

# Socialist Challenge

## THIS WEEK

### TORIES ATTACK...

#### Our pockets



It isn't only the Chancellor of the Exchequer's despatch case that will be battered when he delivers his Budget package on 12 June. John Ross writes on the world economic recession which is closing the Tories' options...page 2

#### Abortion

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It's no flag, no anthem, and no change in Muzorewa's Rhodesia, which was quietly reported in Britain so as to not embarrass the Tories who hope to accommodate the new regime...page 12

## OUR RESPONSE

### Unions

The Rank and File conference on Defend Our Unions is on 23 June, the same day as the SE Region TUC's conference on unemployment where Tony Benn will be speaking. We interview the organisers of both events...pages 8 and 9

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# NO CUDDLING UP TO THATCHER



## END THESE SECRET TALKS

LAST Thursday Len Murray had talks with Margaret Thatcher.

Mr Murray is general secretary of the Trades Union Congress. He represents over 12 million working people. His job is to defend their interests, protect their rights and fight for a rise in their standard of living.

Thatcher is a Tory Prime Minister. She has promised to attack a number of traditional rights of trade unionists. Her government is drawing up a budget with one of the most swingeing attacks on the working class seen in post-war years.

Thatcher is presiding over a prices explosion which will hit working people particularly hard. And her government is about to announce large salary increases for judges, top civil servants, and, inevitably, cabinet members and members of parliament.

So why did Mr Murray have talks with Mrs Thatcher? What possible common ground can the two have? What did Margaret Thatcher and Len Murray say to each other?

We do not know the answers to these

questions because Len Murray has refused to provide them. What happened at these talks was secret, Murray refused to give any details, he made no statements.

If any of the trade unionists in whose name Murray went to see Thatcher last week want to know what was said on their behalf, then as far as Murray is concerned they can go take a running jump.

There is only one possible reason for these talks — and the previous ones the TUC had with Thatcher on the budget.

### 'Secret' talks

The exercise just might have been worthwhile if immediately the meeting had ended Murray had outlined the exact details of the Tory's plans to attack working people; explained what the TUC would do in defence; and announced that any further negotiations with the most right-wing government since the 1930s was for him incompatible with his position as general secretary of the TUC.

In doing none of those things and instead insisting that the talks were 'private', Murray did more than show gross contempt for the people he is meant to represent.

The most inexperienced shop steward could have told the TUC general secretary that negotiating on a basis of 'what can I give you' is like walking into a jail with handcuffs in your back pocket.

But Murray doesn't see things like that. After all he has never even been a shop steward.

Accordingly, it is up to those of us who are shop stewards and those of us who are rank and file trade unionists to insist that the trade union leaders immediately cease their private, cosy chats at 10 Downing Street.

Their job should be quite different: to organise a united fight back against the Tories.

If they refuse to do that then other means of performing the same task will have to be found.

Whichever way is chosen the same principle applies — no talks with the Tory jailer, but break out of the prison.

**Rank & File Conference Manchester 23 June**

## OUR POLICIES

Capitalism is in crisis. The leaders of the Labour Party and the trade 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 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 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 'Eurocommunist' 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.

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)

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Address.....

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

## EDITORIAL

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# The Muldergate scandal

MULDERGATE, like Watergate, has finally toppled the country's head of state. But press comment has only scratched at the surface of the issues surrounding Vorster's resignation.

The Erasmus Commission has not questioned the need for the secret projects whose unauthorised state financing led to the scandal. On the contrary. The attempted takeover of the Morgan Grampian publishing house, for instance, is described as 'a bona fide effort to gain a foothold in foreign media with the object of promoting South Africa's interests'.

These projects — more than 130 in all, and including unspecified campaigns in Namibia and Soweto — aren't challenged because they were and are needed to counter the growing threat to the apartheid regime posed by the black population and the world anti-imperialist movement.

Vorster — whose 'unblemished integrity' was lauded by Erasmus as late as last December — has had to be sacrificed in a bid to end the affair and stop speculation about premier P.W. Botha's own role in allowing money from his former defence

budget to be used in financing the secret projects. Vorster's likely replacement, Louwrens Muller, is presently pushing the Advocate-General Bill through Parliament to prevent further newspaper exposés of the scandal.

But much of the damage has already been done. The confidence of the apartheid regime and its supporters has been badly shaken. The advantage is increasingly ours — if we care to take it by building a worldwide solidarity movement that can topple the system as well as its idols.



## The Pope in a workers' state

WHEN the Cardinals hid away to select the successor to Pope John Paul I last year, they must have had a chuckle at the idea of enthroning an East European. Capitalist recessions are never healthy for the Vatican's investments, and anything which can distance the workers in the West from the alternative offered by the workers' states helps to underpin the bosses' solution to their crisis.

The millions who have greeted Pope John Paul II in Poland are an eloquent testimony to the

barren social and cultural life foisted on them by the bureaucratic leaders of the workers' states.

It takes bleakness in daily life for the rituals of the Catholic Church to hold any charm, and the suppression of political debate and opposition for millions to put their trust in the reaction of the Vatican rather than the transformation in every sphere of life that revolutionary Marxism would make possible.

Far from informing the Pope of the untold misery that Catholicism has brought in its wake,

the Polish leaders shook his hand. Better to appease the followers of God's representative on Earth than risk organised resistance which could spill over into a repetition of the strikes by Polish workers in the early 70s and again in 1976.

When fear of the masses is at the centre of the policies pursued by the Polish regime, it is not surprising that they would prefer to accommodate Catholicism than risk the self-organisation of the masses which would put an end to their bureaucratic rule and privilege.

## FIRST WORD

# The remarkable battle behind the budget

By John Ross

IT IS not often that the Labour newspaper *Tribune* has anything good to say about the Treasury. Last week, however, that journal looked to the mandarins of Whitehall to save us from the Tory budget to be presented on 12 June. According to its economics correspondent:

'A remarkable political battle has been going on in the Treasury. It involves an attempt to win the hearts and minds of the Tory Treasury Ministers to a view of Britain's economic future that is quite the opposite of that which Margaret Thatcher and Sir Keith Joseph have portrayed.'

The pages of the *Financial Times* and the City column of the *Daily Telegraph* have also been spattered with leak and counter-leak; first that the Tories had abandoned their election manifesto budget plans to cut taxes and slash public spending, then that they intend to press on with these cuts no matter what the consequences.

This type of speculation has even found its way onto the pages of the 'popular' press.

## Deathbed

What on earth is going on here? Can it be, as *Tribune* believes, that 'the Treasury ... in a deathbed repentance of the monetarist policies which it forced on the Labour government ... is dreading the impact of unreformed Tory policies'? Has Whitehall now embarked on the road to socialism against the evil axe of the Tories?

In reality, what is going on is much simpler. The struggle in the Treasury — and it is obvious there is a fight going on — is not over the nature of the Tory budget. There isn't, and never has been, any

qualitative difference between the policies of Tory Chancellor Sir Geoffrey Howe and Labour's Denis Healey.

Healey wanted to cut living standards through wage controls and Howe wants to do it through VAT increases to put up prices. Between these two, the Treasury and the capitalist class as a whole would probably marginally prefer Denis Healey's solution — if it would work.

What is creating a problem is the more or less daily information that is streaming in to the government revealing the rapidly deteriorating state of the world economy. The influential business magazine *The*

*Economist* spelt out the situation in the following blunt way last week:

'The seven leaders of the free world's biggest economies... will meet at the end of this month to try to stop economic growth slipping through their fingers. Oil prices and shortages have added their stagflationary pressure to a prospect overcast by rising inflation everywhere — and now also of a real fear that a recession may at last have started in the heart of the world economy, the United States.'

The gloom expressed in this statement was positively optimistic compared to some of the predictions that are doing the rounds. The most important international economic

research body, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), is predicting simultaneous rising inflation, soaring unemployment, and a collapse in growth rates by the beginning of 1980.

The OECD notes that in four of the seven largest economies in the capitalist world price rises are already running at over 10 per cent a year. Meanwhile economic growth is predicted to fall to 3 per cent a year in the capitalist world in 1980.

As it takes an annual growth rate of four and a half per cent merely to keep pace with the rate at which new technology and productivity drives are throwing people out of work, this means rapidly lengthening dole queues throughout the capitalist world.

It is this economic situation which is causing the problems in Whitehall and the disputes in the Tory Cabinet. Thatcher was elected with a promise of higher wages and an expanding economy through tax cuts and private enterprise.

## Terrified

Instead, within six months in office, she will be presiding over falling real wages through inflation, and soaring unemployment. The Treasury is terrified this will lead to a massive struggle to defend real wages next winter, and demands for huge increases in public spending to provide jobs.

With a government becoming increasingly unpopular, that is a recipe for disaster for Tory policies. How the Treasury and Sir Geoffrey Howe sort out their budget problems we will soon see. Whatever the outcome, it will be bad news for the working class. But we can try to make their fears for next winter become a reality. That will turn the present disputes in Whitehall into a real crisis.

## Hands off Piers Corbyn!

DEMONSTRATORS will be protesting at the Marylebone Magistrates Court next Wednesday in defence of leading squatter Piers Corbyn.

Corbyn was found guilty on 1 May under the Trespass Law, although sentencing was postponed.

Corbyn's crime? He was a victim of the vicious police raid carried out by the police at the Huntley Street mass squat last summer.

The postponement of sentencing has arisen because the probation officers' union, NAPO, which opposes the Trespass Law, advised its member assigned to Corbyn not to report as the case was clearly 'political'.

It's doubtless been left to management of the Probation Services to produce a report on Wednesday.



Assemble Marylebone Magistrates Court, Marylebone Road, Edgware Road tube, 9.45am, Wednesday, 13 June.

## The left on the elections

THE main sponsor of this paper, the International Marxist Group, is calling for a vote for Labour in the EEC elections except in West London, where Tariq Ali is standing.

Ali told us: 'The IMG doesn't distinguish between pro- and anti-Market candidates. We call for a vote for Labour not because of its bankrupt policies, but because it is based in the working class and represents the need to organise independently of the ruling class and its parties.'

Below DODIE WEPPLER reviews the positions of other forces on the left.

### Morning Star

THE mid-May meeting of the Communist Party's executive committee called for a vote in the EEC elections only for those Labour candidates opposing the Common Market. It concluded that it was impossible 'to operate' an earlier decision to stand CP candidates.

Yet one week later the Morning Star announced that CP member Stuart Hill was contesting the Middlesbrough seat with the support of the CP's Northern district committee against a Labour pro-Market candidate. Only attentive readers of the party's fortnightly journal Comment learnt about the EC's 'regret' at this action.

A letter to the Morning Star argued that official CP candidates would have meant 'a rare opportunity to...advance our alternative policies'. But the kind of policies put forward by Hill (standing simply as an 'Anti-Common Market' candidate) offer no real alternative that working people can fight for.

His contribution to the local Evening Gazette's columns simply contained familiar calls for import controls, vague appeals to 'develop technology', and 'support for developing countries at UN conferences' as a piece of token internationalism.

His real 'Little England' approach — uniting bosses and workers — was typified in his statement that 'the EEC has plans to grab our oil and gas'. Since when did British workers have control over these resources?

### Socialist Worker

'HOW we vote on 7 June doesn't matter too much [but if you do vote, vote Labour]. . . What really matters,' argues Ian Birchall in last week's Socialist Worker, 'is to get on with the job of building the only alternative to the Common Market... Throughout Europe we have to make links with the fightback.'

Despite the lack of importance attached to the EEC elections by the SWP, one of its leaders, Duncan Hallas, did call from the platform for a vote for Tariq Ali and Bernadette McAliskey at a recent 'Make Ireland an Issue' meeting in Ali's constituency.

### Big Flame

THE June edition of Big Flame explained that it supported 'voting Labour everywhere, except West London where we support Tariq Ali's campaign'.

The article went on to explain that Big Flame is a signatory of an 'against the bosses' Europe' manifesto supported by various groups in other European countries. Big Flame's participation is explained on the basis of 'how can we on the far left strengthen our links across Europe'.

Yet the manifesto appears to represent little in real terms. The signatories disagree even on what attitude to adopt towards the elections.

Big Flame call for a vote for Labour and the IMG; the VS in Denmark have entered an anti-Market electoral pact with a bourgeois party; the PSU in France tried to get a joint slate with the bourgeois Left Radicals; while Sinn Fein in Ireland is advocating a boycott. Sinn Fein also refused to sign that part of the manifesto which supported abortion rights.



ERNEST MANDEL speaking, others (L to R) Tariq Ali, Brian Grogan, Anne Speed, Barbara Green, Val Coultas

All photos: G.M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

# International rally denounces Market

MORE than 200 people attended a rally on the EEC elections last Friday organised by the International Marxist Group. The IMG is standing Tariq Ali in the West London constituency as part of a common revolutionary campaign organised by the Fourth International in all nine EEC countries and the three (Greece, Portugal, Spain) which have applied to join.

The platform reflected this internationalism. Below we report some of the main contributions.

**TARIQ ALI:** The role of the EEC is to co-ordinate capitalist efforts to repress the working class and all struggles against imperialist exploitation. We can only fight the EEC by fighting alongside our European brothers and sisters for a common goal.

We need a European congress of labour. And one item that obviously wouldn't be on the agenda of such a meeting would be import controls!

We also need to fight the division of Europe through solidarity with the struggle for democratic rights against the bureaucratic regimes in Eastern Europe.

It's possible to fight now for a free confederation of socialist republics on a European scale. But one of the main lessons of the last ten years is that you need a revolutionary organisation to lead that fight.

**ANNE SPEED** (People's Democracy): The importance of international campaigning was shown for us in the British election campaign. The systematic efforts of the 'Make Ireland an Issue' campaign and others were really important for the morale of the nationalist people in the ghettos and on the blanket in H Block.

Bernadette McAliskey's present campaign — for which I'm the election agent in Derry — is a marvellous opportunity to put forward the central issues: support for the men of H Block, against the RUC/Army torture, for the withdrawal of British troops, and for the self-determination of the Irish people as a whole.

In Crossmaglen, for instance, old Republicans have been coming up to



ANNE SPEED of People's Democracy at the rally

us and saying that they've never voted since 1918, but this time they'll be voting for us — for the men of H Block.

We say that the repression in Ireland — the doorstep of Europe — must be raised throughout Europe. Only the Fourth International is doing that in these elections. That is why PD, many campaign activists, and Bernadette McAliskey herself are supporting the FI's campaign.

**VAL COULTAS** (IMG Political Committee): This is a particularly appropriate time to deal with the role of the Labour lefts, because it was the EEC referendum debacle which most clearly showed the need for a socialist alternative at a national level — hence the IMG's campaign for revolutionary unity, and the launching of initiatives such as Socialist Unity.

But it's not just needed nationally. If you look at the insular traditions of the British revolutionary movement, it's absolutely clear that you also need a framework whereby you can look at the British situation from outside — see yourself as you really are.

That's why the IMG is part of the Fourth International, and why we appeal to you to join with us in this campaign.

**BARBARA GREEN** (Revolution youth paper): One section of the working class has been at the



BARBARA GREEN from Revolution youth paper

forefront of the struggle since the year dot — youth. We've seen it in Zimbabwe, we've seen it in Iran, as well as all over Western Europe since May '68.

Yet youth have no rights. We make up 40 per cent of the unemployed in the EEC — yet the labour movement bureaucrats don't lift a finger for us. Youth aren't allowed to organise at school, they're harassed (particularly black youth) under 'Sus' and similar laws all over Europe, they're chained to the family, young women are denied access to abortion and contraception facilities.

Our comrades in France and Spain have already set up revolutionary youth organisations. We're hoping to do the same early next year out of Revolution. But finally we need to fight for a revolutionary youth international.

**ERNEST MANDEL** (United Secretariat of the Fourth International, candidate in Belgium): The working class in Western Europe was temporarily caught off balance by the economic crisis which began in 1974. For years it had been misled by the reformist leaders into believing that a steady rise in its living standards was guaranteed through the mixed economy, the welfare state, and bourgeois democracy. And now these self-same leaders were going along with or even initiating austerity policies.

It took the working class some time to react, but its recent struggles have sharply limited the eventual results of the bourgeois offensive and revealed the real relationship of forces between the classes.

The possibilities for an international struggle in steel symbolise what it means to be for a workers' Europe against the Europe of the bosses. They underline the need for overall socialist solutions. The Fourth International is proud that it has been able to mount such a campaign: not only against austerity, but for women's rights, against imperialist repression of the type we see in Ireland, against the nuclear threat.

## Pro-abortion campaigner on trial

**PORTUGAL** — one of the countries applying for EEC membership — has no legal abortion whatsoever. It's even illegal to give the facts about abortion.

Since mid-May an enormous campaign against these reactionary laws has been gaining momentum. This is because a woman journalist — Antonia Palla — has been on trial for incitement to crime and offence to public morals after helping to research and introduce a television programme revealing the facts about backstreet abortion.

Antonia Palla accuses the government of protecting the medical profession which makes fabulous profits from illegal abortion. She also defends herself on grounds of freedom of the press.

There is a picket of the Portuguese tourist office, 1 New Bond St, London W1 at 5pm on Thursday 7 June, to show solidarity with our Portuguese sisters and to call for the dropping of the charges against Antonia Palla. This has been called by the International Campaign for Abortion Rights, which has also issued an appeal for a woman's right to choose on the occasion of the EEC elections.

# ANL's role: a scorched earth policy against racism

THE Anti Nazi League was founded on the basis that its main task was to expose the National Front as fascists, and counter their propaganda during the general election.

In this it has been remarkably successful. The low vote for the fascists was a symptom of a harsher defeat — the frustration of their attempts to appear as a 'respectable' party.

As the self-confessed Nazi British Movement intensifies its pressure on the Front, and 'soft' and 'hard' fascists compete to show themselves the more effective at harassing black people, there are likely to be more bricks going through windows; more assaults in the streets at night.

But while the fascists' presence will be felt, they will have great difficulty hoisting themselves from the political ghetto they have been forced into.

## Tory government

Is the ANL's job now over?

The return of a Tory government has shifted the political spectrum further to the right. The Tories' proposals to further limit immigration directly attack black people, and will stir the latent racism within the workers' movement, conveniently deepening the divisions within it in preparation for an attack on the working class as a whole.

The Labour leadership's response to these proposals was to say that tighter controls were not needed because the Labour government was already keeping immigration to a trickle. Having conceded the principle, they are hardly in a position to object to the practical proposals, and the result will be that the Tories' plans for stricter quotas on the

number of work permits will be widely accepted within the unions.

The Tories' law and order pledge is no less dangerous for the workers' movement than it is for black people themselves.

## State force

Saturation policing to halt 'mugging'; numerous police swoops for 'illegal immigrants'; greater use of the Public Order Act to prevent the violence of 'right and left extremists alike' will all help to create the atmosphere for more legal controls against 'violent and secondary picketing'.

What was the response of the Labour leaders to Southall? Instead of expressing their solidarity with the Asian people defending their rights, they chose to condemn 'violence from any quarter'. The Tories were no doubt grateful.

It will be by performing as the most fervent advocates of Tory policies that the fascists will try and burrow into the unions and workplaces.

The type of activist involvement achieved by the ANL in exposing the Front as fascists is now what's needed to build mass action campaigns against the racist proposals of the Tories. Already the ANL has taken some steps in that direction.

In Oldham, the ANL campaigned against the threatened deportation of Abdul Azad under the immigration law.

## Campaigns

Nationally, the League supported the demonstration against state harassment organised by a broad coalition of black organisations last weekend. These steps have to be strengthened and co-ordinated nat-

# WHO KILLED BLAIR PEACH?



# NO COVER UP!

'Who killed Blair Peach?'  
Camden ANL public meeting  
speakers: Tariq Ali and a member of the East London Teachers Association  
Tuesday, 12 June, 7.30pm.  
Camden Town Hall, Judd St, off Easton Road, London NW1.

ionally. The ANL has to see its job as not only taking up these campaigns itself, but organising to win the labour movement as a whole by confronting the racist prejudices of white workers, and challenging the right wing in the unions which will be mirroring the Tories' campaign.

The carnivals must not stop. They need to be used to strengthen the

campaigns against attacks on black people, and to push forward the fight in the workplaces and unions against the racism which is all too much in evidence. The ANL still a major role to play.

## WHAT'S LEFT

**POSTERS** showing arrest of Hugo Blanco by the Peruvian army. 50p each, funds to be shared by IMG Fund Drive and Peruvian PRT. Write for poster, enclosing 10p for p&hp, to R.D. Duckworth, 35 Malvern Avenue, Frenchwood, Preston.

**WANTED:** full-time refuge worker for Hackney Women's Aid. Write: HWA, 87 Cecilia Road, E8 for details.

**WOMEN'S** Motocycle Maintenance Co-op. Meeting to plan future programme, Sunday 10 June, 2pm, 12 Castle Street, Camden (Kenish Town tube). All women welcome, especially new members.

**SCIENCE** under capitalism conference. How far are scientific knowledge and technology capitalist? Fri 15 June, 7.30-10.15, Sat 16 June 10.5-30, Coopers Hall, Student Union, Imperial College, Prince Consort Rd, London SW7. Open to all. Details from: BSSRS, 9 Poland St, London W1, 01-4372728.

**EDINBURGH** UTM Irish social on Sat 9 June. Heriot Watt Union, Grindlay St, 8-12pm. Folk music and late licence. Also join UTM contingent on Scottish Miners' Gala leaving Hillside Cres, Edinburgh at 10.30am, 9 June.

**REVOLUTIONARY** Communist Tendency public meeting: 'Smash the Prevention of Terrorism Act'. Speakers from RCT and IRSP. Fri 8 June, 8.30pm, Clapham Library, Clapham Common (Northside), London SW4 (Clapham Comm tube).

**BROADSIDE** Theatre, a London based socialist touring group, requires: 1. a second administrator (graphic design skill an advantage); 2. a versatile female performer (including singing). Both full-time, long term commitment. Write giving full details of experience, skills, politics, approach to theatre and reasons for wanting to work with Broadside to 28 Holborn House, Holborn Place, London SW1. For further details phone 01-4782581.

**CAMPAIN** Against Racism and Fascism — CARF — new address from May 79. CARF, Box 12, c/o 135 Kingsland High St, London E5 2NS.

**INSTITUTE** of Race Relations meeting. Stuart Hall, Director of Centre for Contemporary Studies at Birmingham University will lead a discussion meeting around the Open Door (TV) Campaign Against Racism in the Media programme. It will be shown at the meeting. Thurs 7 June, 8.45pm at 247 Pentonville Road, London N1.



POLICE prepare for riot at Leicester

**BOP** with TLC (funk, jazz, soul) and **The Winner** (reggae disco) Kilburn/West Hampstead ANL Carlton Centre, Granvill Road, London NW6 June 8, 8-12, midnight Kilburn Park Tube Adm: £1 (plus 20p bar membership)

## Leicester

FIVE thousand police descended on Leicester on 21 April.

Why? To allow the Nazis of the National Front to launch their general election campaign with a parade and meeting in the town, where one in seven is black.

Local people, black and white, and anti-racists from all over the country, saw it as a deliberate provocation.

The NF were forced to give up their plan of marching through the city centre and had to hurry into their meeting knowing they weren't welcome.

But the cost to the anti-fascist movement was great. In addition to many injuries in the fighting which broke out, 87 anti-fascists were arrested.

The first cases have started to come up in court, and the attitude of the magistrates can be judged from one of the convictions. A defendant who pleaded guilty was fined £250 plus £10 costs plus VAT for a first offence of 'threatening words'!

If you have any information which may help the defendants, or if

you will raise money for the costs, send for details, collection sheets and donations to: Leicester ANL, April 21st Committee, c/o 20 Main St, Kibworth, Leics.

In particular, Oxford ANL would like to contact Graham who reported the arrest of P Duffy to Leicester Poly, and the woman who 'asked' the police to stop kicking him. Write to Oxford ANL, PO Box 16, Oxford OX1 2JE.

## Student union expelled

NO doubt inspired by the new government, the administration of one of Britain's most militant campuses, Sussex University, began to clamp down last week.

Last Thursday, photographs were taken for the vice-chancellor of a protest against the exam re-sit forced on science students. The exams had previously been boycotted as unfair assessments.

Individual students were then threatened with expulsion for this student-union backed protest. At an emergency union

meeting it was decided to occupy for 24 hours against victimisation, and 300 students on rent strike since January are threatened with expulsion as well.

Most worrying is the expulsion by the vice-chancellor of Richard Flint, president of the students' union. He and another student, Shaun Fensom, have also been prohibited from entering university property.

In other words the vice-chancellor can sack the union's presidents thanks to his power to expel students.

## In and out of class

By Anna de Casparis, North London NUT

THE leadership of the National Union of Teachers holds the quaint idea that the place to fight racism is in the classroom — and only there. Hence the union's ban on affiliation to the ANL.

The All London Teachers Against Racism and Fascism certainly wants to tackle racism in the content of education and in the structure of schools,

but it sees the need to link such work in a wider campaign, and for teachers to be involved with school students, parents, and local anti-racist groups.

Blair Peach, who taught in East London, did not confine his anti-racist activities to the classroom. Last week, 60 teachers joined a picket of the Home Office called by ALTARF to support the demand for an independent inquiry into Blair's murder.

Speakers from the Southall Defence Committee and the Blair Peach Memorial Fund will be among those at ALTARF's conference on the next steps to develop the campaign against racism in education.

The conference is on Saturday, 9 June, 11am to 5pm, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. There will be films, exhibitions, bookstalls, food, and a creche.

Among the workshop topics will be the problems of black teachers introduced by the Society for Immigrant Teachers. The TV programme Our People will be shown, with a discussion introduced by its producers.

## Late abortion is our right 'I didn't know I was pregnant'

LATE abortion is likely to be the anti-abortionists' next target. They talk about the foetus's right to life in emotional language.

This is the story of one late abortion — we leave it to you to judge the effects if the woman concerned had been forced to go through with her pregnancy.

Anita Bennett spoke to Harriet.

Harriet sat in the afternoon sunlight smiling and talking about her art. She is 25.

'I've finished my apprenticeship and now it's just beginning to take off.'

She is a serene and friendly person, totally without a trace of resentment or depression in her voice. Which comes as a surprise when you learn that she was a victim of medical bungling.

Something which led to her having a late termination, at 6 months pregnant.

Ironically, she fell pregnant in February 1975, the launching time of the infamous James White Abortion Amendment Bill.

'You know I felt terrible on the pill. It left permanent dark pigmentation on my skin. It happens to lots of women — they should all be warned.'

'I had been off the pill for 6 months when I made love for the last time with the man I had been going with for 6 years.'

'It must have been that last night that I conceived.'

### Sick

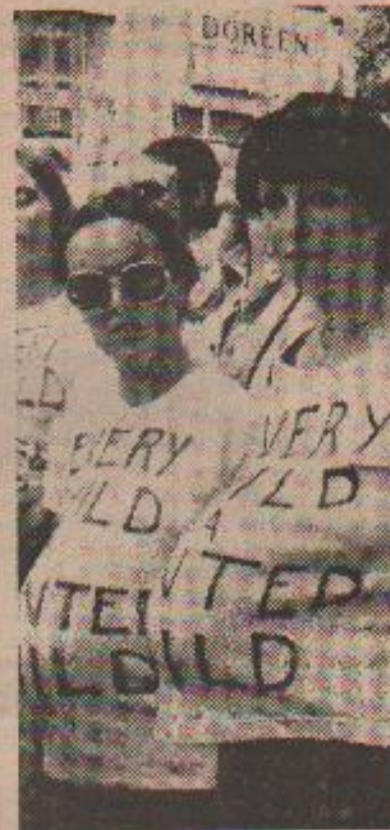
'I went for months without any relationships. Then I began to feel indications of pregnancy.'

'I'd just come back from Italy and I was sick every morning. My boobs got bigger.'

'My periods continued normally for the same length of time. After four months I went to see my GP who had training in gynaecology.'

'By this time I was living at home again and planning to leave the country.'

'Well, at least you're not pregnant,' he told me. 'Take some



of these pills for your tummy.'

'I didn't feel any bigger. My mother was the same way. She didn't even look pregnant when she was seven months along.'

'And periods are no indication either. A friend of mine continued to have her periods even when she was pregnant with twins. It was quite a shock!'

'I took the pills that the GP gave me. I asked him again if he was sure I wasn't pregnant?'

'Off I went for another month. By that time I was feeling alright, but still not putting on any weight.'

'Then I went to a Harley Street gynaecologist. In a very clipped tone he said to me: "Young lady, you are five and a half months pregnant. Good luck to you."

'He didn't believe my story about continuing periods. He said I

couldn't get rid of it now and he told me to book in at the ante-natal clinic through my GP.'

'I felt desperate, desperate. And he was my mother's own gynaecologist. He had always been so helpful.'

Harriet's voice warmed as she spoke about her final gynaecologist, someone she had known previously. She didn't want to ask him, because he was going on holiday for two weeks. So she went to four or five gynaecologists over the next week.

'They all said they couldn't do it. I don't know whether it was because of their consciences or because of the law. There is one man who will do anything if you pay, he would have charged £1000 for a whole caesarian.'

'I couldn't tell anyone, not my parents nor my old boyfriend. It was all over. Finally, when I couldn't get anyone else this nice man told me to stop worrying, that he would get me a late abortion on the NHS as soon as he came back from holiday.'

### Relieved

'At this time I was just beginning to show.'

'I went into a regular gynae ward and was told not to say anything to the other women. They didn't ask.'

'There was a strict little sister who treated me like a slut until she learned what had happened. Then she was very nice.'

'I was in hospital for three weeks because there was some infection. But I felt so relieved straightaway, I can't tell you.'

'Of course, I feel badly about it sometimes, but there was no way that I could have raised a baby under those circumstances.'

'Maybe now it's different, but then I would have had to depend on my parents.'

• The National Abortion Campaign national conference is on 9 and 10 June at Meadows Community Centre, Queens Walk, Nottingham. Details from NAC, 374 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1. Tel: 01-278 0153.



Photo: MARK RUSHER (JFL)

## Health cuts—fighting back

Fightback is holding a national delegate conference against the health cuts on 30 June. KATE TRUSCOTT, a leading activist in Fightback, explains the importance of the conference.

In building a movement against the Tory attacks, we have to present an overall political alternative — a vision of the sort of health service we need. Without it many people will be demoralised. 'Are we fighting the Tory attacks, just to replace them with erosion of the health service under Labour?', they'll ask.

At the Fightback conference we will be drawing on the experience of militants involved in campaigns against hospital closures, to see how they've considered the need for such an alternative.

We will look at struggles for community hospitals, for facilities to meet the needs of the community, for the particular needs of women, for the elimination of private practice and so on.

It will be policies like these which will form the basis of a real anti-Tory fightback.

'Health — not cuts' Fightback conference to be held on Saturday 30 June at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Details etc from: Fightback, 30 Camden Rd, London W1. Tel: 01-560 3431 ext 679.

## Students' fragile new alliance

By Mick Archer  
Member NUS executive

THE outcome of the special 'open conference' for students held on 26 and 27 May was nothing less than predictable.

A 'new left alliance' in the NUS was formed after two days of frank and sometimes heated debate, and the project of the Broad Left leadership — a 'bloc' of the Communist Party, Labour Party, independents and Liberals — came into being.

It has been clear for some months that the Communist Party students, and those independents grouped around them, were intending to form such an alliance.

Nevertheless, the debate at the conference revealed the reservations of some sections of the old Broad Left and the fragility of the agreement reached.

The divisions were between those who wanted to retain some commitment to a socialist strategy and those who were anxious to remove any obstacle to unity with the Liberals.

### Close

A close vote succeeded in retaining a sentence in the programme of the new alliance that approached international work 'from an anti-imperialist perspective'.

But a phrase stating that the programme 'is a socialist one' was deleted in favour of saying it's 'one that is supported by both left radicals and socialists'.

Although these differences did exist



there was general agreement on the strategy underlying the new alliance — the 'strategy for democratisation'.

This strategy involves seeking alliances with 'progressive' forces within education — whether they be students, local authorities or vice-chancellors!

It was argued that this had become even more necessary with the election of Thatcher and the Tories.

But the vague formulations and evasive policies of the programme do not make it an adequate tool to tackle the real dangers posed by a Tory government.

Socialist Student Alliance members at the conference argued consistently for an alliance based on socialist policies to meet the day to day issues facing students, linking them to the class nature of education and society

as a whole.

The rejection of clear socialist policies, in favour of a superficial, 'consensus' obscuring differences, poses new dangers for NUS and the student movement.

In the struggles to come such 'unity' will only be maintained at the expense of union organisation, democratic rights and the living standards of students as a whole.

Nationally the SSA has to continue the fight for a genuine unity of socialist forces opposed to the new alliance and to the policies and record of the Broad Left.

By confronting these developments through debate and independent action we can begin a national fight back against the Tories and against any attempt to disarm or neutralise NUS in the major political battles which lie ahead.

## College lecturers' conference

By Tessa Van Gelderen

THE first teachers' union conference since the general election was far from being a rallying point of opposition to the Tory government.

Delegates to the conference of college lecturers and in particular the Broad Left, who lead the union (NATFHE), seemed unwilling to face the consequences of the Tories in government.

Indeed, the Secretary of State for Education, Mark Carlisle, making his first speech, was politely received after the President, Peter Knight, had been at great pains to point out that the invitation was to the 'office' not the 'individual'.

We were encouraged to give Carlisle a chance; despite the fact that a freeze on all local government posts had just been announced.

An emergency resolution in opposition to these cuts was passed overwhelmingly, but there was very little debate and certainly no passion.

### Bureaucratic

The Broad Left seemed far more concerned to use its bureaucratic procedures to stop the far left, and Rank and File in particular, from raising important questions of politics and democracy.

They ensured that debate could not take place on our present salary, negotiations and ruled out of order all amendments of any meaning on the main salaries motion for next year which comes from the National Executive Committee (NEC).

The NEC/Broad Left largely won the day.

The last two conferences have passed long and detailed resolutions on women's rights, and, again after a long struggle, the union has finally affiliated to the National Abortion Campaign.

But the union has achieved very little in real terms for women teachers.

### Maternity

One particularly worrying aspect has been the complete lack of movement on maternity leave. Perhaps pregnant teachers could postpone having their babies for another year!

NATFHE, proud of its conditions of employment, has worse conditions for maternity leave than unions like NUPE and NALGO, whose members work alongside NATFHE members.

The vital area of 16-19 education was discussed and although motions along the right lines were passed, conference's heart wasn't in it.

There's little use in passing resolutions on education versus training when most young people will face a choice of training for the job or unemployment.

This area of discussion yet again highlighted the inadequacy of NATFHE in understanding the implications of the change of government.

NATFHE will be forced to decide between professionalism and trade unionism.

The middle course, where the Broad Left has been steering NATFHE, is now a blind alley.

# Fighting for jobs 'Little England' policies won't work

By Jonathan Silberman

WHEN Chancellor Geoffrey Howe arrives at Westminster next week all of the more unpleasant surprises in his budget briefcase will have the effect of forcing even larger numbers on to the dole queues.

The Tory decision to freeze all civil service recruitment is just the bitter beginning. In July, thousands of school students who have never had a job will face a dreary, penniless summer.

And the jobs shake-out is relentless, thanks to the effects of capitalist rationalisation and closures, and of the new technology.

## Competition

The Tories want to improve the competitive position of British industry on a world-scale — at the expense of the working class. This isn't easy, especially at a time when inter-imperialist competition is hard.

Their efforts are in the context of a more general trend of capitalist re-structuring on European-wide basis so that loss-making firms can be eliminated, and the average rate of profit raised.

Unemployment is a big weapon that can weaken the fighting strength of the labour movement. If there's one thing a large 'reserve army' of unemployed can do, it's to deter militant struggle.

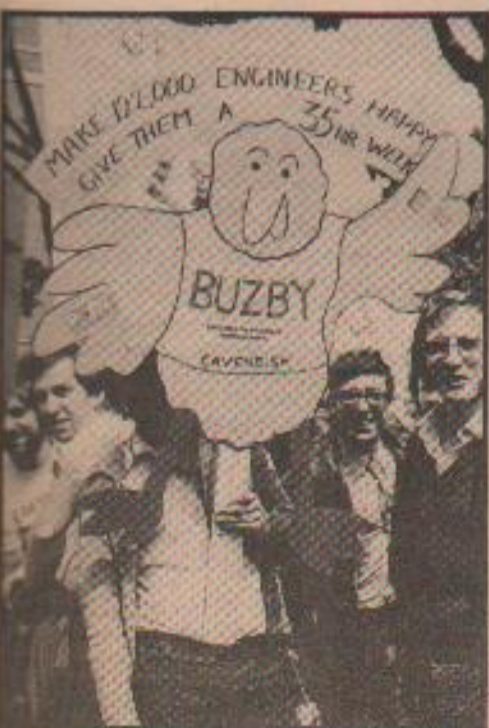
The Tories have a big job in front of them. The fighting spirit of the working class has not been destroyed despite official unemployment figures of 1.3 million. But in some areas, like Merseyside's Speke, the numbers of jobless has taken a grave toll amongst a growing demoralised and pessimistic community.

As one Speke worker argued at a recent local meeting, 'If we can't tackle structural unemployment, then we are certainly going to be incapable of defending our other basic rights'.

## Struggles

During five years of hard 'Labour', it's not too easy to recall more than a handful of struggles against unemployment. Yet under the Tories the memories of those struggles looms large — UCS, Fisher Bendix, Plessey Alexandria, BSC River Don.

Why has there been such little resistance to the growing dole queue in recent years? Especially in a situation where some of the most powerful sections of the British working class, like Leyland, have been affected.



First, the past big struggles were part of a broader movement against the Heath government which culminated in the miners' strike of 1974.

Furthermore, unlike under the recent Labour Government, the working class saw a clear alternative. The vision of that alternative included Benn — who associated himself with

\*Defend the right to work, and on socially useful products.

\*Occupations to defend jobs. A campaign of mass action for the 35-hour week with no loss of pay. Nationalisation without compensation and under workers' control of all firms declaring redundancies — cut hours not jobs. A campaign of unionisation of the unemployed.

\*Defend the public sector. Abolish the cash limits system and protect public expenditure from the effects of inflation through automatic increases.

For a public sector alliance as a first step to mass class-wide action against the cuts.

Abolish private practice in the public sector and nationalise without compensation all social services supply industries. Complete opposition to all denationalisations.

many leading struggles against unemployment — at the helm of industrial policy.

Under Labour, however, the same Tony Benn who had marched arm in arm with Jimmy Reid in previous times became a (silent) member of the Cabinet. In addition, the whole collaborationist machinery installed by Wilson and Callaghan under the Social Contract and through legislation like the Employment Protection Act undermined militant struggle on all issues.

The most important reason for the absence of struggle on the scale of those in 1971-2, however, was the qualitative deterioration of the world economy in the crisis of 1975.

In 1971 workers felt they could win through occupations and other actions. A benevolent Labour government or another firm would bale them out.

After 1975 this was not the case. British Leyland said there was no money — and it was believed by workers, because it was the truth. With Labour's Tory policies, there was little hope that the government would come to the rescue.

Similarly, in the public sector, workers accepted the logic of the cash limits — with a fixed sum of money agreed, all that's left to haggle over is how to divide it between wages, jobs and service-provision.

## Catastrophe

Today, any strategy to tackle the jobs crisis has to confront head-on the catastrophic prospects for the economy. To date the absence of such a strategy has de-railed the jobs fight.

Benn's solution is two-fold: a programme of import controls to protect the British economy, plus government intervention to stimulate demand (and to counter the long-term investment strike by employers).

This ignores the strategy of the ruling class to massively increase unemployment, and to weaken the workers' organisations.

A socialist strategy can't start from the need to convince the employers to invest or for import controls. Its beginning has to be the need to prepare workers — including those already unemployed — for a massive united struggle against the employers and against any government which sanctions the bosses' actions, or declares redundancies itself.

It's not a defence of the British economy which is called for, but an assault on its capitalist character. Not a 'little England' policy, but one based on international workers' action.

Any labour movement leader who opposes job losses can't genuinely act in the interests of the working class unless they back a fighting policy, committed to job defence through mass action. But our fight can't be left in the hands of the leaders. We have to start organising now.

## Consequences

For instance, labour movement-based public sector action committees (which already exist in places like Preston) can develop broad workers' unity to meet the Tory attacks.

The most massive lobby of the TUC in September is a second task for militants in the coming months. Remember, if we can't give a fighting lead to youth, history has shown the disastrous consequences when it's left up to others.



# Another generation joins the dole queues

By Redmond O'Neil

IN JULY another generation of school leavers will hit the dole queues. They will join those who left school at Easter and even some, like Mark from Birmingham, who are 'celebrating' their first anniversary of life on the social security.

As Mark explains, 'After three months the demoralisation starts. Signing on becomes a ritual telling you you've no future.'

Unemployment of youth under 18 years of age rose by a staggering 1100 per cent in the five years between July 1973 and the same month in 1978. This compares with an increase of 250 per cent for the population as a whole over that period.

## Worse

With Thatcher in power the situation for youth can only get worse. Already Labour government policies have created youth unemployment as a specific, structural aspect of the economic and social crisis. Trade union leaders, who bleat about the 'waste of young people on the dole', have made the position of youth worse by accepting natural wastage and voluntary redundancy agreements.

The Tories aim to cut jobs further in the public sector, thereby limiting opportunities for 'new entrants onto the labour market'. And they are out to step up productivity and rationalisations in private industry.

The Youth Oppor-

unities Programme introduced by the Callaghan government was an attempt to mask the startling development of mass youth unemployment.

Youth on the schemes receive no serious training. In some cases, they provide cheap labour for employers, and at the end of a few months four out of five find themselves back on the dole.

## Abysmal

But the alternatives to the programmes aren't very appealing either. If you stay at school you get nothing. At further education colleges, the average grant for 16 to 19 year-olds is £2.22. On the dole, the rate for under-18s is £11 a week.

If you do find work the conditions and pay are generally abysmal. The only work Mark could find was in a small components factory.

'I was doing a heavy monotonous job with no union. About twenty-two pounds for 40 hours, and spending £2 a day on food and bus fares. The boss wouldn't even supply overalls till you'd been there more than two months, so my jeans and boots were wrecked.'

Unemployment for youth means being at the mercy of sweatshop employers when you are in work; boredom, nowhere to go and police harassment and when you're on the dole.

Black youth and young women come right at the bottom of the pile.

In some areas of London 40 per cent of local black youth are unemployed and young

women under 25 made up 57 per cent of the total female unemployed in January 1978.

It was these youth offered no future by capitalism in crisis who took to the streets with the Anti Nazi League and Rock Against Racism last summer. But it was also white youth in the East End who became prey for the arguments of the National Front that the solution to unemployment is import controls and repatriation.

So part of any strategy to fight unemployment must be a specific struggle for jobs for youth. That entails a united campaign to mobilize youth, demanding the union leaders act to fight unemployment.

Policies are needed to break the isolation of youth on the dole, and to link the fight for jobs with the fight for training and education, open to all youth with a guaranteed level of maintenance.

The trade unions themselves should open their doors to the unemployed youth. A permanent movement of youth against unemployment could force them to do this.

## Unity

This could unite the existing campaigns around a programme for action. It could also draw together all sections of youth — unemployed, students, young workers — to fight round these policies and for other issues that confront youth on the dole: a place to meet, social facilities, education and training.

# CIS New Technology Report

## A sharp vision of future profits

By Stephen Marks

AS long as the profit system has existed, technological advances which could have brought a better, richer life for all, have been used instead to attack the jobs, work-conditions and wages of working people in the interests of greater profit.

But what is new, and hard to grasp, is today's vastly greater scale of this process. The threat, and the potential, are both beyond the range of our experiences.

Word processors, computers, and data transmission satellites are all already familiar. Put the three together and you get the 'automated office' where on each desk is a terminal which can call up instantly any one of millions of pieces of data from any number of 'memory banks' throughout the world.

Newly-originated material can be combined with these at will, and reproduced and transmitted to any other terminal in the same building, country or planet.

Add the potential, given the Prestel system, for these facilities to be available in every home, and the implications are explosive. We can imagine more vividly than ever before, a society in which bureaucracy and the division of labour are things of the past.

### Swathes

But as the latest CIS report *The New Technology* shows us, the reality under the profit system is completely different. Word processors alone have cut swathes through office employment.

The Halifax Building Society progressed from



automatic typewriters... to a system of 16 word processors. The workforce has not been reduced but the workload has almost trebled. The typists are at the machine all day apart from two 15-minute lunchbreaks.

So office work gets more and more like the most routine type of factory employment; and management increases its control over the minutest details of the working day.

Nowhere is the contrast between the liberating potential of the technology and its use under capitalism clearer than in its effects on women. As the CIS report points out, 'Over 70 per cent of women are employed in the service industries, compared to only 40 per cent of men. No less than 40 per cent of all women workers are in clerical occupations... There are three million women office workers.'

But in Britain clerical unemployment is rising

faster than the average.

So one of the major impacts of the potentially liberating new technology could be to force women back into the home, thus reinforcing the oldest oppression of all.

In the longer run, a confidential report prepared for the Department of Industry by a director of the state-financed micro-chip firm INMOS predicts that the new technology could lead to an unemployment level of 3.5 million. The research department of the white-collar union ASTMS puts the figure up to five million jobless by the mid 1980s, even if the Government goes for a policy of rapid economic growth.

But governments, Labour as well as Conservative, have stuck to bland assurances that the new technology will create more jobs than it destroys. The CIS report reveals that the Department of Industry has even hired a private

public relations firm to conduct a three-year campaign at a cost of £10 million to persuade 50,000 management and union 'key decision-makers' of the need to rush ahead with the new technology.

Nor will only office-workers suffer. The report takes a detailed look at the impact of the new technology in the print and the Post Office, and makes clear that it also has implications in engineering and manufacture.

The history of capitalism is a history of successive 'new technologies' making old skills redundant, and so increasing not only profits but employers' control over the workforce, as skilled workers' power to enforce 'on-the-job' control [as in the print] is destroyed by deskilling.

But this time round, the scale is so much greater and the impact so speedy that combined with today's economic crisis, there is a near-zero chance of new jobs springing up elsewhere.

As the report acknowledges, the first item in a workers' response must be to insist that the technology is not brought in without safeguards over all jobs and conditions — including the defence of women's jobs. But if effective, these would hit at the employers' reasons for wanting the new technology in the first place.

Also needed are ways of projecting a workers' alternative; and an international dimension, given the international scope of the technology and the multinationals like IBM which dominate the market. Serious thinking on both of these points within the workers' movement is hardly even beginning.

\* CIS Report 'The New Technology', 75p.



## TUC squares up the technology circle

FINALLY getting in on the act, the TUC held a conference last week on new technology. The approach resembled that of a child's to a block of ice cream: fully appreciative of how nice it tastes, but unaware that it can make the eater very sick indeed.

Reassurance was the most commonly adopted stance; both of the speeches from general secretary Len Murray and of the TUC's interim report, *Employment and Technology*.

Happy to be beating the western drum Murray began by proclaiming 'the leading nations in the world are the nations which lead in technology'.

But the major pronouncements to the 61 unions represented involved the effect of the new technology on unemployment. The TUC report was unsure, almost neutral: 'Some job losses are immediately obvious...in other areas the extent of job displacement is as yet uncertain...the potential of microelectronics for creating new jobs is, however, even more difficult to assess'.

With such a hazy brief in front of him Len Murray concentrated on what causes unemployment. He could almost have been quoting from the *Financial Times* when he argued that employment levels are 'determined by two things. One is output. The second is productivity'.

Answering the objections of unnamed critics who, said Murray, might be tempted to argue, 'let's have output growth, but hold productivity constant, then we can increase employment,' the TUC general secretary countered, 'that might be an attractive idea if we did not have to sell on world markets — and in our own — in competition with other countries. It is productivity and prices — via the exchange rate — which largely determine the result'.

With these words, Murray spelt out the core of the TUC's position — that it is the profitability of British capitalism which is the guarantor of the employment, and ultimately of the wider interests of British workers.

Even supposedly 'left' critics on the TUC General Council endorse this framework. Clive Jenkins, ASTMS general secretary, has described the impact of the new technology on employment as the 'job holocaust'. But he says we must learn to live with it.

Communist Party member Ken Gill goes even further. 'A central demand must be that Britain manufactures the new technology' in order to make up for 'Britain's backwardness'.

Of course, they hasten to stress that capitalism will not provide such things automatically. This will need policy from the TUC, and government intervention.

### Vicious

'What we must do is square the otherwise vicious circle of technology and employment', Len Murray explained. 'The overall objective which we have set ourselves is of achieving a basic 35-hour week throughout industry...we need a further massive expansion of the training and education services — not cuts in them.'

Finally, Murray said that these matters could be resolved with full information. 'It is no longer tenable to treat the subject of disclosure of information as marginal to the main trade union job. He (sic) who has the information has the power.'

But even on these questions, Murray failed to give any indication whatsoever as to how they would be achieved.

# Fighting the chips with socialist policies

TWO weeks ago the Socialist Challenge Trade Union Conference set aside one session to debate the impact of the new technology and workers' plans.

STEVE CORBISHLEY is a national executive member of the Civil and Public Service Association. He opened the session with the following remarks.

"I SHOULD point out that I'm speaking in a personal capacity. In our union, failure to do so can result in legal writs and High Court action quicker than the introduction of the new technology!

I will concentrate my remarks on the impact of the new technology amongst office workers and in particular in the civil service. By that I mean the quarter of a million civil servants, 71 per cent of whom are women, who are low paid and who perform boring, mundane secretarial and clerical jobs.

### Implications

The impact of the new technology on these people will be enormous. A Sussex University report predicts the shake-out of 9 million workers in the next 10-15 years. We've already seen some of the implications.

Fifty per cent of the secretarial posts at ICI in Teesside have been axed. Bradford Council

reduced its staff in one section from 44 to 22 with the introduction of 9 word processors.

But the problem itself is not new. First and foremost it involves the drive by the ruling class to cut staffing levels; to make inroads into work practices and to carry out speed up.

There should be no fundamental difference in our political strategy on the new technology than toward, say, productivity bargaining or toward the introduction of mechanisation in manual work.

### Isolated

The key issue is a cut in the working week. The Post Office engineers and the Fire Brigades Union launched struggles around the demand for a shorter working week. But they were isolated from the working class and stabbed in the back by the TUC leaders.

The second issue is full control over health and safety. This is particularly important with the new technology. Its introduction into offices often goes along with eliminating many of the normal breaks which say typists have.

A particularly macabre example is where the machinery is designed not only to perform its own particular function, but also to measure and monitor the work-process itself and the productivity of the workers.

In one office the equipment monitors so



closely it can identify when women office workers have their periods!

I'd like to turn to considering the question of workers' plans as an answer to the problem. The pressure on those who have taken up the workers' plans argument does not come from the revolutionary socialist movement.

It's largely a reaction to nationalisation as it has worked out in practice — capitalist nationalisation — combined with the argument of the left leaders that planning agreements are an encroachment on ruling class prerogative.

### Counterpose

In the absence of any fight against unemployment or on the question of the new technology from the trade union leaderships, workers' plans for alternative products, say at Hawker Siddley's, were produced as a way around a redundancy situation.

We must counterpose to this idea a policy of nationalisation without compensation. We have to integrate the issue of workers' control into this. Without this we will lose sight of the inescapable political fact that we live under a capitalist state.

No amount of planning agreements and workers' plans can get round this. Only by building a movement around socialist policies can we go forward.

**'No government has the right to render the labour movement defenceless'**

**JACK DROMEY**, secretary of the SE Region TUC, and Kent miners' leader **JACK DUNN** on the conference on unemployment in London and the South-east.

**Why have you called the conference?**

**Dromey:** First of all, we should make clear that the conference was called when the Labour government was still in power. It is an attempt to bring together trade union organisations in London and the South-East to develop an industrial and political strategy to deal with the question of unemployment.

The conference will be seeking to develop a series of demands around which the trade unions' industrial muscle can be mobilised to achieve industrial political objectives.

**Which demands?**

**Dromey:** They roughly come under two headings. First, industrial. There is a drive across all levels for the 35-hour week and the reduction of overtime. This would also have to involve a movement upwards of basic rates so that there would be no loss of earnings in the move to a 35-hour week.

Then there's the political. The defence of government intervention in the private sector and an extension of such intervention. Of course, we're under no illusion about the objective conditions under which we put this forward — a Tory government — but we feel it's vital to continue to advance the need for such policies.

**Dunn:** We need to change from a 'lame duck' strategy of government intervention to a positive political philosophy. This means the need both for strong defensive action and for strong offensive action as well.

**Will there be any definite action coming out of the conference?**

**Dunn:** We're hoping within the constraints of TUC policy to get some action at grass roots level.

**Dromey:** A measure of the success of the conference will be if major unions in the South-East have the 35-hour week in their next claims and take action over it; if we can get greater public expenditure in the region. The objective of the conference will be to say, 'Here's a programme of demands — now, how can we translate it into practical activity?'

**Dunn:** Take the civil service. They're suffering the Tory freeze on jobs. There's a need to get the unions in the civil service to act in concert over jobs.

On education — this isn't only a matter for teachers but for us all. There's the need to get the unions in education to take the lead in fighting back.

**How does the present leadership of the labour movement fit into this?**

**Dromey:** This is where we would disagree. It's not a problem of the rank and file versus the leadership. It's a problem that the dominant ideology at all levels has been in favour of the mixed economy.

**Dunn:** We've got to galvanise the rank and file for new policies. One would hope that this would reflect itself in a change of leadership.

**Benn is speaking at your conference. What role do you see him playing in this new direction?**

**Dromey:** We would welcome the opening up of a debate about the mistakes that were made over the last five years. Tony Benn has done a great service to the movement in seeking to promote this debate in

saying that the cause of the electoral defeat was not the 'winter of discontent' (for which the unions were not responsible anyway).

And he has encouraged discussion between the left and the right within the movement about a change in strategy.

**Shouldn't he have spoken out a few years earlier — when the seeds of the electoral defeat were being sown?**

**Dromey:** At a key time historically, he's done it. I'm not prepared to make a judgement on the past.

**Would you agree with Benn's position on what is involved in such a change of strategy?**

On collective bargaining, for instance, Benn only criticised Phase 4 (not 1, 2 and 3) in assessing the cause of the defeat.

**Dromey:** I don't want to put it in terms of what Benn says. I would put the problem in terms of the economic crisis in 1975-6 with the pressure by the IMF and the abandonment by the Labour government of the policies on which it was elected.

In so doing, the Labour government laid the basis for a shift to the right in society and paved the way for the Tories. I think that the Labour government's positions on pay and public expenditure were particularly important in this.

We had a government elected on a pledge to an 'irreversible shift in the balance of wealth and power in favour of working people and their families'.

Until such time that we develop the necessary politics and organisation to prevent it, we will have the endless cycle of cynicism, followed by disillusionment amongst our members, followed by defeat of Labour at the election.

**What do you mean by politics and organisation?**

**Dromey:** The labour movement has got to make up its mind. Is its strategy to prop up the mixed economy or is it for the creation of a socialist, planned economy?

We're for the latter. It's the battle of ideas for the latter that must go forward.

There are certain areas in this war of ideas:

- Defence of the public sector. We must explain that the public sector does not mean bureaucracy, but that it's essential for any civilised society.

- Nationalisation and government intervention. We've got to get over the idea that the best way of guaranteeing freedom is not by placing workers at the whims of private enterprise. It's through the increased public accountability that comes through the extension of the public sector.

We must break down the myth that nationalisation is an attack on freedom.

- Free collective bargaining. We've got to win the recognition that whilst we live in the jungle, we need the means to stay alive in that jungle.

And I'm utterly opposed to the view — put forward by Callaghan and others — that we take a supine view of the Tory attacks. They are attempting to take away our rights.

Just as we would not concede the right of any government to torture and murder, so we will not concede the right of this government to take away our inalienable rights.

No government, whatever its majority, has the right to render the labour movement defenceless.

**Needed: Operation Fortress to defend**

# THE SEARCH FOR THE UNITED ACT

**A TASK** for the trade union movement: how to blunt the Tories' axe on jobs and union rights. On 23 June, two conferences take up these themes.

A conference called by the South-east Region of the TUC will discuss the problem of unemployment in London and

the South-east; another, called

theme 'Defend Our Union Rights'. As part of our discussion, **JONATHAN SILBERMAN** discusses the conferences.



## The shape of pay to come

**REMEMBER** the Standing Commission on Comparability? Set up by Callaghan, it was to have been the salvation of the low-paid workers in the public sector.

One of Thatcher's first election pledges was that the Tories would honour any recommendations from the commission's benevolent chairperson, Hugh Clegg.

It was the promise of 'jam tomorrow' through the new commission which persuaded many workers to accept offers of around 9 per cent over the past few months, with £1 a week 'on account' to tide them over until the commission was due to report.

Well, surprise, surprise, one group of workers at least might end up even more out of pocket than they'd expected. According to NALGO, the report on nurses and midwives will be delayed beyond the 1 August deadline when the £1 on account expires!

Earlier this week, the Office of Manpower Economics, which

houses the Clegg commission, could not say whether this delay would apply to all groups referred to it.

It seems that the commission would like to revert to its original terms of reference — providing material for negotiations rather than making specific recommendations. This arrangement would allow the government much greater flexibility in applying its wages policy.

Meanwhile the teachers' pay claim is the latest to be referred to the commission, on which basis NUT leaders will be recommending acceptance of a two-stage offer amounting to only 10.8 per cent.

The Tories gave some clear indications this week of the shape of pay to come. Substantial increases have been agreed for those on top salaries: army doctors, dentists, judges, high-ranking army officers, and senior

civil servants, and MPs in the pip.

But some groups have shown that to passively accept a policy of big pay and a pittance

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The NUT Railwaymen h indefinite stri London unde June, and call with the emp refused to incre cent offer. On now deciding t

Pay talks engineers and continuing aft

**Conference on Unemployment in London and the South-East**

Saturday, 23 June, 10am-4pm  
Porchester Hall, Porchester Rd, London W2. Tube, Royal Oak.

Speakers: Tony Benn; Ron Todd, TGWU; Arthur Latham; Bob Wright, AUEW. Chairpersons: Alf Lomas, London Co-op; Jack Dunn, Kent miners

Called by SE Region TUC, London Co-op, TGWU, London trades councils, Shipbuilding and Engineering Union.

Details, registration, credentials etc from: Conference on Unemployment, c/o London Co-op Political Committee, 116 Notting Hill Gate, London W11 2BR.



# Defend our unions FOR UNION

by Rank and File, centres on the  
on the fight against the Tories,  
poke to the organisers of both



Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

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## Defend Our Unions

### Rank and File Conference

New Century Hall, Manchester

#### AGENDA

THE AGENDA will deal with the four major areas of the Tory attack:

- ★ Picketing and the right to strike
- ★ Recognition and the closed shop
- ★ Redundancy and the cuts
- ★ Rank and file organisation

#### SPONSORS

Action Works London Transport AUEW Shop Stewards Committee  
CPSA Manchester DHSS branch  
Dunlop Speke Joint Trade Union Action Committee  
Gardners, Manchester Joint Stewards Committee  
Garners Strike Committee  
Hackney Council Joint Works Committee (GMWU, NUPE, TGWU)  
Heathrow Airport Joint Stewards Committee  
Massey Ferguson, Kilmarnock, Joint Stewards Committee  
Nantgarw Coke Works NUM  
Roneo Vickers, Kirkby, strike committee  
Royal Group Docks Shop Stewards Committee  
Sandersons TGWU strike committee

#### TRANSPORT

FOR delegates from LONDON and the SOUTH EAST there's a special train. It leaves Euston at 7.35am and picks up at Watford at 8.00am. Tickets £7 return. Available from 127, Dynevor Road, London, N16. Phone 01-254 5915.

LIVERPOOL: 8.20am Amberline Coach Depot, Garston (by Garston bus garage) 8.45 West 10am. Pierhead: 1.00 Black Bull. Walton Vale: 8.15 Golden Eagle. Kirkby: 8.35 return. Phone: Tony Ryan 051-487 9654.

EDINBURGH: 8.00am by Waverley Station.

BIRMINGHAM: Hall of Memory, 3.00pm.

COVENTRY: Post Meadow, 3.00pm.

NEWCASTLE: 7.20am. Bridge House, High Level Bridge. Phone: Newcastle 29126.

SOUTH WALES: Levens, Parrygrove Post Office 6.20am. Cardiff General Station. Taxi. Tickets from Ken Cross, 100 Queen Street, Telford. Phone: 09024 3499.

BOTHAMPTON: Leaves Bus Stop on at 3.00pm.

SHEFFIELD: Leaves Bus Station at 8.35am.

## 'If we can't defend basic union rights, the rest is academic'

JOHN DEASON, secretary of the Right to Work campaign and a leading member of the Socialist Workers Party, on the Defend Our Unions conference.

Why was the conference called?

The conference was called four weeks before the general election because we realised that whichever government was elected a central platform of its strategy would be attacks on trade union organisation. Under Labour, through the Concordat. Under the Tories, as now, using the principles of the Concordat but applying laws.

One of the demands in the conference appeal is around the right to work. What part will this play?

A session of the conference will be given over to discussing fighting redundancies, cuts and closures. A number of sponsoring bodies will be relating their experience in this field. What we need is an honest discussion about why it is that resistance to redundancy has been at such a very low ebb. For example, we need to look at the way the redundancy provisions of the Employment Protection Act and the 90-day notice period are undermining struggles.

Why do you think resistance has been so weak?

It's another example of the price we've paid for the past five years of Labour government and the Social Contract with the trade union leaders which breed the idea that co-operation with the employers is the way to solve unemployment.

As a consequence, all the arguments around viability and profitability have had a major effect on people's confidence to fight.

How do we overcome this?

In a redundancy situation we must win people to an anti-capitalist attitude — the right to work, whether or not it's profitable. At the same time, we must use imaginative tactics which can really mobilise people.

It's possible that people will be more prepared to struggle against redundancy under the Tories as they feel more angry, just as with UCS, although it's not certain.

There's an elementary job of work to be done among the rank and file, which relates to the objective of the 23 June conference.

When struggles did start to develop in a significant way against the Labour government, what characterised them were three things. First, the sectionalised character of the struggles. Second, that the rank and file organisation within each



JOHN DEASON: 'Socialist Challenge is disturbing'

section was not strong enough to overcome the sell-out antics of the leadership.

Thirdly, even when thousands upon thousands of workers were engaged in struggle, this did not express itself in terms of a generalised political rebellion.

The present Tory government is quite clearly launching a generalised attack — the difference with Labour being that they're quite open about it. There is, after all, a difference between the 'voluntary' Concordat introduced with the collaboration of the whole of the trade union leadership and the more abrasive approach of the Tories, who promise legislation in the autumn.

The danger is that because of the weakening of the movement under Labour and the speed with which the Tories are moving, there's not a lot of time to prepare our defences. This is the central question to which the conference must address itself.

What do you want to see coming out of the conference?

Broadly, we want to start the campaign against the Tories' proposed anti-union laws as a focal point for defending ourselves against every aspect of the Tory offensive — cuts, new technology, wages, perhaps even a future wages freeze.

The key thing will be to draw the attention of militants not only to their own sectional problems, which of course are very important, but also the general problem that if we can't defend the right to picket, the right to strike, the right to make democratic decisions without enforced secret ballots, then discussion about how to defend ourselves against other attacks is academic.

Those at the Defend Our Unions conference will not be the only people discussing how to fight against the Tory attacks.

On the same day, for instance, there's a conference on unemployment called by the SE Region of the TUC, at which Benn will be speaking. What should our attitude be to such forces?

It's very unfortunate that the dates of the two conferences clash. It's almost inevitable at this time of year, though, that national conferences will clash with sectional or regional ones. We would recommend that trade union bodies send delegates to both.

As to Benn, he is obviously putting on a left face at the moment, trying to further his career. It's a great pity that Benn was not prepared to speak at these sorts of conferences when he was the Minister involved!

Will you be seeking unity with such forces, around the themes of your conference?

I'm sure that a great many — perhaps the majority — of delegates at the 23 June conference will have illusions in Benn, or at least in the idea that what's necessary is to change the Labour Party.

I, like every other SWP member, would disagree with this. But the best climate for discussing such differences is one in which we are working together around issues on which we agree — such as defence of basic trade union rights.

Does such unity also apply to other organisations of the revolutionary left?

The conference organisers welcome support from all sections of the movement, although it must be said that Socialist Challenge didn't mention the conference until three weeks before it was due to take place.

What a lot of revolutionary socialists have to learn is that the most important unity is the unity forged in struggle inside the trade union movement.

What about after the conference? Will there be a basis for united activity, both locally and nationally, on the question of trade union defence?

What I want to say about unity is that I find it very disturbing that Socialist Challenge is preoccupied by socialist unity at elections, but when it comes to defending basic trade union rights — something that goes on for every day of the year for five years, and is not just a cross on a piece of paper once every five years — Socialist Challenge is painfully slow to come out and support this initiative to build a united rank and file opposition within the trade unions. But having said that I'm pleased that you are supporting us now.

#### HOUSING IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Conference on Saturday, 30 June  
Sponsors include Shelter and Housing Action  
Among the discussions: the defence and extension of direct labour • tenants' rights • council rents • no to council house sales.

At the Botany Dept, University College, Gower St, London WC1. Details from Joan Halbert, Housing Conference, c/o Shelter, 157 Waterloo Rd, London SE1. Tel 01-633 9377

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#### THE CRISIS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Conference on Saturday, 16 June

Called by the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory and sponsored by 40 Labour councillors in London.  
Workshops include: the lessons of Clay Cross and Poplar • rates, finances, and where the money goes • democracy, Labour groups, and the working class • direct labour.

10am-5.30pm at Hampstead Town Hall, Haverstock Hill, London NW3. Tube: Belsize Park. Details from: Local government conference, c/o 5 Stamford Hill, London N16.

## Fascists attack

BETWEEN 50 and 60 members of the National Front, armed with iron bars, bricks and bottles attacked a meeting on Ireland in Manchester on 31 May. The meeting, organised by the Revolutionary Communist Group featured a showing of the film, 'Prisoner of War'.

Stewards from the RCG, the United Troops Out Movement, the Socialist Workers Party and the International Marxist Group successfully defended the meeting and there was only one slight injury.

Ten members of the NF were arrested.

## Tribunal delegates

THERE is now just over a month to go before the International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland takes place in London.

The Tribunal will hear evidence from a variety of sources concerning the role of Britain in Ireland. A jury made up of delegates to the tribunal will pronounce judgement.

The tribunal organisers are seeking to get as wide-ranging and as representative a jury as possible. It is still not too late to apply for delegate status.

Labour Party branches, trades councils and organisations in the students' and women's movement are encouraged to ensure that they will be represented at this important initiative.

Write now to, International Tribunal, 47 Wilham St, London W11.

## Troops—No(r) way

BY a massive 800 votes to nil, with only ten abstentions the Norwegian students society — the main student forum in Norway — recently voted to demand 'that all British troops must immediately be withdrawn from Northern Ireland'.

The strongly worded resolution noted the 'brutal house searches, arbitrary arrests, torture and murder' committed by British troops and it went on to 'fully support the armed struggle led by the Irish liberation movement to force out the occupiers'.

The student society also saluted the 'heroic political prisoners' in the North of Ireland and called for the granting of political status.

## Oxford conference

OVER 120 — including delegates from the Oxford, Witney and Leicester trades councils attended the recent Oxford Labour Movement conference on Ireland.

The conference opened with a powerful speech from Brendan Gallagher who spoke of the savagery of the British Army in Ireland. Brendan's words were supported by Dave Swingle's account of his personal experiences as a squaddie in the Six Counties.

The conference also heard speeches from Jonathan Hammond of the National Union of Journalists executive and Brian Trench of the Irish Industrial Council. Both referred to the 'wall of silence' surrounding the war in Ireland.

These observations were reinforced by a speaker from Oxford H block/UTOM committee who had been arrested the week before under the PTA for selling 'Republican News'.

Two initiatives were agreed by the conference. The first involved the planning of a Midlands-wide fact finding delegation to Ireland and the other called on the NUJ to organise a national conference on the media and Ireland.

A demonstration protesting against Scanton's threatened deportation will take place this Saturday, 9 June. It will march to Brixton prison and will leave from Kennington Park at 2.30pm.

Irish workers fight back  
The national misunderstanding

By Aileen O'Callaghan

LAST week the general secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) presented to delegates of the ICTU special conference an agreement called the National Understanding he had signed with the Fianna Fail government.

In return for promises of full employment by 1985, a review of the discriminatory PAYE tax system and a commitment by the Dublin government to keep inflation down, the trade union movement was to accept restrictions on pay and the right to take industrial action.

What the government was trying to do was to persuade the ICTU to police the kind of agreement Geoffrey Howe is seeking in Britain with our own Len Murray. But Murray's equivalent in Ireland, Ruari Roberts, got a shock when he found that the delegates didn't have the same 'understanding' of the package he had. They rejected the National Understanding by 318 votes to 119.

## Alternative

Within hours some of the most militant sections of the Irish labour movement presented their alternative to collaboration. Unions representing 55,000 building workers decided to take action to win a 25 per cent pay claim and improvements in conditions. 30,000 craft workers have rolled up their sleeves, and the CPSA's Irish workers also seem set for a fight.

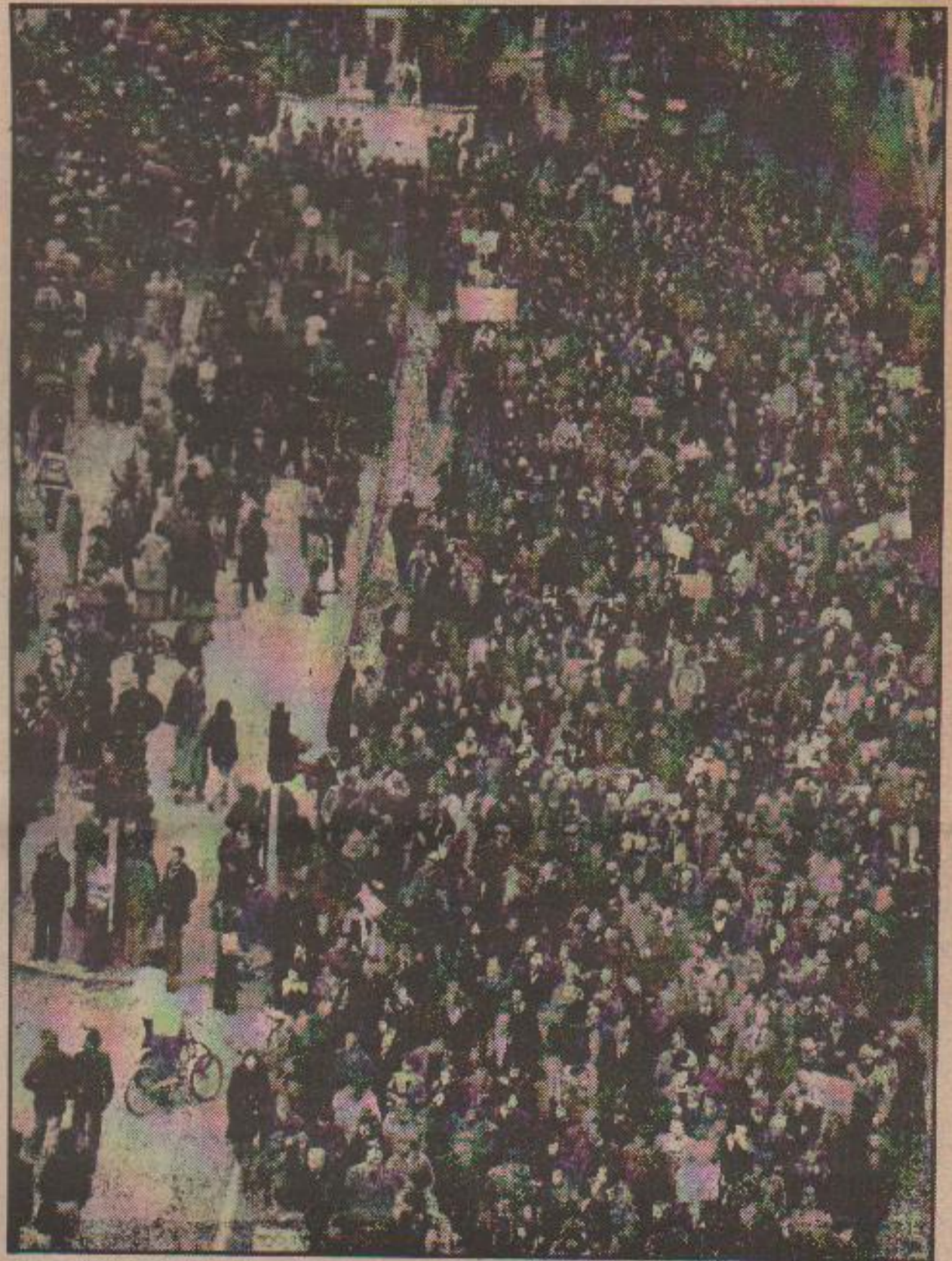
Irish prime minister Jack Lynch will not find the option of holding the line on wages in the public sector an easy one. The rejection of the National Understanding has come right in the middle of a struggle by Post Office workers which is already into its fifteenth week and shows no signs of ending.

With the memory of Dublin's recent general strikes and mass demonstrations against the tax system still fresh in their minds, and with the knowledge also that the worst effects of the oil crisis are yet to be seen, Ireland's bosses are understandably nervous.

## Warnings

The shadow Minister for Finance, Richie Ryan, has pointed out: 'The world outside takes fright at the sight of this country, with Europe's highest inflation rate, worst industrial disputes, most reckless government borrowing — and a rapidly worsening balance of trade.' Not good for an economy as dependent on foreign investment as Ireland's is.

Ryan warnings reflect accurately the main concerns of a bourgeoisie whose profits depend entirely upon a relationship with world imperialism — in particular, with the EEC and British economies. And yet his note of gloom contrasts sharply with the happy tunes played when Ireland entered the EMS and separated the Irish punt from the pound sterling only a few months ago.



The cold fact of life is that Ireland's economic boom in the late 1970s benefited the workers very little and yet depended for its continuation on their passivity.

Ireland in 1978 had the fastest growth rate of all the EEC countries. But personal incomes were only half the Common Market average and about one-third the Danish average. Yet the estimated cost of living in Dublin is 12 per cent higher than that in London.

The same applies to registered unemployment — at 9 per cent it is exceeded only by Belgium in the EEC.

But for the government to channel the benefits of growth to the workers — even if it was so inclined — would require a head-on collision with the multinationals on which the Irish economy has relied for growth in the first place.

So what are the prospects for Irish workers? They will certainly not lack militancy. In the ten years up to 1978

Ireland's workers came second to Italy in the European strikes league.

The Fianna Fail Government is threatening to introduce anti-strike legislation, but trade unionists have already spelt out their determination to resist attacks on both their living standards and their organisation. All in all, with inflation running at 15 per cent, with no post, little petrol and no pay policy, the Southern Irish 'economic' miracle is beginning to look rather sick.

## Another British dissident faces deportation

By Geoff Bell

BUILDING worker Jimmy Scanton is in solitary confinement in Brixton prison. He is a 'category A' prisoner.

What has he done to deserve such treatment? Jimmy doesn't know, he is never likely to know. Within a couple of weeks time, he faces deportation.

Why is he being chucked out of Britain? Jimmy doesn't know, he is never likely to know.

Scanton is the latest victim of the Prevention of Terrorism Act. He was arrested along with other members of the London support group of the Irish Republican Socialist Party on 23 May. Five days later he was served

with an exclusion order. He is now appealing against the order.

But it is extremely difficult to appeal against exclusion under the PTA. First because, contrary to the traditions of English law, the onus of proof depends not on the prosecution proving its case, but on the accused proving their innocence.

This would be difficult enough in normal circumstances, but the PTA has an added delight — the accused is not permitted to know the evidence on which the exclusion order is based. Nor is the accused's solicitor.

Most bizarre of all, the two 'advisers' appointed by the Home Secretary to conduct the appeal may

themselves not know the reason for the exclusion.

Accordingly it is only possible to speculate on the reasons for Jimmy Scanton's threatened deportation.

One reason can be ruled out straight away — that Jimmy had anything to do with the assassination of Airey Neave. If the police had even the flimsiest evidence to link Scanton with this incident then he would have been charged.

Given the ease with which convictions against Irish political prisoners are obtained in Britain, and given the pressure on the police to charge someone with the bombing, the inability to bring a charge against Scanton after five days of heavy

interrogation is the surest proof of his innocence.

In this context the decision to 'repatriate' Scanton to the South of Ireland is part of the continuing harassment of the IRSP.

The police insist that the IRSP is connected with the Irish National Liberation Army, which claimed responsibility for the Neave assassination. But in a press statement last week the IRSP reiterated that it 'is an open political organisation and has no connection whatsoever with the INLA'.

The simple conclusion is that once more the PTA has been used to persecute socialist activists on the Irish question in Britain.

# Czech Trotskyist arrested New attempt to break Charter 77

By Mark Jackson

TEN key leaders of the Charter 77 civil rights movement were arrested at 5am on 29 May by the Czech political police. The following day, two of the three official spokespersons of Charter 77, along with the editor of the Charter information bulletin and a leading representative of the Czech cultural underground within the Charter, were charged with subversion.

## Subversion

The gravest charge has been brought against Charter information bulletin editor Petr Uhl. He has been accused of subversion of a dangerous character under sub-section 2 of article 98 of the Czech criminal code.

This charge carries a minimum of three years and a maximum of ten years in jail.

The same charge, but 'of a less serious kind' (sub-section 1), carrying the threat of sentences between one and five years, has also been brought against three other Chartists, Jiri Dienstbier, Vaclav Benda and Dana Nemcova.

Those arrested represent a range of different political and ideological currents within the Charter. The message is: if you are an activist you will not be safe, whether you are a Trotskyist or a Catholic.

Petr Uhl has openly expressed his political sympathy with the Fourth International, and has compared the demands in the Charter 77 appeal to those in the Transitional Programme, in the sense that 'they get people moving'.

Uhl has made many contributions to the tactical and political discussions which have taken place inside the Charter, and has recently contributed to a book on the East European civil rights movement soon to be published by the Polish opposition movement KSS-KOR.

Jiri Dienstbier was one of the most prominent journalists working for Prague Radio in 1968. He was sacked from his job and expelled from the party for his opposition to the post-invasion 'normalisation' regime.

He is a supporter of the tendency within the Charter which sees itself as continuing the traditions of the Dubcekite party leadership of 1968-9; he could be described as a 'Eurocommunist'.

Vaclav Benda is a Catholic philosopher and secretary of the Committee to Defend Those Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS), of which all the arrested are members.

Dana Nemcova is a well-known figure in the Czech cultural underground, a movement which involves hundreds of young Czech workers and has repeatedly been the target of repression by the police.

## Expulsion

The Czechoslovak authorities have been encouraged by the poor response to the jailing of another Charter spokesperson, Jaroslav Savata.

The regime also prepared for the forthcoming trial by getting the official Lawyers' association to expel the Chartists' courageous defence lawyer Dr Josef Danisz, so that he could not defend the accused.

The arrests have had almost no publicity in the bourgeois press. After

all the hoo-ha around the Belgrade détente conference last year, the Western governments have lost interest in the whole human rights business, since it no longer serves their immediate need to put diplomatic pressure on the Soviet government.

The fate of the Charter movement therefore depends greatly upon the response of the Western labour movements to these latest arrests. The Labour Party, the TUC and the CPGB have all expressed their solidarity with Charter 77. Now they must turn words into deeds:

## Release

- They must demand the immediate release of those Chartists who have been arrested.

- They must prepare to send their own official representatives to any trial that takes place.

- They must circulate their memberships on this attempt to crush the Charter and urge their members to send telegrams of protest to the Czechoslovak government.

- They must demand the immediate reinstatement of Charter lawyer Josef Danisz.

- They should raise a fund to help the families of those in jail.

- They should cancel official interchanges of delegations between themselves and Czechoslovak official organisations, until the Czech authorities show in action — by releasing these Chartists and the others at present in jail — that they will allow the Charter to operate. It is not possible for the left in this country to be in solidarity both with Charter 77 and with its jailers.

Both the Committee in Defence of Czechoslovak Socialists and the



PETR UHL — he's compared Charter 77's demands to those of the Transitional Programme

Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign will be taking up the case. In the meantime the largest possible number of labour movement protest telegrams should be sent to the Czechoslovak Embassy, 25 Kensington Palace Gardens, London W8.

Copies of all such protests should be sent to: 'Czech Defence', 328 Upper Street, London N1 for forwarding to the Charter in Prague. Messages of solidarity can also be sent to: Anna Sabatova, Anglicka 8, Prague 2, Czechoslovakia.

**STOP PRESS:** Four other Charter activists — Vaclav Havel, Jarmila Belikova, Jiri Nemec, and Otta Bednarova — have also now been charged with subversion under sub-section 1.

## Intercontinental Press

THE latest issue of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* (Vol. 17, No. 21) consists entirely of the majority and minority resolutions on Indochina recently discussed by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

Single issues of the journal cost 30p plus 10p p&p, but subscriptions work out much cheaper at £2.50 for an introductory offer of 10 issues, £5 for six months (24 issues), and £9 for a year (48 issues). Please make out cheques to 'Intercontinental Press' and send to: IP/1, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.



Iran's Prime Minister, Bazargan

# Constituent assembly now key issue in Iran

By A. Hamzeh

IRAN'S Islamic regime cancelled its previously announced plans for a democratically elected constituent assembly last week. This is the latest and potentially the most dangerous attack by the Khomeini-Bazargan government on the gains made by the Iranian masses as the result of the overthrow of the Shah's regime in February.

Instead of a democratically elected constituent assembly the government is proposing to set up an appointed body of 40 people to discuss the new constitution, which seems already to have been drafted.

Once the new constitution is ready it will be submitted for 'public discussion'. There will then be a referendum which, like that on the Islamic Republic, is likely to see the government and the Moslem clergy using the full weight of the state apparatus and the mass media to push through their position without even pretending to give critics and opponents a chance to express their views.

The reason is obvious: the government's fear of growing mass disenchantment with the new Islamic Republic.

Workers who made the February insurrection possible through their massive general strike are now faced with unemployment and attempts by the Imam Committees to militarise their factories and take over their unions.

Women who came out bravely throughout last year at the head of the mass mobilisations against the Shah have been faced with attempts to force them back under the veil and into the home.

Oppressed nationalities who were among the fiercest opponents of the Shah have had to face tanks and helicopter gun-ships when they have called for autonomy. First it was the turn

of the Kurds, then the Turkomans, and now the Arabs.

Peasants who saw the revolution as a chance to seize back land taken from them under the former regime have faced attacks from the government.

It would be wrong to assume that the Khomeini leadership has already lost its enormous prestige. Widespread illusions still exist among the masses. But at the same time a clear change in mood is taking place. There is less enthusiasm for the utopian dream of an 'Islamic society', and increasingly the masses are beginning to look for alternatives.

One recent example of this change of mood was the victory of the left in the confrontation with Khomeini over press freedom. Khomeini attempted to close down the leftist daily paper *Ayandegan* by calling for a boycott. Gangs of thugs attacked the paper's offices in a number of towns, and newspaper sellers who sold it were threatened.

But mass support meant that after a fortnight's closure *Ayandegan* was able to restart publication, and it immediately became the country's most popular paper with a circulation of nearly one million. In contrast to this the sales of *Kayhan* — once the country's most popular daily — have dropped catastrophically since pro-Khomeini journalists recently staged a coup purging all the leftist journalists on the editorial board.

The government realised that elections for a constituent assembly would act as a major national focus for the growing mass discontent. It would mean public debate and discussion of many problems which it has been trying to brush under the carpet and to which it has no solution.

The government would also have to end the present neither-legal-nor-illegal situation of left organisations by either banning them or recognising their legal status by allowing them

to participate in the elections.

So the government has opted for a closed non-elected assembly and a referendum as the way to preserve a semblance of democracy while actually reducing democratic debate around the future course of the country to a bare minimum. But already it faces opposition.

The Lawyers Association, which was holding a conference at the time of the announcement, immediately passed a strong resolution attacking this project. All the left and liberal organisations — with the possible exception of the pro-Moscow Tudeh Party and the pro-Peking *Sazman Enghelabi* — will no doubt follow suit and launch a vigorous campaign on this issue. Many workers who are increasingly conscious of the fact that the present authorities fail to represent their interests will also join the opposition campaign.

The oppressed nationalities who have been demanding that the country's new constitution should grant them autonomy will do likewise. At the moment Arabs demanding autonomy in the south west are in bitter violent conflict with government forces. The situation in Kurdistan and Turkomansahra is also likely to come to a head soon despite the recent calm.

In Kurdistan, where Kurdish forces continue to hold most of the region, the Kurdish leader Sheikh Hussein has threatened to call a national assembly. In Turkomansahra the Turkoman farmers have said that they will go ahead and harvest crops which they have seized back from members of the former regime despite threats by the government.

The fight for a democratically elected constituent assembly is going to be crucial for the future development of the Iranian revolution. Around this struggle the oppressed masses — workers, oppressed nationalities, peasants and women — can begin to unite to say no to any attempts by the religious hierarchy or anyone else to determine their future for them.

The Iranian Trotskyists of *Hozb Karegaran Socialist* (the Socialist Workers Party) have made the call for a freely elected constituent assembly as the revolutionary way forward for the masses one of their central slogans from the start. Its enormous importance is now becoming ever clearer.

# Muzorewa's Rhodesia No flag, no anthem, no change

THE state of 'Zimbabwe Rhodesia' came into being with surprisingly little fuss last week. Where we might have expected the British press to play Ian Smith's triumph for all it was worth, they instead decided to consign the story to the inside pages.

The problem was that the story was rather uninspiring. The celebrations were almost deliberately calculated to show how little had changed. There was no ceremonial hoisting of the new flag — because there is no flag. No singing of the national anthem — for there is no anthem.

Instead the Union Jack was hoisted in a curious symbolic appeal to the Tories for recognition.

The outgoing Prime Minister, Ian Smith, deliberately and contemptuously underlined the ludicrousness of the occasion in his farewell broadcast. He announced that he was not in favour of black majority rule 'based on race or colour' [as if that had been in doubt].

And he explained that the future of the new state still rested on the white population since it was they who controlled the armed forces. If he had added that they control the police, judiciary, civil service, land and a large chunk of the government, he would have given a full and accurate portrait of 'Zimbabwe Rhodesia'.

## Accommodate

This is why the launching of the new state was given such sparse coverage, so as not to embarrass a Tory government now trying to accommodate to Bishop Muzorewa's regime.

The first move will come from Washington. A recent Senate decision overwhelmingly recommended President Carter to

recognise the Muzorewa government within ten days of its taking office and to lift sanctions. The recommendation is not binding but Carter is still obliged to say what he will do within that ten day limit.

After the talks between Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington it seems clear that whatever Carter decided to do will be indicative of Tory policy too. The two imperialist nations remain in harmony for the moment in their slow drift towards recognition.

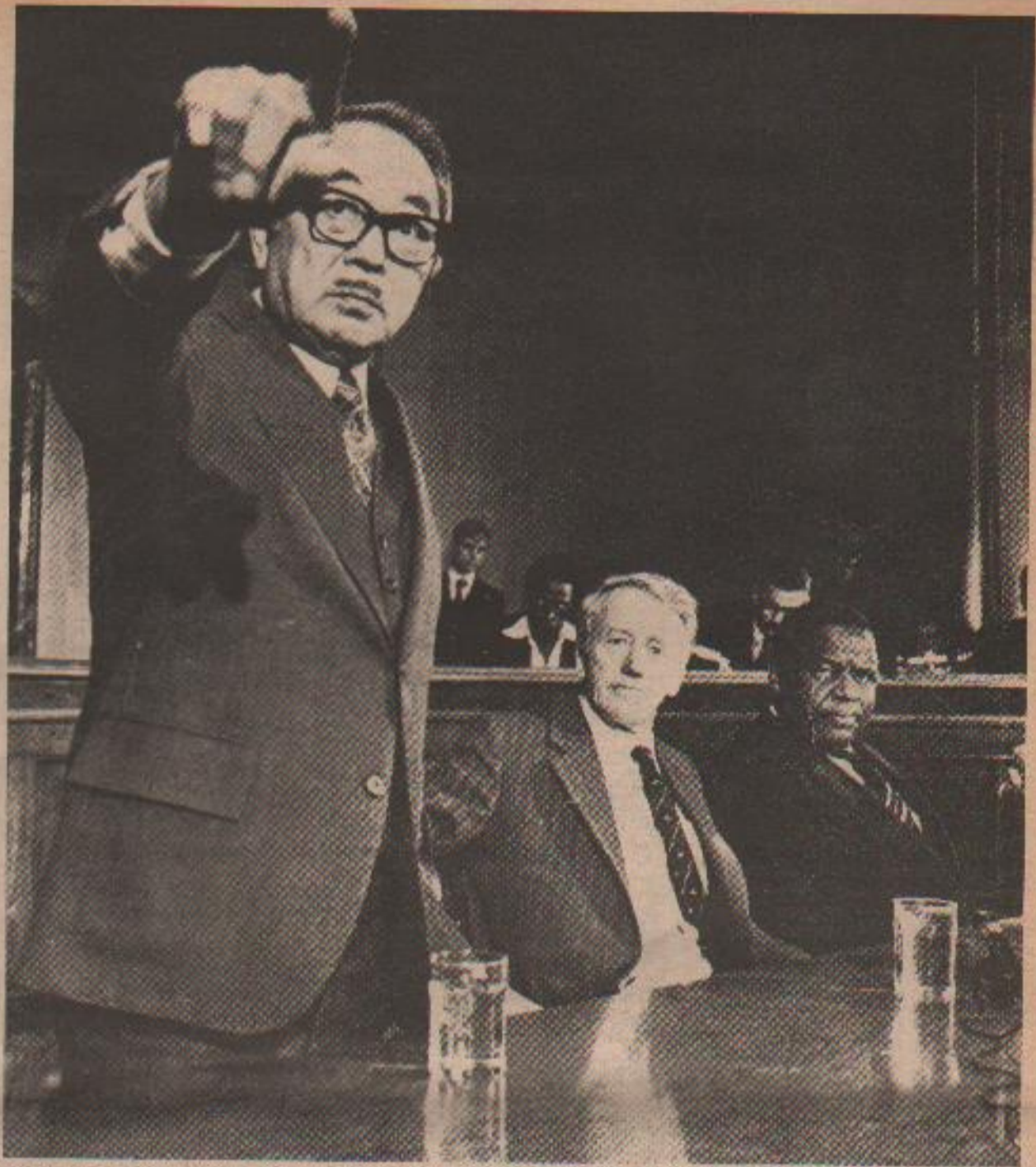
## Nuanced

It is most improbable that Carter will recognise Muzorewa outright. To do so would place intolerable strains on the British government and sabotage the Tories' soft sell approach at the August Commonwealth conference.

For, contrary to most predictions, the Tories are still not rushing into recognition. For the moment their policy is only a nuanced version of their predecessors'. The despatch of Lord Harlech to talk to the leaders of the Patriotic Front liberation movement is of a piece with Labour's policy. This was to split the Front and bring a section of it — possibly its entire leadership — into an independent government.

The plan was obviously worked out at the very highest level of East-West negotiations. The end result would be a politically pro-Soviet state which nevertheless remained open to capitalist investment.

Such a carefully worked out plan will not be abandoned just like that. Even Smith in his final broadcast left open the renegotiation of the present constitution in collaboration with the Patriotic Front. In this contest the



Ian Smith and the reverend Sithole in Washington last October, being received by US Senator Hayakawa

announcement last week of new moves towards the unification of the two parties which make up the Front is especially positive.

The broad lines of Anglo-American policy now being clear, the need for solidarity has never been more urgent. The demonstration in London on 30 June, called by the Zimbabwe Emergency Campaign Committee, has to be supported by every socialist with the maximum possible endorse-

ment from labour movement organisations.

However, the actual lines of Tory policy indicate that the demonstration's political slogan, 'No Tory sell-out in Zimbabwe', is not adequate. The Tories show every intention of logically extending the policy of the Labour leadership — which is the whole problem!

This is why Socialist Challenge is approaching other organisations to

support a contingent marching on the unequivocal basis of 'Hands off Zimbabwe' and to propose that all future activities be organised on that basis.

\*30 June, 2.30, Smithfield Market, London. March past Fleet Street and Rhodesia House to rally in Trafalgar Square. Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe of the Patriotic Front have been invited to speak.

## Fixing the fuel fraud

THE 'petrol shortage' is a fraud. The oil companies are simply holding back supplies to drive up prices and boost profits even more.

This practice has become commonplace in the United States. The American Trotskyists of the SWP recently outlined the following measures to deal with the crisis.

PRESIDENT Carter says the energy crisis is 'the moral equivalent of war'. That's the way the oil trust sees it — as a war against the American working people. The petrol crisis now gripping the country is the latest offensive in that war.

The rip-off at the petrol pump has outraged workers. That anger has even forced some sections of the government to lift a bit of the curtain on what's going on.

### Profits

- Senator Thomas Eagleton said on 15 May that sixteen major oil companies had made profits on domestically produced crude oil ranging from 144 per cent to 389 per cent of the cost of production.

- The Federal Trade Commission admits it has evidence that oil companies have not made full use of available supplies of crude oil and that 'the current shortage may be contrived'.

But Carter insists that working people are to blame for the crisis and that the only thing to be done is to give the oil giants the profits they are demanding. Workers should 'use less and pay more'....

Despite the refusal of the government to act, the measures needed to meet this crisis are simple. The first thing we need to do is to find out the truth about what is happening.

How much oil and gas are really in the

ground? How much oil and gas are in the pipelines or storage tanks right now? What is the real capacity of oil refineries already in operation? What are the real profits the industry is making?

### Secrecy

Under the code of capitalist secrecy, working people — and even the government — are expected to take the word of the companies on these vital facts. Every statistic the Department of Energy has is provided by the oil industry — often on the condition that it not share the data with other government agencies.

The labour movement should demand that the books of the energy corporations be opened to public scrutiny. Let's place every aspect of their operation under a magnifying glass!

Labour should call on the government to take the industry out of the hands of the Rockefellers, Gettys, DuPonts, and other private owners and place it under public ownership.

The petrol shortage is brought to us by the same system of private profit and public misery that brought the skyrocketing meat prices in the spring of 1973; the gas lines in the winter of 1973-74; the natural gas shortage in January and February 1977; and most recently, the nuclear nightmare at Three Mile Island....

In demanding that the government nationalise the energy industry, labour can place no confidence in Carter or any government bureaucrat to administer it in accord with our needs. The fight for public ownership should include putting the energy industry under the management of an independent board directly elected by, and responsible to the American people.

Workers in the energy industry itself would police the functioning of such a board, making sure that it operated in the open and made all the facts about the industry known. It is these workers, after all, who are in the best position to know when refining capacity isn't being used, when storage tanks are overflowing, and when pumping rates are being kept down.

Labour's programme to meet the energy crisis cannot be implemented without a struggle. The oil trust represents the single most powerful sector of the American ruling class. It is backed to the hilt by the capitalist government. Against that power, it is necessary to mobilise the power of the organised labour movement....

The labour movement can campaign first of all to get out the truth about what is going on to the American people. It can organise discussions in union locals. It can publish literature, set up speaking tours, organise picket lines, and help build demonstrations.

### Independent

Such a campaign will be opposed by the Democratic and Republican parties, which are owned from top to bottom by the oil barons. The unions will find it necessary to confront these capitalist politicians in the political arena as well — by running independent labour candidates.

If the union movement stands up to the oil trust and fights the energy blackmail, it will inspire millions both inside and outside of the labour movement. If it utilises the full power of labour — by forming a party of the working class based on the unions — it can take another giant step in the fight for a society based on human needs, not profits.



By Steve Cohen

IT IS important for those of us who are Jewish to see how the same sort of controls which are imposed today on Africans, Asians and West Indians by the Immigration Acts were imposed on us in 1905 by the Aliens Act. The only conclusion we can draw is to oppose all restrictions on immigration.

Likewise it is important for non-Jews to be aware of the nature and extent of anti-semitism in this country — something which the National Front has tried to play on with its campaign to 'brand' the Anti Nazi League as a 'Jewish conspiracy'.

The background to the Aliens Act was the attacks on the Jewish population in Eastern Europe at the turn of the century. As a result about 150,000 Jews fled to this country between 1880 and 1905.

There was immediate pressure to prevent further entry and to expel those already here. This fed on a long history of anti-semitism: from the massacre of the entire Jewish population in York in the early Middle Ages, through the expulsion of all Jews from the country in 1290 (they were only readmitted under Cromwell), to such literary caricatures as Fagin in *Oliver Twist*.

The daily press began to wage a relentless campaign against Jewish immigration. Here for instance is a poem published in *The People* in 1909 (four years after the Act had already restricted entry):

### Subversive

'I would give them a chance, just one week to clear out/And if found in the land one hour later/Then death without trial or fooling about/Whether Anarchist, Banker or Waiter.'

As well as reflecting the later fascist wish to murder Jews, this poem pre-dates fascist mythology of the Jew as both capitalist and worker — and also general subversive.

One man, Arnold White, published a host of popular books and pamphlets against Jewish immigration. His main argument was a sort of combination of the present NF attempt to 'prove' that no Jews died in the concentration camps and the present racist argument that black people come here to 'live off the state'.

Thus he denied that Jews ('the dregs of Russian cities') were fleeing here to escape pogroms — they were coming 'because they are hungry and the English are charitable'.

On top of all this, an organised para-military movement, the British Brothers League, was formed in 1901 to fight for immigration control.

In January 1902 it held a mass meeting of 4,000 at the People's Palace in Mile End Road, East London. This rally, like those of the NF today, was preceded by a procession decked with Union Jacks, under the slogan of 'England for the English'.

### Sewage

At the meeting, Jews were described as 'scum' and 'sewage' — and accused of being responsible for 'knivings' (i.e. 'muggings'). After the rally the crowd went on a rampage attacking Jews in the streets.

By 1905 the Brothers were able to present a petition of 45,000 signatures calling for control and threatening violence if it was not imposed ('the issue can only be settled by agitation or revolt'). Demonstrations were also organised through the Jewish area of Brick Lane.

The Tories tried to put through immigration control legislation from 1893 onwards. Not surprisingly, their arguments were very similar to those used today by Enoch Powell against black people.

Thus Jews were supposed to be responsible for bad housing, unemployment ('taking English workers' jobs'), lowering wages, living on the dole ('a charge on the rates'), spreading disease, general overcrowding of an 'over populated country' (in 1905!), and sexual corruption ('foreign women who carpet our streets').

Finally, one of the main 'charges' against Jews was that they stirred up

# How anti-semitism led to immigration control



Smashing the windows of a Jewish shop in Mile End Road, in London's East End, in the 1930s

unrest and were 'anarchists'. This suggests a very real reason why the Act was brought in — a fear of Jewish working class organisation, which was often stronger and more directly political than that of English workers.

The Jewish socialists did not hesitate to argue against the established Jewish leadership. For example, they organised large demonstrations round the synagogues in 1889 insisting that the rabbis gave sermons on unemployment.

They also helped Jewish workers to organise their own Jewish trade unions — of which there were 36 in 1902. Many of these unions waged successful

strikes against their (often Jewish) employers, and helped to stimulate similar agitation by English workers.

It is no wonder that Jews saw a need for their own unions given the attitude of the organised English labour movement. As early as 1892 the TUC passed a resolution calling for the restriction of 'alien' (i.e. Jewish) immigration.

By 1893, 43 labour organisations were petitioning Parliament for control. Among those campaigning for this object was the famous leader of the dockers' strike, Ben Tillett.

Even many of the Jewish

establishment supported the Aliens Act. They had been in the country a long time and wanted to be accepted as 'English'. Among them were several Tory MPs — including Benjamin Cohen, president of the Jewish Board of Guardians. The latter was supposed to help poor immigrant Jews, but in fact sent many of them back to Russia.

The activity of Jewish workers is difficult to discover, although contemporary accounts show that in 1885 a protest meeting was held in the Jewish Workingmen's Club in the East End to protest against the Board of Guardians' reactionary attitude on immigration.

In 1895 Jewish trade unionists organised a meeting attacking the TUC's anti-semitism. In 1902 an Alien Defence League was formed, and in 1904 a public meeting of workers (apparently including non-Jews) was held in the Labour Hall in Strangeways (a Jewish quarter of Manchester) against the Act.

In fact it was after the Act was passed that the campaign seems to have grown. Thus there were two large demonstrations in 1907 in Leeds and Manchester against the Act and against the size of the naturalisation fee (which made it too expensive for any Jewish worker, once here, to take out British citizenship).

The Act was intended to keep out the sick and the poor (first class passengers were exempt!), and the toll in human tragedy can be seen by reading the reports of the Immigration Boards. Jews were ruthlessly refused entry, deported, and raided by the police if they were thought to be harbouring relatives.

### Suspects

As immigration controls today encourage racism against black people by officially labelling them as the 'problem', so the passing of the Aliens Act in 1905 led to an increase in anti-semitic agitation. When the Act was amended in 1914 the fear of Jewish trade union activity led to the insertion of a clause whereby an 'alien' could be jailed for causing 'industrial unrest' (this remains the law today).

Right through the 1920s and '30s further anti-Jewish control was advocated in Parliament. One MP spoke in 1925 of 'the absolute necessity to preserve the purity of our race and to prevent contamination with the riff raff of Eastern Europe, the stiffs of the Mediterranean, and the dead beats of the world'.

This agitation had tragic consequences — concealed by English historians for 40 years. When Hitler came to power, thousands of Jews were refused entry here on the grounds that they could not support themselves or were not 'genuine refugees'. Many who did arrive were then interned as 'suspected enemy aliens'.

Hundreds were also forcibly deported to Australia. This briefly came to light in 1941 when the British government admitted that Jewish refugees had been shipped off to Australia on board the ship *Dunera* — and that Jewish women had been abused and their property looted. For this the officer in charge received a 'reprimand'.

### Zionism

Two main conclusions can be drawn from all this. First, that we should oppose all immigration controls.

Some members of the Labour Party say that we should argue for 'non-racially discriminatory' control. But to exclude a person from one 'state' because they happen to have been born in another 'state' is to recognise that it is legitimate for that state to interpose barriers between the working people of different countries.

Furthermore, the only time the question of control is raised in practice is to exclude particular races — be they Jewish or Asian. Inventing different criteria for control is not going to fight this chauvinism.

Secondly, any criticism of Zionism must also include a constant attack on anti-semitism, because it is this that provides the material basis for Zionism. It is no coincidence that the year the Aliens Act was passed, 1905, saw the founding in Leeds of a Paole Zionist (Workers of Zion) group.

By the 1930s every major capitalist state had immigration restrictions against Jews. Thus Zionism came to be seen as an answer to persecution, even though it is not in fact a solution to anything. Today the immigration laws in the USA and Britain similarly ensure that many Russian Jews see emigration to Israel as the answer to their persecution.

A vigorous fight against anti-semitism is therefore necessary in order to unmask the false solution of Zionism.

# 'Viability' - whose problem?

STEVE Potter's article on 'viability' (10 May) correctly reaffirms that a woman's right to choose is hers no matter what her gestation. However, it is insufficient merely to state this without having a clear position on what it means in practice, an issue which is frequently evaded when abortion rights are discussed.

What anti-abortionists and some people who campaign for a woman's right to choose often fail to recognise/emphasise is that the question of viability and how best to manage a (late) termination does not devolve onto the woman having the abortion but onto the medical workers carrying it out.

This is an important distinction since it allows for a clear position that it is a woman's right to have her pregnancy terminated at any time and also enables health workers to have a clear policy with regard to the fate of the conceptus and management of the abortion procedure.

Thus the viability question should be posed not as 'till what gestation does a woman have the right to choose to have her pregnancy terminated', but 'how should a termination be managed at any given gestation'.

Policy on this should be designed to ensure that the abortion is carried out with the minimum of distress to the woman concerned, those carrying out the procedure, and the abortus. This in turn requires a clear understanding of what the procedure being carried out is designed to achieve.

If it is to abort a pregnancy and prevent the existence of an unwanted child, then the termination should be designed to ensure that the conceptus never experiences an independent sentient state. If it is to end a pregnancy and provide a live child, then all appropriate measures for the child's well-being should be instituted.

TIMOTHY LAMBERT (Manchester)

## After Torness

I'D like to make a few brief comments about your article on the Torness occupation (17 May).

I am an anarchist, as were a substantial proportion of the people there. A minority, not only of anarchists but many others too, were motivated to smash property by what they saw as an attempt to back out of direct action by a small clique. They behaved badly in that they should have tried to work through the alliance rather than getting into adventurist individualism.

In my view, the tragedy at Torness was that we behaved like a disorganised rabble. In theory all decisions were to be taken through delegates accountable to small groups meeting to arrive at suitable



compromises acceptable to all. This did not happen because it was deliberately blocked by clever manipulation by a relatively right-wing clique seeking to avoid an occupation. They succeeded only in disorganising it.

The Torness Alliance is in for a period of reconsidering and re-evaluating its functions and tactics. In the meantime, with all due respect, the left parties are only beginning to become involved. A dialogue is urgently needed about how we can or cannot work together.

One major element in this debate must be the structure we are trying to create — a decentralised, participatory consensus system which we still believe in despite its recent failures. Can you work through this system, or would you prefer to organise separately?

COLIN ROBERTS (Cardiff)

## Sport's positive values

IN his review of Jean-Marie Brohm's book on sport (17 May), Ric Sissons reports its thesis that 'sport must be smashed like the state machine'. What else is new these days? How about: the revolutionary overthrow of dancing? The transcendence of travel? The withering away of picnics, and holidays by the sea?

Ric Sissons has the sense to demur at the above-quoted remark, but for the rest his review appears to endorse a wholly negative appraisal of sport, as is reflected by its title, 'Sport — new opium of the masses?'. Thus: sport fosters 'discipline and respect for authority', it is a source of profit, it transmits the dominant ideology, encourages violence, sexism, the 'superstar ethos'. Evidently a bad thing!

Of course, sport is not sealed off hermetically from the society it inhabits. But neither are music, the cinema, literature and breakfast cereals. We must still bring some critical discrimination to the analysis of these topics, rather than simply 'rubbishing' them for their relationship to the capitalist order.

Modern sport does display ugly features and reactionary values.

However, it can and does also embody more positive values, antithetical to capitalism, such as fairness, generosity, disinterested admiration and mutual enjoyment; and in certain circumstances, just because of its links to the wider social environment, it can become the vehicle for expressing progressive political aspirations.

Furthermore, there are aesthetic qualities to the play. They may be of limited range but they are none the less real for that. There is the drama of the contest and there is the visual beauty of its constituent movements. As CLR James has put it, the public of modern sport in its own way 'grasps at a more complete human existence'.

Sissons speaks of Brohm's book as 'the first attempt to examine sport from a Marxist standpoint'. He overlooks James's *Beyond a Boundary*, surely an outstanding, if not simply the most outstanding, contribution to serious analysis of sport. It makes an eloquent case against common leftist prejudices. I recommend it to all those interested in this subject.

NORMAN GERAS (Manchester)

## Reactionary Gossip

NEWS from Nowhere (17 May) is a good example of the gossipy and in my opinion sometimes reactionary nature of that William Hickey-type column.

That a person's acceptability/credibility can be destroyed because they offend against the laws of bourgeois sexual morality can hardly be a healthy reason for *Socialist Challenge* to indulge in 'nudge, nudge — wink, wink' speculation about the identity of the 'third man' in the Norma Levy 'revelations'.

It may be diverting to some lefties to see some members of the bourgeoisie hoist with their own petard, but this is a most reactionary attitude. It is the same politics of sexuality which can ruin the ambitions of Profumo, Jellicoe, Lambton, Thorpe or Colquhoun which so oppress and can often ruin the lives of working class people.

The sexual activities or preferences of any person can never be the subject of frivolous comment by genuine revolutionaries. The number of people (particularly homosexuals) who have been driven to suicide rather than be involved in 'a few scandals' testifies to the fact that it is not a frivolous subject for the individuals concerned.

GREGORY CAREY (Leeds)

## Unprincipled

AS a non-sectarian paper, *Socialist Challenge* is not expected to uphold the canons of Trotskyist orthodoxy. But that is not a reason to forget about principles, as News from Nowhere does (17 May).

So you expect some Tory scandal. Bribery? Racialist Leyland boss? Sanction-busting? Nazi connections? Murder of opponents? No, no, not juicy enough. Rather how bourgeois politicians do not respect the norms of heterosexual monogamy and conjugal fidelity!

If you like such scandals, why wait for the future? There is already the Norman Scott-Jeremy Thorpe affair, the personal orientation of some NF leader, the love life of Princess Margaret, etc... If all that is not sufficient to titillate the readership, why not include a free copy of the Sun or the Daily Star as a centre page supplement?

C. RONSE (Oxford)

## Teeside - vote CP?

FEW people have the chance to vote for revolutionary candidates in the European elections on 7 June. So what do we say to the tens of thousands who may be willing to discuss the Common Market with us?

Putting forward internationalist and anti-capitalist policies and arguing for working class solidarity is fine, but not enough. Just as we call for a Labour government in general elections, we must take sides in this vote. Unlike normal elections, the issue is not a choice between reformist

and bosses' parties, but for or against the Market and the strengthening of European capitalist cooperation.

In Europe as a whole, the Communist parties have mass working class support, but disagree with each other on the EEC; here the CP is anti-Market, while the Labour Party is divided and has a pro-Market leadership. These factors must influence our tactics.

The policy we would argue for is 'For a left vote against the bosses' Market'. That is, we should give critical support to labour movement/socialist anti-Market candidates. Here in Teesside, where the Labour candidate is pro-Market, that means a vote for the CP member who is standing as an Anti-Common Market candidate, despite the party's small size and its chauvinist defence of British 'sovereignty'.  
ALAN THEASBY, TIM GREGORY (Middlesbrough)

## Destroy EEC

IF we vote in the coming election called by the EEC, we are thereby ratifying their right to call one, and thus strengthening and supporting the nascent EEC state machine.

We must work not only to withdraw from, but also to destroy, the EEC — as it is a capitalist, anti-socialist combine. If we say 'vote for an anti-EEC candidate', how do we differ from the Italian and French Communist parties?

JIM JOHNSON (Keele)

THE LENGTH of letters printed will usually be kept down to 400 words in order to encourage as wide a range of contributions as possible. All letters may be cut at the Editor's discretion.

Unsigned letters will not normally be published, although we will withhold real names from publication on request.

## SOCIALIST CHALLENGE EVENTS

**NORTH WEST**  
**MOSS SIDE** Socialist Challenge supporters sell the paper at Moss Side Centre, Saturday, 11-1.  
**MANCHESTER** SC Centre has been closed because of fire damage, but will be reopening shortly. All mail/enquiries should meanwhile be sent via the paper's national office in London.  
**OLDHAM** SC group meets regularly at the Gardeners Arms, Middleton Road, Westwood. Next meetings: Thur 7 June, 'Democracy and the labour movement'; Thur 21 June, 'The opposition in Eastern Europe'. Both at 7.30pm. Paper sales every Saturday, 11-1, outside Yorkshire Bank, High St. For further details tel. 061-652 7851.  
**NORTH EAST**  
**MIDDLESBROUGH** Socialist Challenge sales, Saturday lunchtime near the lottery stand at Cleveland Centre. Also available from Newsfare in Linthorpe Road.  
**DURHAM** Socialist Challenge Supporters Group. For details contact: Dave Brown, 2 Pioneer Cottages, Low Pirbrighton, Durham.  
**MIDDLESBROUGH** paper sales, Saturday lunchtime at Cleveland Centre, near lottery stand opposite Woolworths. Also available from Newsfare in Linthorpe Road and inside Cleveland Centre.  
**STOCKTON-ON-TEES** readers, can buy Socialist Challenge and *Revolution* from Green Books stall upstairs in Spencer Hall indoor market, Stockton High St.  
**SCOTLAND**  
For information about the paper or its supporters' activities throughout Scotland please contact *Socialist Challenge* Books, 64 Queen St, Glasgow. Open Wed, Thurs, Fri and Sat afternoons. Phone for alternative

arrangement (221 7481). Wide range of Fourth International publications.  
**HAMILTON** supporters sell *Socialist Challenge* every Saturday in the Hamilton shopping centre, 1-5pm. For details of local activities contact John Ford, 553 Elloit Crescent, Hamilton.  
**EDINBURGH** Socialist Challenge supporters group meets regularly. Phone George at 031-346 0466 for details.  
**DUNDEE** Information about *Socialist Challenge* activities from 64 Queen St, Glasgow. Join in SC sales outside Boots (corner of Reform St) each Saturday 11am-2pm.  
**MIDLANDS**  
**COVENTRY** SC group meeting: 'Abortion — the new threat'. Tues 12 June, 8pm, Wedge Bookshop.  
**NOTTINGHAM** readers can buy *Socialist Challenge* regularly at Mushroom Books, Heathcote St.  
**LEAMINGTON** Socialist Challenge group meets every other Sunday. Contact 311772.  
**YORKSHIRE**  
**Huddersfield** Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Thursdays at the Friendly & Trades Club, Netherthorpe St.  
**DEWSBURY** Socialist Challenge sales regularly on Saturday mornings in Westgate at the Nat.

Westminster Bank, 12.30-2.00pm.  
**LEEDS** Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday at City Centre Precinct, 11am-1.30pm. And at Eldon Rd — when Leeds Utd are playing at home!  
**Huddersfield** Socialist Challenge sales regularly Saturdays 11am-1pm in the Pizzaz.  
**YORK** Socialist Challenge is on sale at the York Community Bookshop, 73 Walmgate or from sellers on Thursdays (12.30-4.45) at York University, Vanbrugh College; Saturdays (11.30-3.30) at Coney Street.  
**SOUTH WEST**  
**FOR INFORMATION** on activities in the South West, write to Box 002, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Bristol 6.  
**SOUTHAMPTON** Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday from 10am-1pm above bar, Post Office, Bargate.  
**BRISTOL** Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday, 11am-1pm in the 'Hole in the Ground', Haymarket.  
**ISLE OF WIGHT** readers can buy *Socialist Challenge* from the Oz Shop, 44 Linn St, Ryde.  
**BATH** Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday, 2-3.30pm, outside Macfisheries, Ring Bath, 20296 for further details.

**SWINDON** supporters sell *Socialist Challenge* 11am-1pm Saturdays, Regent St (Bristol Centre).  
**PORTSMOUTH** Socialist Challenge sales, Saturdays 11.30am-1pm, Commercial Road Precinct.  
**SOUTH EAST**  
**NORWICH** Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday in Davey Place (opp. market) and bookstall Thursdays at University of East Anglia.  
**COLCHESTER** SC supporters meet regularly. For details phone Steve on Wivenhoe 2949.  
**BRIGHTON** SC forums fortnightly on Tuesdays. Contact Mick on 605052.  
**LONDON**  
**TOWER HAMLETS** Socialist Challenge Group meets every fortnight (phone 247 2717 for details).  
**PADDINGTON/N KENSINGTON** supporters sell the paper every Saturday at noon at junction Portobello Rd/Westbourne Park Rd, W11.  
**BRENT** supporters sell every Saturday, 2.30pm, at Kilburn Sq, Kilburn High Rd, London NW6.  
**HEMEL HEMPSTEAD** supporters meet regularly on Sunday evenings. For details phone Mick on Hemel Hempstead 41037. Also paper sales Saturday mornings in Times Square.  
**TOWER HAMLETS** jumble sale, Sat 2 June, 12.30-2.30, St Hilda's Club Row, E1.

**WALTHAMSTOW** readers can buy *Socialist Challenge* regularly from Sheridan's Newsagents, 86 Hoe St, E17.  
**LEYTON** readers can buy *Socialist Challenge* from Panel's Newsagents, 326 Lea Bridge Road, E10.  
**TOWER HAMLETS** Socialist Challenge supporters sell every weekend: Saturdays meet 10.30am, Whitechapel tube; Sundays meet 10am, Brick Lane (corner of Buxton St).  
**HACKNEY** supporters sell every Saturday, 12-2pm, in Kingsland High St, Dalsou — meet outside Sainsbury's.  
**HARROW** Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly, details from Box 50, London N1 2XP.  
**HARINGEY** paper sales at Finsbury Park and Seven Sisters tubes, Thurs evening; Muswell Hill and Crouch End Broadways, Saturday morning. Also available at Muswell Hill Bookshop, Muswell Hill Broadway; Vares newsagent, Middle Lane, N8; and Bookmarks, Finsbury Park.  
**PADDINGTON/N KENSINGTON** SC forum: 'The Tories, the unions, and the fight in the public sector', introduced by John Suddaby (Camden NUPE secretary), Wed 20 June, 8pm, at Meeting Room 1, Thorpe Close, W10.  
**HACKNEY** SC group meeting: 'No recognition of Smith/Muzorewa', with speaker from Zimbabwe Information Group, Thur 14 June, 7.30pm, Britannia pub, Mare Street, E8.

By Richard Carver

THEY were the two most unlikely looking athletes. Sonny Ramadhin had played only two first class cricket matches. He was 19 years old and five feet four inches tall. Alfred Valentine was hardly older and no more experienced. Tall, myopic and flat-footed, he had the shell-shocked look of the bank clerk gone to war.

Yet in a single summer, 1950, the two West Indian spin bowlers changed the face of the game, beginning the West Indian dominance of the game which continues today.

The change was not as sudden as the bare evidence of match results might suggest. Ram and Val had been foreshadowed by players like Learie Constantine and George Headley; they were accompanied by the 'Three Ws' batting trio, Walcott, Weekes and Worrell. But as the crowd surged back down the Brixton Road from Kennington Oval, Ramadhin and Valentine were the heroes of their calypso: 'Cricket, Lovely Cricket'.

The old colonial power was finally crushed in 1963 when Frank Worrell's side swept through the country. The English finally gave up any hope of stopping them by cricketing means and adopted more scurrilous measures.

THE Lords pigeons are the only furred and feathered friends who still take part in cricket. Yet in 1827 there was a challenge match between 'two gentlemen of Middlesex' and a man and his sheep-dog. The dog would stand by the bowler's side until the ball was hit and rapidly field it. Their opponents could hardly score a run.

And when the MCC visited Australia in 1876-77 they found that in one match the fielding side was supplemented by two kangaroos.

Prior to the next West Indian tour in 1966 the England captain, Ted Dexter, a former Tory parliamentary candidate, launched a campaign of vilification against Charlie Griffith, the most successful West Indian bowler in 1963. Griffith was an unsmiling, aggressive man on the field of play — not at all conforming to white ideas of how black athletes should behave. Dexter, backed by a large section of the press, claimed that Griffith threw rather than bowled the ball.

But Griffith continued to take wickets, Dexter retired prematurely, and not even slander could contain the West Indian supremacy.

For the press and ruling class cricket is an 'English' game and therefore dominated by their standards and their favoured players. Many socialists have taken over that attitude wholesale, simply inverting it to get the 'correct' political response: 'cricket is bourgeois'. Apart from reflecting the left's frequent philistinism towards sport, this response is breathtakingly insular.

## Allegiance

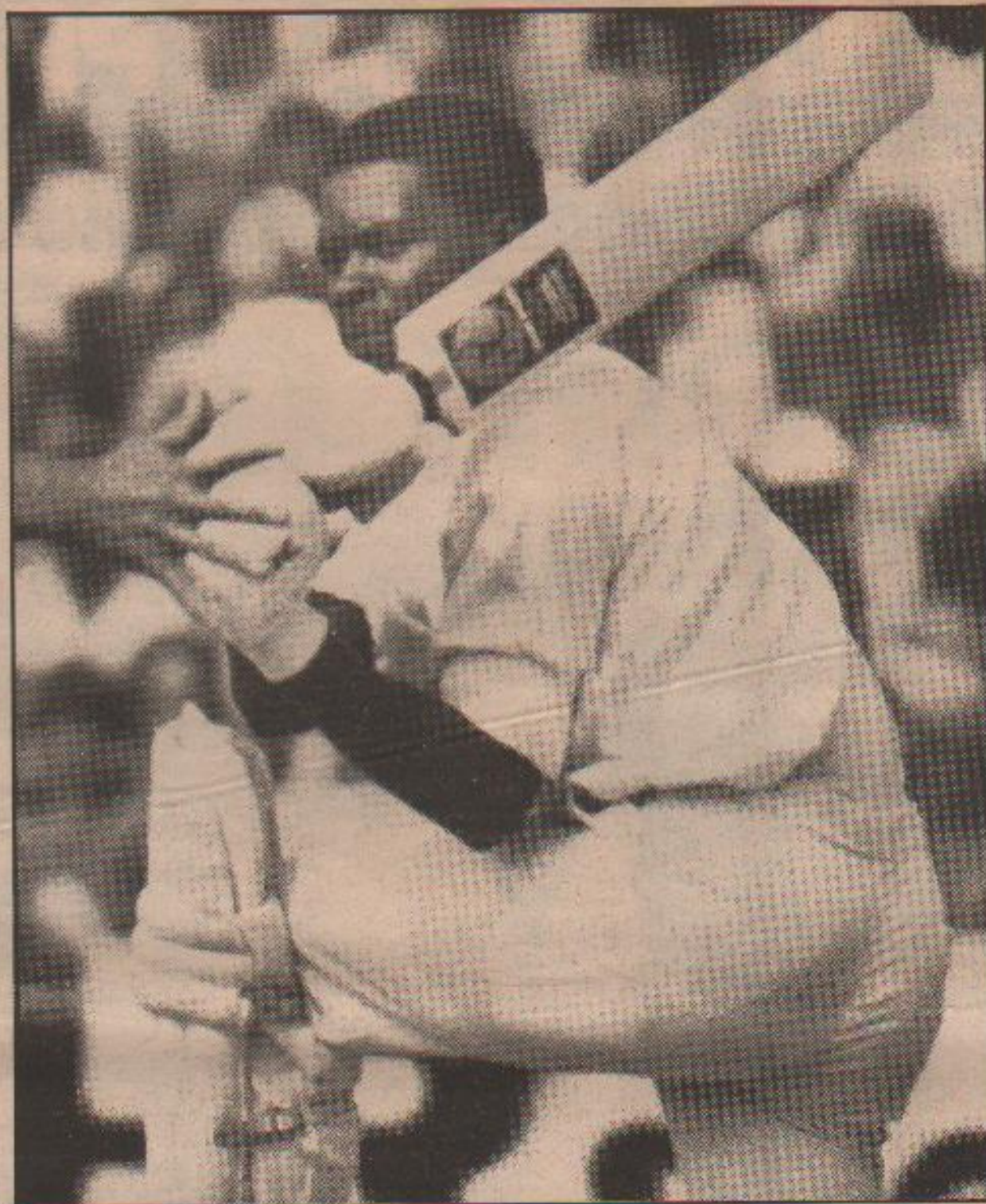
Australian football may be good for the pools, but it is cricket which commands public allegiance. Throughout the Indian sub-continent cricket as a recreation dwarfs all others. In the West Indies the tiniest vacant strip of ground is turned over to the national game. England and New Zealand are alone among the major cricketing nations in that the sport takes second place to another in the public interest.

It was not always so. There was never anything inherently 'ruling class' about a game which began with shepherds pitching a ball of wool at a wicket gate. As the game became standardised it did come to represent dominant Victorian values, but no more so than the equally bourgeois Football Association and League.

In many parts of the country, especially the north, football and cricket had precisely equal status — each was played for half the year. Even the smallest working class community had its cricket league.

The dominance of the public schools and universities has

# 'CRICKET, LOVELY CRICKET'



## 'Gentlemen and players'

THE government of cricket in England has hardly changed in a century. The ruling body is the Test and County Cricket Board. Its international equivalent is the International (formerly Imperial) Cricket Conference. Both bodies are staffed by a small clique organised around the Marylebone Cricket Club, a body equivalent to the Tory Party or the Guards as a prop of the British state!

These structures reflected the old 'Gentlemen and Players' division but have outlived it by years. Cricket used to be divided into the ruling class

amateurs ('Gentlemen') and the working class professional 'Players'. The distinction even affected such things as where players changed for the match or how their names were written on the scorecard.

Myth had it that the Gentlemen provided all the sparkling batters, while the Players filled the more workaday parts — 'an idea without the smallest shred of truth.'

The weekend league and club cricket played locally and was beyond the pale. Although it was governed by the same playing rules its members were in practice not

eligible for selection for national teams. Yet the standard was and is often high, with the participation of West Indians such as Constantine, Worrell and Sobers.

In England the Gentlemen-Players distinction was abolished in 1963. Its effects continue not just in the archaic administration but also in players' appalling wages (top players are meant to have private means, you see). And the selection of the England captain still seems to depend more on the old school tie than on tactical sense (the present incumbent excepted).

The battle with Kerry

Packer, the Australian capitalist who set up an alternative administration, may have helped to shake things up, but it will bring few benefits to the ordinary cricketer.

Nor does Packer provide a solution to cricket's problems. His answer is to make the game more commercial, more professional, and more distanced from the community. The reverse is needed — a destruction of the Test and county structure and a return to locally-based clubs and leagues. International competitions can be democratically organised from that basis.

progressively squeezed the life out of cricket. As the English ruling class decayed so did its input of cricketers. Increasingly repelled, many workers turned to other pastimes.

English dominance of cricket ended with the First World War. The West Indies was only admitted to Test cricket in the 1920s. Like all new Test-playing nations it took time to steel itself against international opposition, though its individual players were as good as any and only escaped due recognition by playing for an 'unfashionable' country. By 1950 it was ready for Ram and Val to explode their bombshell.

The only explanation normally offered for this new supremacy is the

'natural sense of rhythm' theory. The Marxist CLR James dealt simply with that sort of racism. Analysing the genius of Learie Constantine, he wrote: 'It was not due to his marvellous West Indian eyes and marvellous West Indian wrists. It was due, if you must have it, to his marvellous West Indian brains.'

## Technique

Ramadhin was the same. The confusion he created among English players was because of an innovation in technique — a new way of spinning the ball that no-one could understand. The question is why that

'technological' revolution took place in the Caribbean. Why, for example, the 164 square miles of Barbados provided the Three Ws, born within 18 months of each other, when England's hundreds of professional cricketers could offer no equivalent.

The only explanation is mass involvement in the game. That in turn becomes clearer if one visits Kennington Oval when the West Indians are playing. Thousands of black people, shipped over to do menial jobs or stand in a Brixton dole queue, can gain a symbolic revenge as the white team is humiliated.

James reports that on the waterfront in Trinidad is the slogan 'Garfield Sobers' 365', 'the amount of

his record-breaking highest score. The symbolism is the same.

West Indian cricket and politics are indissoluble, but neither detracts from the other. The fear of the political purist that cricket will sap black militancy is ridiculous.

Constantine, for example, was a passionate advocate of self-government. Frank Worrell's team was so popular because for the first time it was led by a black. The latter case also shows the tensions within Caribbean cricket. Worrell's appointment was only the result of a long battle which reflected the continuing gulf between crowds and administrators.

FAST bowling is the reason often given for women cricketers not competing on equal terms with men. Yet it was a woman who invented roundarm as opposed to underarm bowling. Christina Willes of Kents bowled that way to avoid getting her arm caught in her crinolines.

Her brother John was impressed with the idea and tried to use it against the MCC at Lords in 1822. But the umpires persistently ruled that he was bowling 'no-balls'. Willes angrily left the field, jumped on his horse and rode out of history. His sister's invention remained.

Three of the Packer 'Supertests' in the West Indies last winter were disrupted by crowd demonstrations. The fiercest, at the Bourda ground in Georgetown, was provoked by spectators crammed into the hot, uncomfortable stands all day with no cricket. In Barbados the disruption came after the crowd had spent the morning listening to news of the left-wing takeover in Grenada.

According to Frank Walcott, president of the Caribbean Congress of Labour: 'This regional explosion is more than a sporting discontent to be identified with an unpopular decision by an umpire or the judgement of the administration of those who control sporting events. This is a growing sign of social discontent in the area.'

Cricket watchers in the Caribbean evidently do not take the given social role of the game for granted, yet their British counterparts seem to. For all the 'radical' talk of one-day cricket no-one really questions the national and county organisation of the game. The Test and County Cricket Board has even restricted the number of foreign players in the county competition.

Chauvinism is rampant. When countries like East Africa, Sri Lanka and Papua New Guinea arrived for the World Cup this month they were the source of much amusement to the cricket writers. These countries are not up to Test standard, but only because of the lack of top-rate opposition. Why should the most popular sport in Fiji be the object of racist 'grass skirt' jibes in the Daily Telegraph?

## Physique

Why, for that matter, should the game be male-dominated? Physique is the reason most often given, but in only one aspect, fast bowling, is 'pure' physique of such importance. Even there, there is a certain irony, for the modern method of bowling was invented by a woman.

For most English cricket fans the idea of international cricket against Fiji or the involvement of women on an equal basis seems bizarre and laughable. But is it any more bizarre and laughable than the visit of the first Australian aboriginal team to Britain? There were racist jibes aplenty, but these could not hold back the emergence of Australia as a world cricket power — any more than the same methods could stop the rise of the West Indies nearly a century later.

Before these changes can take place the entire professional and administrative structure of cricket will have to be smashed. Power will have to devolve to the leagues in the villages, the estates and the localities.

But the game itself is a ready-made instrument for us to seize. The people of the Caribbean have shown that.

# Socialist Challenge

## WHO KILLED BLAIR PEACH?

### Demand an independent public enquiry



**Funeral Procession for Blair Peach**  
**Assemble 2pm Phoenix school,**  
**Bow Road, E3 (nearest tube Bow Road).**  
**Wednesday 13 June**

**One banner per national organisation**

Photographer: PETER KENNARD

# DISBAND THE SPG!

## OUR FUND DRIVE

WITH just three weeks of the current quarter remaining the Socialist Challenge fund drive has not even reached the half way mark in its three monthly target. To spell it out, we need to raise £1300 in the next three weeks.

We will not go into great detail again about the necessity of reaching our target. Instead we will try to be practical. And ask you to be also.

Last week Hackney Socialist Challenge Group held a fund raising social with Oxy and the Morons. If every other town or district in which there are Socialist Challenge supporters did the same, the quarterly target would be met.

So here's the timetable. This week

arrange a social and try and set a date before the end of June. Have leaflets duplicated; advertise it where you can.

After that, and once you have booked the venue and the entertainment — bands or records — start arranging food and drink.

In the final week, leaflet where you can, phone up all your friends and organise a raffle for the social. This can raise that extra bit of cash.

It's not really difficult, it just needs organising. And above all, when the big event takes place enjoy yourselves.

Unfortunately if this advice is followed, the fruit of it will not arrive at our office for a week or two.

That means an increase in individual contributions is also necessary. And if you haven't given this quarter then it's time you did.

Our thanks this week to:

Southampton IMG	£10.00
M. Shinn	3.00
N. Geras	20.00
P. Scott	3.00
Leamington SC	2.50
Hull SC supporters	3.00
M. Hackett	1.00
E. Fredenburgh	50.00
E. Schooling	10.00
H. Slymonik	10.00
F. Mulliner	5.00
MB	15.00
Week's total	£132.50
Quarter's total	£1,207.29

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 Abroad: Airmail, £16.50. Surface, £10 per annum.  
 Multi-reader institutions: double individual rate

Name .....

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

Cheques, POs and Money Orders should be made payable to 'Socialist Challenge'.  
 Complete and return to: Socialist Challenge, 328 Upper Street, London N2.