

Socialist Challenge

No expulsions!

Lobby the Labour Party NEC
Labour Party headquarters, Walworth Rd.
24 November

Bring Party banners
Called by CLPs against the witch-hunt

Miners can defeat the Tories

IF THE MINERS vote 'yes' in the NUM ballot — result will not be known until after we go to press — the stage will be set for a mighty confrontation.

On one side will stand the Tory government, hellbent on breaking the backbone of the trade union movement and showing people that there is no way that they can be resisted. On the other side will be the most militant, and best organised section of the working class.

If the miners crack the pay offer put up by the NCB and force the Coal Board to retreat over pit closures they will encourage and inspire every other worker fighting for wages and jobs.

They will also give the rank and file a lesson in what leadership is about. The right wing leaders like Sirs, the departed and unlamented Weighell, Duffy, and of course Len Murray, have shown time and time again that they have no stomach for a fight. As a result the Tories have treated them with contempt and simply walked all over them.

In contrast the NUM leadership, with Arthur Scargill to the fore, have shown what leadership is about. They have produced leaflets putting the case of the union executive. They have campaigned through the journals of the union. At a series of militant and

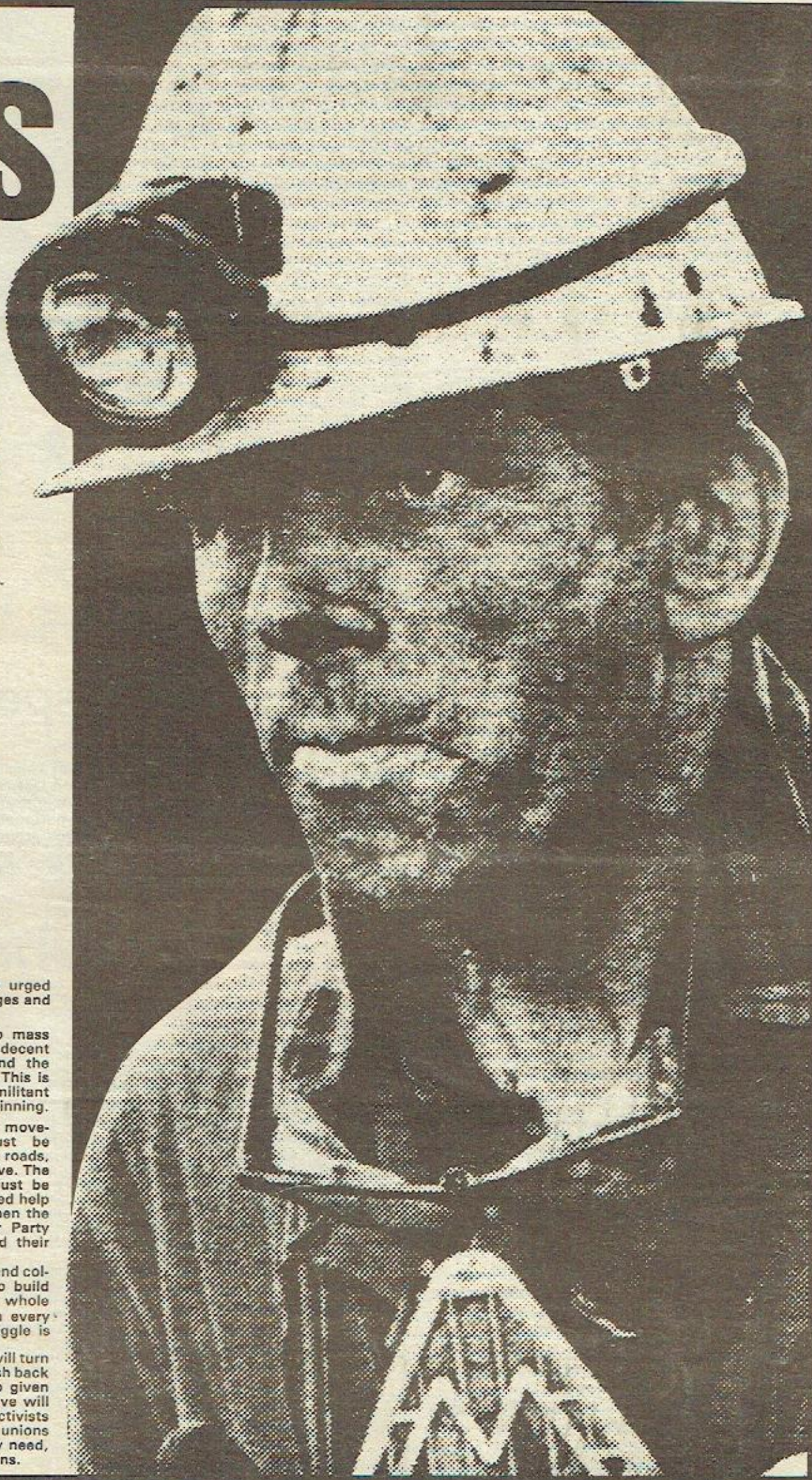
enthusiastic rallies they have urged their members to fight for wages and jobs.

The fight to call a halt to mass sackings and for the right to a decent wage will be centered around the miners if they vote to strike. This is why every socialist and every militant has a vested interest in them winning.

Right across the workers' movement, solidarity action must be organised. On rail, and on the roads, not one piece of coal must move. The gas and electricity depots must be picketed and if the miners need help to swell the size of pickets, then the trade unions and the Labour Party must take their members and their banners down there.

Meetings, demonstrations and collections must be organised to build support for the strike. The whole labour movement must strain every sinew to make sure this struggle is won.

A miners' strike that wins, will turn the tables on the Tories and push back their offensive. The leadership given by the NUM left-wing executive will also show to the rank and file activists in the right-wing dominated unions what kind of a leadership they need, and must fight for in their unions.



Is Labour's 'hard left' softening?

By Alan Freeman

BY A two to one majority, the 23 'hard left' Bennite MPs who announced they were forming an independent group at Labour Party conference have decided to rejoin the 'Tribune' group of MPs. It is still not certain whether they will continue meeting, as they have done until now, as a 'ginger' group.

Hard words were exchanged: Reg Race, MP, publicly denounced colleagues for 'parliamentary cretinism', while he has been accused of acting without consultation.

The traditional Bennite left also split at the last Executive Committee of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, which has led the battle for democratic reform for the last four years. Its best known activist Vladimir Derer has denounced the so-called 'ultraleft' while a group of CLPD officers is calling for a 'recorded vote' in a ballot on whether the CLPD should register 'in order to see who really backs the CLPD line'.

Similarly the issue confronting CLPD is not whether it registers but whether it throws its full weight behind the fight against expulsions. Despite formal backing for the 30 October conference many CLPD leaders will follow Tony Benn in putting their names to declarations, without being publicly and actively involved in leading the campaign.

Behind the confusion lies a much deeper issue: whether to fight Healey and the right wing.

Two currents made up the old Bennite left. Its strongest impetus came from millions of workers who wanted to prevent any

membership and the policies.

It may very well lead to a campaign for Benn to come into the Shadow Cabinet, despite a 10-1 vote against this in Benn's own constituency.



Wipe the grin off Healey's face

This last issue most clearly illustrates the left's dilemma. It may not be wrong in and of itself for Benn to enter the Shadow Cabinet, any more than it was wrong in and of itself for MPs to return to the Tribune group. But what compromises are to be made in order for him to enter it? That is the question. So far, very real compromises have been made. Benn has assented to a Labour Party programme which everyone knows will lay the basis for a new incomes policy. He has let go, without a murmur, Labour's commitment to nationalise the banks; to abolish the House of Lords; to renationalise privatised industry without compensation.

These concessions have an awful logic. As long as Bennite leaders are hamstrung because they think they must not challenge the right wing for fear of taking the blame for losing the next election, the right wing can



Photo John Harris

Time to forget old acquaintance

the activists and ditch policies, like unilateral disarmament, on which the Labour Party could pulverise Thatcher.

By capitulating to Healey, Benn is paving the way for a defeat for which

the left will inevitably take the blame.

But the arguments that hold Benn back need not sway the rest of the left. A clear road lies ahead, which we must travel with or without Benn. We

should prepare to establish an organised, campaigning left that links both unions and CLPs against the witch-hunt; Defend Labour's socialist policies by organising mass action to

defeat Thatcher; Struggle to make the right wing in the unions accountable for their betrayals; Throw them out of the leadership to pave the way for victory.

Benn says we should preserve 'The existing leadership, the existing membership, and the existing policies.' But the leadership wants to get rid of the policies and the membership.

The split in CLPD reflects a fundamental difference on the witch-hunt. Several officers who introduced a 'fallback amendment' to the register at Blackpool have now dropped the pretence that this is merely a delaying tactic, and are proposing the same resolution as CLPD's model for the next Labour Party conference.

more Healey-Callaghan governments.

The rank and file want to be rid of Healey and his friends. But Benn wants not to get rid of Healey's influence but to diminish it and reach a new accommodation with the right wing; to shift the 'spectrum' in the leadership without a lasting split.

The immediate issues are not the most important ones. Throughout last year an independent group of MPs existed but did not split from Tribune. The problem was not this, but its failure to organise any public, campaigning activity. It dissolved into a parliamentary caucus to prepare a left slate for the constituency section of the NEC. It organised no extraparlimentary campaigning, did not strike up links with the rank and file, failed to organise the trade union left to prevent the disastrous assault of Grantham, Weighell and their buddies.

It may not be wrong for Benn to run for Shadow Cabinet. But what compromises will be made in order to do it?

This has led to a series of actions which have perplexed, angered and appalled Benn's supporters. It led to the 'agreement' of Bishops Stortford — which, as Peter Tatchell said, no-one agreed to except the leadership. It has led to Benn's present declared aim of preserving the 'existing leadership, membership and policies' — though the leadership wants to ditch the

simply extract concession after concession, splinter the left, demoralise the left's support, and destroy its gains.

The error is obvious. Benn argues that if the left fights, it will be saddled with responsibility for a defeat at the general election. But we argue that the left must fight in order to win the next election. Healey is an electoral disaster. He wants to ditch

Benn speaks to Telecom workers

By Denny Fitzpatrick

AT A MASS rally of Telecom workers on their day of strike action last week, Tony Benn expressed his confidence that a Labour government would re-nationalise all posts and telecommunications privatised by the Tories.

The Post Office Engineering Union leadership had described the one day strike as non-political. But Tony Benn was adamant that it was political. What was involved was a choice as to which government should be in office — the Tories concerned about profit or Labour concerned about public need. To ensure that this was the real choice, he appealed to the audience to make it their business that Labour Conference decisions — like that on renationalisation — be included in the Manifesto. Just so. In the POEU the Broad Left has fought for Labour Party business and affairs to be accountable to the membership — just as we would like POEU policy to be cast inside the Labour Party.

Benn ended by asking: What had gone wrong? Why were the gains of the public services being reversed? He pointed to three reasons: We forgot to support each other; we forgot our struggle — and if you stop struggling your rights will be taken away; and we had not used 'our socialist imagination'.

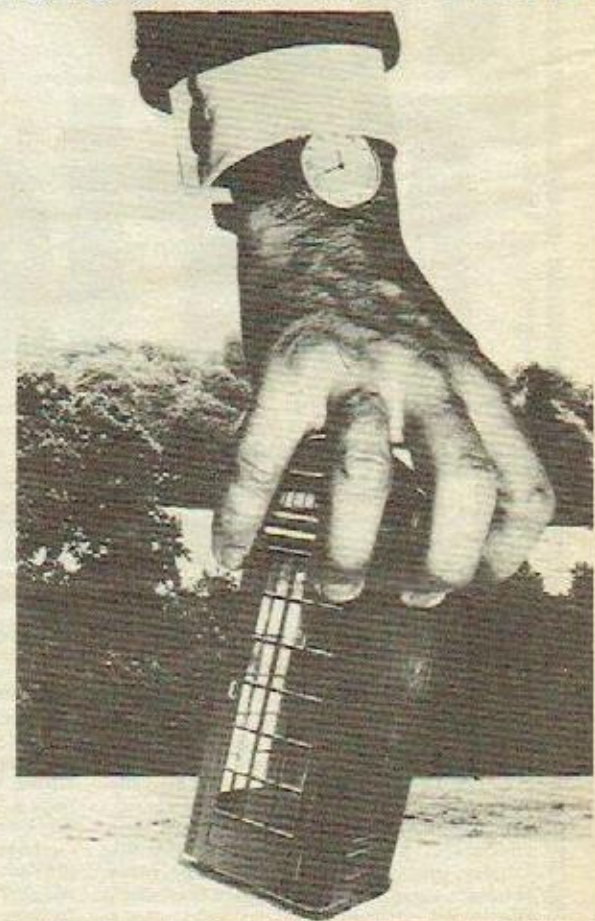
The example he gave was the mimicking of

private firms by the nationalised industries — instead of going further and developing new forms of control.

But what he failed to explain was the role of leadership in this. Rank and file workers have wanted to support each other, have wanted to keep struggling, have wanted to make nationalised industries something different than private, profit-motivated companies and begun to implement workers control.

Many rank and file workers leaders are looking to Tony Benn because they realise the need for a new leadership. They do not want a government of the Callaghan-type which scabbed on the 'winter of discontent'. They see in Benn someone who is prepared to be accountable to their demands.

Socialist Challenge supporters agree with this sentiment and are themselves fighting in the POEU for an accountable leadership. They are fighting to get rid of the Brian Stanleys and John Goldings who are unaccountable and support witch-hunts in the Labour Party.



HANDS OFF TELEPHONES!

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

If you would like to be put in touch with Socialist Challenge supporters in your area or would like more information fill in the form below

Name

Address

Age

Union/CLP (if any)

Send to: Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.



NEW BADGE!
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Witch-hunt conference tasks

- Unity against expulsions
- Build a national campaign
- Organise to resist

ALAN FREEMAN and BRIAN HERON, from the steering committee of the 30 October conference against the witch-hunt, explain the committee's proposals and what it is hoped the conference will do.

AS WORKERS in the pits, steel, post office, water, and health shape up against Thatcher, and as her attacks on working people mount, Michael Foot and Dennis Healey are settling in for a happy winter discussing an issue dear to the heart of every unemployed person in Britain — purging the socialists. But if the response to the 30 October conference against the witch-hunt is anything to go by, their winter won't be a cosy one.

With one week to go, credential applications had been received from over seventy constituencies and are coming in at the rate of 15 a day. 19 MPs are now sponsoring including Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, Joan Maynard and Audrey Wise, and two Liverpool MPs, Bob Parry and Allan Roberts, who spoke strongly in favour of the campaign at its well-attended press conference on Thursday 21 October.

The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy is sponsoring and address-

ing the conference, and *Militant* will be sending a speaker.

The steering committee are to make two main recommendations:

1. To establish a national organisation, with a democratic structure accountable to official labour movement bodies, on the basis of opposition to expulsions.
2. To campaign for the adoption of model resolutions by CLPs and unions, arguing that they will not accept expulsions and that they will support any

CLPs who are disaffiliated.

A series of further proposals, including regional conferences to establish local support, a newsletter and a lobby of the NEC on November 27, are put forward in a discussion document from the steering committee for guidance to delegates. It is also proposed to change the name to 'Labour against the Witch-hunt' to reflect the involvement of trade unions and other affiliated bodies.

What do these proposals add up to? In essence, an organised, national campaign to stop the witch-hunt.

The NEC is determined to go ahead with expulsions, and will do so unless the resistance to them is co-ordinated and organised.

The vast majority of party members and trade unionists do not want this witch-hunt.

The NEC will succeed only if they carry through expulsions quietly and without a fuss. If they have to disaffiliate twenty or thirty CLPs they will fall to a sustained campaign to remove the right wing leaders responsible for the chaos.

Can such a battle be won? It depends on whether support can be built up among the affiliated organisations for a stand by the CLPs. That is why the campaign will be taken, at local level, into the unions, youth, women's sections and so on — and why backing must be won from MPs



Forty seven percent of the population, in the latest opinion poll, want to be rid of American bases. The right wing want to drop nuclear disarmament. We want to win the next election.

and councillors.

The committee's three further proposals deal with this. Regional conferences are to create a local network, through which CLPs will be able to mobilise the local labour movement. The trade union committee will fight for a national response from the unions with

fringe meetings, resolutions to annual conferences, and so on: the aim being to commit the block vote against expulsions and reverse the decision on the register at the next Labour Party conference.

30 October is a landmark in the fight against the right wing's purge: but it is only the beginning.

Hackney Young Socialists oppose witch-hunt

THE STEERING committee of the 30 October conference is proposing to establish a youth subcommittee to co-ordinate work in defence of the Young Socialists. So far nearly twenty YS branches have applied for credentials.

Socialist Challenge reprints here the resolution on the witch-hunt passed by Hackney Young Socialists to their regional conference, which is an excellent working model for other YS branches.

This conference notes:

1. The continued desire by the working class to fight this reactionary Tory government as shown by the health, rail, steel and mineworkers.
2. The attempts of the right wing Labour and trade union leaders to sabotage this potential through the launching of a witch-hunt in the ranks of the Labour Party and unions, and through blocking fightback in the steel, rail and health unions.
3. That this witch-hunt is aimed at breaking up the workers' fight against the Tories, mass movements like the disarmament movement and reversing gains around policy and democracy at Labour Party conference for the last few years.
4. That the Labour right seek to block the inclusion of any progressive policies or demands in Labour's election manifesto such as unilateral nuclear disarmament, or a 35-hour week.

Conference believes

That the best form of defence is attack. The LPYS should throw itself into support for campaigns like CND. At the same time the

LPYS should fight to lead the opposition to the right wing's witch-hunt in the Labour Party and trade unions.

This Conference resolves to:

1. Continue to support all workers in struggle against the Tories and fight to build the maximum solidarity throughout the Labour Party, unions and among youth.
2. Oppose the witch-hunt inside the Labour Party and unions. Defence of the LPYS must be at the centre of this fight, but we declare our opposition to all expulsions of individuals or disbandments of constituency parties in the event of non-cooperation with any NEC instructions.
3. Support the campaign set up against the witch-hunt principally the Steering Committee set up by the Labour Movement Conference against the Witch-hunt, and the national campaign set up by the conference called by Hackney North CLP.

Conference instructs the Incoming Regional Committee:

1. To coordinate YS branches' solidarity work with industrial struggles against the Tories.
2. To continue developing joint activities with Youth CND in the region.
3. To affiliate the Regional YS to the two anti-witch-hunt bodies named above, send delegates to both, and fully support their planned activities.
4. To publicise, and win support for YS activities throughout the regional Labour Party and unions.
5. To campaign for the defence of the LPYS by all labour movement bodies.
6. To launch a massive recruitment drive, as the best way to combat those working to close the YS down.

Why Militant should back the conference

MILITANT HAS APPLIED to register. A four page spread in their latest issue carries a detailed letter of application to Jim Mortimer, Labour Party secretary.

The decision will be seen as a big blow for the left, including many *Militant* supporters. It will be read as a signal that *Militant* wants to strike a deal with the NEC. It also gives legitimacy to the idea of a register.

But the decision won't change much. If *Militant* had not applied, the NEC would still have expelled people.

And it will do this — unless a struggle is organised against expulsions. This is why the conference on 30 October, to organise resistance to expulsions, is so important.

Whatever attitude might be taken to the register by different currents on the left, unity is essential on the one question, which will determine whether or not the register is effective — that is whether or not people get kicked out.

Will *Militant* be taking part in the 30 October conference? Until recently its editors denounced it claiming it was counterposed to their own 11 September rally — even though the conference organisers mobilised support for the rally saying that the two events served different functions.

Militant's leaders now declare they will support the conference. But they are sponsoring a motion which argues it should dissolve, instead of setting

up a campaign, and send along two delegates to their own 'campaign against the witch-hunt' committee. This is not the best way to get unity.

The 30 October conference serves a different purpose to the *Militant* committee. It is designed to establish a broad united front based on official bodies of the Labour movement, unlike the *Militant's* steering committee which is primarily made up of *Militant* supporters. And the 30 October conference aims to defend, not just the *Militant* but the whole of the left — indeed, the whole party.

This is not to deny the importance or legitimacy of the *Militant's* own committee and rallies, which must be backed. But these cannot substitute for the job of building a broad united front. *Militant* should join the new body and work with it to build its own 27 November regional rallies, as well as a network of supporters and affiliates to the new campaign. This would be an excellent working relationship, which could even-



Pat Wall, parliamentary candidate for Bradford North. The NEC will try to remove all *Militant's* PPCs against the wishes of their constituencies

tually lead to a single united body. But are there deeper reasons for *Militant* leadership's reluctance to join in united front activity?

It unfortunately thinks that it, and only it, is the object of the NEC's attack, and that the best way to react is to build the *Militant*. This doesn't leave much role for people who don't happen to agree with the *Militant*, but do want to defend it; and it doesn't do anything at all about at-

tacks on the rest of the left.

Worse still, they have raised building *Militant* to such a principle that they are ready for a wide layer of *Militant* supporters to lose Labour Party membership in advance of a struggle.

At numerous meetings of the left, *Militant* spokespeople have made it clear that they think it would be better for *Militant* supporters threatened with expulsion to leave the Party rather than provoke

Photo Pete Grant

Photo John Harris

HEALTH:

For all out strike

By Norman Lockhart

LAST Thursday the TUC NHS Committee finally decided to consult the healthworkers about taking indefinite, all out action to win their pay dispute. Is this appeal to the members a sudden conversion to mass democracy? Not exactly.

The roasting COHSE leader Albert Spanswick got from shop stewards in Glasgow the day before, left the TUC with little alternative but to go back to the members. It has been increasingly obvious during the three weeks of regional days of action that healthworkers have been looking back to the magnificent solidarity of 22 September and wanting an immediate fight to win, or else a settlement before the members become exhausted and union organisation falls apart.

The limited actions so far has secured an increased offer at the expense of local health boards making cuts. But it has also seen the explosive developments of a shop stewards movement in the NHS.

In Glasgow, one of the biggest health boards in the country some hospitals (such as the Royal Infirmary) had no stewards committee at all at the start of the dispute. Now a city-wide stewards organisation has begun to meet. The first meeting, attended by 60 stewards from seven hospitals co-ordinated with these protests against Spanswick.

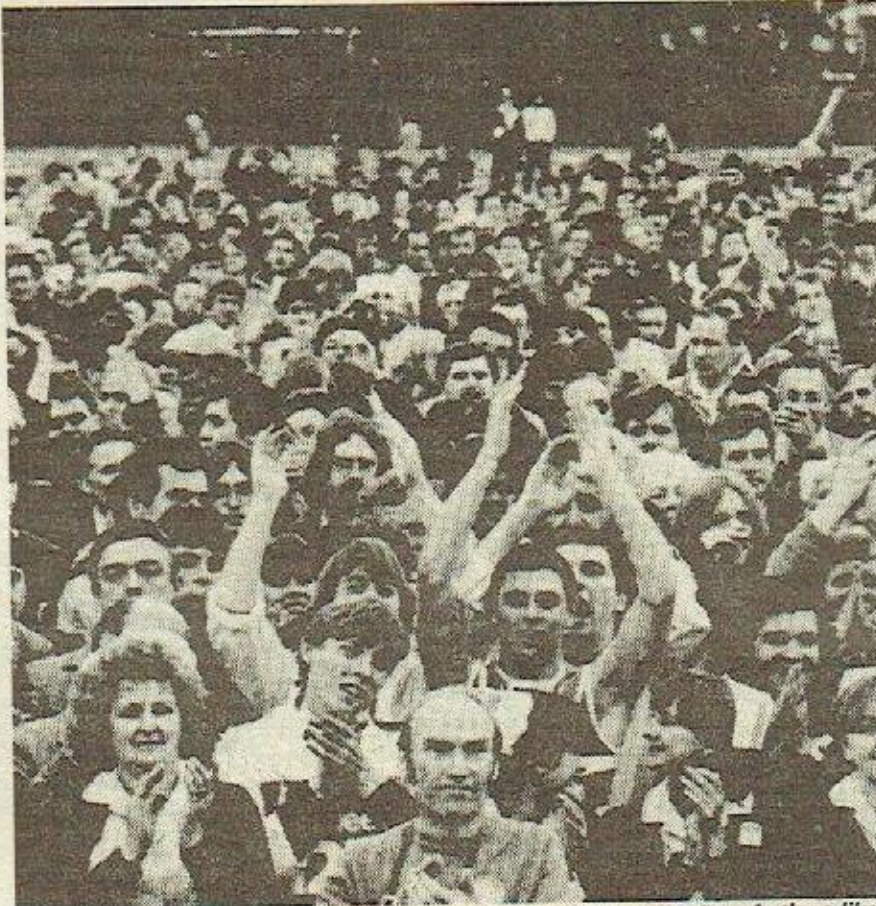
On Friday a second meeting drew representatives from 17 hospitals.

A steering committee of one representative from each hospital is to organise further meetings of all Glasgow shop stewards, and will call a conference of all NHS stewards in Scotland in two to three weeks time.

Task

The main task for the stewards is to turn out a solid vote for an indefinite strike — particularly from the weaker unions, who can expect no lead from their officials. Building on the support already won from industry is also important in preparing the kind of action that can win.

The main focus for building up to all out action and getting the support of the other sections will be the national transport strike on 8 November. Workers in the pits, steel, and British Telecoms and other industries are pushing ahead with their own disputes but can see that they are part of the same fight against Tory policies.



A scene from the massive 120,000 strong London demonstration. Actions like this have to be used to build all-out action.

The fight to get health workers to support all out action is also preparing the battle against cuts involving job losses and closures. The growth of stewards organisations is paving the

way for co-ordinated initiatives that can increasingly put the TUC leaders on the spot.

That is why the national NHS stewards meeting called in Sheffield

Saturday 30 October must be representative enough to move towards an authoritative national body that really expresses and organises rank and file feeling.

POEU march to defend jobs

THE 20 OCTOBER and Day of Action by Post Office engineers was a resounding success. Thousands marched in London and many other workers refused to cross picket lines. Socialist Challenge spoke to five women engineers about their union's campaign against privatisation of British Telecoms.

Was the campaign for the one day strike a success?

Suzanne: The organisation for the strike was really bad, the membership want more discussion. The instruction to strike came too late from head office and distribution to the members was bad. The arguments haven't been won in the membership yet. This still has to be done.

Who's fault is it?

Anne: The POEU national executive didn't organise well. They should be more available to the membership.

Suzanne: The local union office didn't distribute the information quickly enough. The officers of the branch didn't come to our exchange until Tuesday morning, the day before the strike. That was obviously too late. The branch officers don't seem to understand that we need more workplace meetings, more involvement, more discussion.

Bridget: The present NEC is really reliant on a Labour government being returned to office. This is totally useless.

Ann: The Tory's plans to privatise BT mean that management are already attacking the workforce. The latest management circular gives instructions on how to take disciplinary action against workers who aren't totally efficient for BT's needs and that redundancies are needed now. We need to defend our jobs now and not wait for a Labour government.

Janice: In our area engineers aren't being replaced when they leave or retire and management is pressuring other workers to do their jobs. Workers are being compulsorily transferred.

If you look at what our Labour sponsored MP John Goulding has done you see how useless it is to wait for a Labour government. All he does is talk to the Tories. We need to fight now.



Post Office engineers turn out solidly against privatisation.

That is the best way we will make a Labour government implement the best policies for BT. We want the split between Posts and Giro and BT reversed so that it is one industry again — like the GPO. We want renationalisation without compensation.

There are very few women engineers in BT. Did your workmates welcome you onto the line?

Suzanne: The men were shocked but pleased to see me arrive. The group of men I had taken up some time ago because they said sexually abusive things to a woman clerical assistant were organising the picket when I arrived at 7.30am.

After 30 seconds of mutual shock they welcomed me and we are now talking for the first time in six months. I think that showing we actively

support the union means that those members who support our right to be engineers see us as good union members. Those that are anti-union will feel more strongly against women on the job.

Do you like your jobs?

Mona: Yes, very much. I get along really well with my workmates. Blokes don't understand why women do this job. First they treat you like they

think a women should be treated but they can't because you're an engineer. Then they treat you like an engineer...

At this point Gerry County from West End POEU branch arrived...

Gerry: So you're a fitter — you can fit me up any time. No really, some girl fitters are better than most men I've seen. They're good at their job. Women have as much right to work as men do — please quote me in SC.

JANICE CHEDDIE is a youth entrant and works as an engineer in a telephone exchange in North London.

MONA CORBIN is in her first year as an apprentice in Central London.

BRIDGET ELTON joined BT as an adult entrant two years ago and is a fitter in the city of London.

ANN FIANDER joined BT as an adult entrant two years ago and is now an engineer in a telex exchange.

SUZANNE SMITH has finished her three year apprenticeship and now works as a fitter in the City of London.

Support the Healthworkers

Mass meeting of transport workers
Monday 8 November 10.00am

Friends Meeting House
Euston Rd., London N1

Speakers: Arthur Scargill, president NUM
Ray Buckton, general secretary NUPE

Jim Stevenson, executive NUR
Tony Benn also invited.

sponsored by Kings Cross NUR

National Meetings of health service stewards and representatives of strike committees.

Saturday 30 October 1982, Royal Victoria Hotel, Victoria Station Road, Sheffield. 10.30am to 4.30pm.

LEICESTER health service co-ordinating committee and Sheffield Joint Shop Stewards Committee are calling a national meeting to determine the views of shop stewards on the future conduct of the health pay dispute. There is no machinery available for the TUC health service committee to consult with stewards nationally and this meeting is intended to help remedy the problem. It is hoped representatives of the TUC health service committee will agree to attend this meeting and outline the committee's views on how the dispute can soon be brought to a successful conclusion.

Whilst the meeting we propose has no official standing it will allow us to discover the collective view of many of those who have been foremost in the conduct of the dispute and advise the TUC health service committee accordingly. For further information phone Sheffield 0742-26484 ext 2896 daytime or 550 582 evenings.



Rail

Scargill calls for unity in action

By Robin Duncan and Hazel McPherson

LAST SATURDAY, miners' leader Arthur Scargill addressed the Triple Alliance meeting in Edinburgh. Over 5,000 people were present — many having joined the march to the rally as it went along. Fraternal delegations from the health workers, Rolls Royce, Leyland, Upper Clyde shipworkers and others were also there. For many workers, the alliance is seen as something that could and should take on Thatcher's government.

Scargill explained that miners are taking action to protect pay jobs and the future of the industry. He urged the steelworkers and railworkers to do likewise. 'The NUR (the railworkers union) and the ISTC (the steelworkers' union) must stop giving us just moral support and take joint action with us', he said.

Inside the NUR, railworkers will be looking for a candidate for a general secretary who is prepared to respond to Scargill's call and committing himself to campaigning inside the union for a national fightback on jobs as well as putting themselves firmly behind industrial action in support of the miners struggle.

The NUR's national executive committee, which has led the fight against Weighell and Weighellism can play a

role in ensuring that the next general secretary is committed to such policies. First, by responding to Scargill's call and fighting for joint action with the miners within the union as a whole. And secondly, by demanding that all candidates for general secretary should place their views on the Triple Alliance in front of the membership.

Finally the best conditions for the victory of a left candidate will be laid in struggle. The election of a general secretary will provide an opportunity for the left on the executive to explain how it sees the interests of railworkers being defended. This should start now through an active campaign in the branches to build for the one day strike in solidarity with the health service on 8 November.

Scargill's barnstorming campaign

FOR THE first time since 1935, a united National Union of Miners executive has toured the coal field to mobilise a yes vote for strike action.

In the build up to the 28 October ballot against pit closures and for a £27 a week pay increase, union president Arthur Scargill has addressed enthusiastic mass rallies in every mining area. The South Wales and Sheffield meetings each attracted around 4,000 miners who demonstrated their support for Scargill with cheers and standing ovations.

Scargill's message to the first of these rallies in South Wales was repeated throughout the week. 'You have given me a mandate to fight against closures and to fight for a decent standard of life. I can't promise you a seat in the House of Lords, but I can promise you a leadership which is in touch with the members. I can promise you that we will abide by national conference decisions. That's what our union is all about.'

The contrast between this response to the union ranks and the experience of other workers was drawn out in vice president Mick McGahey's speech to the same rally. 'Let's face it there have been retreats by sections of the British working class. When ASLEF were on strike, thirteen leaders, and I emphasise not the trade union movement, sold out the workers. Now look what's happened to them with McCarthy.'

To cheers, Scargill thundered the alternative approach of the NUM leadership. 'The miners are a force no longer prepared to see their industry decimated like in the 1960's. They are no longer prepared to stand idly by and see the same happen to them as has

happened to the rail and steelworkers under the Tories. If you go out and get votes, and I know you will, you can rest assured the union leadership will not betray you.'

Between 1960 and 1972 500 pits were closed and over half the jobs lost. As Scargill reminded his audiences, this bloodletting had continued under Labour and Tory Governments alike. Since 1975 37,000 jobs have been lost, 12,000 of these in the last year alone.

While this emaciated workforce struggles to keep production targets up and maintain safety on high levels of overtime private contractors and loan sharks from the banks and finance houses have been getting fat. Between 1980 and 1981, £341 million was paid in interest and in the last year there has been an increase of 30 per cent in mysterious expenditure items like 'payments to private contractors', 'depreciation' and so called 'expenditure on other items' (an increase of £54 million).

Taking these payments aside, Scargill estimates that a cut in overtime from 14 per cent to 4 per cent would pay the claim twice over, or create 30,000 new jobs.

Further evidence of the Tory plans is revealed in the present issue of the national NUM journal, *The Miner*. An extract from a three year old cabinet document on nuclear power is printed which explains: 'But a nuclear programme would have the advantage of removing a substantial portion of electricity production from the dangers of disruption by industrial action by coal miners or transport workers.'

No more evidence is needed to prove that the Tories intend to take on the miners, to destroy their jobs and smash up their union. Some miners are apprehensive about the results of the 28 October ballot. They are concerned that their leaders waited too long to start the campaign that linked the pay and closure issues as one.

By next week the ballot results will be known. Every steel worker, rail worker and hospital worker tied down in a battle with the Tories will be hoping that the miners will give a lead in action from that day.

As McGahey told the South Wales miners: 'The British miners can be a catalyst that can spark off the fight against the Tory government.' They can also hear on the pressure behind Scargill's message that 'the next Labour government should be as loyal to our class as the Tories are to theirs.'

This is the message which for miners means investment in the pits, a four day week, early retirement and a sane energy policy based on ample reserves of coal, oil, and gas.



Arthur Scargill

How we organised

By David Crowther, Delegate, Warsop Main, North Derbyshire Area (personal capacity)

THE LESSONS of our pay claim and overtime ban can be summed up as 'getting the facts across'. The popular press has talked about our claim for 31 per cent. What we really said was for £25 across-the-board on basic rates. This would particularly benefit the lowest paid — the surfaceworkers — bringing them up to £115 a week. It would equal out some of the big differences between areas resulting from the bonus scheme.

The NCB offered us 7.2 per cent if we accepted 'cost unit efficiency', in other words — pit closures. The Special Delegate Conference

estimated that around 35,000 jobs would be on the line. This made it clear that it wasn't Arthur Scargill or our NEC which was 'artificially' linking pay and jobs. It was the NCB, with Thatcher backing them up.

From the start, the wage claim has been a political issue. This wasn't our choosing. It was the choice of NCB Chairman Norman Siddall and Margaret Thatcher, both with only a year to run in their jobs. If the NCB wanted to avoid confrontation it could have done we could have been offered rate and early retirement at 55 with full benefits on top of the 7.2 per cent and the men might well have accepted. But these issues which were 'agreed in principle' last year, have now been rejected out of hand by the Board.

Neither is it a coincidence that the Tories are now looking for confrontation with the miners. In 1980 they picked off the steel industry. Then they sacked Derek Robinson from BL, and tens of thousands of his members followed him down the road. It was traindrivers and healthworkers this year. If Thatcher can defeat the miners then that gives her a whole year's

free run up to the next election.

So the NCB wasn't only prepared for industrial action it was ready to provoke it. Straight after our Special Delegate Conference, every miner received a printed letter saying how much the offer was worth and how much money the men would lose as a result of an overtime ban or strike.

We haven't had much time to combat the onslaught from the NCB and the *Sun*, *Star*, and *Mirror*. There has only been three weeks from the Special Conference to the ballot. In that time we've won full support for the overtime ban and, through canteen and group or panel meetings, assembled our forces for the ballot.

And it's been at pit level that we've needed to convince the men. Big rallies are very good for morale but to a large degree they are preaching to the converted. The committee men have to go away from them with leaflets, posters, stickers and papers.

A new thing, which has been very useful, has been that area and branch officials have been to one another's areas and branches. This has been good for bolstering weaker areas and pits.

Ballot result in the balance

OVER 4,000 militants gathered in Sheffield to hear Arthur Scargill and other NUM leaders speak. After the rally Andy Miller spoke to John Chambers from Markham Main colliery in Yorkshire and Stuart Borthwick, youth representative at Yorkshire Main colliery about the campaign.

John: I think we'll win it easily at our pit. We're gearing up now, the union is getting behind it and so are the men. I feel a lot more confident. It's made me want to fight that bit harder.

Stuart: From the look of it tonight I think we'll get it. It's looking up. But it's a question now of taking it back to the rest of the pit. There's maybe 55 per cent in favour at pit. But there's a lot dead against it. You've always got 'em.

John: We'll win them over.

Stuart: We'll win them over eventually. It's just a matter of taking them back and showing them the facts. There's too many read the wrong papers.

John: Another thing that's been helping is the overtime ban. That's working now. Management are clamping down, so the lads are starting to fight back against them instead of moaning against Scargill.

Stuart: The arguments are getting across slowly but surely. I think we've got it — well, I hope we've got it.

Mark Hunter was also at the meeting. He works at Welbeck colliery in the traditionally 'moderate' Nottinghamshire area. He is very worried about the lack of a campaign there.

Mark: I went up to the area office last week. The reception area was knee deep in copies of *The Miner*. I went

Jack Taylor, president Yorkshire Area NUM.

WE have the responsibility of other unions in dispute on our shoulders. If we fail then they fail as well. The Tories will get more satisfaction, they'll get more yardage out of beating us than beating anyone else. We owe it to ourselves and to our movement to make sure we are resolved to improve our members' living standards.

Peter Heathfield, general secretary of North Derbyshire Area NUM.

I'll defy anybody in this hall tonight to pick up a copy of the national Coal Board account from 1947 to 1982 and point out to me which year there was some money for miners' wages. There has never been an occasion since 1947 that the NCB report has indicated that cash is available to meet the aspirations of the miners. The wages you have achieved over the years have been achieved through your determination, our collective determination. There has never been cash on a platter.

back today and a lot of them are still there.

So far at my pit we've had a few posters, no information leaflets or stickers. There's been a lot of trouble over the overtime ban. You expect the fitters and electricians who are the only people who do much overtime to go up the wall about it, but there's a lot of other men who turned against the union because of

it. If you believe the press you'd think the overtime ban was imposed by Scargill on his own. But it's not surprising if blokes are accepting this when the union hasn't got the real facts over to them.

It's tragic, because if we fought on the issues, if we had canteen meetings — a real fight — we could win it. We could walk it.

A day in the life of a flying picket

Steelworkers solid

By Steve Pilley, Rotherham BSC

STEELWORKERS responded massively to the call of the steel unions for a one day protest strike against threats of further closure and massive job loss in British Steel Corporation. The giant steelmaking plant at Ravenscraig in Scotland is in the firing line. The decision to close is now in the hands of Tory industry boss Patrick Jenkins. The ultra modern £400m Redcar plant on Teeside is equally threatened.

According to the *Sunday Times* the only thing staying Jenkins' hand is that any closure could 'spark off severe industrial unrest'.

This willingness to fight was clearly shown on 22 October as can be seen from this diary of a flying picket.

5.00am Meet at Rotherham works and make for Tinsley Park works. About 50 pickets there.

5.40am Police van arrives. They tell us about the TUC guidelines for six pickets. We all stand back onto BSC property and ignore the police request. We are stopping all the cars.

5.45am Two more police vans arrive. Still not able to get cars

through. Fortunately there are too few police for their tactics — which they have obviously been practicing (for the miners?) — to work.

6.40am Still more police arrive. Things are getting ridiculous. They now outnumber the pickets. One or two management cars get through. Decide to go to Rotherham for more pickets.

6.45am Arrive back at Tinsley Park to find that one picket has already been arrested — for not giving his name and address. We heard later on in the day that they had handcuffed his legs to the hand-rails on either side of the van. They then beat him across the thighs with a truncheon. He got out of the police station at 10.30. At 11.00, he was back on the line.

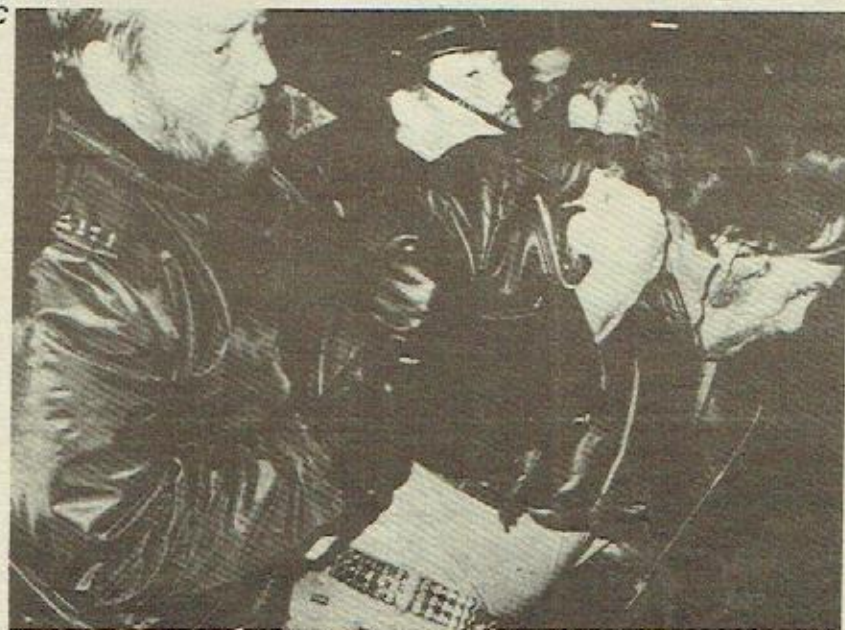
7.00am More pickets, more police, more scuffles. They are now implementing their tactics. They put three lines of police across the gate, splitting into a V-shape as cars arrive. A line of police then walks the car through the gates. We are not as well organised, so some cars get through, we'll be better next time.

8.45am Someone drives through the picket line at

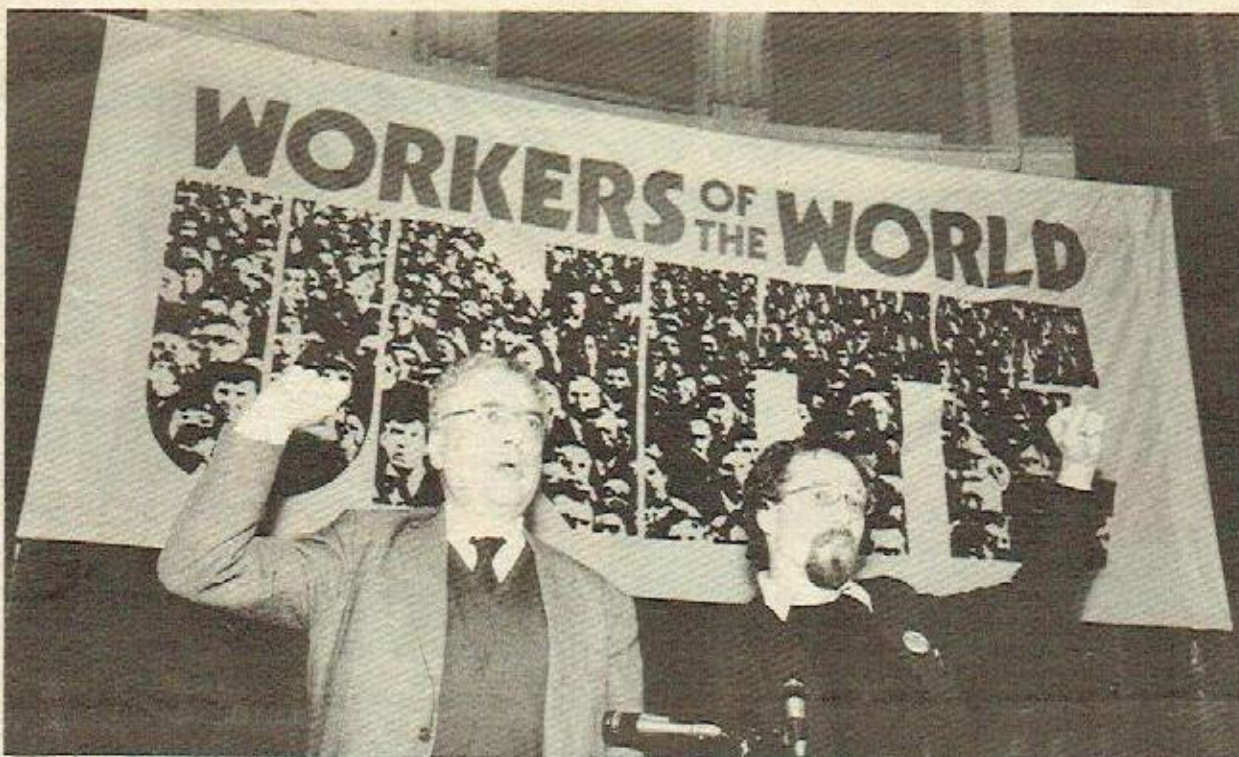
speed and pulls into the garage at the side of the gate. About six of us nip in to see him. During the course of a nice friendly chat, it transpires that he is the general manager!

11.00am Arrive in Rotherham for the rally. Healthworker talks about the need for an all-out strike. Miners speak about a fighting Triple Alliance. Steel union speakers call for a meeting on 4 November to discuss further action. They point out that today is only a beginning and not the end. There are also speakers from *Socialist Challenge* and *Socialist Worker*.

2.00 After visiting Stocksbridge, decide to call it a day. In our chat in the pub reckon the whole thing was fairly successful. Onto all out action!



Steelworker arrested at Tinsley Park on day of strike action.



On Friday evening before the weekend, 400 people attended a rally in County Hall commemorating the 65th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Above Ernest Mandel speaking to the rally; right Ann Speed of People's Democracy who also addressed the rally. Below, John Ross (speaking) and Duncan Hallas of the SWP who debated the Labour Party and entrism at the Debating Socialism weekend.

Debating Socialism Weekend success

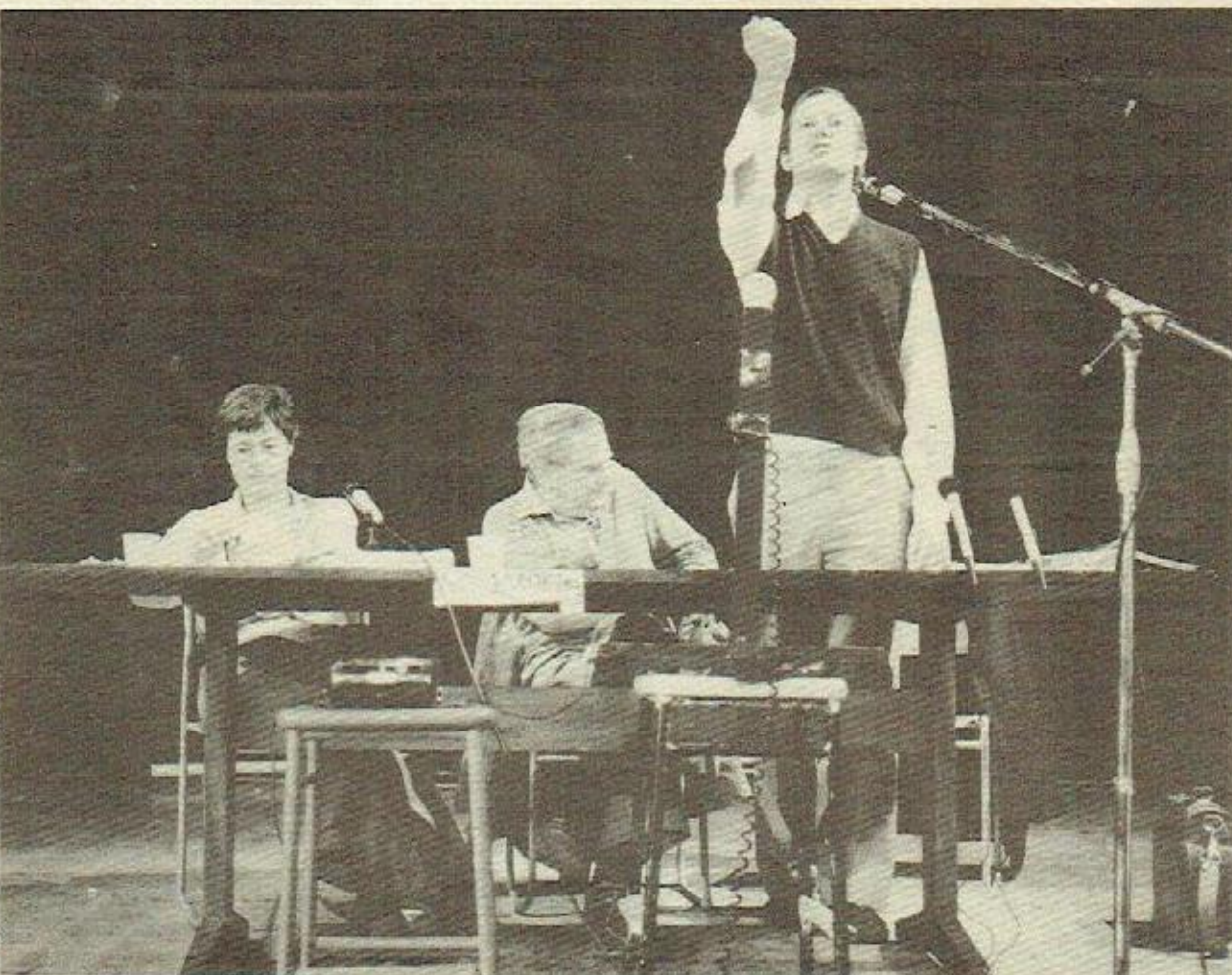
MORE than four hundred people packed into London's Kingsway Princeton College last weekend for the International Debating Socialism Weekend. From Aberdeen to Exeter they had come to hear Ernest Mandel on the international monetary crisis, Bea Campbell and Valerie Coultas on Sweet Freedom, Frances Morrell and Alan Freeman on the new Labour left, and many other debates.

The whole weekend was a big success with young and older comrades alike discussing the crucial questions of revolutionary strategy and programme — from the Labour Party and the unions, to the Cold War and the economic crisis.

Five hundred pounds was raised for the theoretical review *International*, and some thirty people attended a meeting for those interested in the politics of the Fourth International and the International Marxist Group.

As *International's* editor Davy Jones said at the end of the weekend event: 'These issues of revolutionary strategy will become more not less important as the crisis deepens, and such discussion forums and the journal *International* itself are therefore vital weapons for revolutionary socialists.'

* The latest issue of *International* costs just 75p and contains a debate between Alan Freeman and Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone replies to a critique of the lessons of the Labour GLC, Hilary Wainwright on Workers Plans, an interview with Robyn Archer, and much more! Write to: *International*, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Subscribe for just £5.50 inland, £6.50 overseas surface mail, and £12 overseas airmail.



All photos Graham Cookson

'The duty of a CHE

MILLIONS of people have heard of 'Che' Guevara, Fidel's second in command in the Cuban revolution, and most would recognise his famous stylised poster portrait. But what did he stand for? What were his achievements? Nothing better sums up Guevara than his death in October 1967, fighting in Bolivia. He went there at the height of the Vietnam war to open a 'second front' against US imperialism. Fifteen years after his death PAUL LAWSON and ALAN FREEMAN pay tribute to him.

Ernesto Che Guevara was born in Argentina. He decided to become a doctor, and to pursue his studies travelled the length and breadth of Latin America. By accident, he arrived in Guatemala in 1954, a very significant year for that country. The mild reformist government of Jacob Arbenz had just been elected.

At that time the country was dominated by the US United Fruit Company. John Foster Dulles, the US Secretary was determined that no government hostile to that company could survive. He had good reason. His brother Allen Dulles was president of the United Fruit Company.

The result was an invasion of counter-revolutionary exiles, organised by the Central Intelligence Agency. This completely changed Che's thinking. He said: 'The United Fruit Company, the State Department and Dulles — they were in fact one and the same — and they unleashed the dogs of war'.

What Guevara had discovered in Guatemala was in fact imperialism. He decided to devote himself to the revolution: 'to become a revolutionary physician one first of all has to make a revolution'.

Two years later he was one of the group which landed on Cuba with Fidel Castro, from the boat *Granma* to establish a guerrilla army. In the Sierra Maestra, Guevara and Fidel's brother Raul became effectively the deputy leaders of the revolution.

'Political sovereignty and economic independence are united. If a country doesn't have its own economy, if it is penetrated by foreign capital, it cannot be free from control by the country it is dependent on, nor can it exercise its will if it conflicts with the interests of the country economically dominating it.

National sovereignty means first, a country's right not to have any one interfere in its affairs, the right of people to



was not Marxist: its aims were vague, and mainly democratic and nationalist in formulation. When the guerrilla rebels swept into Havana on New Year's Day 1959, the direction of the revolution was by no means cer-

tain. Che argued that the revolution should be based on the poor. To carry through the revolution the July 26 movement should sweep away the old state apparatus and get rid of the rule of the bourgeoisie. It meant a break with imperialism.

The revolution proved that Guevara was right. In order to carry through the revolutionary aims of improving the lot of the poor, Castro's government broke up the large landholdings and distributed them; closed the casinos and brothels; cut electricity and phone tariffs in half; halved rents and made it illegal to own more than one house.

Cuban television program "People's University" in March, 1963.

revolutionary is to make the revolution'

GUEVARA



small business people fled. The USA embargoed Cuban sugar; Castro nationalised all US assets. Then, on 17 April 1961, two US navy ships sailed into the Bay of Pigs with a mercenary task force of five American ships, two battleships and three freighters loaded with tanks, artillery and 1500 troops.

But this time there was no capitalist army to welcome them. The guerrillas armed the people — who drove out the invaders. Che had been proved right, and Fidel declared that Cuba was now to be a socialist republic.

Che's originality now came to the fore. The new republic was under siege. Blockaded by the USA, it turned to the Soviet Union to sell sugar and buy oil. But this brought another danger: that the political line of the Russian bureaucracy would suffocate and isolate the revolution.

Che fought the Kremlin's influence. A furious polemic was joined around the development of the Cuban economy. On one side stood supporters of the 'economic reforms' in Russia, like Foreign Trade Minister Alberto Mora and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, now Deputy President. They called for 'material incentives' to increase production.

Guevara — and the Trotskyist Ernest Mandel, who joined the debate at the Cuban's invitation — said this would create a new bureaucratic layer. Che argued for 'moral' incentives — pride in the collective achievements of the revolution. No incentive should be introduced which divided worker from worker or permitted individual enrichment.

Cuba's backwardness, it was said, made this a 'utopian' project. Che countered that the world level of productive forces was the most decisive factor. Cuba should end its isolation by extending its revolution. Its gains should be guarded at home by building a new leadership, formed in direct contact with the masses in the struggle for production.

From this came Che's famous call for 'One, Two, Many Vietnams' which led Cuba to launch a world wide armed struggle movement in 1966. From it, too, grew his concept of a 'new man' emerging from the struggle against underdevelopment.

Not all Che's ideas bore fruit. He did not live to see the Nicaraguans

transform the Cuban experience into an insurrection model of revolution; his own heroic attempt to repeat the Cuban experience in Bolivia failed when the people ignored his small band, leading to his capture and death.

alternative options — rather than a government proposal to be accepted or rejected. Cuban planning remains plagued by unnecessary blockages which the leadership acknowledge, but have so far not overcome.

The departure of Guevara from

'We clearly understand — and we state with complete frankness — that the only correct solution to the problems of mankind at present is the total elimination of exploitation of the dependent countries by the developed capitalist countries, with all the consequences implicit in this action ...

In contrast to the rapid growth of the countries of the socialist camp and the development, although at a much slower rate, of the majority of capitalist countries, there is the undeniable fact that a large number of so-called underdeveloped countries are at a complete standstill and at times even show rates of economic growth below those of population growth.

These facts are not accidental. They are in strict accordance with the nature of the developed capitalist system in the process of full expansion which subjects the dependent countries to the most abusive and least disguised forms of exploitation.

Ever since the end of the

last century, this expansionist and aggressive trend has been made evident in countless aggressions against different countries on the most backward continents, but today it is most evident in the fact that the developed powers control the production and trade of raw materials of the dependent countries. In general, this is shown in the dependence of a given country on one commodity, which, in turn, is sold to a given market in amounts determined by the needs of that market.

The World is hungry, but does not have money to buy food, and paradoxically, in the underdeveloped world, in the world of hunger, possible expansion of food production is discouraged to be able to maintain the price level, that is, to be able to eat. This is the relentless law of the philosophy of plunder, which must end as a standard of relations between peoples.'

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Geneva, March 25, 1964.

He did not see the twin upsurges of 1968 in France and Czechoslovakia. He concentrated on the third world, and had no strategy to link up with the working class struggle in the urban centres of the world.

Nor did he grasp the vital importance of an organised clash of ideas in a transitional society — which marked the early years of the Russian Revolution.

As Mandel had pointed out, socialist planning requires that the people confront major political and economic decisions in the shape of

Cuba in 1966 to establish a revolutionary guerrilla movement in Bolivia led to many false and stupid rumours in the world socialist movement. Many people believed that Guevara, as the most radical leader of the Cuban revolution, had argued with Fidel and that Fidel had had him murdered.

Of course, since his mission was secret it was impossible for the Cubans to reply and to state just where he was, except to say that he was on 'an important mission in another country'. Only when he was killed was it possible for the Cubans

to make a full reply.

From his guerrilla outpost in Bolivia Che sent a long message to the Tricontinental solidarity organisation in Havana — entitled 'Create Two, Three, Many Vietnams!' In it he argued that the way to help the beleaguered Vietnamese, at the height of their struggle with the United States, was to open up revolutionary struggles elsewhere.

This was anathema to the Soviet bureaucracy, who bitterly opposed the extension of revolution. Their line was 'peace in Vietnam' — a compromise with the Americans and certainly not more revolutionary wars.

While the Soviet bureaucrats said 'make peace', and doled out their aid to Vietnam through an eye-dropper, Che said 'the duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution'. Everywhere Che's message aided the revolutionaries in their demand for solidarity with the Vietnam revolution. To carry through the aim of creating 'Two, Three, many Vietnams' the Cubans attempted, in a mechanical and voluntaristic way, to start a revolution in Bolivia. But an isolated group of revolutionaries were incapable of starting a real revolution. In particular, the Bolivian Communist Party played a treacherous role, refusing to give any aid to the project.

On 8 October 1967, Che's guerrilla group was encircled. Guevara himself was wounded and taken prisoner. He was taken to the village of Higuera by the security forces, and on the order of the head of the military dictatorship Barrientos, murdered. He died as he lived: in combat for the world revolution.

Che understood that only socialist revolution could start to solve the problems of the oppressed people of the third world: as he put it, the revolution in this epoch 'will either be a socialist revolution or a caricature of a revolution'. And he understood and died fighting for the essence of permanent revolution in our time: only by extending the revolution can its victories be consolidated.

'The struggle against imperialism to remove the impediments of colonialism or neocolonialism, being waged politically or through armed struggle, or through a combination of both, cannot be separated from the struggle against backwardness and poverty. Both are phases of the same process that leads to the creation of a new, rich, and just society. It is absolutely necessary to first seize political power and liquidate the oppressor classes; but later we must deal with the second stage of the struggle, which is even more difficult, if possible, than the first.

Ever since monopoly capital took over the world, it has kept most of mankind submerged in poverty, distributing profits among the strongest countries. The living standards of those countries are based on the poverty of our countries; thus, to increase the living standards of the under-

developed countries we must therefore struggle against imperialism. And every time one country falls from the imperialist tree we have not only won a partial victory against our chief enemy, but we have also contributed to weakening it effectively and to taking one step closer to final victory.

We believe that the present road is full of danger, danger that is not invented or predicted for the future by any superior mind, but danger that is the palpable result of the reality around us. The struggle against colonialism has reached its final stages, but in our era the colonial status is only a result of imperialist domination. As long as imperialism exists, it will, by definition, exert its domination over other countries; today, this domination is called neocolonialism.'

Second Economic Seminar of Afro-Asian Solidarity, Algiers, February 24, 1965.



Bolivian workers take on bosses

By Norman Flynn

TWO YEARS after a violent military coup brought to an end the elected government of Hernán Siles Zuazo, a general strike in Bolivia has forced the military regime to resign. On 6 October Zuazo was re-elected president and the Congress of 1980 restored.

The crisis which sparked off the popular unrest was the IMF package of economic measures announced in March. The package, which was the IMF's universal panacea in search of an economic problem consisted of floating the exchange rate; freezing wages; and reducing the size of the public sector.

The exchange rate quickly slid from 25 pesos to the US dollar to around 260. In a country dependent on imports for many products, including basics such as powdered milk, this meant dramatic price increases and sharply reduced living standards. Strikes were staged throughout the country.

In April the miners of Huanani went on strike over three main demands: a general amnesty for people jailed and exiled during the repression following the 1980 coup; a minimum wage which would be index linked; the ending of the permanent martial law which was in force in the mining areas.

In May political activity in the country became more open and self-confident. May Day demonstrations were held calling for an end to the floating exchange rate, a return to civilian rule and the abolition of the paramilitaries — the squads of armed civilians who brought terror and death to trade unionists and political activists.

Amnesty

Later in May the miners' demand for an amnesty was met. Elections were held in the unions, the universities organised to demand autonomy and the political parties gained new life.

The junta, losing the support of the middle classes, particularly in the private sector, invited the unions and the parties to private talks to try to avert the coming confrontation. The Central Obrero Boliviano (the COB, the trade union confederation) whose leaders had been executed and whose building had been demolished by the junta during the 1980 coup, refused to talk.

Having failed to find a political solution President Torrelío resigned and was replaced, in musical chairs manner, by Vildoso.

During September pressure for a real change of government built up. Employees of the Central Bank went on strike and occupied the headquarters of the bank because of fraud by government officials in the national

smelting company.

Even an attack on the employees on 4 September by five truck-loads of para-militaries throwing tear gas grenades failed to break the strike.

The Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria called demonstrations in the cities on 7 September calling for a fixed exchange rate, a minimum wage and a civilian government. The following Sunday the civic committees for three southern districts called an indefinite general strike demanding economic development projects for their area and improved water, health and education services.

On Wednesday the COB called massive demonstrations throughout the country demanding an end to the military rule. These were the biggest demonstrations anyone could remember and particularly impressive was the fact that over half the demonstrators were women.

The police and the military kept a relatively low profile and there were few violent incidents. On Friday a further demonstration was called in Sucre, capital of one of the southern departments, which had called a general strike.

The demonstration was to take the form of a meeting in the central plaza at 3pm. At 1pm the local garrison cleared and occupied the plaza and set up a machine gun post. At 2pm the garrison commander declared martial law in the city and banned the demonstration. During the afternoon four demonstrators were shot dead and fifteen were wounded.

The military junta was in disarray. Several members of the junta emerged from a meeting stating that power ought to be handed over to the civilians. The Minister of the Interior appeared on television to call for calm and assure the country that the military were still in control.

The next day the government resigned and announced that the Congress which was elected in 1980 would be reconvened. The Union Democrática Popular, a coalition of left parties in the Congress, announced that it would accept 'the responsibility of being the next legitimate government'.

There was some difficulty in reconvening the Congress since the junta had destroyed the records of the election and many members had gone into exile to avoid the repression following the coup. However the Congress was

convened on 27 September and decided to elect a new president on 6 October.

Superficially it seems that the general strike and the mass mobilisations have removed one of Latin America's brutal military regimes and replaced it with a left coalition government. There are, however, grounds for scepticism.

First, there is a financial crisis. The government was unable to meet debt repayments of \$50 million due in September and October. Foreign banks are unwilling to reschedule the debt and the military regime was therefore faced with a severe problem which it may well have preferred to hand over temporarily to a civilian government with credit-worthy democratic credentials.

As soon as the government stepped down it was announced that Zuazo, still in exile in Peru, had started to negotiate new credits.

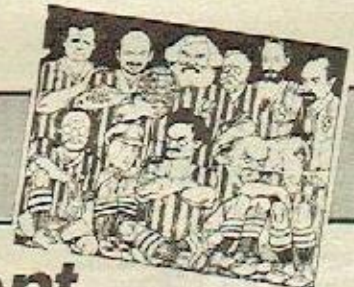
Second, although the military has formally resigned there has been no removal of garrison commanders, no trials of para-military personnel and no attempt by the interim government to disarm the military forces which took part in the 1980 coup. So far nothing has happened to prevent a repeat of the 1980 coup.

Waving goodbye — president Vildoso making his last public appearance in Santa Cruz 24 September



La Paz 7 September Union Democrática/Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria demonstration

What is Trotskyism?



The origins of the United Front

By John Ross

WHEN the revolutionary organisations in Russia began to seriously develop in the 1890s and 1900s they immediately found themselves confronted with a fundamental strategic and tactical problem. This was what attitude they should take to the reformist working class and capitalist forces which confronted them?

This was however not a new question for Marxists. Marx and Engels confronted a similar one at the very beginning of their political activity in the 1840s. At that time the Marxist organisations were only a few hundred people in the whole of Europe. They were faced with very large capitalist parties and movements. There were also working class organisations much larger than the revolutionary ones.

Marx outlined very clearly in the *Communist Manifesto* the answer to the question of what attitude to take to these other forces. As always the answer which Marx gave was a class one. As we can see Marx defined the relation of revolutionary politics to the working class very simply, 'Communists ... have no interests separate and apart from the working class as a whole' as the *Communist Manifesto* put it.

But Marx pointed out that this defence of the interests of the working class

involved two interrelated but different problems.

The first was to defend the interests of the working class in the immediate struggles it is pursuing and faced with. These include for example such questions as the struggle to defend wages, to defend the welfare state, to fight unemployment, to combat racist and fascist organisations, to gain the right to abortion, and to achieve reforms within the existing system.

Secondly however the revolutionaries have to defend not only these im-

mediate interests of the working class but also its historical class goals as a whole. These include such questions as its international working class interests and all the issues and struggles leading up to and including the socialist revolution.

Marx explained the relation between these immediate and overall historical needs of the working class very simply. 'The Communists ... do not set up any sectarian principles of their own by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement. The Communists are distinguished from the other working class parties by this only:

(1) 'In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality.'

(2) 'In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass

through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.'

Therefore, 'The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present they also represent and take care of the future of that movement.'

From this flows a fundamental question of working class politics. Only the revolutionaries would defend the interests of the working class right up to and including the socialist revolution. But under certain circumstances other forces might struggle, for whatever reasons and no matter how hesitantly, for similar immediate goals to those the working class was struggling for itself.

In these circumstances revolutionaries had to seek to unite the maximum possible forces in this struggle. This had to include, where necessary,

entering into united action with other forces to achieve immediate objectives of the working class.

Liberals

Thus for example in relation to the German liberals, who were the Nasser's and Khomeini's of his day, Marx wrote that revolutionaries must 'never cease, even for a single instant, to instill into the working class the clearest possible recognition of the hostile antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.'

But nevertheless, 'they fight with the bourgeoisie whenever it acts in a revolutionary way, against the absolute monarchy, the feudal squierarchy, and the petty bourgeoisie.'

This necessity of united action, the *united front*, was to become a decisive part of Marxist politics.

*All quotations in this week's article are from the *Communist Manifesto*.

1983 - Euroshima year?

By Brian Heron

PRESIDENT REAGAN HAS sent Eugene Rostow to review Cruise missile sites in Britain. He has already been to Holland and West Germany. Reagan and Thatcher are in a hurry.

Regardless of the spectacular build-up of the anti-missiles movement in West Europe, regardless of the fact that the damn missiles keep flying into 'friendly' mountains in their Canadian tests, 1983 remains target year. But the struggle to get Cruise and Pershing into their European bases faces formidable obstacles. To overcome them, big political manoeuvres will be required in the countries concerned.

Proportional representation has shown its undoubted benefits for the ruling class in West Germany where Kohl's right wing coalition now pushes back the pressure that was building on the SPD from spilling over into a government crisis. A big part of that pressure was the movement against the missiles.

Postpone

Elections in Germany have now been postponed to March ... In Holland and Britain labour oppositions are now formally committed to opposition to the siting of US missiles in their territories. If they were to come into government they would pose a major crisis for NATO. Britain is the pivot. Both Holland and Western Germany have previously said

they will not take the missiles if Britain withdraws.

Three

Meanwhile huge mass movements have assembled in all three countries (as well as Belgium, Spain and now France.) The first stage of the campaign is now over. The growth of a mass movement unparalleled since the end of the Second World War, has happened. In Britain that movement has won the potentially unstoppable power of the organised labour movement. These forces have been won through the mass actions, leading to a week of demonstrations last June which mobilised two million in West Europe and a million in New York.



1983 will be the second stage of the struggle. Now we must ask how these powerful forces can stop Cruise in 1983. In CND two answers have begun to emerge.

The first is given by the people who favour non-violent direct action. They urge mass sit downs, Peace

Camps and Pickets around bases all of which will bring down the wrath of the authorities. Within the context of big demonstrations or a wave of industrial action, direct action can play an important role. As a strategy it will lose.

If we look today at

what is needed to force Thatcher to make a 'U' turn even on issues like wages, we get some idea of the giant tasks involved in pulling the plug on the centrepiece of NATO's nuclear strategy.

Panic

The Economist (9-15 October) commented on Labour's recent Conference decision to go unilateralist by saying 'Don't yet panic, quite.' They went on 'Labour's cunning constitution allows the shadow cabinet ... to select what items in that 'programme' to put into the party's manifesto.' That is why the Economist does not advise despair just yet. But it goes on to point out 'The conference also voted by five to one not to leave NATO, but that is little comfort. A Britain which turned its back on all nuclear weapons would — unlike Denmark or Norway — make a horrid hole in NATO's defences.'

If these are the stakes then a few (inevitable) punch-ups with the police hardly tickle the margins of the problem. The full strength of the labour movement must be mobilised if the issue is to be tackled. Unilateralism is pre-eminently a class

against class issue. 'But what' ask many CND activists 'does this mean?'

We can get more than an inkling of an answer to this when we read further down the same Economist article. After showing the means whereby Healey and Foot could fudge Labour's policy — in the awful event they got into office — it writes of a second fudge, modelled on its experience of Germany ... 'If the 1983-4 election brought in only a minority Labour Government, the Liberal-Social Democratic alliance would not allow it to go unilateralist ...'

Heart

At the heart of the class against class battles today is the issue of government. On the one side is the struggle to get rid of the Tories and remove the threat of the SDP. On the other side is the fight to win a Labour Government which can be pressured to apply positive aspects of its own official policy.

Mass action and struggle around any progressive demand, be it in defence of the health service — or unilateralism rapidly leads to the unavoidable conclusion that a solution can be found only at the level of government.

The Tories will not make a 'U' turn on unilateralism. A bloc of SDP and Liberals would join with the Tories to stop unilateralism. Even an outright Labour victory would only set the stage for the bitterest battle to force that government to apply what would be its biggest vote winner! The present leadership of the Labour Party have already made that clear.

Biggest

The fight for unilateralism has to be based on these facts. We need the biggest possible mobilisation of the labour movement in West Europe and Britain on Hiroshima Day in line with Labour Party conference decision. The youth are preparing for this action with a proposal for an international youth carnival at Easter. This must include industrial and political action. Such a movement will be required to force the Labour leaders to stand on their own conference policy.

And through that action, the fight to remove the Thatcherites and to win a Labour government committed to unilateral nuclear disarmament, will take another enormous stride.



Spain: Socialists prepare for power

By Frank McBride

THERE IS A CARTOON which shows Spain's political leaders ready on a starting line for the electoral race. But their reflex reaction on the sound of the starting pistol is to put their hands up terrified. The cartoon illustrates clearly how the threat of military intervention is still present in Spanish political life and how the political parties have refused to tackle it.

The military will however be unable to prevent an almost certain PSOE (Socialist Party) victory on 28 October.

Their victory seems guaranteed with the government UCD party hopelessly split. Inflation is over 15 per cent and corruption and ineptitude rife in the government.

In the cliched election posters, his earnest face turned towards the rising sun, PSOE leader Felipe Gonzalez promises his party is 'Por el Cambio (for the change)'. But judging

by their record and programme there will be little change.

Not only does the PSOE not intend to change the economic system, their proposals for dealing with high prices, unemployment and the capitalist crisis are exceedingly weak.

There will be no nationalisations and no direct price control. They promise 800,000 new jobs with incentives to industry. But given the depth of the world recession and the extent of



Felipe Gonzalez leader of Spain's PSOE

the crisis of Spain's economy, it is very unlikely that they will persuade Spanish capitalists to invest. And as the PSOE will not force them, prices will continue to go up and unemployment will only get worse.

The PSOE manifesto still makes no provision for unemployment

benefit. In its social programme there is still no provision for an abortion law.

They still make no promise to purge the administration or armed forces of reactionaries. But they do promise to increase police resources against 'terrorism' in the

Basque region, without guaranteeing the right to self-determination.

It is in Euskadi (the Basque country) that the election campaign is most dynamic — with a background of a stepped-up ETA campaign and trigger-happy police killing innocent people at road blocks.

The Conservative PNV (Basque Nationalist Party) will win most votes but the big question is how Herri Batasuna — the revolutionary Basque nationalist organisation — will fare.

Herri Batasuna is the party standing for socialism, independence and support for the armed struggle of ETA ('Sovereignty will not be won by arguing, but with a gun in hand') But a survey has shown



The latest issue of *International* costs just 75p and contains a debate between Alan Freeman and Tony Benn; Ken Livingstone replies to a critique of the lessons of Labour GLC, Hilary Wainwright on workers plans, an interview with Robyn Archer, and much more! Write to: *International*, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Subscribe for just £5.50 inland, £6.50 overseas surface mail, and £12 overseas airmail.

that 40 per cent of the unemployed in the Basque country intend to vote for it, and it is clear that Herri Batasuna's support comes as much from its uncompromising rejection of capitalist solutions to the crisis as from its commitment to self-determination.

Despite their differences with HB (notably over its strategy of armed struggle and refusal to sit in parliamentary institutions) the LKI (Basque Fourth Internationalists) have called for a vote for

them. 'The vote of resistance and struggle is a vote for Herri Batasuna' says the LKI.

The resistance and struggle will need to be continued even with a PSOE government in power on 29 October. The second party on Friday will probably be Alianza Popular, one of the most right wing of all Europe's conservative parties, and ready to take over if a feeble PSOE government collapses amongst popular disillusion.

Where you can buy Socialist Challenge

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ABERDEEN: SC available at Boots town books, King St. For more info ring Bill 896 284.

EDINBURGH: SC sold Thur 4.15-5.15pm Bus Station, St. Andrews Square and bottom of Waverly steps 4.30-5.30, Sat 11.30-2pm East End, Princes St. Also available from 1st May Books, or Better Books, Forrest Rd. More info on local activity from SC c/o Box 6, 1st May Bookshop, Candlemaker Row.

GLASGOW: SC sales every Thur/Fri 4.30-5.30pm at Central Station. Also available at Barreits, Byres Rd; Clyde Books, High St; Glasgow Bookshop Collective, Crosswell Lane; Hope Street Book Centre.

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BOLSOVER: Cross Keys, every Fri 8-9pm, Bluebell 9-10.

BRADFORD: SC at Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.

BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. More info Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpellier, Bristol 6.

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LEEDS: Sat 11-1 at Lands Lane Pedestrian Precinct and 10.30-12.00 at Headingley Arndale Centre. Corner Bookshop, Woodhouse Lane.

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NEWCASTLE: SC on sale every Sat 11-1pm outside Fenwicks. Also available at Days of Hope Bookshop, Westgate Rd. Every Friday outside Newcastle University between 1-2 and outside Newcastle Polytechnic between 12-1 every Monday.

NOTTINGHAM: SC sold every Sat 12-1pm Slab Square. For info phone 863916.

OLDHAM: SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities, Tel. 061 682 5151.

OXFORD: SC sold Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.

SHEFFIELD: SC on sale Thursday, Pond St, 4.30-6pm; Saturday, Fargate 10.30-12.30pm.

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BRENT: SC sold Willesden Junction Thur 4.30pm.

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ENFIELD: SC at Nelsons newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.

HACKNEY: SC on sale on estates throughout Hackney, at public meetings, and local factories. Contact us c/o PO Box 36, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8 2NF or phone Megan or John at 359 8288.

HILLINGDON: SC sold Fri, 4.30-5.30 at Uxbridge tube station; Sat 11.30-12.30 in shopping precinct, Uxbridge.

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BANGOR: Rainbows, Holyhead Road, Upper Bangor, Gwynedd.

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MILTON KEYNES: Oakleaf Books, 109 Church Street, Wolverton.

OXFORD: LOA Books, 24 Cowley Rd.

LEICESTER: Blackthorn Books, 70 High St, Leicester, and V Karis, 53A London Rd, Leicester.

LIVERPOOL: News from Nowhere, 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool L1.

LONDON: Central Books, 37 Grays Inn Rd; Collets, Charing Cross Rd, WC2; Paperback Books, Brixton and Charlotte St; Kilburn Bookshop, Kilburn High Road, NW6; The Bookplace, Peckham High St, SE15; Books Plus, Lewisham; Balham Food Co-op; Owl, Kentish Town; New Beacon, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, N1; Bookmarks, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; Centreprise, 126 Kingsland High St, E5; Dillons, GMC, Page One, E15; The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, N1; Reading Matters, Wood Green next to Sainsbury's; Village Books, Streatham; Tetric Books, Clapham; Paperback Centre, Brixton; Oval tube kiosk; Shakti Books, 46 High St, Southall.

PORT TALBOT: McConville's Newsagent, Station Road.

NOTTINGHAM: Mushroom Books, Healthcote St, Hockley.

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NON-STOP PICKET outside South Africa House, Trafalgar Square needs you/your delegation to come on a regular basis. Please phone Amanda 01-405 4498 and book your dates. Free all South African prisoners. Support the Liberation Struggle in South Africa.

NUJ women's conference. Sat 30 Oct. Kingsway Princeton College, Sidmouth St, WC1. Registration 50p.

WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE

Woman's Right to Work/Choose badge. 25p plus 15p postage. Cheques payable to Cardinal Enterprises, c/o PO Box 50 London N1.

Central America

UN vote - victory for Nicaragua

ON TUESDAY 19 OCTOBER the United Nations General Assembly elected Nicaragua to the Security Council by 104 votes to 50. This victory for the revolutionary forces in Central America and resounding defeat for the USA, who had been vigorously campaigning for the Dominican Republic will severely inhibit the American attempts to destroy the Nicaraguan revolution.

Since the victorious Sandinista revolution overthrew the dictator Somoza in 1979 the US has imposed an economic blockade on Nicaragua, one which the Tory government in Britain was recently exposed as supporting. In addition, the US has funded and organised counter-revolutionary forces who have harassed and threatened from the Honduran border. Nicaragua declared a state of emergency earlier this year when it felt outright invasion was on the cards.

While this election does not remove this threat entirely the US would have considerable difficulty explaining any involvement in military action, open or secret, against a fellow member of the Security Council.

Toni Gorton spoke to the Nicaraguan Ambassador to Britain, Francisco d'Escoto about the election.

This vote is an acknowledgement by the international community of the responsibility of the Sandinista Revolution. It's a recognition that its vocation is peace. It's a rejection of the US administration's campaign to sneer at the revolution and a rejection of the violence of the Reagan administration in Central America. The vote says that they don't believe what the US is saying about the Nicaraguan Revolution.

For the first time the US has been defeated in blocking Third World

aspirations particularly where they are revolutionary.

If you remember Cuba three years ago went through 150 ballots before it was finally defeated in its attempt to get onto the Security Council. Nicaragua won on the third ballot.

The attitude of the General Assembly will force the US to start a dialogue with us as we've been asking for two years. We also hope that Britain will now change its position of blocking assistance to Nicaragua. People



should now be asking the British government — why in hell's name do you stand against Nicaragua? Up until now the British government has accepted Washington's charges. But our election implies a complete rejection of what the US has been saying. It's time the world actually listened to what Nicaragua is saying and doing. The General Assembly of the United

Nations has recognised that the Nicaraguan revolution stands against oppression, hunger and homelessness and not for war nor for 'exporting' revolution — as the US says.

We are accused of being a military threat to the region. Yet the biggest war weapon that we have is dialogue. We want to be given the chance to do what is right in our own

country — the right to self-determination. We didn't suffer the loss of 50,000 of our brothers and sisters to lose more.

We think our election will make a definite contribution to peace. We'll use our position to denounce aggression, oppression, hunger — next door as well as in the Lebanon. We hope our presence will defuse the situation in Central America.

Nicaragua: revolution on every front

By Andy de la Tour

REMEMBER 'The Deerhunter'? Until the end of the Vietnam war, Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam, was probably the largest 'vice-city' in the world. Teeming with gambling joints and brothels, the city's only function seemed to be to service the needs of Uncle Sam's troops and the corrupt officials of the disintegrating South Vietnamese puppet regime. Within days of the liberation in 1975 the red light district was closed down.

To throw off the yoke of imperialism it is not enough to drive an occupying army out of the country; the victorious people have to regain their dignity and their culture, their independence in the widest sense of the word. The closing of the Saigon brothels was not 'puritanism' but a necessary stamping out of a barbaric form of female slavery. The prostitutes there, most of them teenagers and many of them children, were no more than degraded playthings, driven on to the streets by poverty and misery.

The Nicaraguan revolution tells the same story. Only a month after the Sandinista victory in July 1979 a law was passed prohibiting prostitution and the brothels were closed. The twelve buildings which were once bordellos owned by high-ranking officials of Somoza's National Guard in Corinto, Nicaragua's largest Pacific port, are now a Training and Social Communica-

tions Centre.

It is here that fifty young women participate in the Social Reinstatement Programme for Women. Laura Rivera, a night student who plans to be a social worker, is one of the 200 or so who have been helped by the centre.

Now one of the centre's administrative team, she says: 'While I study at night, I give adult education classes during the day.

An example of the nation's people educating each other. Right?'

As well as literacy classes there are workshops in sewing, embroidery, manual arts and typing. The plan at the moment is that the young women learn a skill so that they may later form an artisans' collective to sell their products in stores which they themselves would manage in Corinto and Managua.

Laura adds: 'Programme participants have also joined in the activities promoted by the mass organisations. Some are part of the municipal directorate of AMNLAE (the national women's organisation), and others of the CDS (the Sandinista neighbourhood committees).

'The women have also participated in the National Health Days, the militia, revolutionary night-watch duty, and in the cotton harvest. We feel that since we have been given a chance to better our lives, we must give back something in return.'

'Women in Nicaragua Today' is the title of one of a series of meetings about

Nicaragua and Cuba to be held shortly in London. Starting on Tuesday [6 November] at the Oval House, Kensington (7pm) there will be fourteen weekly meetings opening with 'Nicaragua Today — An Introduction'.

Other topics will include political organisation and workers' rights, education, housing, health, the law, media, culture and sexual politics.

Organised jointly by the Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign, the Britain-Cuba Resource Centre and the Ujamaa Centre, this series will provide a thorough background to anyone keen to know more about the revolutionary processes in Cuba and Nicaragua.

For further information: Ujamaa Centre, 14 Brixton Road, London SW9. Telephone 582 2068.

Salvadoran Foreign Minister picketed

The Salvadoran foreign minister Chavez Menda visited Britain last Monday. At very short notice the El Salvadoran Solidarity Campaign organised a picket of his visit to the Salvadoran Embassy.

At a press conference Chavez Menda answered questions about the widespread murders and torture carried out by the security forces. He said that unfortunately there was 'a general atmosphere of violence' in the country due to 'structural problems', which he defined as 'economic and social difficulties' and a 'lack of political opportunities'.

The real reason for Menda's extraordinary formulation of Salvador's problems is of course the desire of the Salvadoran government to get money out of the EEC.

For details of the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign Trade Union conference write to ELSOC, 29 Islington Park St., London N1.

WSL changes course

By John Ball, International Marxist Group

THE WORKERS' SOCIALIST LEAGUE has formally announced an important change of position on the recent South Atlantic war, in a special supplement to its theoretical journal *Workers Socialist Review*.

The WSL's views are prominent in the weekly Labour Party newspaper *Socialist Organiser*. During the war both the WSL and *Socialist Organiser* called for self-determination for the Malvinas (Falkland) islands and did not support Argentina against Britain although they campaigned vigorously against British involvement.

This was overturned at a special WSL conference held on 5 September, which agreed by a narrow 1.2 per cent majority to 'change our line to Argentine defensism', after a four-month tendency struggle.

Slogan

The new majority explains its decision thus: 'The slogan of self-determination is irrelevant and misleading... Were it not for their hostility to the nearby Argentinian people — hostility stoked up by 150 years of exclusion of Latin American people from the Falklands, by imperialist propaganda, and most recently by the Argentine invasion — the most obvious and progressive solution would be for the islanders to develop strengthened links with the Argentine people and economy, fighting for full rights as a self-governing part of Argentina.'

'Instead they remain as an isolated and backward colonial enclave, cut off from any serious hope of social or economic development as anything other than a major imperialist military base in the South Atlantic, downtrodden appendages of a country 8,000 miles away.'

It concludes that the slogan is unacceptable and 'unwittingly plays into the

hands of the imperialist propaganda machine'. The WSL should have supported Argentina's claim to the islands, without endorsing Galtieri's government, it says. In its most important elements the new position is that put forward by the International Marxist Group and presented in *Socialist Challenge* throughout the war. This is a vital and welcome step forward.

Debates among revolutionary groups often seem obscure and incomprehensible to the rest of the left, bearing no apparent relation to the real world. But the discussion on the left around the Malvinas brought everyone in Britain up against the issues involved in this dispute.

The first practical problem facing everyone as soon as the fleet sailed, was whether to support it or try to stop it. The whole labour movement was divided. Foot delivered his nauseating commitment to Thatcher, and Benn with 32 other 'traitors' — as the *Sun* labelled them — said the fleet should stop.

As far as we — and the WSL — were concerned, Foot was the real traitor: a traitor to his class.

Problem

We wanted to make the forces who called for fleet withdrawal as big and effective as possible. So along with CND's leadership, with *Socialist Organiser*, the Socialist Workers' Party and much of the Labour left, we built demonstrations and contingents against the war.

There was a severe problem. The *Militant* editorial board did not agree with the demand to stop the war. This was a disaster, and we strongly polemicised with them, re-



questing their supporters to call them to order. We did this because *Militant*'s refusal to oppose the war held back an important section of the labour movement — particularly the Young Socialists — from coming into the anti-war movement.

We joined hands with WSL supporters in struggling to reverse the YS's orientation, against *Militant*'s leadership. But then we confronted a second problem — and this is where the recent debate comes in.

If you want to argue against the fleet going to the South Atlantic, what alternative do you put forward?

The WSL NC majority 'alternative' led directly to the conclusion which Thatcher herself drew. How could one fight for 'Falkland self-determination' except by sending the fleet? If it had withdrawn, no other practical outcome was possible except Argentine recuperation. The left had to confront this and choose, from the two real possible outcomes of the war, which would advance workers' interests on a world scale.

We chose the outcome which would weaken world imperialism. The

WSL NC majority chose a fantasy option which was, in practice, the basis of Thatcher's ideological offensive!

Objectively, this was a serious adaptation to nationalist and social democratic pressure. This is reflected in the way the NC majority describes its relations with the rest of the Labour left. It congratulates itself on a 'dialogue' with the 'pacifist left'. What dialogue? The NC majority were part of the pacifist left!

The only 'dialogue' conducted by the WSL was with its revolutionary left critics abroad, nearly all of whom recognised its errors immediately.

We believe that this mistake, now that the WSL has corrected its position, should lead the comrades of the new majority to conduct a serious study of why the WSL made such an error. We ask them to turn the searchlight which they often play so glaringly on their fellow-revolutionaries on themselves.

For years the main leaders of the new majority have argued against joining the Fourth International and its British section — the International Marxist Group — claiming that it was a 'poisoned

well' which must inevitably lead revolutionaries into error.

In that case, comrades, in the most serious political test faced by the British revolutionary left since 1945, why have you had to conduct such a bitter battle to win the organisation to which you now belong to the IMG's positions?

The truth of the matter is this: the most dangerous pressures operating on revolutionaries in Britain come, not from Marxists abroad but from the huge weight of nationalist-chauvinist ideology and insularity which permeates the British labour movement as a result of its imperialist past and its imperialist leaders. This pressure is transmitted particularly acutely by the Labour Party.

This is not something to shrink from, not a reason to try and hide oneself in a pure world of one's own.

But it is a reason to understand the importance of a real, living, organic contact with working people's struggles abroad organised, not via a federation of tiny sects but via a living, democratic centralist international: the Fourth International.

CARL conference calls for mass march against racist laws

By Chris Guthrie

OVER 300 people from the Labour Party, trade unions and black organisations met on 23 October and called for a national demonstration on 27 March next year to demand the repeal of the 1971 Immigration Act and the 1981 Nationality Act; the ending of all racist deportations and waiting lists of dependants and UK passport holders; an immediate amnesty for all alleged illegal immigrants and an end to all internal passport checks.

The conference was supported by the Labour Party and the national executive of NUPE and was addressed by the general secretary of the civil servants union, the CPSA.

Avtar Joughl of the Indian Workers Association pointed out that racist laws don't only affect black people but will be used to attack the civil rights of the whole working class.

Two big issues were the use of immigration laws to deport black people and

split their families and the introduction of passport checks in the NHS and in the Social Security offices.

Speakers from the London Immigration Campaign and the Bradford Joint Deportations Committee pointed out that while a number of anti-deportation cases have been won, far more are not even taken up. They number two or three a day.

A model resolution was adopted for use in the trade unions:

THIS union branch condemns current government policy on Immigration and Nationality which discriminates against black people and should be opposed and resisted by the whole trade union movement. We therefore:

- 1 Call for the repeal of the 1981 Nationality Act and the Immigration legislation of 1962, 1966 and 1971.
- 2 Call for an immediate moratorium on all deportations and removals and for an end to all checks on identity based on race and nationality. We urge fellow trade unionists to refuse to process work connected with such checks and removals. We pledge our support for any individuals who physically resist their deportation and urge others to do likewise.
- 3 We resolve to affiliate to the Campaign Against Racist Laws and to support the demonstration called for 27 March, 1983.
- 4 We urge our union executive/conference to endorse this resolution as the basis of policy for our union, produce leaflets and articles explaining the reasons for this policy to the membership and to call on the TUC to sponsor a demonstration against existing immigration and nationality legislation.

For further information contact CARL, 56 Editha St, London SW9 9JP.

Socialist Challenge public meeting Fight privatisation in Birmingham Defend public services

Thursday 11 November at 7.30
Dave Benlow from the Wandsworth Dust dispute with video
NALGO shop stewards from Birmingham
Birmingham's Other Bookshop
137 Digbeth, B5

The Assembly elections: Sinn Fein vote tells Britain, go!

By Steve Potter

THE RESULTS of last week's elections for a Northern Ireland Assembly are a major blow against the Tory government plans and a victory for the oppressed nationalist population.

The original intention of the poll was to attempt to capitalise on the end of the hunger strikers' campaign by paving the way to the reintroduction of the old Stormont parliament with its Loyalist majority. This plan now lies shattered as a result of the spectacular vote achieved by Provisional Sinn Fein.

Sinn Fein emerged as the fourth largest party in the north of Ireland winning five seats with 10 per cent of the vote, shattering the British government's lie campaign that the nationalist struggle is the result of an isolated criminal fringe.

On closer examination the Sinn Fein candidates vote is even more spectacular; in West Belfast Gerry Adams finished at the top of the poll with 9,740 first preference votes; Owen Carron in Fermanagh and South

Tyrone also came top of the poll with 14,025 votes; and in Mid Ulster Danny Morrison and Benedict McIlwain won 11,690 votes.

Sinn Fein ran on a position of boycotting the Assembly and for a British withdrawal. After the count, victorious Sinn Fein candidates said that they were prepared to meet James Prior, the Northern Ireland Secretary, only if the question of withdrawal of British troops was at the top of any agenda.

The Social Democratic

Labour Party, the main bourgeois nationalist party in the north, were also forced by nationalist pressure to boycott the Assembly in advance. The emergence of Sinn Fein as a revolutionary nationalist alternative on the political level ends their claims to be the sole political representative of the nationalist population.

The only parties that will take their seats in the Assembly are those of the middle class Alliance and Loyalists.

Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party consolidated their dramatic gains made in last year's local government elections without yet becoming the largest unionist party, a position still held by James Molyneux's Official Unionists.

The overall results of the election show a deepening polarisation.



Gerry Adams canvassing during election campaign

The Assembly cannot be seen as in any way representative, and as John Hume, leader of the SDLP said, is now as dead as a dodo.

The Sinn Fein ran a political campaign. Hundreds of workers flooded the streets with anti-imperialist propaganda.

This was also the ap-

proach of Peoples Democracy, the Irish section of the Fourth International, who ran PD candidates in West and South Belfast calling for a vote for themselves and Sinn Fein. Fergus O'Hare won 298 votes for a revolutionary socialist platform in North Belfast, John McNulty won 144 votes in South Belfast.

Reactions to the elections in all reactionary quarters were of universal dismay.

James Prior, while trying to play down the significance of the vote, admitted to *The Observer* that the people of West Belfast had given the government a 'kick up the backside'. James Molyneux of the Official Unionists described the Sinn Fein victory as 'more horrible an outcome than I previously imagined.'

Ann Speed, a leading member of People's Democracy, said in London at the weekend:

'The result is a tremendous vindication of the mass campaign behind the H-Block prisoners. It shows that far from that campaign having been defeated it has paved the way for the possibility of a political alternative based on the mass mobilisation of the nationalist popula-

tion. Peoples Democracy is proud to have played a part in this victory of the nationalist population.'

At the same time the elections have highlighted the war which Britain continues against the nationalist population of the north and the need to highlight the daily repression there. This points to the importance of the National Ban Plastic Bullets conference to be held in Manchester on 26 February next year.

Peoples Democracy has appealed for donations to help meet the costs of fighting for a revolutionary socialist alternative in the elections. Over £100 was collected at a Socialist Challenge rally in London last week.

Further donations should be sent to PD account no. 03514129 with the Allied Irish Bank, 159-160 Andersonstown Road, Belfast BT11 9DU; or PD, Connolly Bookshop, 6 Avoca Park, Belfast 11.

Socialist Challenge

Sectarian murders heighten tension

Sinn Fein poll victory

THE ELECTION of five candidates of the Irish Republican movement to James Prior's ill-fated new Stormont assembly is clear indication of the real feeling inside the Nationalist community — a complete rejection of British 'solutions'.

Because of the campaign of Sinn Fein and other Republicans, the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) was forced to adopt a policy of boycott of the new assembly. Now all the representatives of the Catholic nationalist community will thus be absent from the assembly. It is dead as a dodo before it holds its first meeting.

In any event, Prior's assembly was never going to have even the power of decision-making that is possessed by the average town council in Britain. But his attempt to impose another phoney 'power-sharing' system has led to further catastrophe for imperialism in Ireland.

The essence of 'power sharing' proposals has always been the allocation of a few seats or offices to the Catholic community — or rather SDLP politicians — in exchange for tacit acceptance of Loyalist domination of the North of Ireland.

The bigotted and blinded Loyalist politicians don't want power-sharing because they foolishly maintain the illusion that some system of guaranteed representation for the nationalist com-

munity means giving away real power. It doesn't.

The essence of the six-county state is the maintenance of Loyalist and imperialist domination through sectarianism — the systematic exclusion of the Catholic population from the centres of economic and political power.

The election of five supporters of Sinn Fein to the assembly — including leading Irish Republican Gerry Adams — is a brilliant political coup. It means that the Republican movement is establishing itself as much more than the armed defence of the nationalist community, but is effectively challenging the monopoly of political representation of that community by the SDLP. Sinn Fein has con-

solidated a base among the masses in the North.

The continuing need of the Catholic community for armed self-defence was vividly illustrated this week by the savage sectarian murders carried out by Loyalist thugs. The IRA kidnapped a part-time member of the state security forces in South Armagh, whom they later executed.

In retaliation, Loyalist assassins kidnapped a Catholic man not involved in politics — Joe Donnegan — and so badly beat him to death that he could only be identified by his watch. This atrocity was followed by the shooting down of unarmed Sinn Fein supporter Peter Corrigan.

13 years ago British troops were sent to Ireland to 'stop bloodshed'. Instead they defended Protestant rule and the bloodshed has been unceasing. Only if the Irish people are given their national and democratic rights — a united Ireland — will the struggle end.

That requires the withdrawal of British troops and the right of the Irish people to determine their own future.

More analysis of Irish elections see p.11.

De Lorean: all coked up



By Bob Pennington

THE *Economist* called it 'daft'. The Eire government rejected it as being 'too much of a risk for the taxpayers'. David Healey, a leading Wall Street investment analyst, recommended punters to put 'their money in booze' and other things, rather than De Lorean, saying, 'the return would be the same and they would have more fun.'

But others knew better. The fact that the American market was already saturated with flashy fast sports cars like Ferrari, Maserati, Porsche and MG did not deter Labour's secretary of state for Northern Ireland, Roy Mason or his perceptive minister of state, Don Concannon, from giving De Lorean the go-ahead.

A wildly enthusiastic Mason described it as a 'tremendous breakthrough'. Which it certainly was. The only snag was De Lorean got the breaks. After what Concannon described as a 'searching investigation', the Labour government stumped up the cash. The investigation took less than 45 days. It worked out that the government put up £33 million of the £65 million needed to get the gull-winged sports car on the road.

Every job created cost £26,000 which is £9,000 a job more than ever paid out before. With searching investigations like that, I shudder to think what would happen if Concannon ever carried out a slapdash one.

It was a cosy arrangement. The British govern-

ment put up the cash and De Lorean if successful stood to make the killing. Cash was poured into the bottomless pit. Meanwhile the high-flying De Lorean lived it up. Just as the venture was starting he paid out a record breaking three and a half million dollars for a 35-bedroom mansion in Bedminster, New Jersey.

His directors and he got fees of one and a half million dollars annually, which the receivers described as being 'rather extravagant for the directors of a company which couldn't sell cars.'

As cash got shorter and shorter, and the creditors moved in, De Lorean clung tighter and tighter to his own personal fortune which is estimated to be around £15 million, but then good con men never

use their own money when they can spend that supplied by governments, just aching to make capitalism and free enterprise work.

The ultimate decline and fall of the De Lorean empire was obvious from the start. But it was only a few days before he got caught trying to deal in 24 million dollars worth of cocaine that the British government finally closed down his Belfast operation. The FBI had tipped them off that De Lorean had started dealing in new ways of giving people a fast lift.

Now a trail of debts totalling somewhere in the region of £100 million have piled up, and 2,600 jobs in Belfast have gone to the wall, in an area where unemployment is near 50 per cent of the male working population.

An unrepentant Mason and Concannon, a silent former Tory minister, Humphrey Atkins, and a Prior, who pulled out the plug just in time, kept this whole unsavoury exercise going until it irrevocably fell apart. It is easy enough to understand the fascination that swashbuckling free enterprise has for the Tory monetarists. And why they hung on to De Lorean's coat tails right to the end.

Why is it however that so many Labour politi-

cians get entangled with the most sordid of the capitalist buccaneers? Before this right wing businessman took Mason and Concannon for a ride, Poulson and T Dan Smith had given the treatment to so many other people in the labour movement and those two crooks Sir Eric Miller and Kagan had been big buddies of Premier Harold Wilson.

The opportunism and single minded careerism of these businessmen obviously appeals to that type of right wing Labour politician who sees getting on — to help the people of course — as being the key thing in politics. How these business people succeed is obviously less important than the fact that they have 'made it'.

Perhaps one of the most sickening aspects of the De Lorean affair is that the Labour Government was cutting back in the welfare state at the same time it was doling out dollops of money to him.

It just never entered Mason's or Concannon's heads that money could have been put into socially useful projects like health and education, and still created jobs.

But then that's the funny idea which only the odd ball left wingers have, unlike our practical men of the right.

Socialist Challenge FUND DRIVE '82

Rally raises £500

OVER five hundred pounds was raised for Socialist Challenge at last week's rally celebrating the 65th anniversary of the Russian Revolution.

Appealing for money Valerie Coultas explained that she had spent the last week rushing from one picket line to another selling the paper and distributing Socialist Challenge leaflets, boosting the struggles of the health workers, miners and others. Birmingham's supporters ran out of papers last week, such was the demand to read Socialist Challenge.

Meanwhile our regular supporters are being asked to raise their monthly contributions to meet our ever-rising costs. And

many of the Socialist Challenge supporters' subs are now due for renewal, we'll be writing to ask you to renew immediately.

Our thanks to this week's contributors:

Bath	£29.55
Rotherham	11.00
Newham	138.43
Manchester	150.00
Cardiff	48.50
Birmingham	61.00
Hendry	5.00
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Nottingham	256.00
Total	£759.48

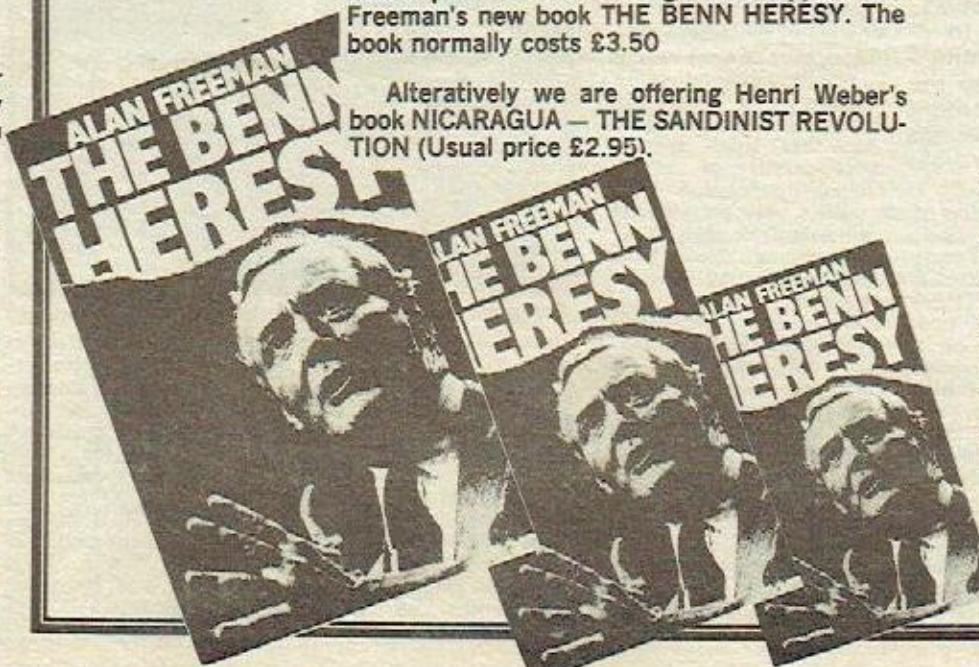
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