

Socialist Challenge

KEEP OUT TORY UNION BASHERS

THE Tories are out to cripple the unions. Margaret Thatcher called the Concordat a boneless wonder. And now she is out for the kill.

The Tories would force the unions to support families of workers on strike. And the right to strike will be under continuing attack.

The Labour Government's policies have paved the way for the return of the Tories. The Concordat is one of the most vicious anti-working class measures ever promoted by Labour leaders.

But many workers have refused to toe the line. And the Tories don't like their actions any better than the government does.

'So much for the government's special relationship with the unions,' say the Tories. 'It can't even keep the workers in line. The Concordat says the strike should be a final resort.'

And they are dead right. Labour is finding it more difficult to get workers to swallow arguments about tightening their belts. The struggles of the civil servants and Leyland toolroom workers are just two of the most recent cases in point.

But how these struggles are being fought show just how necessary overall socialist policies are if the failures of their leaders are to be confronted.

Active support for all such actions in defence of living standards — and for alternative socialist policies which can point the way forward for the working class as a whole — is the best way to ensure that Thatcher never moves into 10 Downing Street.

**Fight the
policies
that
could let
them in**



Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

Here's how they're fighting back in British Leyland...

By Steve Griffiths
AUEW steward and branch
secretary, Rover Solihull

BRITISH Leyland skilled workers from a healthy majority of the company's 34 plants have forged a new alliance — the United Craft Organisation (UCO).

It brings together two groups: toolroom workers who struck in 1977, who are mainly members of the AUEW; and maintenance and skilled workers who aspire to or have had distinct collective bargaining agreements, who are members of other unions.

The UCO is demanding:

* The payment of a national agreement to be backdated to

its original date of implementation — November 1978.

* A substantial increase — the acknowledged figure being a rise to £120 per week, which is directly comparable to the highest paid Leyland-wide skilled worker employed at Alvis in Coventry.

* A reduction in hours to 35 a week.

* Separate bargaining rights for craft workers across BL through a committee elected by the craft workers themselves.

The workers are striking because they feel bewildered and betrayed on the one hand, yet confident through the emerging movement on the other.

Bewildered, because they — like all BL carworkers — have only received 5 per cent and a string of promises about increases through parity and on the basic rates via the national agreement.

Betrayed, because in the plants that have enjoyed the hard-won right to bargain through a toolroom or craft agreement, giving them direct

control over negotiations, it is felt that the Leyland Joint Negotiating Committee has stolen these rights.

Confident, however, because jointly they can stop BL dead in or on its tracks — which has been reflected in management's hysterical response.

All Leyland workers should now prepare to resubmit a claim rejecting the LJNC's proposals and putting forward what we need now.

This is the only way to counter Leyland boss Edwardes' plans to run down the company. Already he has had secret talks with Sir Keith Joseph and others about how a Tory would help to carry them out.

In the run-up to the general election, to ask in whose interests BL should be run could have consequences of immense proportions. We should grab it and use it like the nuclear force it represents.

* Steve Griffiths is a Socialist Unity candidate in the local elections in Newtown ward, Birmingham Small Heath.

... and in the Civil Service

By Pam Shepherd
Organiser, Haringey and
Islington CPSA

CIVIL servants are fighting for a pay rise which restores our standard of living to what it was before Labour's pay restraint.

What we have been offered is the present 'going rate' of 9 per cent plus the remainder in two stages by April 1980.

But we can guess what will happen to those staged increases if the Tories get in.

We want the whole lot now. And the official position of our union leaders is to reject the government offer. But taking action to back up that stand is another matter entirely.

Last week 3,000 CPSA members at the big Livingstone PHSS computer walked out unofficially. Deputy general

secretary Alistair Graham told them to get back or they'd be suspended from the union!

In the North London DHSS region we decided that the official one-day strike on Monday 2 April wasn't enough. So we voted to stay out unofficially for another two days.

The response in our branch was tremendous — 93 per cent of the members stayed out, and the claimants were right with us.

Because of the loss of wages, the region decided to approach trades councils and outside bodies for money to meet hardship cases, like the clerical assistants who get less than £40 a week.

The response of our NEC? They told us we had to give them all the money for the national strike fund, and the union treasurer is seeking legal advice about the possibility of action against us — the members whose interests they're supposed to represent!

A sell-out is on the way. Our general secretary, Ken Thomas,

won't do anything to upset the Labour government.

In fact he was one of the original 'dirty dozen' on the TUC General Council whose document in support of incomes policy led to the Concordat.

But by taking over these policies from the Tories they are paving the way for the Tories themselves, and for a full-blooded attack on our very organisations.

We say that the way to keep out the Tories is to fight now. That means stepping up action for the full claim, building our own links between different areas and regions at a rank-and-file level, and demanding that all Labour candidates come out in support of our struggle and against the government's staged offer.

INSIDE: Is Thatcher a vote-catcher?, page 3; every militant's guide to the general election, pages 8-9; big gains for left in Spanish elections, page 11.

EDITORIAL

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Labour's manifesto

THE bedrock of Labour's right-wing election manifesto is the 'renewed co-operation with the trade union movement' which the TUC-government Concordat represents. And the manifesto goes just as far in its policies of class collaboration as the Concordat.

To provide an alternative to what it describes as a 'Tory free-for-all in pay and prices', the manifesto wheels out the proposals for three-way talks between government ministers, management, and the unions — as if all parties should share a common 'national' interest which somehow overcomes class divisions.

The goal for attaining an inflation rate of 5 per cent by 1982 is repeated from the Concordat, as is the paltry 3 per cent industrial growth rate. A weak promise for 'special attention on more jobs and training' — one of the few references to youth — is number three in the manifesto's five priorities.

Definite policies to extend individual freedom are so vague as to be meaningless, and a central point of international affairs is Labour's sharp, vote-seeking attack on the agricultural policies of the Common Market.

The manifesto's authors have the nerve to record 'progress' in Northern Ireland, despite the policy of wholesale repression carried out under the Labour government against the Republican population. And its claim of winning a 'new deal for women' through legislation will certainly not be greeted enthusiastically by women workers who have experienced a broadening of the gap between their wages and those of male workers. Abortion rights for women? Not a mention.

And Labour certainly won't pick up extra votes among the Asian and black community with its promise merely to 'continue' (sic) to protect the community against discrimination and racism.

With this platform, Jim Callaghan calls on those who 'dare to turn the dream of a caring society into practical action' to vote Labour. But his promises amount to little more than continuing years of attacks on working people. They can only serve to help return the Tories. The Observer described the situation most accurately when it said that Callaghan is fighting the election with the Tories' policies.

Within the workers movement there are those who argue that a return of the Tories wouldn't be so bad for the working class because there's not much difference between their policies and Labour's. No one could agree more with this latter fact than Socialist Challenge. We have always argued against the 'lesser of two evils' position as a basis for calling for a return of the Labour government.

But that's not all that is at stake. First of all, a Tory government would indicate a certain demoralisation in the ranks of the workers movement. And for those sections of workers whose votes would be included in any Tory victory, this would represent a real retreat from even the degree of class independence which a vote for Labour represents.

Secondly, it is not the case that the return of the Tories would lead to an immediate, automatic anti-Tory upsurge. This depends very much on the general confidence and the state of combativity of the working class. We don't want to speculate on future developments, but we should note that under a Labour government significant numbers of working people have refused to accept arguments for wage restraint and have taken action.

We should equally consider, however, the enormous pressures which the union leaders will try to exert on their members to respond positively to the appeals we are now hearing from Thatcher for talks with the unions. 'If we don't get an agreement', it will be argued, 'much worse is in store for us.'

Finally, just as it could well be easier to draw trade union bureaucrats into deals with the bosses and their party if Thatcher were in 10 Downing Street, a wide range of reactionary forces would also find circumstances favourable to their projects. All of them — including the racists, the fascists, the right-to-lifers, the morality crusaders, or organisations like NAFF — would find a new lease of life with the Tories in office.

And if these forces are given a boost, we could well see new depths in the misery suffered by the working class today.

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.

ELECTIONS

SWP leader says:

'We'll vote for Socialist Unity'

SINCE Socialist Unity was first formed as a class struggle electoral bloc, it has campaigned for the involvement of the Socialist Workers' Party. In several elections, the SWP has contested the same seats as Socialist Unity despite the closeness of the two election platforms.

In the general election, the SWP has now decided not to stand. DUNCAN HALLAS, a central leader of the SWP, explains to PETER GOWAN of the International Marxist Group's Political Committee why the SWP has changed its conference decision to contest the elections, and outlines the organisation's plans in the election period.

The general policy of the International Marxist Group and the Socialist Workers' Party in the election involves voting Labour.

But the IMG, along with others in Socialist Unity, is standing candidates to present a socialist challenge to Labour's right-wing programme in safe Labour seats.

Why has the SWP decided against mounting such an electoral challenge, however small?

To be honest, I don't think the left alternative candidates — whether reformist, in the case of the Communist Party, or Socialist Unity — will have any significance. I regret it, but that is the reality.

We will be directing our attention to slamming the Labour Party and arguing, purely on a class basis, vote Labour.

But of course we shan't say, 'Don't vote for candidates to the left of Labour.' You want to try it. Well, good luck to you.

We direct the bulk of our efforts towards the industrial struggles and trade union struggles to come.

If we had 30-40,000 people then we could do both — have an electoral and an industrial challenge. But we don't have such forces, so we choose.

Where there are Socialist Unity candidates, will your members give us a hand?

We will be concentrating on

basic socialist propaganda; the campaign against the Concordat; and anti-fascist activity. If we thought there was any value in the actual electoral intervention, then we would be running candidates ourselves.

Of course, if people want to vote for Socialist Unity or the CP, good luck to them.

We will, of course, be using our electoral platforms precisely to drive forward the anti-Concordat fight and the struggle against the National Front.

But people will be asking your members whether the SWP thinks that it is right to back Socialist Unity candidates.

For example, in Callaghan's constituency Pat Arrowsmith will be backed by Socialist Unity. People may well ask SWP members whether they will be backing Arrowsmith or Callaghan.

From our point of view, this is an issue we shouldn't get very excited about. In terms of the national alternatives we have to say, 'Grit your teeth and vote accordingly'.

There will be members of the SWP — not to speak of sympathisers — who won't be able to bring themselves to do it. We shan't make a big fight about it, because we don't think there is a viable left alternative at the present time.

For us, it is incomparably more important that we try to lay the basis, in the workplaces and in the trade unions, for the struggles to come.



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

This marks a change of assessment from the position taken at the SWP conference, doesn't it?

At the conference, we said, 'Vote Labour', or — low key — 'Vote left of Labour, if you want to'. But it's true that at the conference a small majority did vote that we should mount our own electoral intervention.

Since then that position has been effectively dropped as far as any significant number of the membership is concerned.

Why has the view changed? Because your perspectives for growth then have not materialised or because of a new assessment of the objective situation?

It's because of our actual experience of electoral interventions. You have to learn from experience. We contested seven by-elections. The results were not impressive.

You've also contested by-elections. Exactly the same thing — unimpressive results.

I don't gloat about that. I'm sorry you didn't do better. Nevertheless, the Edge Hill result was poor and you can't

accuse us of splitting the vote. It was because of this experience that we changed our mind on electoral intervention.

So you are basically telling SWP branches to decide for themselves whether they should give a hand in the Socialist Unity campaigns?

I think you are mistaken in mounting this election campaign. But in terms of voting, of course, we shall vote for your candidates.

But we will not involve ourselves in the nitty-gritty of electoral work, because we have a series of operations that we are attempting to mount which will absorb all the energies of our people.

The fundamental problem facing the revolutionary left at the present time is not its obvious electoral weakness, nor is it, as Socialist Unity tends to argue, the division between various grouplets.

But it is the left's effective isolation from the mass of the working class movement and its extremely weak roots in work places of all kinds.

That is the fundamental problem we have to rectify. All the rest is effectively a delusion that we can jump over our own heads.

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.

ELECTIONS

The female image Is Thatcher a votecatcher?

WITHIN a month, Margaret Thatcher will probably become the first woman leader of a major imperialist country.

What do women have to say about this?

By Jude Woodward

Certainly, a few years ago it would have been almost impossible to imagine a woman prime minister.

It is the struggle of women that has made it possible now. But Margaret Thatcher is not going to take up the struggle for women's rights.

The Tories' policies of welfare cutbacks, self-help, law and order and the importance of family life will all tend to push women back into the home; back into our cooking, cleaning, and caring role.

In this election a vote for the Tories will not be for a woman prime minister but for Tory policies.

Yet, from the moment that Thatcher entered the race for the leadership of the Tory Party, the fact that she is a woman has figured prominently in every commentator's column.

In January '75, the *Daily Mail* ran a personal profile of Thatcher.

We found out where 'Maggie' has her hair done, what colour tights she wears, and how she loves going round the sales.

Keith Waterhouse in the *Daily Mirror* counter-attacked, asking why we weren't given the same details about Heath.

The most likely answer is, of course, sexism.

But perhaps the *Mail* and much of the rest of the media were being more astute than crass. How many women will vote for Thatcher and the Tories, because 'Maggie' does her washing in a laundromat and chats to her neighbour over the garden wall?

Wife and mother Maggie, in contrast to uncle Sunny Jim; the image we are being sold is a female image.

She is often defended or attacked on the basis of some aspect of her sex.

Even the left has not been immune from this. *Socialist Worker* has slipped on this on a couple of occasions — a centrespread a few months ago attacked the Tories and Thatcher around a 'blue rinse' image, and last week the front cover headline read: 'Iron Lady with the Iron Heel'.

We must attack the Tories for their policies, never on the basis of Thatcher's personality as a woman.

This is not to deny that Thatcher as a woman has a real constituency — and not just among the hang 'em and flog 'em brigade.

An assessment of voting intention, based on all the opinion polls, shows that 34 per cent of women will vote Labour, while 55 per cent will vote Tory, compared with October 1974 when 38 per cent of women were for Labour, and 39 per cent for the Tories. The shift is not so dramatic among men.

Thatcher does have an



appeal to 'ordinary' women — who have long been saying that they would like to see a woman running the country.

Mary Kenny, in the *Evening Standard* in February 1975, said: 'It would be a marvellous victory for women all over Europe to see a woman, and such an able woman, leading one of the two principal political parties in this country. 'It would be such a marvellous example, a great morale booster to the confidence of women, to know they can do it — and without sacrificing marriage or children either.'

Well, some women may find it a morale booster to see a woman in power — even if

she's a Tory. But Kenny's last point is her most telling — Thatcher is a wife and mother.

Many women may well be drawn towards her because of this — for the mass of women still wrongly believe that their best interests lie in strengthening the family.

Clearly, despite Thatcher's abolition of free school milk, the Tories are well ahead of Labour in the race to be seen as the party of respectability and the family — and in this race Thatcher is clearly an asset precisely because she is a woman.

Labour responded to this pressure by bringing up the idea

of the Ministry of Marriage — an attempt to catch up.

But Labour has done little to combat the traditional male chauvinism of the working class or the 'male' image of the Labour Party.

Most importantly it has not vigorously fought for women's rights — which would have won the support of more feminists to the Labour Party and would have helped to educate women as to where their best interests really lie.

If Margaret Thatcher becomes the next prime minister, helped to power by women's votes, then the Labour leadership will only have itself to blame — for having done so little for women.

It's a knock-out

THE CONCERN of the broadcasting authorities to allow nothing to be televised which might disrupt the election campaign on the terms that the main parties want it to be run has resulted in an interesting cover up.

On the day of the confidence vote in the government, ITN reporter Sarah Cullen camped on Enoch Powell's doorstep in Eton Square waiting to hear how the would-be saviour of Protestant Ulster intended to vote.

As News At Ten viewers will recall, he didn't tell her. What they were not shown, however, is what first took place when Powell strode out of his luxury house.

Less than pleased, no doubt, that such a close interest was being taken in his former hate affair with the Tory leadership, Powell lashed out at Cullen, thrusting her microphone into her throat. All this was filmed by the camera crew. It wasn't screened.

Job cutter ahoy

GERALD Kaufman, MP for the Manchester Ardwick constituency, is also Minister of State for Industry.

His current plans include closing down shipyards causing the loss of 50,000 jobs — one yard on Teesside has already been closed and the closure of Falmouth in Cornwall has been approved.

The main union involved in the shipyards is the Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers. Gerald Kaufman is a union-sponsored Labour MP, and until recently his union was ASTMS.

However in March the Labour Party's National Executive approved a change of sponsorship.

His sponsor union in this election, and if he is returned to office, is ... the Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers.

Ironical but apt, then, that the Socialist Unity candidate in Ardwick, Jeff West, should be an unemployed member of ... the Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers!

Send us your reports

DURING the general election interesting things are going to be happening in virtually every town.

You don't have to be standing a Socialist Unity candidate for Socialist Challenge to want to hear what's going on.

Write or phone in reports each week to tell us what initiatives you've planned, what interventions you've made and let us know what the other parties are up to.

We want to know everything that goes on — whether it's important or just funny, a step forward or a bit of a blow.

Make sure your paper has all the details — ensure that someone is responsible for keeping us informed.

HELP KEEP THATCHER OUT: SUPPORT OUR FUND DRIVE

DURING this general election we will be faced with a barrage of support for the Tories in nearly all the national daily papers.

The *Daily Mirror* will tell us to vote Labour, but entirely on the basis of Callaghan/Healey policies. They certainly won't be giving any coverage to the Socialist Unity election campaign.

Socialist Challenge will be covering Socialist Unity's election campaign. It will be fighting for policies — such as troops out of Ireland, for women's rights and a woman's right to choose, against racism, against the Concordat, for youth rights, — which can begin to challenge, and pose a fighting alternative to, Labour's sell-outs.

But to do this effectively we need cash. We are entering a new financial quarter. We didn't make our fund drive target last quarter, and with the election we have even more than usual to do.

Make sure we can do it by sending in your donations. This week's thanks to: Swansea sellers who've donated their £35.35 credit on sales to the fund drive, Anon £30, Diane Grimsditch £5, Anon £50, Jo Hammond £5, Phil Tewdall £3, Des Stevens £5, Oxford IMG £12.50, Ed Mahood £10, Paul Bellis £5, A J Najmi £3, Paul Keogh £3. This week's total and total so far: £164.85.

I want to support the only paper campaigning for a genuine socialist alternative to Labour's policies. I enclose a cheque/PO/cash for £.....as a donation to the fighting fund.

Name.....

Address.....

Send to: Socialist Challenge, c/o PO Box 50, London N1.

ELECTIONS

Where SU is standing

SOCIALIST UNITY is standing in these constituencies to present a socialist alternative to Labour's right-wing policies. -SU needs both active helpers and money. If you can provide one or both, get in touch via the addresses/phone numbers listed below.

BIRMINGHAM Small Heath. Candidate: Chris Adamson (former NUPE area officer). Address: 76B Digbeth, Birmingham D5 6DY. Phone: (021) 643 9209.

GLASGOW Queens Park. Candidate: Walter McLellan (assistant secretary, Glasgow District NALGO). Address: 312 Cathcart Road, Queens Park, Glasgow. Phone: (041) 221 7481.

HULL Central. Candidate: Pauline Stanton (ASTMS, Hull Trades Council executive). Address: 3 Stepany Lane, Hull. Phone: 41994.

LIVERPOOL Toxteth. Candidate: to be confirmed. Address: 217 Wavertree Road, Liverpool 7. Phone: (015) 260 0305.

LONDON Deptford. Candidate: Janet Maguire (ASTMS branch secretary). Address: c/o PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Phone: to be confirmed.

LONDON Islington North. Candidate: Mike Simpson. Address: 110 Hornsey Lane Estate, N19. Phone: (01) 263 387.

LONDON Southall. Candidate: Tariq Ali (editor, Socialist Challenge). Address: 23 Hamilton Road, Southall, Middlesex. Phone: (01) 571 5019.

LONDON Tower Hamlets. Candidate: Ray Varnes (ILEA district secretary, NUPE). Address: 13 White's Row, off Commercial St, E1. Phone: (01) 247 2717.

MANCHESTER Ardwick. Candidate: Jeff West (Boilermakers Union). Address: 14 Piccadilly, Manchester 1. Phone: (061) 225 0857.

NOTTINGHAM East. Candidate: Ian Juniper (ASTMS). Address: 5 Maple Square, Woodborough Road, Nottingham. Phone: 866126.

Socialist Unity is also campaigning actively for the following independent candidates:

BARNSELY. Candidate: Brendan Gallagher (father of H Block prisoner). Address: 35 Huddersfield Road, Barnsley. Phone: 45012.

CARDIFF South-East. Candidate: Pat Arrowsmith. Address: 1-0-8 Books, 108 Salisbury Road, Cardiff. Phone: 30183.

EVENTS

HULL: SU benefit bop, Fri 27 April, White Lion Hotel, Lombard St. (opp. bus stn.). 8pm onwards. Bar extension to 11.30pm. Tickets 50p from Bofs or SU supporters. Also May Day eve disco, Mon 30 April, Waltham Club, Norfolk St. Late bar. All welcome.

TOWER HAMLETS: SU benefit with film 'Home, Soldier Home' and speakers Brendan Gallagher, Ray Varnes, local UTOM speaker; plus film 'Take it like a man, ma'am'. Fri 13 April, 7pm, City of London Poly Students Union, Whitechapel High St, E1 (Aldgate East tube). £1.50 (£1 wageless, 50p school students).

Socialist Unity

It's 'Schoolkids for Stanton' in Hull

SOCIALIST Unity is putting a lot of stress on the rights of those without a voice in this election — young people.

In Hull school students have started their own 'Schoolkids for Stanton' campaign (Pauline Stanton is the SU candidate). They have put out a leaflet explaining why:

SCHOOLKIDS have virtually no rights at all today. We're herded about in concentration camps that are known as schools; most of us are forced to wear drab, moronic school uniforms; boys are trained for dull and boring jobs; girls are trained to be housewives, and at the end of it we're sent off into the dole queue or if we're lucky we might get a low paid dead-end job.

Even prisoners can't be beaten but schoolkids can have the living daylight thrashed out of them. The Schoolkids for Stanton campaign has been set up to oppose this and start

the fightback for schoolkids' rights.

We're supporting Pauline Stanton of Socialist Unity in the general election because she is the only candidate who totally supports schoolkids fighting for their rights.

Just because we're not allowed to vote doesn't mean this election doesn't affect us. The next government will tell us what our schools will be like, whether we can have more youth clubs, how much records will cost, whether bus fares will go up or not and hundreds of other things like that.

If they won't allow us to vote

we've got to start our own campaign to tell the politicians and bosses what we think.

The politicians have done nothing for schoolkids in the last five years. The Labour government has cut millions of pounds off public spending, which means that we've got less schools, less teachers, less books, less youth clubs but more bored.

They've thrown over a quarter of a million school-leavers on the scrapheap of the dole queues just because the bosses aren't making enough profits.

The Tories would be even worse, they've promised to take money for new hospitals, new schools and new houses to spend on guns and tanks. Thatcher has said that exams will get harder and discipline tougher.

Already on Humberside the Tory county council has

banned schoolkids from belonging to the National Union of School Students — NUSS.

The Nazi National Front want schools to teach kids about the British Empire, listen to Elgar and then be sent into the Army when they leave school.

Socialist Unity opposes all of these parties, they say schoolkids should have the right to control their own lives. They want more money spent on schools, houses and hospitals as well as creating new jobs for the million and a half unemployed people.

They say women should be allowed to decide themselves whether or not to have an abortion and that discrimination against women and black people should be abolished.

Schoolkids for Stanton support all these things. We also want:

*End the ban on the National

Union of School Students.

*Stop discrimination against girls in schools.

*Abolish the cane and school uniform.

*Schools to be run by a democratically elected board of pupils, parents and teachers instead of an undemocratic governors board.

This is what we want in schools but we also want the campaign to give us more control over all sections of our lives.

Schoolkids for Stanton want to take the campaign into every area where youth are involved. Join in the campaign now and start the fight for your rights.

Old enough to work, old enough to vote — votes at 16! Join the National Union of School Students!

Jobs for school leavers now! Free abortion and contraception without parental consent!



PAULINE STANTON — SU Hull candidate

Making Kaufman answer for Labour misrule

By Jeff West
Socialist Unity candidate,
Ardwick

ARDWICK is a densely populated working class area just south of Manchester city centre.

It faces many of the common inner-city problems: poor housing, high unemployment (especially amongst youth), racist harassment, and declining health facilities.

Five years of Labour government haven't even scratched the surface of these problems. Unemployment has steadily increased.

Racism has been defended and encouraged by Law 'n' Order Anderton, Manchester's Chief Constable, who stage-managed the National Front show in Longsight, Ardwick, in October 1977.

The Duchess of York children's hospital still faces the axe, while other necessary facilities such as nurseries remain unstarted.

Socialist Unity is standing in Ardwick against Gerald Kaufman, Minister for Industry, who has been a central figure in developing the government's policies.

Rather than building a mass campaign against racism, and

the consequent fire-bombings and police harassment in the area, Kaufman has limited his role to forwarding petitions to Merlyn Rees.

At the head of a Duchess of York demonstration last year, his only advice to the hundreds of activists present was to invite them to write letters to their MP.

His latest piece of electoral opportunism came when he started his election campaign last week with a demand on Health Minister David Ennals not to close the Duchess of York. Fine words — but where's the action?

Fortunately Kaufman's inactivity has not prevented militant campaigns from springing up.

The Longsight and Levenshulme anti-fascist/anti-racist group has been countering the growth of racism and mobilising opposition to the fascists for two years now.

And recently a local women's group has been formed, which aims to campaign for a women's centre in Levenshulme. They will be using the election to put forward their demands for women's rights.

Socialist Unity supporters have already been active in these and other campaigns, and



Leafleting Manchester schools

will be hoping to strengthen them over the next few weeks.

A socialist festival is already planned for 28 April. Here local activists and campaigns will be able to develop their support.

Our election campaign

started last Friday when we leafleted local schools, where they're 'old enough to be unemployed but too young to vote'. At Spurley Hey comprehensive, just outside the constituency, some 40 per cent of school-leavers go straight

onto the dole queue. On Saturday we were out in Longsight market campaigning for a socialist alternative. Our fight to make Kaufman answer for Labour's five years of misrule is under way.

Photo: BOB MURPHY (Socialist Challenge)

ELECTIONS

Pat Arrowsmith takes on her jailer

By Geoff Bell

IN TAKING on James Callaghan in South-East Cardiff as an Independent Socialist, Pat Arrowsmith will be renewing an old acquaintance — of sorts.

'I bear Callaghan one or two grudges', says Pat. 'He was responsible for having me imprisoned when he was Labour Home Secretary in 1964 — I was given six months for non-violent action against British connivance with the American war in Vietnam.'

Such past encounters are not what decided Pat to stand in South-East Cardiff. But there is no doubt that the respectable press would describe her as the sort of person who does 'bear grudges'.

She has been industrial organiser in the nuclear disarmament movement, a leading opponent of the American war in Vietnam, and now, 'I'm standing centrally on the issue of self-determina-

tion for Ireland, on the need to get the troops out'.

Fighting a general election is nothing new for Pat. In 1964 she was a candidate for a spin-off from the CND called Radical Alliance; in 1970 she stood on the Vietnam issue against Labour Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart.

This time she's fighting on more than just the issue of Ireland. Says Pat: 'As a woman I'm standing on equal rights for women, as a homosexual on equal rights for homosexuals.'

'I'm a sponsor of the Anti-Nazi League, so I'm also standing on the issue of racism; as a socialist I'm standing on general socialist issues; and as someone who has campaigned for many years in the nuclear disarmament movement, that's also a plank in the platform.'

The activities planned for the election campaign in Cardiff — indeed those

already undertaken — reflect these different issues.

Only two weeks ago Pat and her campaign workers from the United Troops Out Movement and Socialist Unity picketed an army recruitment centre on the same day that soldiers were collecting for an army benevolent fund.

Other planned activities on Ireland include organising a 'speak out' and 'blanket' protests.

'I am also speaking at a film show organised by the Anti-Nazi League', says Pat. 'There will be a meeting on devolution, and I hope there will be other activities like poster parades, factory gate meetings, and the usual activities associated with general elections.'

The Independent Socialist manifesto stresses a number of local issues, such as housing conditions in Callaghan's constituency.

But because Pat intends to

speak in many constituencies during the election, her opposition to the Labour leader, and particularly his policies on Ireland, will 'not just be a local campaign but a national one'.

The intriguing question is how much contact Arrowsmith and Callaghan will have during the campaign.

Pat has expressed her willingness to take Margaret Thatcher's place in a confrontation on TV with Callaghan: 'Michael Stewart was prepared to debate with me on a platform, so I hope Callaghan won't be frightened.'

It would be too much to suggest that the Independent Socialist campaign will cause sleepless nights for Callaghan.

But it wouldn't be surprising if, in the course of the next couple of weeks, the Prime Minister finds himself throwing a few nervous and angry glances in the direction of South-East Cardiff.

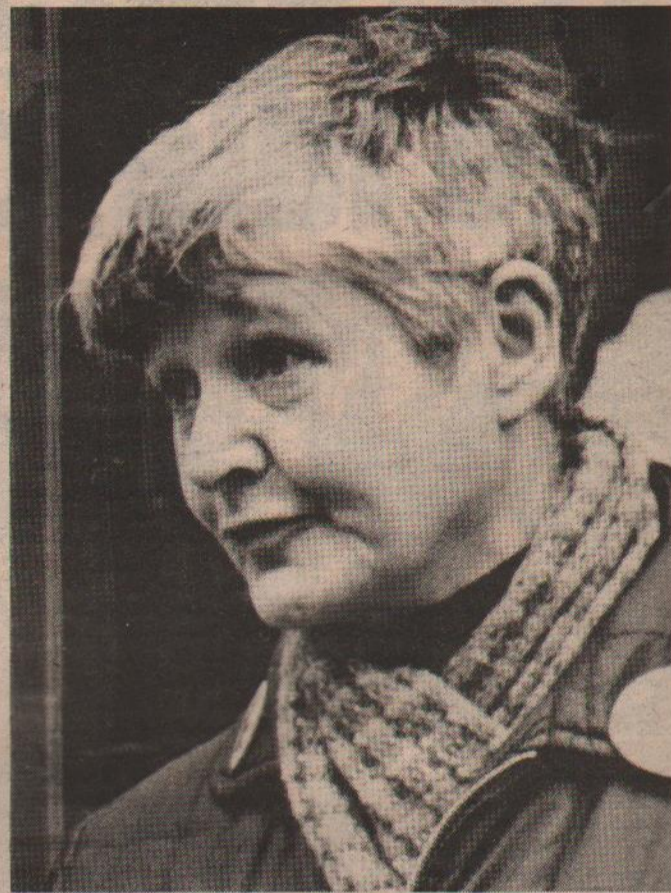


Photo: ROGER LEWIS

What has Labour brought Ireland - apart from death?

PETER Robert Henry Mond Melchett is a Lord in Waiting to the Queen. Educated at Eton and Cambridge, he is the 31-year-old son of the chairperson of British Steel, the grandson of a former vice-chairperson of ICI, and the great-grandson of the very first chairperson of ICI.

With such a background it says much about Labour's social policies in the North of Ireland that Lord Melchett is the out-going Minister of State in the Northern Ireland Office with responsibility for education, health and social services.

By Tom Marlowe

Not all the burden of developing the social and

economic policies has fallen on the young Lord. He has been assisted by Don Concannon another Minister of State at the

Northern Ireland Office.

Concannon has certainly tackled his duties with endeavour and imagination. For example, in July 1977 he announced a £38m building programme.

The *Belfast Telegraph* reported: 'Among projects due to be completed over the next five years are new cell blocks for the Maze prison, a new closed borstal, a young offenders centre, and a new prison at Magherby.'

Unfortunately such decisive state intervention into the building industry has not done much to help the North of Ireland economy.

Unemployment at 13 per cent is the highest figure since the war, and a recent government discussion paper concluded that 'Ulster faces the prospect of continuing low output growth and high unemployment'.

So the Labour government's legacy to the people of the North of Ireland is not just prison camps and corpses. It also includes the type of

economic hardship described in a recent report from the Child Poverty Action Group.

This showed that there are nearly 75 per cent more socially deprived children in the North of Ireland than there are in Britain.

Similar statistics explain the depth of the crisis. The average wage in the North of Ireland is more than £5 below the UK average; food, fuel, transport and many other basic needs and services cost more; and nearly 20 per cent of all housing is officially classified as unfit to live in.

Flying in the face of such evidence, North of Ireland supremo Roy Mason once declared: 'We are doing everything possible to improve the standard of life'. But his housing policy leads one to doubt the truth of such remarks.

Even the most 'moderate' social-democrat would find it hard to argue against a good dose of public intervention into the North of Ireland's housing industry — the

building of council homes, low rents, and all those other promises which used to appear in manifestos of the Labour Party.

But that has not been the road taken by Mason, Concannon and Melchett. Despite the obvious need for more public housing, the government decided last year to adopt the opposite course when it approved a decision to sell a staggering 190,000 publicly-owned houses — more than a quarter of the total in the North of Ireland.

The lack of public housing will affect Catholics particularly. The percentage of unfit houses is much greater in Catholic areas than in Protestant ones.

As a recent article in the *Irish Times* put it: 'The housing problem is, in effect, a Catholic one. Badly-housed Protestants in inner-city areas can simply move out to pleasant suburban housing estates in dormitory areas... Catholics, because of the assassination campaigns, do not feel free to do so.'

This inequality of suffering is true of other fields.

Although legislation suppo-

sedly outlaws discrimination in employment, the government-sponsored Fair Employment Agency claims that unemployment in the Catholic community is still 2½ times as high as in the Protestant one.

It would be incorrect to say that the Labour government has failed to initiate any measures to lighten the economic and social hardships in the North of Ireland.

Numerous bribes, tax-exemptions and grants have been made to monopolies to invest in the North of Ireland — but there has been no noticeable dent in the unemployment figures.

In the long term such 'concessions' are counter-productive in any case. Once the grants run out, or the period of tax-exemption ends, the tendency is for the company concerned to pack its bags.

So the official forecast is that by 1981 a further 9,000 jobs will be lost in manufacturing and 6,000 in construction.

Of course, by then they may need to build new prisons to house those oh so illogical people who keep insisting that Britain has nothing to offer Ireland.

Another 'terrorist' snared

RIGHT to the end the Labour government continued its relentless search for the dangerous terrorists that have so defiled our glorious country. The prospective Labour candidate for Northwich, Barry Silverman, trade union leader Phil Flynn, pacifist Pat Arrowsmith, and former Scotland Yard detective Arthur Evans have all been arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act in the last couple of years.

On April Fools' Day a new name was added — Time Out journalist Ron McKay.

McKay was held for 20 hours after stepping off a plane from Belfast at Abbotsinch airport,

Glasgow.

His dastardly crime was that he was unable to fill in correctly an embarkation card. Specifically, he could not remember the address he was staying at during an assignment in Belfast.

The vigilant Special Branch officers then seized an article McKay was writing on computers in the North of Ireland, as well as his passport and National Union of Journalists membership card.

McKay has now been charged under Section 8 of the PTA. For failing to remember the address in question he now faces a possible three months imprisonment.

'POLITICAL STATUS NOW'

'TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND NOW'

Glasgow UTOM demonstration, supported by Sinn Fein — Saturday 21 April

Assemble 10am, Queens Park Gates, Victoria Road, to march to City Centre rally

Accompanied by Republican flute bands

Commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising

Organised by Sinn Fein

Assemble Speakers Corner, 15 April, 2.30pm

Commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising

Organised by the Irish Republican Socialist Party

Assemble Cricklewood Broadway, 15 April, 2.30pm. March to Kilburn Square.

ELECTIONS

Labour's lies

The idle rich and the idle poor



THE government has managed to break almost every promise made in the Labour Party's election manifesto in 1974. Labour leaders and the government have said time and again that they had no choice.

'It was the crisis', they say. 'Factors beyond our control.' This is a lie.

A policy which meets the needs of working people can be carried out today. But even some of the positive elements of the 1974 manifesto — measly as they were — could only be implemented if a bold choice was taken to mobilise the working class in a fight to break the capitalist hold on the economy.

This would have meant a repudiation of the social contract and instead:

- *a declaration of war on the rich and powerful;
- *ending private ownership of production, sanctioning action taken by workers to put the economy in their own hands;
- *breaking up the army of

bureaucrats and police who run the country on our behalf, forcing us to serve the interests of capital;

*rooting such a government in the power of the working class by promoting and centralising genuinely democratic workers councils.

This week we begin to examine a few ways in which steps could be taken to begin to remove the running of the economy from the hands of the capitalists.

Restoring full employment. One and a half million are on the dole today. This isn't because there is no work. But if they were employed — in the idle factories, offices and plants — their produce couldn't be sold at a price which would satisfy capital's

desire for profits.

Simple measures of workers control and planning could ensure a basic minimum programme of public works is fulfilled.

In construction, 200,000 direct workers and 100,000 ancillary workers are idle — only sixty per cent of existing capacity is in use. This is repeated throughout other areas of industry.

A measure of the total resources which could be released has been calculated by economists Andrew Glyn and John Harrison. In his pamphlet 'Tribune's Alternative Strategy', Glyn quotes statistics from the National Institute Economic Review which show that production in British industry is running at an average of 20 per cent under capacity.

Around £20 billion of goods and services (in 1975 prices) which could be produced are not thanks to the huge amount of idle resources. Glyn calculates that it could provide the following:

50 per cent improvement in pensions and other benefits: £3,500m.

Minimum earnings of £70 per week: £5,500m.

Doubling housebuilding: £4,000m.

25 per cent increase in health and education expenditure: £3,000m.

10 per cent increase in living standards: £4,000m.

To protect the economy from financial and economic sabotage it would have to be accompanied by the nationalisation of all banking and finances and by full state control of all foreign trade.

Proper development of production would require planning and nationalisation of large industry, together with a completely new, non-imperialist role in the world economy. And under these circumstances the new technology — like microprocessors — could be safely used to improve everyone's living conditions

without mass misery from unemployment.

Removing the income of the idle rich. The Labour Research Department recently estimated unearned income at eight billion pounds. This is probably a tremendous underestimate, since widespread tax fiddles and deceptions conceal the real wealth of Britain's top people.

The chairperson of the Board of Inland Revenue, Sir William Pile, reported to the Commons last week that he estimated tax fiddling at three billion pounds. Compare this with so-called social security frauds of one thousandth this amount!

Consider the waste this involves. An army of parasites are free-loading — simply living, without doing any useful work at all. And much of the money the rich has its hands on goes on luxury goods like expensive cars, yachts, and houses which are out of the reach of ordinary people. So useful productive resources are manufacturing commodities for useless 'needs'.

Finally, they live off speculation and activities like the ownership of land. This only jacks up the cost of living for working people by increasing the price of essentials like housing. It certainly does not add to production.

The Benwell Community Development Project estimates that 50 per cent of the cost of every house is now accounted for by interest charges and land prices. This figure is an average. In London, for instance, the proportion is much higher.

This wealth could be put at the service of working people. Investment and property trusts could be broken up. Banks, land and monopolies could be nationalised. Luxury goods industries could be reconverted to useful production.

Next week we will look at other measures to end capitalist waste and state hand-outs to capitalists.

From the left press

WHAT attitude should socialists adopt towards the return of a Labour government? A whole spectrum of views has emerged on the left in this election. Most socialists have called for a return of Labour because it is the lesser of two evils.

The Workers Revolutionary Party is unique in its refusal to call for a vote for Labour Party candidates.

Socialist Challenge rejects the reasoning behind both these positions. We have argued for a vote for the Labour Party where there is no socialist alternative not merely because this represents a class against class vote, but because it is when the leaders of the working class are in office that their defence of capitalism becomes most evident.

Under these circumstances, it is that much easier to fight for a real socialist alternative to the left of Labour.

MORNING STAR

FORTY Communist candidates are to spearhead a 'bold and confident' election campaign by their party to defeat the Tories and win a Labour government that will take a left way forward.

In all constituencies, where Communists are not standing, electors will be urged by the party to vote Labour.

And a 'special responsibility' will be laid on Communists to win support for Labour candidates who endorse and fight for left policies.

These were the strategic decisions outlined by the Communist Party's general secretary Mr Gordon McLennan, and adopted by the party executive committee yesterday in launching its general election campaign.

— Monday 2 April

...The issue is policy. We need different policies, ones which stand Callaghan's policies and Thatcher's policies on their head.

Instead of kow-towing to the big multinationals which are holding our country to ransom in the pursuit of their profits, we need to challenge their wealth and power and solve the crisis at their expense in the interests of the working people.

To achieve that requires two things. The defeat of the Tories. And the building up of the mass democratic movement to the point where it can compel the Labour government to implement left policies, including, as necessary, changes in the composition of the government.

The Communist candidates will be spearheading the drive for these twin aims in their election campaigns.

— Editorial, Tuesday 3 April.

NEWSLINE

THE various revisionist groups in Britain are unanimous in calling for the return of the thoroughly discredited Labour government in next month's general election.

The International Marxist Group, the Socialist Workers' Party and the tiny Workers' Socialist League all pleaded

with the working class to vote for the party of Callaghan, Healey, Merlyn Rees and Roy Mason...

In past elections the WRP and its predecessor the Socialist Labour League has put forward the demand 'Labour to Power on a Socialist Programme' and campaigned to 'Make the Left MPs Fight'.

But that does not mean that such calls are correct for all time, whatever the circumstances. Throughout the history of Marxism, Trotsky, Lenin, Engels and Marx himself frequently engaged in bitter struggles against those who clung to the slogans of a past era when conditions had changed....

What is decisive in Britain today is not whether Thatcher and Joseph subjectively hate the working class more than Callaghan and Healey and are therefore more anxious to attack them.

The decisive factor is the objective world crisis and its impact on British capitalism. The stage is set in Britain for a general strike and civil war, whoever wins the coming general election...

Our candidates will put forward a clear revolutionary programme, based on the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International. We know such a programme will not attract large votes in this election — but that is not our primary concern.

Our task is to put before the widest possible audience of workers, youth and professional people the task which faces them — the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism in Britain as part of the world socialist revolution.

— Saturday 7 April

TRIBUNE

...THOSE in the trade union movement who go into this election to help return a Labour Government do not do so in order to fully endorse what has happened in the last four years. They go into the battle in order that they may be able in the future to have some more significant influence upon what the next Labour government does or does not do.

Without doubt Labour's chances for re-election now depend on the success of the campaign by the trade unions....

There is no reason to believe that they will not pull their weight....

But the ingredient which must be added to that campaign to make it succeed must appear in Labour's election manifesto. It must be a willing and enthusiastic commitment to many of the crucial economic policies that the trade unions have been arguing for for so long.

Without a doubt, the most important must be a full scale commitment to industrial democracy, both through representation of trade unions in companies and also through the implementation of planning agreements....

Labour's objective must be to campaign for a future which must bring change. The trade unions could well be the best engine for that change in the years to come.

— 6 April

How will the 'Labour' government proceed? If it does not have a majority in parliament, that does not mean its situation is totally hopeless. There is a way out; one need only have the will to find it.

Suppose MacDonald said this: 'To our shame, our country has a kind of august dynasty that stands above democracy and for which we have no need.'...What if he added: 'We are going to take their lands, mines and railways, and nationalise their banks.'

...If he added, 'With the resources released by the abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords we are going to undertake the construction of housing for the workers,' he would unleash tremendous enthusiasm.

In Britain three-quarters of the population is working class. It is a purely proletarian country. It has a small handful

of landlords and capitalists — they are very rich and powerful, it is true, but still they are only a handful.

If MacDonald walked into parliament, laid his programme on the table, rapped lightly with his knuckles, and said 'Accept it or I'll drive you all out' [saying it more politely than I've phrased it here] — if he did this, Britain would be unrecognisable in two weeks. MacDonald would receive an overwhelming majority in any election.

The British working class would break out of its shell of conservatism with which it has been cleverly surrounded. It would discard that slavish reverence for the laws of the bourgeoisie, the propertied classes, the church and the monarchy. But MacDonald will not do that.

Trotsky, speech to the Tbilisi Soviet, 1924.

Countering the Front's media message

By Geoffrey Sheridan

IF THE National Front goes through with its declared aim of standing 280 candidates in the general election, it will have one particular objective in mind: the publicity that Front candidates hope to obtain in the national and local media.

This was spelt out in the NF's internal bulletin last summer, which maintained that 'quantity must override quality' in the selection of a sufficient number of candidates to secure radio and TV coverage.

Some news bulletins have already reported that five main parties will be running in the election — no prizes for guessing the fifth.

Yet the Front is by no means confident that media workers will obligingly relay its racist message. That's why its propaganda includes attacks on the media unions and demands for 'press freedom'.

The NF's latest move is to take the Camden Journal to the Press Council for omitting any mention of the Front's candidate in a Greater London Council by-election last month.

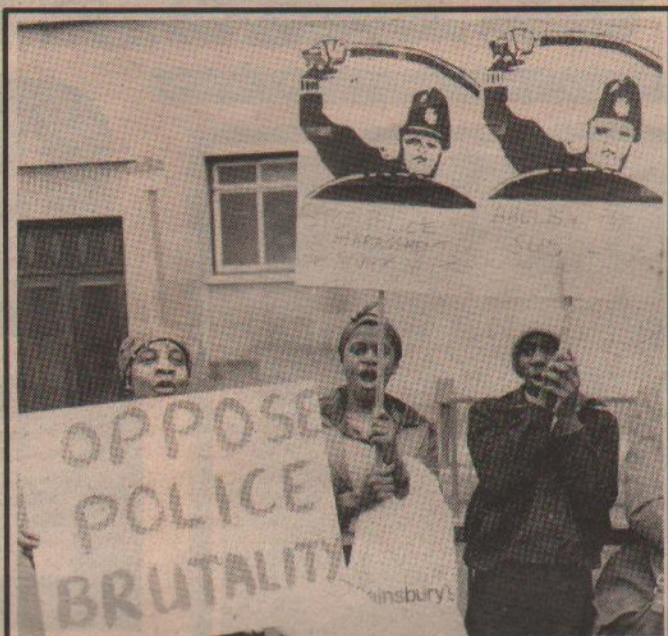
Most of the media unions have toughened their opposition to racism.

A joint agreement between the National Graphical Association and the National Union of Journalists, for example, 'recognises the right of members to withhold their labour on grounds of conscience because employers are providing a platform for racist propaganda'.

Journalists on a number of local papers have set excellent precedents. Papers such as the Hornsey Journal and East End in London have produced vigorous exposés of the fascists during local elections and NF demonstrations.

Other journalists and media workers need to be persuaded to adopt this approach.

Local ANLs should be arranging now to hold discussions with media workers about their election coverage, taking up the demand of the ANL nationally and of the



A HUNDRED people picketed Brixton police station last Saturday calling for an end to the 'sus' laws and police harassment of black people. The picket was called by Blacks Against State Harassment [BASH].

Campaign Against Racism in the Media for no uncritical coverage of fascists and racists.

Pickets should be the order of the day where the press, radio, or TV effectively promote the NF's campaign.

Back up for anti-racist media workers is also needed. On the Islington Gazette, for instance, where journalists have refused to publish NF statements except in a critical context, the editor inserted an article quoting at length the local NF candidate on 26 March.

This led to an immediate 24-hour strike by the journalists on the Islington Gazette and two other papers in the same North London group.

A major focus will be the Front's party political broadcasts, scheduled for 25 April on radio and the following day on TV.

CARM and the ANL are calling for 'No Plugs for NF Thugs'. A picket of Broadcasting House in London W1 has already been called for 6.30pm on 26 April, and local ANLs are being urged to arrange pickets of regional

broadcasting centres.

Webster has been allocated five minutes on TV to promote the Front's racism. The best policy would be to demand a counter-broadcast by the anti-fascist movement to answer the NF's lies, expose their Nazi connections, and calling for mass actions to deal with the Front.

The mass media has presented itself as the defender of democratic rights by insisting on the NF's right to broadcast, in spite of its policies. The demand for a right of reply would allow the labour movement to explain that it is the defender of democratic rights of the oppressed.

If a reply is refused, pulling the plugs on the NF broadcasts would then be much more widely understood by the millions whose sets would go blank.

Many broadcasting workers are unhappy to give Webster free rein of the airwaves. Pickets would encourage them to take the action that's needed.

See you in Leicester on 21 April March against the NF

THE NATIONAL Front has good reason to choose Leicester as the location for its national demonstration on Saturday 21 April.

The NF has spent £30,000 on its headquarters in the town, and as well as standing candidates in all Leicester's parliamentary constituencies, it will be putting up over 60 candidates in the local elections.

In short, Leicester has become a stronghold for the fascists. This is where the first branch of the Young National Front was set up, and last week the YNF picketed a Leicester meeting of the Labour Party Young Socialists on unemployment.

The YNF has also leafleted multi-racial schools in the town, while a School Kids Against the Nazis group has been banned from one school for selling copies of SKAN and Revolution.

The Front does not lack support within the Labour movement in Leicester. At one factory, Bostik, the Transport Union convenor and seven of the union's shop stewards are NF members.

But it is not simply to strengthen this base and further threaten Leicester's Asian community that the fascists will be marching there on St George's Day.

They hope to give national prominence to Webster's election promise of a 'very, very heavy racist campaign'.

There is one sure way of defeating this aim: mass action by the anti-fascist movement on the streets of Leicester on 21

April.

The Anti Nazi League has called a national counter-demonstration, and Leicester ANL has joined with the race sub-committee of the town's trades council to co-ordinate the events.

Yorkshire miners' leader Arthur Scargill spelt out the message at a 160-strong meeting held by Leicester ANL on 4 April:

'We mustn't stand idly by and watch as the NF is allowed to parade through our streets.'



There is nothing the Front would like better than for us to ignore them and do nothing about it.

'If the NF is allowed to march the ANL must be marching at the same time.'

Speaking at the meeting on behalf of Leicester ANL, Socialist Challenge supporter Paul Winston stressed that there should be no reliance on a ban under the Public Order Act to deal with the Front.

In any event, he argued, the counter-demo had to go ahead to show the mass opposition to the fascists.

The Front will be fielding their Midlands candidates on the march. Every Labour candidate should be supporting the counter-mobilisation.

East End

By Patrick Sikorski

'JOIN a trade union, get organised in the workplaces and the sweat shops and the TUC and the trades union movement will support the fight against racism and fascism.'

That was the message from labour movement leaders at an East End meeting of 150 representatives of the black and Asian communities, self-defence organisations, and the unions last Sunday.

While Jack Dromey, secretary of the South-east region TUC and Bill Keyes, general secretary of SOGAT, referred to the fascist menace and the racist killings, and acknowledged the racism in the trade union movement itself, all they had to offer was a union recruitment campaign starting in June.

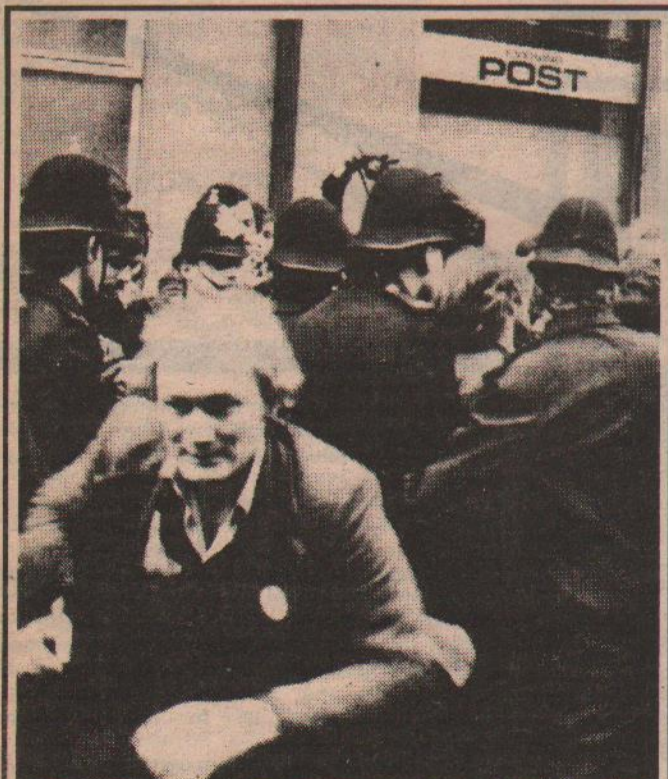
It was left to the defence committee leaders to point out that black workers have not been slow to join trade unions or organise struggles. The problem was to gain support for those struggles.

Patrick Kodikara, of the Hackney and Tower Hamlets Defence Committee, asked local Labour MP Ian Mikardo why he hadn't proposed the abolition of the immigration laws, and whether he and the rest of the platform would be supporting the mass picket of West Ham police station on 21 April against the 'sus' laws and the intimidation of blacks by the police.

Ray Varnes, Socialist Unity candidate for Bethnal Green and Bow, pointed out that with NF leaders Webster and Tyndall standing as candidates in the area, the racist threat would dramatically increase during the elections.

His call for the maximum unity of all the anti-racist and anti-fascist organisations to organise a mass demonstration through the Brick Lane area on 29 April — the Sunday before polling day — met with an enthusiastic response from the meeting.

An ad-hoc organising meeting is being held on Friday, 13 April, at 13 White's Row, off Commercial St, E1, at 11am.



NOT a police line protecting Fort Knox, but uniformed defence of the Nottingham Post where 28 journalists have been sacked. Mass pickets are every Saturday.

CP zig-zags its way to student conference

By Pamela Holmes

THE gyrations of the Communist Party-inspired Broad Left in the National Union of Students have made the union's membership dizzy. On 21 April there will be a first-hand opportunity to see what is behind the most recent alliance projected by the Communist Party when students meet at their national union conference.

Students will be discussing both the general election and who is elected to lead the union in the next year. No doubt the Broad Left-dominated union executive will try and white-wash its own record as well as that of the Labour government.

The Communist Party will also take the occasion to try and explain away how they have zig-zagged from an alliance with the Tories to their present proposals for a 'broader alliance'. In light of the record

of the executive, it is not difficult to see why few students have been impressed with the Morning Star's announcement that 'It's all change for the broad left'.

The failures of the Broad Left are most evident in the further education sector. Here many student unions are still fighting hostile authorities for the right to exist. The Broad Left's response? To call for desks and telephones. What is needed instead is a national campaign to achieve and extend the right to organise independently.

A certain disorientation amongst students has resulted from these policies. Just compare the 5,000 students who marched on the national grants demonstration this year with the 30,000 demonstrators just two years ago. Even more telling are the 2,000 students who turned up at a local Manchester march where the Socialist Students' Alliance has

led a campaign based on independent student action.

The new alliance seeks the inclusion of the Liberals, but this won't entail any major policy changes for the CP. None of the people involved in this project are prepared to talk about the programme of the new grouping, but the CP student organiser gives us a clue in her letter to Socialist Challenge (see page 14).

The CP wants to drop the Broad Left as a 'narrowly socialist organisation' with such 'narrow socialist' demands as 'the social ownership of the means of production'. This indicates that Broad Left leaders want to drop their strategy of uniting with the working class, and favour instead a suicide pact with the right wing. But what role has the National Organisation of Labour Students to play in this?

To date, they certainly

haven't published their views on this project. Rumours of a split in NOLS over this issue are circulating, but the best way to resolve this would be a recall conference of Labour students. Here big differences would no doubt emerge over any kind of student version of the Lib-Lab pact.

The Socialist Students' Alliance has made certain gains in uniting socialist students around class struggle policies. But some sections of the left — notably the Socialist Workers' Student Organisation — have refused to be part of this unity.

And so once again, when students cast their votes in the union's elections, they will not see an overall alternative to the right-wing policies of the present leaders of both the student and labour movement. The only alliance that can rebuild the student movement is one which bases itself on building a genuine socialist alternative.

EVERY MILITANT

Vote for...

IN ALL but 12 constituencies vote for the Labour Party candidate.

Of course we want to keep the Tories out but a Labour government also provides the best conditions for fighting for socialist policies.

This isn't because a Labour government can be expected to deliver these policies, but because Labour's leaders can be put on the spot and fought against best when they are actually in office.

There needs to be a socialist alternative to Labour's right-wing policies. It is much easier to organise that when it can be shown in practice — that is with a Labour government in office — how the Labour leaders are betraying.

One reason it would be a mistake to vote for candidates of the Communist Party is that over the last five years it has consistently covered up for many of these betrayals. It has promoted 'left-wing' union leaders such as Scanlon and Jones who have played an active part in supporting the policies of the Social Contract.

Indeed in some constituencies Communist Party candidates are to the right of the Labour candidates. A case in point is Hackney North, where Labour candidate Ernie Roberts is generally to the left of his Communist Party opponent — on the issue of Ireland, for example.

The CP's programme is reformist. On many policies there is no qualitative difference between them and the left of the Labour Party — and unlike Labour the CP is not the mass party of the working class.

The CP has all the disadvantages of

Labour, and none of its advantages.

In Scotland the Scottish Labour Party also sees itself as a working class party. But like the Communist Party the SLP has no mass base and except on one issue its policies are little different from those of the Labour Party.

That one issue is the question of the Scottish Assembly. While the Scottish Assembly should, in line with the majority vote in the referendum, be established immediately it is not, as the SLP claims, the central issue in this election.

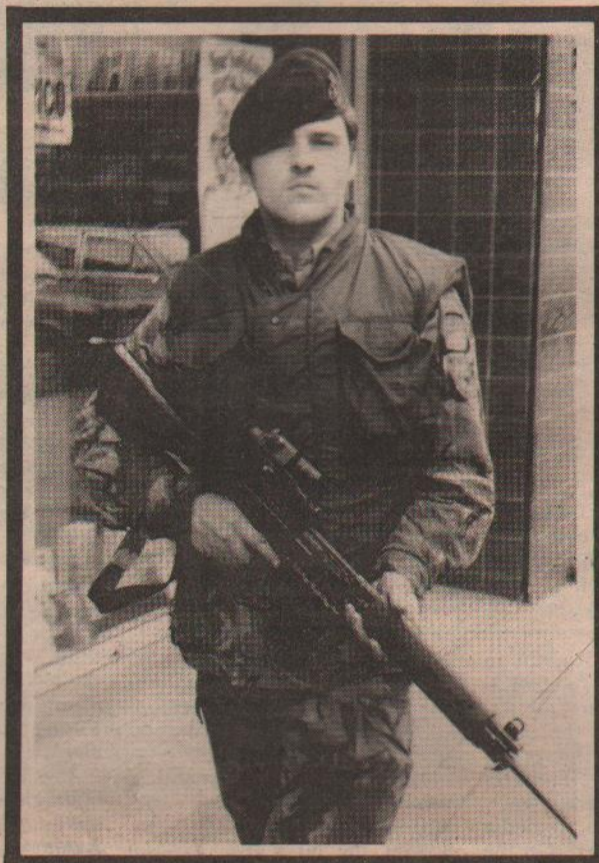
In suggesting otherwise the SLP often finds itself as no more than an echo chamber for the rhetoric of the Scottish National Party.

The Workers Revolutionary Party is revolutionary in name only. It opposes the women's liberation movement; the self-organisation of black people; and the building of a class struggle left wing in the unions.

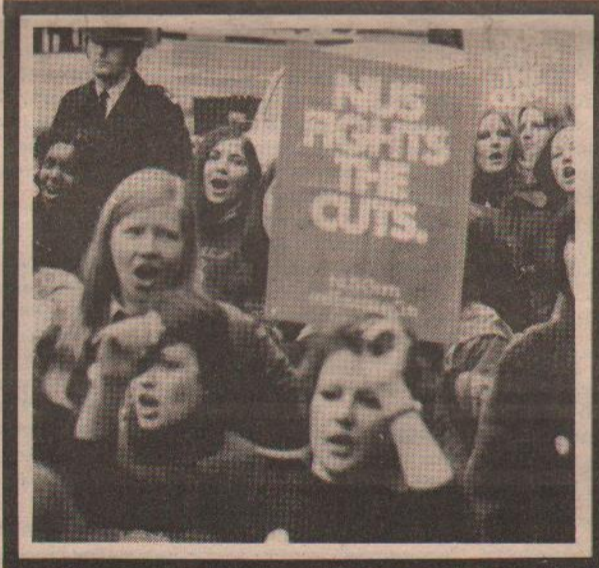
Rather than fighting the Labour mis-leaders, it makes the job of these bureaucrats much easier. Its slander campaigns and manipulative politics have disgraced Trotskyism in the workers' movement.

The Socialist Workers' Party opposes the government's class collaborationist policies, it encourages independent action by the labour movement, and it stands on the side of the working class on most major issues.

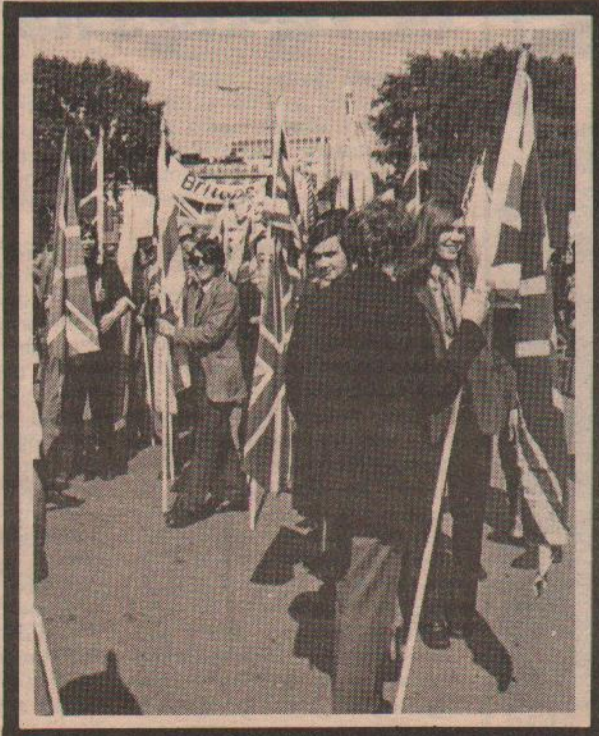
However, it does not have the correct tactics for fighting the Labour leaders. Its decision not to present a common socialist alternative slate in the elections — despite Socialist Unity's appeals — is evidence of the SWP's confusion.



GLASGOW — Socialist Unity, Troops Out demo, 21 April



BLACKPOOL — NUS conference 17-21 April



LEICESTER — anti-NF demo 21 April

Vote and work for...

THE 12 constituencies where there should be a vote for candidates other than Labour are the ten where Socialist Unity is standing, plus the independent candidatures of Pat Arrowsmith in Cardiff South-east and Brendan Gallagher in Barnsley.

As well as votes these candidates need all the help they can get so it is not just a matter of putting a cross on a ballot paper.

Support for these candidates also means canvassing for them, building meetings, arguing for their policies inside the trade unions and Labour Party — doing everything possible to promote the socialist alternative they represent.

Socialist Unity deserves such backing because its policies relate to the immediate needs of working people.

Thus SU opposes cuts in public spending, supports the abolition of immigration controls, and backs all workers in struggle fighting for a decent wage.

SU also believes in organising round such policies — building the Anti Nazi League, supporting the current Anti-Concordat campaign, fighting for free abortion on demand.

Pat Arrowsmith in Cardiff South-east is standing on similar policies as well as giving special emphasis to the demand for Troops Out of Ireland.

So is Brendan Gallagher. A respectable vote for Gallagher against Northern Ireland Secretary Roy Mason would be a tremendous boost for all those struggling in Ireland and Britain for the removal of British troops.

Gallagher and Pat Arrowsmith. Dates so far include 12 April, Islington North, London; 13 April, Tower Hamlets, London; 18 April, Manchester and Nottingham; 19 April, Blackpool at NUS conference; 20 April, Barnsley; 21 April, Glasgow; 23 April, Cardiff; 24 April, Hull; 26 April, Leeds. Phone 01-359 8371 for further details.

* Socialist Challenge Trade Union Conference. On 'Alternatives to the Concordat' and 'Workers Plans'. 26 May, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. Contact Socialist Challenge for further details.

The big events

USE the election to organise support for:

* The Anti Nazi mobilisation against the National Front in Leicester on 21 April. Contact ANL at 01-240 1714.

* The National Abortion Campaign anti-SPUC picnic for the wanted child on 28 April in Hyde Park. The SPUC mob are organising a do for 'the unborn child' on the same date in the same place. These opponents of a woman's right to choose need to be answered in strength.

* The 'Make Ireland a General Election Issue' tour of Brendan

GENERAL ELECTION



EVERY time you pay for a pint of beer you become involved in politics. About two-thirds of what you pay goes to the tax collector.

And then the government decides how that money will be spent — whether on tanks for the Army, or hospitals for the sick; pay rises for the bosses of nationalised industries, or pay rises for school caretakers.

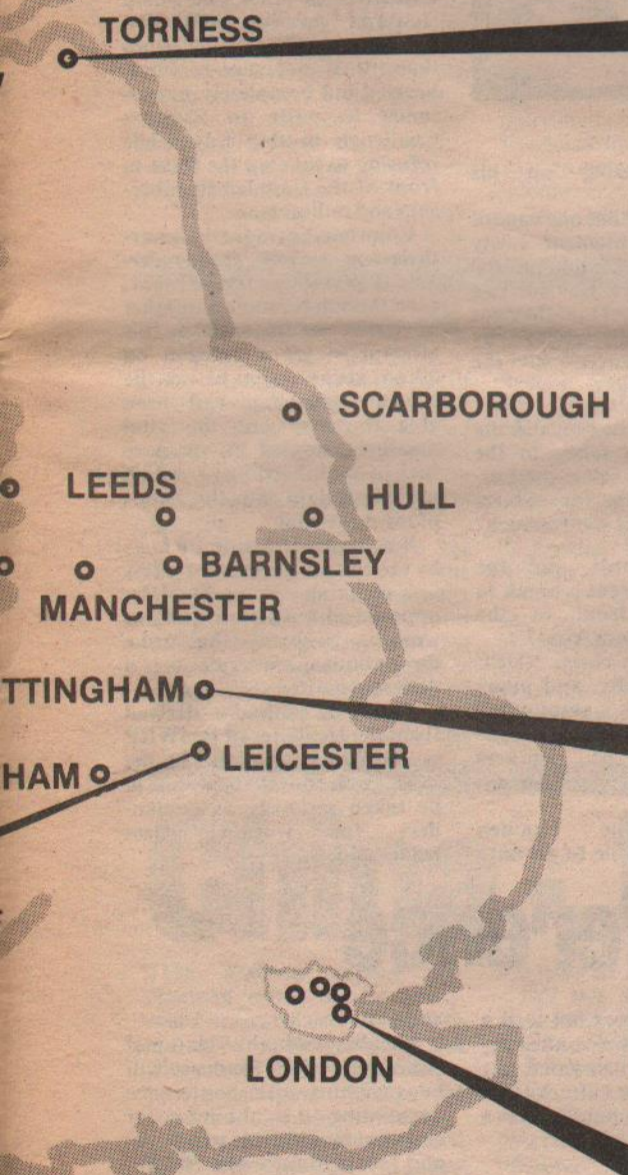
We cannot escape politics, though the professional politicians, the media manipulators, and worthies of all varieties encourage us to think otherwise.

They put naked women on page three of newspapers and say it's 'good fun' and 'harmless' records and say they sponsor sports must be kept off.

At the same time build 'national' against teams encourages racism. 'Glad to be Queen' are policed, pin-up the millions of at, taunted or men encourage objects.

Politics are the time we are

'S GUIDE TO THE GENERAL ELECTION



TORNESS — mass anti-nuclear gathering 4-7 May

Campaign with...

ACCORDING to most of those seeking election, politics is about parliament. But it's not that simple.

For instance it was the massive wave of industrial action which freed the Pentonville dockers in 1972; it was the 25,000 who demonstrated for abortion rights in June 1975 who influenced many in parliament into opposing any further restrictions on abortion; it was the tens of thousands who attended the Anti Nazi League carnivals of last year who helped to halt the rise of the National Front.

The best way to fight reactionaries and the most effective way of fighting for socialist policies is to do so on the streets and in the factories.

It also means building campaigning bodies which can organise such activities. A case in point is the current Anti-Concordat campaign which is already a feature in a number of constituencies.

For example in Hull Socialist Unity activists have already held a 'Kill the Concordat' public meeting and nine members of the local trades council executive have agreed to sponsor the

Anti-Concordat. One consequence of such activity is that the trades council overwhelmingly passed a motion demanding a recall of the TUC.

There are many other campaigns which should be promoted and built during the election period. The Anti Nazi League, the United Troops Out Movement, and the National Abortion Campaign are three of the most obvious.

Particular areas will have other issues to raise. Those with Leyland factories can be organising support for the toolmakers, who are threatening strike action.

The CPSA strike can be publicised in many places and in the few areas where social workers are still on strike — like Tower Hamlets in London — the maximum amount of backing should be arranged.

In every town, in every constituency there are different issues, different campaigns. Try and help them all, but pick the most important, nationally and locally, and build, build, build — now and after the election.

Never be without...

THE Labour government faces defeat in the election for one reason — what the political commentators call Labour's 'traditional voters' are threatening to abstain because of the policies pursued in the last five years.

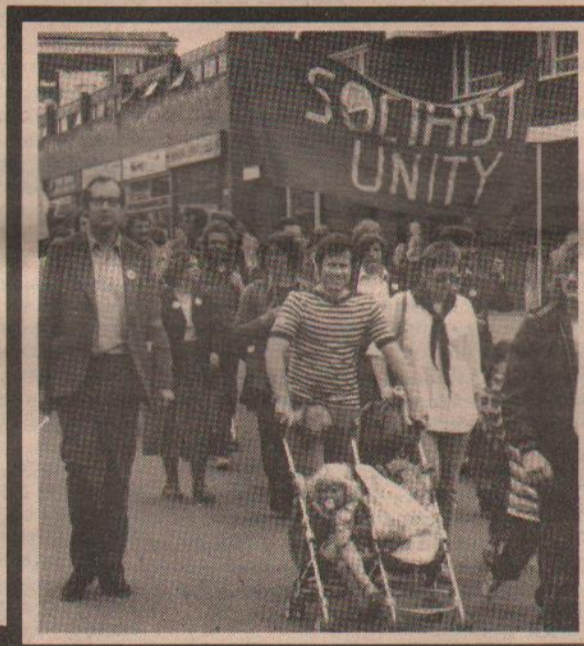
Although we say that the Labour government should be returned, the fight-back against its policies should go on.

An invaluable weapon in that fight-back is the recently published Anti-Concordat. It spells out the

meaning of the Labour Government/TUC Concordat and points to how to resist the policies it advocates.

The Anti-Concordat is not just a pamphlet. It is, to borrow Callaghan's word, a 'crusade'. Sell the pamphlet, win signatures for it, organise around its policies.

The pamphlet can be ordered from the Other Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, London N1, price 20p plus 10p postage. Details of the campaign from 265a Seven Sisters Road, London N4.



NOTTINGHAM — Socialist Unity

The voteless

APART from kissing babies the big parties won't pay much attention to youth in the election — there are no votes in it for them.

But socialists do not primarily see elections as an exercise in vote-catching. The fact that those under 18 years old are prohibited from deciding which party is going to chuck them on the dole queue makes it especially important for socialists to encourage the self-organisation of youth during the election.

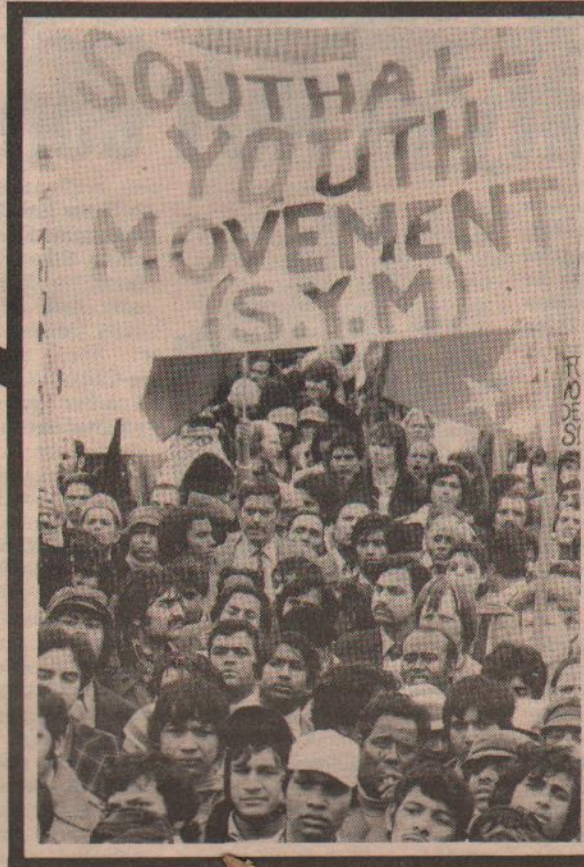
The National Union of School Students is organising a picket of the National Union of Teachers annual conference in Scarborough on 14 April. They are demanding recognition of the NUSS and abolition of corporal punishment in schools and deserve

widespread support.

After Scarborough the next big date is the rally organised by the youth paper Revolution on 5 May in London. The fact that youth can't vote and the fact that so many of them are hit hardest by unemployment underline the need for an autonomous youth movement and the Revolution rally is a step in that direction.

This is not to say that youth should ignore the election process. In some schools mock elections are being held; they should be encouraged and Socialist Unity supporters should make sure they stand.

After all, if Socialist Unity is the organisation of the future it should easily win such elections!



LONDON — Socialist Unity in Southall, Islington, Deptford and Tower Hamlets. Anti-SPUC picnic, 28 April

Put them on the spot

THERE are more promises made at general elections than there are resolutions at New Year. All sorts of shady characters will be going round promising this and that, pledging support to all sorts of causes.

Words are splendid things but they don't bring jobs, don't drive the fascists from the streets, and don't bring the troops out of Ireland.

So any promises or assurances should be matched with action. This means asking those on the Labour left what they propose to do about the socialist policies they claim to stand for.

Those who pledge support for the Anti Nazi League should be asked to put the cost of ANL material on their election expenses.

Any who say they want the troops out of Ireland should be asked whether they are prepared to hold a meeting on Ireland during the election campaign.

All Labour candidates should be asked whether they are willing to submit themselves to automatic reselection. All should be asked whether, if elected, they will vote on the basis of the decisions of the Labour conference.

If there is any strike going on in the constituency demand that the Labour candidate organise support for it. If there are racist attacks demand the candidate help organise black self-defence.

Do not agree to work for Labour because of what they say — demand proof of their intentions.

they churn out pop
is 'entertainment';
and insist 'politics

the sport is used to
unity' and playing
om South Africa
if pop songs like
or 'God Save the
ly sensitive they are
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men who are leered
sically attacked by
think of them as sex

where but most of
to forget it and just

go out and have a good time.

At general elections things change. We are encouraged to be interested in politics. But as always there are limits — all we are advised to do is read the manifestos of the main parties and then vote.

There are many other things we can do and not just during a general election. But the election provides greater opportunities for talking politics and encouraging political activity.

That is why Socialist Challenge has produced this militants' guide to the general election.

Was Camden NUPE right to settle?

WSL letter

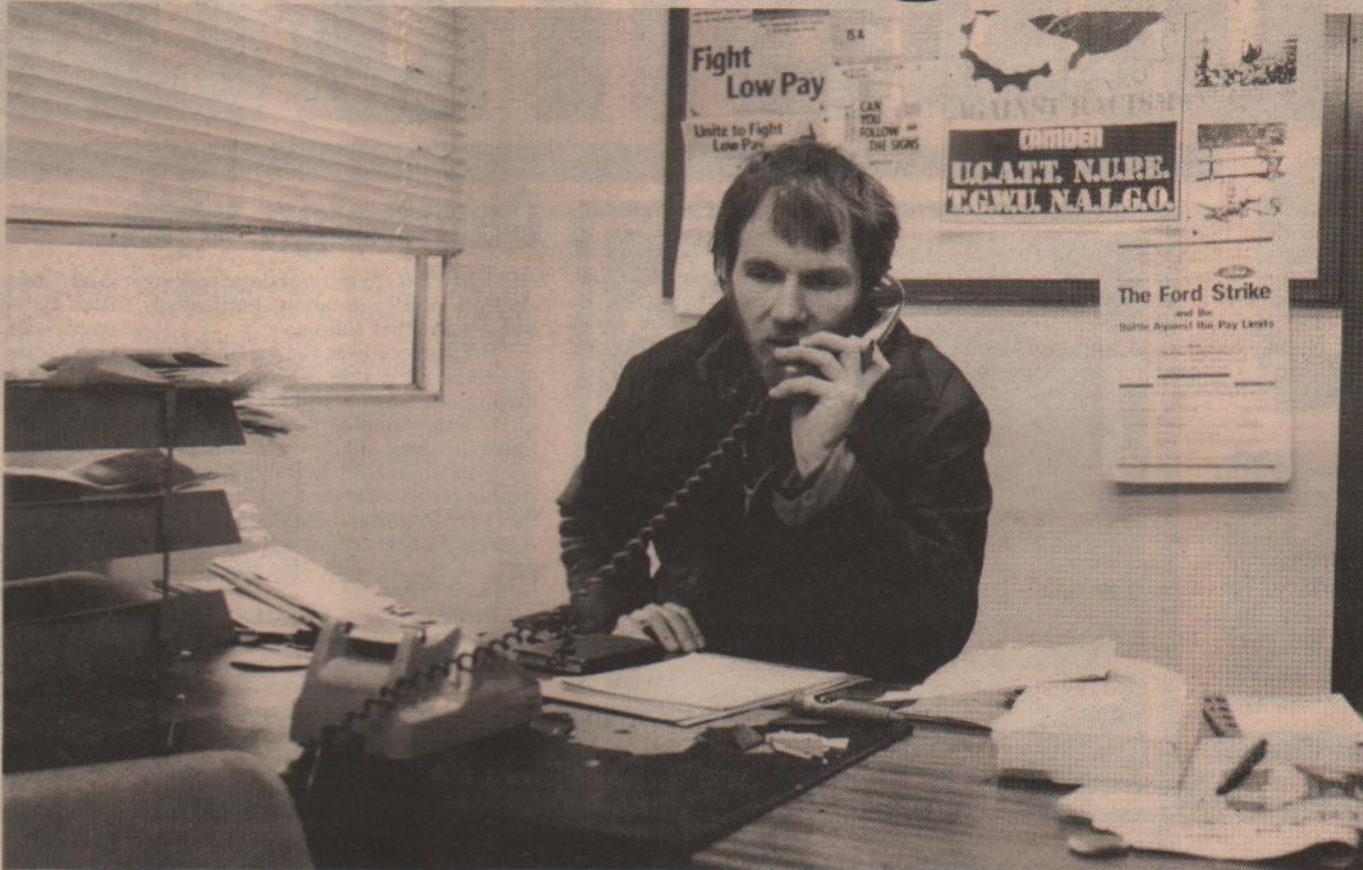
AS shop stewards actually involved in the public sector pay fight in Camden which secured almost the full £60/35 hour week claim, we feel we must come out publicly in opposition to what amount to deliberately lying accounts of the settlement published in both *Socialist Worker* and *Socialist Challenge*.

Both papers claim that there was no political opposition to the acceptance of Camden council's offer in the week of 19 February. *Socialist Worker* states outright that: 'Certainly in Camden no-one on the left argued for Camden NUPE to stay out. The argument should have been put, but there is much strength (sic) in the argument that not signing a settlement in Camden so near the claim will strengthen the opposition in NUPE to the sell-out' (17 March).

Socialist Challenge (1 March) takes a more round-about way of distorting the truth. In an article written by Sikorski and Varnes and (unusually) endorsed by no less than the Political Bureau of the IMG, *Socialist Challenge* publicly disowns the actions of IMG member and Camden NUPE Branch Secretary John Suddaby. But it goes on to report the steps leading to the acceptance of the offer as follows:

'Prematurely assuming that the strike would crumble, they (the strike committee) voted to recommend acceptance to the mass meeting. In addition, neither at the strike committee nor at the mass meeting did the branch leadership argue the case for Camden to continue to play their leading role by staying out for the full claim.'

The *Socialist Challenge* article dodges any mention of the opposition there was within the negotiating committee and within the strike committee to accepting the offer. Instead it minimises the opportunism of IMG member Suddaby by



John Suddaby, secretary of Camden NUPE general branch, during the all-out strike. Many saw the settlement as a resounding victory.

palming off responsibility onto 'the strike committee', 'the branch leadership', and later even 'the Camden leadership'.

These terms are designed to give the impression that not only Suddaby but (since no opposition is mentioned) all the leading stewards involved in making the key decisions backed down.

This is simply not true. Indeed in an interview with *Socialist Press* (28 February), Cressy Road dustmen's steward John Seymour described the opposition that existed to the offer among strikers, while pointing out Suddaby's role in pressing for a quick settlement in case the council withdrew their offer.

Seymour argued then and continued to argue for Camden to press ahead — to win the full claim for all sections of workers, and to strengthen the national struggle. It was Suddaby who from 19 February onwards pressed

the case for acceptance — and it was SWP members who actually proposed holding the mass meeting.

Thursday 22 February on the other hand saw no less than six strike committee members — including WSL members — vote against recommending acceptance. These six were stewards from sections of dustmen, home helps (whom Suddaby wanted to be exempted from the strike call), lighting, sewers, baths and cemetery workers.

It is a total fraud for the SWP and IMG to ignore this political opposition, led by the WSL within the strike committee — especially when they do so only to cover up the opportunist actions of their own members.

JOHN SEYMOUR, C. CREASLEY (Camden NUPE)

Our reply

By Brian Grogan

IN relation to the national struggle of the council manual workers, most of the left criticised the Camden decision to recommend a deal on the local level.

This critical approach was a big error — as the IMG has now recognised. It failed to appreciate the basic principles on which revolutionaries lead the trade union struggles of the working class.

The attitude of comrades Seymour and Creasley amounts to abstract leftism. They take up the IMG not for criticising John Suddaby but — incredibly

— for 'covering up his opportunism'.

Now it is true that one cannot look at the settlement solely from the point of view of the Camden workers. But nor can one negate the fact that they got 'nearly the full claim' by abstract references to the 'national struggle'.

The question is: how did the Camden victory relate to the combativity and self-organisation of the public sector workers as a whole? Did it set this back?

In other words, did the settlement represent a break in the workers' front or the bosses/government front?

The answer is clear: NUPE workers nationally, and many others, saw it as a resounding victory which boosted the determination of workers elsewhere to struggle for the national claim.

In fact the Camden leadership was able to go onto

the offensive at once against Fisher and the bureaucracy. Through a pamphlet, open letter, and many meetings, they immediately took up the fight for 'All-out for the full claim' on the basis of the Camden victory.

The alternative of staying out until the full claim was won nationally was completely abstract. It would have been irresponsible to reject the settlement given its size and the way it strengthened the struggle.

To have done so would only have weakened the credibility of the class struggle wing of the Camden branch leadership, and rightly discredited revolutionaries in the eyes of the mass of workers.

Comrades Seymour and Creasley recognised these realities at the final mass meeting to the extent that they did not speak against the line of critical acceptance put by John Suddaby.

Nor have they raised these criticisms at the one shop stewards meeting and two branch meetings held since then. It is not merely faint-hearted but completely opportunist to write to *Socialist Challenge* in this way while refusing to take up the fight in front of the Camden membership and militants.

Comrade Seymour is nevertheless a serious if inexperienced revolutionary militant, even though he made a number of leftist errors such as his attempt to get a decision on all-out strike action before the branch leadership had been able to carry out the vital measures needed to prepare such a mobilisation — which played straight into the hands of the right-wing.

But the falsification of facts by the editors of *Socialist Press* — claiming that Suddaby opposed all-out action, and was working to break the strike throughout the struggle — is a different matter.

This lying method — derived from the Healyites of the WRP — should be repudiated by the WSL comrades if they wish to be taken seriously as contenders for working class leadership.

WHAT'S LEFT

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

MANCHESTER Socialist Unity public meeting with Pat Arrowsmith and Brendan Gallagher on Ireland. 18 April, 7.30pm, Houldsworth Hall, Council Chambers, Deansgate, Manchester.

RACIAL Oppression: How to fight it. Revolutionary Communist Pamphlet No 4. Racial oppression is inseparable from capitalist society. To fight it requires working class politics. The key elements of a class response are workers defence against racist attacks and rejection of all immigration controls. New pamphlet from the Revolutionary Communist Tendency. Send 30p plus 10p p&p to BM RCT, London WC1V 6XX. (Cheques etc payable to RCT Association).

DESIGNER required to work for *Socialist Challenge* FI Litho.

Apply in writing to FI Litho, 328/9 Upper St, London N1

STOP THE NF! The Nazis are planning a major election meeting in North London on Friday 20 April with John Tyndall speaking. Demonstrate 6.30pm, Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, N1. Called by ICARF and Islington ANL.

SOCIALIST Feminist National Conference 79 follow-up meeting open to all women who were at the conference. St Anne's Hall, Venn St, London SW4, Sat 21 April, 1.30pm. Pooled fare. For child care phone the planning group at 01-274 9829.

Half Moon Theatre 480 6465

Belt and Braces present

Accidental Death of an Anarchist by Dario Fo 7pm

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. Weppier, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP (tel. 01-359 8371).

Left unity at NUT conference

EDUCATION is likely to be a major issue in the General Election. But the General Election is unlikely to be debated at the National Union of Teachers conference taking place in Scarborough at Easter.

By Bernard Regan, Socialist Teachers' Alliance

Although Shirley Williams, Secretary of State for Education, is due to address the conference, the 'professionalist' 'non-party' character of the NUT will rule out any debate on the union's attitude to the Labour Party.

The Socialist Teachers' Alliance will be at conference calling for a vote for Labour, but arguing the need for the union to fight against the policies of Williams — which have led to a massive drop in teachers' pay, school closures and teacher unemployment.

NUT general secretary Fred Jarvis has consistently sided with the advocates of pay restraint in the TUC. Recently



BERNARD REGAN: 'We need national action against school closures'

he has supported the Concordat.

Scottish teachers have been out on strike, but the NUT has kept aloof.

Clearly if the NUT hopes to win its own 36.5 per cent claim then a united fight with the Scottish teachers (and with the civil servants) is necessary.

If the union does not lead a determined fight for the pay claim this will just open the door to further attacks on education — probably from a Tory Education Minister.

The STA and Rank and File Teacher have jointly campaigned around motions for conference — and both will be supporting the attempt by 'Women in the NUT' to get conference to adopt the 'TUC Charter for Women at Work'. The debate on the Charter will centre on the question of abortion rights.

The Communist Party teachers' leadership is opposed to the union openly supporting abortion.

The STA will fight for alternative policies to those of the present right-wing leadership of the union.

In particular it will press for national action to combat school closures. To this end it is important to strengthen and extend united action with Rank

and File Teachers.

Members of the National Union of School Students will be picketing the conference demanding the abolition of corporal punishment in schools and recognition of the NUSS.

The STA supports the lobby and will be voicing its support inside the conference.

School students wanting to go on the picket should ring NUSS on 01-278 3291 for travel from London and Jude or Redmond on 01-359 8371 for travel from other places.

Pre-conference meeting, Fri 13 April, 'Conference 79' Prince of Wales, Prince of Wales Terrace, Scarborough. Speakers: Bernard Regan, STA; Dick North, R and F.

The General Election, Concordat and teachers' pay. Sun 15 April, Prince of Wales. Speakers: Denny Fitzpatrick, STA; Dick Brown, R&F; Stewart MacLennan, CPSA Broad Left and Scottish Teacher speaker.

INTERNATIONAL

Basque nationalists sweep the board Left wins Spanish towns

By C.O. Jones

IN most of Spain's big towns and industrial centres Franco's old fascist appointees have left their mayoral desks for the last time. Last week's municipal elections left the two largest working class parties with 70-80 per cent of the vote in towns of more than 50,000 people.

The exception was in the Basque country where two nationalist slates between them won a majority.

Many of the old fascist mayors stood for re-election for the first time by effortlessly switching their allegiance to the governing Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD). Madrid was a case in point, where the old mayor, Jose Luis Alvarez, was roundly beaten by the left.

In the rural areas, however, many of the old mayors or other UCD candidates were returned, reflecting both the solid support for the government in much of the countryside, and the continuation of electoral patronage and malpractice.

The question which was immediately posed was: how

could the left win majorities in the major towns, when only a month ago it lost to the right wing in the general election?

Apart from the fact that local elections generally favour the left, an obvious answer lies in the left's disunity in the earlier poll as compared with its attempt to patch up an agreement for the municipals.

Both parties must take the blame for this damaging disunity, but the Communist Party (PCE) in particular has spent two years firing vicious polemic at the Socialists (PSOE), at the same time as making gracious gestures towards the UCD.

The PSOE for its part has shunned an electoral alliance for fear of the political consequences of being propelled into government.

Yet immediately after the municipals the two party leaders arrived at an agreement to give them working majorities. PCE leader Carrillo, the individual most responsible for the sectarian divide, was now carried away with the need for a 'global accord'.

The left held a greater attraction at a local level since it

was there that it provided the most credible alternative. Nationally both parties have fallen in line behind government policy on everything from law and order to working class living standards. Locally, however, they were seen as the only way of clearing out the fascist remnants.

The obvious parallel is with the 1931 municipal elections, when an equally sweeping left victory had a national political impact which led to the overthrow of the monarchy. Nothing so dramatic can be expected now, but this result is bound to make it far more difficult for the PCE and PSOE leaderships to get off the hook and avoid the responsibility of confronting the government.

Already, though, they are trying to come to an understanding with local right-wingers. In Barcelona, for example, the Socialists got a majority by doing a deal with the right-wing Catalan nationalists.

In Andalusia the nationalist Socialist Party of Andalusia (PSA) holds the balance, a party which received financial support from the UCD during the general election campaign. In the Andalusian municipal election campaign the major left parties reached an agreement with the UCD 'to struggle against caciquismo' — the system of electoral patronage and corruption most ably represented by the UCD itself!

The PCE sees unity with the PSOE as an 'instrument within a broader field of collaboration with the progressive forces such as the UCD' — in other words, rather than unity being a weapon for struggle against the government it is seen as a means to greater class collaboration.

The one place where that

collaboration was rejected — albeit in a confused and confusing way — was the Basque country.

The largest party there was the bourgeois Basque Nationalist Party (PNV). But it has been able to form working majorities in the two largest cities of Bilbao and San Sebastian only through the support of the second-largest bloc of Herri Batasuna deputies.

This has been all very confusing for the press, which had gone out of its way to label Herri Batasuna as the electoral wing of the 'terrorist' ETA militia. But it is a more complex phenomenon than that.

It is clearly more radical than the Christian Democratic PNV, and does include ETA supporters, but its defining characteristic is that it, like the PNV, claims to be a party of all the Basque people. That is certainly reflected in its membership, which includes the entire spectrum from Marxist-Leninists to factory owners.

Its programme is correspondingly hazy. Immediately after the general election one of the front's leaders was asked what its policies were — and all he could come up with as common ground were three demands about political prisoners. Basque voters have opted for this vague alternative because it offers some prospect of struggle — in contrast to the disgraceful failure of the workers' parties to fight for self-determination and their support for Madrid's 'law and order'.

The result is a major blow to the government's centralist line on the national question and could be the signal for new battles between the Basque people and the Spanish state.



Carrillo, leader of the Spanish Communist Party, with Suarez, the right-wing premier.

FAR LEFT GAINS

THE general swing to the left in the Spanish local elections also favoured the smaller left-wing parties fighting for a socialist alternative to the policies of the Socialist and Communist Party leaders.

Foremost among these are the Trotskyists of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) who won a total of 35 local councillors and two mayors. This makes up for a disappointing general election score of 45,000 votes overall.

The two mayors are in the

Basque provinces of Vizcaya and Navarra, and 25 of the councillors were also in the Basque country — reflecting the LCR's long-standing commitment to the Basque struggle and its deep roots in the region.

There were also five councillors in Catalonia, three in Castile, and one each in Aragon and Andalusia.

Of the other two major far left parties the Communist Movement (MC) polled rather less and the Revolutionary Workers Organisation (ORT) rather more, but we don't yet have exact figures.

China - the fifth modernisation

THE Chinese regime has clamped down on its democratic critics — coinciding with the third anniversary of the Tiananmen Square demonstration which gave birth to the latest wave of opposition.

Plain clothes police arrested four oppositionists as they were putting up a wall poster last week. The four included Ren Wanding, the founder of the Human Rights Alliance.

The Peking city authorities have banned slogans, posters, books, periodicals, and photographs which are 'opposed to socialism and to the leadership of the party'. Wall posters can only be displayed at 'designated places'.

This has meant the end of Peking's 'Democracy Wall'. High pressure hoses have been used to clean off 'unauthorised' posters.

The clampdown may have been immediately provoked by wall posters and slogans criticising the Chinese invasion of Vietnam — certainly the first ban on big character posters in February was specifically over

the issue of the war.

But this also marks a new stage in the political situation. The Tiananmen demonstration of 5 April 1976 was the starting point of a campaign for the rehabilitation of Deng Xiaoping — now Vice Prime Minister. As a result the democratic opposition and the pro-Deng faction of the bureaucracy have got mixed up together.

Some of those who have produced wall posters calling for 'socialist democracy' have maintained that Deng was the one who could bring that about. This clampdown has shattered that illusion.

The high point of the democratic movement so far came at the end of January when a large demonstration of poor peasants and students protested outside a banquet hosted by premier Hua Guofeng and were dispersed by troops.

One of the organisers of the peasant protest, Fu Yuehua, was later arrested. Amnesty International has expressed

concern over her subsequent disappearance.

Also arrested in the latest round-up was Wei Jingsheng, the author of a celebrated wall poster calling for 'democracy, not slavery', and editor of a wall newspaper called Exploration.

The slogan guiding official policy since the middle of the decade has been that of the 'Four Modernisations'. Wei suggests the addition of a fifth modernisation — democracy.

There has been a flowering of unofficial groups organising for the fifth modernisation. The best known is the Human Rights Alliance, whose leader Ren Wanding was arrested last week.

The Alliance has published a 19-point programme which includes demands for the release of political prisoners, for elections with the right to form opposition parties, for the abolition of the secret police, for an end to censorship, for freedom of travel, for a minimum grain ration for the peasantry and

for a reconciliation with the Soviet Union. 'The Soviet

Union is a socialist country,' the programme says.

No truck with Chile

By Dave Hayes

THE Chile trade union solidarity conference on 24 March renewed its campaign to boycott all Chilean goods — a call which was endorsed by the Chile Solidarity Campaign annual general meeting the following day.

Attended by over 200 delegates and observers from 17 unions, the trade union conference was answering a call from Chilean union and political leaders. Most vital is the boycott of copper which accounts for 75 per cent of Chilean trade and which has hardly been stopped.

Jimmy Doyle, shop stewards' leader at Liverpool docks where there is a total boycott of

Chilean foodstuffs, explained that as a minimum we need a national boycott of the Chilean fruit and vegetables which are beginning to arrive this month. Chile 'exports hunger', selling good food while children suffer from malnutrition.

Stewards from East Kilbride, where they held up and rendered useless Pinochet's aero engines for nearly five years, stressed that an effective boycott will mean a fight against the leadership in many unions.

The campaign will be increasing its information material on the details of Chile-Britain trade and has a colourful new poster and special stickers ['No truck with Chile'] for lorries and cars.



THE latest Intercontinental Press/Inprecor (Vol 17, No 13) is a special issue of debate on Indochina, including contributions by Ernest Mandel, Fred Feldman and the Japan Revolutionary Communist League.

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.

Rhodesia—the British stake

By Richard Carver

IN the United States they used to talk about 'company towns'. Rhodesia began life as a company country and not a lot has changed since then.

It was colonised not by a European state but by the British South Africa Company. Foreign capital, dominated by British and South African interests, still has a 70 per cent stake in the economy.

Last week we looked at the similarity between the policies of the major British political parties — all were based on stopping the Zimbabwean people from deciding their own future. We said that the only debate between them was how best to preserve imperialist interests in Zimbabwe. But why is this? And what are those interests?

Imperialism does not unequivocally support Ian Smith. The Anglo-American proposals for a peaceful transition to black neo-colonial rule reflect the hostility which many multinational companies felt towards Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965.

In part this reflected a traditional rivalry between colonial and settler interests.

In the post-war years, British companies expanded their traditional mining interests and broke into manufacturing, services and commerce, which had previously been settler-dominated.

Yet the Central African Federation, formed in 1953 and of which Southern Rhodesia was part, was a device of settler capital to create its own internal market. And then the election of Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front to government in 1963 marked a decisive new victory for the settlers.

Hence the nervousness of many companies when Smith threw down his provocative challenge to the British state.

They need not have worried. Multinational companies are resilient and adaptable organisations. The Bingham report on



The unacceptable face? Lonrho's Tiny Rowland.

the continued supply of oil to Rhodesia is an indication of how lightly most of them took the threat of sanctions.

They did face problems in Rhodesia. The Smith regime's tight exchange control regulations forced them to reinvest rather than repatriate their profits. South African companies have had free movement of capital and their stake in Rhodesia has correspondingly increased since UDI.

The press creates the impression that Rhodesia is out of bounds for the international business community, but many British companies still have a large stake there.

These include: Turner and Newall, British American

Tobacco (chairperson Sir Richard 'bribing wogs' Dobson), Stewart and Lloyds, GKN, GEC, Dunlop, ICI, and British Electric Traction.

In sharp contrast to its public statements, the British government has substantial interests in Rhodesia through British Leyland and the British Steel Corporation.

But two British-based multinationals tower above them all and consistently figure among the top four profitmakers in Rhodesia — Rio Tinto Zinc and Lonrho.

RTZ is most notorious in southern Africa for its operations at the Rossing uranium mine in South African-occupied Namibia. In Rhodesia it has big holdings in mining and industrial engineering, through its subsidiaries Empress Nickel Mine and Tinto Industries Ltd.

Lonrho — once dubbed the 'unacceptable face of capitalism' by a Tory Prime Minister — manages to combine brazen defiance of sanctions with backing for certain black parties.

Lonrho has close relations with pro-Western African leaders such as Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda. The company's owner-director, 'Tiny' Rowland, understands that superficially radical measures, such as nationalisations or joint ventures with African governments, do not necessarily threaten Lonrho's interests

and can even strengthen them.

This explains Lonrho's increasing links with sections of the Zimbabwean Patriotic Front — it sees Zimbabwe's future as neo-colonial and it wants to have a share in that future.

Lonrho is perhaps the model of the modern multinational. Its network of subsidiaries in every section of production allows it to both sidestep sanctions and confidently establish relations with liberation movements in the expectation of future profits.

This should not lead us to cynicism over the liberation movements. However successful it may be, the Lonrho-style multinational treating with a liberation movement is a sign of the weakness of capitalism on a world scale. And the movements themselves are not undifferentiated agents of British imperialism. Quite the reverse!

But capitalism — and British capitalism above all — will cling on to Zimbabwe with all the resources at its disposal.

*Much of the information in this article is taken from back issues of the Zimbabwe Information Group bulletin. A UK subscription for five issues of the bulletin costs £1 for individuals and £1.50 for campaigns and institutions. From ZIG, 1 Cambridge Terrace, London NW1.



Iranian women's appeal

THE Iranian Women's Solidarity Group has sent out the following letter asking for sponsorship for the planned women's delegation to Iran.

Dear comrades,

In the recent revolution in Iran women played a significant part in the overthrow of the Shah's regime. Their demands were the general demands for the overthrow of the corrupt and barbaric dictatorship and the establishment of democracy and basic rights rather than their own specific demands.

However in the recent wave of demonstrations and rallies following the International Women's Day in Iran women have been demanding their rights. This meant demands as basic as the right to choose one's clothing, provision of childcare and contraception, as well as the right to work, let alone full equality with men.

These actions have met with a great deal of hostility and also attacks from religious fanatics and agents provocateurs who support the old regime.

Furthermore the question of women's rights has been equated with other aspects of westernisation so that the demands for women's rights are termed as counter-revolutionary.

We are a group of Iranian and British women who believe in women's liberation and its importance to any social revolution in any society. We are calling for a women's delegation to be sent to Iran to investigate and report back on the situation of Iranian women.

We are also calling for a demonstration on 19 May in London and for support for a conference on the situation of women in Iran on 12 May at City University in London.

We need your help in sponsoring and publicising these activities and in raising money for the delegation. Each delegate will cost £500. A minimum of £3,000 is needed. Please raise this matter in your women's organisation, trade union, student organisation or political organisation.

Yours in struggle,
Iranian Women's Solidarity Group

Initial sponsors:

Anna Coote, Alix Holt, Tess Gill, Sheila Rowbotham, Cathy Porter, Angela Phillips, Margaret Renn, Amrit Wilson, Oonagh McDonald MP.

IWSG can be contacted at Women's Centre, 45 North Street, Clapham, London SW4.

MURDERED!

Apartheid hangs Solomon Mahlangu

APARTHEID murdered Solomon Mahlangu because that is the only way it can deal with black opposition. Mahlangu and four other members of the African National Congress were hanged at dawn last Friday, 6 April.

Solomon Mahlangu died because he was not prepared to accept that the racist regime had the right to send its police shooting their way through his town like gunslingers off a Western set.

Mahlangu was at school in Soweto at the time of the student uprising in 1976. The conclusion he drew from the police massacres was the need for armed struggle to bring down apartheid.

So he left the country for military training with the ANC.

He returned secretly in 1977 and was captured by police in Johannesburg after a shoot-out.

Two whites died in the shooting and although Mahlangu was not directly involved he was still tried and convicted of murder.

Murder is a strange category in South Africa. Strange because it does not seem to matter whose finger is on the trigger. Solomon Mahlangu's was not, but they found him guilty all the same.

And strange too because it applies only to the death of whites. The hundreds of blacks gunned down in Soweto in 1976 were not murdered according to South African justice.

And so, the apartheid regime decreed, Solomon Mahlangu had to die.

And we say that is murder.



Picket of South Africa House in London organised by Anti-Apartheid on the day of the execution.

The common touch

THE Tories are so taken with Ian Smith's idea of 'majority rule' that they are sending a team of observers to look at next Tuesday's 'election'.

No doubt they will be much impressed by Smith's jolly wheeze of not allowing any of the major opposition parties to take part. It could catch on here.

The six-man delegation [and it is six-man] must know what it is doing because it is led by Viscount Boyd of Merton, who

used to be Secretary of State for the Colonies. The delegation includes three lords, one knight, and two QCs.

That's called the common touch.

*In a deliberate move to sabotage the coverage in Socialist Challenge, Ian Smith has moved his elections from 20 April to the 17th. This came too late for us to prepare the survey of Zimbabwe we had planned for next week. So it will appear then all the same.

By Anna Libera

LAUNCHED with a fanfare several months ago, the campaign for the elections to the European Parliament in June 1979 has already run into problems.

A contradiction faces the ruling classes in their project of West European centralisation and integration.

On the one hand it requires the increasing synchronisation of the economic, political and social situations in the different countries. On the other hand, in each country they are faced with crises which temporarily require a closing of their ranks — divided on the European question — against the working class.

But attempts to hold back the working class at a national level actually go hand in hand with the establishment of an elected European Parliament in order to coordinate this at a West European level.

The establishment of supra-national West European institutions is the logical consequence of the West European concentration of capital, of the creation of West European multinationals.

The field of action of the state under capitalism has to match up with the productive forces and the relations of production. The internationalisation and concentration of capital in the EEC therefore runs up more and more against the continued role of the national states and the absence of supra-national institutions.

The foundation of the EEC itself was a response by big West European capital to the contradiction between the development of the productive forces and the straitjacket of the national states.

To keep up with American and Japanese competition, the West European industrial groups needed to unite and take advantage of a more and more concerted economic policy (raw materials, infrastructures). Hence the Treaty of Rome.

But because of the decisive role of the state (money, taxation, credit, infrastructure, social policy), these big West European groups needed supra-national institutions of a state type, capable of carrying out a centralised policy in their favour.

Once the inter-penetration and West European centralisation of capital reached a certain level, the pressure for a supra-national state became irresistible.

Since 1969 the representatives of the key sectors of West European capital have argued for a more thoroughgoing economic and political integration. As Fiat boss Agnelli put it on 20 February 1969 to the permanent industry commission of the Italian Parliament: 'If we want to plan the development of the automobile industry, then we must take it in hand at the supra-national level.'

That is the historic tendency. But in a period of growth it wasn't necessary to go beyond measures to aid exports and guarantee profits. Only with the onset of the big world economic recession of 1974-75 did the crisis of the EEC explode.

There was no supra-national state capable of carrying out the anti-crisis policy needed by the big West European groups to compete with the American trusts, who had a powerful state at their service.

In this situation, in the absence of a supra-national state, each bourgeoisie began to concern itself with its own economy. Thus Italy demanded a series of exemptions from the community's economic agreements at the height of the crisis of the lira.

And they turned to their national states to deal with the deep social crisis which was developing.

There was a clear risk that the EEC could simply fall apart, particularly as the national states were tending to adopt protectionist measures in order to limit competition from the other

High stakes in the European elections



French steel-workers fighting EEC attacks.

economies.

So in 1977 the most far-sighted representatives of West European big capital (the social-democrat Helmut Schmidt and Giscard d'Estaing) took steps to counter this.

The bourgeoisie, after the first explanation of the crisis as a temporary consequence of the rise in oil prices, now settled down for a crisis of longer duration, and began to sharpen up its instruments for making the working class bear the cost.

At their 'summit' on 4 February 1977, Giscard and Schmidt announced their intention of acting as the motors of a European resurgence. Their common declaration explained:

'The West German and French governments would like to see the Community take up again in 1978 the moves towards economic monetary union, a necessary stage on the road to European union.'

'They hope that the policies of recovery (read austerity!) put into action by several member states will contribute to this.'

This clearly revealed the objective: to co-ordinate the anti-working class austerity policies put forward by the governments of the member countries of the EEC, and to use the crisis to redeploy the forces of West European capitalism.

These objectives lie behind the

three connected measures which the West European bourgeoisie is currently trying to apply: the creation of the European Monetary Union, the enlarging of the EEC, and the election of the European Parliament.

The creation of the European Monetary System (EMS) is in line with several concerns of the European capitalists:

— not to be subject to the fluctuations of the dollar;

— to free the movement of European capital;

— to co-ordinate the anti-crisis policy (credit, etc.);

— to create a common reserve fund which would allow (strong) countries to influence the political, economic and social choices of governments faced with a powerful workers movement (in the tradition of the IMF in recent years in Peru, Italy, Britain, etc.).

The EMS is intended to accompany and act as a guideline for national austerity policies.

For example, the economic policy committee of the EEC admits that the poorer countries which join the EMS will meet with difficulties, because it will require them to give greater priority to questions concerning the balance of payments, and less to other objectives such as growth and employment.

On the other hand, because the EMS regulates the rates of exchange, that will reduce the number of political instruments available to governments faced with a crisis.

The main pitfall on the road to establishing the EMS lies in the disparity between the different national currencies, the different economies, the different social and trade union situations.

These disparities are currently blocking the full implementation of the EMS, although the bourgeoisie would like to achieve this before the onset of the new recession.

The establishment of an elected European Parliament is intended to allow them to forge ahead with these projects by legitimising the whole operation in the eyes of the West European people — in the first place, the reformist leaderships of the working class.

In this sense one can talk of an institutional yoke on the West European workers and their organisations. By this means the different West European bourgeoisies also hope to have a go at reducing the political weight of the workers' organisations in each national state.

For example, Agnelli explained to the paper *France Soir* on 10 July 1976 (just after the Italian CP's big electoral gains, which were to lead to

its integration in the Italian parliamentary majority):

'In an integrated Europe, the problem posed by a strong Communist presence in Italy and France would be offset to some extent. The Communists would thus have the necessary time to go through with their democratic evolution (if they are capable of it), and we will have the time to confirm the sincerity of their respect for pluralism, not only politically but economically, and for the links which unite us in the West and which we don't wish to renounce.'

The fact that the West European bourgeoisies have encountered difficulties and delays on the way to realising this project does not mean that they will give it up.

This is also the significance of the proposed entry of Greece, Portugal and Spain into the EEC. For the bourgeoisies of these countries, the crisis they face makes entry into the EEC an urgent question.

Certain sections of the bourgeoisie in other EEC countries are more dubious, but four factors argue in its overall favour for the West European bourgeoisie:

— the advantages of a market consisting of a quarter of the world market;

— the interest for big West European agribusiness in cornering the market in the primary agricultural produce of these Mediterranean countries, and securing an opening into Third World markets in this sphere;

— the interest for the industrial groups in redeploying their means of production towards those countries with a cheap labour force;

— the need to give political support to weak regimes facing a massive social crisis.

For all these reasons, which are stronger than those for holding back, they are therefore moving towards an integration of the three candidate countries with special long-term clauses (particularly in order to limit the free circulation of labour from those countries with a high unemployment rate).

The entry of these countries into the Common Market — which is advanced and defended by the workers' parties in all three countries — will have immediate negative consequences for the Spanish, Portuguese and Greek workers.

It will strengthen the dominant sectors of capitalism in each country and therefore their ability to exploit the workers.

These reasons are enough to justify a rejection of EEC entry by the workers in these countries.

However, this opposition cannot be mounted on the line put forward by the Communist Party in France — opposed to enlarging the EEC — whose only consequence is to counterpose the interests of French workers to those of the three candidate countries, and particularly Spain.

For while the policy of the West European bourgeoisie leads to immediate divisions between the workers of different countries (in stimulating unemployment and therefore competition for jobs inside the working class), this cannot be answered by falling back on the defence of 'French jobs' coveted by 'foreigners'.

Opposition to the entry of Spain, Greece and Portugal can only be mounted in the name of centralising the struggles of the workers of these countries with those of workers in the 'Nine' against austerity.

A common campaign for a reduction in the working week can lead on to a fight for the democratic planning of the European economy and thus for the overthrow of capitalism.

* This article is condensed from a longer one which appeared in the 15 March issue of the French language *Inprecor*.

UNDER REVIEW

Seriously though; you've got to laugh

'Accidental Death of an Anarchist'

By Tariq Ali

WHAT is humour? Humour is a very controversial question for many British socialists. Why? Well there is the old puritanical strain in British socialism.

But there is also a somewhat bizarre conception of what a model revolutionary should be like.

There is a view that a modern Bolshevik should essentially be a soulless robot, carrying out routine tasks (preferably decided by someone else), incapable of recognising his/her own mistakes and above all being incapable of laughing at oneself.

A hypocritical version of the same is even worse: you can laugh and joke in a non-political milieu, but not where politics are involved.

People who refuse to acknowledge that humour and politics are interrelated should keep well away from *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* by Dario Fo, currently being performed by Belt and Braces. It will only upset them.

For everyone else the play will be a delight in terms of both politics and entertainment.

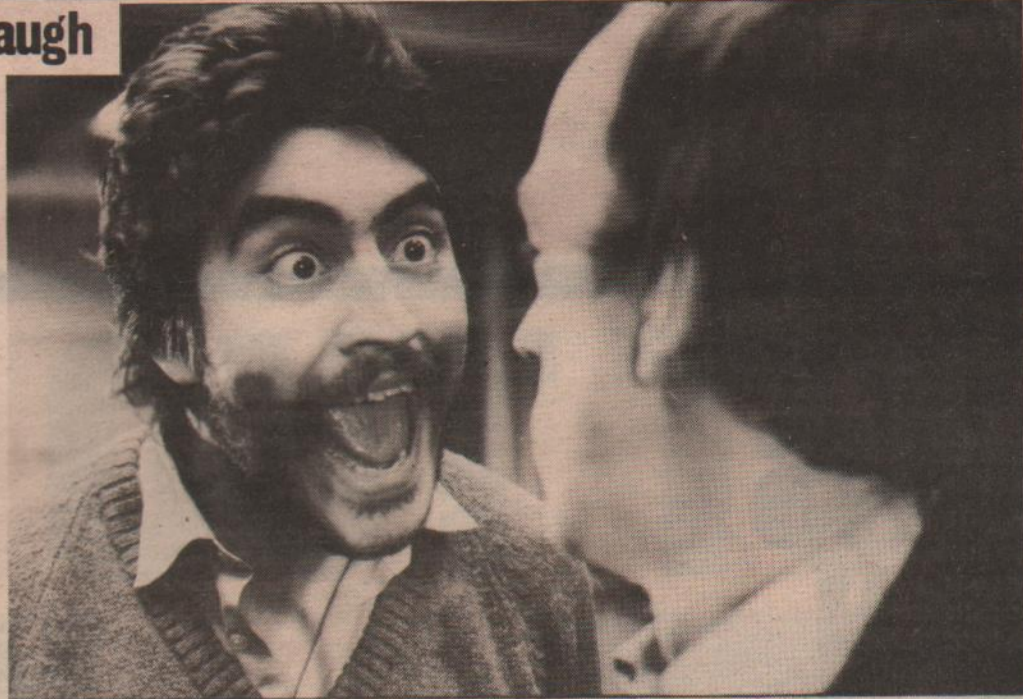
Dario Fo is the most popular comedian in Italy. He was driven off TV because of his politics. His satirical barbs against the Vatican and Christian Democracy delighted the masses, but upset the authorities.

Disgusted by the 'historic compromise' he parted company with the Italian Communist Party. He now works with a theatre company which plays before 700,000 people a year, predominantly workers.

Accidental Death is a ferocious satire against the Italian state. It describes the murder of an anarchist railway worker by the Milan police in 1969 and utilises that episode to explain the nature of the capitalist state.

OK, OK I'm making it sound heavy. Just read the excellent programme notes when you get there. Not another word from me.

You must go and see this play. It is the best that I have



'A Maniac' [Alfredo Molina] confronts police superintendent Andrew de la Tour

seen in this country for the last 15 years (and for two of these I had to see five plays a week as the theatre critic of a bourgeois magazine).

Now a word or two about the performances. When one says that this is the best play to be seen in this country for many years one is not just talking about the script.

It is the Belt and Braces production which does full justice to Fo's satire.

The performances are superb and the evening I saw the play there was a real camaraderie between the players and the audience, including the odd repartee. Not a trace of alienation.

Alfred Molina's performance as 'A Maniac' deserves a Lunacharsky (our equivalent of

the Oscar). It is simply brilliant.

This is not to underrate anyone else (Andrew de la Tour is aptly cast as a decaying, semi-fascist police chief), but to stress the fact that 'A Maniac' dominates the proceedings. It needed a Molina to ram the point home and he does.

The entire production, of course, should be filmed and shown on television, but then we are in Britain and this is election year.

The Prevention of Terrorism Act has just been passed again; Airey Neave has been blown up; tortures continue in H Block, blacks continued to be harassed, beaten up, etc.

Fo, too close to the bone in Italy, would saw through it in

Callaghan's Britain. Don't just go and see the play. Take all your friends as well.

'Accidental Death of an Anarchist' is at the Half Moon, Alie St, London E1 until 5 May, and at the Duke's Play House, Lancaster, 7-12 May.

Especially for the election, Belt & Braces and the Half Moon are co-producing a dramatised reading of Billy Colvill's 'The Scream'.

The play compares the Labour government's handling of the Grunwick dispute (and what it would do if there was a general strike) with how the social democrats dealt with the revolutionary upsurge in post-First World War Germany.

At the Half Moon on 22 and 29 April, 7.30pm.

Class war comes to the National

By Margaret Ford (Equity) and Paul Colbeck (NATKE)

ACTORS at the National Theatre in London are crossing a picket line set up by 80 members of the technicians' union NATKE.

A motion at the annual general meeting of Actors' Equity on 2 April, calling on the union to instruct its members not to cross the picket line, was effectively blocked by the union executive — they simply turned out the lights on the mover.

Yet one of their own members who has refused to cross the picket line is among those who face dismissal.

The National Theatre suspended 27 stage staff (pending dismissal) on 16 March after they had given notice of industrial action. This followed a year of protracted and frustrating negotiations for an acceptable and workable shift pattern.

On 19 March they were joined by 20 workshop staff who had previously been engaged in limited industrial action for their parity claim. Many members of other departments also refused to cross the picket line. All got the sack.

Management have stated that they will only re-employ the strikers if they sign a contract agreeing that any future unofficial strike action would mean instant dismissal. Meanwhile the National's shows continue in 'limited decor'.

The workers are now picketing the theatre 24 hours a day. If the dispute is not resolved this week they will also be calling for a mass picket of the theatre between 6 and 8pm each Monday evening.

The strikers know only too well that the outcome of this dispute could be crucial for the future of rank and file organisation in the theatre.

The imposition of the proposed contract would set a dangerous precedent for the rest of the industry, and for trade unionism as a whole.

Tribute to Trotsky

WE WOULD recommend to our readers the new double issue of *New Left Review*. It contains a passionate and moving tribute to Trotsky by Norman Geras.

The continued existence of anti-Trotsky prejudices among sections of the left intelligentsia is an indication of the ideological impact of Stalinism. Geras' text restores Trotsky to his real stature: that of a giant.

He does so by concentrating on the literary quality of Trotsky's writings. It is a fitting tribute to print in Trotsky's centenary year.

New Left Review, No 113-114, £1.75, available from all left bookshops.

By Richard Carver

THE BBC and IBA are approaching the elections with their customary 'balance'. This means, among other things, that parliamentary candidates are not allowed to be featured in any other capacity than as candidates, since that would be

free publicity.

Incidentally, that was the reason why Jeremy Thorpe's trial was postponed — 'If we give him coverage, they'll all be demanding that they're charged with conspiracy to murder.'

Another early casualty was Labour MP Joe Ashton, who

had a television play postponed until after the election.

But surely a better way of achieving balance would be to give the Tories a few light entertainment slots as well. How about the Eurovision Song Contest — Keith Joseph singing 'Money makes the world go round', or Michael Heseltine in 'Hair'.

VIEWERS can probably survive the next month without Joe Ashton's opus, but the 'balance' policy has more serious consequences.

Racism, we are always told, is something that all respectable politicians are opposed to. But that hasn't stopped the BBC from postponing *Dread, Beat and Blood*, a film about Linton Kwesi Johnson, the black poet.

How balance comes in is unclear, since Johnson doesn't have a kind word for any of the political parties. But perhaps that's the problem.

Even more sinister is the BBC's comment: 'In the normal way the BBC would have balanced, over a period, the highly personal political judgements which are a vital part of the film.'

Does this mean that this explicitly anti-racist film would be compensated for by equal time for explicitly racist views? Yes, that's exactly what it means!

LINTON Kwesi Johnson has found an unlikely champion in the *Daily Star*, which last Thursday carried an article which was distinctly 'un-balanced' in that it only quoted



Linton Kwesi Johnson

the film's director attacking the BBC decision. (This is in contrast to the liberal *Guardian*, which only quoted the BBC.)

This is hardly enough to make you rush out and buy the thing, but it is significant that the *Daily Star* is still keeping its voting intentions secret.

The *Star* is, as you would expect, a thoroughly disgusting newspaper — the term is used loosely, since it carries very little news — whose most obvious feature is its 'Full Colour Starbird'.

But in its enthusiasm for capturing the 'lower' end of the market it has come out with some strange positions.

It handed over the front page to NUPE's Alan Fisher during the public sector dispute and the centrespread to Arthur Scargill when the miners put in their claim. Editorials frequently denounce both major parties for their attitude on low pay.

The *Star* is owned by

Trafalgar House, with the *Daily Express* as its stablemate, so it seemed unlikely that it could call for anything other than a Tory vote. We asked its editor, Peter Grimdsitch, to let us know what's in store.

It turns out that he thinks it's wrong for newspapers to tell their readers how to vote. On 3 May the line will be: 'This is what Labour's offering, and this is the Tories' package. Decide what you want.'

Grimdsitch didn't say exactly how these policies would be presented. He did add, though, that when the *Daily Mirror* gave heavy front-page promotion to Labour in one of the '74 elections its circulation apparently dropped by 150,000.

And it's circulation that the *Star* has uppermost in mind.

*The cartoon which illustrated last week's article on the election and the media was by Christine Roche and first appeared in *Labour Research*.

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Socialist Challenge

Pakistan: Bhutto hanged

ZIA SIGNS HIS OWN DEATH WARRANT

By Tariq Ali

IN THE face of overwhelming mass opposition inside Pakistan the generals hanged Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the country's last elected Prime Minister.

There was a wave of spontaneous protests throughout the country. In Rawalpindi, Lahore, Peshawar and Karachi the masses confronted the police and the army.

They attacked banks, built barricades, and set police stations on fire. Over a dozen people were killed and thousands arrested.

The slogan which everyone chanted was: 'Revenge! Revenge!'

After four days of rioting the generals have restored a shaky peace, but this is not the end of the story.

The sheer cold-blooded brutality of Zia and his cohorts has shocked the entire country.

Many old rivalries have been forgotten. Former opponents of Bhutto were prominent among those who demonstrated against the hanging.

Even if the army now tolerates a general election and even if Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) wins, the masses will be looking for other solutions. And the means of attaining these will be mass struggles, strikes, land occupations, and so on.

The question of minority nationalities will also become prominent. Bhutto was a Sindhi. The general who hanged him and the judges who acquiesced are all Punjabis — though the Punjab masses are as opposed to hanging as the rest of the country.

In hanging Bhutto, the generals have provided him with a halo of martyrdom. In death he will prove to be a more powerful image than when he was alive.

Zia does not have long to go. The only question is whether he will be replaced by a coup from within the army, an unstable government which emerges from the promised elections, or a series of mass uprisings.

Pakistan was always a state without a past. The generals have ensured that it is also a state without a future.

* Tariq Ali, Socialist Unity candidate in Southall, was among the 8,000 Pakistanis who marched from Hyde Park on Sunday to condemn Bhutto's hanging.

* More than 300 Pakistanis marched through Nottingham last Sunday in protest at the execution of Bhutto. Speakers at a final rally were Shebir Nawaz, Mohammed Aslam (a leader of SCOPO), and Julian Atkinson (Socialist Unity election agent).



Photomontage: PETER KENNARD

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