

Socialist Challenge

Seven per cent won't pay the rent

By Keith Legg, Stockton taxes and Phil Dexter, CPSA Longbenton

ALMOST half a million civil servants showed the Tories on Monday what they thought of the government's

7 per cent pay offer.

Monday's strike was overwhelmingly supported by civil servants throughout the country. Almost every kind of government institution was hit — from airports to tax offices, from naval shipyards to social security and vehicle licensing offices.

And now the Tories' vicious budget will be hit by our action. Customs and excise officers are threatening to delay the implementation of the new budget proposals.

Elsewhere selective strike action is taking place at key government finance and computer and installations. Ministry of Defence staff in Englescliffe, Cleveland are out, so are the revenue computer staff at Shipley in Yorkshire and Cumbernauld in the West of Scotland.

At Longbenton in Newcastle all two hundred computer operators are on strike. This action will disrupt the work of the DHSS fraud officers and ensure that all new claimants are paid at the maximum rate!

These actions should be stepped up. Picketing should be strengthened where the selective strikes are taking place and a date set to start national all-out strike action. That's the way to beat the Tories — as the miners showed.

ROBBERY!

HIGHER prices, higher taxes, and fewer jobs — that's the outcome of the third viciously anti-working class Budget that the Tories have introduced.

By not increasing income tax allowances when inflation is well over ten per cent, the Chancellor has effectively lowered the starting point for paying income taxes. The low-paid and the poor will be paying a higher proportion of their wages in taxes.

The massive price rises in cigarettes, alcohol, and petrol will inevitably hit working people hard.

The whole effect of this budget will be deflationary. More money will be taken out of the economy.

More money will be taken out of the pockets of consumers, and given to the government — and a large portion of it will inevitably end up being paid out in unemployment benefit as the declining

British economy rushes headlong towards four million unemployed.

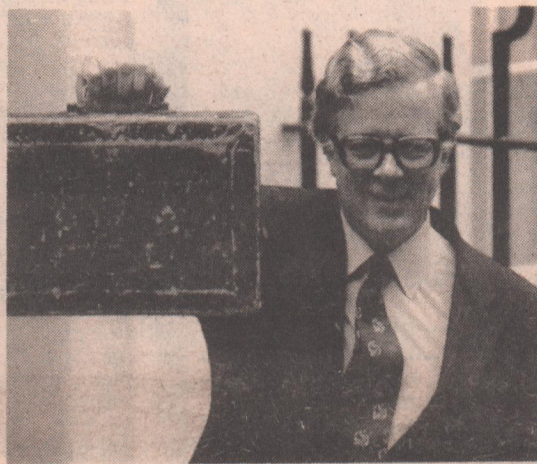
Last year industrial production in Britain declined by a staggering nine per cent.

In pursuit of their anti-working class 'monetarist' objectives, the Tories have been prepared to increase the number of unemployed endlessly.

Their aim is a dispirited and defeated workforce, with much lower wages, which will create a new basis for capitalist investment and capitalist 'prosperity' — at the expense of working people.

The only way for working people to break this spiral of decreasing living standards and deflation is to drive the Tories out of office.

So long as they remain in power, they will continue their policy of making working people pay for the crisis of their system.



VICTIMISED!

By their union for fighting cuts - full story page 2

Howe's budget will take an extra £5,000m out of our pockets — the cost of the Trident missile system



KICK OUT THE TORIES

Editorial

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Teachers' union boots out militants

SUSPENDED from the union, *banned* from holding office: these are the viciously repressive sentences handed out to six members of the National Union of Teachers by the union's disciplinary committee last weekend.

They had been charged with breaches of union discipline because Lambeth NUT supported the strike against cuts in the South London borough on 4 February.

Dick North, Bernard Regan and Dave Picton were candidates in the Inner London Teachers Association elections. The disciplinary committee found that their election address did *not* constitute a call to teachers to come out on strike.

But in a bizarre decision they were proved to have 'refused to obey an instruction from the general secretary' by not writing to teacher associations to clarify that they were *not* making such a call!

The severity of the sentences is a deliberate and determined attempt by the union leadership to strike a blow at the left. It is one of the most serious attacks against unionists in the public sector for a decade. It is an attack on these militants' activities and standing in the labour movement. And it is an open provocation to their employers.

If the appeals against the sentences fail, these teachers will be outside the trade union movement for six months — or in Dick North's case, for one year. The attack on Dick North is particularly severe: an elected member of the executive, he has been thrown off the executive and is out of the union for a year.

The ban on his holding office for a further eighteen months means, in practice, that he won't have another opportunity to stand for the executive for at least four years.

The action of members of the NUT executive in bringing these charges coincides with two significant events. First, the elections in ILTA, where three of the accused came within a couple of hundred votes of winning — in circumstances where over three hundred votes were disallowed.

Secondly, it coincides with general secretary Fred Jarvis and the NUT executive pathetically capitulating to the government on pay.

The acceptance of a miserable 7½ per cent, when inflation is double that, was on the ludicrous and untrue grounds that this is the 'going rate'. Such an argument is a nice piece of propaganda for the Tories who will use it against all public sector workers.

Jarvis and his cronies on the executive, including members of the Communist Party, are trying to build a tin pot dictatorship in the union, instead of fighting attacks on teachers' living standards.

Even Frank Chapple doesn't have a catch-all rule like 'refusing to obey an instruction from the general secretary', which can be used indiscriminately against opponents.

The campaign to defend the eight has already won the support of many sections of the labour movement. The Greater London Association of Trades Councils has passed a resolution stating that it is 'seriously concerned that members who take part in activities against the cuts in public expenditure have been, or can be, subjected to disciplinary action by their trade union.'

It went on: 'We urge the TUC to do all it can within its power to obtain the agreement of its constituent unions not to apply a rigid application of certain rules, but to follow the spirit and intention of the TUC policy of opposition to cuts.'

Now NUT associations and other bodies of the labour movement must bombard the teachers' union executive with resolutions of protest.

At a time of growing Tory attacks, never has the slogan 'an injury to one is an injury to all' been more appropriate. The labour movement has to demand that these suspensions are lifted immediately and that Jarvis's law is suspended — permanently.

The victims and their sentences

Dick North, member of the NUT executive: *GUILTY* of refusing to obey an instruction from the general secretary: He has been *SUSPENDED* from the union for one year and *banned* from holding any office, or representing the union, for a further eighteen months.

Vanessa Wiseman (president of Lambeth Trades Council), Hilary Tarr (vice president, Lambeth NUT), Gary Jones (Lambeth NUT president), Jackie North (assistant secretary, Lambeth NUT), John Esterton (general secretary, Lambeth NUT) all *GUILTY* of refusing to obey an instruction of the general secretary. They have been all *SUSPENDED* from the union for six months and *BANNED* from holding office or representing the union for a further 18 months.

Bernard Regan, Dave Picton and Dick North: *GUILTY* of refusing to obey another instruction of the general secretary. They have been *REPRIMANDED*.

JOB NOT BOMBS

BARRY WILLIAMS, president of Liverpool Trades Council, is one of the organisers of the Liverpool-London People's March for Jobs.

He told John Parkinson, secretary of Preston Trades Council, and Pete Clifford about the importance of this event and the policies the labour movement needs to adopt against the Tories.

Why has this march been organised?

Despite rising mass unemployment and closures, there hasn't really been mass action, certainly nothing comparable with what happened between the wars.

The Labour Party demonstrations have certainly raised consciousness but we believe that the struggle has to be taken a stage further. That is why we are marching on London.

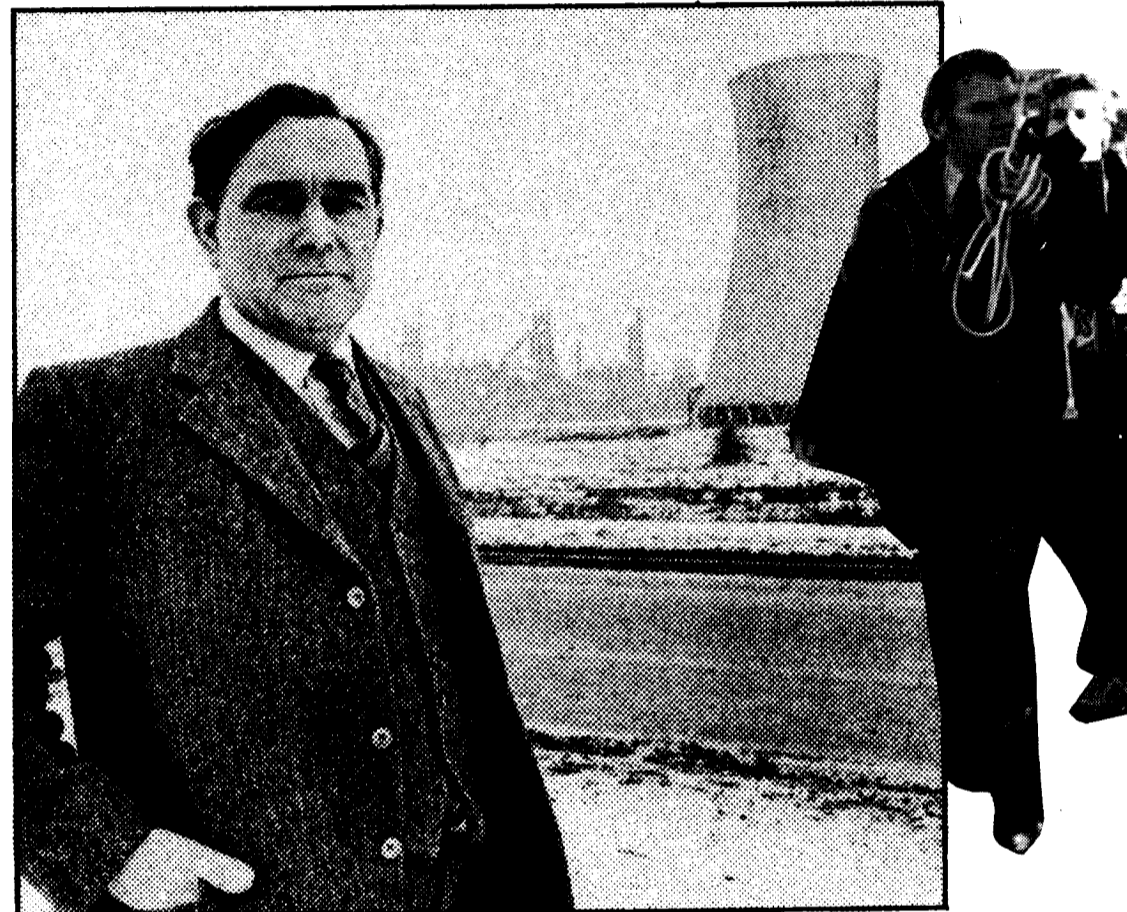
We want to embrace not only the trade unions but the whole labour movement, including ethnic, women's and youth organisations. The march is to bring people into action against this government.

We need a fundamental change not only in policy but in the type of government we have in this country. We want to mobilise the people as part of the process of bringing down the government.

The level of unemployment and poverty is comparable with the Thirties. The idea that the welfare state acts as a safety net is nonsense — people are now experiencing a great deal of misery.

Will the march be taking up the Tories' priority of spending on defence, particularly missiles and nuclear weapons?

We are completely opposed to their policy. Thatcher's visit to Reagan was to co-ordinate military,



Barry Williams, president of Liverpool Trades Council

back into the home.

We want sponsors and participants from women's and black organisations on the march. The unemployed, especially youth, should be sponsored as well as employed workers.

If we don't win youth

must be at the full-rate for a real skill, not just work experience. If youth are to have a future they must have the right to work and an allocation of jobs to protect this right.

All discrimination against black workers must end. When people are being taken on for work, trade unionists must find out how many are black, how many are young.

What policies are being put forward for solving unemployment?

There is an alternative. We need a shorter working week. Britain probably works the longest hours in industrialised Europe. Wages must be increased.

The erosion of pensions and social security rights and women's rights have to be reversed. Interest rates have to come down if local authorities are to be able

multinational scale. Liverpool was one of the first victims of the Common Market, being port on the periphery of the EEC.

The Common

'They want to drive women back into the home'

economic and social policies. Opposition to subordination to the Common Market and to the United States is implicit in the aims of this march.

If you're concerned about unemployment, about wages, you should be concerned about peace. There can be no solution as long as there is this massive mis-spending.

You're arguing for jobs not bombs?
Absolutely, yes.

What about the problems of unemployed youth, women and black workers?

We are distributing leaflets directed particularly to women's organisations. Any advance that has been made on women's rights has been thrown back by the Tory government. They want to drive women

then in the long run there's no future for the labour movement. So we must do something for youth and not just pay lip service to their problems.

Training for youth

Tories answer to the army of youth unemployed — the army

By Alix Cooke, Revolution Youth

SO YOUTH thought they had no future under the Tories. How wrong can they be.

Now, if everything goes according to plan, unemployed young people will be called-up. For six months they will receive military training in uniform by kind permission of the Ministry of Defence.

And just in case you think the nation's security may be at risk, don't worry. Normal recruitment criteria will apply.

What does this wonderful scheme have to offer the youth of Britain? — accommodation in army barracks and an allowance of £23.50 a week.

The Tories hope to do a little better out of it. Conscription will help keep the real unemployed figures down — another 700,000 school leavers

will be looking for work this summer.

And it will help keep you in our place, or so the Tories hope.

But tens of thousands of young people have marched for jobs and against bombs. And many, many more can't wait to join them.

We may be part of the army of unemployed but we won't willingly become part of the British Army of repression.

'The government should be made redundant, not the workers'

to relaunch house building programmes in order to create more jobs and homes.

Our membership of the Common Market aids those forces which are against the interests of the working class on a

Market hasn't helped any workers in Western Europe. West Germany was once called a 'economic miracle', but when capitalism is in crisis there are no miracles.

The march will

LIVERPOOL TO LONDON 1-31 MAY
**ON THE MARCH
 AGAINST
 THE
 TORIES**



arguing for the Alternative Economic Strategy. It won't solve all our problems but it's a minimum.

All this debate should take place under the umbrella of the right of every person to work. The government should be made redundant, not the workers.

How will the march be organised?

There will be a maximum of 500 on the march. Three regional councils of the TUC are involved — the North-west, West Midlands, and South-east Region. Trades councils are being contacted and we want broad-based support committees set up. There are leaflets, petitions and collection sheets ready to go out.

As the march passes through major centres we hope the local support committees will organise big reception marches and festival type events.

When the march starts in Liverpool on 1 May we want to have a traditional massive May Day demonstration, with full support from outside Liverpool. When we arrive in London we will be put up by the black community in Southall. And we would like to have a really massive demonstration and rally, although this has not been finalised.

A number of Labour MPs are supporting and

sponsoring marchers, and some will be marching with us.

My own view is that the climb down by the Tories over the miners has shown people the way if they do move en masse. And this government does have to be routed out as quickly as possible.

ALL OUT TO GREET THE MARCH

By Ray Varnes, Vice-chairperson, London divisional council NUPE

THERE should be a massive demonstration and rally in London to greet the marchers from Liverpool and Sheffield when they arrive in the capital on Friday 29 May.

This proposal from the London divisional council of the Public Employees' Union has gone forward to the Regional Labour Party in London.

To me, the proposal means taking industrial action on 29 May. The Labour Party, obviously with union backing, has shown it can mobilise over 200,000 people for the unemployment marches in Glasgow and Liverpool.

Now the London labour movement should show its strength in the fight against unemployment and to kick out the Tories.

The TUC week of action at the beginning of April and the election campaign to return a Labour Greater London Council should lead to mass action to greet the marchers at the end of May.

Such a demonstration called by the Labour Party could also help to lay the basis to stop Labour councils administering any more Tory cuts.

The Liverpool-London march must begin to unite the labour movement in mass action against the Tories.

There is a great deal of unevenness in the fight

Now organise!

● **Get your trades council and Labour Party to set up support committees open to delegations from all labour movement bodies, including black, women and youth organisations.**

● **Such support committees should organise the broadest possible solidarity with the marchers, including local demonstrations.**

Events should be planned before, during and after the march has passed through your area, up to the final national event in London at the end of May.

● **Get your trade union to nominate and sponsor a marcher, and ask your trades council or district committee to endorse her or him.**

against redundancies. We have seen the victory of the miners. But we have also seen tens of thousands of jobs lost.

Michael Edwardes has just announced that another 20,000 jobs are to go in BL.

'The miners showed the way' must be the message

that comes out of this march. They rejected the Tories' argument that there is only a future for 'profitable' pits and fought for no job loss and no closures.

They showed that the only way to defeat the Tories and defend jobs and living standards is by taking industrial action.

The Labour Party should now join with those sections of workers who are taking action.

The left wing in the party has taken important steps to democratise the election of the leader as well as the policy making process. That movement was organised by the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Party and the Rank and File Mobilising Committee.

But there is no such left wing openly campaigning in the unions for a fightback on jobs and against the Tories.

Fighting in the Labour Party and the unions for action on 29 May can begin to change that.

Is the Labour Party prepared to give a lead to the growing number of workers in its ranks and call for at least regional strike action in London and the South-East on that day?

Or are the marchers from Newcastle, Sheffield and Liverpool going to be insulted by a reception led by a handful of 'civic dignitaries' (most of whom will have just pushed through another round of cuts and rates and rent increases) and by vicars?

British Labour and Irish 'security'

By Geoff Bell

THE Labour Party has produced a consultative paper on its Irish policy. A series of questions are posed and CLPs and affiliated unions are asked to submit their views.

Socialist Challenge has run a series taking up these questions, and this week we deal with the final one, headed 'Security'.

'SECURITY' as it has come to be practised in Northern Ireland by Britain has proved no more than a euphemism for repression.

Sadly it has been previous Labour governments which have been associated with this repression.

It was a Labour government which introduced the Prevention of Terrorism Act — described at the time as 'draconian' by home secretary Roy Jenkins — as well as the Emergency Powers Act and the change of rules which has led to the horrific situation in the H Blocks and Armagh prison.

Torture

It was Labour governments which formed the now discredited and partisan Ulster Defence Regiment, and who introduced the SAS into Northern Ireland.

It was a Labour government which was found guilty by Amnesty International of using torture in police stations in Northern Ireland.

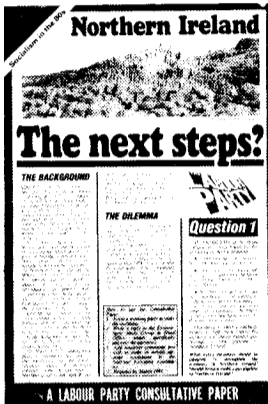
Such repression has proved necessary because in maintaining a British presence in Ireland, British governments have gone against the wishes of the Irish people as a whole.

In the most authoritative survey yet undertaken, conducted by the Irish Economic and Social Research Institute in October 1979, 70.8 per cent of those in the Republic of Ireland agreed with the statement: 'The British government should declare its intention to withdraw whether the majority in Northern Ireland agrees or not.'

Polls

A further 77.8 per cent agreed that 'the British government should announce its intention to withdraw from Northern Ireland at a fixed date in the future.'

These figures, taken together with the response to the same questions in Northern Ireland — respectively 23.6 per cent and 31.6 per cent in favour — add up to a majority of the Irish people as a whole who favour some form of British withdrawal.



There have also been majorities for withdrawal in British opinion polls.

Britain has no right to place its own conditions on a withdrawal, which would be best exercised immediately. However the government has an obligation to ensure that in the process of such a withdrawal the repressive police and institutions erected by the British are abolished.

End

Other aspects of British interference in Irish affairs, including restrictive legislation in economic and social affairs, should also be ended.

- The disarming and disbanding of the Ulster Defence Regiment.

- The repeal of the Emergency Provisions Act.

- The repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

- An amnesty for all prisoners convicted of offences arising from the political situation in Northern Ireland.

- The repeal of all socially restrictive legislation — such as that on abortion and gay rights.

- As part of a system of war reparations, the British government should maintain financial aid after withdrawal to all business concerns which do not discriminate against Catholics.

- The repeal of the 1921 Government of Ireland Act, the 1949 Ireland Act, and all previous legislation through which Britain has interfered in Irish affairs.

- The final conditions of British withdrawal to be determined by a representative body of all-Ireland opinion, such as a 32-county constituent assembly.



Last year's International Women's Day protest outside Armagh prison

THE LARK

MY grandfather once said that the imprisonment of the lark is a crime of the greatest cruelty because the lark is one of the greatest symbols of freedom and happiness.

He often spoke of the spirit of the lark relating to a story of a man who incarcerated one of his loved friends in a small cage. The lark having suffered the loss of her liberty, no longer sung her little heart out, she no longer had anything to be happy about.

Atrocity

The man who had committed the atrocity, as my grandfather called it, demanded that the lark should do as he wished: that was to sing her heart out, to comply to his wishes and change

IRISH political prisoner Bobby Sands is now in the second week of his hunger strike in the H Blocks of Long Kesh, Northern Ireland.

Portrayed in the British media as a mad, ruthless 'terrorist', this is Bobby Sands' evocative reply, first published two years ago in *An Phoblacht/Republican News*

herself to suit his pleasure or benefit.

Murder

The lark refused and the man became angry and violent. He began to pressurise the lark to sing but inevitably he received no result. So he took more drastic steps. He covered the cage with a black cloth, depriving the bird of sunlight. He starved it and left it to rot in a dirty cage, but the bird still refused to yield. The man murdered it.

As my grandfather rightly stated, the lark had spirit, the spirit of freedom and resistance. It longed to be free and died before it would conform to the tyrant who tried to change it with torture and imprisonment.

Spirit

I feel I have something in common with that bird and her torture, imprisonment and final murder. She had a spirit which is not commonly found even among us so-called superior beings:

Take an ordinary prisoner. His main aim is to make his period of imprisonment as easy and comfortable as possible.

The ordinary prisoner will in no way jeopardise a single day of his remission. Some will even grovel, crawl and inform on other prisoners to safeguard themselves or to speed up their release. They will comply with the wishes of their captors, and unlike the lark, they will sing when told to and jump high when told to move.

Machine

Although the ordinary prisoner has lost his liberty he is not prepared to go to extremes to regain it, nor to protect his humanity. He settles for a short date of release.

Eventually if incarcerated long enough he becomes institutionalised, becoming a type of machine, not thinking for himself, his captors dominating and controlling him.

That was the intended fate of the lark in my grandfather's story; but the lark needed no changing, nor did it wish to change, and died making that point.

This brings me directly back to my own situation: I feel something in common with that poor bird. My position is in total contrast to that of



Bobby Sands: a spirit for freedom

an ordinary conforming prisoner; I am a political prisoner, a freedom fighter.

Like the lark I too have fought for my freedom, not only in captivity where I now languish, but also while on the outside where my country is held captive. I have been captured and imprisoned but like the lark I too have seen the outside of the wire cage.

I am now in H Block where I refuse to change to suit the people who oppress, torture and imprison me and who wish to de-humanise me. Like the lark I need no changing.

Dignity

It is my political ideology and principles that my captors wish to change. They have suppressed my body and attacked my dignity. If I were an ordinary prisoner they would pay little if any attention to me, knowing that I would conform to their institutional whims.

I have lost over two years remission. I care not. I have been stripped of my clothes and locked in a dirty empty cell where I have been starved, beaten and tortured and like the lark I fear I

may eventually be murdered.

But dare I say it, similar to my little friend I have a spirit for freedom that can not be quenched by even the most horrendous treatment. Of course, I can be murdered but while I remain alive I remain what I am, a political prisoner of war and no one can change that.

Finish

I dare not conclude without finishing my grandfather's story. I once asked him whatever happened to the wicked man who imprisoned, tortured, and murdered the lark.

'Son,' he said, 'one day he caught himself on one of his own traps, and no-one would assist him to get free. His own people scorned him, and turned his backs on him.'

He grew weaker and weaker and finally he toppled over to die upon the land which he had marred with so much blood. The birds came and extracted their revenge by picking his eyes out and the lark's sang like they never sang before.

'Grandfather,' I said, 'could that man's name have been John Bull?'



THE newly-formed Black Media Workers Association is taking action over Fleet Street's coverage of the New Cross fire massacre march.

Distorted

It has written to the editors of the *Daily Express*, *Daily Star*, the *Sun*, *Daily Mail*, and *Daily Mirror* complaining about their distorted

Black media workers act on press coverage

and misleading reports, which focused on black violence to the virtual exclusion of the issues involved.

Feeling

The association aims to contact union officials at several of these newspapers to see if it is possible to convene meetings to explain the depth of feeling in the

black community arising from the massacre.

If necessary, it will take direct action in order to secure the right of reply.

The association was set up at a one-day seminar held on 28 February, which was attended by 50 Asians and Afro-Caribbeans working in both editorial and technical jobs in the media.

It is now to decide an action programme on racist and third world coverage, and on the issue of jobs and training for black people in the media. The seminar was backed by the media unions ACTT and NUJ.

Organiser

One of the organisers of the new association, Diane Abbott, of

Thames TV, says that they want to have a working relationship with the Campaign Against Racism in the Media, which was formed in 1976.

CARM has issued two press releases on the massacre coverage.

Further details from: BMWA, 29c Lanhill Rd, London W9. Tel 01-262 8846. CARM, PO Box 50, London N1.

What now, after New Cross?

By Laura Mitchell

WHEN thousands of black people — mainly youth — bring the centre of London, the heartland of British imperialism, to a halt and thereby focus the whole of the country's attention on racism, something is happening.

That is exactly what did occur on 2 March when up to 10,000 blacks marched to, and for a while took over, Central London.

The demonstration had been organised in response to a massive cover-up of the fire at a party in New Cross on 18 January in which 13 black youth, aged between 14 and 20, died.

Attack

All the evidence points to the fact that the fire was a deliberate attack by local fascists.

The downstairs window in the house which was attacked was smashed from the outside. Just before the fire started a white man, outside the house, was seen making a throwing action, jumping into a car and speeding off.

The fire fits into a pattern of a series of arson attacks in black people's property and clubs in the area. The local National Front organiser was recently jailed for attempted arson — he was discovered making an incendiary device.

Party

The police, backed by Tory home secretary Willie Whitelaw and the national media are maintaining that the fire was started by a black person at the party — just like all those synagogues attacked in Hitler's Ger-



Blacks on the march over the New Cross fire last week

many were really destroyed in fires started by Jews!

For six weeks the attack on the party received scant treatment in the media. The demonstration on 2 March was designed to change all that. And so it did.

The media were forced to take up the demonstration and the events which led up to it. But how they took up was just one more example of racism. 'Rampage', 'riot', and 'black mob' were the words most commonly used to describe the protest march.

The reason for this was that, for the establishment, the demonstration spelt danger. It showed that black people would fight and organise.

On 2 March they did so, largely by themselves. No assistance was offered or given by the mass organisations of the working class — the Labour Party and the trade unions.

The house that was attacked was two doors away from the local Labour Party offices. The local MP, John Silkin, Tony Benn, and other Labour Party MPs were lobbied to get parliament adjourned for the day of the march, but with no success.

The demonstration itself passed the national headquarters of the Labour Party, outside of which one solitary, middle-aged white male stood and watched like a disinterested spectator.

Yet the truth is that the fire in New Cross and the demonstration will never be forgotten —

CAMPAIGN AGAINST RACIST LAWS



either by the state or by black people. Black people have thrown down a challenge to the racist society in which they live, and in that conflict working people are forced to choose — either with the blacks or against them.

There is a wider context. There was a very strong 'black consciousness' element on the demonstration, a consciousness which was internationalist and anti-imperialist in its implications.

The black struggle in Britain feeds on the revolutions in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Grenada. There are parallels, too, with the

growth of the civil rights movement in the 1960s and '70s.

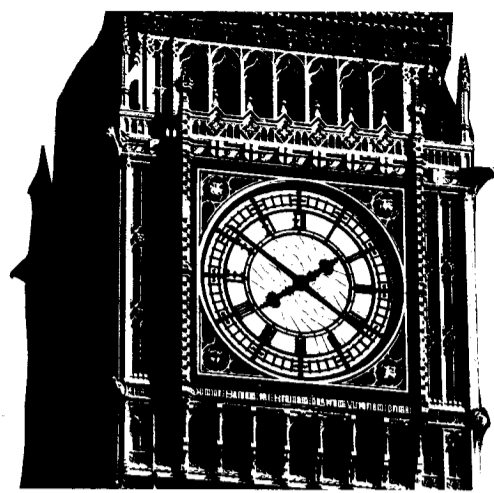
The democratic rights which black people in this country do have are being threatened by the Tory government. Couple that with the growth of the British Movement and massive unemployment in the black communities, and the situation becomes explosive.

The development after last week's march over the massacre is the demonstration in London on 5 April against the Nationalities Bill. After 2 March black people and their supporters can look forward to that demonstration with a new confidence.

Other marches against the Nationalities Bill include

Bradford — Sat 14 March. Assemble 11am, Lister Park, Manningham, Bradford.

Leeds — Sat 28 March. Assemble 1pm, Saville Pk, off Chapletown Rd.



Is parliament democratic?

By Alan Freeman

WHO really runs the country? The democracy struggle in the Labour Party has once again raised this question.

The right wingers say that the reforms in the party threaten democracy — the right of the population to elect MPs, control governments, and if necessary throw them out.

In fact, the parliamentary system goes nowhere near ensuring control of and by the people.

To start with, parliament does not just consist of elected MPs. There is also the House of Lords, which isn't elected but has the power to delay and control legislation. Cabinet ministers can be, and are, chosen from the House of Lords, like the present foreign secretary, Lord Carrington.

The cabinet itself is chosen by the prime minister, who has absolute power to appoint or sack anyone he or she wants. During Harold Wilson's reign he appointed 100 cabinet ministers, 403 junior ministers, created 243 peers, appointed 24 chairpeople of nationalised industries, and 16 heads of royal commissions.

The prime minister is not elected either — but chosen by the monarch. In 1931 King George V re-appointed Ramsay MacDonald as PM, although by that time he had ditched the Labour Party, on the strength of whose votes he had originally become prime minister in 1929.

Once appointed, the cabinet only has to refer legislation to parliament. Without consulting parliament, cabinets can — and have — declared war, states of emergency, and embarked on a new weapons programme, as Attlee did when the British atom bomb programme was initiated.

Indeed, there are many things cabinet ministers are not allowed to tell parliament.

On taking office they take a privy councillor's oath which imposes a special obligation to preserve government secrecy. Cabinet minutes are not made public for 30 years.

Nor can the cabinet and government be removed from office by parliament. A convention has grown up whereby a government resigns if it loses a vote of confidence, but there is no way of enforcing this procedure.

Strangely enough, the cabinet has the right to sack parliament — which it does when it calls a general election.

This means that a government which has minority support in its own party, the party that voters put in power, can force its policies on the party by threatening to resign from office and call a general election.

The whole idea that the most popular party at the polls automatically becomes the government is rendered false by the practice of forming coalitions, through which governments are established for which no one voted. Britain has spent 24 years under coalition or minority governments in this century.

Finally, parliament can, if it wishes, maintain itself as long as it likes. It did so in 1914 and 1939, leading to parliaments which lasted eight and ten years respectively.

So the whole idea that when the voters go to the polls they are electing a government is a gross exaggeration.

The late cabinet minister Richard Crossman offered this view of the House of Commons: 'It can only advise and warn, as the monarchy could 100 years ago, whereas the effective power is outside the Commons.'

Picket for Anwar Ditta

THE case of Anwar Ditta, the Asian woman separated from her children by Britain's racist immigration laws, is the subject of a *World in Action* television programme on Monday 16 March, at 8.30pm.

The following day there will be a picket of the Home Office, opposite St James Park tube station, from 11am until lunchtime, in support of Anwar.

By Arthur Smith

THE entire Soviet politburo was unanimously re-elected to power at the 26th Communist Party congress in Moscow. That's a fitting symbol for the politics of the Soviet leaders: preservation at all costs of the status quo.

The average age of the politburo members is 69. Chief ideologist Suslov is 78 and the new premier Tikhonov is 75. These ageing bureaucrats fear above all any challenge to their rule throughout the Soviet bloc. The crisis in Poland therefore dominated the congress.

The Soviet leaders emphasised that the present course of events in Poland was unacceptable. Other delegates were wheeled out to press home the point. Even Fidel Castro put the crisis down to 'Western attempts to destabilise Poland'.

Polish party leader Stanislaw Kania argued differently. He claimed that the 'problems' in Poland arose from 'breaches in socialist legality' by the Gierek and Gomulka regimes, which had alienated large sections of the population including many Communist Party members.

The Soviet leaders would dearly love the Polish problem to go away. In the meantime they are exerting the maximum pressure on the Polish CP to roll back the gains made by the Polish workers.

Soviet Communist Party congress

Opting for the status quo — and hoping for the best

Another problem discussed at the congress was the upsurge of revolution in Central America, and the increasing cold war stance of the Reagan regime in the USA. The Soviet regime remains wedded to peaceful co-existence, and it seems likely that they severely miscalculated Western reaction to their invasion of Afghanistan.

Brezhnev used the congress to take a bold initiative to put the West on the defensive over Cruise missiles, by proposing a freeze on the stationing of medium range missiles in Europe, and a reciprocal freezing of the construction of nuclear submarines. This proposal is a positive one, which can only serve to undermine the cold-war hysteria in the West.

The place of Fidel Castro as one of the most honoured guests of the Congress underlined the fact that in the face of Reagan's cold war threats it is impossible for the Soviet Union to abandon Cuba. El Salvador however is a very different matter.

All the noises coming out of Moscow have strenuously denied any connection with the events in El Salvador: for the Soviet bureaucrats, an American intervention in El Salvador would no more interfere with the

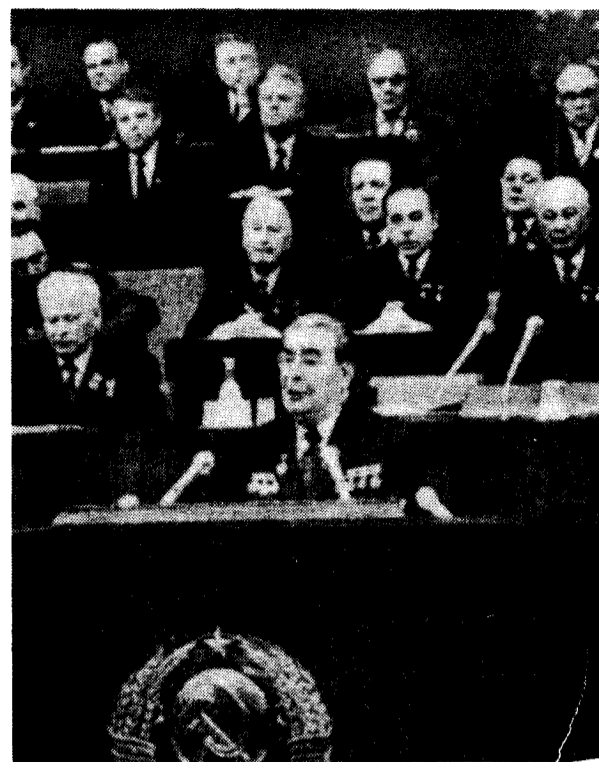
process of trying to reconstruct detente than the Vietnam war did in the '60s and '70s.

Soviet premier Tikhonov reported to the congress on the relative stagnation of the economy. A combination of increasing raw material prices, increased arms expenditure to meet the Western threat, and the inertia of a bureaucratically centralised economy, are posing severe difficulties in raising the standard of living of the people.

The response of Tikhonov was to urge Soviet workers to 'work harder and work better'. In the Soviet Union, where all independent initiative is stifled, such a call is hardly likely to meet with results.

The deadening hand of tight control by the bureaucracy permeated the whole atmosphere of the congress itself; no real debates, no counter-reports, unanimity in voting, 5000 delegates sitting as an appreciative but uncritical audience.

Despite the smooth running of the congress, the workers of Poland and El Salvador, and eventually the Soviet Union, are unlikely to let the Soviet leaders continue to live where most of them belong — in the past.



No change in the Soviet politburo — the ageing bureaucrats crave the status quo

Poland: the truce begins to break

By Davy Jones

A DRAMATIC new threat to the Polish workers has been issued by Soviet President Brezhnev. At a summit meeting last week the Polish party leader Stanislaw Kania and new premier General Jaruzelski were told to roll back the gains made by the Polish workers — or else.

Brezhnev warned them that the 'pillars of socialist society' were in peril. He needn't have worried though as the Polish leaders promised that they would 'move swiftly against anarchy and disarray'.

Within days of the summit the Polish security police arrested leading dissident Jacek Kuron and held him for six hours. He now faces possible imprisonment on charges of 'slandering the state'.

These moves threaten to undermine the 90-day strike truce for which General Jaruzelski appealed when he took of-

face. Solidarity's national executive met in emergency session on Saturday and demanded an end to Kuron's harassment.

Alert

And Solidarity officials in Lodz have begun a series of strike actions to defend five union activists dismissed from their jobs a month ago.

Dissent is also growing within the Polish Communist Party. The leadership is backtracking on the promised party congress in March or April. The February cen-

tral committee failed to set a date for the congress and the preparatory commission meeting this week was postponed.

Rank and file members of the party are involved in a campaign for greater party democracy. Initiated in Torun last autumn it has now spread to Gdansk and Poznan. A consultative committee has been set up which has issued an appeal for unity 'against the conservative part of the bureaucracy'.

As part of the new crackdown Zbigniew Ivanov, leader of the democratic currents in Torun, has had his expulsion from the CP upheld by the party control commission.

Solidarity leader Bogdan Lis was in London last week to discuss practical aid from the British TUC. Lis explained at a press conference that the workers' object was 'not to change the system established thirty years ago but to get rid of the wrongs and injustices of the system'.

Appeal

He added that Solidarity now has 10 million members, one and a half million of whom are in the Communist Party. Len Murray announced that the TUC would launch an appeal for £20,000 for equipment and aid for Solidarity which the TUC regarded as 'by far the most representative organisation of the Polish workers'.

Socialists in Britain can use the TUC appeal to win broader support for the Polish workers in the labour movement. They may need that support soon if Brezhnev gets his way.

A solidarity demonstration with the Polish workers planned for 15 March in London has



Under the shadow of Soviet tanks the Polish workers discuss the new government offensive

Who is Jacek Kuron?

JACEK KURON was picked up by the authorities again last week sparking a new crisis. He has long been a thorn in the side of the Polish bureaucrats. The son of an old communist cadre he helped to form a discussion circle at Warsaw University after the 1956 events, from which many of the subsequent dissident currents among the intellectuals emerged. He also initiated opposition work within the party youth organisation.

In 1964 he was expelled from the Communist Party for having jointly authored with Karel Modzelewsky the Open Letter to the Polish Communist Party. This document represented a systematic Marxist critique of the bureaucratic system in Poland. For this Kuron was sentenced to three years in prison. After a solidarity campaign he was released in early 1968, only to be re-arrested in March after the student riots. He was only re-released in 1971.

After years of continuing opposition activity he helped to set up KOR (the Social Self-Defence Committee) in 1976. KOR won respect inside the Polish working class for its persistent defence work of dissidents and its propaganda for independent trade unions. Last summer Kuron was appointed as an advisor to the independent trade union movement, Solidarity. Since then he has been the target of a vicious campaign of slander by the official East European press.

been postponed because of Whitelaw's three week ban on marches. It had won the support of Tony Benn, Eric Heffer and six other Labour MPs, as well as Bernard Dix and Ron Keating of NUPE.

Details

For information on future solidarity activities contact: Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign, 10 Park Drive, London NW11.

Socialist Challenge/Revolution Youth
PUBLIC MEETING

**Don't Die for Thatcher and Reagan
US hands off El Salvador**

Wednesday 18 March at 7.30pm
Station Hotel, Wicker, Sheffield 3

US Hands off El Salvador

**DEMONSTRATE
Sat 4 April**

OXFORD

2.30 p.m. The Plains through city centre

EDINBURGH

10.30 a.m. Kings Stable Rd to US Consulate

Labour Party — Stop the missiles

Don't select your candidate from a shortlist of one

LONDON-WIDE PUBLIC MEETING

organised by
LAMBETH LABOUR LEFT

Friday 3 April 8pm
Lambeth Town Hall,
Acre Lane, SW2

Speakers from
CAMDEN LABOUR LEFT
LAMBETH TRADE UNIONS
LAMBETH LABOUR LEFT

fighting for a policy of
**NO CUTS,
NO RATE OR RENT
INCREASES,
NO COUNCIL HOUSE
SALES**

All Labour Party Members
welcome

ATTEMPTS by some local right wing Labour executive committees to bar alternative candidates to a favoured candidate during the re-selection process have led to a debate about the use of one-person shortlists.

VLADIMIR DERER, honorary secretary of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, put the CLPD position in a letter to *Tribune*.

CONTRARY to published reports, we understand that the reselection guidelines finally agreed by the National Executive Committee make no mention of shortlists of one as such.

They simply lay down that the procedure 'should follow the practice normally adopted for ordinary selection conferences' — with addition, of course, of the automatic short-listing of

the sitting MP.

The normal practice at present is that the NEC does not accept shortlists of one, even if there is only one nominee.

The practice which opponents of mandatory reselection would like to see adopted is that the NEC should endorse shortlists of one, even if there is more than one nominee. This seems to be quite out of order under the rules as they stand at present.

The point is that the

rules are made by conference, and constituency parties have no right to go further than the rules allow.

The legal advice we have been given points out that the rules do not even allow for short-listing unless the number of nominees makes it necessary. Therefore a shortlist of one is permissible if there is only one nominee, but not in any other case.

CLPD urges wrongfully excluded nominees and their nominating bodies to insist

on their rights — not (it goes without saying) by applying to the courts for an injunction, but by an immediate appeal to the NEC.

We feel confident that the NEC's established custom and practice, backed up by the constitution and rules laid down by annual conference, will ensure that shortlisting is not abused to pre-empt the decision which must be taken by the selection conference.

Purchasers of Chris Mullin's booklet, *How to Select or Reselect your MP*, in which the NEC guidelines for parliamentary selection are published for the first time, should note that these new need bringing up to date accordingly.

A note of the necessary

changes can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to: CLPD, 10 Park Drive, London NW11 7SH.

Hackney North Labour Party defies cuts

HACKNEY North Labour Party has called on the Labour council in the East London borough not to introduce any rate rises or cuts next year.

The party decided on Wednesday of last week that it will initiate public meetings to build support for this policy among tenants associations, trade unions, and community organisations.

The party wants to cooperate with trade unions, tenants associations, ethnic groups, and local organisations of all kinds to organise a workers' inquiry to establish the needs of the borough, as a way of rallying people to a set of positive proposals against the cuts.

If Hackney council does increase rent and rates, Hackney North Labour Party will organise and support a rent and rates strike by the people of Hackney.

Speaking on behalf of the CLP, Chris Morris says: 'The government has cut Hackney's rate support grant by £15m and wants to see a disastrous cut in services in Hackney. But to pay for the planned level of service would mean a rate increase of 77 per cent, which would also be disastrous for the people of Hackney.'

'The council can only serve the people of Hackney if a massive campaign forces the government to abandon its attacks.'

He added: 'The party wants to link up with those who have already taken action, such as tenants on the Lea View and Kingsmead Estates, and Hackney NALGO, in order to build a campaign that can defeat the government.'

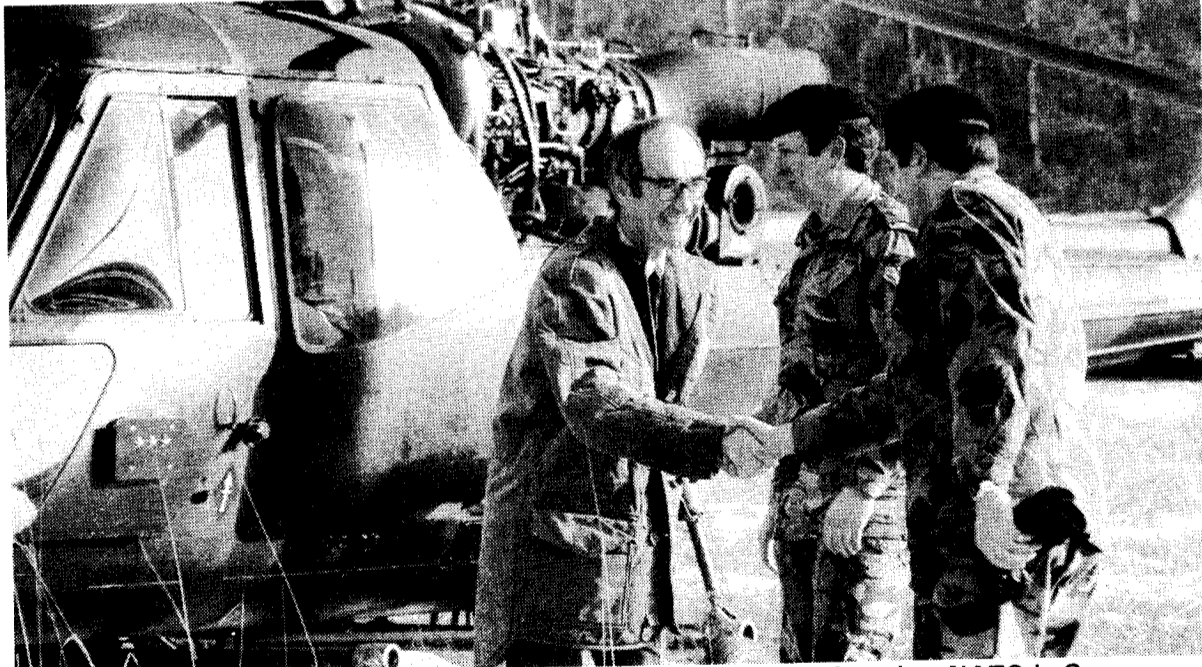
MPs debate our nuclear future

THE 3 March parliamentary debate on Britain's nuclear strategy and the purchase of the Trident missile system illustrated the basis of Tory foreign policy and the division within the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Labour MP Peter Snape summed up the Tory approach to world politics today: 'We could write a song about it entitled *If it's all right with Ronnie, it's all right with me.*'

But opposition to the government's foreign policy was fairly muted. No one really questioned the need for millions being spent on defence while millions of people go without work and social benefits are cut.

Virtually everyone who spoke laid the blame for the war drive on the Soviet Union. No one



John Nott, Tory minister of defence inspecting British troops assigned to NATO in Germany

threat NATO can offer no security without nuclear weapons:

'Deterrence means providing ourselves with the capacity to exact unacceptable destruction, so that anyone thinking of attacking us is bound to calculate that the risks outweigh any possible gain.'

'The time has come,' he continued, 'to update our theatre nuclear capacity by the stationing of US Cruise missiles... to put right our long neglected civil defence and replace Polaris with the Trident system.'

Lining up firmly with imperialism, David Owen said that Social Democratic government in 1984 would carry on the Polaris weapon system rather than Trident for NATO. He ad-

mitted that Labour's policy of unilateral disarmament was a vote-catcher.

Foot

He demanded that Michael Foot as Labour leader should recognise that it is 'not in keeping with his responsibilities to continue to peddle the doctrine of unilateral disarmament.'

Owen added that if Foot becomes prime minister he should continue with Polaris and not send Cruise missiles back to the US without arms talks, and make a contribution to NATO as part of an overall strategy of detente and deterrence.

The shadow defence minister, Brynmor John, put the official Parliamentary Labour

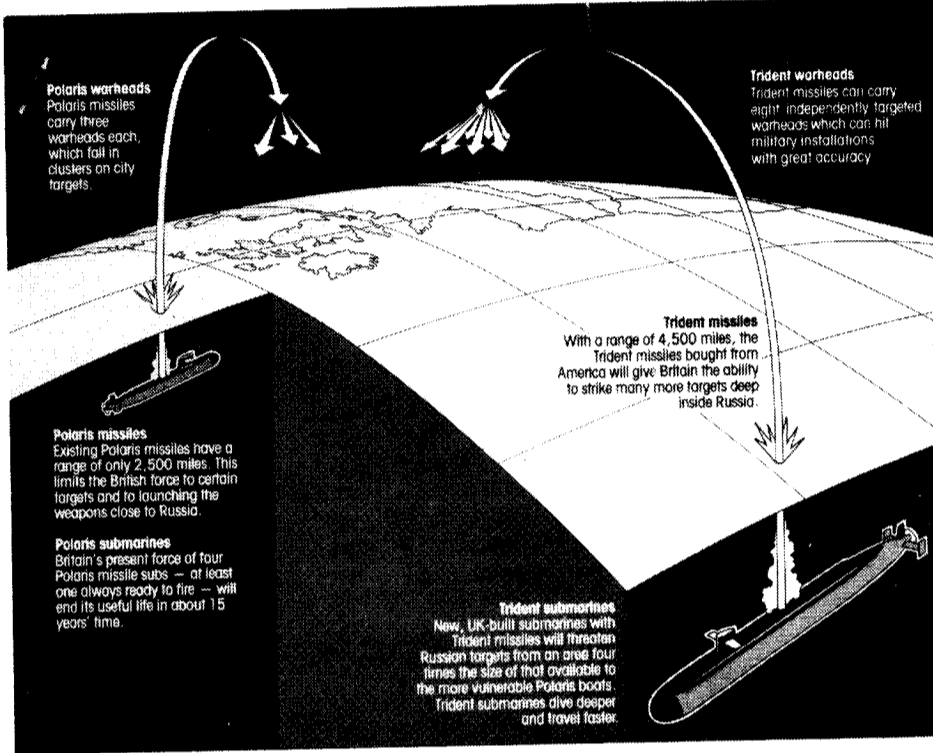
Party line, making no mention of Labour's conference decisions of unilateral disarmament.

He objected that the £5bn to be spent on Trident would be at the expense of the rest of the defence budget. 'Already we have ships that don't sail and planes that don't fly.'

John complained that the government was taking on new commitments above and beyond Trident, such as the rapid deployment force sponsored by Thatcher.

Opposition

Left Tribune Bob Cryer gave the clearest statement against the nuclear arms race: 'I shall oppose nuclear weapons for as long as I



By Toni Gorton



Eric Heffer

commented on the fact that it was the United States alone that has used nuclear weapons during war time. All accepted participation in the NATO military alliance.

Eric Heffer, leading left spokesperson for the Labour Party, presented his position in terms of 'the best way of defending this country', as if the interests of the British working class were the same as those of the ruling class.

The Secretary of State for Defence, John Nott, explained that because of the Soviet

'Why is this country committed to a level of growth in its nuclear weaponry which, for example enormously outstrips by 200 to 300 per cent the expected increase in French nuclear strength over the next decade?'
Peter Snape MP

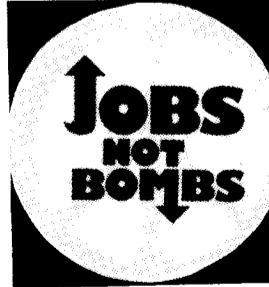
Anti-missile Action Guide

WHAT'S on against the missiles? The following events are listed by CND. If you have a film show a demonstration, a public meeting or other anti-nuclear event, please send the details to us and CND.



- 14 March:** Clydebank CND assemble at 1pm at the High Park, Hawthorn St. March to rally at Dalmeir Park at 3pm.
- 14 March:** Sheffield nuclear disarmament demonstration and rally. Assemble 10.30/11.30am, Carlisle St. Rally in the City Oval Hall featuring Neil Kinnock MP, Ray Buckton ASLEF, Bruce Kent CND.
- 14-21 March:** Cardiff Week of Action includes meetings with EP Thompson, showings of *The War Game*, public meeting 'Nuclear Weapons, US war drive and El Salvador'. Rock concert and socials, poetry readings. Ending with demonstration 'No Cruise missiles, No Trident subs — Jobs not Bombs' on 21 March. Invited speakers from the National Union of Mineworkers, Labour Party, Plaid Cymru and CND. Phone John Southern, secretary of Cardiff CND 0222-372674.
- 26 March:** Journalists Against Nuclear Extermination meeting at NUFTO Hall, 14 Jockies Fields, London WC1, at 7.45pm. Speakers: Melvyn Bragg and the two Duncan Campbells of *New Statesman* and *Time Out*. Chairperson, Linda Rogers, NUJ national organiser (personal capacity). Further details from JANE, c/o NUJ Magazine Branch, 314 Gray's Inn Rd, London WC1.
- 28 March:** Ealing Trades Council coach to CND Labour

- Movement conference against the Missiles, Manchester. Phone Andy (574-2895) for details. £6 return.
- South London coach to Missiles conference. Leaves Lambeth Town Hall at 6am. Clapham Junction at 6.15. Tel: 01-582 2955 for details.
- 31 March:** Islington CND public meeting. Speakers: Jo Richardson MP, Melvyn Bragg, Duncan Campbell, Cllr Margaret Pitt, Dr Berry Beaumont. 8pm, Central Library, off Holloway Rd, London N7.
- 12 April:** Trans-Pennine march starting in Leeds — through Rochdale to Manchester.
- 18 April:** Mass demonstration called by CND and Manchester Against the Missiles to greet the Trans-Pennine March. Details tel: 061-236 4905.
- 25 April:** 'Jobs not Bombs' march in Stockton (Bill Rodgers constituency). Speakers from LP, CND, Trades Council. Assemble Norton Green, 12.30pm. Details tel: 062-244316.
- Easter:** No Aldermaston march. There will be large events in all regional centres.
- May Day:** National CND conference in London. Details from: CND, 11 Goodwin St, London N4. Tel: 01-263 4954.



have breath in my body. I am opposed to nuclear weapons here, in NATO, or anywhere else in the world.'

He stated that unilateral disarmament by Britain would encourage all those opposed to nuclear weapons.

It would give heart to all those in America who forced their government to get out of Vietnam when they were waging the fiercest war ever inflicted on a tiny agrarian country.'

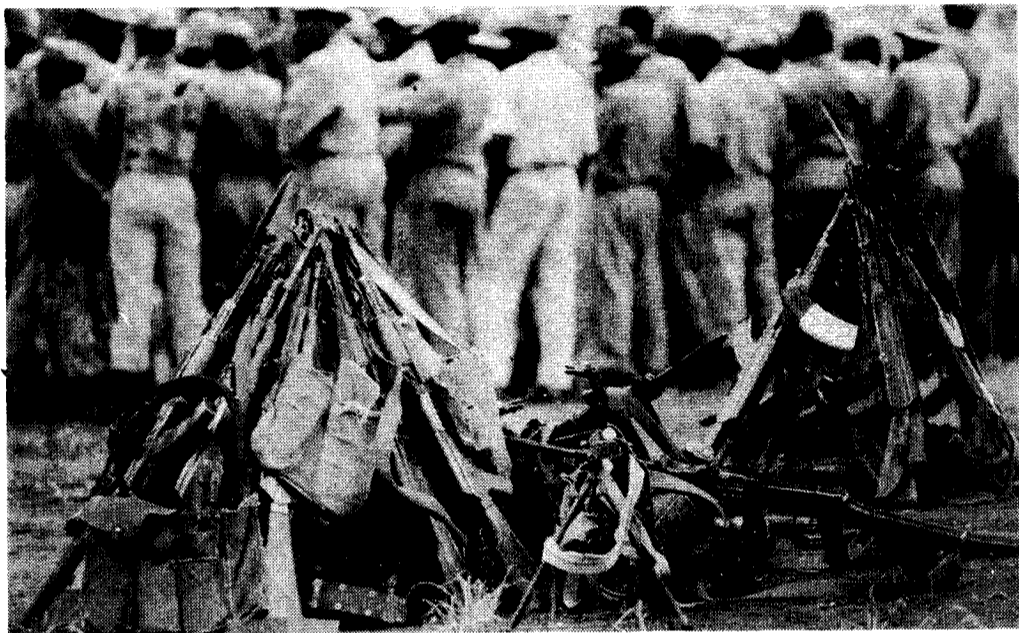


A REVOLUTION IN STRAIGHT-JACK WHITE INSTITUTIONS

ON 5 March last year, Robert Mugabe took over the reins of power from the white Rhodesians.

One year later many of the Zimbabweans who supported the long guerilla struggle for national liberation feel they have gained little from Mugabe's government.

RICHARD LLEWELYN examines the strings attached to black majority rule.



NDEBELE ORIENTATED TRIBES
% of population

1, Ndebele	14%
2, Kalanga	5%

SHONA ORIENTATED TRIBES

3, Rozwi	9%
4, Korekore	12%
5, Zezuru	18%
6, Manyika	13%
7, Karanga	22%
8, Ndeu	3%

OTHERS

9, Tonga	2%
10, Venda	1%
11, Shonga	1%



'TRIBALISM' has long been the reflex of the Western journalist trying to explain African politics.

Sure enough, the foreign press corps in Zimbabwe, every last one of them, has used it to explain the recent confrontations between the guerilla armies.

This explanation could be put to a simple test. Take all the foreign journalists in Zimbabwe. Lock them up in urban camps, four to a tiny room in windowless, breeze-block huts, or in even worse conditions in rural assembly points.

Don't pay them on time; sometimes don't pay them at all.

Give them nothing to do (the correspondents wouldn't mind that bit), and periodically lecture them on the need for discipline and restraint. Keep them in these conditions for more than 13 months. At the end, ask them to give a reasonable and restrained opinion of 'tribalism'.

This is what the guerillas have had to put up with since the ceasefire in January last year.

Despite being told that they were the victors in the eight-year war of liberation, and despite the odd speech thanking them for their sacrifice, they are treated more like prisoners of war.

By contrast the soldiers of the former Rhodesian army, the 'losers', still live in barracks and draw their pay on time.

Scheme

The media, always on the lookout for 'ironies', thought they had found one when Prime Minister Robert Mugabe sent in the former Rhodesian African Rifles to deal with the guerillas in Bulawayo and near Gwelo.

Yet this was the predictable outcome of the scheme for a 'national army' which was meant to incorporate the Rhodesians and the two guerilla armies.



Photo: LESLEY MCINTYRE

Disabled ZIPRA guerrilla at a centre in Bulawayo

By transforming the guerillas from representatives of the liberation struggle into conventional soldiers it was inevitable that they would have to accept the discipline and the assumptions behind the old white settler army.

Anyone who resisted this would have to be beaten into line. That is what happened in Bulawayo.

If there is an irony, it is the fact that the two guerilla armies began to fight each other and not their old enemies. Contrary to what the media say, the guerillas are probably less disposed towards sectarianism or tribal hostility than their counterparts in the political parties.

It is not true, for example, that the ZANLA guerillas are loyal to Edgar Tekere, a leading ZANU member

who has made frequent attacks on the Patriotic Front.

Historically the reverse has been the case. ZANLA members have been more inclined to co-operate with ZIPRA and the PF.

The fighting was caused by a number of things: poor conditions in the camps; boredom and too much alcohol; and fear on ZIPRA's part that its political leaders were being humiliated. In the longer term, the senseless division within the nationalist ranks plays a large part.

Conflict

And, yes, tribal rivalries between the majority Shonas and the minority Bdebeles played their part too, though this must be seen in the context of all the other political problems.

The basic cause of the conflict is that the leadership of both parties have refused to carry through the liberation struggle to its proper conclusion by doing away with the old institutions of the Rhodesian state.

They are under strong pressure from the Tory government which drew up the terms for Zimbabwe's independence and now provides British military instructors to knock 'wrong' political ideas out of the heads of national army recruits.

It is easy to see why Mugabe, Nkomo and their colleagues have taken this course. They want to avoid the flight of white skilled personnel and capital which threw the Mozambican and Angolan economies into chaos after independence.

But if retaining white confidence means sending in the Rhodesian army against liberation fighters, the price is too high.

There is a straight choice between the interests of the white generals and landlords and capitalists and those of the black guerillas and peasant workers.

Mugabe and his friends have already made their choice. Sadly it is the wrong one.



LAST November a Patriotic Front leader warned of the danger of making public attacks on armed guerillas who had no platform from which to answer back. 'This could lead to war,' he said.

A few days later fighting broke out in Bulawayo. At least 58 people died. More recently the death toll was over 300.

What that PF leader had in mind was a deliberate campaign of provocation by some ZANU leaders.

The November fighting was sparked off by Finance Minister Enos Nkala, who told supporters: 'Organise yourselves into small groups to challenge the Patriotic Front on its home ground. If it means a few blows we shall deliver them.'

A few weeks later he was echoed by Robert Mugabe who talked about the need for 'vigilante groups'. Mugabe has also made sympathetic references to Nkala's call for a 'one-party state'.

Black leader

Nkala is one of a group of professional PF-haters in the ZANU leadership. Another is Edgar Tekere, who was recently acquitted of murdering a white farmer on a technicality.

His rather feeble explanation was that he was pre-empting an assassination plot by ZIPRA, the PF's military wing.

Even though Tekere is now out of the government, he is still ZANU secretary-general and the Nkala grouping seems to have the upper hand in the cabinet.

It is not, as is often reported, a left-wing or radical faction. It simply exists to pin the blame for Zimbabwe's many problems on the minority party.

Arrested

The PF has been constantly humiliated. In November nine of its leaders were arrested and some of them held for a couple of months without being charged. Uniformed police were used in the arrest, but PF leader Joshua Nkomo, then the minister in charge of the police, was not even told.

Next the government announced the takeover of the South African-owned newspaper group which has a monopoly in Zimbabwe. It did this through a mass media

trust set up with money.

The government this was to control of the in practice it into ZANU one more m a one-party s

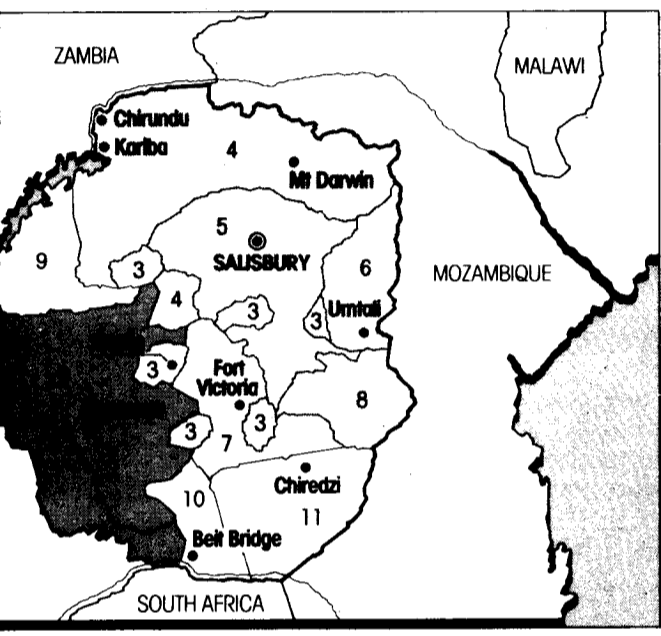
The PF argued that to take the Zimbabwean that the mass



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when the next humiliation came and Joshua Nkomo was demoted in a Cabinet reshuffle, they had no option but to accept it.

To have pulled out without a political alternative would have been to go out into the wilderness. It would also have confirmed the taunts that the PF is simply a tribalist party representing the minority Ndebeles.

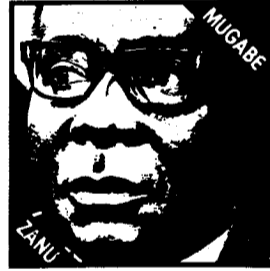
If tribalism is being stirred up, it is more by some ZANU leaders — Nkala, for example, even though he is a Ndebele himself. The government has consistently discriminated against Matabeleland, where the Ndebeles live.

Shona, the language of the majority, has been introduced as a compulsory subject in schools. The land resettlement programme has hardly touched the province. And parts of Matabeleland have had their food relief cut off at times.

Shonas

No wonder then, that when fighting breaks out between the guerrillas it unleashes ugly tribal killings of Shonas in Bulawayo.

There are people in both parties who see the need to break this vicious circle. There is a more coherent left wing in the



PF — partly because it is a more centralised party with some Marxist tradition; partly because the PF is subject to such pressure at the moment.

The left's main focus is to demand that its leaders pull out of the government.

Some of the PF left see the need to cut across the old party divisions, a feeling shared by some in ZANU. The split between the two in 1963 had no political basis (nor was it tribal at first) but was the product of petty rivalries and outside interference.

When it came to sending the Rhodesian troops into Bulawayo the leaders of both parties approved. They saw common cause in crushing the 'dissidents', just as they both benefit from dividing the workers and peasants along party lines.

One ZIPRA guerilla put it well: 'Hatred is being brought about by our own leaders; it will bring hatred between the people of Zimbabwe. People are being kept apart by the leaders.'



Photo: LESLEY MCINTYRE
Farmers meeting at the Silvera House agricultural project

THE PARTIES

ZANU (PF) — Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front). Founded in 1963 after a split in ZAPU. Holds 57 (out of 80) of the parliamentary seats open to blacks.

President: Robert Mugabe, who is Zimbabwe's first Prime Minister. Guerilla army: Zimbabwe National Liberation Army (ZANLA).

Main backers during the liberation war: Yugoslavia, China, Romania, Bulgaria, Mozambique, Tanzania. Main support among Shona peoples of northern and eastern Zimbabwe.

PF (ZAPU) — Patriotic Front (Zimbabwe African People's Union). Founded in 1961 as successor to National Democratic Party. Holds 20 parliamentary seats.

President: Joshua Nkomo, who is one of five PF Ministers in Government. Guerilla army: Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA)

Main backers during the liberation war: Soviet Union, East Germany, Zambia, Angola. Main support among Ndebele and Kalanga peoples of western Zimbabwe.

'This is Zimbabwe, not Rhodesia. You don't have to buy land' — black squatter

ZIMBABWE is expecting a record maize crop this year. Yet, according to the Ministry of Health, in some areas as many as 60-80 per cent of under-fives are malnourished.

In a few places people are actually starving to death.

Why is there such suffering when Zimbabwean agriculture is booming? One reason is the effect of the war. The Rhodesian army had a policy called 'Operation Turkey' which consisted of destroying all food supplies which it said might reach the guerrillas.

Even worse in some respects was the policy of 'protected villages'. Three-quarters of a million people were herded into these glorified prison camps.

The time available for growing food was cut short by strict curfew hours. Often people were so far from their fields that they could not reach them at all. Cattle had to be left outside and were often lost, stolen or shot.

Without cattle people are unable to plough and with aid so scarce the government has not been able to help out with tractors. Many people will not harvest enough food this year.

But an even more profound cause of food shortages is the system of land distribution. Farm land is divided roughly half and half between white and black areas.

There are about 100 times as many black farmers as white.

Fertile

Black land was less fertile to start with and things have got worse through overcrowding. Even before the war people in the tribal trust lands were not getting the average annual requirement of maize, the staple food.

This racial division explains how it is possible to have starvation and a record crop at the same time.

The government has a programme of resettling people from the tribal trust lands on former white land. Under the Lancaster House agreement it has to pay compensation.

By the beginning of the last planting season less than 10,000 people out of 4.5m in the tribal trust lands had been resettled.

Jail

Some people decided to take matters into their own hands and simply take over white land. The government clamped down and a number of the squatters were sent to jail.

But when it became obvious that rank-and-file members of both parties supported the squatters the government backed down and let them stay for this year.

As one squatter said: 'This is Zimbabwe, not Rhodesia. You don't have to buy land.' The way that people

are ready to take the initiative regardless of the party leaders is the most encouraging sign in Zimbabwe today. It can be seen all over the rural areas, especially among women.

Under Rhodesian law, women are minors. It means that they can't leave home, look for work or make decisions about their children without the permission of a man — father, husband or guardian.

They suffer the lowest wages and the highest unemployment, and they do a large part of the agricultural work.

Militant

Yet, against all the odds, they are in the forefront of popular self-organisation — setting up a democratic health care system, women's agricultural co-operatives, and so on.

Another crucial development is that industrial and mine workers have been getting increasingly militant since independence.

There have been many strikes over economic issues, especially at the Wankie coal mines — owned by the South African Anglo-American Corporation and the largest enterprise in the country.

The Minister of Labour has repeatedly intervened in strikes on the employers' side. Government-controlled radio even, quite improbably, accused the Wankie miners of being responsible for the slow progress of the land reform programme.

Britain's excuses

THE Mugabe government has not threatened British investments in Zimbabwe. But just to make sure, the Tories are squeezing Mugabe by being mean over aid.

The Tories are giving just £75m over three years. £48m of this is loan, not grant:

THE TORIES SAY:	THE ZIMBABWEANS SAY:
All aid is being cut. Why should Zimbabwe get more than other African countries with a similar gross national product.	No aid should be cut. And GNP figures don't tell you how that wealth is distributed.
Britain has its own economic problems.	Britain was the colonial power. It has profited from Zimbabwe for 90 years. It has a special obligation.
At the Lancaster House conference, which agreed the terms of independence, no figure was even mentioned.	Unfortunately true, but we would never have signed without a guarantee that you would find money for our land reform programme.
We have forked out a lot more than £75m — £29m in debt relief and £33m in debt rescheduling, for example.	Irrelevant. It was Rhodesia's debt.
You can't spend the money anyway. Look at land resettlement. You've bought farms which you can't yet resettle.	We will be able to resettle them as soon as we know the money is there to build schools, hospitals, and roads in the rural areas.

Our Spring offensive

Where you can buy Socialist Challenge

ABERDEEN: SC sold Saturdays outside C&As — for more info ring Colin, 574060.
BATH: SC on sale at Bute 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: every Sat in Bute Town 10.30-12. Also available 1-0-8 Books, Salisbury Road.
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 and bottom of Waverly steps 4.30-5.30; 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 newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.
GLASGOW: SC sales every Thur/Fri 4.30-5.30pm at Central Station. Also available at Barretts, Byres Rd; Clyde books, High St; Glasgow Bookshop collective, Cresswell Lane; Hope Street Book Centre.
HACKNEY: supporters sell SC every Saturday morning at Ridley Road market 8-11.
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.
HEMEL HEMPSTEAD: SC sales in Time Square, Saturdays 10.30-1.30pm.

HUDDERSFIELD: SC supporters sell papers every Saturday 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.
KILBURN: SC sales every Sat, 10am in Kilburn Square.
LAMBETH: SC available from Village Books, Streatham; Tethric Books, Clapham; Paperback Centre, Brixton; Oval tube kiosk. Also sold Thur and Fri evenings and Thur mornings outside Brixton tube.
MANCHESTER: SC supporters sell 11-1pm Sat at OLDHAM outside the Yorkshire Bank, High St; at BURY in the shopping precinct and at Metro Books; at BOLTON in the town centre; and in MANCHESTER outside the central reference library in St Peter's Square and at Grassroots and Percivals Bookshop. Tel: 061-236 4905 for further info.
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.
NEWHAM: SC sale every Saturday, 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Market, Upton Park.
NEWPORT: every Sat in town centre 11-12.30.
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).
TESSIDE: SC on sale Sat lunchtime in the Cleveland Centre, and in Newsfare, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and outside Woolworths on Stockton High Street.
WOLVERHAMPTON: SC sales on Thur/Fri at Poly Students Union from noon-2pm and British Rail 4.30-6pm; on Saturday near Beatties, town centre from 11am-2pm.

Is your town or city mentioned above? If not, send in details to this sales column.

SC Events

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE: organisers' fraction on Sat 14 March at national centre.

Revolution Youth notices

MEMBERSHIP CARDS: Cards now available for members of Revolution Youth. All branches should place orders with national office.

MISSILES: national fraction Sun 5 April, London. A meeting for all RY members involved in building YCND or other anti-cruise work. Contact Richard at national office for more details.
REVO 16: next issue underway, out for beginning of April. Get your branch reports in now.

What's Left

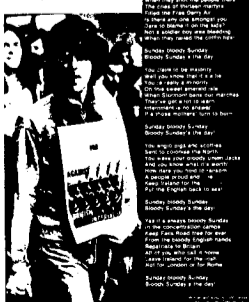
RATES for What's Left: 5p per word or £4 per col. inch. Deadline: noon Sat. prior to publication. Payment in advance.

EALING: trades council coach to Labour Movement Conference Against the Missiles. Cost £6 return. Leaves Sat 28 March 6.55am Southall town hall, 7.10am Ealing Common, junction of Uxbridge Rd and Nth Circular Rd, 7.30am junction of Nth Circular and Gt North Way. Contact A. Lilley phone 574-2895 evenings.
LEEDS: Troops Out Movement. Torchlight protest to support the Irish hunger strikers. Fri 13 March and Fri 20 March, 5.30 to 7pm Town Hall steps, the Headrow, Leeds. Public meeting to support the hunger strikers, speakers from Sinn Fein and TOM. Fri 27 March 8pm at Leeds Trades Council Club, Savile Mt, Leeds 7. TOM Day School on Ireland, speakers from Sinn Fein, Information on Ireland, TOM, Women and Ireland etc. Contact Box 1969, 29 Blenheim Terrace, Leeds 2.
BIRMINGHAM: Youth CND March against the Missiles — Sat 21 March. Assemble 12 noon at Gosta Green, Aston University.
BROADSIDE: Mobile Workers' Theatre requires socialist musician/actress/actor for permanent work commencing 13 April. Write to 241E, High St North, London E12 or telephone 10-470 2581.
TOWER HAMLETS: CND Benefit: live music, bar, disco. Fri 13 March, 7.30-11.30. Dame Colet House, Ben Johnson Rd, London E1. Admission 50p.

'STAY away or face expulsion' Len Murray. 'We don't want disaffiliation from the TUC. We are trying to build good links with the community' John Catterall, CP Chairperson Salford Trades Council. 'A tactical mistake' Ernie Roberts, LP MP. 'inconceivable that (such) a conference should be allowed to take place in Coventry' Coventry Evening Telegraph. 'They want their heads examining' Lancaster Poly director, Desmond Heath. 'We are not bothered what the TUC says. We shall be at the conference' Mick Blair, Todmorden Trades Council. 'This is an event of major importance' Paddy Bigger, Sinn Fein, National H-Block/Armagh Committee. 'To remain silent, as the TUC bureaucrats would have you do is to endorse the continued suppression of the Irish nation' IRSP POW's Long Kesh. Smash the PTA Campaign, Labour Movement Conference: TUC HANDS OFF IRELAND! Coventry, 14 March 1981. Coaches from Manchester, South, Central and East London: £3. Details, phone 01-274 3951.

SANA (Scientists Against Nuclear Arms) will be holding its inaugural conference on the weekend of 21-22 March at the Open University, Milton Keynes. Scientists, engineers, social scientists, economists etc, all welcome to discuss investigation and action to help nuclear disarmament movements. For details and booking (in advance only) contact: MJ Pentz, Science Faculty, Open University, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA. Cost is £18 (£12 students and unemployed) including accommodation and meals.

JOHN LENNON 1940-1980

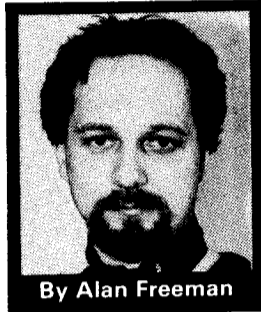


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'IT'S the first paper I've read that puts our views forward,' commented a Furniture Union steward from the Royal Pride factory in Manchester, on strike over union recognition.

She was talking after a Manchester Socialist Challenge meeting where 50 workers from five disputes discussed how to link up and organise their fight against the employers and the government.

Speakers included: Ken Capstick, of the NUM; Val Harrop, from Royal Pride; John Brown, of Mosedale's brick factory; John Morris, of Halsteads; and Phil Davis of Schreibers furniture factory.



By Alan Freeman

We are concentrating on an industrial, Labour Party, and anti-Missile audience. We want new sales at factories, estates, union meetings, and Labour Party GMCs.

Weapon

Rita Mitchell, coordinating committee secretary for the white-collar union ASTMS at the local ICL plant, said from the chair:

'We've proved Socialist Challenge can be a campaigning weapon for working people. It tells the truth, contrary to what Fleet Street turns out, and puts a working class point of view.'

That's why we are launching a drive for a thousand new public sales and 350 new subscribers. We also want to help Revolution build a socialist youth readership.

To consolidate the drive, Ernest Mandel will be speaking at a national rally on 23 May, followed by a Socialist Challenge school and festival.

Plans

How can you help? If you are a local Socialist Challenge supporter, prepare now. Make a list of potential new sales and work out a plan. Tell us your plans so we can publish them and inform your local readers.

If you read Socialist Challenge and want to help write in. Or watch this page for local activities — we'll publish details of sales points and public meetings, as the drive proceeds.

Money

Finally, back us with money! Rupert Murdoch and Tiny Rowlands do not take a great interest in our paper because we put the working class viewpoint. We need an extra £800 in regular monthly donations to keep us going.

If you have a standing order to the paper, why not increase it? If you haven't, the time to start is now. Otherwise, why not try to send us a pound or two each month. We fight for you — fight for us.

Elections

We'll start with the TUC's week of action on 4-11 April, and we are having national sales week on 29 April to 6 May — the last week of the local elections. We want everyone out helping us in that week, especially on Saturday 2 May.

We will be carrying feature material building the Liverpool-London march, on the crisis in local government, and our socialist answers.

Socialist Challenge

SUBSCRIBE TO SOCIALIST CHALLENGE

For new readers we are offering TEN ISSUES of Socialist Challenge for the incredibly low price of £2 (real value £3.15!)

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 Delete as appropriate.

Name.....
 Address.....

Fighting for the future

By Alix Cooke
 Revolution Youth is an organisation fighting to win youth to the struggle for socialism.

Our paper has been around for over two years now, and our organisation was launched almost a year ago. We work quite closely with Socialist Challenge supporters in local and national campaigns.

At the moment our 15 branches are all involved in the anti-nuclear campaign, fighting against the siting of Cruise and Trident missiles in Britain. We are building the youth wing of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament — Young CND and arguing

that the campaign as a whole should be orienting towards youth: that is where the future of the campaign lies.

It is through the pages of our paper, 'Revolution', that we try and reach new people and win them to our political point of view on a whole range of issues. We've produced 15 issues already.

Unfortunately, due to lack of money, we are not able to produce the paper as often as we'd like to, or as is necessary.

If you want to contact Revolution or can send us a donation to our fighting fund, write to Revolution, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Dear Revo,
 I decided to write to you after reading the Feb/March edition of your very interesting paper. I think this paper does a lot in telling us what is really happening all over the world and it does a lot in telling us the truth, not the lies as seen on TV and the newspapers. All in all it is a very good mag for anyone from a middleman to a communist...

I have filled in the enrolling form from the mag and I give you full support in everything you do. In my membership of Revolution Youth I will do anything I can to help you in your struggle against the repressive right wing scum of the world.

I will help to try and make Revolution Youth bigger and the newspaper bigger (wouldn't it be great to have big rallies and regular meetings in places all over the world)...

PETER, Airdrie

do things for themselves. Most young people are really interested in things but you don't know how to go about it.

If you're in a youth organisation like Revolution Youth you can learn how to organise and fight for what you want. I think I've learnt a lot since I've been in Revolution Youth... Ordinary papers don't say anything about youth.

And I don't like youth papers which are boring, all talk and no action. Revolution seemed like a big organisation, it stood out a lot. It said what youth were doing in all different places...

MANDY, Oxford



Revolution Youth in conference



Labour and abortion rights

'Abortion is an issue of conscience' says Labour MP

AT the start of this parliamentary session, anti-abortionists decided against seeking legal changes to restrict women's right to abortion.

Instead they aim to curb the Abortion Act by administrative measures which do not have to be debated or voted on by MPs.

GWYNETH DUNWOODY, MP for Crewe, who is on the Standing Committee considering abortion regulations, told Judith Arkwright about the current threats to abortion rights and what Labour MPs ought to do.

A green form has been introduced by statutory instrument that is to be filled in by a doctor after performing an abortion.

At a committee meeting this month Dr Gerard Vaughan, the health minister, said that it is the result of consultation with the medical profession.

We say it is the result of pressure put on by the anti-abortionists during the course of the Corrie anti-abortion Bill.

The form is supposed to provide information for the DHSS, but it's both confusing and detailed.

Type

What the form leaves out is some of the ways in which terminations are carried out, making it more difficult for doctors to record the type of termination.

It obscures the place where the operation is carried out, so that in future it will be more difficult to tell whether abortions are carried out in the health service, in the private sector, or even in private pay beds in the NHS.

Dr Vaughan said that we were merely seeing a plot in everything and that he was simply trying to make things easier for doctors.

This is an extraordinary attitude when you consider that he didn't consult with the charitable abortion services which carry out a high proportion of the abortions in this country, because of the unevenness of the health service provision.

Day-care

In the Labour Party, we would like to see the extension of day-care provision — there is no mention of this on the form.

At best you can say that the minister is just incompetent. At worst he has allowed himself to be bullied by the Corrie groupings who are against abortion under any circumstances.

The anti-abortionists have declared their intent to use administrative measures to

restrict abortion rights — not to go through parliament. We pressed the point that this is what he was doing.

But this measure has been in force since 1 March, so now we have to carry on the fight against it.

If the NHS facilities for abortion were available, then the working of the 1967 Abortion Act would be acceptable. But if we bring up the question of legislation again, the pressure in this House of Commons would make it more difficult to obtain abortions.

In the Labour Party we would like to see a situation where those who wish to have a health service abortion should be able to do so with the best level of care no matter where they live.

Changes

I don't think we need changes in the statute book. We can obtain the changes we need if we had money and facilities — if they can use administrative measures, so can we.

We don't want to start the argument again. There is someone trying to bring a Corrie-type Bill through the House of Lords now. It's not succeeding, but it shows they will keep trying. We have to concentrate on ensuring that what is in the law at present is adhered to.

Abortion is a vital issue for trade unionists

The aim of the labour movement conference on abortion on 14 March is to launch a mass campaign to commit the next Labour government to establish a woman's right to choose in law and in practice.

This campaign has to go hand in hand with the fight for Labour MPs to be accountable

to the Labour Party.

It is also vital that the trade union bloc vote on abortion at Labour conference be democratically determined by the rank and file.

The articles here describe some of the most important questions.

No free vote for Labour MPs!

From the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign executive committee

LARC does not believe in dictating to people, which is why we support a woman's choice on abortion.

The difficulty over the free vote is that at present Labour MPs are able to vote against clearly defined policy that is overwhelmingly agreed by the Labour Party and trade unions — unlike the issue of Common Market membership.

They can do this without giving it a second thought, many don't bother to vote and some even campaign on the other side!

Labour MPs have always been able to abstain on issues of conscience — or defy the whip if they choose.

If the free vote were abolished they could still vote against a whip on the abortion issue — nobody is going to stand around the division lobbies with a shotgun.

If the issue of abortion came under the Labour whip, MPs would at least be obliged to be there and they would also consider the issue with some care.

We don't believe that the 1967 Abortion Act can ever work satisfactorily in the long run. It has only accidentally given women greater choice and thus the interpretation of the Act can always be challenged.

Facilities

The failure of the '67 Act to lay down a requirement to provide facilities has always been a serious flaw. 'Administrative' measures to improve the provision of abortion really aren't good enough. They can be changed at any time.

Firm legal arrangements would make it rather more difficult for women's lives and health to be kicked around like a political football from one administration to the next.

A good law would have the merit of allowing everyone to know where they stood. It would be more difficult to change its provisions out of sight somewhere in Whitehall.

We're sure a lot of MPs don't want the issue 'opened up again'. But for any woman facing an unwanted pregnancy and an unsympathetic gynaecologist the issue is immediate — and there are around 100,000 women in this position every year.

The problems which arise solely out of the barbaric and outdated laws can be made to go away. If these things present special difficulties for conscientious socialists, those difficulties have to be faced up to and solved.

Labour Abortion Rights Campaign
PO Box 110, London SE21 8ND

and for the Labour Party. But I do accept that for religious reasons some will have a different point of view.

I'm not the sort of socialist who believes that one can dictate to people. If the Labour Party takes a policy decision then I will do my best to see it's carried out.

But I'm anxious not to lose the free vote. I have often voted against my own government — on the Common Market issue for example — which I regard as a matter of conscience.

Ignore

The firm anti-abortionists would ignore the whip anyway — so a whip won't make any difference.

Most MPs are now aware of the arguments for and against abortion; that much was clear in the Corrie campaign. Women's groups and trade union groups should fight to convince the Labour Party as a whole rather than forcing people.

Whatever we say, some people will argue that this is an issue of conscience and we won't change their minds by putting a whip on.

The Labour Party national executive is supporting the conference on positive legislation to be held in London.

It has been called by the National Abortion Campaign and the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign.

Make sure you're at the conference. It is at Starcross School, Rising Hill St, London N1, on Saturday 14 March, and begins at 10am. A creche is available.



by Bob Pennington

THE Labour Party has the appearance of a battlefield. Supporters of the Council for Social Democracy have all but split. The Labour right, led by Healey and Hattersley, is going all out to overturn the decisions of the Wembley conference.

The mass media echoing the concerns of their ruling class paymasters, are besides themselves with wrath at the thought of a 'left takeover'.

Across the political spectrum, from the die-hard right to the far-left, there is broad agreement that this is the most explosive crisis to hit the Labour Party since MacDonald quit in 1931.

But are we all mistaking a storm in a tea cup for a political blizzard? Is it really much ado about nothing, as the Socialist Workers Party seems to think?

Writing in *Socialist Review* on 16 February, Chris Harman dismisses the gains made by the left as 'very marginal'. Telling the left to stop 'going on about "reselection" and "electoral colleges"', he urges them to 'deal with the threat of the recession to shopfloor organisation.'

Yet according to Chris Harman's logic, the Labour left will not be able to do a lot about things that matter, because as he modestly explains: '... if sections of the Labour left really want to worry about these sort of things they will need an organisational form and political concerns which will look remarkably like those of the SWP.'

Since the poor deluded Labour left obviously intends to stay in the Labour Party and fight, and the SWP thinks it is all rather a waste of time, the twain will

Socialist Worker

Neither Washington nor Moscow but International Socialism 20p. Unemployed & strikers 10p.



SWP and the Labour Party

Abstaining is not on

never meet and we can all abandon hope.

It is crazy to adopt an holier than thou attitude to the fight for democracy inside the Labour Party.

The extension of control over Labour MPs and councillors and making the Labour leader accountable to the labour movement would seriously undermine the means whereby capitalism has continued to have its interests served whether Labour or the Tories are in office.

The fight for democracy is an attempt to break the grip of the state and to bring the MPs and councillors under the control of the organisations of the working class. This brings the questions of the state into the centre of British politics.

It seems strange that a revolutionary organisation like the SWP fails to understand that, and what is more, completely fails to see that it offers Marxists a great opportunity to show to a growing au-

dience why a peaceful road to socialism is a highly unlikely event.

Duncan Hallas writing in *Socialist Worker* on 31 January is scathing about the fight for accountability and points out that Moss Evans, who cast his vote for the 40-30-30 option, would never tolerate anything like the same measure of democracy within the Transport and General Workers' Union.

But doesn't Duncan Hallas think that some hundreds of thousands of union members might start drawing some conclusions from the votes of Evans, Fisher et al?

Rank and file union members are likely to be quite enthusiastic about all this democracy which gets talked about at Labour Party conference by their leaders. They will surely start to think what is good for the Labour Party is equally good for their own unions.

Any struggle for democracy in the

labour movement can only be good. When that struggle can have a mass impact, like the one taking place in the Labour Party, it is not just good, it's excellent!

For years the SWP Rank and File organisations have agitated for greater democracy in the unions and for effective accountability of union officials. Now, when democracy is raised on a wider scale than ever before, it gets the brush off from their leader writers.

The battles in the party for policies to abolish the House of Lords, for unilateral disarmament, along with that for nationalisation and the 35-hour week, are not issues on which Marxists can or should abstain, especially when attracting ever wider support among working people and their allies.

Paul Foot reported in *Socialist Worker* on 7 February: 'In the last three months... Labour Party headquarters has had a flood of applications from people who are opposed to nuclear weapons.'

There is hardly a constituency Labour Party in Britain that is not reporting a steadily increasing membership. Last year the party gained 80,000 new members.

The outcome of the fight for the policies being advanced within the Labour Party is too important to be left to the parliamentarians. It is the task of every revolutionary Marxist to see that the struggle is taken through to the end, and to show that Marxist policies can provide realistic and practical answers to those people who today look to left reformism.

That means relating directly to what is going on in the Labour Party, not commentating from the sidelines.

THE victory of the miners over pit closures is certainly stirring, and all socialists will hope that it marks a turning point in mass working class resistance to the Thatcher government.

However, it wasn't Michael Foot who 'said it all' (26 Feb) when he told the unemployed to 'rise up like lions' in Glasgow. He was quoting the poet Shelley:

Rise like Lions out of slumber
In unvanquishable number—
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you—
Ye are many—they are few.

The passage concludes one of the greatest political poems in English, *The Mask of Anarchy*, a vicious satire on the Castlereagh administration, written in 1819 at white heat in response to the massacre of unarmed demonstrators at a mass rally for parliamentary reform in Manchester.

The mask of Foot

Eleven demonstrators were killed and several hundred injured when sabre-wielding troops charged into the crowd.

The point is that Shelley was certainly a better socialist than Michael Foot. He saw clearly that revolution was necessary to wrest power and privilege from the ruling class.

He fully supported the Irish people's right to self-determination, and in his personal life he tried to develop and live out (albeit unsuccessfully) a radical and feminist alternative to orthodox marriage and the family.

Shelley's work is part of the heritage of revolu-

tionary socialists in Britain, and it is still powerful, as Foot's speech showed.

What a pity that in this case Shelley's words were appropriated to shore up the credibility of a slippery, oppor-

tunist social democrat who will attempt to defuse working class self-activity as soon as his party has ridden to power on it.

JOHN MUCKLE,
Wivenhoe, Essex

THE threat of direct US military intervention into El Salvador becomes more serious day by day.

Socialist Challenge has been correct to point out that not only the revolutionary movement in El Salvador is threatened, but also Nicaragua and Cuba. But what about international solidarity?

I always thought

International solidarity, only propaganda?

Socialist Challenge is in favour of socialist countries pursuing a revolutionary foreign policy including military aid to countries struggling for socialism.

In two consecutive

articles Phil Hearse tried to deny that the rebels in El Salvador receive any help from abroad, be it from the Soviet Union, Cuba or Nicaragua.

He wrote: 'The White House is now openly talking about the possibility of a blockade of Cuba, which it alleges is supplying arms to the rebels. This threat is based on a frame-up just like the US fabrication that 100 Nicaraguan soldiers landed by sea in El Salvador.'

I can't check whether this is true or not, but if the Cubans don't help the rebels then they ought to. We should make clear that there is a difference between military support for liberation fighters, where they invite foreign soldiers to help them in their struggle and the control stays with the local rebels.

We are opposed to a military invasion of a country, be it by the United States or the Soviet Union or any other state.

And America has no right to impose a blockade of Cuba, whether Cuba sends arms and soldiers or not.

ANDREA GIBSON,
London

PHIL HEARSE replies: I agree. The El Salvador resistance has every right to receive material help from Cuba and the Soviet Union. But I still think that US claims of large-scale aid are fabrications.

The Labour parting

PAUL ANDREW's response to my letter on the Labour Party (28 Feb) managed to take over 300 words to reply to six of mine.

I was not discussing the value of entrism, but the method.

At a Labour Co-ordinating Committee conference last autumn Socialist Challenge reported that its supporters would oppose the revolutionary motions put up by *Socialist Organiser*, in favour of the Alternative Economic Strategy which would supposedly help to create a mass campaigning Labour Party.

The paper's front-page articles and editorials have maintained the same objective of a mass campaigning party.

But if one decides on entrism, the only viable strategy it to stress that the Labour Party is incapable of transforming society. To do otherwise is to follow the path of *Militant* and become the left flank of reformism. Unfortunately Socialist

Challenge is showing signs of going the same way.

Of course, the reason for entrism is also important. In the present period there is no major influx of activists into the Labour Party whom Socialist Challenge can turn into a major split.

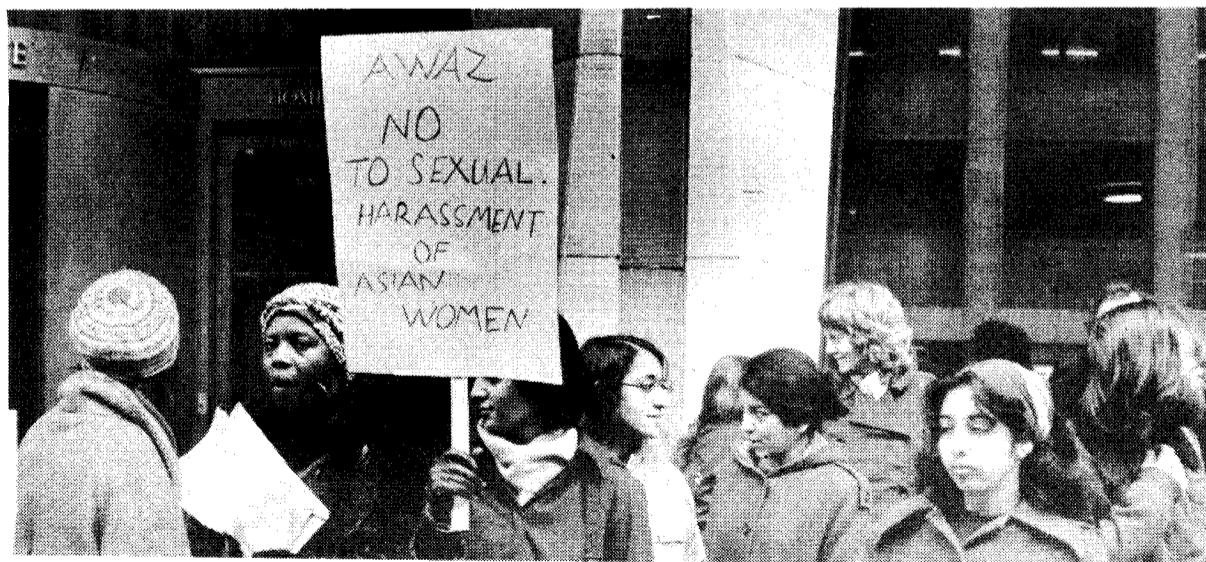
It is possible that there is a significant increase in support for the Labour Party, but this does not require us being in the party.

One finds leftward moving people whom we can influence in areas such as the unions, anti-nuke campaigns, anti-racism, and anti-unemployment. This is the perspective of the Socialist Workers Party, and we welcome those members of the International Marxist Group who see us as revolutionary.

The IMG has long argued that to have a united revolutionary party is more important than a refusal to unite due to tactical differences.

GEOFF COLLIER,
Hull

Letters letters LETTERS



My workmates certainly harass me

I AM a socialist feminist and a Socialist Challenge supporter who has many disagreements with revolutionary feminist politics. However, I feel dissatisfied with some of the attitudes to women's oppression in SC articles.

In her article on rape (26 Feb) Valerie Coultas suggested that it is not men as a whole who benefit from women's inferior position in our society, but the capitalist class.

In an earlier article on sexual harassment at work a lot of emphasis was given to the

attitude and actions of managers, but the idea of women being sexually abused by workmates was ignored.

I feel very strongly that in both cases ordinary men are being let off the hook. Men do benefit from women's oppression. I've seen this quite clearly since I began working at British Telecoms. The male Post Office engineers who have harassed me and put me down at work are not my bosses but my workmates.

At the end of the day they

go home to wives who do all their shopping, cooking, and cleaning. They have a privileged, better-paid job than most women, and they don't have to work half as hard as a woman cleaner, factory worker, or shop assistant.

Of course, these men materially benefit from women's inferior position. If we as socialists don't see that, how on earth can we fight to change it?

JENNY DAVENPORT,
London E9



Mafia refuses to invest in Britain shock

The Long Good Friday

By Phil Hearse

THERE'S a gangster movie showing in London which has had a hard struggle to get shown at all, and is still in doubt for general release.

Funny that, since gangster movies and TV series are all the rage. *The Long Good Friday*, though, is somewhat different. In the last analysis it's a political gangster movie and parable about the decline of Britain.

Harold, brilliantly played by Bob Hoskins (star of TV's *Pennies from Heaven*), is a loveable cockney gangster. Having dealt with his London rivals, Harold (known to his friends as 'H') has a dream — a big redevelopment of dockland.

But Harold needs cash, so an alliance with the Mafia is called for. Two Yanks fly in to negotiate the deal. On his luxury yacht on the Thames, H assembles an entourage to greet the mobsters — including bent councillor Harris, 'Parkey' a senior CID officer, H's most trusted hatchet-man (literally) called Razors, and his wife Victoria, played by Helen Mirren, a considerable organiser.

Harold explains his vision, and gives a toast — 'Hands across the ocean'.

Then things start to go wrong. Someone tries to blow up Harold's mum while she's at church. His best friend is stabbed to death. Nasty things happen to other things in his life. 'Someone's trying to do me,' says Harold. There's no doubt about it, someone is definitely trying to create the impression that he is not a good business prospect.



Harold (right) and Victoria discuss with the man from the Mafia

The problem is that whoever it is seems to be too powerful, too fanatical and well organised for Harold to deal with. He's being hit by forces which for the first time he can't con-

trol — not just because of business but because of what are ultimately political factors.

H, like British capitalism, reaches for the weapons he

knows, the tried and trusted techniques. As he sends out his men armed with sawn-off shot guns to round up all possible opponents, he says:

'Boys, one thing more

— be discreet.'

In his frantic search to track down and deal with his opponents, all Harold's prejudices come out. He's racist and nationalist to the core: 'Scum', 'filth' and 'shit'

are his milder epithets for blacks.

H's morality is ultra-conservative, though he can just about tolerate homosexuality. But above all he's British, and proud of it.

Ultimately, despite apparent victory on the military side, our hero fails to get American finance. As the leading Mafiosi says: 'We can't invest here. Britain's become a banana republic. You're in worse shape than Cuba before Castro took over.'

Business

The Long Good Friday deserves to go on general release, not just for Bob Hoskins' virtuoso performance, but because the moral of the tale is an apposite one.

A declining imperialism, like Harold, has forces unleashed on it that it struggles to comprehend and certainly can't deal with. After all, Harold, like many of his compatriots who use more conventional techniques, is a businessman.

And in a time of social and political crisis, even the best run, mob-handed business can get into big trouble. Ask the president of any US corporation.

'The Long Good Friday', directed by John Mackenzie, is showing at the Classic cinema, Oxford St, London W1 and at the Ritz, Leicester Square.



By Phil Hearse

Warfare within the welfare state

By Donald McKenzie, London-Edinburgh Weekend Return Group

MANY state workers who are socialists feel strongly the need to struggle for socialism from within our jobs.

Yet the content of these jobs, especially the so-called 'professional' jobs such as teaching or community work, makes this difficult.

The state we work for is a capitalist state. As teachers, for example, we are licked into an educational system that has more to do with making people docile, submissive, individualistic and competitive than with helping them learn and ask questions.

9 to 5

Does this mean that we work for socialism in the evenings and at weekends, only to reinforce capitalist relations between nine and five?

Those who make up

the London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group — four women and four men employed by the state or by organisations funded by the state — felt that for us, at least, trade unions and political parties hadn't provided clear enough thinking on this issue. So we started meeting to discuss it.

Pervasive

Two things stood out from our discussions. First, that the state is all-pervasive. When Lenin, for example, was writing about the state most workers' lives involved relatively little direct contact with the state, except as straightforward repression — the army, police, and so on.

Now, with state education, housing, health care, social work, the state is part of the daily lives of all of us. It is not just state employees who are 'in the state'; to some extent we all are.

Secondly, our experience of the state is contradictory. The state



provides resources we all need, yet state provision is often niggardly, and the way it is given is oppressive.

Working-class people, and in particular women, blacks and gays, all get put down by the state. Moreover, the state takes what are really class issues and divides people from each other by treating them all as separate individuals.

So you go to the state with a problem that has been caused by capitalism in one way or

another... you're poor, ill, homeless... yet you are treated as if it were your own individual problem; your fault.

Social workers, for example, are expected and constrained by management to deal with people as individual 'clients' — yet problems such as poverty and bad housing can at best be 'coped with' at an individual level, not fundamentally solved.

No cuts

Since the mid-'70s, first under Labour and now much more sharply under the Tories, the state's provision of resources is being 'rolled back'. At the local level, particularly, services are being cut back, while central control is being tightened.

We are worried that a simple 'no cuts' line on its own is quite insufficient.

Most people experience the state — even local councils controlled by the left — as their enemy as much as their friend. Socialists should certainly oppose the sale of council houses, for example, yet it is difficult to raise much enthusiasm

for a defence of council housing when state provision is experienced as bureaucratic, miserly, hedged in with red tape and petty restrictions.

Challenge

We can start defining our problem our own way — as women's self-help groups have done. As state workers we can step outside our brief — as community workers have done when they have reinforced tenants' barricades rather than seeking to incorporate tenants in meaningless 'participation' exercises.

We will face opposition when we start doing this — from management and from those imbued with ideas of 'professionalism'. But if we take these choices collectively, and not as isolated individuals, we can reorganise to defend our choices, our 'oppositional space'.

We have learnt that that means challenging the state, even in its most benevolent guise, even in face-to-face everyday situations. We need to be against the state, as well as in it.

**In and Against the State. Pluto Press, £2.95*

The Insane Society

Onward Christian slayers

RELIGION rules in the City of London. The financiers have, after all, a big debt to Christianity.

The City's founders rampaged around the world, beating, maiming and making slaves of black people to teach them that there was only one God, who was white, male, and on their payroll.

So last week when the City began its commemoration of Lent — the season of penance and fasting — Margaret Thatcher was asked to do the service at the opulent church of St Lawrence Jewry. She packed the aisles with ladies done out in furs and tweeds and gentlemen wearing Jermyn St overcoats and vicunas.

The saving grace of this event was, of course, the members of the Young Communist League, calling for Jobs not Bombs. But when these latter-day saints were removed from the holy place, the premier recovered her composure.

To a loud chorus of reverent Amens she extolled the virtues of making money. A sense of Christian contentment swept the souls of the ladies and gents when she announced that, creating wealth was a 'Christian obligation'.

Work was not just a necessity 'but a duty and a virtue'. The wrath of God was clearly descending on the 3 million scroungers drawing dole money.

Maybe these lazy un-Christian people should be given a Bible, drafted into a Gulf strike force, and sent to fight a new Crusade against the Moslem non-believers.

Being Lent, the prime minister warned her audience of the dangers of 'immoral inflation' explaining that it undermined financial agreements.

But they did not need to worry. Like a true Christian soldier, Thatcher has drawn the sword. Hospitals will be closed. The old will be condemned to die from hypothermia. More jobs will have to go.

The pious and devoted city establishment will be saved, and God will keep on working for those who pay His wages. In fact the most revered premier intends to unleash a permanent Lent on the working people. she can get away with it.

Scottish workers can't wait till 1984

By Stewart Oswald
THE Scottish Labour Party holds its annual conference in Perth this weekend to a background of a Tory onslaught on jobs.

Unemployment in Scotland is now approaching 300,000. Talbot Linwood faces closure with a loss of 4,800 jobs and further redundancies are announced every day.

It's not surprising therefore that the conference agenda bristles with motions denouncing the Tory government. Dozens of resolutions outline the extent of the government attacks on employment, the health service, education and housing.

But denunciations are not enough. Scottish workers won't find a lead from the conference for their fight against the Tories. Practically every resolution talks hopefully of what the next Labour government should do or even worse calls on the Tories to 'change course'.

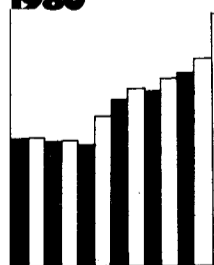
Instead of a policy of united action with the Scottish TUC to prevent redundancies the resolutions call for a future government to introduce 'selective import controls' on a growing list of items. Nor is any clear lead given on how to fight now against rent and rate increases or the cuts in social services.

It's hardly surprising therefore that the Scottish supporters of the Council for Social Democracy have chosen to remain inside the Labour Party.

If the anger and impatience of the Scottish working class is not reflected in the conference motions on economic policy the same cannot be said for the Tories' war mongering. Last year there were six resolutions on nuclear weapons. This year there are nineteen, ranging from calls for cuts in defence expenditure to support for the European Nuclear Disarmament campaign and calls for lifting the ban on the War Game film and an end to army recruitment in schools.

The conference will also see the re-emergence of the issue of devolution. The Scottish executive are proposing to increase the

SCOTLAND'S UNEMPLOYMENT 1980



powers of any Scottish Assembly that may be set up. They see a Labour-majority in the Assembly as a method of ameliorating the effects of the Tory government in London. It's all part of their 'wait till 1984' strategy.

But its effects on the Scottish working class might be the opposite. Scottish workers voted overwhelmingly for Labour at the last election. As the campaign throughout the labour movement against the Tories heats up the idea of a Scottish Assembly with economic powers could become a powerful stimulus to end the Tory government's life prematurely.

Greenock women show the way—occupy

By Des Tierney
AS the Tories' economic blizzard continues in Scotland the occupation of the VF factory in Greenock has become a shining example for Scottish workers.



Greenock women left their occupation only to join the Glasgow jobs march

'Strike and you're sacked'

EIGHTEEN trade unionists — mainly women — at Royal Pride Furniture in Salford are on strike for payment of their 1981 national wage award and recognition of their union, the Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades.

The strikers received the following letter from their employer: 'You are in breach of your contract of employment by taking strike action which commenced 22 February 1981 and in consequence you are deemed to have dismissed yourself.'

'If you do not return to work by Friday 6 March 1981, this factory will close and the jobs of all employees will cease to exist.'

VAL HARROP, a shop steward at Royal Pride, told Laura Mitchell about the dispute.

'We were offered a 5 per cent rise which we wouldn't accept. We've had 5 per cent rises for the last two years.'

Joined

'We only joined the union last November. Until then we'd tried to negotiate with the boss for a £7 a week increase. He said he couldn't afford it. "Times are hard," he said.'

'He's had to sell his Mercedes for a Daimler and he's just back from staying in the tax haven

island of Guernsey.... Before we joined the union the boss came out on top every time because we didn't know how to go about things.'

Men

'He's always threatening to close the factory down. It's like a gun at our head. We need the jobs, so we've always backed down.'

'Since we joined the union, the boss has agreed to give us the increase, plus the back pay. But he won't agree to union recognition.'

'He said he can't understand why we're prepared to lose our jobs over this issue. But we say we need the union. If we weren't in the union, we wouldn't have come this far. We'd have had to accept 5 per cent.'

'The men were in the union but when they were offered a rise, they left. So with one or two exceptions it's the women who are leading the fight for union recognition.'

'When the men saw the picket lines and saw how strong we were, they



wouldn't cross them and now they're supporting us. The boss wants to sack some of the men and bring in people from the Youth Opportunities Programme. He'd only have to pay them £23 a week.'

'There are nine women who are the main producers. They're all on piece work so they all earn a different wage. Each item you make is priced so your wages depend on how hard you work.'

'We get £2.50 for a chair that sells in the shops for £72; £1.05 for a stool that sells for just under £50, and £2 for a headboard that goes for £230.'

'All our families are behind us. This is the first time we've stuck together. It's our pride, our self-respect, that we're fighting for.'

Messages of support and contributions to: Royal Pride Strike Fund c/o Joss Davidson, 37 Anson Road, Victoria Park, Manchester M14 5DB.

This week saw the announcement of more redundancies in Scotland: British Leyland at Bathgate (900), NCR in Dundee (279) and Hoover in Cambuslang (300).

The Talbot Linwood shop stewards have called a West of Scotland shop stewards' conference to discuss their campaign to save 4,800 jobs, and pride of place on the platform will go to Ellen Monaghan and Bridie Bellingham, shop stewards at the VF factory in Greenock.

Collect

Socialist Challenge spoke to them about the situation in the occupation. Ellen spoke first about the campaign: 'Support has continued to pour in. The local engineering union and shipyard workers are collecting money each week for us.'

'We've had girls out touring factories in Glasgow and Edinburgh. We hope to go further afield with the tours this week. The Gardner's workers came up last week. We talked to them for four hours. They gave us plenty of advice on how to run the occupation and they'll be organising tours for us in Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool.'

'We've not organised it yet but we'd like to tour South Wales and places like that. I'm sure when we explain our case we'll get plenty of support. The Scottish TUC secretary Jimmy Milne was down the other day and he called for full support for us.'

Pounds

'It seems like every other union is supporting us except our own,' continued Bridie. 'Last week our full-time official, Colin Tinsley, was up at the factory.'

'He told a stewards' meeting that our struggle was hopeless and we should consider the chances of getting "enhanced payments".'

'We told him we didn't start this occupation for a few extra pounds but for jobs. What use would the money be to these girls that have just left school.'

'He said it might take another three or four weeks to get the occupation made official and anyway there would have to be a ballot of the members in the Irish factories, because we're calling for worksharing!'

Sick

'If anything, the attitude of the national officials has hardened us. Of course, we want it made official but we've made it clear from the beginning that we'd go ahead whether it was made official or not.'

'It would make you sick. In all these years we've never asked for anything from our union. Now when all we want is their support, we get this.'

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The women in Armagh jail provide a focus for an investigation into the lives of women in the midst of war in Northern Ireland.

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Virago, £2.50

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Glasgow University Media Group

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Routledge and Kegan Paul, £5.95

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No slumber for Duport workers

'Socialist' publisher sacks strikers

By an NUJ striker

ROBERT Maxwell, a Labour Party member and millionaire publisher, who claims to be a 'socialist', sacked nine journalists last Friday — just two days after we had gone on strike.

The nine NUJ members work in the journals production department of Pergamon Press in Oxford.

For more than 18 months we have been trying to negotiate an agreement with Maxwell over a 1980 pay claim, and comparability with other unionised publishers. Of 57 unionised publishers, only three pay less than Pergamon.

The agreement should have been concluded by 31 August last year, but Maxwell didn't meet the union until November. He had refused to attend or cancelled some 20 earlier meetings. His final offer

this month was a 10 per cent pay rise.

We are demanding an increase of between 20 and 25 per cent on basic pay of around £3,000 a year, five weeks holiday, a 35-hour week and a sick pay scheme which is not discretionary.

The NUJ claim would cost Pergamon at most one per cent of its £6m profit in 1980. Maxwell has just gained control of BPC, and now boasts of the £20m liquid assets under his control.

The NGA print chapel at Pergamon has decided not to handle work from the journals production department. Post Office workers, local government workers, and unionised delivery workers are respecting the picket.

The strikers are determined that Maxwell the self-proclaimed socialist should not be able to treat trade unionists with contempt.

Print union leaders ignore occupation

By Tessa van Gelderen

SIXTY-five journalists are still in occupation at Futura Books in Hackney, East London — three months after the dispute began.

As we go to press, management is trying to negotiate a settlement, the first such talks since 19 January.

Annabel McLaren, the NUJ mother of the chapel, hopes that the occupiers win their demand for full reinstatement of two jobs and the creation of a third. But the employers are likely to stick on the question of back pay.

Futura is owned by the British Printing Corporation, the largest publishing firm in West Europe, the board of which has recently come under the control of millionaire publisher Robert Maxwell.

With a massive crisis in the print industry, Maxwell wants to introduce a 'survival plan'. As Annabel McLaren says: 'BPC wants to get rid of jobs, and the present occupation has put us in a strong position to fight future redundancies.'

'If we'd been working normally, we would probably be deciding to go on strike — with a threat of closure hanging over our heads. Now we hope to be in a position to have a say in what happens.'

The National Union of Journalists, particularly the magazine and book branches, are giving practical support to the occupation. The Transport Union is also officially supporting it and will be halting the movement of goods.

Local teachers associations have agreed not to buy educational material from the company. But the print unions, while 'sympathising', have not given their official backing.

As BPC faces massive restructuring and redundancies, the print unions leaders are selling jobs hand over fist. All printing agreements have been torn up as the unions negotiate to sell jobs.

So a victory now in BPC might go some way to stem the tide of redundancies that is sweeping the company and the print industry in general.

STEEL workers at the Duport private steel company in Llanelli, South Wales, are threatening militant action to stave off closure.

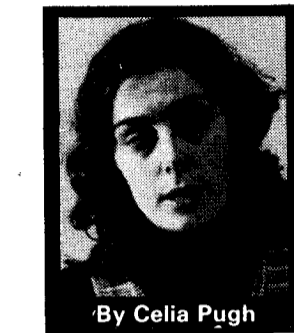
The Duport Group, best known for Slumberland beds, is intending to scrap its steel interests.

The steel-making plant in Llanelli, where 1,200 are employed, faces total shut-down within 90 days, while the re-rolling plants in the Midlands and Sheffield will be sold off to the British Steel Corporation.

With unemployment standing at 15 per cent in the area, the Llanelli steelworkers have rejected redundancy hand-outs and agreed to fight the closure.

There are plans to lay siege to the plant if the company tries to remove valuable equipment, recently installed in a £30m modernisation project.

John Carberry, steel union official, said: 'We will block the works to prevent the removal



By Celia Pugh

of plant and machinery. We do not accept that the closure of the works is inevitable and our main emphasis is to keep it intact.'

The first round in this fight for jobs was a demonstration of trade union, Labour Party, and community supporters in Llanelli on 28 February.

The presence on the demonstration of members of miners' lodges was a sign that

the steelworkers are prepared to learn the lesson of the recent miners' fight against closure — that action can stop job losses.

If the Duport workers do take industrial action it will call a halt to the complacency of steel union leaders, who have stood by as over 16,000 Welsh steel jobs have been axed in the last year.

More losses are in store in the public steel sector when BSC boss Ian MacGregor reports on his corporate plan in July. Industry Secretary Keith Joseph recently said in parliament that 'Mr MacGregor admits his plan is optimistic, and I think he is right.'

'If Mr MacGregor's optimism is not justified, further closures and redundancies will be necessary.'

A victory for the Duport workers, although they work in the private steel sector, would prove a powerful incentive for Keith Joseph to decide that a Tory U-turn in the direction of maintaining steel jobs should be considered.

Fighting for gay rights at work

By Jamie Gough

A CONFERENCE to organise the fight for rights of gays at work is being held later this month. Recent cases of victimisation show the need for such an initiative.

After two months in her job as a teacher, Ms X was summoned by the local education authority and told that she had been sacked because she was 'unfit to teach'. The authority had found out she was a lesbian.

'A lesbian cannot be trusted to teach in a girls' school, where some of the girls are well-developed,' she was told. Nobody seemed to mind about the number of men teaching in the school.

John Saunders was sacked from his job as maintenance worker in a schools holiday camp for being gay.

has recently adopted a formal policy of not employing gay people in jobs involving youth, the elderly or the handicapped.

Unions

Gay people organising at the workplace and outside have begun to challenge all this. Gay groups now exist in NALGO, NUPE, NUT, the civil service unions, and NATFHE — the union for teachers in further education. Organisation is beginning in the Union of Communication Workers, and in the print unions.

NALGO and the CPSA conferences have been won to anti-discrimination positions; to a limited extent these have been implemented in contracts of employment.

Conference

Leaders of the GMWU and NUPE have made statements on gay rights but activists in the unions need to ensure that their leaders go beyond words.

The Gay Rights at Work Conference, which welcomes the participation of non-gays, will be the next step in organising this. It will be held in Sheffield on 28 March. Details from John McKay, Pickwick Court, London SE9.

Sacking

An industrial tribunal upheld his sacking on the grounds that, whether or not the employer's prejudice against him was well-founded, many people have the same prejudice and the sacking was therefore 'reasonable'.

These are just two examples of the kind of problem which gay people face at work. It is no coincidence that both concerned jobs involving young people.

Lesbians and gay men working in these jobs are constantly under threat — and can scarcely ever be open about their sexuality — because it is considered that the example of openly gay people would 'corrupt' youth.

Clwyd county council

Trades council rejects 'TUC — Hands Off Ireland' conference

HACKNEY Trades Council, one of the half dozen trades councils which had supported the 'TUC — Hands Off Ireland' conference to be held later this month, withdrew its support last Thursday.

This followed the decision by the TUC to disaffiliate any trades council which backs the conference, but Hackney made it clear that this was not the reason for its withdrawal.

An amended resolution supported by a large majority of the 50 delegates at the meeting declared the trades council's right to establish its own policy on any issue, and reaffirmed its commitment to troops out of Ireland and self-determination for the Irish people.

Socialist Challenge supporters and members of the Socialist Workers Party were among those who argued against support for the forthcoming con-

ference, which has been called by the Smash the Prevention of Terrorism Act Campaign — a campaign of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency.

They argued that to describe the TUC as 'imperialist' — the term used in announcements for the conference — could only bring disunity in the fight for working class commitment to end the British occupation of Northern Ireland.

The aim was not to demand that the leadership of the trade union movement should wash its hands of the war in Ireland, as in effect it already does with its backing of the Better Life for All campaign, but that it should call for troop withdrawal.

By a vote of 19 to 15, officers of Hackney Trades Council were censured for withdrawing the trades council's support for the conference in advance of the trades council meeting to discuss the issue.

Students occupy against state racism

By Richard Young, UCL Student Union executive

AS MANY as 250 students at University College London have gone into indefinite occupation in protest at the proposal to raise the fees of overseas students by 25 per cent from October this year.

The union had been campaigning against the fee increases for three weeks, before a packed union general meeting voted, almost unanimously for immediate occupation.

The University Grants Commission, the government body responsible for allocating university funds, has recommended minimum 'full-cost' fees for overseas students for next year. It means that arts students will have to pay £2,500, and medical students an incredible £6,000 for one year's study.

The authorities at UCL 'deplored' the government's policy on overseas students, but then went on to say that they intended charging an additional 5-10 per cent increase on top of the recommended UGC minimum.

After Students' Union pressure the UCL authorities backed down, but still insist that they will implement the minimum fees.

The fee increases are part and parcel of the government's racist immigration policy.

Since the gap between fees charged to home students and those charged to students from overseas widened noticeably two years ago, there has been a dramatic fall in the numbers of overseas students applying to study in this country.

Support for the UCL occupation has come from the campus trade unions and from student unions around the country. Students at UMIST in Manchester had a 24-hour occupation in support of the overseas students campaign.

Last week the London Students Organisation held a rally and a 24-hour occupation of Senate House, London university, and students at the London School of Economics are currently occupying their administration block.

NUS needs to build support for these actions

Banned!

THE decision of the home secretary to ban all marches in London until the end of the month has hit several protest actions.

The blanket ban was imposed after the NF had threatened to demonstrate in Deptford last weekend.

The Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers says there are sufficient powers within the Public Orders Act, as amended by the Race Relations Act, to ban a particular march if it poses a threat to public order.

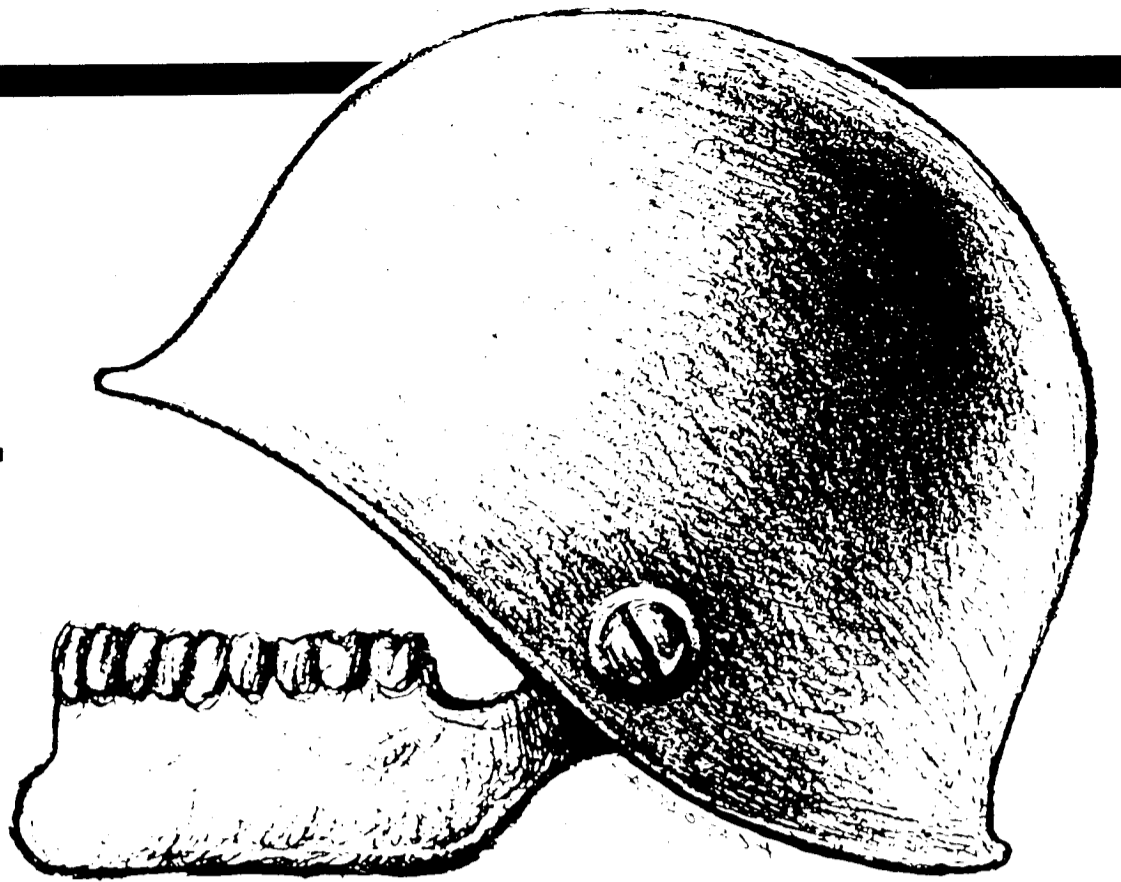
The ban will do nothing to stop fascists organising. The 'reception' the NF would have received in Deptford may well have discouraged such open displays of racism.

The blanket ban affects protests planned in London by CND groups, student unions, anti-racist groups, and others.



Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

Socialist Challenge



The money required to provide adequate food, water, education, health and housing for everyone in the world has been estimated at \$17 billion a year. It is a huge sum of money



... about as much as the world spends on arms every two weeks.

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2 each from Trade Union branches, Trades Councils, shop stewards' committees, Constituency Labour Parties and branches, regional and national executives of Trade Unions and the Labour Party.
Other political parties in the Labour Movement are invited to send delegates on a national basis of up to 20 per party.
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Creche facilities will be available.

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Do you require creche facilities?..... for how many?..... ages?.....
Full details of conference agenda etc. will be sent with delegates credentials.
If your TU/Labour Party wishes to affiliate to CND please ask for form.

From a poster produced by *New Internationalist*