

# Socialist Challenge

**THEY SAY LAW AND ORDER**

**WE SAY**



**TROOPS OUT NOW**



DID those who cry over Airey Neave mourn the dead of Bloody Sunday?

**WHY WE CALL FOR THE RETURN OF LABOUR**

COMMENTING on Airey Neave's death, Merlyn Rees said it would strengthen his determination to maintain a 'bi-partisan' approach to Ireland. On that basis, at least as far as Ireland goes, there seems little to choose between Tory and Labour.

Many would extend such a judgement to other issues: unemployment, racism, inflation, or reactionary foreign policy — Callaghan and Thatcher, much of a muchness.

The shop stewards at the Dunlop factory in Liverpool threatened to call for an abstention in the Edge Hill by-election unless Labour acted in defence of their jobs. Public sector workers disillusioned by Labour's pay policy talk of disaffiliating NUPE from the Labour Party. These are no solutions to Labour's betrayals.

To call for an abstention on Labour will only aid the party of big business — the Tories. When workers cast their votes for the Labour Party, they are voting for a party of their class — whatever its policies.

But the best conditions for defeating the Labour government's reactionary policies for once and for all is when Labour is in office. Then these bureaucrats — who claim to represent working class interests — are judged by the policies they implement.

And, as we have seen after five years of Labour rule, more and more working class people are refusing to accept its measures. The civil servants' decision to reject the latest offer, despite the election, is a case in point. The proof is the way the capitalist press has held up this dispute as evidence that Labour can't 'control' the working class any longer.

If the Tories were in office, these Labour leaders and their friends at the head of the unions would be let off the hook. Then we would hear all sorts of left noises and promises never to do again what they've done between 1974 and '79.

And after several years of the Tories, they may well even be believed — including by many of those who today are rejecting Labour's policies.

Socialist Unity will be contesting the election in safe Labour seats on the basis of policies which provide a real socialist alternative. The best condition for extending this alternative is to return a Labour Government. Not because it will deliver socialism, but because under Labour the real socialists can be seen much more and heard much louder.

# EDITORIAL

Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper St, London N1. Editorial 01-359 8180/9. Distribution/advertising 01-359 8371.

## Airey Neave; what we say

ACCORDING TO Margaret Thatcher, Airey Neave '...was one of freedom's warriors, courageous, staunch, true'. Clearly she has lost a friend, but the workers movement certainly has not. Far from being a fighter for democracy, Neave was one of the most outspoken reactionaries in favour of curtailing democratic rights.

While shadow spokesperson on the North of Ireland, 'freedom's warrior' demanded that the SAS be sent to the Six Counties, that Provisional Sinn Fein be banned, and that all legal restraints on house-to-house searches and the questioning of suspects by the Army be lifted. In a speech to Conservative women in his Abingdon constituency in May 1977 he went further, calling for the reintroduction of internment and saying: 'The public should not be misled by the woolly propaganda of the left that detention can never achieve its objectives. Nothing could be further from the truth.'

But whether Neave was killed by a revolutionary nationalist or by a provocateur, the end result will be the same. A wave of repression, directed primarily at the Irish community in Britain but with the aim also of smearing and isolating the supporters of Ireland's struggle for self-determination, is already being prepared.

The Daily Mail editorial, the day after the assassination, called for increased security checks and for identity cards for the Irish in Britain. Eldon Griffiths, Tory MP and political adviser to the Metropolitan Police, demanded 'more and better equipped units' of the SAS, and for them to be used to back up police operations in Britain.

Yelping like puppy-dogs at the wheels of this cart of reaction can always be found the Labour leadership. When James Callaghan said that 'No effort would be spared', he was correctly understood by the Daily Mirror when it headlined his statement, 'Jim Vows Revenge'.

The campaign in the press is designed not only to increase the election chances of the Tories, but to turn whole sections of the working class rightwards and tie them to the reactionary schemes of the ruling class. The National Front's campaign will be given the biggest boost it could have hoped for. Not self-determination for Ireland but 'Law And Order' and possibly 'Hanging for Terrorists' has become an issue. For all these reasons no support whatsoever can be given to the bombing.

But that is not to give any credence to the reactionary campaign of hysteria. The Morning Star did just this in its editorial on Saturday when it expressed 'utter and total condemnation of those who brutally and cold-bloodedly murdered Mr Airey Neave'.

Andrew Murray's front-page article in the Star confined itself to applauding Neave as a 'hero' of World War II and a major opponent of troop withdrawal (just like the CPGB?). His personal role in aiding state repression in Ireland went unreported. The term 'barbarism' was reserved not for British imperialism's operations in Ireland but for the resistance to it.

However much we disagree with the strategy or the particular tactics adopted by Irish freedom-fighters, socialists have a responsibility at all times to defend the right of the Irish people to fight back against the primary violence of the British state.

The best way to do this in the election campaign is to be prepared to mount defence campaigns for all those who will inevitably be lifted under the Prevention of Terrorism Act in the next few weeks, and to demand publicly that Labour candidates, particularly the 'lefts', commit themselves to such defence campaigns and to the fight to repeal the PTA. They should be hounded by people reminding them of the fact that, whoever planted the bomb, it was primed by this Labour government's policy on Northern Ireland.

Socialist Unity candidates will be calling for 'Troops Out Now' as a major part of their campaigns. Furthermore, Pat Arrowsmith (standing as an Independent Socialist against Jim Callaghan in Cardiff) and Brendan Gallagher (standing against Roy Mason in Barnsley) will concentrate on making the reality of Ireland an issue in the election.

These candidatures will be used to stimulate mass actions in defence of Irish freedom and for 'Troops Out Now' — in the end the only way the workers and the oppressed in Britain will be won to the side of the Irish people. Now more than ever, our ability to support these initiatives will be a test of our commitment to the fight for socialism.

# HOME NEWS

## Civil servants — 'we're fighting on : despite elections'

By a CPSA member in Newcastle

CIVIL Servants will be continuing the action over our pay claim, despite the general election.

If Callaghan were to meet the claim in full, and commit Labour to implementing a decent minimum wage rise throughout the public sector, he would be in a much better position to win.

Not that our union leaders are keen on continuing the action. Ken Thomas, general secretary of the Civil and Public Services Association, is a strong supporter of the Concordat and has consistently limited the fight to selective action.

It's the pressure of the membership which has forced him to reject the offer of 9 per cent now and pie in the sky later.

A good example of that pressure is the meeting we had at Newcastle Central branch, to which CPSA assistant general secretary John Raywood came along.

He argued that up till now press reports have been good, and that we should not threaten this supposed support by escalating action in the Department of Health and Social Security, lest we be seen to be attacking the unemployed and sick.

Raywood also made it clear that any real escalation of the dispute by militant branches such as our own would not get official support. Speaker after speaker from the floor attacked this, saying that one-day strikes and selective action is not enough.

As one striker put it: 'We don't want any striking by proxy. Selective action means that only a few people will fight the battle we should all be waging.'

Barry Fudge, the branch secretary, argued: 'The only way to force the government to make concessions is to force the issue in to public attention. The miners, lorry drivers, and hospital ancillary workers understood this, and we should too.'

A way of discouraging unofficial action has been the rumour that where such action is taken, official action will be called off.

We are finding out that it's not enough to be prepared to take action locally — we have to build links between the different branches and strike

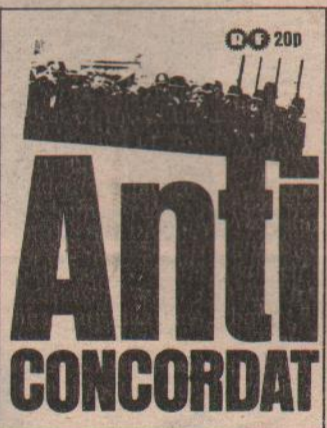


Foot wishes the civil servants strike would go away — we have to help them win.

committees so that this sort of sabotage can be prevented.

We are not a bowler hat and broly brigade, as the press portrays us. We are mostly low-paid clerical workers. We deserve a decent living wage just like any other workers.

It will be interesting to see how many Labour candidates are prepared to come out in our support.



The Anti-Concordat. Available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, N1. 20p.

## Tories greet Concordat

By Rich Palser

'THE scope for genuine consultation between an incoming Conservative government and the unions is immense', said Leon Brittan, Tory spokesperson on employment, a few days ago.

Wishful thinking? An election gambit to counter the argument that Labour is better at 'dealing with the unions'?

Unfortunately Thatcher's crew have some ground for claiming a Tory government would find much to talk about with the unions — and it's called the Concordat.

The Concordat accepts that 'curbs on the power of the unions' are necessary. It does not use the same language as the Tories, but it agrees changes are needed over picketing, the closed shop, strike ballots — all the issues on which the Tories have been demanding change.

'As Conservatives we should now examine carefully the solutions proposed in the

Concordat and explain exactly where and why those solutions seem to us inadequate', Brittan added.

'We should then invite the TUC to remedy these deficiencies and come up with further proposals.'

The Tories have made it clear that 'remedying these deficiencies' will in some cases mean using the law — to prevent effective picketing, particularly flying pickets, and break the closed shop.

The TUC-Labour government pact calls on the unions to exert self-discipline; in other words for union leaders to impose discipline on the rank and file.

The Tories have won half the battle in getting the TUC to admit that some sort of discipline is needed.

Stealing the Tories' clothes will not win Labour the election. And what is worse, it paves the way for Thatcher and friends to launch an attack on the unions should they get in.

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.

\* I am interested in more information about activities in my area.

\* I would like additional literature and enclose 50p to cover costs.

[Delete if not applicable]

NAME

ADDRESS

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

## OUR POLICIES

Capitalism is in crisis. The leaders of the Labour Party and the trades unions offer solutions that are in the interests, not of the workers, but of the capitalist class.

Socialist Challenge believes that the two vital tasks confronting revolutionary socialists are:

\* To build broad-based class struggle tendencies in opposition to class-collaborationism in the labour movement. These should be non-exclusive in character grouping together militants holding a wide range of political views.

\* To begin to fight for the creation of a unified and democratic revolutionary socialist organisation which can, through an application of united front tactics, begin to be seen as an alternative by thousands of workers engaged in struggles. Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

**1** The struggle for socialism seeks to unite the fight of the workers against the bosses with that of other oppressed layers of society — women, black people, gays — struggling for their liberation. This socialism can only be achieved by creating new organs of power and defeating with all necessary means the power of the capitalist state.

**2** Our socialism will be infinitely more democratic than what exists in Britain today, with full rights for all political parties and currents that do not take up arms against the socialist state. The Stalinist models of 'socialism' in the USSR and Eastern Europe have discredited socialism in the eyes of the millions of workers throughout the world. We are opposed to them and will offer full support to all those fighting for socialist democracy.

**3** The interests of workers and capitalists are irreconcilable on a world scale. Capitalism has not only created a world market, it has created world politics. Thus we fight for working class unity on an international scale. This unity will in the long run be decisive in defeating both the imperialist regimes in the West and the brutal dictatorships they sustain in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

In Britain it implies demanding the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and letting the Irish people determine their own future.

**4** The Communist Parties in Europe are in crisis. Neither the 'Euro-communist' nor the pro-Moscow wings have any meaningful strategy for the overthrow of the capitalist state. New revolutionary socialist parties are more necessary than ever before. Conditions today are more favourable than over the preceding three decades. But such parties can only be built by rejecting sectarianism and seeing internal democracy not as a luxury but as a vital necessity. This means the right to organise factions and tendencies.

# HOME NEWS

## Socialist Unity

# Putting forward a socialist alternative

AT THE last election, Labour promised 'a fundamental shift in the balance of wealth and power in favour of working people'.

Instead the government has consistently attacked their interests.

Working people didn't vote Labour to be given Tory policies. Socialist Unity — an alliance of socialist organisations and militants — is therefore standing candidates in this election as part of the fight for a socialist alternative to the bankrupt policies of the Labour government.

The aim of Socialist Unity's campaign is to help build the campaigns and struggles necessary for working people to improve their standard of life and take control of society.

It intends to show that it is possible to fight for a socialist alternative, and that this means building an opposition that embraces trade unionists, members of the immigrant community, and the women's movement, as well as all those people inside the Labour Party who are prepared to take action against the anti-working class

policies of their leaders.

The policies Socialist Unity stands for therefore include:

**\*Against Labour's wage cuts.** Socialist Unity supports the fight against incomes policy and for a national minimum wage of £60. Wages, benefits and social spending should all be defended against inflation by automatic rises.

**\*Against the government-TUC Concordat,** whose Tory-inspired proposals amount to an all-out attack on the effectiveness of working class organisation.

**\*End unemployment.** The reduction of the working week to 35 hours without loss of pay would create 1.8 million jobs overnight. Firms which propose redundancies or closure should be nationalised without compensation under workers control.

**\*Reverse the cuts in social services.** Nationalisation of the banks and finance houses would allow interest-free loans permitting a massive new programme of house, school,

nursery and hospital building.

**\*Against racism.** The National Front should not be allowed to spread their racist poison. Socialist Unity stands for the scrapping of the immigration laws and the right of black people to defend themselves against racists and police harassment. It supports the Anti Nazi League and all mass action against racism and fascism.

**\*Equal rights for women in all spheres.** Socialist Unity stands for free contraception and abortion on demand so that women themselves can choose whether or not to have children; free 24-hour nurseries; an end to violence against women in or out of the home. It supports the independent organisation of women to achieve their aims.

**\*The right of women and men to determine their own sexuality.** Socialist Unity supports the fight of gay organisations to end all discrimination.

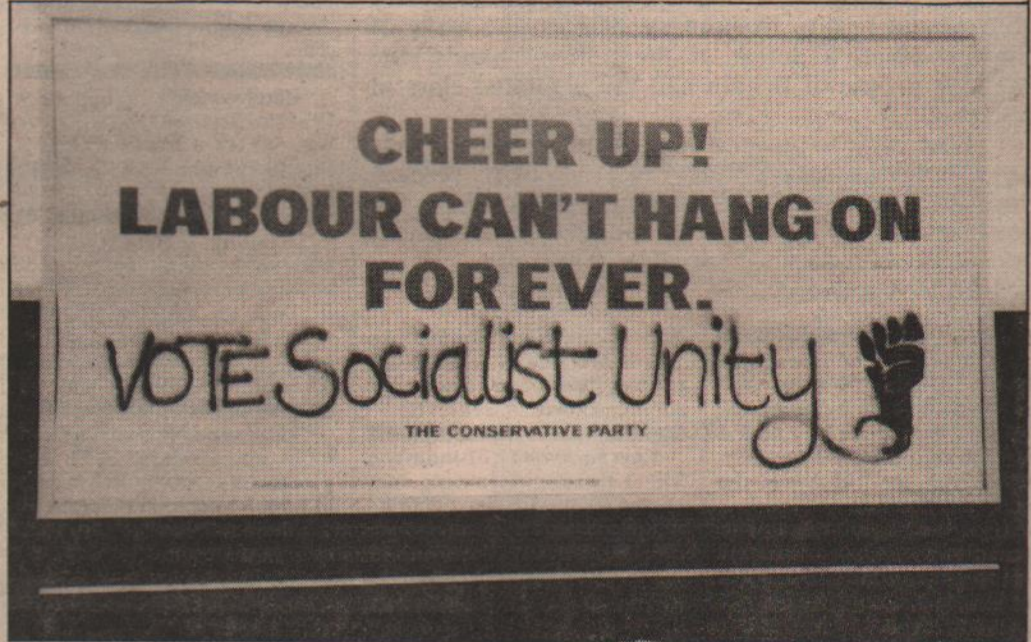


Photo: HILARY DRIVER

**\*Defend democratic rights.** For the scrapping of all repressive legislation — notably the Prevention of Terrorism Act, Suppression of Terrorism Act, 1824 Vagrancy Act (the 'sus' laws), Criminal Law Act, Official Secrets Act; for the disbanding of the SPG and other special police and military units.

**\*Full rights for youth.** Although there are no votes to be gained in this way, Socialist

Unity will give a voice in this election to youth and their demands for adequate facilities and the right to a living wage or grant for full-time education. It supports organisations like NUSS, SKAN, and RAR.

**\*For a Scottish Assembly.** The referendum produced a majority for devolution — elections to the Assembly should go ahead immediately.

**\*Self-determination for the**

**Irish people.** Socialist Unity demands the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and supports the H block prisoners' struggle for political status.

**\*Break all imperialist links.** Socialist Unity stands for solidarity with the struggle to smash the white racist regimes in southern Africa; immediate withdrawal from NATO; unilateral nuclear disarmament.



Photo: GEOFF CARROLL

OVER a hundred people at Socialist Unity's final rally in Edge Hill on 26 March heard an impressive platform of speakers (left to right): Pat Arrowsmith, Independent Socialist candidate against Callaghan in the general election; Harry McShane, active socialist campaigner for sixty years; Tariq Ali, editor of Socialist Challenge; Pete Cresswell (chair), a leader of the recent social workers' strike in Liverpool; Al Walker, the Socialist Unity candidate (who polled 127 votes); and Rashid Mufti, chairperson of the Merseyside Anti-Racist Alliance.

## Where SU is standing

**BIRMINGHAM Small Heath:** The candidate will be chosen later this week. Socialist Unity will also be contesting the local elections in all four wards: Small Heath, Saltley, Duddeston, and Newtown.

**GLASGOW Queens Park:** The candidate in this Gorbals area is Walter McLellan, assistant secretary of Glasgow District NALGO and well-known in the campaign for better housing and against all cuts.

Socialist Unity's campaign here will lay particular stress on mobilising for the 21 April demonstration on Ireland in Glasgow, supported by both UTOM and Sinn Fein. It will also provide a platform for teachers and civil servants currently in struggle.

**HULL Central:** The candidate is Pauline Stanton, delegate to ASTMS Divisional Council No. 1, a member of Hull Trades Council executive, and an active campaigner for abortion rights and against the closure of a local women's hospital.

A novel development is the setting up of a School Kids for Socialist Unity by young supporters.

**LONDON Deptford:** The candidate is Janet Maguire, secretary of the South-East London Medical Branch of ASTMS and a member of ASTMS Divisional Council No. 8.

An active campaigner against the cuts throughout the life of the Labour government, she is currently secretary of the

Lambeth, Lewisham and Soutwark trades councils committee against the cuts in the health service.

**LONDON Southall:** The candidate is Tariq Ali, editor of Socialist Challenge, who was once told by Labour MP Syd Bidwell that he should 'either join the Labour Party or return to Pakistan'.

Bidwell reportedly likes to joke with Asian voters that 'My name is really Bidwell Singh', but his real record can be seen in his signature on the racist Parliamentary Select Committee Report on Immigration produced last year.

Socialist Unity is making it clear that if Bidwell loses his seat he will have only his politics to blame; Ali's candidature primarily aims to offer a positive alternative to the thousands of black people who will turn away from Bidwell in disgust. To this end Socialist Unity is circulating an open letter to Bidwell (see page 6).

**LONDON Tower Hamlets:** The candidate is Ray Varnes, ILEA district secretary of NUPE and a member of NUPE's London Divisional Council.

Apart from the major issue of racism, Socialist Unity will take up the local reflection of Labour's right-wing policies in the council's stand against the manual workers' and social workers' strikes (the latter now into its eighth month).

**MANCHESTER Ardwick:** The candidate is Jeff West, a welder and member of the Boilermakers Union. He will be

standing against Industry Minister Gerald Kaufman, notorious amongst other things for helping to sabotage the Lucas workers' Corporate Plan.

**NOTTINGHAM East:** The candidate is Ian Juniper, a member of ASTMS who works for a trade union information unit. He is active in the ANL and is on the steering committee of the Nottingham Anti-Cuts Committee.

Apart from these constituencies, there may also be Socialist Unity candidacies in **LEEDS South** (against Merlyn Rees), **LIVERPOOL** (see article on Edge Hill by-election), and **LONDON Islington North**. Confirmation is expected later this week.

Finally, Socialist Unity will also campaign actively for independent candidates in two other constituencies:

**BARNSELEY:** Here Brendan Gallagher, father of Willie, is standing on a 'Troops Out' platform against Northern Ireland Secretary Roy Mason.

**CARDIFF South-East:** Here Pat Arrowsmith is standing as an Independent Socialist against Callaghan, and a committee to support her candidacy has been set up — the Campaign for a Socialist Alternative.

The main issue in this campaign will be Ireland, but it will also focus on unemployment (with the recent closure of the East Moors steel plant in the constituency) and devolution. The SWP has pledged that its members will be active in the campaign.

## Government condemned at Edge Hill

By Tony Meehan

THE RESULT of last Thursday's by-election in Edge Hill, Liverpool, was staggering.

It was generally recognised that it had become a marginal seat despite the Labour majority of 6,000 at the last general election. But no-one could have expected Labour to lose 8,000 votes — despite the government's record.

This was a wholly working class constituency that had voted Labour for the last thirty years, each time returning Sir Arthur Irvine, an MP who

could hardly be described as left.

The Labour candidate this time, Bob Wareing, was a left. But Transport House was clearly not going to tolerate any criticism of the government's policies.

The result was a dramatic condemnation of the government's record of cutting wages, closing hospitals, schools and nurseries, and allowing unemployment to double.

The Liberals became an alternative because at least they promised to mend the roofs.

The result is an indication of

the clear need for militants to fight both inside and outside the Labour Party for a socialist alternative.

Despite the many shortcomings of the Socialist Unity campaign, partly due to time and resources, SU supporters in Liverpool — including many who were doubtful about standing in the by-election — are absolutely convinced of the need to fight in the general election.

A decision on whether to stand again in Edge Hill or in another Liverpool constituency will be taken later this week.

# LABOUR IN CRISIS

## Labour's record

# What they said they'd do

DO you remember 1974? That was the year this government began. In January 1974, in the wake of Edward Heath's defeat at the miners' hands, the working people of Britain had the capitalist class in retreat.

Labour came to power on a programme which reads like a hollow mockery today. Not one of its pledges have been honoured. In betraying its promises, the government has demoralised the labour movement and dragged the name of socialism in the mud.

Let's look at the record.

**\*The balance of power and wealth:** Between 1974 and 1977 real earnings fell by seven per cent. In the same period dividends rose by four per cent faster than the increase in the cost of living.

Also in the same period the government transferred over six billion pounds to private industry in handouts, twice the previous rate and two thirds of the total fixed investment by industry.

This was taken directly from the working class in the form of cuts and increased taxation. Leaving the cuts aside for a moment, personal taxation grew from 38.8 per cent to 46.6 per cent, whilst corporate taxes fell from 6.4 per cent to 4.6 per cent.

**\*Poverty:** Last week the Child Poverty Action Group reported that the number of children living on the poverty

line grew from 26,000 to 500,000. Nearly 5,000,000 people live at or below the supplementary benefit level.

**\*Accountability of industry:** The Labour government concluded precisely one planning agreement — with Chrysler UK.

Stockbrokers Greenwell & Co. said in their 1977 Oil Report: 'Participation agreements have turned out a bit like the Cheshire Cat. The socialist body has disappeared, leaving only a grin on the face of Harold Lever'.

**\*Economic equality:** In 1976 the top 5 per cent of the population owned 46.2 per cent of the wealth — three per cent more than in 1974. The bottom 50 per cent of the population owned 5.6 per cent — three quarters of what they owned in 1974.

The top 10 per cent of the

population have as much income as the bottom 50 per cent.

**\*Employment:** In February 1974 official unemployment was 545,000. The last figures for 1979 put unemployment at 1,455,000.

**\*Housing:** With 200,000 building workers unemployed, housing starts fell from 351,000 in 1972 to 267,000 in 1977. Average house prices doubled in the same period; public spending on housing halved.

**\*Education:** Between March 1975 and March 1977 the government cut capital spending by 30 per cent. Teachers' unemployment now stands at an estimated 66,000. Labour Education Minister Shirley Williams has stated that at least 77,000 new teachers would have to be employed simply to implement existing agreements on class size.

**\*Health:** In a situation where three-quarters of all hospital beds are in pre-1918 hospitals, and only 43 out of 2300 hospitals have been built since the war, the government has imposed cuts of nearly 30 per cent in hospital capital spending.

It has forced local authorities to close numerous hospitals through its cash limits. The

### Promises: promises

'THE AIMS we set out in this manifesto are Socialist aims, and we are proud of the word. It is only by setting our aims high, even amid the hazards of our present economic situation, that the idealism and high intelligence of our young people can be enlisted.

'It is indeed our intention to:

- Bring about a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families;
- eliminate poverty wherever it exists in Britain, and commit ourselves to a substantial increase in our contribution to fight poverty abroad;
- make power in industry genuinely accountable to the workers and the community at large;
- achieve far greater economic equality — in income, wealth, and the community at large;
- increase social equality by giving far greater importance to full employment, housing, education and social benefits;
- improve the environment in which our people live and work and spend their leisure...

'This preliminary manifesto, drawing upon the new policy statements which the Labour Party has discussed by its democratic process, over the last three years, sets out the specific numbered pledges which the next Labour government will seek with all its strength to carry out in a single parliament.'

LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO, February 1974

health workers' union, COHSE, estimates nursing unemployment at around 70,000.

The reasons for these appalling results were not outside the control of the government or of British workers. The fine-sounding phrases in Labour's 1974

programme — many, with which no revolutionary would disagree — could have been implemented.

They were not implemented because the government made a political choice. It chose not to face the consequences of a fight for its policies: a break with the capitalists and their economy and state.

In future issues, we shall show how many of the policies in Labour's programme promoting working class interests could have been achieved through a full-scale mobilisation of the working class to impose them.

And we'll see why the government backed down.

## Tories' plans for industry

# Only for the ears of the party faithful?

By Stephen Marks

JOBS will be an election issue. Leading Labour speakers have aimed their fire at the threat to jobs contained in the Tories' industrial strategy of massive spending cuts and an end to state handouts to industry.

This may seem a sick joke to the 1½ million and more already jobless under Labour. But Callaghan and Co feel no shame in arguing that if it's bad under Labour, under the Tories it would be worse yet.

Leading Tories make the threat seem real enough. In a *Daily Telegraph* article last week Jock Bruce-Gardyne MP called for: an end to automatic rises in pensions and social security benefits; a one-year freeze in Civil Service and local government recruitment; cutting spending on job centres and 'job-creating' schemes; axing housing subsidies and aid to private industry; and cutting spending on aid to 'deprived' inner city areas.

Some of this could be dismissed as kite-flying rant by a more than usually loony Tory right-winger.

But it is official Conservative policy to trim some £3 billion from the subsidies and grants to

private industry now administered by the Department of Industry, and to cut the National Enterprise Board down to a simple holding company for those state shareholders in 'lame duck' firms that cannot find private buyers.

It all sounds familiar. Edward Heath was returned in 1970 with similar policies of big tax and spending cuts, government withdrawal from industry, and laws against the unions.

The idea was that resulting tax cuts would make investment more profitable for capital, and lead to economic growth. In fact, all that happened was that the boom never got beyond the stage of frantic speculation.

Before his government was brought down by the miners, Heath had nationalised Leyland and Rolls-Royce, and passed the laws which provided the basis for massive state handouts to private business.

So is the whole Tory industrial strategy simply intended to keep their party rank-and-file happy, rather like Labour leaders' occasional talk of socialism? Only up to a point.

True, the wilder fantasies of

the 'free-market' fanatics do not fit the real needs of modern big business. Much government spending today on education, housing and transport, is a necessary subsidy to the overhead costs of modern capital.

As for direct aid to industry, what would be left today of Britain's productive capacity and export-earning potential if big firms like Leyland had been left to go to the wall?

If this also has the effect of saving jobs, or stopping the dole-queues growing quite so fast, that is also useful for another plank in the strategy of big capital; to buy the co-operation of the trade union leaders in policing their rank and file.

The same role is played by aspects of the Labour government's legislation which many Tories would like to modify, such as the Employment Protection Act.

But that does not mean that a Thatcher government's 'free market' programme would go the same way as Heath's, or so easily. The base of 'Thatcherism' is the small business, lower middle class Tory rank and file.

These people can afford the price of Callaghan-Heath style 'class-collaboration' policies less easily than big business, whether in the shape of higher taxes or protective labour legislation.

They might not be so easily

ditched as last time, after a further six or seven years of crisis.

Big business too is less willing to pay the price of 'consensus' if mounting industrial unrest shows that the trade union bureaucracy cannot deliver its side of the bargain.

Finally, the position of the labour movement under a Thatcher Government would not be just a re-run of the fight against Heath's policies which forced him to make his 'U-turn'.

After the Concordat, the cuts, and unemployment, Labour in opposition would find it harder to present itself as the political alternative.

The tax-cutting, anti-bureaucracy ideology of Thatcherism has a potent appeal not only to the lower middle-class but to confused sections of the working class as well.

Labour's savage attack on its own roots, and the revolutionary left's failure to make the most of its opportunities, means that there is an absence within the labour movement of any systematic body of ideas with a mass base, that could legitimise class struggle in the way that Thatcherism legitimises attacks on the working class.

That means that the fight for the socialist alternative to Callaghan is central to the battle against Thatcher's strategy.



Tories promise no teddy bears' picnic

# HOME NEWS

## Elections and the media

# Why the Tories will do very nicely, thank you

ON 3 May, the day of the general election, over 70 per cent of the national newspapers on sale in Britain will be calling on their readers to vote for the Tories.

The Daily Express, Sun, Daily Mail, Daily Star, Daily Telegraph, Financial Times, and The Times (if it's back in business) will all be waving the flag for Margaret Thatcher.

TV and radio can't officially line up that way, but their message will lean in the same direction. GEOFFREY SHERIDAN looks behind the screens and presses.

How much the Tory Party is spending on street posters to advertise its wares is a secret. The rumoured figure is £2m.

That might seem a bit extravagant since most of Fleet Street now functions in effect as a permanent propaganda machine for the Conservatives.

The affinity with the party of big business begins in the boardrooms of the multinationals and conglomerates which — with the exception of the pro-Tory *Daily Telegraph* and the Lib-Labish *Guardian* — are behind Fleet Street's daily output.

National newspapers these days are not profitable commodities. The majority register on the loss side of the financial balance sheets. It is politics which largely maintains the City's interest in supplying our daily reading material.

As Victor Matthews, chief executive of Trafalgar House, put it when his shipping and property company took over the ailing *Daily Express* a couple of years ago:

'It is very important in the present state of the country that the Beaverbrook papers should continue and express their views which are sympathetic to those of the Conservative Party and of capitalism.'

Trafalgar House puts its money where its mouth is in a

direct sense. In 1977 it donated £20,000 to the Tory Party. S Pearson and Son, owners of the *Financial Times*, contributed £10,000 in the same year.

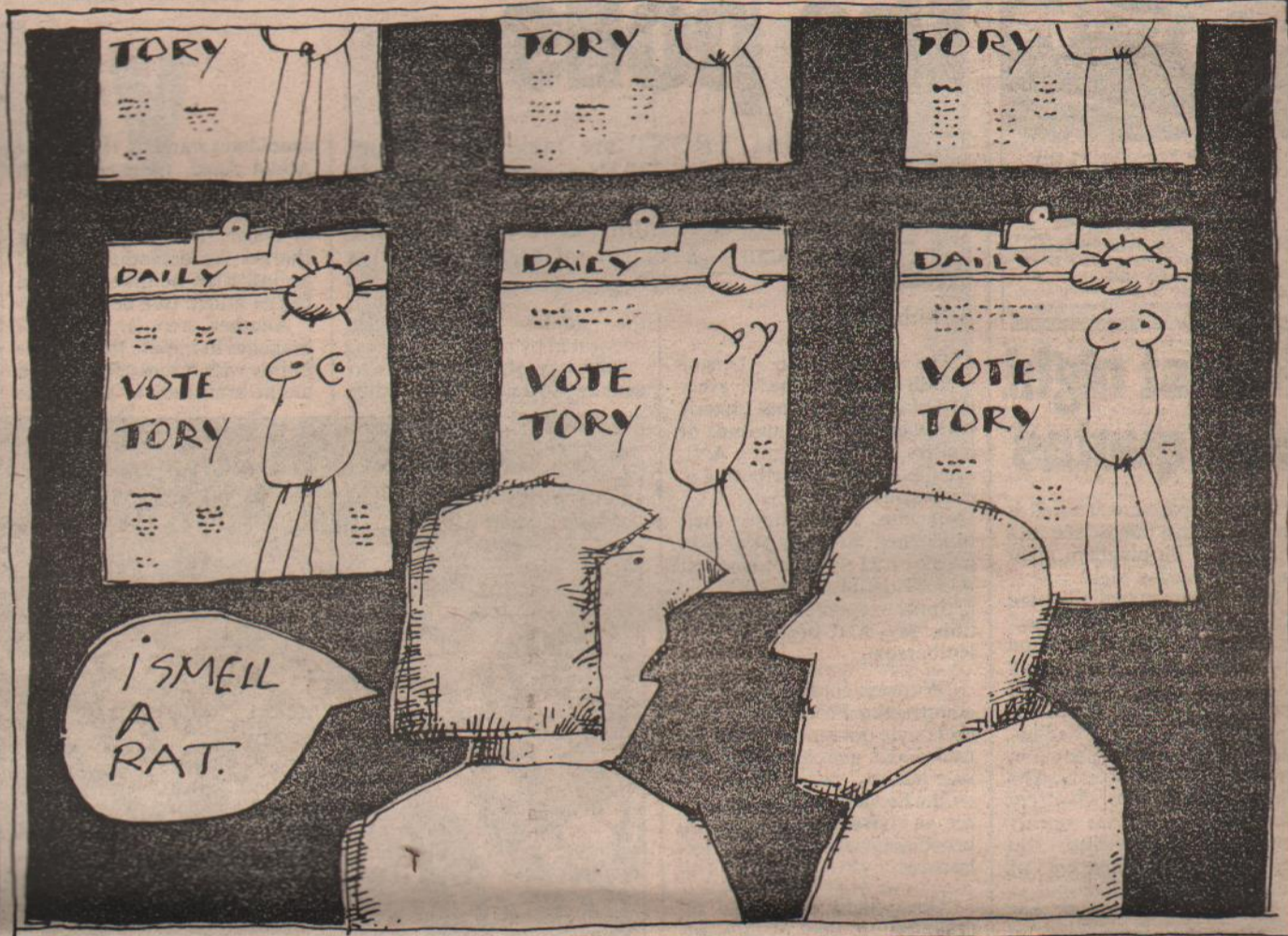
The companies which fund the Tories do not need to directly own papers to ensure their voice is taken into account. It is their advertising which provides the main financial prop to the editorial columns.

Alone among the 'popular' mass dailies, the *Daily Mirror* calls for a Labour vote. It's almost as if there is an unwritten rule that it should do so.

The labour movement, in spite of its hostility to the bosses' press, has barely begun to debate the possibilities of an alternative mass press, but if the *Mirror* were to withdraw its traditional backing for the Labour Party the tolerance shown to Fleet Street's products could finally snap.

There are no prizes for guessing the kind of Labour government the *Mirror* wants to see re-elected. The *Sunday Mirror* spelt out its support last weekend:

'The Prime Minister has shown true grit in standing up to the unions in the long-term interests of the country. When it comes to patriotism Mr Callaghan can claim a thing or



two.

'The charge that he is a lackey of the unions now holds about as much water as the Sahara desert, and the voters will be interested to know how Mrs Thatcher would cope with inflationary wage claims without the misery that has been inflicted on everyone this winter.'

The political spectrum of the national press reaches — if that's the word — from right-wing social democracy rightwards.

No Fleet Street paper, for example, came anywhere near to supporting the manifesto on which the present government

was elected. They unanimously called for a Yes vote in the referendum on Common Market membership, which marked a significant defeat for the Labour left.

The sharpest turnabout in the voting line up on the national press this decade has come with the phenomenal rise of the *Sun*.

In the 1970 general election, shortly after Rupert Murdoch's News International had taken over the paper — which began life as the *Daily Herald*, jointly owned by the TUC and Labour Party — the *Sun* called for a Labour vote.

Now its 4m plus daily copies

could be mistaken for Margaret Thatcher's personal fan mail. Yet the fact that Murdoch's paper has achieved such a high working class readership by popularising the politics of reaction is itself a reflection of the Labour government's policies.

Press freedom in Britain is virtually a monopoly of one class, and as the present struggle at Times Newspapers reveals, even that can be suspended when it comes to confronting the printworkers.

Fleet Street will need to invest £20m to convert to new technology, which means — as John Whale, a leader writer on

the *Sunday Times*, puts it in his book *The Politics of the Media*:

'Organisations which invest that kind of money could not help preferring a world where the rights of property were respected and the future reliably predictable from the past.'

Meanwhile the Labour government advocates the kind of 'rationalisation' which Times Newspapers is attempting to carry through, and remains silent on how that new technology could be used to expand the press in the interests of the working class.

# Television's blind eye

STOP WATCHES will govern the appearance of politicians on TV during the election campaign. Under the Representation of the People Act and various broadcasting Acts, strict rules of 'balance' determine the time allocated to the main political parties.

So on the face of it the leaders of these parties shouldn't have much to complain about.

A clue to what lies behind this neutral facade is given by Anthony Smith, a liberal commentator on the media, in his book *The Politics of Information*:

'The broadcasting authorities in their commitment to impartiality in all its forms are coming to accept a more far-reaching responsibility, harder to guarantee: that of keeping society wedded to its political structure.'

That marriage is, of course, one that Jim Callaghan approves. Never mind that maintaining the political structure provides the broadcasting

authorities with their justification for the inherently conservative — and therefore broadly pro-Tory — output of TV and radio.

The routine attacks on strikes; the silence over the war in Ireland; the promotion of women's existing place in society; the pervasive racism; the reporting of international events from the standpoint of British imperialism — all these are in line with the Labour government's policies.

And when it is these kinds of solutions that are offered to deal with the present political and social crisis, TV interviewers are happy to restrict their questioning of politicians to this right-wing framework.

Alternative policies, including those of left social democracy, will have virtually no airing in the coverage of the election; although one particular alternative is likely to figure — the National Front.

Making Britain a place fit for capitalism in these trying times has made the TV controllers

increasingly hostile to critical treatment of political and social issues. Bread and circuses is the order of the day, with BBC's *Tonight* the latest target for the axe.

Not surprisingly, the response of most viewers to the election coverage will be one of boredom and cynicism.

After the '74 campaigns, Michael Swann, then chairperson of the BBC, said: 'The risk of over-doing things is a very serious one, and we shall, I expect, set or endeavour to set a slower tempo and a lower key [for the EEC referendum] than we have done for ordinary elections.'

But it is the narrow definition of politics and the stultifying approach to it which will cause the TV sets to be switched off.

Even live debates, which would make the coverage less predictable and more democratic, are opposed by the party leaders. Only if the audience members are handpicked by the party organisers [in carefully worked out proportions] will

### Do you buy a newspaper from these multinationals?

Company/profits	UK publishing interests	Publishing interests as % of turnover
Reed International 1978 — £81m.	Daily Mirror, Sunday Mirror, Sunday People, 3 provincial daily/Sunday papers, 9 local weeklies, 175 magazines. Aggregate circulation 28.8m.	24%
S. Pearson 1977 — £44.9m.	Financial Times, 12 provincial dailies, 111 local weeklies, large no. of magazines. Aggregate circulation of newspapers 2.4 m.	25%
Thomson Equitable Corp. 1977 — £22.5m.	The Times, Sunday Times, 15 provincial daily/Sunday papers, 37 local weeklies, 46 magazines. Aggregate circulation over 6 m.	N/A
News International 1977 — £18m.	Sun, News of the World, 2 provincial Daily/Sunday papers, 24 local weeklies, 3 magazines. Aggregate circulation 9.2 m.	65%
Trafalgar House 1978 — £60.6m.	Daily Express, Sunday Express, Daily Star, 1 London evening, 3 local weeklies. Aggregate circulation 6.4 m.	17%

the party leaders participate.

So there is little chance of Callaghan facing left-wing

criticism on the box.

At the end of the day, it is the policies he advances which will

lead many working class people to the conclusion that Labour is not offering them any solutions worth viewing.

RACE & CLASS pamphlet no.6  
95p

## POLICE AGAINST BLACK PEOPLE

Documents the West Indian and Asian experience of the police in Britain from the 1960s to date

On the street In the station  
The 'beat' Acts 1964 and 1971  
Information and surveillance  
'Community Relations'

Available from progressive bookshops or  
210, 247 Pentonville Rd, London N1 9PG  
(add 15p p&p)

Evidence submitted to the Royal Commission on  
Criminal Procedure by The Institute of Race Relations

## Racist night club quotas

SEVEN people were arrested at a picket against the racist quota system at a Birmingham night club on Saturday night.

Eighty people had picketed Pollyanna's night club following a report by the Commission for Racial Equality which found the club guilty of operating a quota system on the admission of blacks to the club, and of turning away people in turbans and woolly hats. The manager of the club, Geoffrey Weston-Edwards, has openly defied the CRE ruling, and announced his intention of maintaining quotas.

An action committee has been formed to fight racism in all Birmingham's night clubs. Raghieb Ahsan, a leading member of the committee and a shop steward at Rover Solihull, said after the picket:

'The police action in arresting peaceful picketers on Saturday night was totally unjustified. They obviously made a special point of intimidating and arresting women on the picket.'

'We are going to come back to picket this club every Saturday night until these racist practices are dropped. In particular we shall be fighting for the trade union movement to boycott this club — for T&GWU members to refuse all deliveries and to prevent the collection of rubbish.'

'There is no way in which the police are going to stop us smashing the colour bar at this club.'



TWO hundred pounds for the Garners strike fund was raised on Sunday at a film benefit at the Gate cinema, Notting Hill. More than 150 people came to see Dark Star and Dread, Beat and Blood.

The strike committee is holding two further benefits in the next week which it hopes will be equally successful.

The first is on Sunday 8 April at 1pm at the Paris Pullman (Drayton Gardens, SW10), showing Wim Wenders' film The American Friend.

Then on Wednesday 11 April there is a late-night showing of Dread, Beat and Blood and Blacks Britannica at 11.15pm at the Screen on the Green, Upper Street, Islington.

## NF plans 280 candidates

# Confronting racism at the polls

THE NATIONAL FRONT are making no bones about what their intended 280 election candidates will be saying and doing.

'We're going to be fighting a very, very heavy racist campaign', says Front leader Martin Webster.

By Rich Palser

The Anti Nazi League intends to counter the NF every step of the way. It has already produced tens of thousands of leaflets which local ANL branches will be distributing in every constituency.

'If the Front hold their threatened St George's Day march on 21 April in Leicester, we will definitely be calling a national counter-demonstration,' says ANL organiser Paul Holborrow.

'We want local branches to counter the Front every time they come out on the streets for rallies and marches to spread race hatred.'

The Front also seem likely to get a five-minute election broadcast. Comments Holborrow:

'One would not allow an organisation that openly advocated rape broadcasting time. The Front is committed to inciting racist violence and we will be advocating that the plugs are pulled on their broadcast.'

The national counter-demonstration planned for Saturday 21 April, falling as it does in the middle of an election campaign, can tackle the fascists' impact in the most effective manner — through mass action on the streets. We must demand that Labour candidates back it.

Even if the Front back out and call off their demonstration, or if it is banned under the Public Order Act, the ANL must go ahead with their demonstration in order to show in practice the mass opposition to the fascists — and if necessary to protest against any attack on the right of the anti-fascists to demonstrate under the Public Order Act.

The National Front will not be the only ones contesting the elections on a racist platform. In showing the Front to be fascist by exposing its past Nazi connections, our job must be to force white workers to question

the similar racist policies advocated by other candidates. One way of doing this is to demand to know where other

candidates stand on the case of Abdul Azad, threatened with deportation under the racist immigration laws; or the case of Nazir Ahmed, now facing charges for defending himself against what he thought was a fascist attack (see below).

Another step is for ANL branches to initiate local rallies jointly with trades councils and union branches, at which the

candidates of the workers' parties can explain their opposition to the fascists.

The fascists of the National Front must be defeated in their attempt to present themselves as a national force to be reckoned with. On top of that we must begin to confront their racist policies, which unfortunately have far wider currency.

ALEXANDRA PALACE  
SAT 14th APRIL 4.30pm - 12pm

TICKETS £1.70 (in advance) £1.95 (on the door) £1.70 (with dole card)

ASWAD, ANGELIC UPSTARTS, JOHN COOPER CLARKE, DAMBALA, THE RUTS, LEYTON BUZZARDS

AGAINST RACISM - BOYCOTT THE NATIONAL FRONT

ADVANCE TICKET FROM ROUGH TRADE, ACE RECORDS, HONKY TONK RECORDS, AND SMALL WONDER

# Open letter to Sydney Bidwell, Labour MP



Dear Sydney Bidwell  
Socialist Unity is standing against you in Southall. In order to avoid all misunderstandings I thought it best to write and explain why we took this decision and why I am standing against you.

For a whole period socialist activists throughout the country have been dissatisfied with the entire record of the Labour government. Its policies have harmed and hurt the interests of working people of all races in this country.

Because of the social and economic crisis people have intensified the search for scapegoats. It is black people in this country who have been chosen by racist politicians and the fascist National Front to play this role.

Your attitude on racism and the government's policies on immigration have antagonised many people in Southall and elsewhere. In fact it was your ambiguities on this question which led to your expulsion from the International Socialist (now the Socialist Workers Party) many years ago.

You have consistently defended the government's immigration policies on the grounds that this would help black people already in this country.

But the utter bankruptcy of this argument has been totally exposed by the experiences of the last five years. For it is since Labour decided to support and introduce racist immigration policies that the fascists have gained more support and racism has increased in this country.

The problem is not one of immigration, but of racism. You know perfectly well that nearly 10,000 white Rhodesian immigrants have returned to this country over the last two years. Many of these were responding to recruiting drives launched by the Metropolitan Police in Salisbury, Rhodesia.

So Tory 'law and order' is going to be imposed in areas like Southall by white Rhodesians who, as you well know, are experts in building a 'multiracial society'. Have you ever spoken out on these questions?

The final straw for many people was your participation on the House of Commons Select Committee on Immigration. This report is racist and seeks to institutionalise racism legally even more than it is at the moment.

It is reports such as these which would, if implemented, make virginity tests the 'norm' throughout Britain. The fact that even the Labour government found the report too racist and refused to accept its recommendations is the most eloquent indictment of what you still continue to defend.

Given your views it is an absolute disgrace that you represent Southall of all constituencies! Socialist Unity will oppose your brand of paternalistic politics with all the resources at its disposal.

We would be happy to clarify these issues further. We accordingly suggest a public debate on the issues involved before the Southall labour movement.

Yours etc.,  
TARIQ ALI

## Victimised for self-defence

By Chris Khamis

JUST after midnight on 3 July last year, seven men burst into the shop of Nazir Ahmed in Longsight, Manchester.

Nazir thought that they were fascists. His fears seemed to be confirmed when one intruder pulled out the telephone wires, preventing his son from contacting the police.

The Ahmeds tried to defend themselves, and shouted for help. When it arrived the intruders identified themselves — they were plain clothes police officers.

Nazir Ahmed has now been

charged with wounding a policeman with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, and his son faces two assault charges.

They could face years in jail — simply for defending themselves against what they believed to be a fascist attack.

Black people in that area have good reason to be wary of racist assaults. Last year, for example, the house of an Asian bus-driver was fire-bombed, leaving his daughter in a coma for weeks.

Another Asian family were hounded out of their shop in Levenshulme after it was smashed up by a gang of racist

youths.

The Ahmed Defence Campaign is demanding the dropping of all charges against the Ahmeds and a full inquiry into the events.

It is supported by the Pakistan Social and Welfare Society, the Afro-Asian Society, Khaksar, the Pakistan Community Centre, ASTMS Central Manchester branch, Manchester Area National Union of Students, and a number of local anti-racist committees and ANL branches.

So far it has organised a

petition to the Home Secretary and a picket of the committal hearings, and it is preparing for a mass demonstration outside the court when the Ahmeds come to trial.

Support is vital. Black organisations, trade union bodies, and local Labour Parties can all be approached to send messages demanding the dropping of all charges to the Home Secretary, and to support the picket of the trial.

Messages of support and financial aid should be sent to: The Ahmed Defence Campaign, c/o 642 Stockport Road, Longsight, Manchester.

# IRELAND

## The speech that brought down the government

# Fruits of Labour's Irish policy

IN THE END it was Labour's Irish policy, leading to the abstentions of Social Democratic and Labour Party MP Gerry Fitt and Independent Republican Frank Maguire, which sealed the fate of the government.

**Socialist Challenge** does not agree with many things which Gerry Fitt does. It does not agree with some of the points he made in the Commons last Wednesday. But his speech was an eloquent indictment of what the government has stood for on Ireland.

We reprint this edited extract, not just for the value of what Fitt said, but because Labour supporters have the right to know why he abstained and brought down the government.

'This will be the unhappiest speech I have ever made in this House. When I was elected in 1966, I sat on the Labour Benches...

'When the Labour Government were defeated, I took my place among Labour Members of the Opposition benches. Throughout a 14-year period in Parliament I have never once voted in the Conservative Lobby...

'However, all that we had built up so laboriously was wrecked by the election in February 1974. We then in May of that year experienced the UWC strike. That strike terrified the Labour Government.

'Since then the Labour Government have been running

away. They have not stood up to Unionists and Loyalist extremists as they should have done...

'Some journalists and others have said that there is a personality conflict between the present Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and me. That is totally untrue.

'The right hon. Gentleman is only implementing Labour Government policies in Northern Ireland. If I criticise him, I criticise this Government.

'In late 1976 or early 1977 the Government went into a minority and began to make arrangements with the Ulster Unionists.

'Every deal that they made so antagonised the minority community in Northern Ireland that any denunciation of this Government gets a standing ovation...

'I believe that the Labour Party will win the next election, and my speech is an attempt to point out the Government's tragic mistakes over the past five years.

'I did not make up my mind about how to vote tonight because of devolution in Scotland and Wales. I made my mind up the Friday before last when I read the Bennett report on police brutality in Northern Ireland.

'The report clearly states that men were brutalised and ill-treated in the holding centres in Northern Ireland. Restrictions were placed on debating

that report when we were discussing the Northern Ireland (Prevention of Terrorism) Act, and we have not been promised a debate.

'That report was only the tip of the iceberg. We have heard of Watergate and Muldergate, and there will be a "Bennett-gate".'

'When the true story emerges of what has been happening in the interrogation centres, the people in the United Kingdom will receive it with shock, horror and resentment...

'It has been said that if I do not vote for the Government tonight and there is an election, the alternative is just as bad. I do not think that that is so.

'I want to see a continuation of the Labour Government. But if there is a Conservative Government, I warn them not to get carried away with the belief that somewhere around the corner there is a military solution to the Northern Ireland problem.

'Unfortunately that is the tune we have heard from the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Every Monday morning at 10 o'clock he sees the Chief Constable. Every Monday at 1pm we hear on the news that so many IRA men have been caught and so many have been sent to gaol.

'Every Monday the Secretary of State looks for a military solution. But there will be Mondays and Mondays and more Mondays when there will be no military solution and there will be no solution at all until we start to grapple with the political problem of Northern Ireland.

'My grievances are very clear and readily understood. Although not too many of my hon. Friends will stand up and



GERRY FITT

say this in the House, many of them have told me that they recognise what has been going on over Northern Ireland and that they are sorry.

'Many regret bitterly ever having done a deal with the devil in the person of the Northern Ireland Unionist Party. But it is too late now.

'In all conscience, and understanding the real needs of Northern Ireland, I would be a liar and a traitor to the people

who sent me here if I were to go into the Lobby tonight with the Labour Government to express confidence in their handling of the affairs of Northern Ireland.

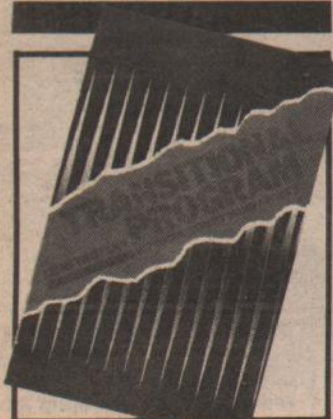
'I want to see an election as soon as possible. I want to see the Labour Government win with such a majority that never again will they have to rely on the votes of the Unionists in Northern Ireland.'

## Gay rights

**ALL the Ulster Unionist MPs are opposed to any change in the laws affecting gay people. Hence the Labour government quietly dropped its decision taken earlier this year to extend the 1967 Homosexual Law Reform Act to the north of Ireland.**

While homosexual acts in private between men over 21 are legal in England and Wales, and 'allowed' in Scotland, they remain a crime in the Six

Counties. The government has not even bothered to submit evidence to the European Human Rights Court, to which a member of the Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association has taken the issue. The London Gay Activists Alliance supports the demand for the extension of the Act, and is holding a picket of the Northern Ireland Office, Great George St, London SW1, on Saturday, 7 April, noon to 2pm.



The Transitional Programme, 30p plus 10p p&p, from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, London N1.

**WOMEN IN ACTION** — A new women's liberation paper for the trade unions. Pilot issue to open discussion on a broad based paper for the unions. Sponsored by Working Women's Charter Campaign, Women in NUT, Women's Rights Group CPSA, branches of ASTMS, NATFHE.

Copies from 'Women in Action', Box 2, 190 Upper Street, London N1, 12p each.

Conference to establish the paper. September 22 Birmingham. Details and donations — write to same address.

**WOMEN IN ACTION**  
A PAPER FOR ACTION BY THE WOMEN OF THE UNIONS

INSIDE: EQUALITY LEGISLATION  
UNION REPORTS ABORTION INTERVIEWS  
INTRODUCTORY PULL-OUT and more!

**TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND:**  
Political Status for POWs  
Glasgow March, Saturday 21 April  
Called by Glasgow United Troops Out Movement, supported by Sinn Fein  
Assemble, Queens Park Gates, Victoria Rd. 10am.



**MAKING Ireland an issue** — Pat Arrowsmith (right), Independent Socialist candidate in Cardiff, exchanging words with a British soldier at a recently held anti-recruitment picket in the city. Pat's campaign against Callaghan in the South-east Cardiff constituency is being backed by the newly formed 'Make Ireland an Election Issue Committee'. The committee is also supporting Brendan Gallagher, who is taking on Roy Mason in Barnsley. 'Make Ireland an Issue' is planning wide-ranging activities throughout the election, and a pamphlet on Labour's record in Ireland is being rushed out. For more information contact the committee c/o 1 North End Road, London W11.

# WHAT'S LEFT

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

HULL Socialist Unity social, Friday 6 April. Further details from any SU supporters.

PEOPLES News Service benefit: film by Red Sisters Collective, *Take it like a man, ma'am*, 1 April, 1pm Scala Cinema, Tottenham St W1. £1.50 at door or PNS, 739 9093 x7.

NALGO Campaign Against Low Pay conference — called by NALGO Action., Sat 7 April, 11.30am to 4pm. Hamilton Hse, Mabledon Place, London WC1. All NALGO members welcome.

**PICKET GARNERS:** Main pickets every day, noon to 3pm and 5.30 to 11 pm at 399 Oxford St., London W1 (opp. Selfridges); 243 Oxford St. (Oxford Circus); 40-41 Haymarket; 56 Whitcombe St. (Leicester Sq.). Mass picket every Saturday at noon, 399 Oxford St. Donations urgently needed as strike pay is only £6. All donations to Garners Strike Fund, c/o TGWU, Rm 84, 12-13 Henrietta St., London WC2. 01-240 1056.

**FLEET STREET** Branch of the Anti Nazi League — new badge in three colours: Print Workers Against the Nazis/The NF is Bad News. 20p plus sae each. Bulk orders — 20 for £3. All money in advance to S Yanowitz, 116 Fortune Green Rd, London NW6.

**MAY DAY GREETINGS:** would your trades council, shop stewards committee or trade union branch put its May Day greetings in **Socialist Challenge**? If so, just send us the name and address of the secretary and we will send details so that it can be raised at the April meeting. Contact D. Welpler, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP (tel. 01-359 8371).

**EDINBURGH** Revolutionary Communist Group. Fifth in a series of monthly public meetings. 'South Africa — Support the Liberation Struggle'. Wednesday, 11 April, 7.30pm at Trades Council, Picardy Place.

**PAN AFRICANIST** Congress of Azania (South Africa). 20th anniversary. Public meeting and dance afterwards. Speakers from: Black consciousness movement, ZANU, PAC, and other groups. Friday, 6 April, 3-10.30pm, Africa Centre, King Street, Covent Garden, WC1 (Zila Azania Band, Dudu Phukwana, and Curchill Jobobe).

**GENERAL** office worker to back up elected trade union officials in Central London office. Amateur typing needed. Approx £60 weekly with flexible hours. For information ring Oliver on 01-571 5019 (eves/week-ends).

**TOWER HAMLETS** Socialist Unity film showing, 'Take it Like a Man, Ma'am' and 'Home Soldier Home'. Friday, 13 April, Tickets £1.50. Further information from: 01-247 2717.

**TWO** socialist feminists require accommodation urgently in London area. Anything considered. Call 801 8341 or 958 5061.

**SOCIALIST** (male, 23) seeks room in friendly, communal house, Inner London. Please write Box 101, c/o Socialist Challenge.

**SEXUALITY** and Fascism, new pamphlet, 20p. Big Flame, 217 Wavertree Road, Liverpool 7.

**SPARTACIST** League public meeting — Down with Islamic Reaction, for a workers' revolution in Iran! Fri. 6 April, 7.30pm, Central Library, 68 Holloway Road, (Tube: Highbury and Islington or Holloway Road).

**SOUTH** London United Troops Out Movement, labour movement conference on Ireland. Goldsmith's College, Sat. 19 May, 10am-5pm. Further information from 60 Loughborough Rd., London SW9.

**PUBLIC** meeting on treatment of Irish POWs and showing of film of Prisoners of War. Speakers from Sinn Fein, Cuman Cabrach and Prisoners Aid Committee. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Friday 6 April, 7.30pm. Admission 50p. Prisoners Aid Committee.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**NAC BENEFIT**, 6 April, 1979. Team 2 present 'Belisha Beacon', 7.30pm, in One Manning Theatre, University of London Union, Malet St., WC1. Entrance fee: £1.00 wages, 75p unwaged.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**DESIGNER** required to work for **Socialist Challenge**/FI Litho.  
Apply in writing to FI Litho, 328/9 Upper St, London N1

# PUBLIC SECTOR STRIKE:

TO SAY whether it was a victory or defeat you have to look at the original purpose of the action. It was the first round in a battle to establish a national minimum wage. In that sense of course it was a defeat.

When you look at the anger being expressed at Fisher's position of recommending acceptance, the call by the London NUPE Divisional Council for Fisher's resignation which is being echoed up and down the country, the membership do not see it as a victory.

However, that isn't to say the struggle was a total disaster. It was a defeat, but not a defeat of our ability to win, because we never engaged in full battle.

Sections of the union have learnt a lot out of this struggle. It has been the first experience of collective action by different public service workers — local government, health, ambulance workers — they've learnt a lot about selective action.

Selective action is very divisive — sections of the membership are engaged

in different types of struggle losing different types of money. As the strike goes on people who are on all-out action begin to feel that others are not doing all they should.

In Southwark, for example, they all went out on strike and then went back to selective action because they felt they were on their own.

In Westminster the dust went on all-out strike, waged a fight to get the rest of the branch out which was undermined by full-time officers on the scene, and the result was that they accepted a £200 back to work bonus and took no further part in the action.

Selectivity tends always to pick on the most organised to take the action and this has a long term effect. It was much more difficult to get the dust to strike this time round — back in November they were coming forward to the area committee, saying 'don't expect us to do all your fighting for you.'

Also there has been an increase in organisation coming out of the strike.

Women workers became much more involved, electing their own stewards, coming to the meetings, and wanting to be fully involved.

In London we began to create a tradition of holding London stewards rallies, which there's no provision for under rule at all.

If you look at the dust the experience of organisation in the past stands them well in this dispute — in Tower Hamlets it took only days for a joint stewards committee between the unions to be set up, though it had ceased to exist over the last four or five years.

The gains in this dispute in union organisation will stand us in good stead in the next.

## What steps were needed to win?

The ideal time to go into struggle was in November, when we could have had a united fight of sections in the private and public sector. The lorry drivers, for example, were fighting for a very similar fight to us.

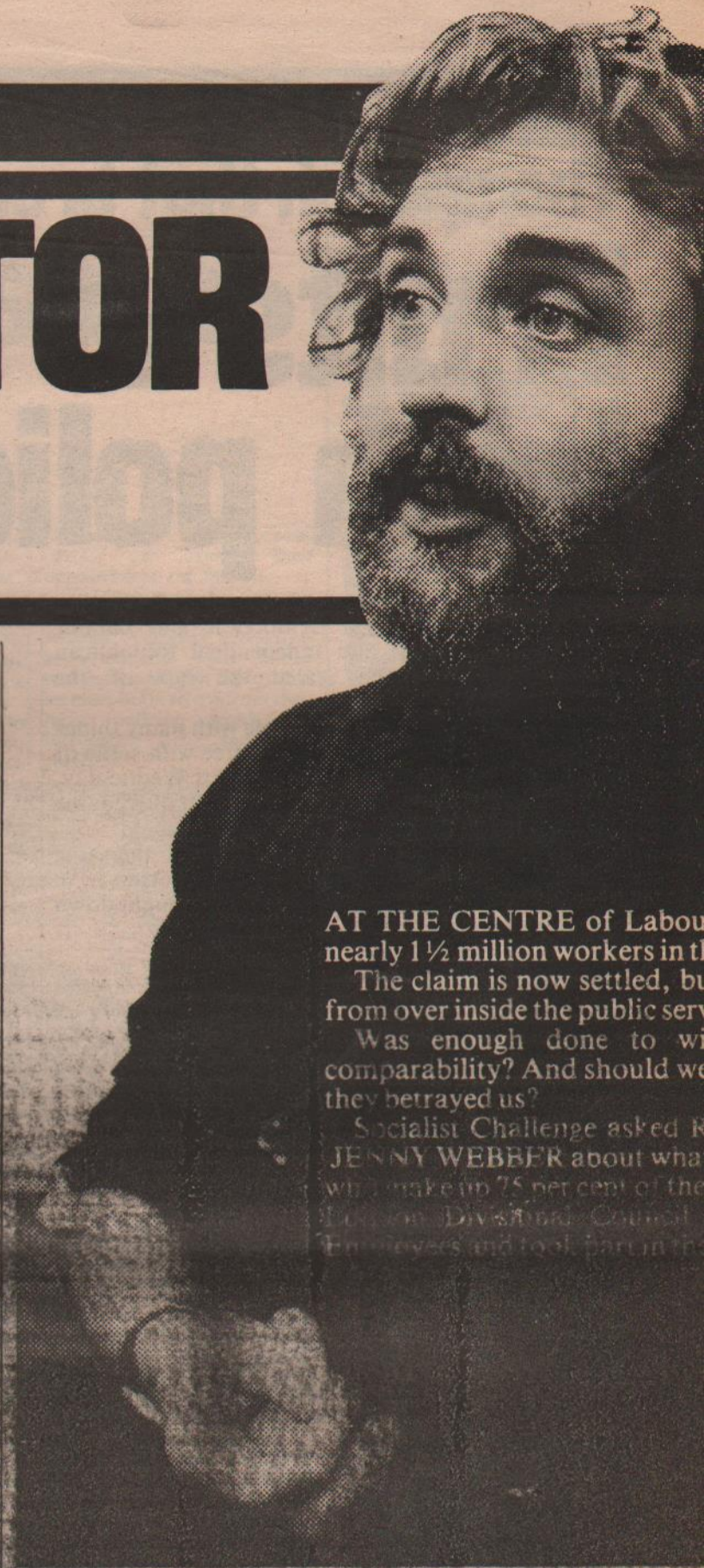
Second, an all out strike was needed. A public sector strike, except when you're talking of sections like the water, relies on the political impact of having 1 1/2 million workers mobilised and on the streets, demonstrating and picketing to win support. That could have isolated the government, and many of us fought for this against the leadership's strategy.

## Why didn't it happen?

Firstly, the union organisation in the public sector is weak. But local weaknesses were rapidly overcome within the course of the strike itself, and this was not the main problem.

In the absence of a national lead for all-out action by the union leadership, local organisation is not enough.

This was demonstrated in the stronger boroughs in London. They went into all-out action, but this was still selective in the national sense. The leadership was happy to let them go on all-out strike, so long as they remained isolated from other areas and boroughs.



AT THE CENTRE of Labour nearly 1 1/2 million workers in the

The claim is now settled, but from over inside the public service

Was enough done to win comparability? And should we they betrayed us?

Socialist Challenge asked RAY VARNES about what

JENNY WEBBER about what will make up 75 per cent of the

London Divisional Council Employees and Tool Partin

RAY VARNES, a member of

the eyes of the membership — by regional and city-wide strike committees, by divisional councils, etc.

But a lead will only come from the bodies if militants are providing political lead within them. There is organised left inside NUPE, capable co-ordinating the activity of militants within the shop stewards a



THE gang of four put in charge of the low pay battle — from left: Terry Mallinson, COHSE; Charlie Dommet, GMWU; Mick Martin, T&GWU; Ron Keating, NUPE.

## 'A lot of the women feel hoodwinked'

By Jenny Webber, NUPE

BEFORE the strike there was very poor union organisation amongst women in the schools in London. Everyone was in the union, because it's a closed shop, but we had one very big branch covering the whole of the Inner London Education Authority.

The branch secretary cannot possibly service over 8,000 members, branch meetings were irregular, and though there is a system of school representatives they do not act as stewards — and even where they do they are not protected, because they are not officially stewards.

In Tower Hamlets we began to build a stewards committee. Sometimes members turned up but it was quite an

off-putting body, partly because the male officials talked a lot and wouldn't let the women get a word in edgeways. Also it wasn't really doing anything.

The response to the strike amongst women in the schools was widespread anger with the union, because we had never been consulted. Often we are not even notified by the union about strike action, but by a grapevine, or by the school keepers or even head of the school.

I think that since we began having regular mass meetings this has been overcome. A lot of women are much more satisfied that they can turn up and say what they feel, be informed and discuss the problems.

Also, many women members do not see money as the main problem. As

part-timers, many women argued at the meetings that there was no point in getting a pay rise if half of our jobs went as a result.

Every kitchen I know of in Tower Hamlets is running at three women short as a result of 'natural wastage'. There has been a solid refusal by the women to do work study, because even though it's more money they know the older women will suffer through lost jobs.

Then there was a lack of faith in the union. They felt that the national officers were not serious about winning the claim, and that their loyalty to the Labour government was stronger than to their members.

The bad organisation and lack of consultation reinforced that view. But they came to the mass meetings during the strike — partly because they were angry with the union, partly to make sure it voted against a strike, partly just to find out what was going on.

One of the resolutions passed was for regular mass meetings every fortnight, and after the strike we voted to continue on a monthly basis. Another resolution passed was for a shop stewards committee — and whilst it's still not huge, there are many more attending than before.

There has been an upsurge in minor actions as a result — when one school hears what's happened in another they may decide to take a similar course of action, and that was never possible before.

As to the pay award, a lot of women are on part-time work — many 15 hours or under — and they do not get the one pound supplement pro-rata of the 9 per cent is nothing — a few pence. It seems that comparability will not consider part-time workers either.

There's a lot of anger at the union negotiators, and a lot of the women feel hoodwinked. We're 75 per cent of the union but they've forgotten about us.

## The lo

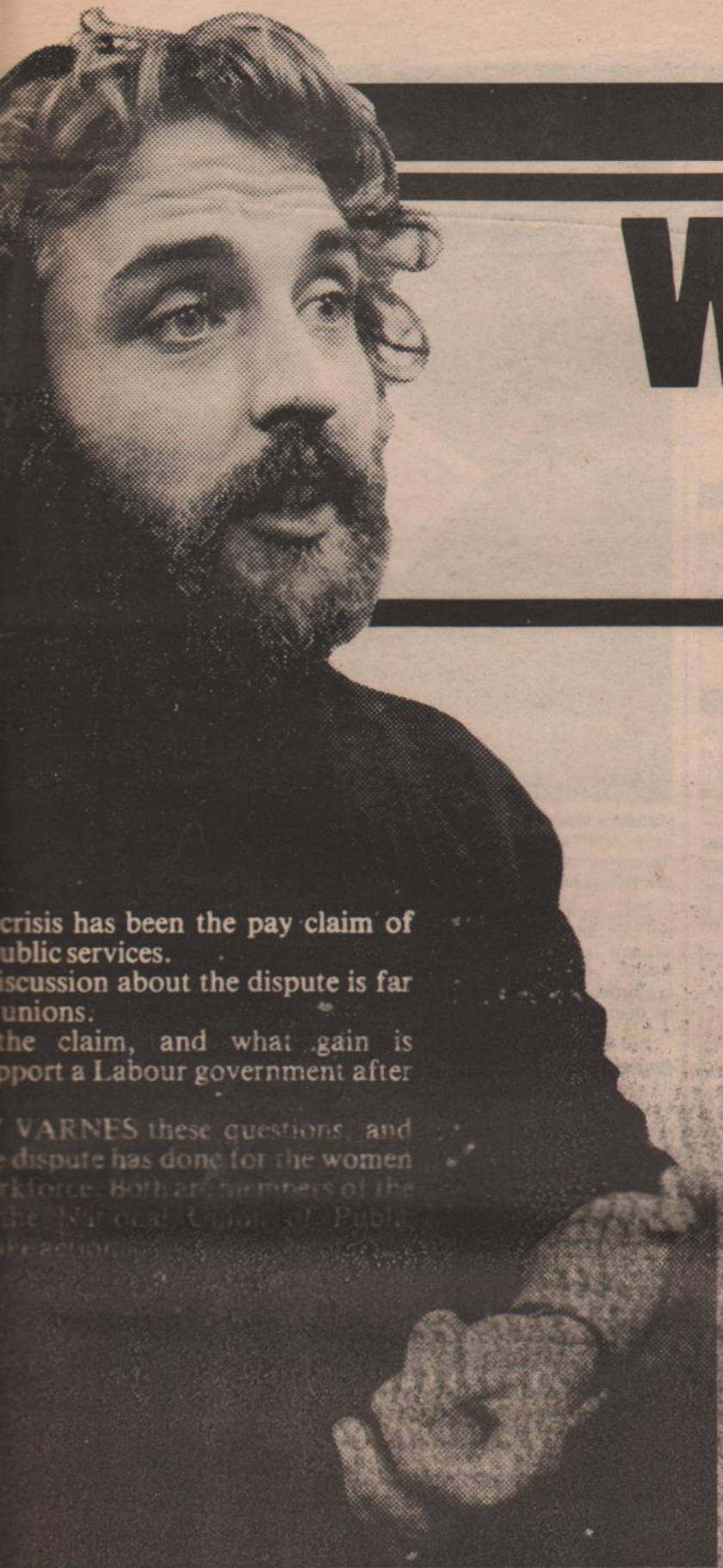
By Mary Allen

THE PUBLIC sector Standing Commission headed by industrial relations 'expert' Hugh Clegg, is not the dynamic new proposal it was made out to be, when it was used to sell a return to work. This body will examine low pay and compare it to private industry.

It is just one more in a long line of many such bodies that have surfaced over the past ten years.

Pay boards, boards of inquiry, a comparability studies — primary through the Civil Service Pay Research Unit — have played a very large part in determining public sector pay, a union attitudes to bargaining. The present Standing Commission has a history in the board set up by the Labour Government under the Prices and Incomes Act in 1966. When a six-month statutory pay freeze was imposed, the Pay Board played a decisive role in determining p





# WAS IT ALL IN VAIN?

crisis has been the pay claim of public services. Discussion about the dispute is far from over. The claim, and what gain is possible, support a Labour government after

VARNES these questions, and the dispute has done for the women workers. Both are members of the National Council of Public Service Workers.

London Divisional Council of NUPE. The union bodies. So if the Campaign for Action in NUPE or the Hospital Worker grouping were stronger, they could have given that call for all out action? Not exactly. We are talking about strong oppositions whose ideas could

win support within the official structures, the shop stewards organisations — in all the bodies representative of the members as a whole and which could have given that alternative lead because they were representative. The job of CAN is not to substitute itself for the union structure, but to fight in it to win an adequate strategy.

Even the limited intervention of the left into the London Divisional Council — winning the call for stewards rallies, for all-out national action, for rejecting the deal — shows the potential.

Despite the willingness to fight on the part of the membership — and the action taken escalated right up until the ballot — the struggle remained sectoralised as long as we did not answer the political issues faced by the membership.

The union leadership couldn't answer these problems because when it comes to the crunch and the life of the government is put on the line, they are forced to concede despite their 'alternative policies'. They cannot see an alternative to the Labour government coming out of struggles by working class people.

That's why they are forced to accept the framework of the Concordat, and we started getting separate directives from the four union leaders on picketing, emergency services, etc.

To save the Labour government, Fisher pleaded for us to accept the deal, and was unwilling to continue any action in a general election situation.

Are you saying that it was necessary to bring down the Labour government?

We would not be the ones bringing it down if it did fall. If they put themselves on the line over wages it's not our fault.

The national minimum wage if adopted by the Labour government would be one of the policies that could keep them in office.

How do you see the fight for a national minimum wage going forward?

The membership do not grasp the full implications of the Concordat yet. But they are fighting the individual manifestations of it. For example, the London Divisional Council threw out the code of picketing in the health service.

We need to show how these are linked together within the Concordat, and get it rejected by union

conferences.

The other danger is that in accepting the framework set up by comparability, we will be diverted from our strategy of a national minimum wage. We don't need comparability with anybody, what we need is a national minimum wage which is then indexed against inflation.

The fact that the government rejects a minimum wage and says OK to comparability suggests to me that whatever the boards come up with it will be a con.

The danger is that we will get pulled into struggles in August and April to get the full amount under comparability, which will undermine the fight in November of next year for a national minimum wage. You can't wage a national fight three times a year.

So how about developing union organisation, and this organised opposition?

They obviously go hand in hand. The danger is that demoralisation will set in over the defeat amongst many union activists.

They know they are sold out, and unless you show them that it's possible to wage a fight to remove those who have sold out — not avoid them or by-pass them but remove them — then activists retreat into localism or become demoralised, and you find the gains in union organisation can evaporate.

There's another example of this if we look at the debate in our union over disaffiliation.

When the Labour government denies even the most elementary right to a decent minimum wage, some of the membership want to turn their backs on the Labour Party, to run away from politics, to disaffiliate.

Unless they see a way of fighting the Labour government by the union fighting within the Labour Party, then in the event of a sell-out the members' demoralisation results in abstentionism.

Fisher is not prepared to wage a serious fight in the Labour Party — he wants to call off the action rather than use our strike to further the fight in the Labour Party. We play into his hands if we support disaffiliation, because he can pose as the one with the answers.



75 per cent of public service workers are women.

## ng, sordid history of comparability

settlements. Until 1970, the Prices and Incomes Board not only attempted to scrutinise and control unions' claims and actual settlements, but also review wages structure, and methods of pay bargaining.

A pay board continued under the Tory Government, but this time it was to administer the statutory wage controls. However, the role of this board broadened, as it was called upon to arbitrate on pay anomalies which arose as a result of the 1972 wage freeze.

Trade unions representing several groups of public sector workers referred claims to the Pay Board in the hope that pay relativities wiped out by the freeze on wages could be re-established.

The Pay Board was eventually abolished by the Labour Government when it ended the statutory incomes policy.

Under both the Tory and Labour governments, the pay boards have marked important developments — they have established a centralised bargaining procedure, and, through them, the concept of productivity deals has been introduced wholesale into the public sector, under the guise of solving the problems of low pay.

Another feature of the early 1970s was the use of courts of inquiry. These were set up — almost without exception — as 'independent' arbiters into industrial disputes.

The continuing deterioration of local government manual workers' pay is just one testimony about how useless recommendations from these courts were. It was only in 1975 when the minimum wage of £30 was introduced that the pay of local government workers improved somewhat.

The notion of comparability has run through all pay board and inquiry reports. This idea, in one form or another, has traditionally dominated

wage bargaining. Before incomes policy, there was no widespread challenge to pay differences between the public and private sector. The current demands for such comparisons have arisen because pay policy is more rigidly enforced in the public sector.

Wage increases won by organised workers in the private sector have set the 'going rate' for the rest of industry. The boards and inquiries have been concerned with comparisons between groups of public sector workers themselves — on a job-for-job or skill-for-skill basis.

The sophisticated methods of Pay Research have been used since 1975 to calculate industrial/civil service pay. Since 1969 these workers have been trying to establish comparisons with outside industry. After a pay board report and arbitration, the industrial workers switched to the pay research method. But as the civil service dispute shows today this method does not

guarantee payment of wages in line with the cost of living, let alone an adequate wage.

The pay deal awarded to the Fire Brigades Union broke from traditional pay comparisons. But this stemmed from one prime reason: pay comparisons could not be made. Firemen established comparisons with manual workers' wages, but that will not guarantee protection against inflation.

'Special case' arguments have been used by unions to force increases above incomes policy. But this argument has also been used to divide workers in struggle and, more recently, in the Concordat, to open the door to the idea of compensatory payments for the withdrawal of the right to strike.

Pay comparisons and arbitration are part of a whole history of wage restraint. They offer no way forward for securing a living wage. A minimum wage index-linked to rises in living costs is the only way that workers' pay can be

protected. But this gain can only be achieved through struggle.

If one lesson can be drawn on the basis of this history, it is that when workers resign their right to determine their wage settlements they will end up with minimal increases. Public sector workers are now finding that their increases will do no more than take their standard of living to 1974 levels.

It's not surprising, therefore, that the trend is to extend these pay boards. Already teachers have been told to refer their claim to the Standing Commission through 'this body' was never established to deal with this particular group of workers.

The Standing Commission smacks a bit too much of the idea of a Pay Board. With a Tory Government in power, the machinery of the early '70s could be rolled out yet again. But this time it will be that much easier thanks to Labour's establishment of the Standing Commission.

# Silicon chips: Facing up to the job gobblers

**'THOSE directly affected by technological change must be assured that they will be among the beneficiaries', states the TUC-government Concordat.**

**In preparation for Socialist Challenge's trade union conference, JONATHAN SILBERMAN examines what this assurance is worth, how silicon chips are being used to digest and control jobs, and the impact on women's employment.**

AS the trade union and labour leaders are well aware, the introduction of the new technology has already met with some resistance from the workers' movement.

Post Office engineers took strike action last year to back their demand for a 35-hour week. In the newspaper industry, trade unionists have at least slowed down the introduction of the new technology.

And throughout society there is a growing concern about the social consequences of the new industrial revolution.

But the response of Callaghan, Murray and Co. to the prospect of millions of unemployed over the coming ten years has been...to go along with it!

The government has been at pains to point out that it has 'saved' around 300,000 jobs through its various subsidies, training schemes and the like.

But these are little more than cosmetics, when the Concordat's central message is 'the need to increase productivity — of both capital and labour'.

'Minister for Unemployment' Albert Booth put it more bluntly. 'As with computers, micro-electronic technology can often replace people. Why in such circumstances should the government promote applications of it?' he asked.

'If our competitors boost productivity and reduce costs by employing new techniques,' Booth explained, 'then we have no option.'

Needless to say, the criteria of productivity and profitability play completely into the hands of the employers.

The Concordat would have us believe otherwise. 'Among the benefits will be shorter working hours, improved conditions of work and better education. But those directly affected by technological change must be assured that they will be among the beneficiaries.'

What are these assurances worth? At last year's TUC, Congress adopted policy for the 35-hour week. But the General Council gave no support whatever to the Ford workers, the public sector manual workers and others who have tried to achieve it. As long ago as 1972 the TUC adopted policy of nationalisation of the computer industry — another resolution to find its way into the dustbin.

As for 'better education', the Labour government has presided over huge cuts in schools.

The Concordat claims

'concern', but the Labour government is really pouring massive finance into developing the new technology. By December last year, the government had committed £400 million — predominantly to private industry — to develop or use the chips. And the TUC General Council has gone along with it.

If genuine concern existed about the social effects of the new technology then there would be TUC measures to deal with the problem of mass unemployment.

Firms declaring redundancies or threatening massive job loss through these new gadgets should not be given hand-outs, but nationalised without compensation. By placing them under workers' control, hours could be cut to save jobs. The Lucas plan has shown how socially useful products could take the place of wasteful production for profit.

This could be combined, for instance, with a crash programme of house construction to give jobs to the hundreds of thousands of unemployed building workers.

Instead of the Concordat's green light to capitalist rationalisation, a workers' plan is needed to beat the crisis based on promoting mass action around such socialist policies. Action now on the 35-hour week — including the call for government action — could be just the springboard needed.

IT TAKES an Albert Booth to claim that the new technology will have little effect on unemployment. The trend is towards the elimination of jobs within industry as a whole, including the technology-producing industries.

Writing in *Scientific American*, W.C. Hotton explains that at IBM: 'The computer itself can prepare the master

## Women in the firing line

\* TWO out of every five working women in Britain are in clerical or secretarial jobs.

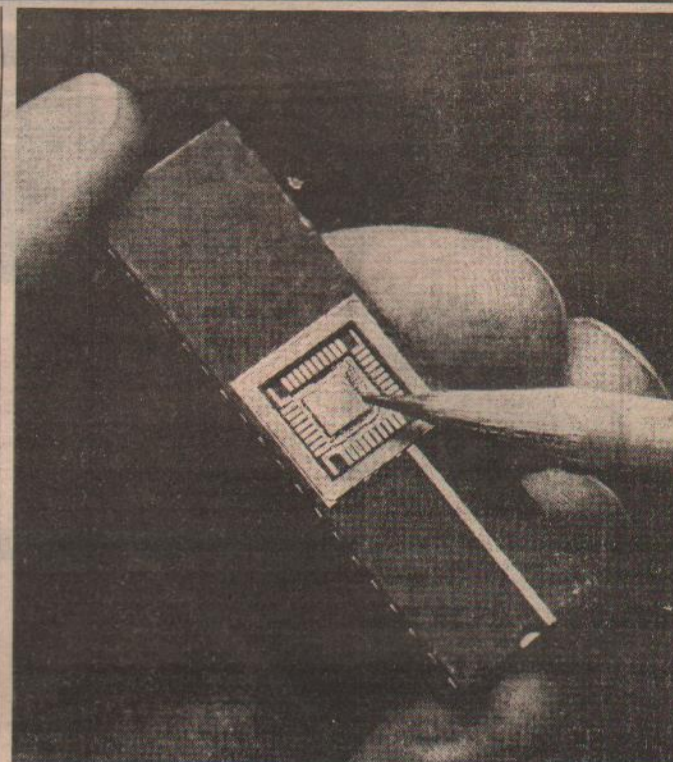
\* Ninety-eight per cent of secretaries and typists are women.

\* Word processors — probably the most spectacular example of the new technology — allow one typist to do the work of four.

Set these three sets of



BOTH cartoons are taken from Chris Harman's pamphlet on New Technology and Socialism.



statistics side by side and it is only too obvious why the 'micro revolution' spells danger for women.

This need not necessarily be the case. Ideally the position of women in the labour market would mean that a whole multitude of skilled jobs would be open to them.

But that is not how capitalist society functions. The majority of women in this country are in badly paid, semi-skilled or unskilled occupations.

Now, thanks to the way new technology is to be used, the major job area available to women faces a massive run-down.

The banking industry — another field of relatively high employment for women — is another example. Note the following comment from Lloyds' 1978 annual report:

'Generally machines are going to have to do much of the work. Already the United Kingdom clearing banks computer systems process up to twenty million cheques a day... the revolution that has taken place in the clearing of cheques will be repeated on the counter.'

'It is our job to serve our customers with the right people and the right machines in the right combination... an on-line Cashpoint system... is better than the most charming cashier at the far end of the queue.'

It is 'better' for the directors of Lloyds bank, it is not better for the 'charming cashiers' who last year ensured that Lloyds had a pre-tax profit of £182 million.

Will that profit, and the new technology, be used to cut the working week of the 'charming cashier'?

No, because even the vast profits Lloyds made last year are, in the words of its chairperson Jeremy Morse, 'too low and not sufficient'.

The ability of women in particular to fight for the new technology to be used for their benefit is restricted because of their relative lack of unionisation.

Often this itself flows from the nature of the work women find themselves in, and the lack of enthusiasm from union leaderships to recruit seriously in such areas as secretarial services.

Nevertheless, the fact that the percentage of women workers who join trade unions is half that for the unionisation of male workers is one more reason why women face the biggest threat from a new technology controlled by the bosses, for the bosses.

★ A conference on Women and the New Technology is to be held shortly. Information from: Helen Deas, 12 Randolph Road, London W9.

## And now for the alternative

drawings that will be employed to define the circuit pattern on the silicon.

'Other computers supervise the fabrication process and still another one tests the completed chips, automatically marking the defective ones.'

Similar examples exist within 'traditional' industry. The giant car firm Fiat, for instance, has robotic welders to

produce the new model, the Ritno.

In an excellent pamphlet produced by the Socialist Workers Party, Chris Harman shows the enormous consequences of technology on employment. He quotes a Fleet Street worker who uses a word processor: 'All the natural breaks you get using a typewriter — when you change paper, shift the margin, move from one job to another — disappear since the word processor does all these things for you at very high speed... The mental effort is more repetitive and more continuous. 'You get the feeling you are being forced to exert yourself ever more by the pace of the machine.'

And consider the consequences of IBM's latest 'electronic switchboard 3750', drawn to our attention by the French metal workers union, the FGM. It controls all phone calls, decodes phone numbers called to show the list of correspondents outside the firm, and it can control the

speed of work, check work productivity and follow up the movements of the staff.

'Today, any clerk — or perhaps shop steward — may be followed step by step within the firm...'

Mike Cooley and the Lucas Aerospace stewards have shown, however, that it is possible to forge elements of an alternative technology corresponding to the needs of workers.

They have put forward proposals for alternative sources of energy, alternative transport systems and so on. They have also tried to counter the tendency where techniques are designed 'in such a fashion as to objectivise human skill, and thereby diminish or totally replace the human being'.

To counter this drive to 'eliminate all that vast human knowledge', the Lucas Aerospace workers have proposed 'telechiric' devices (literally 'hands at a distance'). These machines are labour-saving, of course, but at the same time they allow workers' skills to be

developed through the work process in conditions of complete safety.

In a vivid way, the Lucas workers have shown us that there's an alternative to two common positions: a complete opposition to new technology or acceptance of the new technology while struggling to win certain concessions at the level of control.

That alternative is workers' control over an alternative technology.

THE following material was particularly helpful in the production of this page:

**Computer Technology and Employment**, papers from a national conference organised by AUEW (TASS) and now produced as a book published by NCC.

**The Future of Employment in Engineering and Manufacturing**, Lucas Aerospace Combine Shop Stewards Committee, CAITS 1979.

**New Technology and Socialism**, Chris Harman, SWP, 1979.



# INTERNATIONAL

## Iranian referendum: a foregone conclusion

THE real winners in last week's Iranian referendum would have been the opinion pollsters — if they had such a thing in an 'Islamic Republic'.

The overwhelming vote of approval for Ayatollah Khomeini's regime was utterly predictable. On this page we ask why.

By our Foreign Staff

IT WAS a foregone conclusion. Faced with a choice between the monarchy and an Islamic Republic — and that was all the choice there was — it was inevitable which way the Iranian people would go.

But inevitability was not good enough for Ayatollah Khomeini and his entourage. To make doubly sure they issued coloured voting cards — green, the colour of Islam, for yes; red, the colour of danger, for no.

In every polling station voting was overseen by religious leaders. One half of the coloured card had to be put in the ballot box, the other half discarded in a bin. This was done openly, with no pretence at a secret ballot.

In some places it is reported that mullahs and electoral officials were telling voters to put the green card in the ballot box and the red one in the bin.

In many areas there was a low turnout, since people could hardly see the point of voting.

The most dramatic boycott came in the oppressed nationalities, where the people have already discovered what an 'Islamic Republic' means in practice, with armed repression against the national movements in Kurdistan and Turkestan.

In those areas where there was a high turnout, this should not be taken to mean that the new regime's problems are over. The trouble with an undemocratic referendum is that it still leaves everyone guessing as to what the masses actually think.

The point is that, having struggled for months with terrible loss of life to overthrow the Shah, no-one could vote for his return now.

Most of the political parties called for a boycott — of a more or less active character. An exception was the pro-Moscow Tudeh Party, which supported the Islamic Republic — which is why the Morning Star has had such sparse coverage of the referendum.

Both the Mujahedeen and



Prime Minister Bazarjan — elected by no-one.

the Fedayeen guerilla organisations came out against the referendum, though the former still maintained that they were in favour of an Islamic Republic.

The Fedayeen announced that they were in favour of immediate elections to a constituent assembly. The outstanding problem is their continued policy of 'critical support' for Prime Minister Bazarjan and the religious hierarchy.

Constituent assembly elections — immediate, secret and free — are an infinitely more democratic way of deciding what the new constitution should be.

The Iranian Socialist

Workers Party (HKS) has combined its agitation for a boycott of the referendum and elections to a constituent assembly with a campaign in defence of the oppressed nationalities. As we explain elsewhere on this page their problems can only be democratically resolved by the free exercise of self-determination.

In opposition to the Islamic Republic — which has meant successive attacks on women, the nationalities, and the workers movement — the HKS raised the demand for a workers' and peasants' government, the only government capable of meeting the needs of the masses.

## Turkestan — a permanent revolution

By Richard Carver

'WHAT kind of Islam is this?' This appeal from a nurse in Gonbad-e Qabus just about sums up the attitude of the Turkoman population to the Ayatollah Khomeini's referendum on his Islamic Republic.

The nurse was interviewed by phone by a Reuter's correspondent. She said that hospitals were refusing to admit Turkomans wounded in the fighting with Khomeini supporters and the army. She was one of a small number trying to provide treatment. But, 'We have no medicines, no blood, nothing, please help.'

The fighting broke out on 26 March after several weeks of tension and sporadic clashes between Khomeini's Islamic Revolutionary Guard and the local population.

It seems that the previous evening a Khomeini militia member had tried to arrest a Turkoman cigarette seller. One of the cigarette seller's relatives saw the incident and tried to intervene but was shot dead.

When Turkomans gathered at their cultural centre the following day to discuss the incident they were fired upon. But they had held onto their guns after the insurrection and were soon returning fire.

Early reports suggested that the Fedayeen guerillas — who still give 'critical support' to the Bazarjan government — were fighting on the side of the local people. But they have since denied this.

On the other side the army has been put on alert but says it has not taken part in the fighting. But reports from Gonbad say that Turkoman militias have already confronted and disarmed three lorryloads of soldiers.

Like other oppressed nationalities in the Iranian state the Turkomans are demanding autonomy from the central government. In this North eastern region, up near the Soviet border, the national and agrarian questions are closely bound together.

Under the 1963 'land reform' the Royal Family seized large tracts of the Turkoman peasants' fertile land to distribute among its high-ranking servants and hangers-on. Much of the land was subsequently resold and farmed by absentee landlords.

The Turkomans have not renounced their claim to the land and the central government has refused to upset landlord interests by agreeing to the peasants' demands.

The government's plan to send the Ayatollah Taleghani to Gonbad to sort out the rebels is therefore hopelessly optimistic.

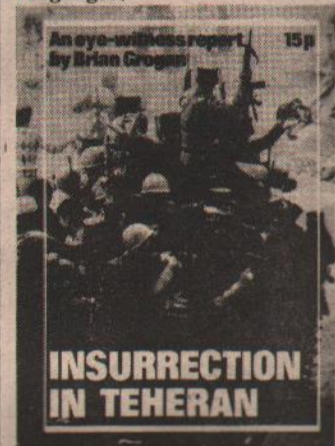
Taleghani has found himself cast, probably reluctantly, in the role of the government's troubleshooter in the nationalities.

It was he who formulated the ceasefire proposals in the Kurdish capital of Sanandaj a fortnight ago. These included a limited autonomy and greater use of the Kurdish language.

This was enough to stop the fighting but it will not satisfy either the rank and file Kurdish militias or the mass of the population, who are determined that it should be they who determine what relation Kurdistan has to Iran.

In his speech in Sanandaj, Taleghani made it clear that he did not accept this idea. The Kurds, though generally not advocates of total separation, seem adamant on the principle of self-determination.

The central government sees the stop-gap Sanandaj formula as a model for its nationalities policy — a sure sign that that policy must fail. On the eve of the referendum assistant Prime Minister Amir Entezam announced that Kurds, Turkomans, Baluchis and other groups would be free to teach and broadcast in their own languages.



NOW into its second impression — Insurrection in Tehran, an eyewitness report by Brian Grogan. 15p plus postage from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XQ.

But the more significant development the same day was a report of new national unrest among the Baluchis.

In all the oppressed nationalities the referendum is a dead letter — partly because they are in a continuous state of semi-insurrection, but also because the vote offers no solution to their problems.

A Shi'a 'Islamic Republic' has no future among the minority religious sects which predominate in the oppressed nationalities. Nor does it meet the problem of organising sovereign assemblies in each nation — the only way of giving substance to the idea of self-determination.

After the referendum the old army of the Pahlavi state will still be intact. That problem is better resolved by armed struggle on the streets!

And, as the Turkomans are showing, the referendum has no answer to the mass demand to destroy the power of the landlords and hand over the land to those who till it.

In other words, different groups of the oppressed population — women, national and religious minorities, peasants, and factory and oil workers — are discovering that within the present, capitalist state there will be no satisfaction for even their most minimal demands.

## New Iranian solidarity campaign

By Steve Potter

'WE are going to Iran to express our solidarity with our sisters fighting for their liberation. We will come back to Britain to tell the women's movement and the whole labour movement about their struggle.'

This was the message that Farideh, a member of the newly formed Iran Women's Solidarity Group, brought to a delegate conference on Iran last weekend, called by the Committee Against Repression in Iran.

The conference later voted to set up a new organisation — the Campaign for Solidarity with Iran.

The delegation got an enthusiastic response from the 80 delegates and observers. Another Iranian woman drew the attention of the women's

movement to a conference on Women in Iran on Saturday 12 May in London.

After hearing representatives of the Liverpool Port Shop Stewards Committee on the experience of building international solidarity campaigns in the British labour movement, the conference went on to discuss action.

Top priority for delegates was support for the women's delegation. They also decided

on the need for a similar delegation from the labour movement. This would be the focal point of a labour movement conference on Iran.

Discussion arose about the difficulties of taking solidarity into the labour movement. All agreed that the solidarity campaign had to get the truth out on Iran to counter the lies in the Western press.

But a successful resolution moved by the Socialist Workers

Party tended to be pessimistic about the degree to which labour and student movement organisations could be involved.

Steve Archer from the International Marxist Group disagreed, pointing out the fact that there were many in the labour movement who both applauded the overthrow of the Shah and were willing to give active support to current struggles.



Women's delegation will express solidarity with Iranian women's struggle

Intercontinental Press combined with Inprecor

'STEELWORKERS march on Paris'. The struggle in the French steel industry is again the featured story in the new Intercontinental Press/Inprecor (Vol 17, No 12). Other articles include an analysis of the China-Vietnam conflict by Pierre Rousset and a discussion of the French and Italian Communist Party congresses by Livio Maitan.

Single copies are 30p. Subscriptions are £9 for one year, £5 for six months or £2.50 for an introductory offer of 10 issues. Write now to Intercontinental Press/Inprecor, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Cheques payable to Intercontinental Press.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF KURDISH STRUGGLE IN IRAN

Speakers: From Kurdistan and H. Hamza from the Iranian Socialist Workers Party

Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London NW1. Monday, 9 April, 6.30pm.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Against nationalist solutions

# Forge unity in steel

JOB in the steel industry are being cut back all over Europe.

One forecast predicts that the total steel workforce in the Common Market countries could fall to 580,000 in 1980, compared with 751,000 in 1973.

By Martin Meteyard

The steel crisis reflects both the effects of the economic recession and the impact of new technology. But its outcome is not being left to chance.

On the contrary, the EEC's industrial commission, headed by Viscount Etienne Davignon, is vigorously overseeing the whole process to make sure that cutbacks go ahead on schedule.

Workers in every steel-producing Common Market country are feeling the pinch. In Britain, for example, the last eighteen months have seen the closure of plants in Hartlepool, East Moors (bang in the middle of Jim Callaghan's Cardiff constituency), Ebbw Vale, and Shelton. Next on the list are Bilston and Corby.

In France, where 30,000 jobs have already been lost since 1972, the government is trying to make a further 20,000 steelworkers in Lorraine and the North redundant by next year.

But there the similarity ends.

In France the reaction of the workers has led to some of the biggest class battles since 1968.

Employers' offices and police stations have been stormed, motorways and railway lines occupied, and whole towns taken over for several hours during massive general strikes.

On 23 March more than 100,000 workers converged on Paris to demand a halt to all lay-offs and an immediate 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

In Britain, however, the general secretary of the Iron & Steel Trades Confederation, Bill Sirs, responded to recent calls for all-out national strike action to save the jobs at Bilston by saying:

'I would always hesitate to embark on strike action. I am against strikes generally, and if they can be avoided they should be.'

That kind of talk is music to the ears of Viscount Davignon and his EEC cronies, especially when it is accompanied by the instant nationalist solutions of the Communist Party.

In Britain CP shop stewards have initiated a campaign in Ford to make the company use more British steel. The *Morning Star* (27 March) favourably quoted the comments of Transport & General Workers Union national organiser Ron Todd:

'We are posing questions about the sources of steels used in the car industry in order to defend our British industries where thousands of jobs are being lost.'

The same line has been adopted by the Communist Party in France. Having organised practically no solidarity with the recent massive strike of the German steelworkers, they are now parading with banners bearing slogans such as 'No to a German Europe' and '1870, 1914, 1940 — that's enough'.

In the name of national independence, the Communist mayor of Longwy has issued a municipal decree 'prohibiting



STEEL against steel. Paris cops confronted the 100,000 workers who marched against steel lay-offs on 23 March.

the transport of iron ore and steel products from abroad' through the territory of the town.

But nationalist solutions are no answer to what is an international crisis of the steel industry. They merely prevent workers from organising a unified offensive against the internationally co-ordinated attempts of the employers to rationalise the industry through the Davignon Plan.

Not just the need but the possibility of such unified action has been shown by the common demand raised in each struggle: for a 35-hour week to share available work and stop redundancies.

Already some steps have been taken. The geographic situation of the northern part of Lorraine, where the 'national' borders of France, Belgium and Luxembourg come together, has brought

home to many workers that, whichever side of the border they live on, they are being forced to bear the same costs of the same economic crisis.

This has led to the formation of a 'three borders committee' of trade unionists from these countries.

Another promising sign was a successful public meeting in Luxembourg on 23 February addressed by the former editor of the German steelworkers

union paper *Metall*, Jakob Moneta, and jointly sponsored by the Belgian, Luxembourg, German and French sections of the Fourth International.

The European elections in June offer a possibility to generalise such a workers' solution in opposition both to the employers' attempt to stabilise multinational capitalist institutions and to the narrow chauvinist response of the CP and Labour lefts.

# Make Zimbabwe an issue

By Richard Carver

BISHOP Muzorewa's effusive welcome for the Tory victory in the House of Commons was a reminder of something that was already obvious — that Zimbabwe would be an issue in this election.

Muzorewa is a minister in the 'internal settlement' government of Ian Smith, which will itself be contesting elections — if the meaning of the word can be stretched that far — on or around 20 April. This statement is a predictable demonstration of where white racist sympathies will be in the British general election.

Even before the vote of confidence Muzorewa had written to Shadow Foreign Secretary Francis Pym inviting him to monitor the 20 April elections 'in view of your personal interest and that of your Party in solving the protracted problems which have faced this country over the past 14 years.'

Despite attaching 'enormous importance to this election and I wish I could accept your invitation', Pym had to refuse.

'However, as you will know, Mrs Thatcher will soon be

appointing a team of observers to represent the Conservative Party and I am confident that they will be able to form a balanced judgement on the election.'

Traditionally Tory governments have given unequivocal backing to the white settler regime. On the face of it Pym's reply to Muzorewa is in the same spirit, but there are reasons for thinking that official Tory support for Smith is less whole-hearted these days.

The problem for the Tories — as on so many other issues — is that the Labour government has so effectively done their job for them.

Tory spokespeople will always draw back from anything which might associate them with 'terrorists' but the more sane among them realise that the Anglo-American proposals for Zimbabwe are the best guarantee of British business interests in the region.

So it is worth going back to see what the 'Owen-Young' plan, published as a Labour government White Paper in September 1977, actually says.

The White Paper makes



Speaking: the Rev. Sithole, a member of Ian Smith's transitional government. Yawning: Ian Smith.

a number of quite specific proposals.

- The destruction of the liberation army and its replacement by 'a new Zimbabwe National Army'.

- The retention of the existing police, judiciary and civil service, even beyond the 'transitional' period.

- The plan 'would permit the government of Zimbabwe to introduce measures of land reform' but subject to

'protection from deprivation of property'. The two points are mutually contradictory — the obvious intention being that the white 5 per cent should hold on to its fertile 50 per cent of farming land.

- 20 per cent of parliamentary seats will be 'specially elected' to represent 'minority communities'. The minority, of course, is white. It is also not 20 per cent!

- Western powers will launch a 'Zimbabwe Development

Fund' to bolster the economy of the new country. This is not, however, unbridled altruism — the investment will only be forthcoming if the transition takes place 'without disruption of the economy' and 'the establishment and continued operation of the Fund are predicated upon the acceptance and implementation of the terms of the settlement as a whole.' There is a not very polite word for that!

- Finally, the Labour government proposes a 'transition' period in which Britain takes back colonial power through a Resident Commissioner, who will command the army. But 'the primary responsibility for the maintenance of law and order' will be with the existing police force.

Most ominously the White Paper provides for a United Nations Zimbabwe force to implement the other proposals in the plan. The core of such a force would undoubtedly be British troops.

No wonder the Tories have problems differentiating themselves from the government position.

Another enthusiastic supporter of the Anglo-American plan is Liberal leader David Steel. He recently went on an 'unofficial' trip to southern Africa and came back with a superficially sympathetic appreciation of what was going on.

Viewers of David Frost's celebrated 'Global Village' programme on Zimbabwe will remember that Steel's was the most radical voice there. But all he actually said, when it came down to it, was that no solution was possible without the participation of black leaders more representative than Bishop Muzorewa.

And how is Britain to make sure that the outcome is acceptable? He didn't tell Frost, but Steel's position is that troops should be sent.

His visit was undoubtedly arranged in close contact with the Foreign Office and government. Steel is a stalking horse — what he says today the Labour leadership will say tomorrow.

For the people of Zimbabwe that is very, very dangerous. And that is why we too will be making Zimbabwe an issue in this election.

# Zionism, war and peace

By Ike Nahem

ZIONISM as a modern political movement was founded in the late nineteenth century by Theodore Herzl. Herzl put forward the idea that the bitter anti-semitism that plagued European Jews could be escaped by establishing an all-Jewish state in Palestine.

In order to gain access to Palestine, the Zionists pursued a consistent policy of trying to make deals with the imperialist powers who ruled Palestine at that time — namely Turkey, and then later Great Britain.

Accordingly, in the early 1900s Herzl courted mainly the Sultan of Turkey and the German Kaiser. Herzl's proposal to Turkey was to guarantee them an imperialist foothold in the Middle East. In his book, *The Jewish State*, Herzl explained:

'If his Majesty the Sultan were to give us Palestine... we would form there a part of a wall of defence of Europe in Asia, an outpost of civilisation against barbarism.'

Despite all of his promises to the Sultan, Herzl failed to get a charter from Turkey. The Zionists then turned to the British who were emerging from World War I as the new imperialist rulers of the Middle East. In 1917, the British issued the Balfour Declaration, which announced support for establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

Sir Ronald Storrs, the first civil governor of Jerusalem under British rule, summed up the thinking of the British imperialists. He predicted that massive Jewish emigration to Palestine could create 'a little Jewish Ulster in a sea of potentially hostile Arabism'.

Zionism was not a movement for national liberation but a movement based upon collaborating with the imperialists. Unlike 'classical colonialism' Zionism aimed to create a colonial-settler state.

Such a state would not be based solely upon exploiting the labour and resources of the colonised country. The Zionists instead planned totally to remove the native population — in this case the Palestinian Arabs — and replace them with Jewish settlers.

In 1940, Joseph Weitz, the head of the Jewish Agency's Colonisation Department in Palestine, explained the Zionist strategy.

'Between ourselves it must be clear that there is no room for both people together in this country... The only solution is Palestine, at least western Palestine, without Arabs... and there is no other way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighbouring countries; to transfer all of them; not one village, not one tribe should be left... There is no other way out.'

It is a bitter historic irony that at the same time as the Nazis were carrying out the policy of a 'Germany Without Jews' the Zionists were carrying out a similar policy against the Palestinian Arabs.

Zionism claimed few adherents among Jews until the 1930s and the rise of fascism. Most Jews saw Zionism as a utopian dream that based its appeal on the notion that anti-semitism was an inevitable and permanent part of modern civilisation.

Many poor working class Jews rejected this idea and were thus much more attracted to revolutionary socialism than to Zionism.

As fascism triumphed in Germany, many Jews throughout Western Europe first tried to emigrate to the United States. Blinded by their search for a 'holy land' in Palestine, the American Zionists allied themselves with President Franklin Roosevelt in refusing to amend immigration laws so that the persecuted Jews could enter the United States.

The American Zionists pinned

THE 'peace treaty' between Israel and Egypt has again focused attention on the Middle East.

Many people in the labour movement welcome the treaty because they see the state of Israel as the Jewish people's safeguard against anti-semitism. They are puzzled at why revolutionary socialists — who fight against racism in any form — nevertheless oppose Zionism.

In the first of our series of socialist education articles we therefore look at why we support the struggle of the Palestinian and Arab people against the Israeli state.



their hopes on the idea that if the doors of the United States were closed to the Jewish immigrants, then the Nazi persecution would spur the movement to resettle Jews in Palestine.

Immediately after World War II, an upsurge in the Arab revolution helped to convince Washington of the advantage in supporting the Zionists' call for the formation of the state of Israel.

To accommodate the Zionists, the United Nations passed a resolution in November 1947 that divided Palestine into two parts — a Jewish state and a Palestinian Arab state. The Palestinian Arabs, who were the majority, strongly objected to this partition.

Even after the post-World War II Jewish immigration, the Palestinians still constituted two-thirds of the population, including one-half of the population in the part of Palestine that was assigned to the Zionists. In addition, at the time of the partition Palestinians farmed three-fifths of the fertile land.

The outbreak of the so-called Israeli war for independence on 15 May 1948, led to another defeat for the Palestinians. This war provided the Zionists with the pretext they were seeking to expel the Palestinian Arabs from all Palestine.

Even before the outbreak of this war, the Zionists were cooking up plans to expel the Palestinian Arabs. On 9 April 1948, an entire month before the outbreak of the war, the Zionist terrorist group called Irgun massacred over 250 unarmed men, women, and children at the village of Deir Yassin.

The Irgun leader at Deir Yassin was Menachem Begin — now Israeli Prime Minister.

Zionist threats and brutal attacks, combined with the onset of the 1948 war, forced hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs to flee their homeland.

Israel emerged victorious from the war. The Zionists took advantage of their strength to annex additional land. In 1949, King Abdullah of Jordan made a secret deal with Israeli

Premier David Ben-Gurion. They agreed to carve up and divide the Palestinian half-state that had been established by the 1947 UN resolution.

These secret deals were carried out without the agreement or participation of the Palestinians, who were living in the area. There were no democratic votes taken, no elections held.

Since 1948 the Palestinians living in Israel have been refugees in their own land. Those 'lucky' enough not to have been expelled face conditions similar to those of black people in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Immediately after the state of Israel was established, the Zionists instituted a policy of boycotting Arab labour and Arab products. For years, Arab workers were excluded from membership in the all-Jewish trade union federation — the Histadrut.

Today, Arabs in Israel are treated like second-class citizens. They are subjected to legal segregation in education, housing, and in every

aspect of social life. There are thousands of political prisoners in Israeli jails, where cases of torture have been documented by the International Red Cross.

Zionist foreign policy has been just as reactionary as their domestic practices. A few examples will point this out.

The Israeli government:

1) supported the French in their war against the Algerian independence struggle in the 1950s;

2) supported the US aggression in Korea in 1950 and in Vietnam during the 1960s and 1970s;

3) joined with French and British imperialism in the invasion of Egypt in 1956 after Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal;

4) supported the landing of US marines in Lebanon in 1958 to head off a popular uprising;

5) maintains friendly relations with the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Israel has consistently supported the most reactionary elements of Arab society — the feudal, monarchical, pro-imperialist elements — against the upsurge of the Arab revolution.

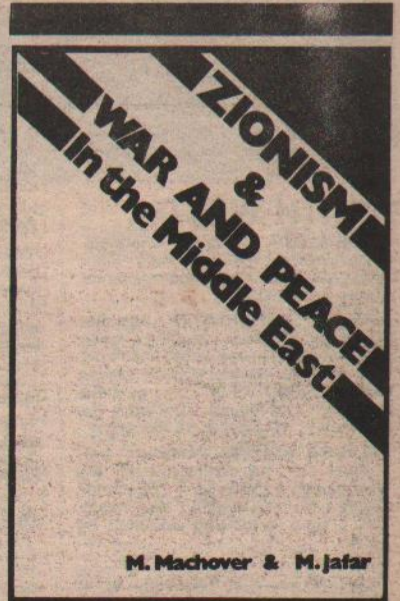
The most revealing example of this was the position taken by Israel during the upsurge in Jordan in September 1970. At that time, the mobilisation of the Palestinian and Jordanian masses was threatening to overthrow the reactionary monarch, King Hussein of Jordan.

For years, Zionist propaganda accused Hussein of being anti-Jewish and an employer of Nazis. However, when a major social crisis forced the Zionists to state where they really stood, they made it crystal clear that they had no qualms about invading Jordan in order to save the Hussein regime from the Palestinian and Jordanian masses.

Recently, some anti-Zionists as well as 'left' Zionists have come out in favour of the idea of setting up a Palestinian mini-state on the West Bank of the Jordan River on land captured by Israel in the 1967 war.

Such a solution cannot succeed. Any such state would only be an appendage of Israel.

Many Jews, who have been victims of Nazi genocide in Europe, were driven to Palestine under false pretences. Instead of finding an escape from their oppression, they were simply placed in the position of being the oppressors of another people — the Palestinian Arabs.



FOR further reading see the new pamphlet from the Palestine Solidarity Campaign: *Zionism & War and Peace in the Middle East*, by Moshe Machover and M. Jafar. Available from Box 98, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

# Surrealist text - we were wrong to publish

A FOUR-page supplement on surrealism in the 22 March issue of Socialist Challenge, contributed and financed by a group of surrealists, included 'automatic texts' containing extremely violent images of women.

The newspaper's Editorial Board has reconsidered its position on the publication of this text, and concluded that it should not have been printed.

However, we must make it clear that the Editorial Board did not endorse the views contained in the supplement. We remind readers the text was accompanied by a critical comment from the Editorial Board which began: 'Some of the automatic texts published here, especially that by Stephan Kukowski, contain extremely violent images of women. They are fantasies of male aggression to women of a kind which are only too often played out in reality — in rape, woman bat-

tering, street attacks and murder.

'They are among the most humiliating and degrading images of women that bourgeois ideology conjures up. Feminists have attacked such images — in art, advertising, and the media — as constituting an actual incitement to violence against women.'

We utterly rejected the surrealists' claim that the text 'merely' recorded the disgust felt by someone witnessing a rape. Our starting point was how best to combat the sexist nature of these contributions: was it by deletion or publication?

We intended the critical publication of the text as part of our support for the fight to end violence against women. After discussion we recognise that we did not achieve our intention.

On consideration we should have removed the text with a note of explanation.

Then, if we had wanted to further expose the text, we could have done so on our terms in an extended article where it would have been possible to take up many questions: sexual fantasy and its relationship to sexual violence against women; sexism in art; the right of the oppressed to 'censor' art. Our aims were never to condone the degradation of women.

Protests over the publication of the text came from a number of quarters, including members of the International Marxist Group and in particular from some 20 angry women who demanded a meeting with the Editorial Board on 27 March.

The women — many of them had attended the socialist feminist conference — expressed disgust that a socialist paper could publish such material. One of the women read out a long statement which analysed how the text degraded and humiliated women, in the most violent way. None of us disagrees with this assessment of the text. We understand and share the anger the women expressed.

The statement ended with demands from this group of women which included: a report of the meeting in Socialist Challenge; four pages in the paper to express a feminist viewpoint on violence against women; and the £200 which the surrealists paid for the supplement to be paid either to the Rape Crisis Centre or the Women's Aid Federation.

The decision to publish the automatic text was not taken on the basis of any kind of

financial consideration. We disagree that Socialist Challenge should pay out any money.

Since it was launched Socialist Challenge has had a policy of giving space in its columns to groups or movements normally denied access to the media. In many cases, these have been included within our normal 16 pages in the form of supplements or speak-out columns.

With the surrealist group it was different. The group approached us asking for space. We agreed as we think surrealism is a legitimate area of concern for a socialist paper.

However, we asked the collective to pay the costs for their supplement. We were not prepared to give four pages of our normal 16 pages over to it.

We retained control over the content of the pages — hence the editorial statement which accompanied it. It is how we exercised that control which should be criticised, not that we asked the surrealist collective to pay the costs of four extra pages. The paper in no way benefited financially.

In respect of the women's demand for access to the paper, it is absolutely in line with our policies to turn over Socialist Challenge's pages in this way. In fact, we have many times asked the Rape Crisis Centre, the Women's Aid Federation and others for contributions. Spare Rib contributed an article in one of the first issues of the paper. We have never asked any section of the women's movement to pay for such space.

More importantly, Socialist Challenge has always tried to have worthwhile coverage on all aspects of the struggle against women's oppressed and exploited role, and for their liberation. That is why we carry extensive coverage from our staff writers, as well as soliciting additional material.

For this reason, we welcome the production of four pages on women against violence against women. As we agreed with the women who came to our offices, the pages should show the positive way forward in women's struggle against sexual oppression.

We hope the four pages will include contributions from a number of organisations like the Rape Crisis Centre and Women's Aid who can write on the basis of collective experience and discussion.

If it is not agreed to this particular time, our columns would remain open to such groups for the future.

# Statement from feminists

ON Tuesday 27 March a group of about 20 women invaded a meeting of the Socialist Challenge Editorial Board. We staged this protest in order to express our rage and disgust at the printing of a viciously sexist and violent piece of writing in the last issue of Socialist Challenge.

This piece was part of a 4-page supplement entitled 'Surrealist Challenge' with the subtitle 'Surrealism and Revolution' and it was intended by the contributors to be an example of 'revolutionary art'. It described a man's fantasy of a gang of men raping a dead woman, drinking her blood and tearing her body to pieces,

leaving only her mouth, breasts and vagina intact.

It was printed in full — readers were spared none of the horrific, vicious bloody details.

The editorial comment — a few lines stuck in at the end of the supplement — said that the surrealists had been asked to take the offensive piece out but had refused and so it had been left in. This outrageous cop-out was justified on the grounds that it would stimulate debate on the issues of censorship and violence against women.

The same insulting argument was put to us by members of the Editorial Board when we occupied their offices. They saw our protest as part of the debate. But we say that we will not allow our distress and anger to be used as material for any debate.

The excuse for four full pages being given over to these literary thugs with no editorial control to restrict them was that they'd paid for the printing themselves. In other words any group that calls itself revolutionary and has £200 to spare

can have a big spread in Socialist Challenge with the one proviso that they stimulate debate. What women's group can afford this luxury?

Before walking out of the Socialist Challenge offices we made four demands:

1. that in the next issue of Socialist Challenge a public apology be made to women for any mental or physical harm caused by the printing of the article.

2. that a report of our protest also appear.

3. that in a subsequent issue 4 pages be given over to women free of charge — for us to say what we think and feel about violence against women.

4. that £200 — the amount paid by the surrealists — be paid to the Rape Crisis Centre. If Socialist Challenge does not have £200 then they can organise a benefit to raise it, just as women's projects such as the Rape Crisis Centre are constantly having to do.

If the Socialist Challenge Editorial Board do not meet these demands then we will consider taking further action.



The Fourth International: The Long March of the Trotskyists, by Pierre Frank Ink Links

## PRE-PUBLICATION OFFER

You can get this history of the FI for only £2.50 (normally £2.95) if you order it by 30 April (p&p add 30p). From: The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St., London N1.

## Abortion marches — world-wide

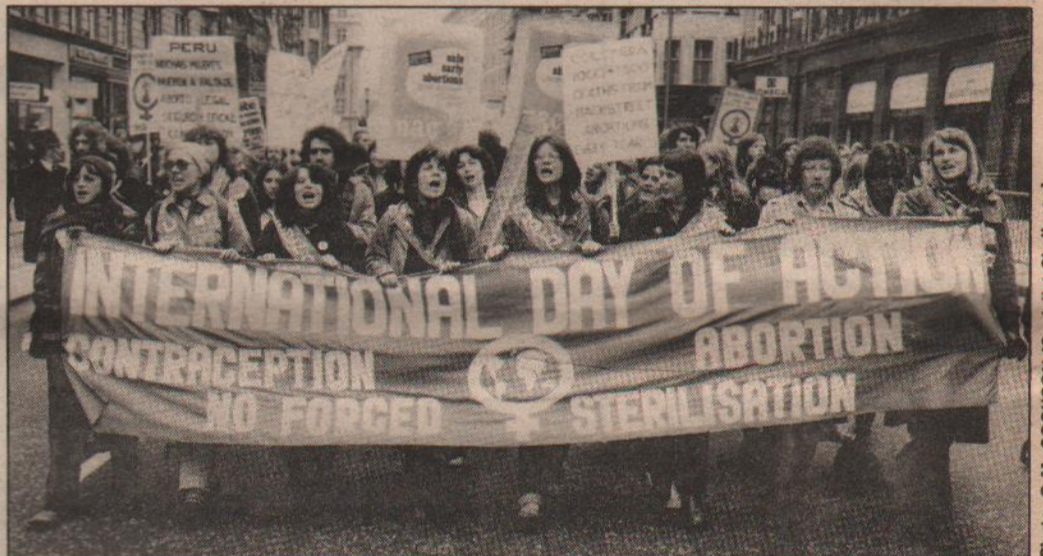


Photo: G.M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

WOMEN from all over the world headed Saturday's demonstration in London organised by the International Campaign for Abortion Rights. At the very front was the band Soul Sisters. Organisers put the size of the march at 5,000 people.

Abortion campaigners in Liverpool also organised a march, while Glasgow women mounted an exhibition in a shopping precinct. Many shoppers signed a petition for a day-care abortion unit.

In Belgium 8,000 marchers called for the removal of abortion from the Criminal Code. In The Hague 2,000 cyclists demonstrated past foreign embassies — and there were pickets outside the Irish and Italian. In Venezuela 1,000 women attended the first ever national meeting on abortion rights.

Speakers at the London rally included writer Amrit Wilson, Isabel Villena from Barcelona, teacher Vanessa Wiseman, Alison Downie from the National Union of Students and a woman from the National Union of School Students. Sue Youngdahl (United States) chaired the rally.

Angela Phillips of the National Abortion Campaign urged support for a national day-care campaign whose first meeting will be at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital on 27 April. The campaign wants NHS laws amended to oblige the health service to provide day-care facilities.

THE DEADLINE for this column is midday on the Saturday before publication.

## NORTH WEST

WARRINGTON Socialist Challenge group meets regularly. Ring Manchester Socialist Challenge offices for details. 061-236 2352.

GREATER MANCHESTER Socialist Challenge. School students who support the paper and would like to get involved in anti-fascist activity, please contact Chris (273 5947, day) or Steve (226 4287, evening), or write to Manchester SC Centre, 14 Piccadilly.

SALFORD Socialist Challenge supporters can be contacted at the Manchester Socialist Challenge Centre c/o 14 Piccadilly, Manchester with a view to forming a Salford SC group.

OLDHAM Socialist Challenge group meets on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month. Future meetings on: Culture and Society, the Labour Party, Socialist Unity. For details phone 061-236 2352 or write to Manchester SC Centre, 14 Piccadilly. Paper sales every Saturday 11-1 outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street.

MOSS SIDE Socialist Challenge supporters sell the paper at Moss Side Centre, Saturday, 11-1.

## NORTH EAST

NEWCASTLE Socialist Challenge local supporters are active! If you want to join them, phone Pete on (0632) 29057.

DURHAM Socialist Challenge Supporters Group. For details contact: Dave Brown, 2 Pioneer Cottages, Low Pittington, Durham.

MIDDLESBROUGH Socialist Challenge sales, Saturday lunchtime near the lottery stand at Cleveland Centre. Also available from Newsfare in Linthorpe Road.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES readers can buy Socialist Challenge from Green Books, upstairs in the Spencer Hall shopping centre.

## SCOTLAND

For information about the paper or its supporters' activities throughout Scotland please contact Socialist Challenge Books, 64 Queen St, Glasgow. Open Wed, Thurs, Fri and Sat afternoons. Phone for alternative arrangements (221 7481). Wide range of Fourth International publications.

EDINBURGH Socialist Challenge supporters group meets regularly. Phone George at 031-346 0466 for details.

DUNDEE Information about Socialist Challenge activities from 64 Queen St,

Glasgow. Join in SC sales outside Boots (corner of Reform St) each Saturday 11am-2pm.

HAMILTON supporters sell Socialist Challenge every Saturday in the Hamilton shopping centre, 1-5pm. For details of local activities contact John Ford, 553 Elliot Crescent, Hamilton.

## MIDLANDS

COVENTRY Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly. Next meeting: 'General election — should socialists support Labour?' Tue 10 April, 8pm, Wedge cafe/bookshop, High St.

NOTTINGHAM readers can buy Socialist Challenge regularly at Mushroom Books, Heathcote St.

LEAMINGTON Socialist Challenge group meets every other Sunday. Contact 311772.

## YORKSHIRE

HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Thursdays at the Friendly & Trades Club, Northumberland St.

YORK Socialist Challenge is on sale at the York Community Bookshop, 73 Walmgate or from sellers on Thursdays (12.30-1.45) at York University, Vanbrugh College, Saturdays (11.30-3.30) at Coney Street.

DEWSBURY Socialist Challenge sales regularly on Saturday mornings in Westgate at the Nat. Westminster Bank, 12.30-2.00pm.

HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge sales regularly Saturdays 11am-1pm in the Piazza.

LEEDS Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday at City Centre Precinct, 11am-1.30pm. And at Elland Road — when Leeds Utd are playing at home!

## SOUTH WEST

BATH Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday, 2-3.30pm, outside Macfisheries. Ring Bath 20298 for further details.

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

ISLE OF WIGHT readers can buy Socialist Challenge from the Oz Shop, 44 Union St, Ryde.

PORTSMOUTH Socialist Challenge sales, Saturdays, 11.30pm-1pm, Commercial Road Precinct.

SWINDON supporters sell Socialist Challenge 11am-1pm Saturdays, Regent St (Brunel Centre).

FOR INFORMATION on activities in the South-West, write to Box 002, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Road, Bristol 6.

BRISTOL Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday, 11am-1pm in the 'Hole in the Ground', Haymarket.

## SOUTH EAST

NORWICH Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday in Davey Place (opp. market) and bookstall Thursdays at University of East Anglia.

BRIGHTON SC forums fortnightly on Tuesdays. Contact Micky on 605052 for details.

COLCHESTER Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly. For details phone Steve on Wivenhoe 2949.

## LONDON

TOWER HAMLETS Socialist Challenge supporters sell every weekend: Saturdays meet 10.30am, Whitechapel tube; Sundays meet 10am, Brick Lane (corner of Buxton St).

TOWER HAMLETS Socialist Challenge Group meets every fortnight (phone 247 2717 for details).

BRENT Socialist Challenge open forums are held on the first Tuesday of every month at York Room, Anson Hall, Chichele Road, NW2, 7.30pm. Everyone welcome. Next meeting, 3 April: Clive Turnbull on the situation in China and Vietnam.

BRENT supporters sell every Saturday, 2.30pm, at Kilburn Sq., Kilburn High Rd, London NW6.

HACKNEY Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Thursdays at 7.30pm in the Britannia pub, Mare Street, E8. 12 April: 'What should revolutionaries do in the general election?', with speakers from the Labour Party and Socialist Unity.

HACKNEY supporters sell every Saturday, 12-2pm, in Kingsland High St, Dalston — meet outside Sainsbury's.

HARINGEY Paper sales at Finsbury Park and Seven Sisters tubes, Thurs evening; Muswell Hill and Crouch End Broadways, Saturday morning. Also available at Muswell Hill Bookshop, Muswell Hill Broadway; Vares newsagent, Middle Lane, N8; and Bookmarks, Finsbury Park.

LEYTON readers can buy Socialist Challenge from Patel's Newsagents, 326 Lea Bridge Road, E10.

WALTHAMSTOW readers can buy Socialist Challenge regularly from Sheridan's Newsagents, 86 Hoe St, E17.

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

# UNDER REVIEW/HOME NEWS

## Rock Against Sexism From cock rock to teeny bop, women were insulted

'COCKS and jivin' and the odd bloodied nose... That's what rock music is made of — like slugs, snails and puppy dogs' tails — according to Jean Jacques Burnel of the Stranglers.

Doesn't sound much fun, does it? But it's true.

By Jude Arkwright

Rock music is about sex and sexual expression. In fact, when Elvis's thrusting pelvis first appeared on stage, people began to think it was all about sexual liberation.

Parents were shocked, politicians outraged — it was almost as bad as the communists. But as it turned out rock was strictly big business and actually helped to reproduce existing values about women and men.

The lyrics of every kind of rock music from cock rock to teeny bop insulted women and glorified male sexuality.

The Rolling Stones:  
Under my thumb  
The girl who once had me  
down  
Under my thumb...

The Who:  
What is it I'll rape it

The Stranglers:  
Beat you honey till you drop

Where violence may seem rather excessive, a more subtle approach is used.

Just give me love when you can  
if you need me,  
A woman in love will  
understand  
I'll give you all that I am,  
believe me

Anyone who thinks lyrics don't matter ought to think about a song like *Substitute*, the meaning of which is reinforced by the plaintive tune.

It invites Sam to make use of this woman even if she's only second best — after all, we sex objects are interchangeable, really.

But it's not just the lyrics and the style of the music. The music industry is almost entirely controlled by men, and is also highly profitable. Women's bodies are a good way of selling products.

Some people thought punk would be different. Punk was for people not profit. It was anti-establishment, and not interested in sugary romanticism or its obverse, sexual violence.

But it didn't work out quite like that. The best of the punk bands have been signed up by the record companies and punk still excluded or ignored at least half the human race.

Paul Cook of the Sex Pistols was still in it for the 'booze and the birds after the show'.

But here the contradictions did start to emerge. *New Musical Express* laughed at Poly Styrene's 'puppy fat' yet a lot of its readers appreciated



what she was saying about stereotyped roles and consumer society.

Rock Against Racism preached anti-racism, yet some of its bands employed 'racism to women' — sexism.

That is really how Rock against Sexism came about. We started in December; a group of women from the women's movement, the student movement, and feminist bands.

Tom Robinson immediately pledged support and now we're drawing in some of the newer punk bands and the feminist

bands.

Our aim is to use music to build the anti-sexist movement. We want to reach the youth through the music they follow.

That does not mean we think we can change rock music. It will never really be 'ours' to change until it's out of the hands of big business, and it will never become non-sexist while sexism exists in society as a whole.

We want to create a counter focus within rock music. We want to challenge the ideas and get the bands and — more

importantly — their followers to become part of the fight against sexism.

We want RAS to be a link between young people and the women's movement; as RAR was the link to the ANL and the anti-racist movement.

That's why... we want to have fun and fight sexism.

Anyone interested in coming along to RAS meetings, or organising a gig; or if you'd like badges, copies of *dRAsTic* measures, gig guides, among other things, write c/o 121 Grandison Road, London SW11.

## The cane mutiny

By Redmond O'Neill

IN Croydon's 22 secondary schools there were 1,300 recorded canings of students last year. A survey of a quarter of Inner London schools has revealed 3,000 recorded canings.

It is in response to such extensive physical assaults that the National Union of School Students has launched a campaign for the abolition of corporal punishment, which begins with a picket of the National Union of Teachers' conference in Scarborough on April 16.

The campaign will involve petitions and culminate in a London demonstration following the general election.

Britain is one of the few countries in the world to allow the extensive use of physical violence in its schools.

In most European countries it was abolished along with the revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries. In Russia its abolition was one of the first measures taken by the Soviet government established following October 1917.

Just how widespread is the use of the cane in England and Wales, and of the belt in Scotland, can be judged from the fact that an MP's Private Bill calling for the abolition of corporal punishment in schools for the mentally and physically handicapped was blocked last month by Tory filibustering.

At a time when the Tory Party will be stepping up its campaign for more 'law and order', including in schools, and the government and most Labour councils refuse to implement the Labour Party's policy for the abolition of corporal punishment, the NUSS campaign is especially important.

The left and particularly left-wing teachers need to come out loud and clear against one of the most reactionary hangovers from Britain's imperial past. The NUSS campaign should be supported and publicised in every area of the country.

For information on the campaign, petitions, and copies of the NUSS magazine, *BLOT*, write to: NUSS, 302 Pentonville Road, London N1.

## School of scandal

By Dick Withecombe

OVER 60 trade unionists, women's groups, and Labour Party members joined 18 women workers outside Stonai public school in Wiltshire on 23 March.

Since the beginning of March, when the domestic staff — all Transport Union members — were locked out, Stonai has become known as the Grunwick of Wiltshire.

The domestic workers earn 66p an hour, compared to £3,000 a year and more that most parents pay for their child to attend the school as a boarder.

However, school management has consistently refused to enter into negotiations on

pay and conditions, in spite of an agreement made through ACAS last October. The mass picket on 23 March was organised to greet parents as they arrived at an end of term dance.

Pickets are being maintained daily during the holiday. Messages of support to A. Swales, District Officer, TGWU, Swindon.

## Rail lockout

By Pete Grant  
ASLEF (Paddington branch)

THE British Rail Board has put a ban on press reports of a dispute which is resulting in train cancellations and affecting the supply of coal to power stations.

The dispute involves railway shopworkers, who have a parity claim for a £60 minimum wage, 4 weeks paid holiday at £80, and pro rata increases for all other shop grades.

Because the National Union of Railworkers has dragged its feet over this, the unofficial Railways National Committee put out a call for a week of action from 19 March, including a two-day stoppage of work.

This followed a two-day strike in February involving 46 depots on the Scottish, Eastern, Midland and Western Regions.

Management responded on 20 March by locking out all who refused to work normally. This resulted in most Scottish, South Wales and London depots being locked out till the Saturday.

Management's fuelling of locomotives resulted in members of ASLEF boycotting them at the large London depot of Stratford, and shopworkers in South Wales responded by sitting in on the locomotives.

The British Rail Board are now realising that the NUR's belief that the shopworkers' committee has no support is very much a false hope. The shopworkers remain determined....

## Racist quotas

By Des Murphy

THE fight by North East London Polytechnic student union against the racist quotas imposed by the governors took

a further dramatic turn on Thursday. Armed with both possession orders and court injunctions the High Court sheriff and a large number of police officers smashed into the week-old occupation of the Poly's West Ham precinct.

Already evicted by similar measures at the Barking precinct — but confident in light of a mandate from three consecutive union mass meetings — the singing occupiers sat tight behind the barricades.

Eleven not so gentle arrests were made. An immediate picket of West Ham police station forced the police to release all the students in two hours — most being charged with intentionally obstructing the sheriff.

The remand for one month at West Ham Court the next

morning was the scene of another mass picket by students. The occupation had become the focus for activities aimed at changing the mind of the governors and rejecting — as has Middlesex Poly — the quotas which limit the number of student admissions on a racist basis.

Student occupiers, together with members of the college lecturers' union, have spent the last week visiting individual governors seeking an emergency governors' meeting so that the whole matter can be reconsidered especially in light of the Middlesex Polytechnic decision. With the vacation now with us a temporary lull in mass student action has occurred but the new term promises to see the struggle taken up with new vigour.

# Socialist Challenge

## IT COULD HAPPEN HERE!

THEY haven't got a clue! That is the only conclusion, as plans go ahead for the evacuation of up to 600,000 people from the area of the leaking Pennsylvania nuclear plant. Up to 50,000 square miles could finally have to be abandoned to the wilderness for ever.

The nuclear core of the reactor threatens to melt down, releasing an incredible amount of radioactive material. And still they have no answer.

By Richard Carver

### \* What has happened at Three Mile Island?

In short, the worst ever nuclear disaster — apart from the 'planned' disasters of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. If there have been no deaths so far, that is because death from radiation is not short and dramatic but slow and lingering.

The Three Mile Island plant uses a pressurised water reactor (PWR) — that is, the reactor is cooled by water pumped round it at a high pressure. It is as safe as any nuclear installation.

What went wrong was not the failure of some sophisticated process or unknown substance but the breakdown of two pumping systems.

An emergency valve stuck open, allowing radioactive fluids to escape, and the emergency core cooling system was accidentally switched off.

Supporters of nuclear power always use complicated statistics to show how improbable such a combination of failures would be. But it has happened.

### \* What did the failure of the cooling system mean?

It caused the fracture of one of the fuel rods — just about the worst thing that can happen. It took staff at the plant three hours to realise that something was wrong.

Then there was another unforeseen development — the formation of a bubble of gas in the top of the reactor unit.

### \* Do the US nuclear authorities know what to do?

No. Their computer has been working overtime to find solutions but it hasn't yet come up with anything. There are two things they can do to disperse the bubble. One is to let the gas out, but radiation levels are so high that no-one can get near enough to do that.

The other, which they have tried, is to disperse the bubble by pumping in high pressure cold water. All that happened was that the bubble split in two, changing the balance of the gas and nearly causing an explosion!

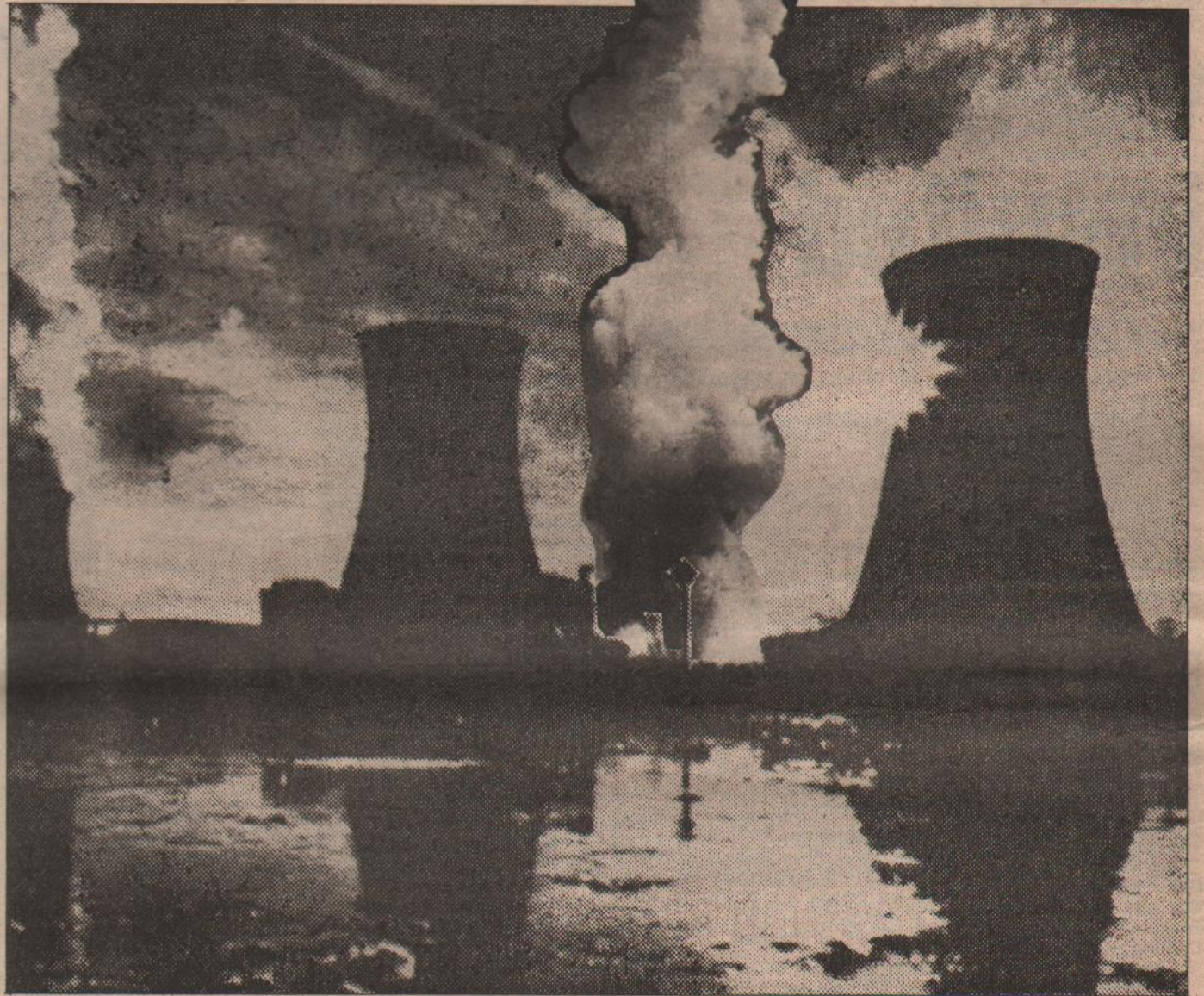
### \* What does this mean for the people of Pennsylvania?

Nobody really knows — certainly not the nuclear authorities. It all depends on which and how much radioactive material has been released into the atmosphere.

With typical complacency one spokesperson said: 'The radiation level is what people would get if they played golf in the sunshine.' But golf courses are not usually evacuated or subject to curfew as soon as the sun comes out!

Another estimate was 'no more than you get in a dental X-ray'. Are there plans for the permanent abandonment of all dental surgeries?

If the nuclear core of the reactor melts down — which is the worst possible outcome — there would be a major release of radioactive material. The Ford Foundation reckons that this could cause 3,000 early deaths, 45,000 cases of radiation sickness, 45,000 cases



of cancer, and 30,000 genetic effects over 150 years.

### \* Could it happen here?

Yes. The British nuclear industry is strongly in favour of PWRs. Indeed the Three Mile Island reactor is one of the designs currently being tendered to the British Central Electricity Generating Board.

But all nuclear power stations carry this sort of risk. Remember that what went wrong in Pennsylvania were simple mechanical devices like

pumps and valves.

### \* What can be done about it?

The complacency of the nuclear industry is exceeded only by its terrifying ignorance. Who would have thought it possible to build a nuclear power station without being able to mend the most simple of breakdowns?

Only capitalism could do that. It is prepared to mortgage human life itself when there is a chance of profits.

Protective legislation is

useless. Five US nuclear plants were recently closed down because of defective design. Three Mile Island was not one of them.

It is the state, operating in capitalist interests, which directs nuclear policy. It has little concern for safety.

### \* How can we change that?

Lobbying has proven useless. For example, there was little opposition when Parliament voted to go ahead with the

Windscale fast breeder reactor.

The only way to fight state nuclear policy is through an uncompromising campaign of mass action which says: 'Capitalism can never be entrusted with our safety. Stop all nuclear development now!'

The next opportunity to do that will be from 4-7 May when there will be a mass 'festive gathering' at Torness in East Lothian against the proposed nuclear power station there. Details from SCRAM, 2 Ainslie Place, Edinburgh.

## OUR FUND DRIVE

MOST readers will be flooded with calls for money in the next few weeks. With Socialist Unity standing in a dozen or so constituencies that is how it should be.

But let us plead our case. Our regular financial supporters may feel inclined to forget our fund drive for a month in favour of more immediate causes. However, as the only weekly paper fighting for a socialist alternative to Labour's policies, we need your help more than ever.

The last two weeks are especially worrying. We have not made our target of £2500

this quarter once again. And we have an even bigger job to do.

Covering an election means sending out reporters, and paying the high costs of British Rail tickets. It means extending our picture coverage, and putting up our print run. To add to our problems the money we have received in the past two weeks is dismally low — we hope part of the explanation is the London postal strike.

How can this situation be rectified? As ever we are not short of ideas.

To sellers: the election is a time for hectic political activity. It is the best opportunity there is

for increasing sales. The target for each seller should be an increase of 50 per cent. Where Socialist Unity is standing it should be higher still.

To readers: we want to help worthy causes — such as Socialist Unity. An election is not just about voting, it is also about political commitment. Which means a bigger financial contribution to the weekly paper that's committed to Socialist Unity. Send a tenner to us now.

To new readers: we expect to gain many new readers during the campaign and we want to

keep them. We are therefore offering a special election subscription — £2 for three months.

Opposing the no confidence vote in parliament Callaghan called for 'a bolder socialist challenge'. We agree. Rush money, subscriptions and increased orders to us at PO Box 50, Upper Street, Islington, London N1.

Our thanks to:  
J Riley £5  
M Tupper £5  
D Hoyle £2  
Costas Prodromon £2  
Total £14  
GRAND TOTAL £2185.55

## SUBSCRIBE

Domestic: 6 months, £5; 12 months, £10  
Abroad: Airmail, £16.50. Surface, £10 per annum.  
Multi-reader institutions: double individual rate  
Special election domestic offer: £2 for 3 months

Name.....

Address.....

I enclose a donation for the Fighting Fund of.....

Cheques, POs and Money Orders should be made payable to 'Socialist Challenge'. Complete and return to: Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.