

# Socialist Challenge

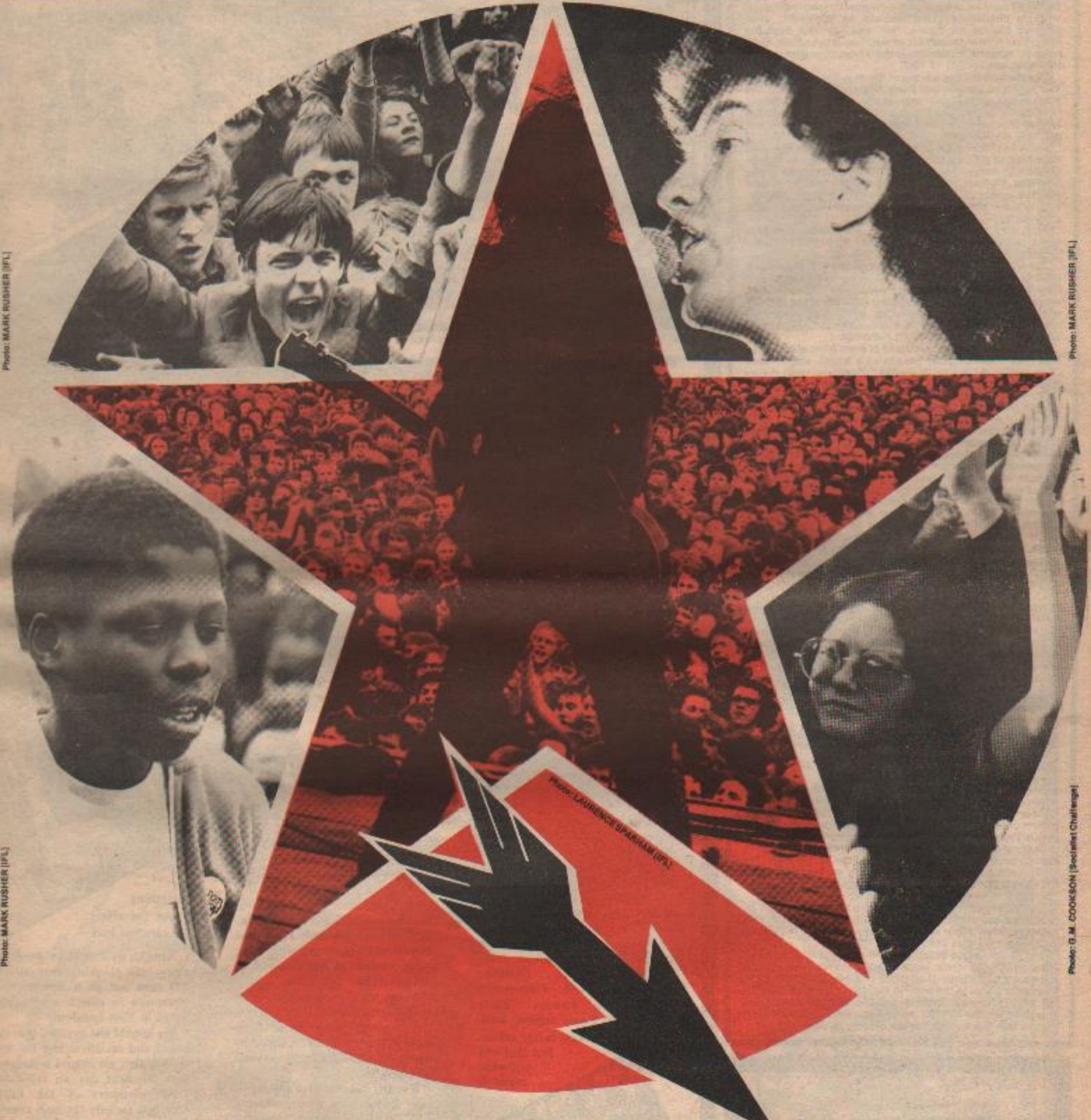


Photo: MARK RUSHER (IFL)

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## Build the Anti Nazi League

**INSIDE:** FRANCE: Althusser's Bombshell Pages 8 & 9  
 BOOK REVIEWS: John Fowles, David Edgar, Gregor Benton, Hilary Wainwright



# EDITORIAL

Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.  
 Editorial 01-359 8180/9. Distribution and  
 Advertising 01-359 8371.

## Hats off to the SWP

IT WAS FANTASTIC. That is the only way to describe last Sunday's carnival. After months of racist propaganda; after massive publicity for the fascists on television; after growing attacks on blacks, this was the best possible response. A new generation of anti-fascists showed their colours. What better way could there have been to celebrate the tenth anniversary of 1968.

The carnival did not fall out of the sky. It was organised. The Anti Nazi League and Rock Against Racism were the sparks that ignited the anti-fascist fire. The fusion of politics and culture was vital in offering an alternative to the tens of thousands of youth who carried ANL banners and placards on Sunday.

But a further point also needs to be stressed. The Anti Nazi League did not fall out of the sky either. It was an initiative undertaken and launched by the comrades of the Socialist Workers Party. They threw the resources and political weight of their organisation to build the League; and ensure the organisation necessary to build the carnival.

True, they were not the only force, but without them this event would not have taken place. It would be crass sectarianism to try and underplay this fact.

The problem which now arises is now the ANL is going to build on the success of the carnival. It would be a tragedy if the enthusiasm of last Sunday were to be dissipated. An important factor which ensured the success of the carnival was its non-exclusive character (and SWP comrades should compare this to the narrow way in which they organised their Right to Work campaign.)

This has to be institutionalised at every level of the ANL. This means building the League as a broad, single-issue organisation at the local as well as the national level. It also means allowing local groups a fair amount of autonomy in terms of activity and encouraging the affiliation of groups like the All London Teachers Against Racism and Fascism instead of erecting organisational impediments.

It is now obvious that the ANL needs a conference of its active supporters. We can share some of the apprehensions of the SWP in relation to such a conference becoming a bear-garden and alienating League supporters because of sectarian bickering. A conference devoted to discussing whether or not the ANL is a 'popular front' or similar rubbish would, in our opinion, be disastrous. However, what does need to be discussed is what the central focus of the League should be.

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament had a clear focus. It sought to capture the Labour Party and fight in the unions. The Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, too, had a focus: The American embassy in Grosvenor Square.

The ANL needs to discuss where it is going and how. Such a discussion will be of immense practical importance in the coming months. What lies ahead is probably the most vicious General Election in postwar British history. The Anti Nazi League has to organise its troops to intervene in this period throughout the country. At the same time it needs to organise local carnivals and discos to further cement the new alliance so brilliantly brought about by Rock Against Racism.

## AUEW disaster

TERRY DUFFY is the new President of the AUEW. This represents an unmitigated disaster for engineering workers. The fact that the union's rule book will now be 'interpreted' by Brother Duffy is a fact that will please every right-winger in the labour movement. It will be greeted with hymns of praise by Bernard Levin and the Tory press, which actively campaigned for Duffy's victory.

Duffy will now use the precedent first established by Carron and recently emulated by Scanlon to cast the million and a half votes of engineering workers in the way he deems fit. 'Duffy's Law' will probably be used to the detriment of every militant in the Engineering Union.

Duffy's election represents a sharp drift to the right by one of the country's two most powerful unions. What now becomes even more vital than ever before is a fighting organisation within the AUEW.

The leaders of the Broad Left should not waste too much time in drying their tears. They should immediately convene a conference of all those who supported Wright to plan a campaign in the coming months. This should centre on both the way forward for the Engineering Union members and the fight for union democracy. Duffy's victory shows that the two issues are closely related.

If you agree with these principles and want to be involved in activities by Socialist Challenge supporters in your area, fill in the form below and send it to us:

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Send to Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper St, London N1.

# ANTI-RACIST NEWS



TOM ROBINSON addresses Trafalgar Square crowd

IT WAS a day they will write songs about. We will look back on 30 April 1978 in years to come and say 'Remember....'

Remember the day that 80,000 people stood up, danced, sang, marched and smiled defiance. Defiance not just at the Nazis, their politics of fear, ranting and 'no fun'.

Defiance too at the establishment politicians, who, for the last six months, have been falling over each other to play the 'white card' as an election winner. Who have argued with each other, not really about each other's racialism, but about who is offering the best solution to the 'immigration problem'.

Their racialism was put to shame on Sunday. It was put to shame best of all by those who perhaps could be excused most for looking for black or brown scapegoats. The young white underprivileged who made up the bulk of the carnival.

Of course the usuals were there as well. Union banners from NUPE, NALGO, COHSE; revolutionary left, Communist Party and Labour Party contingents. Paper sellers, book sellers, badge sellers.

But that was not what made it.

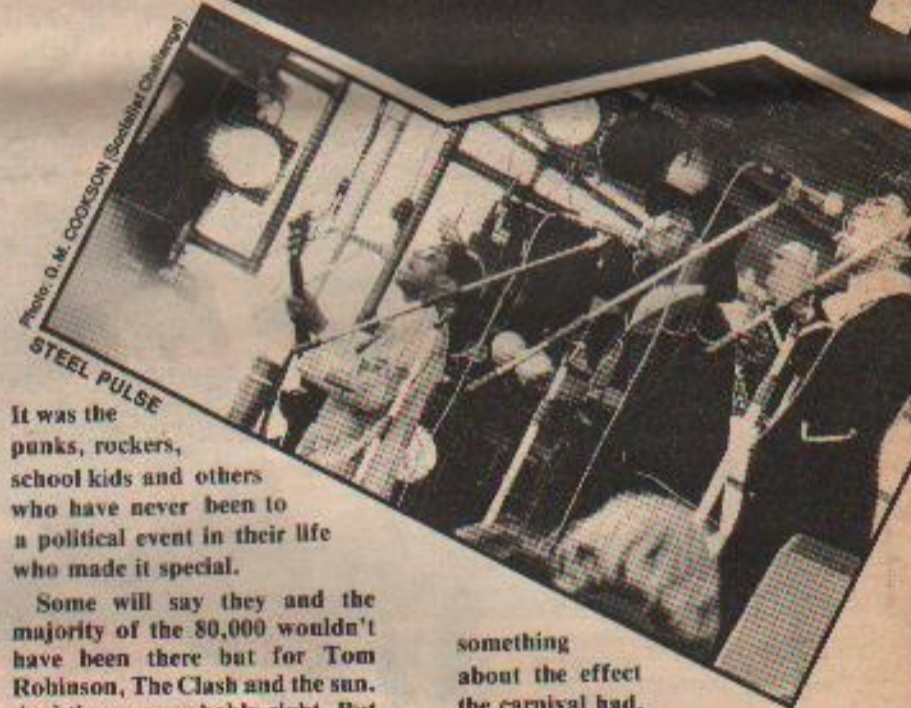


Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)  
 STEEL PULSE

It was the punks, rockers, school kids and others who have never been to a political event in their life who made it special.

Some will say they and the majority of the 80,000 wouldn't have been there but for Tom Robinson, The Clash and the sun. And they are probably right. But there is nothing wrong with using every weapon at our disposal to fight fascism.

Those who see demonstrations as at best a duty and at worst a chore could only have been exhilarated at the difference of 30 April; at the music, joy, and enthusiasm.

If many did come for the music how many went away wearing ANI, or 'Fight Racism' badges?

Socialist Challenge supporters sold 7,000 of the latter before the carnival was half over, and that says

something about the effect the carnival had.

Alright, we should not be swept away into thinking that 80,000 will turn out on a wet winter's afternoon to march against the Front in East London.

We should not pretend that the Front and racialism lost the war on Sunday; we should remember that the next day an estimated 1,500 members of the Front marched secretly through central London and that the Front could well get 100,000 votes in London in the local government elections on 4 May.

But having said that, what was seen on Sunday at the march and carnival was a glimpse of the future.

Most of all, racism, which for months has become 'respectable' through the mouthings of the establishment politicians, was driven back into the gutter by 80,000 people.

And that is where it belongs.



Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)





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Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

# Anti Nazi League



Photo: ISLINGTON COMMUNITY PRESS



Photo: MARK RUSHER (IFL)



## Is this the State of things to come? Anderton's law

by MART COLLINS and GEOFF BELL

JAMES ANDERTON is the type of eccentric policeman they like to make films about in Hollywood.

A John Wayne character, believing in the old traditional values, sounding off against long haired hippies, keeping women in their place, the hiring of the white Anglo-Saxon establishment in some southern states of America.

But Anderton is not a figment of a movie mogul's imagination. Anderton is alive, very real and running the police force in Greater Manchester.

Of everything that is known about Anderton, this fact is the most amazing.

That someone with Anderton's opinions and record can rise to his position in good old liberal Britain is a significant sign of the times.

Anderton hit the headlines against last week when he sounded off on television against the European Court of Human Right's condemnation of the Isle of Man's practice of birching young lawbreakers.

'I have long advocated a selective form of corporal punishment for certain offenders', Anderton declared.

### ABSURD

Up until now it is Anderton's 'anti-porn' campaign which has attracted most attention. He has taken it to absurd lengths. Recently his officers confiscated copies of a magazine produced by the Sun featuring reproductions of its page three poses.

By the same criteria Anderton could seize copies of the Sun itself, and that is an indication of just how dangerous his censorship campaign is.

But while Anderton deploys his police force to enforce his

morality on the citizens of Manchester, he believes other areas of police activity have been 'over-manned'. Last month he said that he intended to cut down on the number of police on traffic duty.

### PRIORITIES

From now on Manchester police will only be on accident prevention duty at already established high accident spots.

Despite this, Greater Manchester's Chief Constable has warned: 'The present disregard for human life and safety is such that I predict a growing emphasis on personal protection.'

Another example of Anderton's priorities is the reputation he has acquired as the National Front's best body-guard. There was October last year when in the course of one day Anderton and the Labour Government mounted a police operation which cost £250,000.

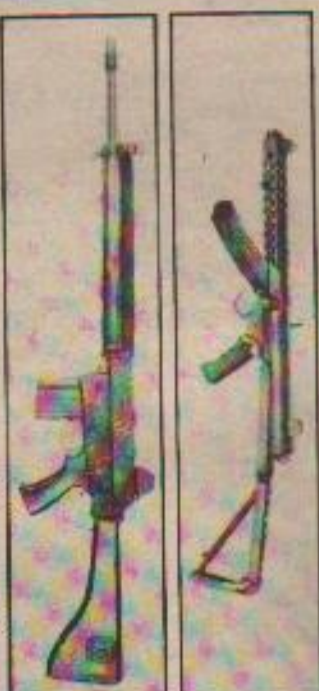
Jeeps, squad cars, and helicopters were deployed by Anderton to ensure that in one area NF boss Martin Webster could march unmolested and in another area a 300-strong fascist demonstration could take place.

### DEPRESSED

The police were given little opportunity to display their public order techniques on that



Anderton and his weapons: the Armalite (left) and Sterling sub-machine gun.



occasion and perhaps that is why Anderton decided to mount a mock exercise of his own.

It took place in the depressed inner city area of Collyhurst, where hundreds of police and soldiers invaded an estate one evening. There was mock machine-gun fire in the flats as armed police and soldiers enforced a curfew. There were road blocks, spot questioning, and searches.

### WEAPONRY

Within the past few months his police force has equipped itself with an array of weaponry previously unheard of among the British police. Anderton has purchased supplies of Sterling sub-machine guns and the Armalite rifles, together with a laser-type rifle sight.

He would go a lot further if he had his way. He has forecast the introduction of identity cards and compulsory finger-printing for every citizen. He has gone on record to demand the abolition of

remission of sentences and parole for prisoners.

Anderton likes to make a virtue of such suggestions. As a self-proclaimed good up-standing Christian he sees his duty as raising 'the moral quality of life'.

For this cause he made sure that last Easter Good Friday was kept 'good' by closing all the nightclubs in the city at midnight on the Thursday.

He has also seen it as his duty to wage a campaign against gay clubs by prosecuting them under an act of 1837 which outlaws 'licentious dancing'. 'Licentious' in this case means two people of the same sex.

It all adds up to a not very pretty picture and protests and demands for the sacking of Anderton are growing in Manchester. The immediate focus for the opposition to 'Anderton's Law' is the appearance of the man himself at an evangelical rally in Manchester's Free Trade Hall on 2 June.

Anderton will be speaking on the theme 'It's your life'.

Gays, women and labour movement activists are planning a picket under the banner 'Anderton Out! Investigate Police Activity'.

Tameside Trades Council has already called for his removal and on 8 May in the Polytechnic students union the Greater Manchester Committee of Anti-Fascist Groups has called a meeting of all organisations who are for the sacking of the Chief Constable.

### INQUIRY

The aim is to build for 2 June and to launch the broadest possible campaign for a labour movement inquiry into the role of the police in Manchester.

The public actions and pronouncements of James Anderton are worrying enough. What a full inquiry into his activities would reveal could be literally frightening. But better to be frightened now than wait until, say...1984.

For information on the inquiry, and to submit evidence, contact: 3rd Floor 14 Piccadilly, Manchester 1.

## Leeds: hold tight please

**TRANSPORT** Union workers on the buses in the Leeds area began an indefinite strike following a branch ballot on 16 April. The action was taken because management refused to negotiate around new revised service schedules, reports **GRAHAM WILLIAMS.**

The Tory controlled Metro executive wants to cut bus services by 52 journeys a week, to increase one-person operated buses, to reduce lay-over time, and to re-deploy staff without negotiation.

And it also wants a staggering 24 per cent increase in fares — a figure which has been halved, thanks to a concerted campaign by the TGWU and public transport consumer groups.

The Tory West Yorkshire County Council has given its blessing to Metro's action by stating in its Five-year Structure Plan the intention to further rationalise bus services in West Leeds. The real issue is service cuts.

### LEAFLETS

Chances for a victory for the crew are very good. Last year's successful campaign linked up with consumers, and one Labour County Councillor was elected on a policy of total opposition to service cuts or fare increases.

And public transport workers in South and West Leeds have refused to cross TGWU picket lines on the Leeds City boundary. Thousands of leaflets aimed at bus users have been distributed across the city by bus crews.

The Trades Council gave support to the strikers immediately, and helped to publicise the issues involved. The Labour Party has been slower. It was not so keen to publicise its opposition to cuts when Labour's election manifesto was being discussed.

### OFFENSIVE

The TGWU needs to rally the labour movement in defence of public services which are under the Tory axe. This isn't an easy job. For example, the full-time branch secretary would not be unhappy if ACAS became involved, so the whole dispute could be called off.

Platform — a rank and file group of transport workers — has a good record in the union. Now it should press for policies which can combine winning the strike and pointing the way forward beyond just a defensive campaign.

### SCHEDULES

In addition to ensuring that the new schedules are withdrawn, the right of the union to vet all further schedules must be won. A local conference once this dispute is settled could draw up new schedules based on public need, if it involved labour movement organisations and public transport consumers.

This would lay the basis for an alternative to future Tory cuts and provide the sort of common aims that could unite bus crews and bus users.



Photo: LAURENCE SPARKHAM (FPI)

### OXFORD NURSERY OCCUPATION

The seven week old occupation of South Oxford nursery came to an abrupt end on 28 April when the city council sent in the bailiffs to evict the occupiers. Parents occupied the nursery in protest against the council's plans to close it, and kept it running during the whole period of the occupation. Despite winning widespread support the council chose to ignore all opposition and close it anyway. The evicted parents and their supporters are determined to fight on. They are continuing the nursery class in other premises.

## Behind Sot'on docks closure Containing parity

**SOUTHAMPTON** docks are at a standstill. The workers stress that they have not withdrawn their labour or gone on strike, but they have been prevented from carrying on normal working, thanks to the actions of management.

Below we print some of the comments made by a group of maintenance workers, all members of the Building Workers' Union, UCATT.

In December 1974 an agreement was negotiated and signed. It gave parity of wages between skilled maintenance workers and registered dock workers. It was to take effect on 1 January, 1976. But an interim payment of £1.20 was to be paid each week starting 1 January, 1975.

We have still not achieved parity with the dockers. We have the invidious position of having skilled shipwrights working in containers, with unskilled dockers as labourers — and taking home at least £15 less than them.

### CONTAINER

Towards the end of 1977, a new container berth was nearing completion, due to start operation in January 1978. Although negotiations took place on manning levels, there was no agreement. Meanwhile, negotiations did get the parity agreement implemented.

But the Dock Board turned

this down. The Board said it was against the pay guidelines and offered 10 per cent from 1 January — providing we agreed to their manning levels on the container berths.

At a mass meeting, we decided not to man 206 container berth until parity was implemented.

### ULTIMATUM

On 9 March, we received an ultimatum from management in our wage packets threatening not to pay any increases unless we worked the new container berth, the 206 berth — according to their manning levels — by 14 March.

Our annual agreement expired on 31 December, 1977. It has been honoured by us. It was the management who broke the agreement by sending people home. We have worked normally elsewhere in the docks — until the lock-out — and were willing to continue until a settlement was reached on the outstanding questions.

After the lock-out we approached management to return to normal working if they rescinded their order, for us to man 206 berth. This was refused.

Unlike most disputes, management is offering us the use of their halls and loudspeakers to hold our meetings. Normally they have to be held outside the gates. Why?

And although a major part of this country is at a standstill it has hardly been mentioned in the media. Why?

This dispute has not been made official. Why?

Management propose a 10 per cent increase from 2 January, 1978, with parity on 1 August 1978, if the Government permits. This is conditional on our acceptance of management manning levels on 206 berth. But this is a worse position than before!

### UNANIMOUS

A mass meeting on 24 April to consider management's offer was turned down almost unanimously.

L. Walkers (shop steward, painters), M. Baxter, S. Hill, C. Browning, A. Billows, F. Giles, B. Allen, A. Barnes, (shop steward, bricklayers).



THE papers last week were proud to announce another drop in the unemployment figures. It is now 'only' 1.39 million — the highest for any April since the war.

But there are two small catches. One is that these figures only refer to 'adult' unemployment. And they have been artificially reduced by phony job creation schemes.

Secondly, unemployment is only measured among the 'workforce'. Many unemployed women don't bother to sign on because of sexist dole and social security laws and are not counted.

The truth is that there has been no improvement. In an area like the North-west (which is by no means the worst) the jobless have increased to 83,800 or 11.4 per cent. That bare figure can't express the hardship and humiliation of life on the dole.

And employers are making further moves to swell the Merseyside dole queues: at Leyland's Speke plant and at the Fashion Design Centre among others. But, as our reporters explain on this page, workers are resisting the threat of redundancy, often in the face of sabotage from their own leaders.

## Liverpool women occupy

# 'The time to start demanding'

AN ADVERTISEMENT in a recent Liverpool Echo offered for sale an 'almost new garment factory with a willing and able workforce ready to commence production immediately'.

This workforce of 200 — nearly all women — has been occupying their factory since 20 March when the liquidators were called in after the factory was suddenly closed down.

SANDY TOMKINS and MARY ROCHE report on the occupation of the Fashion Design Centre, and the options open to workers who find themselves in similar situations.

The workers have maintained a 24-hour sit-in at the factory, and are now getting support from some sections of the labour movement on Merseyside. Financial help is essential — but more than just money will be needed to keep the workforce together. Only 30 women attended a mass meeting last week.

### DETERMINED

The workers hope for a buyer but none has appeared. But the women are determined to continue the occupation. The Merseyside Women's Action group who are waging a campaign against Merseyside unemployment — and its specific effects on women — attended the last mass meeting.

### PROBLEMS

They distributed a letter to the workers which raised some of the problems facing the occupation and the possible direction it might take. Socialist Unity has made the FD struggle part of its electoral campaign against unemployment. FD workers have shared platforms with Socialist Unity speakers.

The women at FD have begun to fight back against closure and unemployment, but many other firms on Merseyside also face shut-downs. So what happens at FD has a massive significance. What are the possibilities?

Closure, a buyer, a workers' co-op are the 'tried and tested' ways. But what experiences have workers had with these?

### OPTION

Closure: Vast numbers of

# We can beat unemployment

**WE CAN** beat unemployment. But it will take more than just pious words. We need a fight for policies which say: we will not give up a single penny or a single job to meet the cost of the bosses' crisis.

**\*35 hour week.** When the Ford workers put in their claim last year they estimated that a reduction of the working week to 37½ hours would create 1500 new jobs at Ford. A 35 hour week would mean 3,300 new jobs. That could be extended to the whole of industry.

**\*Work sharing with no loss of pay.** This is an extension of the same principle, but on a sliding scale so that the existing work is shared out among all workers.

But it's not work sharing employers-style. People already in work should not pay the cost of the extra jobs. There should be no cut in pay.

**\*Reduce the retirement age for men and women to 60 on full pay.**

**\*Launch a programme of socially useful products and public works.** Unemployment is caused by economic anarchy: millions homeless or in substandard accommodation, while building workers are unemployed; unemployment in the public sector while our services suffer; class sizes rising at the same time as growing teacher unemployment. And so it continues. A plan for production to meet working class needs would do away with the dole queue.

\*Open the books of companies threatening redundancies. The bosses claim they can't afford to keep on workers. Well, let's see their accounts to prove it. If they're telling the truth, then we've got plenty of ideas about useful work to do.

If it's just a con, if they're trying to shift operations elsewhere, that gives us a chance to organise against them.

**\*Nationalise all companies threatening redundancies under workers' control.** By cutting back on their operations the bosses are showing there is no solution to the international economic crisis unless we take it out of their hands.

The only way we can implement programmes to create jobs and useful products is when we control industry as well as providing the labour.

workers on Merseyside have taken this option and some are contemplating it as at Standards No 2 plant, Tate and Lyle, Plesseys, and Spillers.

### SOLUTION

It is not apparent that workers find this a totally satisfactory solution. Temporary unemployment subsidies maintain 110,466 workers; the Job Creation Pro-

gramme, 26,312 in the Northwest. When these run out, the already-1930s situation can only deteriorate further.

**Buyer.** Even when a buyer is interested and can obtain government grants, there is no guarantee they will employ the original number of workers. Where the workers have taken militant action to save jobs, they can find that they don't get re-employed.

### PULL OUT

More often than not, buyers pull out when government grants cease. And the workers face the threat of closure once again. For example, Court-aids, Fisher Bendix/IPD/KME and Thornes.

By demanding to see the books workers can ensure at least a knowledge of the state of the firm.

**Workers' co-ops.** Some workers co-ops have worked. Others face continual problems. The difficulties of competing on the market have forced some, however, to cut wages and lay-off workers.

Meredins, who make Triumph motor bikes, have been successful but this co-op had the privileged position of inheriting a guaranteed market in the USA.

### INJECTION

The injection of Government money at first gets co-ops started. But then they are left to sink or swim when the money stops. Added to these difficulties, workers' co-ops find it hard to get suppliers.

These are the tried options, but none have proved able to guarantee adequate employment in the long-term.

In their letter to the FD occupiers, the Merseyside Women's Action group wrote: 'You have been to Wilson and the 16 Merseyside MPs for help. They told you how disgusted they are with the situation on Merseyside, but they have done nothing.'

'Maybe it is time now to stop asking, and to start demanding. If they were to guarantee you government contract work — i.e. school and nurses' uniforms, etc. — backed up by a permanent subsidy, they could ensure not only that you keep your jobs now, but that they are safe in the future.'

This kind of permanent government-backing and the instituting of workers' control over production is the most progressive demand workers in this kind of situation can make. The women at FD are showing the way forward for the rest of Merseyside.

### Liverpool

A MEETING of over 600 Liverpool members of the Government Workers Union, NALGO, rejected the recommendation of the branch executive to support a one-day strike on 9 May.

This leaves the Triumph TR7 plant, Dunlops, and the Builders' Union as the only sections to support the one-day general stoppage agreed last month at Liverpool Trades Council's conference on unemployment. MARK TURNBULL reports.

The main trade union officials who sponsored and spoke at the conference refused to put out the call for their members to support the strike. So it's been left up to individual workplaces and union branches to decide.

Without any political lead

### London NUPE

EDUCATION cuts in London are meeting the resistance of school keepers, who this week began a series of one-day strikes against management's 'Rationalisation' plan. RAY VARNES reports.

The Labour-controlled Inner London Education Authority has dreamt up an interesting way of saving £500,000.

It is proposing to intensify the work-load of school keepers, make 60 redundant, and add such duties as banking wages and fees, which last year resulted in several school keepers finding their skull at the business end of a cosh.

The London school keepers branch of the Public Employee's union has other ideas.

We are demanding negotiations on our plan for a 35-hour week, no closures, no redundancies, and an increase in staffing levels. And we are backing these demands with action.

One-day strikes at selected schools throughout the capital began on Tuesday, and no exception is being made for

from the Trades Council, most factories have ignored the proposed strike. All that has been planned is a lobby of Parliament to which factories that are not on strike will send delegations.

But many militants will question the value of a 400-mile round trip to see local MPs Eric Heffer and Eddie Loyden yet again. The day of action could have won greater support if a demonstration had been called in Liverpool instead of 500 or so trade unionists marching from Euston to Westminster.

Delegations could better use their time by visiting other factories around the country to discuss solidarity, particularly with British Leyland, GEC and Lucas where many redundancies are planned.

The protest politics of the Communist Party is getting trade unionists on Merseyside nowhere fast. And the time is running out for the thousands who face the dole queues, at end of May. Local supporters of the paper have argued that preparations must be made now to occupy all factories threatened with closures, especially Leyland's Speke plant.

polling day in the local elections, when a number of schools designated as polling stations will remain locked up.

The attack on school keepers' jobs is linked to the ILEA's plans for school closures, by preparing the ground for amalgamating schools. The authority aims to defeat the ancillary workers before taking on the teachers.

Before strike action in each school, meetings will be held with teachers, cleaners, and kitchen staff to discuss the issues involved and win support for the picket line.

A petition is being organised in the schools and the community. It has also been proposed that the Socialist Teachers Alliance should produce a model leaflet that could be run off in schools and go out to students and parents along with the note announcing that the school will be shut.

So far there have been relatively successfully local campaigns against school closures, such as those in Westminster and Lavender Hill. But this resistance has yet to be built on an all-London basis.

RAY VARNES is a shop steward in the NUPE school keepers branch.

## Support the FASHION DESIGN CENTRE OCCUPATION

Donations and messages of solidarity to:  
FD Centre [Liverpool], Randells Road,  
Knowsley Industrial Estate, Knowsley





# Can the Lucas worker's plan get off the drawing board?

**One thing that the corporate plan devised by the Lucas Aerospace combine shop stewards committee does not lack is supporters in the labour movement, writes GEOFFREY SHERIDAN.**

Shirley Williams, Secretary of State for Education and a banner bearer for the right wing in the Labour Party, is among the latest to register her enthusiasm.

She has suggested that the corporate plan, which puts forward a wide range of socially useful products tailored to the plant and skills available at Lucas Aerospace, merits a debate in Parliament.

Both the Transport and Engineering Unions have adopted the plan as policy.

Among the rank and file and in the community at large, the plan is gaining increasing popularity. Local meetings organised by the Lucas Aerospace shop stewards in Burnley and Luton each drew an audience of five hundred.

As the combine committee is well aware, the appeal of the plan lies in the anarchy of capitalist society to which it seeks to give a workers' response.

## IDLE MACHINES

Machines standing idle while two million workers languish on dole queues is one of the most grotesque obscenities that capitalism has to offer, and it was in anticipation of the redundancies that Lucas Aerospace has now announced that the combine first decided to draw up its plan, three and a half years ago.

Running to six 200-page volumes, the plan outlines 150 products that vividly demonstrate how advanced technology could meet social needs.

It defies the logic of Concorde-style technology: consuming vast amounts of energy to transport business people at twice the speed of sound, so that they can contrive speed-ups and closures twice as fast.

Among the products put forward is a hybrid internal combustion-electric power pack which would reduce fuel consumption by half and toxic emissions by 80 per cent. Another is a road-rail vehicle which would cut the cost of track laying from £1m to £20,000 a mile.

## IDEAS

New inventions are only part of the plan. It includes products such as kidney machines, for the lack of which people are dying.

Not least, the plan shows that workers can readily conceive and design products without any 'assistance' from management — or in this case much help from outside specialists.

While the plan has resulted in the opening at the beginning of this year of the Centre for Alternative Industrial and Technological Systems at NE London Poly — which is being run jointly with industrial workers — only three of the 180 academics and institutions initially approached submitted practical proposals.

It was a questionnaire circulated among the 12,000 workers at Lucas Aerospace which elicited the ideas of how they could use their skills and equipment, presently employed in producing components for

aircraft — half of them military.

For these workers, as well as the countless others who have seen in the plan an inviting glimpse of the future, the crucial question is: What is to be done with it?

## SACKING

In effect, Lucas Aerospace management has already thrown down the gauntlet. Having refused to even discuss the plan — or, for that matter, to recognise the combine committee — it announced a few weeks ago its intention of closing plants in Liverpool, Coventry, and Hemel Hempstead and sacking 2,000 workers.

It is the biggest challenge the combine committee has had to face in its seven-year history. The committee was formed in the wake of the 5,000 redundancies that came with amalgamations which brought Lucas Aerospace into being in 1970-71.

Although another thousand jobs have since disappeared through 'natural wastage', the unions have prevented any further direct sackings.

Last month the combine committee brought together 74 shop stewards from the 17 plants in the company, who unanimously agreed that they would allow no movement of equipment or personnel from the plants facing closure.

The problem is that while the committee will back up militant action against redundancies and closure, it has not developed a strategy that can place the corporate plan in the context of this struggle.

The committee considers that the crucial step in advancing the plan is to secure a tripartite agreement between itself, management, and the Government over its implementation. Not surprisingly, it takes a jaundiced view of such an agreement coming about.

At a meeting at the House of Commons on 4 April attended by stewards representing all the Lucas Aerospace sites, all that Employment Minister Albert Booth and Leslie Huckfield from the Department of Trade and Industry had to say was that they were not happy about the closures.

As far as these Labour ministers were concerned, the combine committee was an unofficial body, and therefore did not exist. The Department of Industry has continually used the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions as a shield against the combine.

Industry minister Gerald Kaufman recently wheeled out Ken Gill, general secretary of the Engineering Union's white-collar section, to front for the establishment when Audrey Wise, Jeff Rooker and other Labour MPs challenged his department's policy.

When the MPs wanted to know why there had been no reply from the Confed to three letters about the corporate plan written over the past nine months, Gill's explanation was:

'There's been a lot of sickness in the Confed.'

A month ago, stewards from all sites and unions at Lucas Aerospace deplored the action of Gill and the Confed in meeting top Lucas management behind the backs of the stewards and excluding everyone but full-time officials.

The strategy of the labour leaders is plain enough. Their model is Leyland's corporate plan, devised to cut the workers down to size through speed-ups, closures, and undermining the power of the shop stewards.

These are measures that the Lucas Aerospace combine committee would vigorously resist. They say that they would want full control over jobs and working conditions if any of the plan's products are to be introduced.

## LOGIC

Yet Leyland is the logic of any tripartite agreement settled around the negotiating table.

Some members of the combine committee bluntly explain that their plan cannot be implemented under capitalism: the dictates of profit and the market can in no way accommodate production based on need. But to leave it at that — to simply argue that only socialism can make this possible — is in effect to abandon the plan, instead of posing demands that can make a struggle for its implementation possible now.

If the plan is made to appear utopian, which is after all exactly how the bosses want it to seem, then many workers will believe that some form of endorsement by management and the Government is the only viable solution.

In reality, of course, it is this 'solution' which is utopian.

The merit of the plan lies in

the contribution it can make to the struggle against unemployment, by providing a popular focus for the demands that pose an alternative to Labour's class collaboration.

Most immediately, a fight for the plan means a fight against the redundancies and closures that Lucas Aerospace has announced. And that requires rapid action.

Occupying the threatened plants would ensure that nothing could be removed from them, and at the same time provide centres of struggle against management's plans.

Selective closures are invariably conceived as a means of isolating the workers affected, which underlines the need for demands that can establish a basis for unity throughout the combine.

The demand for sharing the available work with no loss of pay cuts across management's divisive strategy and substitutes reduced working hours for the bosses' alternative, the living death of the dole.

## OPEN BOOKS

If Lucas Aerospace claims it needs to sack two thousand in the interests of its balance sheet (a somewhat notional exercise, since the Lucas group as a whole made a profit of £76m last year), then forcing the company to open its books would reveal the reality of the financial operations.

The combine committee opposes the demand for nationalisation, arguing that this is not the same as 'socialisation'. But it is the money available to the Government which would be required to fund the products in the plan, and in any event Lucas is already largely dependent on nationalised industries.

The workers' control that the combine seeks can only begin to impose itself on management through struggle.

On Merseyside, where Lucas Aerospace's Victor works and the Triumph plant at Speke both face closure, it has been suggested that an advanced engine could be made at Victor for cars built at Speke.

It is this kind of unity of interest between workers in struggle which can lift the corporate plan off the drawing board — not the prospect of an enlightened management or benevolent Government.

A fight against the closures would create the best conditions for fighting around the plan, and it would face the Government with a simple choice: backing the workers, or helping to sharpen management's axe.



**The Working Women's Charter: Where do we go from here?**

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE WORKING WOMENS CHARTER NATIONAL CONFERENCE

June 17th and 18th 1978

Manchester Polytechnic Students Union, Grandd House, Cowditch Street, AB Notts, MANCHESTER

# Chrysler stewards sacked

**CHRYSLER management at the Stoke plant in Coventry has declared open war on militants within the factory.**

**Its first move has been to sack George and Paul O'Brien, two leading shop stewards. MARK WHYTE reports from Coventry.**



**GEORGE O'BRIEN**

The sackings were clearly a deliberate provocation on the part of the Chrysler management.

On returning to work, after clocking off to carry out union business on 19 April, the two stewards were told they had 'dismissed themselves'.

Chrysler then laid off all the 4,000 workers at Stoke to prevent support for the sacked men being organised. The fork lift drivers, whom George and Paul O'Brien represented, started a picket line which received wide support in the factory.



**PAUL O'BRIEN**

give up the fight and return to work.

Such action by management and union officials in breaking militancy lays the basis for further attacks on the workers at Chrysler and elsewhere. This points to the urgency of building broad-based support in the TGWU against the witch hunts now taking place.

Hopefully the recent meeting in Oxford in defence of the militants at Cowley can be an important step in this direction. Even if the two Chrysler stewards can't be reinstated, this must not be allowed to happen again.

## RAILROADED

However, no support was forthcoming from the other stewards in the plant. In fact on the Friday morning Eddie McCluskey, a Communist Party stalwart and Transport Union convenor, and Duncan Simpson, the Engineers convenor, called a mass meeting of the entire plant to recommend returning to work.

These convenors didn't allow the sacked men's supporters to speak and railroaded through the decision to scab on the two stewards.

This was followed by a letter from management threatening to sack all workers who didn't return to work. The truck drivers stayed out in support of their stewards, but after further threats from management and complete capitulation from the other stewards they, too, had to





# Courts join bosses against animal keepers



FIFTEEN striking animal keepers at Windsor Safari Park had their right to picket severely restricted on Friday, reports FRANK ALLEN.

A court order barred the strikers from the park land, and limited picketing to a five foot wide strip of grass verge.

During the six month dispute, the workers have had to stand up to a barrage of legal and other action from the employers, who are determined to prevent strong union organisation at the park.

were joined on strike by 11 other keepers and these too were promptly sacked.

## OFFICIAL

It was not until mid-April that the strike was made official by the TGWU, but despite this many visitors to the park have been turned away. Others have preferred to cross the picket line — including a coachload of tourists from the People's Republic of China and a member of the staff at the Russian Embassy.

Nevertheless the picket has been effective enough for Trident to offer Dave Cartledge alternative employment in Canada or Scotland. The shop steward has rejected this attempt to get him out of the way.

The attacks of the court on the right to picket make the dispute a serious matter for the entire labour movement.

## SUPPORT

Support would be especially welcome from the thousands of other employees of Trident TV whose managing director has been quoted as saying: 'Doesn't every company have the right to pay its employees as little as it can get away with. I bet British Leyland would pay £10 per week if it could.'

You can help to win this

## GRIEVANCE

The dispute began last October when 28 animal keepers joined the Transport and General Workers Union.

Their basic weekly pay was £25, but the workers' main grievance was the treatment of the animals. The keepers say that sheep have been skinned alive, lions shot because they could not be sold, and food rations to animals severely cut.

Five days after joining the union, four dolphin trainers — including shop steward David Cartledge — were sacked by the park owners, Trident Television, who also own Yorkshire and Tynes TV.

Early last month the four

After Claridges, Garners must win!

Details of pickets in What's Left, p 10.

## Safari park strike

dispute by joining the pickets at the Safari Park every weekend during the summer, and particularly on Whit Sunday, 28 May.

The park is located three miles south of junction 6 on the M4 motorway. Financial support is urgently needed, to: Brother Quentin Rose, c/o TGWU, 36 Kings Road, Reading.

## NF forge election papers

THE NATIONAL Front in Leeds has an imaginative way of participating in the local elections — forging nomination papers, reports GRAHAM WILLIAMS.

A front supporter has admitted forging three signatures on the form for Audrey Rhodes, the Front's candidate in the City and Woodhouse ward.

This first came to light when Labour canvassers found that they had received door-step pledges of support from voters who had supposedly nominated Rhodes. The police Fraud Squad is now investigating.

The police are also checking into another Front candidate in the city, Peter Jackson. Seven of his ten nominees say they were tricked into signing the papers.

NF leader Martin Webster has decided that Jackson is an 'infiltrator — out to destroy our party'.

## Leeds: Police halt May Day march

POLICE spent £25,000 to stop the labour movement holding its May Day march in Leeds on Saturday. MARTIN FRIEDMAN reports.

Leeds Trades Council voted overwhelmingly last week to go ahead with its march, in spite of the blanket ban on demonstrations introduced to cover the NF's proposed march in the city.

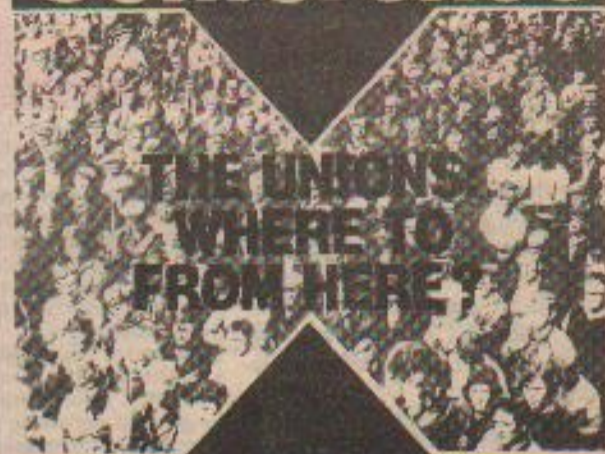
Twenty thousand leaflets helped to mobilise support for the march, with declarations of support coming from trades councils in Sheffield, Bradford, and Halifax.

Other labour movement bodies in favour of defying the police ban included: the district committees of the Engineering and Transport Unions, Yorkshire miners, and the UCATT building workers.

On the day, 400 assembled — to be confronted by 2,000 police, who promptly made two arrests, including that of Beryl Hufangley, the secretary of the Leeds Trades Council.

The column of marchers dispersed and proceeded to walk to the city centre, where the town hall was picketed. They demanded the right to march, and condemned the attempt to equate the labour movement with the fascists.

## Socialist Challenge Trade Union Conference



Saturday, 1 July, 10.30 am  
Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE is calling a trade union conference. We have approached Socialist Voice and Big Flame newspapers to jointly sponsor the conference on the basis of broad agreement with the perspective outlined in this broadsheet.

The conference is not designed to establish a new body in opposition to other organisations of the left. It will provide a forum where militants can exchange experiences. Discussion will centre on how to fight for a united democratic organisation to struggle against the class collaborationist right wing for policies in the interests of workers and for a union

leadership prepared to carry these out.

Particular emphasis will be placed on drawing out lessons from the Grunwick and firefighters' strikes as to how militants can support and fight for socialist policies in the context of such struggles.

We will be discussing campaigns for socialist policies to: defend living standards against racism, for women's rights, and for democracy in the unions.

And we will be discussing the general lessons that can be drawn from developments in particular industries and unions for the fight for a class struggle left-wing in the labour movement as a whole.

GRUNWICK NATIONAL CONFERENCE  
The Lessons to be Learned  
11am—5pm Sunday 14 May Wembley Conference Centre, Empire Way, Wembley, Middlesex.

Credentials £1 from Trades and Labour Hall, 375 High Rd., Willesden, London NW10.

## ANTI-RACIST NEWS

### Lewisham

JOHN LOCKWOOD, presently serving a three-month sentence in Pentonville, will be met by a welcoming party when he is released on 12 May, reports RICHARD TISDELL.

John, a member of the Socialist Workers Party, was charged with assaulting an unknown cop during the anti-fascist demo in Lewisham last August, and convicted on the evidence of just one cop.

As with Flame editor, Kim Gordon, now awaiting an appeal against his jail sentence, John's conviction can in no way be connected with the leading part he played on the demo, or the fact that he is an executive member of the All London Anti-Racist and Anti-Fascist committee.

The John Lockwood Defence Committee has been active in the SE London labour movement and community. A large delegation from the school where John teaches attended a public meeting last month, to hear NUT executive member Dick North urge a 'no cover' policy to ensure John is reinstated.

It is vital that we show anti-fascists will not be

intimidated by frame-ups.

Send a message to John, via the defence committee, c/o The Civil Liberties Society, Goldsmiths College Students Union, Lewisham Way, London SE14. And join the welcoming party outside Pentonville at 6.30am on Friday, 12 May.

### Cardiff

THE NATIONAL Front candidate in a Cardiff council by-election held last week only polled a dismal 91 votes out of 4,000 cast.

This humiliation for the Front followed sustained anti-fascist campaigning in the Fly ward where the by-election was held.

Prominent in this was the Cardiff Committee Against Racism, to which many trade union branches and Labour Party wards are affiliated, as well as a local women's group, the Communist Party and the International Marxist Group.

The CCAR distributed over 10,000 leaflets and set up public stalls to expose the politics of the Front.

The local Anti-Nazi League, set up three weeks ago, also leafleted. But the Socialist Workers Party, which controls the ANL in Cardiff, refused the CCAR offer of a joint

campaign. In so doing they appeared to be ignoring the ANL steering committee elected at a public meeting.

The defeat for the Front gave the lie to the words of the Labour Party candidate David Seligman, who had argued that the anti-racist activity would only give publicity and aid to the Front.

### Waltham Forest

THE ANTI-Nazi League has been launched in Waltham Forest, East London, after a sometimes heated debate with members of the well-established local anti-racist campaign, reports JOHN BOURNE.

The inaugural meeting of the League on 24 April was attended by over 40 people, many from Walthamstow CAR which was formed 18 months ago. It was agreed that the two groups should liaise as much as possible, and formulate joint activities.

A number of concerns were raised during the debate — particularly the problem of duplicated efforts and the lack of internal democracy in the League. The first joint action came three days later when a 200-strong picket was held outside an NF election meeting.

In spite of a pledge from the leader of the local Labour council that everyone would be able to attend the NF's 'public' meeting — held in a school — it proved necessary to be a card-carrying fascist to get in. Providing most of the vocal opposition was a group of 50 well-organised school students.

### Loughborough

ASIANS in Loughborough have every reason to wonder what use the town's Inter-Racial Solidarity Campaign is to them after hearing the views of its president, John Cronin.

Cronin, Loughborough's Labour MP, addressed a meeting of the campaign last week and offered his opinions on:

Immigration — 'The laws have been administered with justice and humanity. Less coloured immigration is in the best interests of Britain's coloured population.'

Overseas student fees — 'These are a bit too large, but it is a fact of life that these students are not British passport holders.'

NF meetings — 'While I greatly disapprove of the National Front, I am against any ban on the use of school halls for meetings held by such

organisations.'

Anti-Nazi League — Cronin refused to add his name to the list of sponsors, saying it was 'tactically unwise' to give unnecessary publicity to the NF.

This Labour MP, who was speaking on the theme 'Race Relations in Britain Today', painted a rosy picture of racial harmony in the town.

He just forgot to mention the infamous Mansfield Hosiery strike, the growing number of NF posters, the threatening letters and a bomb sent to local anti-racist militants, and the increasing harassment of Asians.

Cronin's outrageous reason for suggesting that harmony rules in Loughborough was that white people are afraid to walk the streets at night in Brixton!

### Lambeth

LAMBETH Trades Council is to carry out an investigation into what it describes as the apparent collusion between the police and the National Front during the run up to the Lambeth Central by-election.

It has already demanded the disbandment of the Special

Patrol Group.

The trades council has issued an interim report on the election meeting held by the NF in a local school on 15 April, when 5,000 cops, including the notorious SPG, mounted police, and a helicopter were drafted into Brixton.

On the night before the meeting, police with dogs occupied the school, forcing teachers to abandon a scheduled meeting.

The trade council says that the small group of anti-fascists who attended the NF's 'public meeting' were not given the same protection by the police as the fascists received.

One member of the community relations council who attempted to enter the school was turned back by the police on the grounds that he was black. And when the fascists physically attacked the group in the meeting, the police hustled the anti-fascists out, arresting some.

Six black youths were swooped on in the street, and the trades council considers that these arrests 'were made to cause an incident — perhaps to justify the number of officers and the cost.' It wants the NF banned from holding meetings in schools 'as the meetings are not public'.



# Dissident Louis Althusser writes on party and class CRISIS IN THE FRENCH

**THE FRENCH Communist Party [PCF] is in turmoil. A fierce debate has broken out in the ranks on the reasons for the defeat of the Union of the Left in the March elections. The party leadership's claim that the PCF 'bears no responsibility' is widely challenged.**

Many militants think there must at least be something wrong with a strategy which leads to such a defeat. Was their party not a bit to blame for the way in which the split with the Socialist Party took place last September — a split which was only half-heartedly covered over on the eve of the second round of the elections? A bombshell was dropped into this discussion last week by well-known

philosopher Louis Althusser — a member of the PCF for thirty years. In four articles published by the newspaper *Le Monde*, totalling some 20,000 words in all, he presented one of the most scathing indictments of the operations of a mass workers party to appear from the pen of a party member since the days of the Left Opposition.

Althusser is able to speak with an intimate knowledge of the workings of the PCF. Often a nonconformist with regard to prevailing party dogma, he has on several occasions suffered at the hands of the leadership. His most recent stand was to oppose the dropping of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' from the party's programme at its 22nd Congress in 1976.

His *Le Monde* articles centre on two key problems: the relationship between the party leadership and the base, and

the relationship between the party and the working class and oppressed masses. The scope of this critique cannot be adequately presented in the space available here, so we have limited ourselves to two short excerpts highlighting these central concerns.

The criticisms of Althusser and others have met with a sharp response from the party leadership. Addressing a meeting of the PCF Central Committee at the end of last week, general secretary Georges Marchais accused the dissidents of being 'busybodies...composing monologues at their desks...apart from everyday life and any consultation with their comrades'.

The Central Committee unanimously approved Marchais' report, which came down firmly against any concessions — such as the opening up of a limited discussion in the party press. But as Althusser outlines, the

Central Committee is hardly an accurate barometer of feeling inside the PCF.

In fact the criticisms have come not only from intellectuals like Althusser and the historian Jean Elleinstein, but also from party cadres — members of PCF section and federation committees. The editor of the party's million-selling industrial weekly, *Action*, has also resigned his post in protest at the continuation of Stalinist practices inside the PCF.

*Socialist Challenge* considers that this debate holds important lessons for the left in Britain. The discussion inside the PCF will undoubtedly continue despite the outcome of the Central Committee meeting, and in future issues we will be publishing further excerpts from it as well as analysing the fundamental questions at stake.



JEAN ELLEINSTEIN leads another opposition wing

Compartmentalisation has a two-fold effect. On the one hand, it enforces every rank-and-file militant in a narrow ascending column, which rises from their cell to the section, and, beyond that, to the federation and Central Committee. This 'ascending traffic' is dominated by full-time officials, who faithfully filter the contributions of the base in the light of the decisions from the top. On the other hand, the rank-and-file militant cannot, outside of section or federation conferences (if they are a delegate), enter into any relationship with the militants of any other cell, which belongs to another ascending column. Every attempt to establish a 'horizontal relationship' is, even today, declared to be 'factional'.

One could believe, in effect, that we were in a military formation, where operational effectiveness implies both absolute obedience and secrecy, but also a drastic compartmentalisation of the units engaged in combat. This similarity has nothing ignominious about it. It recalls the periods when the party had to adopt military forms of organisation and security in order to defend itself and act: the clandestinity of the party of Lenin, of the party during the Resistance, etc. Inasmuch as the conditions then justified measures of compartmentalisation, so the present conditions render them void, anachronistic, and sterile: not only for militants, but for the masses, and at the extreme, for the officials themselves.

## A WAY OF FUNCTIONING WHICH MUST BE CHANGED FROM TOP TO BOTTOM

Numerous militants are saying, 'it is no longer possible to go on like this', and that it is necessary to denounce and to change from top to bottom the mode of functioning of this 'machine' which is the party. They are demanding this not just for themselves, for their freedom as militants, that is, for the party (because the party is its militants), but for the mass of French workers, who cannot conquer in the class struggle without the Communist Party, but who cannot conquer with this Communist Party either, as it presently exists.

These same militants do not want the party to be a 'party like the others'. They know only too well what these 'others' are, bourgeois oligarchic parties, within which is exercised the undivided domination of a caste of professionals, experts, and intellectuals, closely linked to the upper levels of the State administration.

These same militants believe in the necessity for a revolutionary party of the class struggle of the exploited, they believe in the necessity for a leadership and officials in this party. They believe that democratic centralism can and must be retained, provided that its rules are profoundly changed and, more importantly, its practice. This is not just a matter of formal rights, but of that which decides the fate of every formal right: the political life and practice of the party.

Now we are at the heart of the problem: the party...What is the party?

## A PARTY MODELLED ON THE STATE APPARATUS AND THE MILITARY APPARATUS

I use the word 'machine' advisedly, because it returns to the term of Marx and Lenin for the State. On the face of

it, this is a startling statement for someone to make: the party is obviously not a State in the proper sense, but everything is carried on as if, in its structure and hierarchical functioning, it was closely modelled both on the apparatus of the bourgeois State and on the military apparatus.

This is the parliamentary aspect of the party. On the one hand there is the mass of militants, who freely discuss in their cells and sections. This is the 'sovereign people': but it stops short once the barrier of the federal secretariats, led by full-time officials, is reached. The break is there, where the apparatus takes precedence over the base. There things start to become serious (for the leadership). If the popular will of the base expresses itself in elections, it is in ultra-reactionary forms (majority ballot in three stages for the congresses) and under the close scrutiny of 'nominating commissions', which are provided for in the statutes for the election of

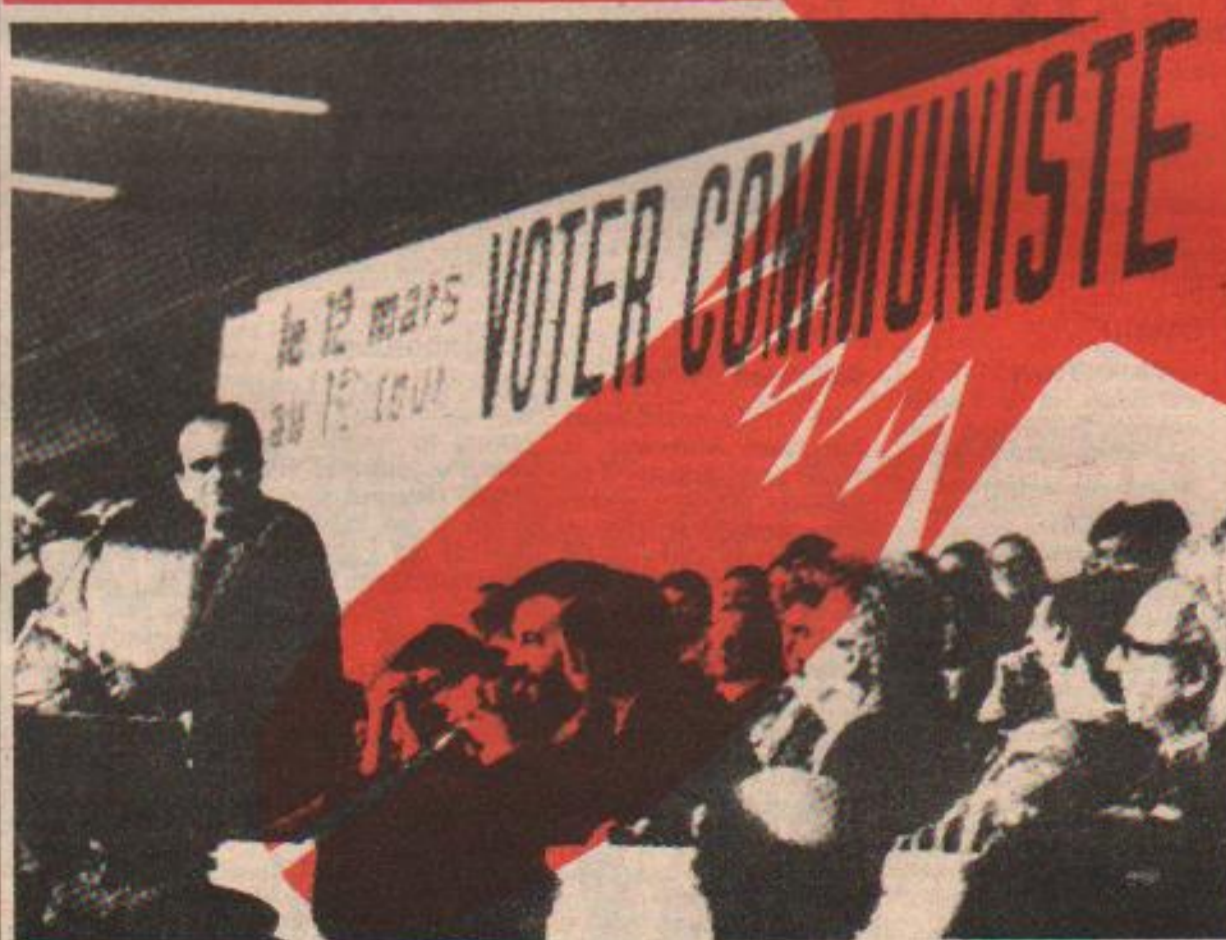
'officials' but have been illegally extended to the election of congress delegates.

These elections produce the hierarchy of officials: members of the committees and bureaux of the sections, federation, and the Central Committee, capped by its political bureau and secretariat. The Central Committee, elected by strictly selected federation delegates, is supposed to be the sovereign organ of the party, its legislature and executive. In practice this sovereign organ exists more to ratify and ensure the implementation of the leadership's decisions than to propose anything new. We have never heard it said that the Central Committee had taken the least initiative. In reality the Central Committee is more often the executive organ of the leadership than its legislature: in this capacity it is a sort of general assembly of prefects (senior local government administrators ap-

pointed by the central government in France — ed.) which the leadership dispatches and employs throughout France to 'observe' — that is, to control on the spot — the federations, to appoint the federal secretaries, and to handle delicate questions.

The leadership bases itself not only on the members of the Central Committee, but also on the formidable power, often mystical, of its functionaries of all kinds, full-time officials and advisors of the central committee, these non-elected unknowns, recruited on the basis of competence or connections, always by cooption — and specialist of every category.

And this is the military aspect of the party. Everything which has just been said would be incomplete if we did not add the fundamental principle of absolute vertical compartmentalisation, which recalls the compartmentalised form of the military hierarchy.



Communist Party leader Georges Marchais speaks at pre-election meeting. He is also pictured right in more relaxed mood. Marchais washes his hands of all responsibility for the electoral defeat of the left.

## THE BOURGEOIS MODE OF POLITICAL FUNCTIONING

By thus combining the military model of compartmentalisation with the model of parliamentary democracy, the party cannot help reproducing — and strengthening — the bourgeois mode of political functioning. From the parliamentary model it draws a well-known advantage: just as the bourgeoisie achieves the reproduction of its forms of political domination through the free 'citizens', so the party leadership achieves the reproduction of its forms of domination through the militants. And from the military model of compartmentalisation it draws among others the not insignificant advantage that it can disguise the co-opting of officials as their election. As a result of this combination it obtains the reproduction not only of the form of the political domination of the leadership, but of the very body of the leadership.

In effect the narrow circles from which the leadership is drawn makes it practically impossible to dislodge them, whatever their failures or even sometimes their political bankruptcy (for instance, the line of 'legalisation' at all costs in the autumn of 1940). Under these conditions, the 'game' of



# I COMMUNIST PARTY

democracy in the party culminates, as in the bourgeois State, in the miracle of transubstantiation: just as the popular will is transformed into the power of the ruling class, so the will of the party rank-and-file is transformed into the power of the leadership.

Have they considered the following fact? The counterpart of the mechanism which reproduces the leadership and enables it to survive, irremovable, through all its strategic and tactical turns — as through all its mistakes — is the flight of the militants. It is their continual haemorrhaging, their continual replacement by 'new generations' who have not known the struggles and hardships of five, ten or twenty years ago, and who in their turn are thrown into the fray on the strength of 'theories', slogans or promises, to be burnt up after a few years.

Why are there so many former Communists — more than even the official membership of the party? Why are there so many card-carrying militants who have dropped out of active involvement? Why are entire generations of militants who have been tested in struggle (the Resistance, Cold War, Vietnam, Algeria, 1968, etc.) almost completely absent from the party, both from its activity and at any level of leadership? The party, as a little 'State apparatus', has found the solution to the famous problem to which Brecht referred after the bloody riots in Berlin: 'The people have lost confidence in their leaders? There is nothing for it but to elect a new people! Periodically, from one recruitment campaign to the next, the party leadership elects a new people', in other words, another rank-and-file, other militants. But as for the leadership, it stays put...

## THE DECISIVE QUESTION: THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MASSES

... One cannot leave it at the level of the party, nor even at the character of its political practice: it is necessary to discuss the political relationship of the party to the broad masses, therefore its political line, and the decisive question of political line: the question of alliances.

The existence of a party and a line is absolutely necessary to assist the working class to organise itself as a class, which is the same thing as organising its class struggle. However, just as we don't build the party for its own sake, one should not organise the working class for the working class, because that would lead to its isolation. The working class exists within a broad mass of exploited or oppressed working people; it is that part of the masses which is the most capable of organising itself and showing the way forward for all the exploited.

Marxist tradition considers that it is the action of the broad masses which is decisive, and that the action of the working class must be conceived in this light. It is from the broad masses that have come the historical initiatives of revolutionary scope: the creation of the Commune, the factory occupations in 1936, the popular conquest of the Liberation Committees in 1944-45, the immense surprise of May 1968 in France, etc. And a party judges itself primarily by its ability to link up with the needs and initiatives of the popular masses.

On this absolutely decisive question of a close relationship with the masses, the party was able at one time to take a position. It is a tendency in its history. But there is also an opposite tendency which has continually reappeared and

become more pronounced: an instinctive rejection of everything which is not under the control of the apparatus, of new forms which can upset certainties and the established order. This was the case in May '68: the party deliberately cut itself off from the student and petty-bourgeois masses because it did not have control over them! In general, its instinctive fear of anything which it does not control from above, through its 'theory' or its apparatus, means that it always starts off a good way behind when it does agree to move into action. It nevertheless carries in its portfolios, in advance, the truth about what is going to happen, when its first task should be to listen to the masses. Maes said: 'Consciousness always lags behind'. The party leadership calmly applies this principle to the letter without suspecting its irony: it ensures its consciousness by lagging behind.

It is clear that, depending on the relationships which the party maintains with the masses (living, attentive, open, or on the other hand, characterised by mistrust, deafness, and delay), so its political line will be conceived differently: broad and flexible while remaining correct; or, on the contrary, authoritarian and rigid, even if it is correct in the abstract. One can judge this on the central question of any revolutionary line: the question of alliances.

All Marxist tradition, since the Communist Manifesto of 1848, has defended the necessity of alliances. The working class cannot conquer alone, its struggle would be a 'funereal solo' (Marx).

But there are alliances and alliances. And here two conceptions/limits come up against each other. Either one conceives alliances in terms of a contract between political organisations seen as 'proprietors' of their electorate; or else they are conceived in terms of a struggle led by the organised section of the working class in order to extend its influence.



LOUIS ALTHUSSER

In the first case, it is a question of applying a juridical and electoralist conception: this happened with the Union of the Left, ratified by a contract 'from above'. In the second case, we are talking about a conception which, while respecting pluralism and allowing for a juridical contract 'from above', plunges the party directly into the mass struggle to extend its audience and win broader positions — above all in the working class and petty bourgeoisie. The question is basically one of primacy: primacy of the contract, or primacy of struggle.

The leadership has of course declared that 'the Union is a struggle', but one may well ask what the content of this formally correct slogan could be since the leadership, contrary to the position adopted in the perspective of the Popular Front in 1934-36, opposed the establishment of popular committees. In fact, in place of the struggle in the masses, to give the Union a real basis, the leadership substituted the struggle between organisations under cover of fidelity to the Common

Programme. It thus succeeded in replacing unitary electoralism ('right opportunism') with a sectarian electoralism, which claimed to pass off the domination of one party over another as a real hegemony, a 'leading influence' of the working class in the popular movement. But it was still electoralist — indeed, more so than ever — and therefore right opportunist. The leadership went so far as to launch an appeal to the masses after the drama of September ('Everything depends on you!' — Georges Marchais at the L'Humanite fete), so far as to use this astounding formula: 'Make the first round of the elections into a gigantic "national petition" for the updating of a good Common Programme and support for the Communists!'

## LIVING IN A DREAM WORLD

What were they dreaming of, when from 1972 to 1977 nothing had been done to stimulate or develop rank-and-file initiatives and forms of unity between manual and intellectual workers. Indeed, any suggestion of popular committees had been rebuffed because of the risks of 'manipulation'. And then, having broken mass initiative over a period of years, they finally appealed to the masses. In order to prevent 'manipulation' they ended up quite simply by manipulating the masses. At the final desperate appeal of the party leadership, they wanted the masses suddenly to mobilise and transform their vote as citizens into a 'petition' to support the 'battle' led by the party inside the Union of the Left!

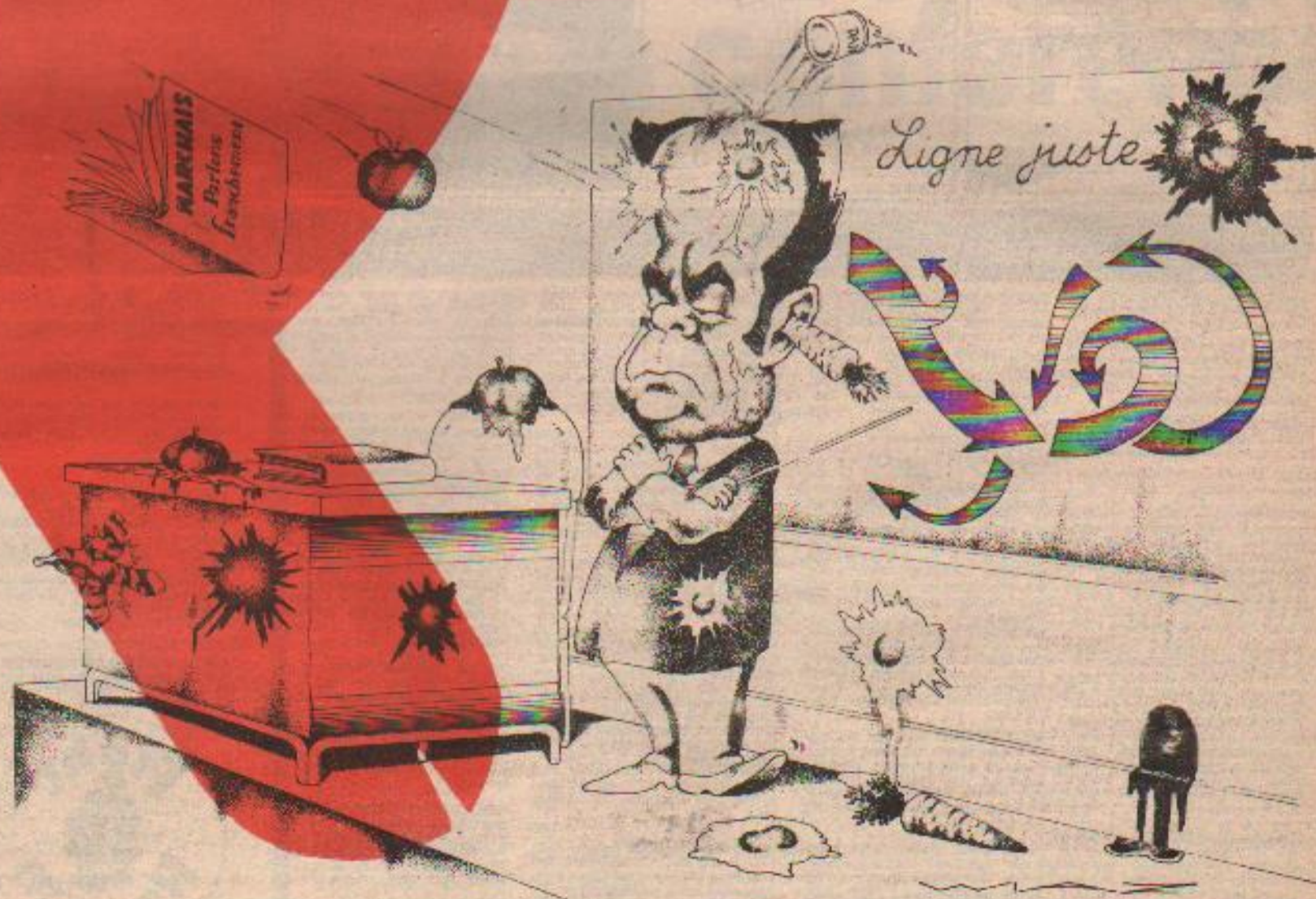
That is what happens when one opts for a conception of the Union as a contract between leaderships and when one tries desperately to compensate for its effects by seeking to write in, at the

last moment, struggle into the agreement. Electoralism is not avoided but worsened, and confusion is increased by an appeal for the mobilisation of the masses who have previously been kept aside from struggle.

It would however have been perfectly possible to conceive this policy of the Union as a policy of mass mobilisation and struggle: as a policy of popular unity, tying the contract signed 'from above' to a unitary struggle at the base in which the party could have extended its audience beyond the 'buffer' [this refers to the stable, but limited, proportion of the electorate who vote for the CP — eds]

In this case, one would have straightaway written the contract into the struggle and acted in such a way as to give priority to the unitary struggle of the masses. One would have had confidence in the masses to give short shrift to manoeuvres and manipulations, and stopped manipulating them — that is, treating them in fact as the object of a bourgeois practice — in order to create the conditions for a workers' and people's policy of popular unity.

The deep-rooted, stubborn and thoroughgoing mistrust shown by the leadership towards the masses ruled out this liberating choice for the party. It fell back on a policy of agreement where the Union was run 'from above'. The party literally did not wish to hear the slogan of 'popular unity' which arose spontaneously from massive contingents of workers in the years 1973-75. There was a fear of taking risks, disguised as a fear of adventurism, or, in the last analysis, pure and simple routinism (who knows what reasons an apparatus would acknowledge!). The leadership withdrew into old habits as into a protective fortress, dragging the party in with it. The left has lost; the fortress still remains, immutable, whatever the heavens hold.





# IRELAND

## Raids fail to stop protest

# 6,000 march for the prisoners

AN ESTIMATED 6,000 people marched in Belfast on Saturday in solidarity with Republican prisoners in H Block, Long Kesh.

It was one of the largest demonstrations so far in support of the granting of political status for all Republican prisoners.

For over two years Republican prisoners convicted of offences committed after 1 March 1976 have refused to wear prison uniforms and accept other regulations which seek to make out that they are 'criminal' rather than political prisoners.

### BLANKET

As a result over 330 prisoners are now 'on the blanket'. This means that they have only a blanket to wear, are refused proper exercise and food, have no proper medical

treatment, and are often put in solitary confinement.

The support these prisoners have for their stand was shown by the size of Saturday's demonstration.

### REPRESSION

In an attempt to forestall the protests, the British Government launched a massive wave of repression last Friday and Saturday.

Catholic working class areas were sealed off with metal barriers, and for the second time in four months the Army and RUC closed down **Republican News**, the newspaper of Provisional Sinn Fein.

Anyone connected with the paper was the target for the arrests. These included the

paper's printer, who is a member of the Social Democratic and Labour Party.

In an attempt to prevent details of the raids reaching the outside world, Tom Hartley, press officer of Sinn Fein, was also arrested. He and at least 13 others are being held under the

Prevention of Terrorism Act.

There is every possibility that these new raids and arrests represent a major effort by the British Government to close down what it sees as its most determined 'opposition' newspaper and to outlaw Sinn Fein as a political organisation.

**Singers from 'The Men of no Property' — who made England's Vietnam — and friends in three benefit socials for the 'Troops Out' paper.**

**Friday, 5 May with Belt & Braces Roadshow Band and The Resisters at St. Hilda's Community Centre, Club Row, London E2 (off Bethnal Green Rd).**

**Sunday, 7 May, organized by Tottenham Socialist Connection at Park Lane Community Centre (behind Spurs Ground) London N17.**

**Monday, 8 May with Hackney & Islington Music Workshop at Hemingford Arms, Hemingford Road, Islington, London N1.**

## Long Kesh



### Letter

**SINCE my last letter a lot has happened in Long Kesh which has affected us both directly and indirectly.**

You will probably have read about the escalation in the protests by the prisoners in H block. They have refused to clean out their cells or empty their chamber pots. When the cell doors are opened each morning the contents of the chamber pots are thrown onto the corridor.

At first the prison authorities ordered young non-political prisoners to clean up the mess. When they refused they were put in solitary confinement with the loss of remission, but it meant the warders had to clean the corridors themselves.

They now wear gas masks when they are doing the job and the whole affair has caused frustration and friction within their ranks.

Another major embarrassment for the prison authorities occurred only a few days ago. Bill McFarlane, Pat McKeown and Larry Marley, three prisoners from cage 12, reached the front gate outside the perimeter of the prison dressed as prison warders.

It was a major breach of prison security which was carefully papered over by the Northern Ireland Office who immediately issued a statement saying that a special enquiry would be initiated. This was a ploy to cool the reaction of the many right wing Unionist elements who always like escapes so they can put pressure on the British Government to harass the prisoners more and more.

By saying there will be an enquiry the Government hopes the whole thing will be

forgotten.

Not that the authorities need any encouragement to harass us. With the number of 'Special Category' or political prisoners decreasing the screws are doing all they can to make the lives of those of us that remain even more miserable.

### PASSES

In recent weeks they have refused to allow any hand-crafts out with 'Long Kesh' printed or painted on them. Officially Long Kesh doesn't exist as the name had a sordid link with British imperialism in the eyes of the world. So it's now officially known as Her Majesty's Prison, Maze, and although its the same place as Long Kesh, prisoners cannot even send out letters which include the name 'Long Kesh'.

They are also fiddling about with the passes sent out to visitors. Now all the names and addresses must be on them which wasn't the case until recently. The alleged reason for the change is that recently a South Moluccan and a USA senator supposedly visited prisoners in Crumlin Road jail without the knowledge of the prison authorities. How this was meant to affect security even the prison authorities can't explain.

There have been more serious incidents. Tom McFeely, a County Derry Republican, 'on the blanket' in H block was driven onto a hunger and thirst strike as he had been continually subjected to rule 42 of the prison code. This means he was in solitary confinement for an indefinite period. It's the most draconian measure the authorities have at their disposal.

### OFFICER

McFeely's life had been made a hell within a hell; he was the officer commanding of the Provisionals inside H block and although confined to his cell, McFeely still managed to control the actions of those under his command. This disturbed the screws so much that he was regularly put in solitary confinement.

After being in solitary for a lengthy period McFeely had only one alternative left — to go on hunger and thirst strike until he was granted a guarantee that he wouldn't be subjected to any more victimisation. After seven days and near death the authorities granted his request and with the intervention of his comrades Tom gave up his protest. But like so many of the promises made by the authorities they have gone back on their word and he is again on solitary or to use prison slang 'on the boards'.

One thing is certain. His spirit will not be broken as he is a most determined and strong-willed character. He typifies the political commitment and determination of those 'on the blanket' who the authorities and Roy Mason would like us to believe are 'criminals'.

Yours,  
Tiofaudh Ar La

### Prisoners Aid Committee

Public Meeting

ON  
Irish Political Prisoners

Friday 7pm, 5 May  
NUFTO Hall, Jockeys  
Fields, Theobalds Road,  
London WC1. Tube:  
Holborn.

Prisoner of War status  
for Irish Political  
Prisoners!  
Amnesty for all Irish  
POWs!  
Brits out of Ireland!



Rates: 5p per word. Display £2 per column inch. Deadline: 3pm Saturday before publication.

**OXFORD** and surrounding areas: 44 IS/SWP comrades interested in meeting to discuss work and experiences since leaving IS/SWP phone Oxford 43541.

**FOUR SOCIALISTS** looking for 4 roomed flat/house in North or East London. Phone Mick 01-356 8301

**FLAT SHARE** in Camden Town. Phone 01-267 5059

**WOMEN'S DAY** School: Socialist feminism and the revolutionary party. Organised by women from the Coordinating Committee for an International Socialist Alliance, 13 May, N London Poly, Holloway Road, London N7. Creche available. Further details from Leni Solinger, 142 Hunter House Road, Sheffield 11.

**WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER** Campaign national conference, Manchester Poly, 17 and 18 June. Further info from: Pat Green, Flat 2, 49 Spring Bank, Hull. Tel: Hull 443 243.

**'A WORKERS ANSWER to the Crisis'**, platform of the expelled left faction of the International Socialist (IS/WP) who are now constituted as Workers Power, is available from Workers Power, 1a Camberwell Grove, London SE5. Price 35p.

**THE OTHER BOOKSHOP** is looking for a part time worker to look after the pamphlet and newspaper sections. Hours are by negotiation but will include one Saturday in three. The wages aren't particularly good, but the company is admirable and the job is interesting. Positive discrimination will be applied. Anyone

interested should apply to Sarah or Alan at the shop, 325 Upper St, London N1. Tel: 01-225 0571.

**FLAT SHARE:** socialist feminist woman to share comfortable North London flat with two others. Available July for about a year. Approx £250pm inclusive. Please write to: Margaret Hickman, 97 Galsburn Rd, London W13.

**EDINBURGH** Public Meeting 'End the Repression in Ireland', Fri 5 May 7.30pm Edinburgh Trades Council, Priddy Place. Speakers from Belfast — the Relatives Action Committee and the Women against Imperialism Group. Sponsored by Socialist Challenge and the Edinburgh Irish Solidarity Campaign. For further information contact the E.I.S.C. c/o First of May Books, Niddry St, Edinburgh.

**BROADSIDE** Mobile Workers' Theatre requires versatile socialist musician (full-time). Long term commitment. Acting ability an advantage. Write: 52 Holborn House, Holborn Place, London SW1. Phone (01) 450 6927/730 5395

**WEST LONDON** National Abortion Campaign benefit organised by Black Productions. With: Miley, Pleasure Zone and The Passions. Friday, 6 May, Avdian Hall (under the tower, Portobello Rd, Ladbroke Grove tube), Port. 01

**CHRISTIANIA** benefit with films, disco, bar and food at Ladbroke House, Highbury Grove, London N5. Friday, 12 May from 8.30pm. Adm 50p.

**30th ANNIVERSARY** of the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Public

Meeting on Tuesday 9 May, 7.15pm, room G11, Main Building, Aston University, Birmingham. Speakers: Mohammed Abu-Khosh (Palestine student leader), Dr. Mosha Machover (Israeli socialist), Norman Temple, (Chairman BAZO). All welcome. Adm. free. Organised by British Anti-Zionist Organisation and Palestine Student Societies.

**GARNERS STRIKERS** — support them! Main pickets everyday, noon to 3pm and 5.30 pm to 11pm at 389 Oxford St, London W1 1opp Sellridge; 243 Oxford St (Oxford Circus); 40-41 Haymarket, 58 Whitcombe St (Leicester Square). **Mass picket** every Saturday at noon 399 Oxford St. Donations are urgently needed as strike pay is only 65p per week. All donations to Garners Strike Fund, c/o TGWU, Rm 24, 12-13 Hethletta St, London WC2. 01-240 1055. **Day of Solidarity Action**, Sat. 20 May. Assemble 2pm Speakers Corner for march to rally at Trafalgar Square.

**NOISS** Rally, 1968 — 1975. Ten Years on!, speakers include Chris Harman, (Students at the LSE in 1968); Judith Condon, (ed. board Women's Voice); and Robin Blackburn (ed. board New Left Review). Band: Limousine. Theatre: Cast — Confessions of a Socialist. All for 70p. Friday, 12 May, at the LSE, Houghton St, London WC2.

**HISTORY WORKSHOP** Journal book sale. Fri. 5 May, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 from 8pm. Wide selection of socialist, historical, and general works at bargain prices.

**BRIXTON SOCIALIST CLUB**. Dick Hart, a Jamaican socialist working in

Brixton will talk about what's been happening in Jamaica since the elections when the high level of struggle was reflected in the British press as a growing political drift towards Cuba. Fri. 5 May at 8pm, The Canterbury, Canterbury Crescent, Brixton, Adm. 50p.

**FULL-TIME** worker, preferably IMG member, wanted by Birmingham IMG to be trained in screenprinting and offset litho printing and to run our expanding print department. Further info from: 760 Digbeth, Birmingham, B56DY. Tel. 021-643 8209

**SUSSEX AFRICAN** Student's Association presents **The Trial of Dedan Kimathi** by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Micem Githae Mugo in aid of the Ngugi Defence Committee. 8.11 and 12 May, 7pm at the Old Refectory, Falmer House, Sussex University, Falmer, Brighton. Adm. £1. Students and GAFs 75p.

**YOUNG SOCIALIST** Medical Association is holding its first public meeting on Tues. 9 May at 7.30pm at the House of Commons meeting booked in the name of Neil Kinnock MP). Can Bracker of the Hounslow Occupation Committee will speak on 'Can the Unions Save the NHS?'. All welcome.

**REVOLUTIONARY** Communist Tendency Public Meeting: 'Ireland — Its Revolutionary Significance'. Speaker: Phil Murphy. Friday, 12 May, 7.30pm Trades Council Club, 21 Savile Mount, Leeds. Adm. 20p.

**CARDIFF** comrade wants company travelling to Italy/Greece in May. Contact: A. Webber, 119 Macintosh Place, Cardiff.

**NATIONAL ABORTION** Campaign. Open meeting on the campaign for day-care facilities. Wed. 10 May, 7pm, London School of Economics, Students' Union, Room S101A, Houghton St., London WC2.

**GAYS** against the backlash. Public meeting, 7.00pm Wed 10 May at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC2.

**PIRATE JENNY** Theatre present Sir is Winning a play about the William Tyndale school. 4 May, 7.30pm Bullmasho College of Higher Education, Reading 5 May, 7.30pm Clevedon Press Centre, Walton St., Oxford. 6 May, Kell Hall, London Rd., Southampton. 9-13 May, Gulbenkian Studio, Newcastle. 8pm.

**NORTH WEST** Spanner present Out of Control, play about the nuclear issue, on 6 May, Manchester Poly, Cavendish House, 7.30pm.





# Our opinion poll findings

SOME MONTHS ago we published a questionnaire in the paper asking for readers' views. Over a hundred replies were received. Most of these were from comrades in the Socialist Workers Party, the Labour Party, the Communist Party and independent socialists.

While they had different estimates of the various sections of the paper, there was virtual unanimity on the section they liked best: one reader expressed it as our 'non-sectarian debates and a genuine commitment to unity.'

There can be little doubt that it was this feature of the paper which filled a real gap on the left and continues to do so on a weekly basis. Though since our launching a year ago, other journals have emerged as well.

The decision by the SWP to publish a monthly *Socialist Review*, which carries articles by non-SWP militants and encourages discussions, was a reflection that they, too, understood the need for such a change.

We have been discussing the ways in which we can improve the paper and take it forward. Should we allow the fact that Big Flame and other organisa-

tions have rejected our appeal for a common paper to alter our overall political co-ordinates?

In other words should we give up the task of using the paper to unite all revolutionary Marxists? We reject such a narrow conception of the paper.

## EDUCATIVE

What is needed is more material concerned with basic socialist ideas. We are planning to institute regular educative material in the paper. But we insist that a popular paper does not imply treating your readers

I would like to attend the annual conference of Socialist Challenge supporters and enclose £1 registration fee.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE GROUP (if any) .....

Please fill in and send to Socialist Challenge Conference, PO Box, 50, London N12PX.

as if they were idiots.

A popular paper has to deal with all aspects of the social, political and economic life of all classes. Every social class has to be observed in its entirety.

These and many other questions need to be discussed in detail. It is for this reason that we are organising a one-day conference of Socialist

Challenge supporters on 27 May. In the weeks leading up to it we hope to publish several opinions of the paper.

If you have specific ideas on how we can improve the paper, then write and send them to us. If your Socialist Challenge group would like a speaker from the Editorial Board to introduce a discussion, please let us know.



Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)



FIGHT RACISM T-shirts from the Socialist Challenge stall at the Carnival are still available for £2 plus 15p (p&p) from 328 Upper Street, London N1. Cheques/POs payable to J Wilson.

## On the Gay News boycott

**THE DECISION** of W.H. Smith to stock Socialist Challenge is a big step forward for us. The last far left paper to reach Smith's was Seven Days in the early 70s.

A letter to us from readers in Southampton a fortnight ago raised the question of Gay News. Why should we remain in Smith's when Gay News had just been barred?

We discussed this question at some length on our Editorial Board. The feeling was that it

was important that our paper — which supports the gay liberation movement — should get into Smith's so that our views could reach people who can't get the paper elsewhere.

Was that better for the gay movement or worse? We thought it was better.

We are in favour of Gay News being allowed into Smith's, as we are for other socialist papers. But we question whether such a boycott should be launched without full discussion amongst all militants who have defended Gay News in the past

and those who will be affected by the campaign.

This is important because on a different scale, similar considerations would apply to such magazines as Spare Rib and Time Out. Women buying Spare Rib at WH Smiths — many of them learning about the ideas of the women's movement for the first time — will be confronted by Gay News pickets for purchasing a magazine which fully supports the plight of lesbian women.

We believe that for us, for Spare Rib, or even for Time Out, which acts as a

co-ordinator of disparate political and cultural meetings in London, to join in a general boycott would be completely counter-productive. WH Smiths of course would be delighted. But it is our common interests that would suffer.

We are quite ready to discuss other means of campaigning for the access of Gay News and other papers to national distribution networks. But a boycott would be a case of cutting off our nose to spite our face.

Socialist Challenge Editorial Board

## IMG in conference

**THE CONFERENCE** of the International Marxist Group, the British section of the Fourth International, was held on 15-18 April. It centred on the political tactics of the IMG in the present period.

There was, in addition, a lively debate on the question of 'women only' caucuses inside the organisation. BRIAN GROGAN writes:

The outgoing leadership of the IMG presented proposals based on 'The Fight for a Socialist Alternative' supplement which was published in Socialist Challenge on 2 February.

These proposals, with some amendments, were passed by a large majority. The conference agreed to deepen the work begun with the launching of Socialist Challenge and Socialist Unity.

It was stressed time and again that Labour's social and economic policies had forced the workers' movement to confront political questions. The old methods of more militancy were insufficient when it was Labour, backed by the TUC, which was administering heavy doses of capitalist medicine.

The two responses offered within the unions by the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party were rejected by delegates. The CP's politics were those of class collaboration, and its tail-ending of Labour and trade union lefts had paralysed its working class base.

The SWP's 'rank and file' organisations were, with some exceptions, merely the trade-union front of the SWP.

What we were in favour of was the development of a class-struggle current opposed to class collaboration and which could unite revolutionary and non-revolutionary workers on the basis of a struggle for common objectives.

The political expression to the fightback had to be outside the Labour Party, especially while Labour was in office. Hence the launching of Socialist Unity.

As far as building a unified revolutionary organisation was concerned, the majority insisted that this demanded a correct attitude to the SWP. Whilst joint work had to be more systematically pursued in every field possible, this was not enough. A political fight had to be conducted around the key questions posed by today's class struggle: the outcome of this fight would decide whether unification of our forces was posed.

For the united front and

against 'frontism'; for building a socialist alternative which was not reducible to the SWP; programmatic clarity on the question of mass organisations and the fight for workers' power; the autonomous character of movements such as the WLM; for a democratic internal regime, and for proletarian pluralism and socialist democracy at the level of the state; taking concrete steps toward the building of a revolutionary international.

### CONSTRUCTION

The IMG had already made it clear that agreement on these questions was vital for the construction of a unified revolutionary organisation in Britain. Accordingly members of the IMG would argue for these political positions. At the same time the existing differences would not be allowed to hamper joint work in a number of important areas.

An alternative resolution was presented by the various minorities who united during the course of the conference. Their positions were published in SC during the week of the conference. They received 25 per cent of the votes cast. A leadership of 45 was elected, with 11 comrades representing the minority, 16 women were elected to the new Central

Committee. The debate on women-only caucuses was a model discussion. It was dominated by rank-and-file comrades and it reflected the serious interest on the question. There were two basic positions: one for caucuses and one against. However, within the former there were two distinct positions.

The outgoing majority had one interpretation and the comrades who set up a tendency on this question another. After a long debate the leadership was defeated on this question. The position of the comrades opposed to women's caucuses was overwhelmingly rejected.

There was a feeling on the part of many comrades that the central political debate had been unnecessarily polarised between the minority and the majority. This was further stressed by Richard Kirkwood in his fraternal greetings from the Workers League.

What was needed was a debate within the framework of the majority tactics on how these should be applied concretely in the light of the experiences of different branches. It became obvious that the next conference would concentrate on such a discussion, unless there were dramatic political changes which necessitated a change of tactics.

### REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PAPERS NO 2 MAY 1978

Theoretical Journal of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency

#### SPECIAL ISSUE ON IRELAND

The entire issue of Revolutionary Communist Papers No 2 is devoted to an examination of the Irish question. RCP No 2 provides the first Marxist analysis of the impact of the world recession on the Irish economy — North and South. It looks at the contemporary form that the British domination of Ireland takes today and examines the political strategy pursued by the Labour Government in the Six Counties. Through a materialist analysis of the changing conditions in Ireland the significance of this question is brought out.

1. British Imperialism and the Irish Crisis  
*Mary Masters and Phil Murphy*
2. No Equivocation!  
*Frank Richards*

Price 50p + 15p postage. Available from BM RCT 54 London WC1V 6XX  
Make cheques and postal orders payable to RCT Association



18 June

# March for Soweto

The African Students Union [UK] has launched an appeal for a national solidarity demonstration on the second anniversary of the Soweto uprising.

'June 1976 deserves to go down in the History of Africa as a memorable date. The students of Soweto played a heroic and historical role in going into struggle against the racist state of South Africa.

'With their own blood and their bare hands they faced alone one of the most powerful and ruthless regimes in the world today.

'By their action they put a stop to the cruel deceit of 'detente' in southern Africa, and opened up a new period of struggle against the apartheid regime.

'The African Students' Union has pledged itself to ensure that the Soweto students will never have to fight alone. We will do everything possible to guarantee that in their present and future struggles they will have

behind them the whole of Africa, and the support of all those who oppose racism and imperialism around the world.

'At a time when British imperialism is frantically manoeuvring to prevent the destruction of the white racist regime in Zimbabwe, it is essential that a demonstration of mass support for the liberation struggle in southern Africa should take place in London.'

### COMPLEMENTARY

The demonstration is planned to take place on the weekend of 17-18 June. Unfortunately the Anti-Apartheid Movement has so far not backed the demonstration. But it is holding a mass rally in Central Hall Westminster on 16 June.

Socialist Challenge supports this important initiative, but we will also be arguing for local Anti-Apartheid groups to back the demonstration and encourage militants to stay in London after the rally.

These two solidarity events need not be opposed to each other, but should be comple-

mentary.

We endorse the ASU appeal for the widest backing for the demonstration:

'We call on all organisations concerned with the struggle in

southern Africa, all organisations of the student, labour and socialist movement, and all groups opposed to racist and imperialist oppression to support this appeal.'

## Apolitical football

THE Scottish Argentina Campaign has written to the Scottish Football Association, congratulating them on reaching Argentina, pointing out the junta's human rights record, and asking the Scottish FA and the team to sign a petition of protest at the junta's record and to observe a minute's silence for those killed in Argentina before they board

their plane to the tournament. [That's all!]

They received the following reply from E Walker, secretary of the Scottish FA:

'The Scottish international team has nothing to do with politics. It is travelling to Argentina to play at football and the Association will not carry out your proposals.'

# The detention of Ngugi 'Truth is our atomic bomb'

NGUGI WA THIONG'O, Kenya's best-known and most talented writer, has been imprisoned without trial since 31 December last year.

The Kenya Government maintains that Ngugi is a 'Public Security Risk'. The real reason for his arrest — as you can see from this extract — is his fearless attacks on continued imperialist domination of Kenya and the complicity of the neo-colonial regime.

The Ngugi Defence Committee, which is backed by the African Students Union and the Pan African Association of Writers and Journalists, has called a picket of the Kenya Tourist Office on 5 May. It starts at 12.30 at 13 New Burlington Street, London W1.

For leaflets, petitions and further information get in touch with the committee c/o 28/29 Southampton Street, London WC2 [01-240 0362].

And support the picket if you can.

Below we reprint a speech by liberation fighter Kimathi — who was captured and shot by the British — from The Trial of Dedan Kimathi, a play co-authored by Ngugi and Micere Githae Mugo. Like other works by Ngugi it is available in Heinemann's African Writers Series.



Brits arrest 'terrorist' suspect in 1950s

## World cup in Argentina

# Put the boot



# into the junta

IN JUNE an estimated 350 million people will watch the World Cup televised from Argentina; and be subjected to one of the largest propaganda uses of sport since the 1936 Olympics in Germany.

There are further comparisons with that event: 800 yards from the River Plate football stadium in Buenos Aires, the Marine School of Mechanics is being cleaned up to provide dressing room and leisure facilities for the footballers. Its previous use could well put them off their game, and their food. For it has been

one of the most sophisticated torture centres in the country.

The widely published testimonials of tortures inflicted at the Marine School show the practices of the Argentine military to be as brutal and horrific as any of those reported from Chile, Uruguay, Brazil or Nazi Germany.

### IMAGE

The military are well aware of their international image and are exploiting the World Cup to the full to bolster it.

In the words of World Cup organiser, General Merlo: 'If it were necessary to make some correction in the image which exists abroad the 1978 World Cup will be just the occasion to show the Argentine's real way of life.'

The military are sparing no effort or expense: \$700 million is the latest estimated cost of the World Cup. It will be money well spent if they manage to deceive the world.

Their public relations agency Burson Marsteller of New York, obviously values its one million dollar contract

The enemies of our people are strong  
They have the bombers  
They have machinegun fire  
Their striking power is awesome  
Why should I hide that from you?  
They have greater and more efficient  
Weapons of propaganda.  
The radio, newspapers, schools,  
Their universities where they give  
Our children  
An education to enfeeble minds,  
Make them slaves, apes, parrots

Shadows of the men and women  
they could have been.  
But they are also weak,  
Very weak, the famed giant  
on mosquito legs.  
Our love of freedom is our Bullet  
Our successes are our newspaper  
But  
Stronger than any machinegun fire  
Stronger than the Lincoln and  
Harvard bombers  
Mightier than their best generals  
Is our unity and discipline in struggle

With unity, discipline  
Along correct lines  
People's line  
With unity and discipline  
In our total commitment to  
The liberation of us  
who sweat and labour  
We can move mountains  
We can yet cut off the giant's  
legs and mammoth head  
Truth is our atomic bomb  
But Discipline is our hydrogen bomb

— i.e. to buy a ticket you have to buy for the whole series of games in any one of the stadiums at an astronomical price. They must also have booked accommodation and return air fares.

The situation in Britain remains that only 50 Argentinians have been given visas and little pressure has been put on the Home Office to create a visa programme.

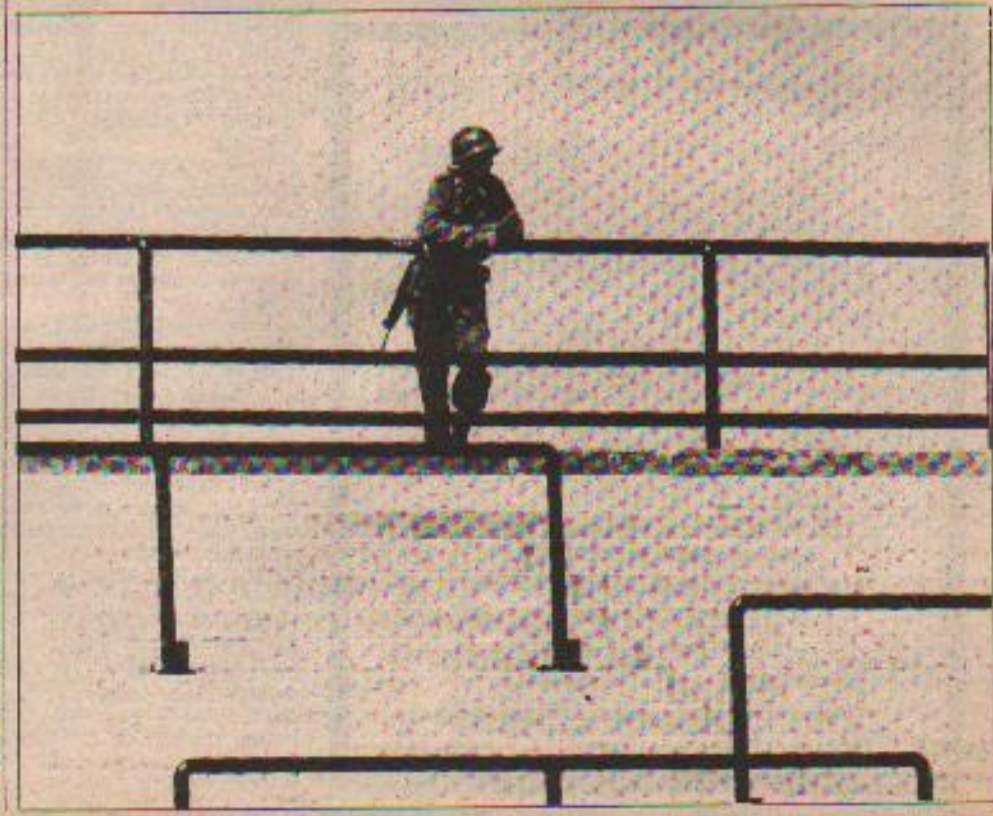
Therefore, it would seem

that the World Cup should be used, firstly to counter the propaganda that is being distributed by the Argentine government, and to denounce its political use of football.

Secondly to use the attention and interest on Argentina as a means to increase awareness in Britain of the reality of Argentina, and to channel that awareness into the ongoing campaign within Britain for the instigation of a visa

programme, a statement of condemnation by the British government of the situation in Argentina; and an end to the arms trade and promotion of trade between Britain and Argentina.

This is a shortened version of an article which first appeared in Links, the journal of Third World First, one of the sponsors of the British Argentina Campaign.



Latest issue of Labour Focus on Eastern Europe — special issue on women. New offer — £2.75 for 10 copies of this issue, post free. Single copies, from bottom flat, 116 Cazenove Road, London N15. 30p plus 10p postage.



# COMMENT

## Empty sloganeering

AS AN IMG member who has been working in the housing field for a number of years I was pleased to see an article on Labour's housing record in *Socialist Challenge* (13 April issue).

Comrade Blum's article provided a very useful summary of the analysis of Labour's appalling housing record contained in the pamphlet 'Up Against a Brick Wall' jointly sponsored by NUPE and the Shelter Community Action Team.

However, in his conclusions, he appears afraid of accepting that anything sponsored by the union bureaucracy could possibly provide even the beginnings of a way forward against Labour's attacks on housing and feels obliged to criticise the pamphlet's proposals from a 'more left than thou' point of view.

Unfortunately this leads him to empty sloganeering after the fashion of the Militant group 'to take the land, financial institutions and building industry out of the hands of the profit makers', with very few proposals for concrete action to achieve these laudable aims.

In fact the pamphlet's proposals for a TUC conference on the Government's Housing Green Paper, and for trades councils to make links with tenants groups and to monitor local authority housing programmes, are closer to the method of revolutionary marxism than empty calls for 'the obvious socialist conclusion' of nationalising everything in sight.

To get NUPE to sponsor this pamphlet was quite a victory for the workers of the Shelter Community Action Team, who researched and wrote the pamphlet, and this sponsorship itself provides a weapon for tenants and housing activists to take its proposals into the labour movement.

And although these proposals are limited the aim should be to take up and develop them in the tenants' and trade union movement, not to indulge in 'socialist' phrasemongering. I hope that some of this debate can be taken up in the pages of *Socialist Challenge*.

MICK SULLIVAN, (Islington, London)

## The blind alley of reform

I AGREE with most of Tariq Ali's analysis of the reasons for the declining circulation of the *Morning Star* as outlined in the 20 April issue of *Socialist Challenge* and also his positions on the type of paper that would be good for the working class. However the framework he puts his alternatives in is dangerous and confusing. The article is posed as though the *Morning Star* were produced by some rather confused set of well meaning journalists instead of by a very well defined political force — the Communist Party.

This failure of Tariq Ali to relate the problems of the *Morning Star* to



'The only safe fast breeder is a rabbit' was the message on teeshirts worn by some of the 12,000 people on Saturday's demo against plans to build a nuclear reprocessing plant in Windscale, Lancashire. The march ended in a rally at Trafalgar Square with speeches and messages of international support.

One speaker was Yorkshire miners' leader Arthur Scargill, who said: 'If it needs civil disobedience to stop

nuclear power, then we shall have to have civil disobedience. If it is necessary to go and sit at Windscale to stop it physically, so be it.'

There was a wide age range from old CND campaigners through to many students and young people mainly mobilised by the Friends of the Earth, which called the demonstration.

their real roots shows up for example in an extreme fashion in his comparison of that paper to *Newsline*. He talks of this reflecting the 'bizarre politics' of the Workers Revolutionary Party — as indeed it does. He includes in this indictment *Newsline's* support for regimes such as those of Gaddafi in Libya and the Baath in Iraq.

The *Morning Star*, however, supports not merely Gaddafi and the Baath but virtually every similar regime throughout the world. You need only turn to the *Morning Star* any week to discover the wonders of the regimes of Syria, Ethiopia, Indira Gandhi, the SFLP in Sri Lanka, Neto, etc., etc., etc. We furthermore scarcely need add its failure to take any seriously campaigning position against the repression in Eastern Europe and its endorsement of a not inconsiderable amount of it.

As for 'support for strikes' which is the supposedly second key feature of the *Morning Star*, would someone like to explain to the Leyland toolmakers the great 'support' given by the *Morning Star* in 1977 in urging the calling off of their struggle, or the sabotage by the CP of the campaigns following the Labour Assembly on Unemployment, or the Leyland 'Rank and File' TUC — not to mention their policies in the Second World War in France for the Union of the Left, in Italy on the austerity programme, etc., etc.

Finally we are astonished in an article written by a genuine internationalist to find no reference to Ireland or black people. I assume no one wants to pretend that the 'Bill of Rights/Support the Peace People', refusal to oppose all immigration controls, of the *Morning Star* even remotely corresponds to the interests of the working class and oppressed.

Of course if all these views were really expressed merely by a group of confused journalists we might hope that the experience of the class struggle would convince them to

adopt better policies. It might make sense, as Cde Ali proposes, to campaign for the paper to become 'a socialist paper which develops new journalistic forms which bridge the cultural gap between the "popular" and "quality press" and which was dedicated to serving the needs of all class-struggle militants'. Such a newspaper is undoubtedly sorely needed.

But the politics of the *Morning Star* aren't the product of confusion but of the very well worked out policies of the Communist Party. To try to urge that the Party's paper reflects the real interests of the class struggle is no more realistic than expecting the Labour Party to lead the struggle for socialism. What is needed is to build an alternative to the CP and not a futile fight to change it. To give the militants of the CP or anyone else genuinely looking for a socialist alternative the perspective of reforming the *Morning Star* or the Communist Party is to put them in a complete blind alley.

JOHN ROSS (London)

## Sad and angry in Brixton

SEVERAL MONTHS ago there was a film going round called *Black Joy*; a black film maker's idea of what a white cinema audience would like to see about being black in Brixton; colourful street markets, pubs full of hustlers, sex, dope, and easy money. It was an insincere and insulting film, that left you feeling sad and angry.

I'm sorry that I had the same feeling when I read Richard Carver's piece on Brixton in *SC* a few weeks

ago.

Some of it was fine, but come on Richard, what is this rubbish about 'Brixton people being fiercely proud of where they live'? (Lambeth has one of the most mobile and fastest falling populations in London) and the 'strange decaying elegance in the tall houses and wide streets'? And frankly I don't believe you spent 'five minutes' in the area and the 'two most obvious symptoms of inner city decay' — unemployment and homelessness — hit you in the eye. What were people doing — walking round with suitcases and bedrolls under their arms? OK, so Lambeth is poor (in parts) and decaying (in parts), but under no stretch of the imagination is it a 'squalid ghetto almost without parallel'.

You're not writing about what you found, but what you thought you should find, and perhaps more insultingly, what you thought we'd like to read.

It's perhaps fairly harmless until you also throw in an account of the local white population which is, at best, misleading. You write: 'Anti-immigration propaganda doesn't cut much ice among the white population of Brixton.'

I read your article just after I'd finished canvassing for *Socialist Unity*. We'd knocked on about 40 doors and without exception every white person had mentioned race as the main issue. Maybe only a handful were NF supporters, but in one form or another the 'numbers game' was upper-most in practically everyone's mind; very few saw much wrong with what either Whitelaw is proposing to do, or Callaghan has already done, about immigration.

And I think we were relatively lucky. Last year when the local anti-racist committee canvassed one of the large estates in the area during a council election, we were turning up members and sympathisers of the NF on every landing.

The white left in Lambeth has spent a lot of time trying to woo the black

community and at times it has been hard to convince white comrades that an equally important contribution lies in actively combating racism among white people. Probably unintentionally, your article helps feed the misconception that the election campaign is principally about winning support from black people. It is about that, but it's also about winning the argument with the white working class that the way forward lies through socialism not racism. It's an argument that certainly hasn't been won in Brixton yet.

NICK DAVIDSON (Brixton)

## Cheap illusions

I'M NOT much of a dancer, not unless the illegal chemical industry cares to put a little zip in my hip beforehand. I don't know the bloke who wrote the review of *Saturday Night Fever*, but I'll take his word for it if he thinks he is in the Astaire/Kelly bracket. Travolta, of course, isn't. He not only isn't a dancer, he never was a dancer.

They could have cast a dancer; but they didn't because they wanted to show the painful/tawdry limited glamour of a would-be neighbourhood Gene Kelly. That's why, he isn't so great, and that is the point about a good film that everybody seems to have missed. The point is the modesty, the moderation, of showing the limits of a cheap illusion beckoned on by a system that denies everyone's existence unless it can rip it off.

Yes, the film does wheel out the odd cliché and there are sensationalist bits, like the gang fight. But on the whole it holds close to a quiet integrity. The script, for the most part, is subtle, subversive, implicitly political, and pointedly witty. The reviewer was so stuck for words to put the film down that he had to quote it. What a pile of piss.

I'm glad I don't go to many discos. The floor must be crowded with tired Marxists clutching crumpled copies of *Time Out*, trying to cover their spiritual middle age spreads by reference to the asinine manufactured opinions of that journal.

JIM MASTERS (London)



## Socialist Challenge EVENTS

### NORTH WEST

WARRINGTON Socialist Challenge group meets regularly. Ring Manchester Socialist Challenge office for details. 051-236 2362.

GREATER MANCHESTER Socialist Challenge School students who support the paper and would like to get involved in anti-fascist activity please contact Ghria 273 5947 (evening), or Steve 225 4297 (daytime), or write to Manchester SC Centre, c/o 14 Piccadilly.

PRESTON Socialist Challenge supporters can be contacted by ringing Preston 54816.

LIVERPOOL Open Socialist Challenge group meets every Wednesday evening at Nash's Art pub, Speke, Liverpool 8pm.

SOUTH MANCHESTER Socialist Challenge group meets every other Thursday at the Albert Inn off Wilmslow Rd. Help sell Socialist Challenge between 11.30am and 1pm at Moss Side shopping centre or Longsight Market, Dickenson Rd. Further information from 061-238 2362.

### YORKSHIRE

HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge group meets next on 4 May and fortnightly thereafter. 7.30pm. Friendly and Trades Club, Northumberland Street (opp station).

### NORTH EAST

DURHAM Socialist Challenge supporters group meets regularly at Big Jug Pub, Claypath, Durham City. Details from J. Fox, 41 The Avenue.

BARLINGTON Socialist Challenge sales on Saturdays outside Northern Hook on High Park 11.5am-1pm.

MIDDLESBOROUGH Socialist Challenge sales on Saturdays, outside Boots at Cleveland Centre, 11am-1pm. Socialist Challenge is

also available from Harrisons (newspaper) in Lindholme Street.

### WALES

SWANSEA Socialist Challenge group meets every other Wednesday at 7.30pm in St Helena Inn, Vincent Street. All supporters welcome. Next meeting, 10 May and fortnightly thereafter.

CARDIFF Socialist Challenge meeting 5 May. Speaker, Dodie Weppier from SC editorial board. In presence for SC conference. Four Elms pub, Elm St., off Newport Road, 7.30pm.

### SOUTH WEST

SOUTHAMPTON Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday from 10am-1pm above bar, Post Office, Bargate.

PORTSMOUTH Socialist Challenge sales, Saturdays, 11.30am to 1pm, Commercial Road/Pedestrian.

### SOUTH EAST

COLCHESTER Socialist Challenge supporters sell the paper every Saturday outside Caters from

10.45am-1pm. Further information of local activities from Mike, 11 Angelsea Rd, Wivenhoe.

BRIGHTON Socialist Challenge sales regularly on Saturdays at the Open Market, London Road, from 11am-1pm.

COLCHESTER Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly. Details from Steve, 1 Abigail Street.

### SCOTLAND

For information about the paper or its supporters' activities throughout Scotland contact Socialist Challenge Books, 64 Queen St., Glasgow. Open Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday afternoons. Phone for alternative arrangements (021-2451). Wide range of Fourth International publications.

EDINBURGH Socialist Challenge supporters group meets regularly. Phone George at 031-345 0456 for details.

DUNDEE: information about Socialist Challenge activities from 64 Queen St, Glasgow. Join in 50 sales

outside Boots (corner of Reform Street) each Saturday, 11am-2pm.

### LONDON

HAMMERSMITH Socialist Challenge groups fortnightly — details from PO Box 50, London N1 2FX.

BRENT Socialist Challenge Open Forums. Next meeting, Monday 8 May, 7.15pm, Robin Blackburn, 'Labour and the Labour Party', West Green Community Centre, Stanley Road, N15.

HARROGATE Socialist Challenge group meets next Monday 8 May, 7.30pm, Robin Blackburn, 'Labour and the Labour Party', West Green Community Centre, Stanley Road, N15.

HARROW Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly, details from PO Box 50, London N1 2FX.

HACKNEY Socialist Challenge group meets next on 10 May, and fortnightly thereafter. Socialist Unity, Speaker Bob Pennington, 7.30pm, Britannia Pub, Mare St., near Hackney Town Hall.

GREENWICH/LEWISHAM Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly. Details from Ray on 01-869-1167.

NEWHAM Socialist Challenge Forums occur regularly. Details from PO Box 58, London N1.

WALTHAM FOREST paper sales every Saturday 11am-noon outside the post office, Hoe St., Waltham-forest, London E7.

LONDON CPSA Socialist Challenge readers. We are establishing a CPSA supporters group to work in the union and Broad Left. If you are sympathetic to Socialist Challenge's ideas, write to London SC organiser, c/o PO Box 50, London N1.

MIDLANDS For details of activities of local supporters throughout the Midlands contact the Socialist Challenge Centre, 76b Digbeth High Street, Birmingham. (021) 643 8209.

WOLVERHAMPTON Socialist Challenge group meets next 9 May, 'Nuclear power, pollution and the struggle for socialism'. Speaker, Dave Ashcroft, Labour Party, The Vine, Stafford Street, 7.30pm.

LEICESTER Socialist Challenge supporters meet fortnightly at the Highfields Community Centre. For details ring 0533 25854.



# REVIEW OF BOOKS

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## Literary punch up

Aesthetics and Politics  
By Ernst Bloch and others  
New Left Books, £6.50

By JOHN FOWLES

I WAS ONCE obliged to be a Marine, and I vividly remember the part of our indoctrination, alias training, I hated most. It was an exercise called milling, invented by some idiot brass hat to increase the aggressive spirit among the troops. You had to get into a boxing ring and spend three minutes trying to knock out another recruit. Sparring was forbidden, Lonsdale rules were ignored, and one was expected to go berserk.

I must confess that *Aesthetics and Politics* did once or twice remind me of milling, not least in its frequent lack of fraternity and its occasional savagery. But contrary to my Marine training, the end-result here is good. This is vital reading for anyone concerned with the relationship between art and socialism.

The mill takes place between some formidable heavyweights of the German intellectual left, and the bouts take the form of a series of key texts: Ernst Bloch versus Lukacs, Brecht versus Lukacs, Benjamin versus Brecht, Adorno versus Benjamin, Adorno versus Lukacs, Brecht and Sartre. With one exception (Adorno v. Benjamin, tough going without a knowledge of the texts they are discussing) the confrontations are well chosen and helpfully introduced; and the whole epic debate is shrewdly summed up in a final essay by Fredric Jameson.

It is not for nothing that the central figure, the one most often in the ring (and being battered), is Lukacs, since the common theme is the correct Marxist attitude to art, or to put it more precisely, the correct attitude in the perennial aesthetic guerrilla war between Ancients and Moderns.

Lukacs, in all his phases, stood for the conservative view, and was therefore always the man to beat. His faults, his omissions, his self-contradictions are mercilessly exposed here, especially by Adorno, who puts on a performance that, in the terms of my original comparison, recalls Muhammed Ali at his taunting, dancing, bee-stinging best. He calls



LUKACS: the elephant

Lukacs an elephant at one point, but the metaphor holds in ways he did not mean: Lukacs is clumsy, he can be painfully dogmatic and wilfully blind (as when he denounced Expressionism on purely literary grounds, completely ignoring its much more significant artistic contribution)... and yet he remains a massive fighter and on his feet, still posing the vital question, after all the assaults on him.

What is the vital question? It is this: can a truly socialist artist employ modernist techniques and theories of art?

For Adorno the answer was (passionately) yes. For him the 'reflective', actuality-mimicking, classical formula ('critical' realism) advocated by Lukacs was an abomination, a flagrant attempt to revamp the essentially petty-bourgeois theory of 'boy-meets-tractor' art — socialist realism. Only form-breaking, however nihilistic the content, could adequately reflect the

alienation of modern man.

Adorno argues persuasively that art is not in the business of scientific, philosophical or political assertion, but in that of subjective expression — which allows him to find a socialist justification in the work of such unlikely writers as Proust and Beckett (both anathema to Lukacs). Intellectually he can be very convincing; yet somehow one feels his mental acrobatics, full though they are of clever insights into all the arts, are done inside the weightless stratosphere of his own mind, at a vast distance above ordinary humanity. For all his ponderousness, Lukacs remains in much closer contact with that vague, but very real, entity.

It is the same with Brecht and Sartre, both of whom Adorno would



BRECHT: cut to shreds

prove to be, along with 'committed' art in general, bundles of self-defeating contradictions. In a characteristic aside, while cutting Arturo Ui to shreds, he berates Chaplin for 'obscene' triviality, because he allowed a Jewish girl in *The Great Dictator* to hit a line of storm troopers over the head with a pan 'without being torn to pieces by them'. This, he claims, destroys 'all satirical force'.

One wonders where the satire is in watching a Jewish girl being torn to pieces; what is so dreadful, in a comedy, in allowing an atrociously victimised race at least one little symbolic revenge; and whether a socialism so without a vestige of generous humour (though sarcasm abounds) differs all that much from a much older heresy, that of puritanism. Adorno is a brilliant thinker, but like so many brilliant thinkers, not without an ugly streak of the prig as well.

If the fault of the Germanic mind is its implacable need to dogmatise and pigeonhole, its corollary virtue lies in its seriousness, its thirst for establishing principle. *Aesthetics and Politics* constitutes, in effect, an enormously rich discussion not only of the duties of 20th century art, but of the alienated society that spawns its disensions and problems. I cannot think of a better book to put in any young artist's hands, a clearer guide to the sort of choices he or she will have to face if they mean to be serious about their work.

I know many British socialists of all persuasions have an ancient — and to my mind stupid and insular — belief that contemporary 'high' art and its theories are profoundly irrelevant to actual political needs and priorities. They are the ostriches who really need to read books like this (or David Craig's recent *Pelican, Marxists on Literature* — which contains Franz Kafka or Thomas Mann?, a key summary of Lukacs's position), though I don't suppose they will.

Adorno tells a pertinent anecdote. During the German Occupation of France, a Nazi officer found himself in front of Picasso's *Guernica*. Picasso was there, and the Nazi turned to him. 'Did you paint this?' 'No,' said Picasso. 'You did.'

Art, however distorted and modernist, however subjective and individualist, remains a mirror of society — and at its best, a better one than science has yet invented. Only fools could think this subtle and prolonged European Marxist analysis of how that mirror functions, and should function, is irrelevant to a sane praxis.

## Homer's Odyssey

A RECENTLY-PUBLISHED Penguin deals with the experience of workers on piece-rates. It contains many evocative descriptions of the experience, such as the following: 'I am on piece-rates. And that changes everything. Labour is turned into its opposite. Every possibility is turned inside out.'

And this: 'At work, I don't have time to check the piece-rate, because I am on one... In the end, the only way out is to become a machine myself.' And, of course, this: 'In a way, we don't feel that our union official is really part of a trade-union apparatus at all, the union is our paid enemy.'

It won't be surprising for the reader to learn that this book is written by a Marxist, not, for it is expressively and even lyrically written, by a poet. What may be a shock is that the factory described in the book is in the People's Republic of Hungary, and that its author received a suspended prison sentence for writing it.

Miklos Haraszti, twice expelled from Budapest University for suspected 'Maoist' activities (on the second occasion he was accused of 'organising a meeting to read selections of Lenin's writings without accompanying comments'), based *A Worker in a Workers' State* on his own work experience. It is a depressing book, because there is, lurking within most socialists, however critical they may be of the Eastern European regimes, a kind of instinct that the socialisation of the means of production, whether in a deformed, degenerated or even state capitalist mode, must have some effect on the relations of workers to their product. Haraszti dispels this sentimental illusion. As he writes:

'He who sells his time, his strength, his abilities for wages, whether bit by bit for piece-rates or in a more transparent, total form, knows that he does not work for himself. He has sold everything... Anyone who works in a factory knows, without need of statistics, that for those who work to norms, complex arguments about whether or not they own the means of production are nothing but empty talk.'

It is this insight into the political implications of work-systems that makes Haraszti's book more than a documentary (which it is — and a good one) of factory work, in the East or the West. Early on, he quotes a Hungarian 'Management science' expert who claimed that 'payment by results was the ideal form for socialist wages'. It was, the comrade expert claimed, 'the embodiment of the principle "from each according to his capacity, to each according to his work".'

Haraszti does not need to linger on that breathtaking misquotation, its implications are all too clear. The worker's work-life under piece-rates is 'dominated by an obsession about making money'. This obsession with earnings serves to disguise the reality of his or her situation: 'When he has a good month, he believes, from the bottom of his heart, that he is not the dupe but the victor'. Finally, of course, the workers' experience dulls even the awareness of the possibility of change:

'We accept the fact of competition and its spirit, and so we cannot even pose the question of whether it could be replaced by co-operation in life or in work, or why competition has come to dominate our conditions of life.'

The only activity of meaning left to the worker, an activity which Haraszti describes with ambivalent affection, is the creation of homers, small domestic objects made on the firm's machines with their materials. While acknowledging the element of 'nostalgia for the days of the domestic artisan', Haraszti affirms the necessity of homers and their power:

'The humble little homer, made secretly and only through great sacrifices, with no ulterior motive, is the only form possible of free and creative work. Here the passion is for nothing other than work, work as an end in itself.'



It is this continued faith in the creative (and cooperative) potential of work processes that keeps Haraszti from pessimism. It is the chapter about homers in particular — and the general perception and charm of the writing — that turns the summary of Haraszti's trial (appended to the book) from a tragedy to a kind of macabre farce.

As he told the court, 'the prosecution bases its case on a fiction, on the myth of a society without conflicts'. The proceedings against Miklos Haraszti for 'deliberately slandering the institutions of the Hungarian Peoples' Republic' read like a kind of dream, lost in abstraction, compared with the sturdy concreteness of the reality of wage-labour, in Hungary or, indeed, here.

DAVID EDGAR

**A Worker in a Workers' State** by Miklos Haraszti, with an introduction by Heinrich Boll  
Penguin Books (in association with New Left Review) 85p

## The realities of Labourism

**Living with Capitalism: Class Relations and the Modern Factory** by Theo Nichols and Huw Beynon  
Routledge & Kegan Paul

THIS BOOK is about capital's central problem: putting to work and controlling that peculiar and resistant commodity, labour power. The authors have chosen to look at how this problem is overcome in corporate capitalism at its strongest. They chose a chemical company (pseudonym Chemco, but not unlike ICI) where the high capital intensity makes the cost of failure especially high.

When each worker in the petrochemical industry works on an average of £400,000 of capital, compared to the mere £3,000 of a car worker, and adds £120,000 of value compared with £2,800 (1971 figs) it is not surprising that firms like ICI operate the most advanced schemes for incorporating the unions, blunting shop floor power, and inducing increases in productivity.

It is such firms which have set the pace in government circles — Labour government that is — when the topic under discussion is labour relations. Not only did the authors choose such a pace-setting company but within the company they chose its model site (pseudonym Riverside, not unlike ICI's Avonmouth site). Model, because being situated — like many plants of the modern corporations — outside an urban centre and in a 'dozy part of the world' (the description by a national official quoted in the book), collective shop floor militancy did not exist.

So this is a sobering book if you get too easily intoxicated by talk of the capitalist crisis and working class militancy and yet need to face the more complex realities of Labourism in 1978.

The recessions afflicting international capital do form part of the context of this book, but what is thrown into relief is the sophistication and the power of the modern corporations to overcome them, at the cost of the workforce. The book analyses in detail workers' struggles against this 'economising', but their struggle does not conform to the normal images of militancy.

First, it more often than not takes place outside union channels. A new and elaborate productivity deal had so effectively incorporated the stewards into management's web of productivity committees and grading procedures that 'most of the workers had come to write off "the union" as a source of organised strength. Generally they preferred to go their own way'. Secondly, while workers at Chemco have no commitment to their work, the company, or to capitalism, neither do they have a vision of an

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alternative social order, an alternative way of living.

**Living with Capitalism** does not pretend to try and spell out how an alternative will develop. But it does contribute to the understanding necessary to creating such an alternative. It does so in a number of ways. First, by showing in detail management's strategies of incorporation; their close connection to the drive for greater profit in periods of crisis; their use of a particular social division of labour; their harmony with the limited objectives of traditional trade unionism, and their effects on class relations.

'Incorporation' is a word flung around a lot on the left, mostly to describe the trade union leadership. But the conditions which allow incorporation to take place even when living standards are falling and workers' organisations have not been in any simple sense 'defeated', are rarely examined.

Beynon and Nichols help us to fill out and, at times, correct, our schemas. For Jones and Scanlon et al are only able to carry through their collaborative policies with moderate success because the foundations have been laid during the past five years and more in hundreds of sites similar to — if not yet as sophisticated as — Chemco's Riverside.

Secondly, the authors describe — often through the words of those involved — the day-to-day struggles which should be built on and generalised if the processes of incorporation are to be reversed. Thirdly, by showing the links between incorporation in the factory and the growing state corporatism, most recently expressed in the Social Contract, the book warns against the lights of factory militancy and stresses the need for a socialist movement able to take on capital politically.

**Living with Capitalism** does not claim to be a finished analysis. It is a contribution which can usefully be built on. It needs to be used to stimulate others — working class militants and socialist writers, together — to draw on different experiences of life under capitalism; of capital's diverse strategies and the varied levels of trade union and political response. The way the book is written makes it easy to use in this practical, collective way.

HILARY WAINWRIGHT

## More than a grand puppeteer

**The Chairman's New Clothes**  
By Simon Leys  
Allison and Busby, £2.95 (paperback) and £6.50

THE POLITICAL writings on China of the Belgian sinologist Simon Leys have been very influential on the Continent, and this is the first work to appear in Britain, in an excellent translation.

In a generally angry book, Leys reserves his most withering contempt for those foreign 'politicians in or out of office, financiers, industrialists, compradores, parlour revolutionaries, worshippers and various kinds of tourist' whose infatuation with Maoist authority and power prevents them from seeing the genuine revolutionary ferment which continues throughout Chinese society albeit now against the Maoist political system.

As a leading specialist in Chinese art and literature, Leys is also passionately angry at the Maoists' wilful devastation of Chinese cultural life. 'What an influence contemporary China could have on world culture,' he declares, 'if only its potential for intelligence, knowledge and talent could be freely and fully employed.'

His analysis of the cultural revolution leads him to conclusions in many ways similar to those of some Trotskyist commentators on China. 'The cultural revolution', he writes, 'had nothing revolutionary about it except the name, and nothing cultural about it except the initial tactical pretext. It was a power struggle waged at the top between a handful of people and behind the smokescreen of a fictitious mass movement.'

'As things turned out, the disorder unleashed by this power struggle created a genuinely revolutionary mass current, which developed spontaneously at the grass roots in the form of army mutinies and workers' strikes on a vast scale. These had not been proscribed in the programme, and they were crushed pitilessly.'

Unfortunately Leys devotes little space to the views of this genuinely revolutionary mass current, or to the workers' strikes, and rather too much to Pekingological analysis of leadership changes in the Forbidden City, which may bore general readers.

But this does not detract from the overall value of the book, which is saturated with brilliant insights and wide ranging allusions to Chinese history and culture. Where Leys falls short of a balanced view is in his analysis of Mao. Here bitterness and disenchantment get the better of his judgement.

Were Mao's political schemes the product of a perverse 'poetic subjectivity' and an obsessive Confucian hostility to science? I don't think so. Mao's warnings against the formation of a privileged technocratic élite were not a mere quirk of personality, but an attempt, however futile and ultimately utopian, to ease strains and tensions in Chinese society of a sort which his opponents' proposals can only exacerbate. The truth is that in the long term neither faction in Peking can prevent further political and social crises, since both believe that China's problems can be solved within her borders.

Was the cultural revolution a mere 'settling of accounts in the corners of palace corridors', lacking all 'ideological coherence' and launched solely to maintain Mao's personal power? Here again, I think not. Although there is some truth in the view of Mao as a grand puppeteer, it is still only part of the picture.

Mao sincerely thought that he enjoyed the undivided confidence of the Chinese, and that by 'touching youth to the soul' he could repair the decaying political system and recreate in modern form magic ties of the sort that had bound peasants to the Party in the revolutionary years. This is why he dissolved China into chaos, in an experiment unique in the history of established governments (although he was shrewd enough to keep the army in the wings).

What he failed to see was that a more complex society had sprung from the revolution he had led to power, with aspirations of its own towards socialist democracy.

Disappointed and alarmed, Mao had to retreat, to compromise on his ambitious reform programme and to repress the wayward Red Guards. But the irony remains that this old-style despot, who saw nothing untoward in being officially photographed with a political handbook of the imperial mandarin, **The Universal Mirror of History as a Reference Book for Rulers**, at his elbow, deliberately created openings through which these new, anti-bureaucratic forces could flow.

GREGOR BENTON

## Primitive ultra-leftism

**Pannekoek and Gorter's Marxism.**  
Ed. D.A. Smart  
Pluto £2.95

THIS volume is a welcome addition to the growing number of writings available in English by ultra-left currents which existed in the early years of the Communist International. For that reason, and because many of



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these arguments are still repeated today, this book is very much to be recommended. It always aids clear understanding of political issues to know the arguments on both sides. Anyone reading this book will have new light thrown on Lenin's **Left Wing Communism**, and other polemics against the ultra-lefts.

It must be said, however, that the actual quality of the writings of Gorter and Pannekoek in this volume is of a very primitive level. Gorter comes over as a really raving economist and syndicalist. The concept of the specifically political struggle is virtually absent from any of his writings reproduced here. For example, in the final essay 'The Organisation of the Proletariat's Class Struggle' he states that the character of organisation must be derived from the economic system (p 155 and p 158).

The concept of struggle against bourgeois state isn't even mentioned and no organisational consequences whatever are drawn. Gorter's organisational conclusions are therefore that what is needed is a combination of a party whose role is chiefly co-ordinating and linking the workers, and a General Union of workers (p167-169). The role of soviets and a specifically political party disappears.

Gorter's formula is interesting as a precursor of the 'three cogs' theory of Tony Cliff (party/rank and file

movement/unions), but its economist framework no more corresponds to the political reality and needs of the class struggle than his later imitator.

Pannekoek is more sophisticated than Gorter but the political content of his contributions isn't much different. His chief thesis is that 'the material development of the economy creates consciousness' (p93). This position, which totally denies the primacy of politics, naturally leads to the same practical conclusions as Gorter's greater crudity. The sometimes interesting analysis Pannekoek makes of the nature of bourgeois ideology (p102-9) can't conceal the essential framework.

Indeed the classical combination of economy/ideology, omitting the dominance of the political, provides the common theoretical framework between ultra-left economism of the Pannekoek/Gorter/Socialist Workers' Party variety and the rightist economist orientation of the Communist Party's particular interpretation of Gramsci.

In short this book is very interesting as it sheds light on the roots of current political errors. It isn't particularly interesting for the quality of the articles themselves. A more sophisticated defence of ultra-leftism is to be found in **Lukacs Tactics and Ethics** (published by NLB at £3).

JOHN ROSS



# Socialist Challenge

## Zionists discuss how to crush Palestinians

# 13 MAY— MARCH FOR PALESTINE

The British left and labour movement will have a chance to show its opposition to the Israeli invasion and United Nations occupation of southern Lebanon on 13 May, when the Palestine Solidarity Campaign will be holding a demonstration.

This opportunity has been delayed for so long because of the ban on demonstrations in London. NIGEL WARD explains that one of the most important repercussions of the invasion has been within the Zionist state itself.

A recent article by Yehoshafat Harkavi in the Israeli paper Ma'ariv shows the outlines of the debate in Israel. The author is an ex-chief of army intelligence and he expresses the attitude of influential Israelis who support the US approach to Middle East politics.

### IRON LAW

The debate is how best to maintain and secure the Zionist state. For Harkavi, 'in the present official position Israel is dropping tactical cards by being heavily dragged into concessions step-by-step, instead of making these concessions with an uplifted head and demanding something in return'.

What this means is recognising that: 'A large commun-

ity cannot be denied self-determination. The West Bank cannot escape this iron law. The West Bank will remain Arab and Arab rule will be set up in it.'

### ARSENAL

Such a strategy would guarantee a continual renewal of Israel's arsenal by the US, without which any territorial gains would be useless.

This would mean making greater use of the reactionary Arab regimes: 'Instead of adhering to a policy of remaining in the West Bank, which in any case cannot be kept up, it is better to consider how to minimise the damage of handing over the West Bank.'

'The possibility is open that the West Bank will become part

of Jordan, whose strength and stability are far greater than those of the Palestinian organisations, and whose effectiveness in the suppression of the PLO was proved in 1970.

'This effectiveness is superior to all the Israeli efforts against the PLO. It should also be remembered that whereas in 1970 Jordan acted alone, nowadays it could count on Arab support, for example from Egypt.'

The debate among the Zionists assumes that the Palestinians will be repressed — the only question is by whom.

What is worrying the Israeli government is that the growing peace sentiment — shown by the recent demonstration of army reservists — will implicitly challenge such assumptions.

### VIOLENCE

That is why the extreme right-wing Herut party has resorted to violence against the supporters of the US/Egyptian 'peace strategy'.

In Britain, 60,000 Zionists are expected to attend an Paris Court rally to celebrate the achievements of the Zionist state — its ability to expand to four times its original size, to create millions of refugees and to maim and kill thousands more.

The strength of the Zionists in Britain and the level of organisation they demonstrated during last year's debate in the National Union of Students, show the need for a strong, national organisation



of anti-Zionists.

The 13 May demonstration is an opportunity to begin this task. With the revulsion at the Israelis' tactics, such as cluster bomb attacks on civilians, there is a chance to reduce support for the Zionists in Britain. The appeal for the 13 May march

requires support for only these slogans:

- \*Israel out of Lebanon
- \*No United Nations stabilisation of the Israeli occupation
- \*For the right of the Palestinians to struggle for their national liberation
- \*End Israeli attacks on the

Palestinians and Lebanese

This is a big step forward, overcoming previous divisions in the British left and amongst Arab students.

A large turnout by socialists is the best way to make sure this progress is continued.

### PALESTINE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

**Demonstration**  
assemble 1pm at Speakers Corner, Hyde Park

March past Israeli embassy to an outdoor rally

SATURDAY 13 MAY

## OUR FUND DRIVE

FOR THE first time the British labour movement has May Day as a public holiday. Britain has now fallen in line with most other West European countries. That is good news for the British working class.

The first week of May was also a good one for Socialist Challenge.

From this week Socialist Challenge will be on sale in

selected branches of WH Smith's in London, Oxford and Cambridge.

If you want to order an individual copy that can also be done through nearly all Smith's branches. The system is entitled 'Customers Special Orders'. Just go in and ask.

Being the first of the month this is also a good week for the fund drive. This is because the

month's bankers orders fell due. That boosts the fund drive by £138, taking the cumulative total to £374.05.

For the paper to survive we have had to raise our fund drive target to £2500. That is £700 more than last quarter. This is a steep, upward, job, but unfortunately necessary.

Every supporter and every Socialist Challenge group must

plan ways to raise funds.

The stamp appeal made by our Leicester supporters has been receiving a good response. One supporter from Jersey sent in a good collection and commented 'not everyone there being a tax exile'.

The Leicester supporters have also lit on another fund raising idea — selling off archival material. Older mili-

tants will probably have material they no longer want or have spare copies which can be sold, auctioned or raffled.

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