme threatened to shake up the whole party apparatus.

Novotny was finally removed from his last post as President of the Republic and went into the political

were overnight filled with discussion of the crimes of the past.

The broadest layers of society became united in their opposition to the old regime and increasingly to those elements such as the secret police which were its clearest representatives. Above all fear vanished as a basic fact of everyday life.

The Action Programme undoubtedly played a role in the spreading of this new climate. It was not only directed against Novotny. It was also an attempt to co-opt the movement for democracy based among intellectuals and a growing number of rank-and-file and middle leadership bodies of the Communist Party, like the Prague City Committee.

In June the 2,000 word manifesto was published reflecting these pressures

## Appeal for Peter Uhl and Vaclav Havel

December 1980 is the first anniversary of the court appeal lodged by the main activists of VONS (the Czech League of Human Rights). Several human rights militants and Charter '77 activists are currently serving heavy sentences in Czechoslovakia: some up to five years like Peter Uhl, Vaclav Havel, Vaclav Benda, Jiri Dienstbier and Otta Bednarova.

They are suffering in scandalous prison conditions: Peter Uhl can only be visited once every six months by his wife;

Vaclav Havel is not allowed to write; Jaroslav Sabata is very ill; as for Otta Bednarova she had to be transferred to hospital in view of her alarming physical state.

Their lawyer Danisz remains excluded from legal practice in Prague. Yet all of them have only been fighting for their rights recognised by the Czech constitution and by international agreements ratified by the Czech authorities, which no doubt Czech leader Husak will sign at the Madrid conference.

Because our conception of

socialism implies an indivisible struggle for democratic liberties in those countries with dictatorial regimes in the East as well as the West, in the name of those ideals of liberty and democratic socialism we demand the release of all the political prisoners in Czechoslovakia.

Signatories include: Vladimir Borsov, Jean Lacouture, Yves Montand, Gilles Martinet, Ernest Mandel, Laurent Schwartz, Charles Tillon, Alain Touraine, Max Gallo.

Paris, Dec 1980





## US Government tries to deport socialist

THE United States government is trying to deport a socialist coal miner simply because of her membership of the US Socialist Workers Party. Marian Bustin, aged 26, has lived in the United States since 1977. She works at a coal mine at Philippi, West Virginia.

Marian was born in Scotland and became active in socialist politics in Glasgow. Coal mining in the US is not an all-male job — but inside the mines there is no job equality.

Marian says: 'I am a belt cleaner. Most of my

time on the job is spent shovelling coal and spreading rock dust. Many women do this kind of job — it's sort of the lowest rung on the ladder. You aren't cutting the coal or working any machinery; your tools are a shovel and a rock dust

bag.' Marian is active in the United Mine Workers Union. Because of her trade union and socialist activity she is now threatened with deportation, after a six year investigation by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service and the FBI.

The extent of the investigation mounted against Marian became clear after the FBI handed over files to the SWP's lawyers as a result of the suit that the organisation is pursuing against the

FBI. These files revealed that Bustin has been the subject of FBI investiga-

tion since 1974 when she attended SWP meetings on a visit to the United States.

## Evidence

Most disturbing, however, is the revelation that much of the evidence of Bustin's political activities comes from the United States embassy in London. The fact that the FBI has on call information about political activists in Britain opens up two possibilities.

Either the American Embassy receives information from the Special Branch or another section of the political police

in Britain; or the American security services are active in obtaining political intelligence in Britain.

It is even conceivable that both processes are taking place. In any case it is a matter of deep concern for all sections of the labour movement.

Socialist Challenge will be keeping its readers informed about the progress of the Marian Bustin case. But we shall also be attempting to find out how the American embassy received its information about Marian and asking British miners to give their support to Marian's struggle.

The Carter administration has gradually increased US political, diplomatic, economic and military involvement in support of the civilian-military coalition in El Salvador.

This involvement is extensive and growing. The resources invested in this effort exceed those allocated to any other hemispheric crisis since 1965.

Resource allocation and public statements have identified our strategic interests in Central America and the Caribbean with the fate of a relatively weak, unpopular and internationally isolated regime.

## Collapse

Various government agencies have taken preparatory steps to intervene militarily in El Salvador. Policy makers appear to have concluded that such a move could succeed in preventing the collapse of the current regime.

Current policy consistently underestimates the domestic legitimacy and international support enjoyed by the opposition FDR/DRU coalition.

Furthermore, policy makers fail to recognise the scope of military capabilities of opposition guerrilla forces and ignore the logistical value and potential impact of their support in neighbouring countries.

Contingency scenarios for US military deployment tend to underestimate troop requirements, estimates of casualty rates, and the time and geographic scope of required engagement. Politico-military analysts downplay the potential for regionalisation of armed conflict in the isthmus.

In particular they underestimate the implications of the Nicaraguan and Cuban commitment to provide military support to Salvadoran guerrilla forces in the event of continued escalation of US involvement.

Our actions and our words have narrowed down our policy options to a single path of gradual escalation of direct military involvement in a region vital to our national interests and within a political context that gives the use of force few chances to achieve a satisfactory outcome.

## Present US activities in El Salvador

**Strengthening counter-insurgency capabilities of armed forces through:**

\*Increased training for middle and low ranking officers.

\*Improving military infrastructures for more effective urban and rural combat communications and for rapid troop deployment.

# Will El Salvador be the next Vietnam?

A FORTNIGHT ago the media in the United States revealed the existence of a 'dissent paper' on El Salvador, written by members of the State Department and other government agencies.

The dissidents argued that the present drift of United States policy towards El Salvador will lead to military intervention, and that a new, more conciliatory course is necessary.

In presenting these views the authors of the document make a full exposé of the role of the United States in El Salvador — that of covert material and moral support for the regime.



\*Setting up adequate supply lines and stockpiling material in cooperation with regional and extra-hemispheric allies.

\*Providing strategic and tactical command advisory assistance.

\*Increasing cohesion and coordination among various command structures within Salvadoran armed forces.

\*Seeking to bring under unified command the paramilitary units operating in the country.

\*Establishing and/or improving communications and cooperation among armed forces and paramilitary organizations in Guatemala,

El Salvador and Honduras.

**Updating detailed contingency plans for US alternative responses to deterioration of conditions in the region to include:**

\*Political and diplomatic initiatives to be taken in the event that military engagement of US forces is required to preserve the current regime.

\*Operational plans for multilateral and unilateral deployment of military forces in El Salvador and Guatemala.

\*Cost, casualty and time estimates under favourable

and unfavourable conflict scenarios.

They maintain that direct military intervention by the United States would cause immense political problems and would probably not be supported by public opinion in the US: 'An October 1980 poll found that 60 per cent of all males and 68 per cent of females interviewed opposed the use of military force in developing countries.'

The election of Ronald Reagan makes it unlikely that the 'moderate' course advocated in this document will actually be adopted. Nonetheless it gives a fascinating insight into just what the United States is up to. The excerpts published here are from the American Trotskyist paper, The Militant.



and unfavourable conflict scenarios.

\*Evaluation of readiness status and recommendations on preparatory exercises to be undertaken.

\*Assessment of the need and preparation of contingency plans for actions intended to disrupt support and supply lines of Salvadoran guerrilla forces in Cuba and Nicaragua.

This partial list of activities implies an allocation of bureaucratic and financial resources exceeding those made to any other hemispheric crisis since 1965. No such allocation could have taken place without a major high level decision in the administration.

## Assessment

We consider these activities and the policies they imply to be dangerously misguided. Current policy, as we interpret it, is based on inaccurate intelligence, and on the suppression within various bureaucracies of verified contradicting information.

## El Salvador's domestic situation

\*The governing Junta and the armed forces have failed to rally significant support for their reform and counter-insurgency programs.

\*The land redistribution

effort has failed to neutralise the peasant population and has not succeeded in isolating the guerrilla forces.

\*The urban middle class is divided among those who have already chosen to side with the FDR opposition, those seeking to leave the country and those remaining neutral for the time being. Only a small fraction of this sector can be said to be committed to the survival of the current regime.

\*The documented expansion of military capabilities of the opposition forces, including their ability to recruit and organize large contingents of displaced peasants, and to cause heavy casualties among government forces, makes it highly unlikely that a short term military defeat of the guerrilla forces might be achieved.

\*Neither the government nor the armed forces have been able to demonstrate their will or ability to avoid indiscriminate repression of civilian personnel thus contributing to the rapid deterioration of their image among the population and internationally.

We believe that this support would not survive the introduction of US troops in the region. For example, an October 1980 poll found that 60 per cent of all males and 68 per cent of females interviewed opposed the use of US military force in trouble spots in developing countries.

## Our proposals

### Signal Our Willingness to Abandon the Confrontational Track

Salvadoran and international public opinion perceive the US as being committed to a military solution in Central America. We must signal our willingness to abandon this course of action under certain conditions, without necessarily closing that option. To do so we must consider:

1) Taking actions which will clearly separate us from those sectors in and out of the armed forces responsible for gross excesses against the population. The individuals involved have been identified by the FDR/DRU and by our own intelligence services.

2) Taking actions that indicate our willingness to reduce the level of military support we are providing to the armed forces, for example by reducing or interrupting our training program and supply flows.

3) Condemning the intervention plans of Guatemalan military and paramilitary forces, indicating our opposition to Honduran support for hostile actions against Nicaragua.

4) Expressing privately and publicly our concern regarding Southern Cone countries' involvement in El Salvador, and urge all our allies, including Israel, to act with caution in the region.



# Stand up and be counted

By Phil Flynn,  
Deputy General Secretary, Local  
Government and Public Services  
Union (Ireland)

AS WE approach the festive season, time is running out for the hunger strikers. Soon, they will suffer irreversible damage to their health. Shortly after, they will be dead.

After years of protest, they confronted the following range of options — win recognition of their status, waste and wither away, or die with dignity. They could not and can never accept the criminalisation of the national struggle and of the national ideal.

They know that in every age and every generation for more than three centuries past not one single generation of Irish prisoners has consented to wear the convict uniform: that in every generation, the struggle for political status has been fought and won — sometimes at the cost of life itself.

The British callous intransigence is matched only by their dishonesty and expediency.

## Justification

They say that there is a question of principle involved in refusing the five demands of the prisoners. But they do not explain how this squares up with the existence of special status for those sentenced before 1976 or the justification for its arbitrary removal.

The only logical answer is the base motive of vengeance coupled, perhaps, with a belief that the resistance movement was on the point of defeat.

By the letter of their own special anti-democratic legislation, they stand exposed and indicted. Both the Emergency Powers Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act include, at the end of a list of 'scheduled offences' the words 'or any other carried out with political motivation'. So much for principle.

Who would deny that it is imperialism that has produced the Blanketmen, their comrades in Armagh, that they are the

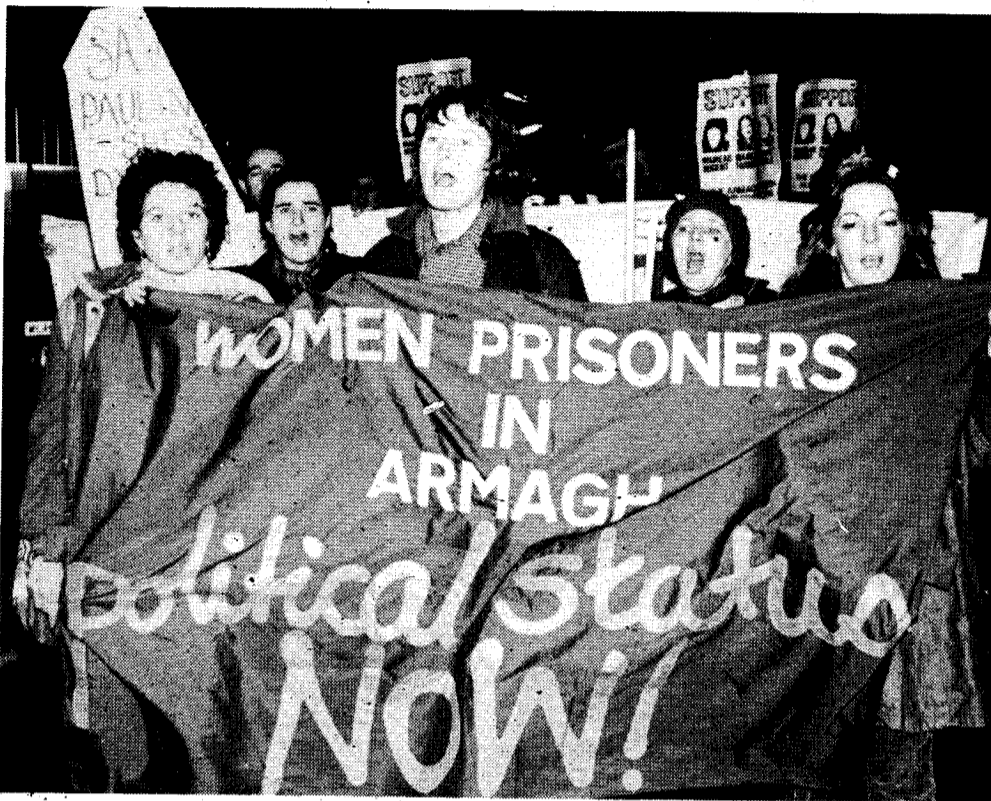


Photo: JOANNE O'BRIEN (Socialist Challenge)

Demonstrators march last Thursday to Thatcher's house in Chelsea, called by the Armagh Co-ordinating Committee.

direct result and the victims of imperialism.

Yet, from the Irish labour movement leadership, with a few honourable exceptions, come a deafening and disgraceful silence. They engage in cop-outs such as 'to get involved would be to condone the activities of those in the H Blocks'.

They ignore the threat posed to the working class as a whole by the draconian legislation under which those in question were arrested, tried and convicted. They ignore that over 80 per cent were convicted on the basis of confessions, many of them oral.

In many cases they also ignore or

distort democratic decisions by the rank and file expressing concern or demanding action on the H Blocks. The more particularly for the trade union movement, nothing can justify silence, indifference or inactivity on the ill-treatment of prisoners and the deprivation of human dignity.

To the rank and file, we say — rise up, rebel. Do not allow opportunist and pro-establishment leadership to speak for you either by their utterances or their silence. Speak out, push the situation as far as you can in your branch, factory or office. Stand up and be counted.

Use your muscle, your power, your blood to save the lives of fellow workers, fellow trade unionists and fellow Irish men and women. It is your union and your movement.

To the British, we say: You fools! You have learned nothing from centuries of occupation. You have not learned the most obvious lesson of Irish history — that the kind of treatment being dished out to the prisoners, while inflicting hardship, serves only to stiffen and strengthen resistance.

In the tradition of earlier generations, it should be clear that the men of the H Blocks and the women of Armagh cannot be broken even to the point of making the supreme sacrifice.

## Resistance

The hunger strikers do not want to die but they expect to die. They expect no quarter, no justice, no humanity from the British. At this stage, they can do little more than live out their lonely protest. But this is not true of us on the outside. There is much that we can do; much that we must do. We must re-double our efforts, strengthen our determination, stiffen our resistance.

When we weaken or tire, we must take inspiration from the courage and unbending faith of the prisoners, because — make no mistake — this confrontation represents the greatest challenge to the national movement in 60 years. But, if it does, it also presents a great opportunity, because a victory would not only save courageous and faithful lives but also represent a giant step towards the completion of the national struggle.

Let us raise our fist in angry warning notice to the British. If any of the strikers die, you will be overwhelmed by the anger of the Irish people, by the anger of the growing international support in solidarity with the justice of their cause.

Let us raise our fist also in salute to the heroism of the hunger strikers.

(This article is an edited version of a speech made by Phil Flynn at a recent demonstration in Dublin.)

## Why a Tory deal on Ireland cannot be ruled out

ENOCH POWELL, the Ulster Unionist MP for Down, South, ended an article in Monday's *Guardian* with the assessment:

'The hunger strikers won; the Irish Republic won, Charles Haughey won.'

Powell was referring to the Anglo-Irish summit of the previous week when Irish premier Charlie Haughey met Margaret Thatcher, Lord Carrington, Humphrey Atkins and Geoffrey Howe.

Powell's assessment of the talks has been echoed by many on the Loyalist side. It has been reinforced by Haughey, who described the meeting as 'historic' and added:

'The meeting in Dublin Castle was primarily concerned with the relationship between the two islands of Ireland and Great Britain. I believe that it represented a major step forward in that long and tangled relationship.'

'I do not conceal my hope that through the development of that relationship a solution to the problem of Northern Ireland will eventually come about.'

## Summit

The practical outcome of the summit also suggests that something of

significance did occur.

The joint communiqué issued after the talks reported the commissioning of a series of joint Irish/British studies, 'covering a range of issues, including possible new institutional structures, citizenship rights, security matters, economic co-operation and measures to encourage mutual understanding.'

## Right

By agreeing to these studies, Margaret Thatcher made a decided U-turn. Previously the Tories have insisted that the south of Ireland has no right to have any say in what happens in the north.

As recently as August, Humphrey Atkins maintained: 'The South has as keen an interest (in the north of Ireland) as anybody outside the United Kingdom. We understand that, but it is our responsibility and nobody else's.'



Haughey and Thatcher discussing — but what?

The joint studies, especially those covering 'institutional structures', mean that Thatcher has acknowledged that the south does indeed have the 'responsibility' to have a say in what solution is put forward for the north of Ireland.

This change was most pointedly illustrated by the presence at the Dublin summit of Lord Carrington. As Foreign Secretary, Carrington represents a British Foreign Office which, for the last couple of years, has let it be known that it is sick and tired of the whole north of Ireland situation.

The reason for this impatience is illustrated by the current hunger strike. It seems likely that the treatment of the prisoners in

Long Kesh and Armagh will be debated at the European Parliament, and even at the United Nations.

The raising, in these international forums, of British repression in Ireland does Britain no good at all. The Foreign Office, as the standard bearer for Britain throughout the world, realises this and has canvassed for ending the embarrassment.

## Consider

The failure of the latest British government initiative — the so-called Atkins' plan — has given strength to the Foreign Office cause, and it appears that Thatcher has at least agreed to consider an option

which would, in the long term, throw into question the constitutional position of the north of Ireland.

Thatcher has yet to work out how to sell such an option to the Loyalists, and it is for this reason that she has refused a debate on the summit in the House of Commons.

Leaving the reaction of the Loyalists aside, Britain would be quite happy to politically withdraw from the north of Ireland provided that whatever took its place would bring some stability to the north and would be friendly to British interests.

In the last ten years British governments have been unable to secure within the north of Ireland such a dependable or credible pup-

pet. The flop of the Atkins' plan is the latest example of this, although the greatest pressure Britain continues to face is the strength of the anti-imperialist resistance in the north.

Such is the context in which it seems possible that Thatcher has decided to consider the more radical option of seeking a solution which would directly involve the south of Ireland and Charlie Haughey in particular.

## Security

Haughey has proved co-operative with Britain on cross-border 'security'. His economic policies are not dissimilar to Thatcher's, and he has a Republican reputation which can give

him at least some authority in helping to de-mobilise the northern resistance.

This does not mean that Thatcher has decided to end the British presence in Ireland; only that she is willing to explore an option by which Britain will have less direct political control in the north.

In this sense Haughey's description of the Dublin summit as 'historic', while an exaggeration, could contain an element of truth.

On the other hand should the hunger strikers die, and the Irish people display their anger with a militancy not seen in that country for years, then the Dublin summit may prove, after all, to be one more irrelevant effort to solve Ireland's British problem.



# Xmas — 'a crescendo of bad faith and de

FROM earliest childhood we know the stereotypes of Christmas — gifts, turkey and pudding, decorations, snow, festivity and drink. Yet the cultural forms now surrounding Christmas are the result of thousands of years of accumulation of myth and symbol.

As each epoch bequeathes its symbols to the next the meaning is transformed and shaped by the new social systems which adopt them.

The very universality and magnitude of Christmas makes it the major communal festival of late-capitalist society. But it is also a yearly reminder of the possibility of overthrowing the society we have and replacing it with another. Herein, argues FRED HALLIDAY, lies the dialectic of Christmas.

All kinds of pagan, Roman, Persian, Jewish, Celtic, Teutonic and Christian elements have been mixed up to produce the festival as we now know it. Although today we are oppressed by the weight of Christmas as fixed tradition, its form is determined by a long historical and social evolution.

Yet its very origins are based on myth and falsehood. Christmas is alleged to be a Christian festival, celebrating the birth of Christ, the son of God, on 25 December in the year 0.

The historical Christ was not born in December, but in June or July; he was not born in the year 0 but just before, or just after; and Christmas is a pagan festival used by early Christians as a means of diverting pagan loyalties into following the new religion.

The Romans celebrated the period 17-24 December, as the Saturnalia, an occasion for feasting, dancing and dressing up. In the north, including Britain, there was a more sombre festival of Yule when fertility rights for the coming year were celebrated. Part of this consisted in the making of special rich foods — the origin of the modern turkey and plum pudding.



In ancient Persia, the sun-worshippers celebrated the feast as that of the rebirth of the sun, invincible and a saviour.

Although Christianity itself is obviously the product of previous religions of the ancient world, the early Christians did not celebrate Christmas as a major festival until the fourth century.

At that time two oriental religions, Christianity and Mithraism — a sun-worshipping cult — were competing for the following of the suppressed classes and peoples of the decaying Roman empire. The leaders of Christianity decided therefore to adopt the pagan date and to celebrate it as the birth of Christ and an occasion of rejoicing, hoping thereby to win followers of Mithraism and Roman religion.

Instead of the celebration of Saturn or of the birth of the sun as saviour, they worshipped Christ as saviour.

This adoption of pagan symbols for Christian purposes was common. The halo was also taken straight from Mithraism as a symbol — the sun — of divinity. The crib was borrowed from the cult of Adonis, also alleged to have been born in a stable.

Since this early tactical move in the politics of conversion, Christmas has picked up all sorts of other cultural symbols, and has served different functions in the various societies in which it has flourished.

The Jewish festival of



lights, Hanukkah, led to the practice of putting up coloured lights at Christmastime — although the fact that it is often dark at that time of year must also have helped.

Another addition came from the feast of St Nicholas, celebrated on 6 December. St Nicholas was an early Christian bishop, patron of scholars, sailors and children — as well as of Czarist Russia. His patronage of children and connection with giving gifts are derived from two grossly ideological legends about him.

According to one, some little rich boys were killed by a wicked butcher who chopped them up and pickled them. St Nicholas stuck them together again and returned them to their parents alive and well.

Another story concerns a merchant who was suddenly thrown into poverty and was going to sell off his daughters as prostitutes, when along came St Nicholas secretly and gave them the dowries they needed to marry according to their position.

The latent sexual and class content of these legends is obvious. However, in the Anglo-Saxon world at least, the giving of presents was transferred

from 6 December to Christmas Day, while St Nicholas himself was banalised and secularised into Santa Claus — an American corruption of his name in Dutch.

Christmas as we now know it took shape in the 18th and 19th centuries. The 18th century coaches and houses on cards reflect its origins; the growth of cards with the expansion of the cheap post in the 1860s, and the popularisation of the Christmas tree by Prince Albert are later additions.

What we now have is this complex of myths and symbols, but their varied origins are subordinate to the function, which Christianity serves for the preservation of late-capitalist society. It is not merely cultural inertia or human nostalgia that enables Christmas to be celebrated each year — but the inner dynamic of capitalist society itself.

First of all Christmas serves to reinforce certain crucial ideological ties in capitalist society. The two central figures of feudal society — monarch and Pope — are both given special billing at Christmas-

time, this time in the service of capitalist mystification.

Their messages stress the unity of Church and Empire. Christmas may be experienced as a predominantly secular occasion but religious ideology is trumpeted through the radio and TV programmes, carols and culture of the period. And the once yearly visits to church to witness the spectacle serve to blunt materialist consciousness in young and old.

The boosting of the monarchy is also an intrinsic part of Christmas. The myth of 'Christ the King' is found in a plethora of carols and cards, and there is always Good King Wenceslas, tossing crumbs to the Bohemian peasantry.

The temporary putting aside of class and social tensions in the Wenceslas carol is found in all kinds of festivals of this period. In ancient Rome slaves were temporarily freed during the Saturnalia; landlords in Russia would give their serfs presents at Christmas-time; and we find its modern-drunken embodiment in the office party and the factory dance.



# endo ceit'



More generally Christmas is characterised by the ideology of 'peace on earth' and 'goodwill to men'. However genuine and deep these aspirations are they also serve to displace the need for change onto an abstract wish, onto a spiritual saviour. They obscure the need for conflict if peace and goodwill are to be possible. A universal awareness of crisis is dissolved into passive fatalism, and high idiocy. At the same time as the public structures of mystification are reinforced, the private structure of the family is strengthened. However antagonistic the relations of parents and children, however different the differences between them, Christmas is a time to get them. The violence of familial relations is drowned in a mire of nostalgia and eternal cooking. The Christmas dinner witnesses a pseudo of bad faith and is forced on the individual by family pressure and guilt at violation of the tradition. This is helped by the white return to childhood relations in this period — a fantasisation that serves to

protect the myths of the family, and more generally prevents the individual from winking out the liberation potential of Christmas.

While a false celebration of people's salvation takes place round the spiritual altar of the Church, a real celebration of our repression is found at the material altar of the family — the Christmas dinner-table. As we reach out to a non-existent spiritual liberator, we are stabbed in the back by the knife that carves the family turkey.

A second major function of Christmas is quite simple: *it is good business*. The first signs of approaching Christmas are the tinsel and decorations in shops. The period before Christmas is colloquially measured in the idiom of the market as 'x shopping days before Christmas'.

An eighth of all retail trade is done in December. By mid-November the media are full of advertisements urging people to buy their wares.

Instead of gift-giving being a spontaneous act it is surrounded by capitalist pressure; the value of gifts is often measured by how much they cost; and the up-tight nature of relations between parents and

child is perhaps reflected in the fact that they can only give at one institutionalised period, and even then they often have to divert the giving through a mystical Santa Claus.

The third aspect of Christmas reflects the repressive channelling of the liberating emotions and forces in society.

Christmas has inspired some of the greatest works of Western music and painting, and no one can deny that Christmas expresses the deepest aspirations of suffering men and women — a longing for peace, happiness, good food, social equality and free giving of commodities.

In the deepest winter and at the end of the year all these forces are annually released. The expression of these liberating emotions is however controlled by social ritual as it has been since pre-historic times. Far from finding their fulfilment in a liberated society they are diverted to reinforce the structures of oppression.

The function of myth is to

The critical, creative and aesthetic faculties are assaulted by the awful level of Christmas decorations, cards and other paraphernalia; yet one is blackmailed into submission by the very "traditionality" of it.

The lights across Regent Street sum this up — linking Soho to Mayfair: instead of suggesting the end of the class relations on which the shops of Central London are based, these decorations attempt to adorn them.

The overconsumption and frenzied drunkenness of Christmas also serve to divert critical awareness of what is involved. The social implications are reinforced by the fact that Christmas is experienced in an atomised and enclosed manner. Everyone is at their family lunch. The streets are never so empty as on Christmas Day.

The real social unity of the nation and its common acceptance of this extraordinary ideological festival are concealed; the only unity is via TV.



The Church, the Queen and Billy Smart's Circus are the focuses of external attention. While all are socially unified in this observance of Christmas, its conscious unity is projected onto the most absurd actors of late-capitalism — gods, queens and clowns.

Here lies the dialectical significance of Christmas. Jesus Christ was once seen as a militant saviour. Christianity was once a revolutionary ideology, but has long been a tool of oppression and myth, and except in the case of revolutionary priests in Latin America it serves to reinforce capitalist society.

The desire for happiness is marshalled to defend the instruments of misery and the ideological symbols of myth are carefully used to drown the critical and liberating content of the Christmas festival.

To smash the institutionalisation of happiness is to release men and women from myth, from the need to displace salvation onto gods or charity, and to reign our hopes on conscious historical action.

Within the apparently innocuous shell of Christmas is found both oppression and the longing for liberation and revolution. The Puritans banned it; the Cubans postponed it; we can transcend it.

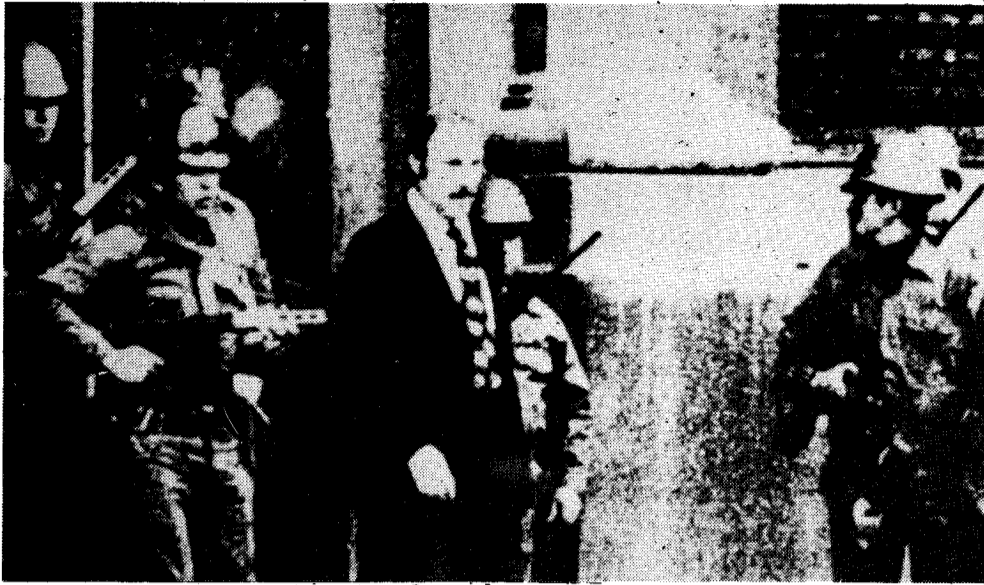
This involves the release of the revolutionary potential now marshalled by late-capitalist forms. In the meantime, we can, of course, enjoy it.

provide diverting solutions to real problems, and the function of ritual is to provide a controlled way in which human emotions can be resolved without destroying the structures against which they are reacting.

The liberation of Christmas is controlled by the very institutionalisation of its expression. People should be able to choose when they rave it up and give presents and love each other; yet Christmas ordains and ritualises them. One is pressured into celebrating these at one date in the year to stop one from expressing them for the rest of the year.

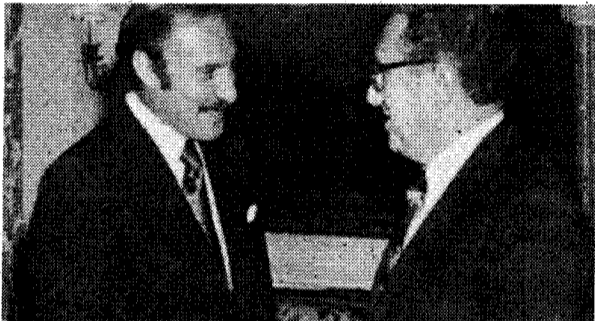
The expression of freedom in this form is an expression of unfreedom. The happiness of Christmas masks the misery of society. The infantilisation of Christmastime, and the torrents of gross ideological gibberish put out at this period, also serve to blunt any awareness of critical content and revolutionary potential.





Letelier arrested in Chile after the coup

## How Chile's 'Jackal' killed Letelier



Letelier meets Henry Kissinger

OVER Christmas thousands of people will spend some of their holiday time reading spy novels or political thrillers — writers like John Le Carré, Richard Ludlum, and Frederick Forsyth will be coining it in.

But in the New Year a political thriller, *Assassination on Embassy Row*, will be published in Britain every bit as thrilling as *The Day of the Jackal*, but with one difference — it's all true. *Socialist Challenge* takes a pre-publication look.

ON 9 September 1976, a tall, fair-haired man in his thirties arrived at Kennedy Airport in New York on an official Chilean passport. The passport gave his name as Hans Petersen Silva. The name was false, just one of a string of pseudonyms used by the man in question.

His real name was Michael Vernon Townley, by birth an American. He had arrived to organise the assassination of the exiled Orlando Letelier, who had been Salvador Allende's ambassador to the United States. Townley was an agent of the external section of the DINA — the Chilean secret police.

### Explosion

On the morning of 21 September 1976, Orlando Letelier, who had a job with the left-wing Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), was driving through the embassy district of Washington with a young couple who worked for the IPS, Michael and Ronni Moffitt. Ronni was sitting in the front next to Letelier, Michael was sitting in the back.

Unknown to Letelier, they were being followed. In the pursuing car someone pressed a switch. Michael Moffitt heard a hissing sound which, as he said later, sounded 'like a hot wire being placed in cold water'. Then he saw a blinding flash above Ronni's head followed by a crashing sound. Letelier's car was blown

into the air. The explosion came upwards from below the driver's seat.

### Search

Michael Moffitt jumped out of the car with minor injuries. He rushed to the front of the car. Letelier's legs were blown off; Ronni was bleeding badly — she later died in hospital. Michael kept running around shouting: 'The fascists killed him, DINA killed him.'

The murder of Letelier set off an extraordinary search for the murderers which brought to light the activities of DINA's top hit man, Michael Vernon Townley. The FBI took over the case, while the IPS launched its own investigation.



Ronni Moffitt

The CIA was less than fully co-operative. As the investigation progressed it failed to hand over vital evidence for fear of disrupting its relationship with the secret police forces in reactionary parts of



Pinochet

Latin America.

The official view in the CIA and at the State Department was that Letelier had probably been bumped off by leftists to 'create a martyr'. This was the line fed to the press and it received a good response. Among numerous articles which gave credence to this view was one in *Newsweek*:

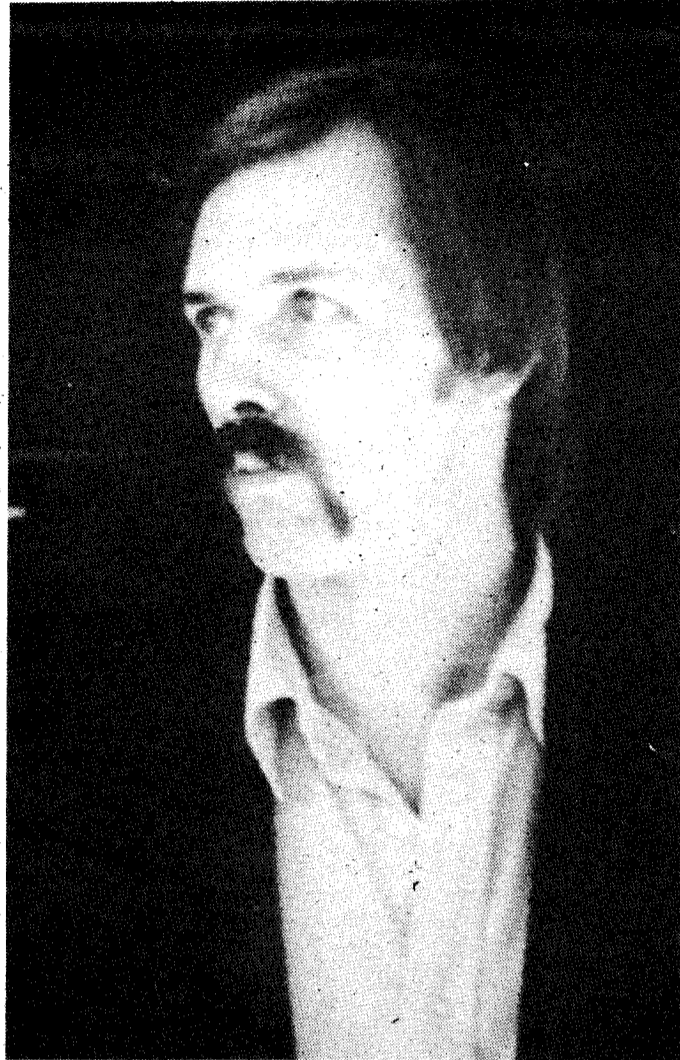
'After studying FBI and other field investigations, the CIA has concluded that the Chilean secret police was not involved in the death of Orlando Letelier...

'The agency reached its decision because the bomb was too crude to be the work of experts and because the murder, coming while Chile's rulers were wooing US support, could only damage the Santiago regime.'

*Newsweek* was wrong on every count. Far from being a crude device, the remotely-detonated bomb which killed Letelier was an ingenious piece of electronic handiwork. At 36, its maker was a veteran assassin.

Michael Townley's family moved to Chile when he was twelve. In his teens he developed an interest in electronics and engineering. He worked for a period as a salesman for the notorious Investors Overseas Services (IOS) getting a rich living selling stocks to Americans in Chile until anti-IOS legislation in the States prevented American citizens abroad buying stocks and shares.

When Allende came to power Townley left the country and went back to the



Michael Vernon Townley

United States, mixing in Cuban exile circles in Florida. Anti-Castro Cuban exiles were to be his accomplices in murdering Letelier. But eventually he went back to Chile, after contacting the CIA, to help with the task of destabilising the left-wing government.

### Expert

He made contact with Patria y Libertad, a fascist paramilitary organisation, which had just been allocated tens of thousands of American dollars for its work by a committee chaired by Henry Kissinger. Townley's first operation for them was a commando raid in the southern town of Concepcion, a stronghold of the far left.

The fascists had set up an illegal television station. Instead of finding it and closing it down, the government just jammed it. Townley, as an electronics expert, led the team which raided the government's jamming transmitter and destroyed it. Under Townley's supervision, the transmitter's caretaker was so well bound and gagged that he died of asphyxiation.

### Coup

The incident received widespread publicity. Townley fled the country and returned to the US. But General Pinochet's coup in September 1973 brought him back to Chile. Many in Patria y Libertad became DINA agents, and the agency had much bigger plans for Townley in the new order established by the generals.

Manuel Contreras was colonel at the time of the coup. To him was given the task of constructing an efficient secret police force which would wage national and international war against Chile's leftist opponents.

Most mornings Contreras breakfasted at around 6am with Pinochet, and discussed

the plan of campaign for the day. His office, in DINA's luxury block in Santiago, was in constant video-phone communication with Pinochet.

Together they hatched 'Operation Condor'.

Condor was conceived as a joint operation between the secret police forces of the right-wing countries of the Southern Cone to facilitate the capture and execution of leftists who had taken refuge abroad. A classic example of the Condor operation was the way that Eduardo Enriquez, brother of MIR leader Miguel Enriquez and the MIR's representative in Europe, was abducted in Uruguay and secretly tortured to death.

Contreras dubbed himself 'Condor One' — the leader of an international anti-communist élite.

One of the authors of *Assassination on Embassy Row*, Saul Landau, was involved in an 'All the Presidents Men' style private investigation of the murder of Letelier which is recounted in the book. It revealed without question that the reason Townley was able to get into the United States was because of the close co-operation between the CIA and the DINA. Letelier was also the victim of the reactionary foreign policy of the United States.

*Assassination on Embassy Row* will be published by Writers and Readers Publishing Co-operative in the new year.

sion was to have been the assassination of two well-known leaders of the Chilean Socialist Party and Communist Party in Mexico — Carlos Altamirano and Volodia Teitelbaum. But the operation never came off. Instead Townley found himself in Europe with orders to eliminate the leader of the Chilean Christian Democrats in exile, Bernardo Leighton, who lived in Rome.

For once, Townley varied his technique. Leighton's wife, Anna Fresno, was shot in the shoulder; Leighton was shot in the head but survived.

### Fingered

Townley now turned his attention to Letelier. The investigation of this murder revealed something very interesting. Before Townley went to the United States the Chilean regime persuaded the Paraguayan government to ask the Americans for two diplomatic passports for 'Chilean army officers'. The story was that they couldn't use Chilean passports for their special 'diplomatic mission'.

American officials in Paraguay were suspicious of this strange request and passed on details of the two people for whom passports were required (Townley and an accomplice) to the CIA. When Townley eventually arrived in the USA on a Chilean diplomatic passport the CIA knew that he and his colleague were the two 'army officers' for whom they had been asked to provide credentials.

In other words the CIA almost certainly knew that Townley was a DINA agent probably in the US to carry out a hit. But nothing was done. The matter was referred eventually to the then director of the CIA, George Bush, now vice-president elect of the United States. The CIA has always refused to discuss the details of the case.

The murder of Letelier had widespread repercussions. Chile came under increasing international pressure to liberalise its regime. When the identity of the organiser of the murder was revealed Pinochet expelled Townley and extradited him to the US.

Townley promptly fingered Contreras and Pinochet as the real organisers of Letelier's death.



Contreras

Contreras is cited in the official indictment and the US has asked for his extradition. Pinochet, eventually sacked him and dissolved DINA, replacing it with a reorganised version of the same thing.

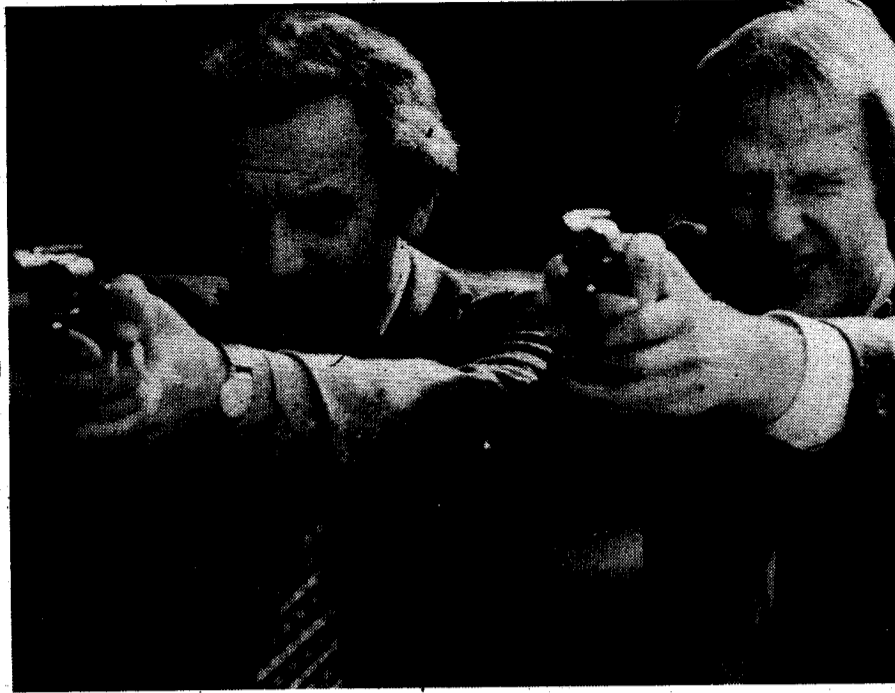
To ensure conviction the US prosecutors entered into a plea bargain with Townley. He turned States' evidence in return for a 10-year sentence. His Cuban exile accomplices got 99 years. Reports from Chile say that Contreras is on his way back. Michael Townley will be eligible for parole in 1981.



# Under Review



Above: Airport, or maybe it's Airport '75, or Airport '76 — difficult to tell the difference. Below: Roger Moore (yuk) in Gold.



The Sweeney — the most left-wing Xmas movie. Below: The Godfather — three hours of dark suits and nasty looks

## Xmas Movies on TV

# The good, the bad, and, the awful

By Geoff Bell

OF COURSE, no reader of Socialist Challenge will be watching movies on TV at Xmas. You will all be out at meetings, right-to-work marches, and picketing the Queen's Christmas broadcast on 25 December (assemble 1pm outside your nearest TV studio).

But just in case you have friends who may feel inclined to watch TV it would be a good idea, should they ask your advice on what films to watch, for you to have all the answers.

This will impress your friends that socialists know about things which interest the rest of the population.

Rule number one is that the only programmes worth watching over Xmas are the movies. The exception to this is the King George VI handicap on Boxing Day, but as the great Bright Highway is not running this could be a bit of a let down.

So here it is, the socialists' guide to TV movies.

It would be a failure in revolutionary duty if we didn't start with Trotsky. He pops up in the shape of Tom Courtney in *Doctor Zhivago* (ITV, 1 Jan), and very stern he looks too. But the music is lovely and the players are very snowy. It's a terribly nice film but as it borders on being counter-

revolutionary no socialist can watch it.

You are allowed to watch *Sweeney* (ITV, 22 Dec), even though it is sexist. This is because it has a left-wing political message, exposing the corruption of the ruling class, the state, and world imperialism. It is also exciting, but of course you will be watching for the politics, which are astonishingly left-wing, believe it or not.

The same cannot be said for *The Godfather* (BBC 2, 27 Dec), although as the Mafia is as American as apple pie the film could be taken as a metaphorical analysis of US capitalism and the dialectical relationship between crime, high finance, and horses' heads.

On the other hand it is one of the best films to be made in the last few years, although as ever it will lose something on the small screen.

So will the 'disaster' movies being shown: *Towering Inferno* (BBC 1,



26 Dec), *Earthquake* (ITV, 26 Dec), and *Airport* (BBC 1, 25 Dec). Such movies are a very interesting genre and no doubt page after page of shrewd Marxist comment could be written as to why, at this precise conjuncture, such films seemed to attract large audiences. But you

will be glad to know that we will pass on to pleasanter things.

Like *Midnight Cowboy* (BBC 2, 21 Dec), which is New York as you have never seen it before. It could be interpreted as an exposé of machoism, which Jon

Voight and Dustin Hoffman play to a man. John Schlesinger directs. Along with Robert Altman, he is one of the best mainstream directors of the '60s and '70s. Altman is on show in *Nashville* (BBC 2, 28 Dec). As ever with Altman, the film concerns the frailties of the American Dream.

No one wrote better on that theme than Raymond Chandler, and a remake of *Farewell My Lovely* (ITV, 23 Dec) is on view with Robert Mitchum and Charlotte Rampling. Not as good as the original with Bogart but enough of the Chandler dialogue is there to make it watchable.

## Remake

More definitely recommended is another remake, *The Front Page* (BBC, 25 Dec) with Walter Matthau, Jack Lemmon, and Carol Burnett. Directed by Billy Wilder and with all that talent on show, it couldn't fail. It doesn't: one of the funniest films of the decade.

And that, apart from Hitchcock's *Family Plot* (ITV, 24 Dec) and the female proteges Jodie Foster in *Bugsy Malone* (BBC 1, 27 Dec) and Tatum O'Neal in *Nickelodeon* (BBC 1, 28 Dec) is the best of the bunch.

For the rest, there is the usual diet of animals, with films about giraffes, dolphins, cats, bears and even a special Lassie season; horrible TV spin-offs, such as *George and Mildred* and *Are You Being Served?*, and Roger Moore doing his racist and sexist thing in *Gold* (ITV, 31 Dec) and *The Man with the Golden Gun* (ITV, 25 Dec).

Or what about *Two Weeks With Love*, (BBC 1, 29 Dec) starring Jane Powell and Ricardo Montalban. The BBC preview says it is 'a delightful period musical about Patti, a girl whose parents simply won't accept she's growing up. A young Debbie Reynolds appears as Patti's sister, Melba, and featured songs include "By The Light of the Silvery Moon" and "Destiny Waltz".'

That sounds so horrible that all socialists who don't picket the Queen's broadcast are ordered to watch it as a penance.

Just one final, disgusting thought. Can you imagine what Xmas will be like if, as part of her broadcast, Lizzie Windsor announces the engagement of Charlie and Lady D? Now that would be a disaster movie.

**HOW good a revolutionary cadre are you? How avidly have you been reading Socialist Challenge over the last year? Test yourself with this special festive, political quiz. All answers have appeared in issues of the paper this year. A clue is that the questions are chronological. Answers at the bottom of page.**

1. The steel strike began on 2 January. How much, in percentage terms, was on offer to the steelworkers when the strike began?
2. Who said of whom that his 'eyes and affections are in Dublin, on Brussels, on the Vatican'?
3. Which major trade union backed the campaign against the Corrie anti-abortion Bill by 'urging branches to support the lobby of Parliament on Tuesday 5 February'?
4. Who said: 'I've been accused of interfering in the steel strike. I plead guilty'?
5. Who said of what that it was 'the single biggest domestic issue in the United Kingdom'?
6. Which island faced a two-month bombardment by US and British warships?
7. Who decided 'to the youth, industry and revolutionary unity'?
8. How many seats did Robert Mugabe's ZANU win in the Zimbabwe election?

# XMAS QUIZ

9. Messrs Murray, White, Freestone, Lake, Richardson, and Scottow were named as being suspected of what?
10. Who or what was Alexander L Kielland?
11. What began at the Black and White Cafe?
12. Who told Jimmy Carter 'hard luck' after the bungled raid in Iran?
13. The Queensland government in Australia proposed a punishment of 14-years' hard labour for what?
14. Which country, where 30,000 US troops are stationed, saw mass uprisings in a number of cities?
15. Which city in the US was invaded by 3,600 members of the National Guard?
16. Which strike ended after nearly eight months?
17. Which Marxist historian and left-wing activist was murdered in the Caribbean?
18. Which privileged son died in a flying accident?
19. Who said, after being ordered to leave the room, 'My record for dissent is unequalled'?

20. Which body, on its 59th anniversary, promised to eliminate 'feudal and bureaucratic influences'?
21. Who, when he died, was described as 'the bloodsucker of the century' by his country's press?
22. Who said: 'Wall Street here I come. Let's make millions of dollars together'?
23. Which navy announced that women sailors would be allowed to serve at sea for the first time?
24. Who said he would 'never permit a new Nicaragua, even if it must take the most reprehensible measures to prevent it'?
25. Who told Socialist Challenge: 'After 20 years of silence on socialism you can't short cut it by industrial muscle'?
26. Who said, and where: 'I'm sure you asked yourselves what is that old bugger doing sitting on this platform'?
27. In what country did Trotskyist candidates win 142,000 votes in a general election?
28. Who wrote to Socialist Challenge to 'offer a true socialist challenge. Use all means

at your disposal to prevent another tragedy'?

29. What percentage of the US electorate voted for Ronald Reagan?

30. Who was quoted as once saying: 'Like Marx said, "To each according to his need" — I think that would work well here'?

- Quiz answers**
1. 6 per cent. 2. Enoch Powell of Ireland. 3. NALGO. 4. Arthur Scargill. 5. Tony Benn on 4. 6. Vieques. 7. IMG conference. 8. 77. 9. Killing Blair Peach. 10. The oil rig which collapsed in the North Sea, killing 123 workers. 11. The black revolt in Bristol. 12. Egyptian president Anwar Sadat. 13. Carrying out an abortion. 14. South Korea. 15. Miami. 16. Chik. 17. Walter Rodney. 18. Sanjay Gandhi. 19. Dennis Skinner, after being ordered out of the Commons. 20. Chinese Communist Party. 21. Shah of Iran. 22. Jerry Rubin, ex Yippie leader. 23. Holland. 24. Zbigniew Brzezinski, US national security adviser. 25. Tony Benn. 26. Michael Foot at a Labour Party conference Tribune rally. 27. Portugal. 28. Sean McKenna, Irish hunger striker. 29. 26 per cent. 30. John Lennon.



# 'Oh come let us annoy Him!'

'The Christmas Party' is an extract from *In the Ditch* by Buchi Emecheta. She is a Nigerian who has lived in England for the past 18 years. The book is published by Allison and Busby, £1.95 pbk and £4.95 hbk.

**T**HERE was a Christmas party at Carol's. The children were loaded with more gifts and goodies. Adah did not go to the party, for it was on one of those occasions when she felt fed up with being given things.

She felt her dignity as a human being was being gradually taken away from her. After all, they would move some time in the New Year so she might as well start learning to live by herself, making her own decisions.

On Christmas Day, she and her kids went to the church. It was extremely cold, yet the vicar was exceptionally inspired. His sermon dragged on and on. Bubu's version of the Christmas carol was a joy to listen to.

'Oh, come let us annoy Him,

'Oh, come let us annoy Him, Christ the Lord.'

The bigger children shivered uncomfortably in their new clothes which Adah had bought through a mail-order catalogue.

After church, they ran home. There was a small Sainsbury's turkey in the oven. She had held back the rent for a week to buy that, and she also bought a small bag of coalite, just to give the living-room a festive air. The kids refused the latter, though. They preferred the ones they had at school. Adah did not blame them because she had never seen any food look so ugly.

They were lucky that Christmas. Many of her old African friends paid visits, and they paid indirectly for the food Adah gave them with money. The money she kept to repay what she had 'borrowed' from the rent. She kept the turkey for a week — she kept slicing and re-heating it until there was nothing left but the bare bones.

She gave away many of the boxes of chocolates which were given to her. She gave a box of giant After Eight mints to the nurses at the nursery where her youngest went. She gave an assorted box of biscuits to the library assistants at her local branch.

## Charges

That, she was sure, would take care of overdue charges for the following year. She would always be sure to get most of her college special text books reserved for her. She did not like the large amount of overdue charges she had had to pay in the past year.

That Christmas was a white one. After the hullabaloo of the week before, the great day was deadly quiet. It gave her the impression that Christmas was only celebrated in shops. There was so much rushing and hurrying, so much spending and giving, that to Adah, Christmas ended on Christmas Eve.

As usual, all the things people rushed to buy the night before became unwanted litter on Christmas Day. On



their way back from church, Adah and her children saw Christmas wrappers and crackers all gaily dotting the otherwise flawlessly white snow. A few children were being pushed out in the snow by enthusiastic parents to show off their gleaming prams, bicycles, and giant dolls that did everything.

Some of the parents stood by the door admiring their children. It was unfortunately too cold for much talk.

Towards the evening, more snow fell, obliterating the footmarks made in the morning by the few people who had ventured out. Inside Adah's flat, there was warmth and laughter. Her children were already getting bored with their new toys. The doll's cot which was the baby's had been dislocated.

She came to Adah, tears in her eyes, and commanded Mum to 'fix it'. Adah was trying and retrying this, finding it difficult to know which part belonged to which, when she heard Mrs Cox, croaking what Adah later found out to be a Christmas carol. The baby momentarily forget her unmemorable 'dolly cot' and listened, sucking her fingers thoughtfully.

## Knock

Adah knew that Mrs Cox was trying to knock at her door. She was either too drunk to do it properly, or too cold to know what she was doing, for she was banging at Adah's toilet window instead. She lumbered in when the door was opened, with a bottle of cheap red wine under her arm. Whoopey soon joined them, and a Christmas party was in full swing. More sweets and chocolates were pressed on the children. Unfortunately neither the feeders nor the fed knew when to stop.

They all sang carols until they were hoarse. Many of them they sang out of tune but, as Mrs Cox said, God would forgive them being miserable offenders. She assured every one that she still remembered what it used to be like in the churches.

She knew how Christ was born. And she knew what it was all about. She would not say it before the children though, she assured Whoopey and Adah. Before long, her songs were not only out of tune, but scarcely came out at all and then only drowsily. Christmas itself was

coming to an end.

The bottle of wine had long gone, so had Adah's Emma Cream Sherry. She too was becoming sleepy. They were woken by one of Whoopey's children. The poor boy was doubled up in pain. 'Ooh, Mummy,' he screamed. 'My tummy, it hurts, Mummy, oh, Mum.' The mums suddenly became wide awake. Mrs Cox blamed her daughter for giving the children too much chocolate.

'You brought the lot, Mum, you did,' snapped Whoopey as she made a dive for her little boy while Mrs Cox still sat, too drunk to get up.

'Not too bad for the last Christmas in this place,' put in Adah. 'This time next year we'll probably be somewhere else.'

## Bulk

'I shan't miss this place, God knows,' said Mrs Cox, as she heaved her bulk from the couch.

'Adah, come here. Bubu has been sick all over the floor,' called Whoopey.

Adah dashed into the corridor and saw Bubu in a mess. Whoopey hurried her two green children out. The air outside was biting cold. They all shivered involuntarily when Whoopey opened the door to go out.

The unprepared Christmas party had been a success. Adah cleared up the sick. Life at the Pussy, like that Christmas, was always spontaneous. Nothing was planned, everything was done as it came, naturally. Adah was no longer sure whether she would feel at home in places like the British Museum or the big libraries where she used to work.

In those places, your laugh was regulated, intellectual, artificial. No spontaneity. You waited for others to finish what they were saying before you made your own contribution. You seldom listened to what the other person was saying, and by the time it came to your turn to speak, your point would no longer be relevant. You would have forgotten what you were going to say anyway.

Adah shivered as she mopped and disinfected her corridor. Outside, there was going to be a blizzard. More snow fell, and there was hardly a ghost in the street. The end of another Christmas.



A pit pony, 1906 (left). Troops in Pontypridd in December 1910 at the time of the Tonypandy riots (right). Below: Mardy miners and their families with Soviet banner, December 1926.

*THE threat of civil disobedience and the moves towards a triple alliance of miners, rail, and steelworkers in Wales in the event of further redundancies in the steel plants is being treated seriously by political commentators. There have been explosions of Welsh militancy and radicalism before now.*

Members of Llafur, the Welsh labour history society, have done much pioneering work in recording these developments. Three books have recently been published: *The Fed*, *Fields of Praise*, and *People and a Proletariat*.

DAVID SMITH made a major contribution to these books. Ric Sissons asked him about historical developments in working class life in Wales.

WHERE would you locate the first stirrings of political activity within the Welsh working class?

We have to go back to 1831 and the Merthyr rising, which Gwyn Williams has written about, and which he sees as signalling the birth of the Welsh working class.

Even before that in South Wales there had been strikes, rather than food or corn riots. There had been guerilla activity in the coalfields in the 1830s and 1840s — scotch cattle, as it was called, the intimidation of scabs and non-unionists.

In the early 1870s there were again attempts to form unions. Once more the strikes failed. But from the 1870s the coalfield really began to expand. The workforce arriving was enormously fluid, coming from the countryside, from England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. It was generally non-unionised.

In South Wales there was no effective union tradition. The miners were considered backward. They had a sliding scale system whereby the price of coal affected the wages, so union activity was often thought to be irrelevant.

There were two great strikes in 1893 by the hauliers, and then in 1898 the owners imposed a lock-out.

In a sense it was the owners who created the South Wales Miners Federation (SWMF) — the Fed. The seven district unions finally merged. At last the old leadership accepted that their policies were not working and thus the Fed was formed.

It remained very much a decentralised body and was federal within South Wales.

In the first decade of this century Wales experienced the largest influx of immigrants of any decade, and these were increasingly non-Welsh. By 1911 the population of Wales was concentrated in the south.

**Did the immigrant workers bring a distinct political tradition? I am thinking of the point you make in *The Fed* about the influx of Spanish workers who tended towards anarchism and syndicalism.**

Certainly there were pockets of Spanish workers who tended to be atheists and they influenced certain villages. But I suspect that in *The Fed* we underestimate the influx of the non-unionised and non-political.

There were large numbers of Irish workers who went on to play a prominent part in the Labour Party in South Wales and also in the Communist Party. Some of them were brought in during the 19th century as strike breakers.

There were anti-Irish riots in the Rhondda in the 1870s. There were anti-Jewish riots in Tredegar, Monmouthshire, Bevan's home town, in 1911. This was no holier than thou workforce.

**What were the decisive features which gave the Welsh working class such a militant tradition in the 20th century?**

We had a large, fluid population; non-union; few traditions; a not very effective union; and a history of defeat not victory. So why then do they become a militant workforce?

It is partly because by the early 20th century there were so many workers in a fairly progressive, dynamic industry with established social institutions. Democracy had been absorbed to some extent through the chapels and self-help organisations.

Increasingly it was a cosmopolitan population. Until 1900 half was Welsh speaking, but English was becoming the lingua franca and with it came more progressive socialist ideas.

Then there were the economic conditions of the industry. An industry that had been making profits very quickly started to encounter productivity difficulties because the South Wales coalfield has always been difficult. So you have more and more people digging more and more coal, but productivity — what each individual dug — had been going down.

By 1913, when the highest production peak was reached, the seams were getting thinner, the coal was being hauled longer distances, the rate of profit was falling and the owners proving difficult over such issues as working in water, seams petering out, too much stone in the coal.

The miners were demanding a cut in prices to compensate for that.

This late development was occurring at a time when England was passing through the second wave of socialism after the first wave of the 1830s and 1840s.

# How roots



These ideas were filtering through. But liberalism and the consensus society held the fort until 1914.

Syndicalism, the workers' control movement, and industrial unionism saw a role for the trade unions which was more than just an economic one — rather as a social institution and beyond that a political institution.

Remember this was a one-class, one-industry area. There were tin plate workers, steelworkers, brickworkers, transport workers, but they were nearly all dependent on the coal industry. There were almost a



# militancy took in Wales

## Working class Wales in print

*The Fed*, by Hywel Francis and David Smith, is the history of the South Wales Miners Federation in this century. Given the importance of the mining communities in South Wales, this book is essential for an understanding of political life in Wales. Unlike most union histories, this one is highly readable. Lawrence and Wishart, £5.50 pbk.

*Fields of Praise*, by Gareth Williams and David Smith, is the official history of the Welsh Rugby Union. For anybody interested in sport this book is of value simply for the momentous occasions of the Welsh national game. But it does more. It firmly locates rugby within the development of Welsh economic, political, and social history. University of Wales Press, £12.95.

*People and a Proletariat* edited by David Smith is a collection of essays on the history of Wales from 1780 to 1980. Written by Llafur members each article throws new light on Welsh life and culture. Pluto Press, £4.95 pbk.

religious, Welsh-speaking pillars of the labour movement, in favour of parliamentary representation.

Their idea was that the union itself would go on to take increasing control of society. The First World War built up all those hopes because increasing numbers joined the labour force as more coal was being demanded. Hardly anybody saw the post-war slump coming.

From these ideas being seen as potentially wielding a sword they became defensive; the general strike was defensive. There were lockouts. There was a great deal of bitterness within the labour movement. Ablett fell away.

In the 1920s and later these ideas lacked vitality. But they did give a legacy of thoughtful militancy and political organisation to a workforce that was always ready to move beyond mere economism.

One of the most interesting subjects about which you write are the 'Little Moscows', villages like Mardy. How generalised was the domination of the CP?

Mardy was special because of the leadership it attracted. There are a number of sociological reasons why that occurred — the late development of the pits; the large pits; and the fact that the men could pay for good leadership. It was also an isolated village at the top of one particular valley.

But there were other villages, like Bedlinog, where the struggle against company unionism took place in the 1930s, where they had a Communist chamber of trade at one point. They even had a red butcher! In 1927 the Rhondda Borough Labour Party and the Maesteg Labour Party both split and reformed after they were completely taken over by CP sympathisers.

I think people often misunderstand the nature of the villages. Although you move from one designated, named

place to another in the Rhondda you are really in one huge urban town.

There were more Communist councillors and more Communist councillors in mid-Rhondda; it was a very militant area. But you cannot say that mid-Rhondda was a 'Little Moscow' because it consisted of five or six townships. There was not the same kind of total domination.

And even in Mardy there was always a Conservative club. 'Little Moscow' was an epithet put on it by the enemies of communism but proudly adopted by the local inhabitants.

One of the other interesting phenomena were the miners' institutes. Hywel Francis in *History Workshop Journal* cites the case of Tredegar which had subscriptions to both *Pravda* and the *New York Herald Tribune*. How widespread were they?

The miners' institute libraries were all over the place. Originally philanthropic, they were built by coalowners, but by the 1920s they were virtually in the hands of the miners. They were in villages which for the most part were deprived of social amenities.

They contained dance halls, swimming pools, billiard rooms, debating chambers, as well as the great libraries. These books were usually picked by elected committees. Their choices reflected their interests.

Obviously they picked novels, works of great literature, but this was a time of worker-author didacticism. They wanted to learn. They were full of improving works in the literary, political, geological and scientific sense.

As pits have closed so have the institutes. Some still exist but more as social centres. The spread of public libraries in the 1940s dispensed with the need for them and now there are other social amenities. The cultural brain of the coalfield — because they were the brain — has now gone.

quarter of a million workers in the mines.

It was not so ridiculous to think that if you controlled the union, if you centralised it, turned it into a fighting organisation, then you could spread the tentacles politically into society at large.

What were the political ideas which had an early influence?

English ideas, Fabian socialism, De Leonite socialism were all imbibed. The influence

of the Americans has been underestimated. South Wales bore a stark resemblance to the notions of the Socialist Labour Party established by De Leon in the USA. The works of Marx being put out by the Kerr publishing house of Chicago were gobbled up.

I think that there was such a thing as Welsh syndicalism which was heavily based on the notion of one union. It was not really about workers' control, guild socialism, the general strike, or direct action but I think it was effectively about control at the coalface and using

the lodge as a political branch. Ablett was the leading pedagogue. He contributed to the *Industrial Syndicalist* and was a director of the Central Labour College. On one occasion he said: 'I am not a syndicalist but an industrial unionist.'

The role of the lodge in the mining unions in general, and in South Wales in particular, has been misunderstood. The lodge represented not just the pit but the village. It was a kind of workforce, community, union, social political organism. That is why *The Miners' Next Step*, the pamphlet of 1912, placed

such an emphasis on it.

What we had was an upsurge of grievances both against the coalowners, as in Tonypanydy in 1910, and against the shopkeepers and the forces of law and order who were trying to define a community for them. I don't think that this had anything directly to do with socialist ideas but it was on such events that socialist ideas grew fat.

It was no coincidence that *The Miners' Next Step* came out two years later in Tonypanydy. The leaders of the 1910 strike were for the most part not ideologues. Most of them were





## Ireland is a student issue

By Ann Henderson

The message from the recent National Union of Students conference in Margate was that Ireland should be a student issue.

Two hundred students attended a conference fringe meeting organised by Charter '80, where Margaret Nugent, mother of Marie Nugent currently on hunger strike in Armagh jail, urged support for the Irish prisoners. She received a standing ovation after addressing the conference itself.

The last night of the conference, on 8 December, saw a heated debate on Ireland. While the NUS policy opposing British withdrawal from Ireland and support for the prisoners was maintained, over a third of the colleges voted for support for the prisoners and for British troops to be withdrawn from Ireland.

### Support

The conference debate followed a growing wave of activity on Ireland throughout the student movement, including in the north of Ireland.

NUS Wales now supports the Charter '80 campaign and the London Student Organisation has called for support for the prisoners. Recently 40 students travelled to Belfast to support the Queens University Campaign Against Repression demonstration of 3 December in support of the H Block and Armagh prisoners.

The conference also censured the NUS executive for its handling of the government attack on student union independence. The government proposes to stop giving student unions funds directly. In future they will go to college authorities with whom student unions will have to barter for the money.

Photo JOANNE O'BRIEN



Margaret Nugent

The NUS leadership's strategy for opposing this government attack has effectively led to acceptance of the deal. Many polytechnic and further education college student unions supported an amendment rejecting public accountability for student funds and recognising the attack as similar to the Tory attacks on the trade unions.

There were a number of important emergency motions passed by the NUS conference: reaffirming a woman's right to choose an abortion calling for an active and educational campaign against sexual harassment and violence; and supporting the relaunch of Students against the Nazis.

Following the defeats students have suffered over recent years on overseas students, college closures and now student union financing, it is vital that the current NUS 'left alliance' leadership is challenged.

### Campaigns

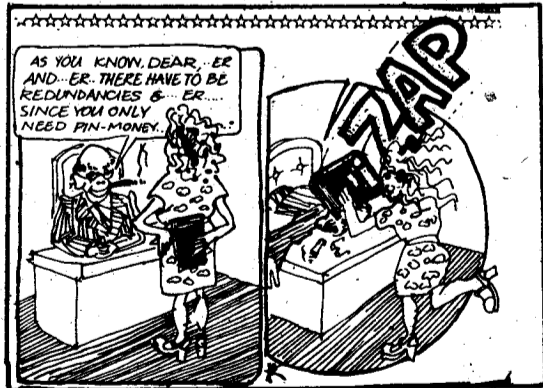
The Socialist Students Alliance will be fighting for the maximum unity of all those activists involved in the major political campaigns inside NUS — on Ireland, women's liberation, nuclear disarmament, and student union financing.

Socialist Student Alliance badge — 20p or 15p each for bulk orders. Available from: Ann Henderson, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.



## Women in ACTION

New Year Issue 35p



## Women have the right to work

**In this issue**  
 Can women beat the slump? Hilary Wainwright  
 NCCL on Positive Action  
 Interview with women from New Plans for Abortion Rights  
 Fighting Low Pay Gardners

A Paper for Action in the Unions on Women's Rights

The new issue of *Women in Action* is now on sale. Orders: over 100 at 20p each plus p&p, individual orders 35p each plus p&p, from Box 2, 190 Upper Street, London N1.

## Stop the Sainsbury anti-abortion Bill

By Ann Potter

AT A time when women are under attack from all sides, it was surprising that the Law Lords should reverse the Denning ruling on protagan-din abortions.

Last Thursday they ruled that nurses could take part in these abortions, making late abortions for women who need them that much easier to obtain.

But another threat still looms in the form of one Timothy Sainsbury MP. He is still making up his mind about introducing a Private Members' Bill to reduce the time limits for abortions, will further his career.

East London abortion campaigners are trying to help him decide. They are organising pickets of local Sainsbury's stores to explain to customers the threat to their rights posed by the nephew of Lord Sainsbury. If the Tory MP goes ahead with a Bill, the National Abortion Campaign (NAC) will carry out similar actions.

Pro-abortionists should draw the lessons from the victory over the Corrie Bill, where the turning point was the involvement of the labour movement.

Many unions have recognised abortion as a legitimate issue of concern. Abortion is a class issue because a woman's right to control her own body is central to women's rights. Women cannot have equality in opportunity and employ-

ment if our right to decide whether or not to have children is under threat.

A woman's right to choose is therefore a vital democratic right that the labour movement should defend.

Local Labour parties and trade unions should be passing emergency resolutions now to defend abortion rights. They should:

- Pledge the branch to actively oppose any attempts to introduce new restrictions on abortion rights.
- Write to Timothy Sainsbury and Donald Stewart, an anti-abortionist who came second in the private members' ballot, demanding that they drop their proposals for a new restrictive Bill.

- Call on the TUC and the Labour Party executive to organise actions like demos or rallies in the event of a new Bill.
- Call on any sponsored MP to do all in their power to oppose restrictive Bills and support any actions called against one.

Some Labour MPs have called a meeting to oppose any new restrictive Bill in Parliament. Both the TUC and the Labour Party should be forced to act on their position that it is a woman's right to choose on abortion.

Many labour movement bodies have indicated their support for women's abortion rights by sponsoring the labour movement conference on abortion called by NAC and the Labour Abortion Rights Cam-

paign. Recently ASTMS, ACTS, the Tobacco workers, and the Sheet Metal workers' unions have all backed the conference.

Charles Grievess, general secretary of the Tobacco Workers' Union, told NAC: 'It is with some concern that we note that MPs who have drawn a place in the Private Members' Bill ballot are again considering amendments to the current Abortion Act.'

'It is still essential that the labour movement maintains a campaign in support of both TUC and Labour Party policy.'

It's ironic that an MP should be considering a new anti-abortion Bill when a recent Gallup Poll showed that more than three out of four people support the view that abortion should be left to a woman in consultation with her doctor.

## Students' conference and women's demos demand

# STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

'RAPE and sexual violence cannot be seen as acts of individual violence. They are endemic to a society that treats women as disposable commodities.'

With these words Stephanie Green of Goldsmiths college and the NUS womens committee proposed a wide-ranging motion on violence against women at the recent NUS conference.

In the wake of the Ripper killings and a spate of less-publicised attacks on women students in London and elsewhere, the student conference unanimously endorsed a comprehensive programme of demands on sexual violence.

By Jude Arkwright

### Buzzers

These include demands on the college and local authorities to provide better transport and lighting, as well as alarm buzzers for women students. It further urged support for local Rape Crisis centres and the establishment of women's self-defence classes.

The motion called on NUS to launch a mass campaign including lobbies, pickets and demonstrations, together with educational material on sexism and sexual violence.

dragging them off to nearby police vans. Women protesting against unprovoked attack were themselves arrested.

Earlier on 12 December thirty women had marched into the offices of the *Sun* newspaper to protest against page three pin-ups.

Nine women were arrested on the 12 December demonstration making a total of 30 arrests over the past few weeks of women protesting in London against sexual violence. Some of those arrested have been charged with causing criminal damage to cinema screens.

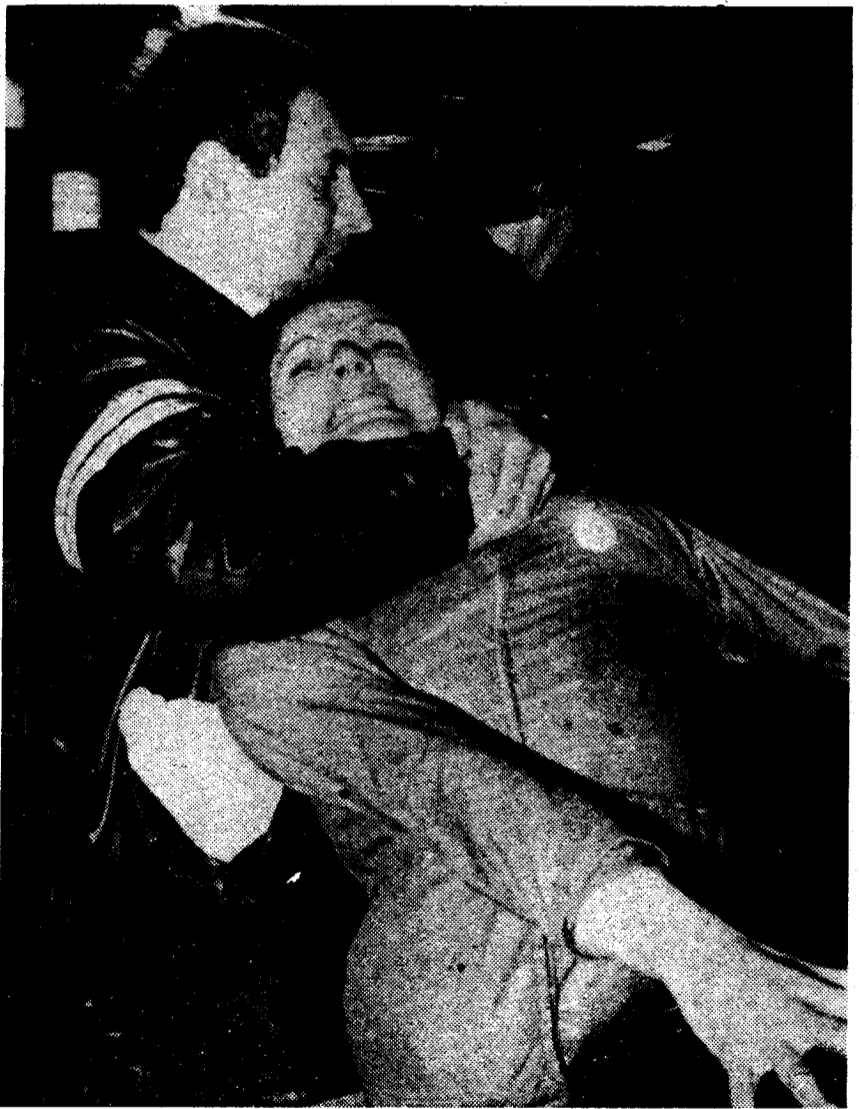
### Issue

Women Against Violence Against Women who organised the London demonstration told us they were encouraged by the increasing public sympathy for their campaign. And the decision of the NUS to launch a national campaign should be welcomed.

The labour movement in this country should follow the example of this year's Scottish Women's TUC and the Canadian trade unions in recognising that sexual harassment and violence is a permanent and important problem to tackle.

Socialists in this country should use the example of the practical measures agreed by NUS to take this issue into the labour movement.

● Solidarity messages and money for the defence of those arrested should be sent to: South East London Women Against Rape, Box 10, 190 Upper Street, London N1.



More violence against women — this time from the police on last week's demonstration through Leicester Square



### Threat

Women speakers explained that the continuous threat of harassment and violence against women was made worse by the media and entertainment industries' sexist portrayals of women.

Meanwhile women in London took to the streets on 11 and 12 December to protest against the showing of sexist films. A peaceful protest organised by Women Against Violence Against Women leafletting filmgoers in Leicester Square was attacked by the police.

### Protest

A statement from some of the women on the protest explained that a police van was driven through the protesters while plainclothes policemen violently attacked women demonstrators,



# Turkey under the military boot

By Nick Robin

**TWO months ago the military coup in Turkey had an excellent press. *The Financial Times* designated junta head General Kemal Evren their 'Man of the Week' only one day after he had seized power, dissolved parliament, banned all political parties, and suspended the constitution!**

But a swift return to democracy was promised. The West and the Soviet Union continued trade links and political relations, and Turkey was no longer news.

The truth is that since the coup repression has reached levels rarely known in countries which are not actually fascist dictatorships.

According to Kemal

Doytal, the only one of the seven leaders of DISK, the major trade union federation, to have escaped arrest, 60,000 people have been arrested since 12 September. Dozens have been killed in clean-up operations and hundreds of death sentences have been handed down by military tribunals.

This is in addition to the 65,000 political prisoners in

Turkish jails before the coup. The repression has been concentrated in the *gecekondu* (working class districts) of the major cities and in the Kurdish nation in the east.

## Kurds

Kurds make up one fifth of the total population but are denied the right to speak their own language or organise as Kurds.

The national question, Islamic revivalism, and political violence which is claiming twenty lives daily — mainly from the goon squads of the National Action Party, the largest fascist party in Europe —

were the main forces which 'persuaded' the army to step in.

In power, the Generals have a clear brief: the destruction of the high level of organisation and combativity of the Turkish working class to create what leading Turkish industrialist Vehbi Koc described before the coup as 'a (necessary) new approach to industrial relations'.

You know the sort of thing — banning trade unions, locking up their leaders, outlawing strikes, and so on.

The Western press, following their governments, have chosen to ignore the gross violations of

basic democratic rights. Turkey is a vital part of NATO's 'southern flank' and the imperialists are painting the Turkish generals as secular modernisers beset by religious and political fanatics.

## Truth

It is therefore up to the labour movement to get out the truth about Turkey, to demand an end to the savage repression, and to campaign for the downfall of the junta. The Turkish Solidarity Campaign should be the focus of this activity. It can be contacted at BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX.

## Pakistani Workers Association holds first conference

THE Pakistani Workers Association held its first annual conference on 7 December in Birmingham. The conference unanimously approved the draft constitution and statement of aims and elected Amir Kabil Khan as general secretary.

The conference passed an emergency resolution on the Anwar Ditta case and demanded that her three children be permitted to enter the country.

The high point of the conference was an impassioned appeal by Anwar Ditta to the predominantly male audience of Pakistani workers to take up her case. After she had graphically described her plight, the 26-year-old machinist from Rochdale was given a thunderous ovation.

The conference chairperson, Tariq Ali, then proposed that she be elected the first president of the PWA. The motion was passed by universal acclamation.

This in itself marks a break with the dominant tradition within the Pakistani community: it does away with the backroom squabbling which normally precedes the election of officers and it gives prominence to a Pakistani woman worker who is waging a militant fight against the immigration laws.

All the speakers, including Mukhtar Rana, a former Pakistani MP and now a railway worker in London, stressed the importance of the PWA. It was a small but modest step forward in organising militant Pakistani workers in Britain.

Further details from: A K Khan, General Secretary, PWA, c/o The Other Bookshop, 137 Digbeth, Birmingham.

## Young CND against the missiles

YOUNG CND has backed the call from the recent CND national conference for a national carnival against the missiles in May 1981.

Duncan Edwards from Manchester Young CND argued that the regional events planned by CND should be backed up by a national carnival to harness the massive national opposition among young people to the Cruise and Trident missiles.

Bruce Kent, general secretary of CND, opened the conference which was attended by about 130 youth from all over the country. Other activities discussed at the con-

ference included writing letters to Reagan, Brezhnev and Thatcher; harassing local MPs to raise the issue of the missiles in Parliament; vigils outside prominent places; organising music gigs and showing the 'War Game' film.

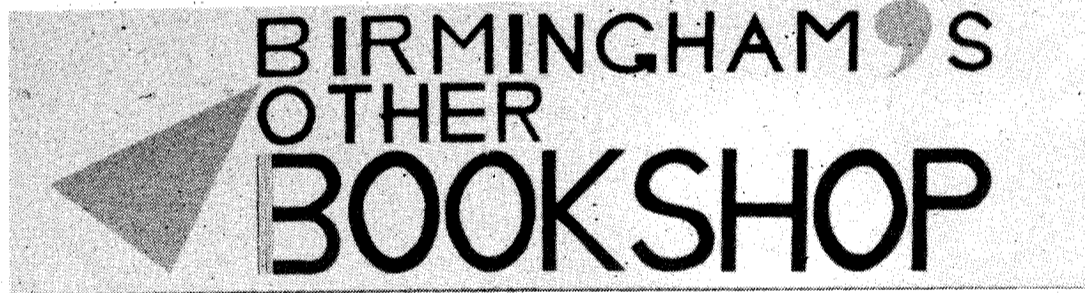
The conference workshops also discussed the need to centre Young CND's activities around opposition to Cruise and Trident missiles and the need for Young CND to organise all young people — young workers, school students, students and unemployed youth.

After a controversial debate it was agreed to elect a leadership composed of representatives of local Young CND groups. The conference

organisers had argued that such a committee would not be representative of all youth in the campaign because the conference had been called at short notice.

The conference overwhelmingly supported the idea of a representative leadership proposed by members of Revolution Youth and others. A 17-person committee was elected with representatives of local Young CND groups, Schools Against the Bomb, No Nukes Music and Manchester Area NUS.

Young CND should now go out and build the anti-missiles movement among young people, and organise for their next national conference in Spring 1981.



BIRMINGHAM's Other Bookshop opened on 1 November as a service to the left and the labour movement in the city. You can find us at 137 Digbeth, just down from the Bull Ring on the way to Digbeth Civic Hall.

We have a wide selection of books, pamphlets, newspapers, posters and badges — everything for the activist and the armchair revolutionary.

Our stock includes all the socialist and Marxist classics as well as some of the books of the moment: EP Thompson's *Protest and Survive*, Tony Benn's *Arguments for Socialism*, and Tim Pat Coogan's *On the Blanket*.

We also stock handbooks for trades unionists and books on rights at work; books on black liberation, racism, fascism and international struggles; a wide selection of feminist books and novels, including *Women's Press and Virago*.

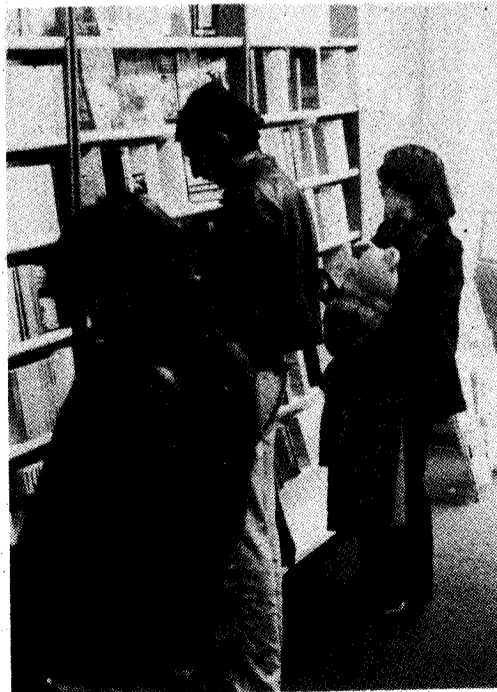
We have a section on Fourth International publications as well as many

periodicals, such as *Spare Rib*, *The Leveller*, *Socialist Republic*, *Insist*, and *Searchlight*.

The bookshop, sponsored by the IMG, also is a place for campaign bodies to meet and use. It can only succeed if it is supported and used by working people. We can't compete with Hudson's or WH Smiths but we can provide the books you need.

Socialist ideas face hard competition in capitalist society. Visit Birmingham's Other Bookshop, buy your Xmas books, and help us to help you.

For information on available books and bookstalls for local/national conferences, trade union branches, and so on, ring us on 021-643 5904.



### Send greetings to South African prisoners

Each year Anti-Apartheid organises the sending of Christmas greetings to South African political prisoners. Although it is now too late for Christmas delivery, these cards help to boost prisoners' morale. Socialist Challenge urges readers to contact Anti-Apartheid to get their list of prisoners to write to. Contact: AAM, 89 Charlotte St, London W1 PD.

### Campaign Against Racist Laws

National delegate conference  
Saturday 10 January  
Discussion on building a mass campaign against the Tories' new nationality proposals  
Send for details to: CARL, c/o Lansbury House, 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5

## 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. More info from Box 2, c/o Fulmarks, 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. More info on local activity from SC c/o Box 6, 1st May Bookshop, Candlemaker Row.

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

HACKNEY supporters sell SC every Saturday morning at Ridley Road market E8.

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 Elliot St, Hamilton.

HULL: 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; Tetric Books, Clapham; Paperback Centre, Brixton; Oval tube kiosks. Also sold Thur and Fri evenings and Thur mornings outside Brixton tube.

NEWCASTLE: SC on sale every Sat 11-1pm outside Fenwicks. Also available at Days of Hope bookshop, Westgate Rd. For more info ring Phil or Pete on Newcastle 737507.

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).

SWANSEA: SC sales outside Co-op, Oxford St, 11am-1pm, Saturdays.

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

TESSALE: SC on sale Sat lunchtime in the Clewley Centre, and in Newsware, 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, send in details to this sales column.

## What's Left

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

NO NUKES MUSIC: Fri 19 December benefit concert featuring the Thomson Twins, the Lucy's and Changing Trains at Brixton Town Hall, 5th London. Food, drink & 'surprise events'. Price £1.50 in advance £1.80, £1 unwaged.

SUPPORT THE HUNGER STRIKERS: March in Glasgow, Sat 20 Dec 10am. Assemble Craigmuir St, Blackhill. Rally at Cowliars Park. Called by Scottish Hunger Strike Action Committee.

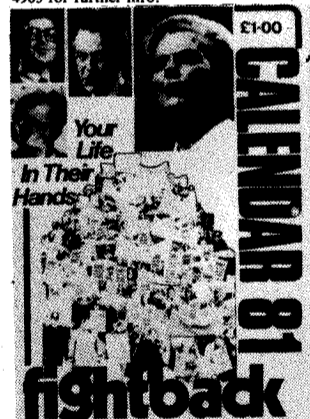
BENEFIT for Kings Cross Building (NAC, Women's Aid, Homeless Action, Lesbian Line, Rights of women.) Women Only. Sat 20 Dec 8pm till late. Jam Today, Sisterhood of Spit.

## International Marxist Group notices

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.

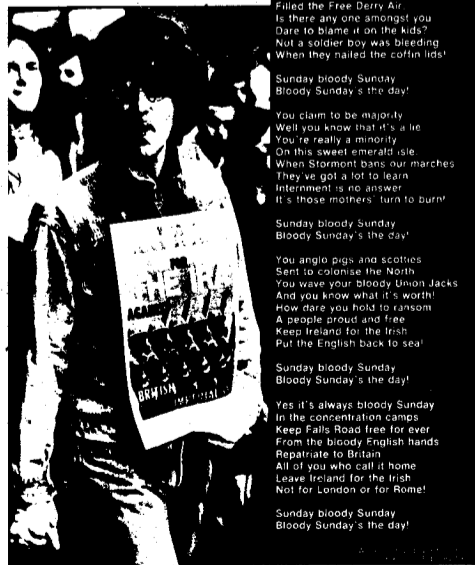
IMG MEMBERS: We urgently need you to fill vacancies in a variety of technical posts in National Centre. Any cdes interested ring Penny on 01-359 8371.

FOR SALE: Back copies of IP/1 for SC Fund Drive. Vols 16/17/18 (1978, 1979, 1980). Offers to Fed, Camden IMG, c/o PO Box 50, London N1. TGWU National Fraction, Sat 17 Jan. Details later.



'Your life in their hands' — the 1981 Fightback calendar. Campaigns, private medicine, drug profits, low pay. Pin up, or carry with you... handy A4 size, good writing space. Useful for work, home, or the union office. Only £1 (add 25p p&p) and we'll send by return of post. From Fightback, 30 Camden Rd, London NW1.

## JOHN LENNON 1940-1980



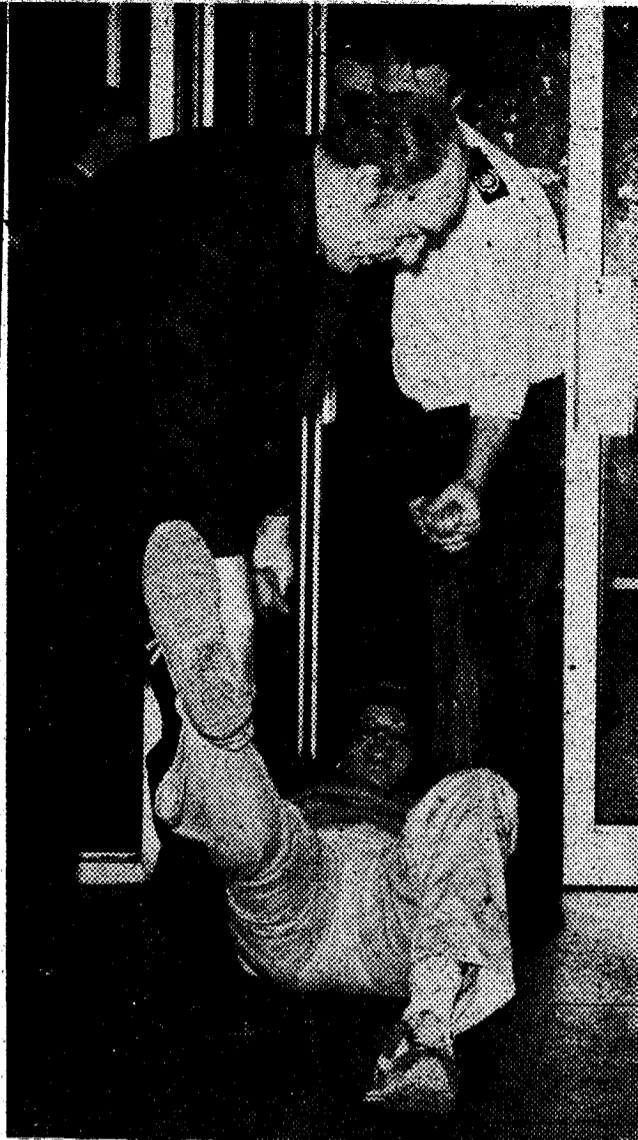
Exclusive John Lennon poster! Just £1. Bulk orders (over 5) are post free, otherwise send 30p p&p. Orders and money to: The Other Bookshop, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester



# Socialist Challenge

SEE YOU  
IN 1981

AS our readers may have guessed, Socialist Challenge will not be published on 25 December. But we shall be back on 1 January 1981 with a review of the struggle for socialism in 1980.



**WOMAN dragged from the Sun office during protest over sexism and violence against women — see page 14.**

An Xmas message from the Tories

# 20,000 STEEL JOBS TO GO

SOMEONE forgot to remind the Tories that it was Christmas, supposedly a time of peace and goodwill!

By Pat Kane

The Xmas message from the government will mean misery and hardship for working people throughout the country.

Whether you're employed or on the dole, you'll not escape the impact of the latest round of Tory policies.

The government's message to Britain's steelworkers is that 44,000 redundancies in 14 months is not enough. To make the British Steel Corporation profitable, another 20,000 workers have to join the dole heaps.

For those who are left, BSC will increase their workload and they've not even offered a pay rise for next year.

throw out your government.

The triple alliance of miners, rail, and steel workers can halt the decline in the nationalised industries.

Militant action is our answer to the Tories: action such as that at Gardner's — occupations and solidarity can stop redundancies.

Militant action as at Lambeth, where trades

unionists are refusing to sell council houses and are planning strike action to save services.

The TUC leaders and the Parliamentary Labour Par-

ty have stood by for too long and watched jobs and services go. The huge 29 November demonstration in Liverpool showed that the labour movement is able to

kick this government out.

Militant action is needed now.

## Slashed

If you're lucky enough to have a job, increased taxation and reduced welfare benefits will cut your pay packet.

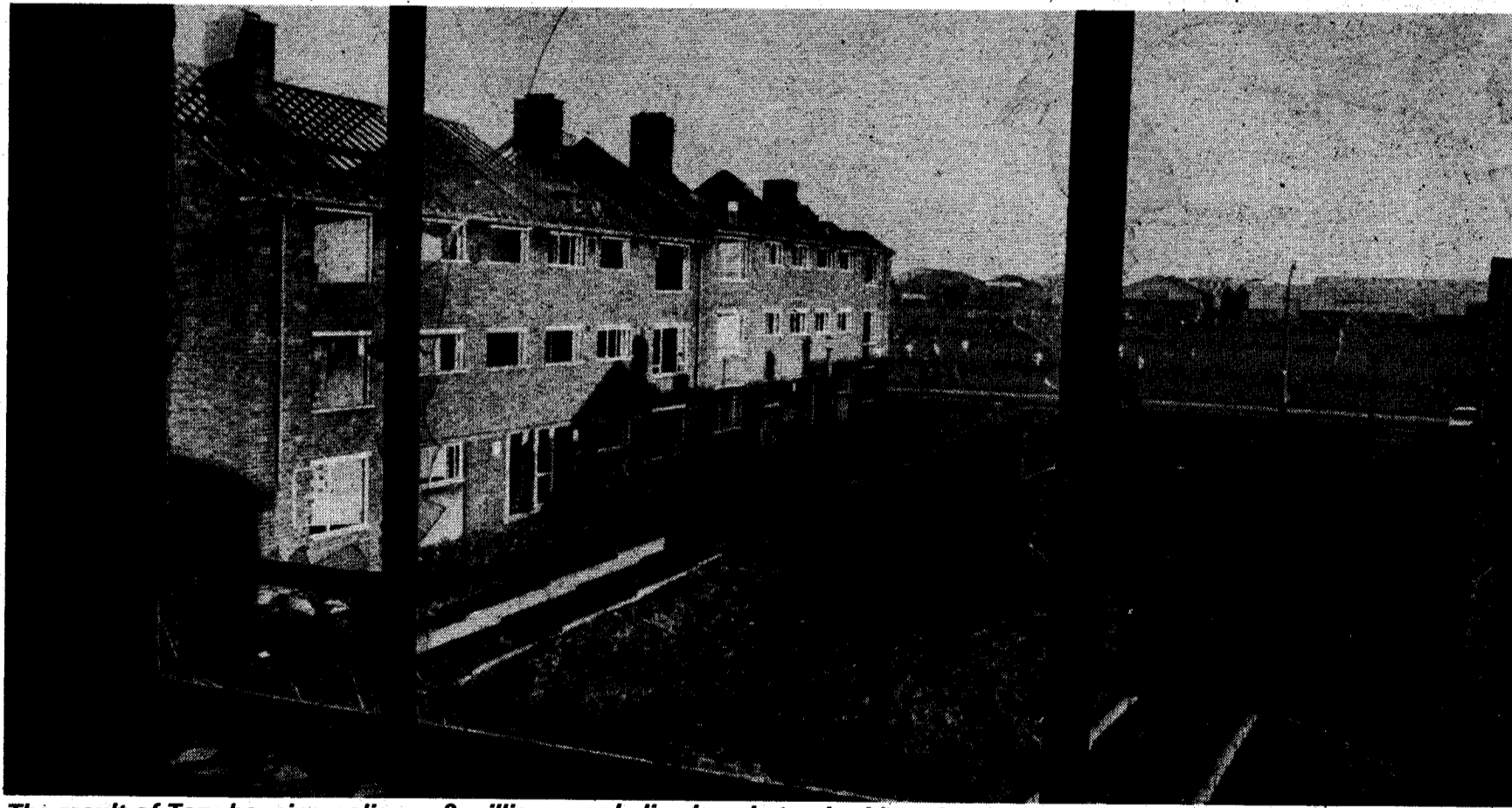
Council house tenants face a weekly rise of £3.25 in their rent. With two million people living in substandard housing, the Tories have placed a total ban on council house building until April, and they have cut next year's total building programme by a further 15 per cent.

Not content with increased rents, they have slashed the subsidy to local authorities from the Rate Support Grant, and this will lead to a further increase in rates.

## Answer

British Rail has announced 28,000 redundancies, and the National Coal Board is planning dozens of pit closures.

Our Xmas message to the Tories is simple — joint action by trades unionists and Labour Party members can stop your policies and



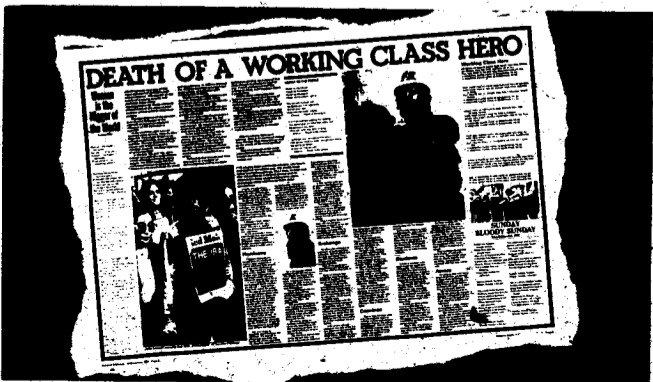
The result of Tory housing policy — 2 million people live in substandard housing.

## Support your printshop

LAST week was something of a first for us. We managed to hit the streets with a front page and a double-page

spread, on John Lennon, at one day's notice.

It was important to us,



and important to the left. The media have been full of sentimentality about John Lennon, but they haven't had a word to say about his support for the Irish cause, and the working class fight. That's part of the Lennon tradition we want to keep alive.

We were able to respond so quickly because our last fund drive helped fit out a modern and sophisticated printshop, and because of the dedication and hard work of the printshop and newspaper staff.

But unfortunately the work of equipping the printshop isn't complete. That's why we're allocating £4,000 of our £100,000 fund drive to complete the capitalisation of the printshop with much-needed stock and equipment.

The sooner we get it, the better we'll be able to respond

to more events with similar speed; the more flexible our paper will be, and the better we'll be able to fight for socialism.

So search your pockets, your conscience and your bank account, and send us a donation for Xmas!

Our thanks this week to:

MB	£20.00
Camden IMG	2.50
Bolsover IMG	10.00
Urs Kern	2.00
Colin Barnes	2.00
A Laing	12.00
Des Stevens	5.00
D Mills	2.50
Ed Mahood	10.00
A Yeeles	15.00
Middle East Cmsn	33.41
Brent IMG	2.40
Newham IMG	18.00
Anon	150.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£284.81</b>
<b>Cumulative Total</b>	<b>£4,603.10</b>

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