

# Socialist Challenge

BUILD A SOCIALIST OPPOSITION FOR A UNIFIED REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

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# CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE

## A bread and butter issue

The nearest the British press has come to telling us anything about Hans Martin Schleyer, the head of the West German employers' federation kidnapped by the Red Army Faction, is a mention in The Observer of 'murmurs of an SS past'.

The British genius for understatement or a deliberate conspiracy? We say the latter.

The Sunday Times ran a whole page story on 'Germany's latest victim' without mentioning a word of Schleyer's past.

We stress that this is not a Socialist Challenge 'scoop'. Every editor in Fleet Street knows what we know. What hope is there for press freedom in Britain when news is censored at the request of a foreign government?

The Fleet Street editors know that:

■ When Schleyer entered the University of Heidelberg in 1934 he already described himself as 'an old Nazi fighter'. He was 19, and had joined the Hitler Youth three years before. He wore the black SS uniform, with the

number 227014, and was awarded the golden Ehrenzeichen medal.

■ He became the head of the Reichsstudentenwerk in Heidelberg, entrusted with the task of Nazifying the universities.

■ 29 May 1937 he denounc-

ed the Rector of Freiburg University to his superiors.

■ 15 June 1937 he became 'political officer' to the 30th SS cavalry regiment.

■ From the beginning of 1938 he headed the Reichsstudentenwerk in Innsbruck, in occupied Austria.

■ After the invasion of Czechoslovakia he went to Prague to head the Reichsstudentenwerk there. By now he was a 'Doctor of Law'.

■ Because of his personal friendship with Goebbels he was able to avoid visiting the front. He stayed in Prague — lining his pockets by all accounts — until days before the arrival of the Red Army.

■ He was head of the

Zentralverband der Industrie für Boehmen und Mähren, which entailed the employment of slave labour from the concentration camps for the war effort.

■ During this period his collaborators were men who later became the core of the functionaries of the Christian Democratic Union: men like Fritz Ries, Arthur Missbach and Eberhardt Taubert.

■ After three years internment by the Allies he joined Daimler-Benz. His promotion was rapid — the director general was a former SA leader who had obviously forgotten about the Night of the Long Knives!

Why has all this information been suppressed? Because the Schmidt Government is turning the full

forces of repression against left-wing opposition to the regime.

Any whisper of this Nazi past might draw too many parallels in the public mind.

And the British press — which operates the same conspiracy of silence about the tanks on the 'British' streets of the Six Counties — is only too happy to oblige.

Neither Socialist Challenge nor the Fourth International gives the slightest support to the terrorist methods used by the kidnapers. We don't thank them for provoking this witch-hunt against the German left.

But we will not shed a single tear for Hans Martin Schleyer. Who are the real 'Hitler's Children'?

• See page 2 for our Editorial Comment.

THE EMPLOYERS in the baking industry are a shabby lot even by the dubious standards of British capitalism. The reason there is little bread in the shops of England and Wales this week is because these employers refuse to do what the vast majority of other employers have done for years — give paid leave on bank holidays.

The employers complain that this would cost them £100,000 a year. How little this would mean to the largest bread giant — Rank Hovis McDougal — is shown by the £46 million profit that company made last year. Compare that with the wages their heavily immigrant workforce receive. The current wage stands at a basic of £28.50 plus a £10.49 supplement from stages 1 and 2 of the Social Contract.

And yet the bakers are not even out for a rise in the basic rate — all they are asking is the right to take off Bank Holidays with pay.

'We are a moderate union', says Sam Maddox, general secretary of the Bakers Union. He is right, all they are asking for are a few more crumbs from a rich man's table.

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Democracy and Revolution in Indo-China by Tariq Ali p. 11

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The Unions & the TUC p. 2, 4 & 5

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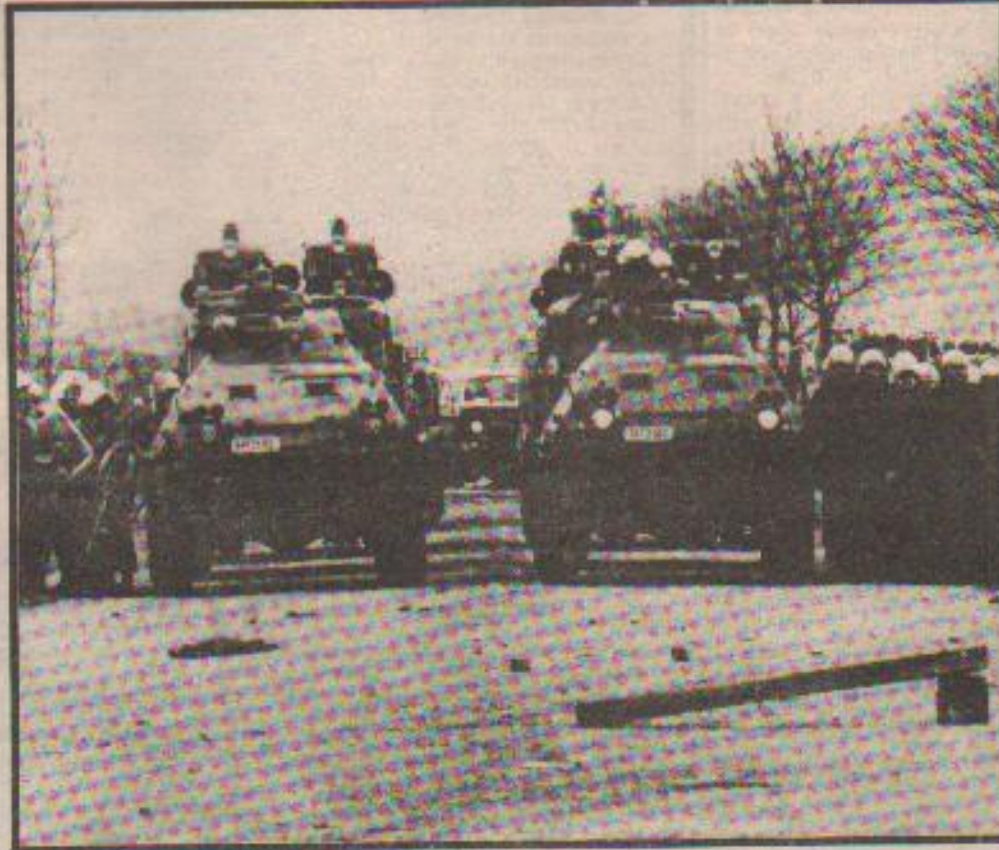
Reporting Lewisham: Lessons for Tameside by Anthony Barnett p. 8 & 9

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Letter from Long Kesh p. 6



This man was a friend of Goebbels



These tanks are out on the streets again



# Editorial

Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.  
Editorial 01-359 8189  
News 01-359 8180

## State of siege

YOU DON'T EXPECT to see armoured cars on the streets of a 'Western democracy'. But that is what millions of West Germans woke up to last week. You don't have to be a counter-insurgency expert to know that armoured cars are not much use for hunting a handful of kidnapers. So who are they after?

The Minister of Justice explained: 'We have to isolate those who still show an understanding of the murderers or sympathy for their actions or who even give them assistance.' With a simple 1984 logic he has managed to include the whole West German left, anyone who opposes the Government.

Already the net has been cast wide, bringing in members of various far left groups and the small Communist Party, even though none of these organisations give political support to the kidnapers. The irresistible conclusion is that if the kidnap hadn't happened they would have invented it. A virtual press blackout has been imposed as part of a deliberate campaign to create the impression that the country is in chaos and only decisive action can remedy things.

The scandal doesn't stop there. As we have shown in our revelations of Schleyer's past, voluntary censorship extends even to the British press.

## TERRORISM IS NOT THE ANSWER

The Red Army Fraction bears no responsibility for any of this. For 20 years after the foundation of the Federal Republic, left-wing parties were banned. The *Berufsverbot* excludes tens of thousands of radicals from jobs in public employment. Widespread surveillance techniques and stringent self-censorship by the press have operated for years. There was no RAF then.

Nevertheless we are unequivocal in our denunciation of the methods used by the terrorists. It is still a grave responsibility to be the excuse for this stepped up repression. Far from weakening the West German bourgeoisie the Cologne kidnaping strengthens it. Because it has no base within the mass movement, not even its passive support, the RAF only serves to isolate the vanguard of the working class and the far left organisations from the masses, making them an easy target for arrests, surveillance and even possible prohibition.

We understand what leads these people to terrorism. The development of a stifling atmosphere of work, discipline and affluence, where the Social Democrats seem no different from the capitalists and the mass of workers seem happy with their lot, has led a number of middle-class youth to a petty bourgeois despair at the possibilities of work within the mass movement. We understand also that the most terrifying and sophisticated forms of torture — for that is what it is — against RAF members in jail have sharpened the desire for revenge. We too offer our full solidarity with West Germany's political prisoners. But terrorism is no way to display it.

The Social Democratic Government has shown itself consistently willing to pursue the policies of its predecessors. It is no surprise that Schleyer, the ex-Nazi, got on so well with his 'Socialist' counterparts, or that the latter should now want to cover up Schleyer's past. It has accumulated all the machinery — both legal and technological — of the 'Strong State': a state based upon an elected assembly but with sweeping independent executive powers of intervention and repression of civil life.

It is a development we cannot watch with the slightest complacency. When the British press collaborates with the West Germany state via the Foreign Office in blacking out all information on Schleyer, it should serve as a reminder that the British state too holds political prisoners; it too sends its armoured cars onto the streets to intimidate or suppress opposition; and it too is only waiting for the chance to extend its powers of coercion and repression over the trade unions and socialist movement. And we can't expect to read about it in the papers.

# TUC leaders bid to stifle wage explosion

by Steve Potter

The decisions of the Blackpool TUC marked a victory for the trade union leaders. But it is only the beginning of their campaign to reverse the overwhelming decision of their summer conferences to return to free collective bargaining.

As Hugh Scanlon delivered the 1.2 million votes of his members into the fold of the 12-month rule — to the jeers of his delegation and the undisguised contempt of other delegates — he must have reflected whether it was all worth while.

Scanlon started the week by reversing the decision to expel the Transport and General Workers Union from the TUC. He did so on the grounds that he was bound by the decisions of his delegation to vote against the move. Yet it was this very principle which he steadfastly ignored when it came to the vote on the 12-month rule.

The engineers' delegation insisted that the vote be cast in line with their national committee policy calling for an immediate return to free collective bargaining. The policy made no mention of adhering to the 12-month rule.

## BLOCK VOTE

If the AUEW delegates had won the day, there is no doubt that the block vote of the engineering and transport workers would have commanded the slim majority necessary for the rejection of 'Phase 3 by the back door'.

But, apart from the standing ovation accorded to Callaghan's speech calling for wage claims under 10 per cent, the TUC leaders felt they could go little further at Blackpool. In an important decision the conference rejected the cash limits system in the public sector. A fight on this issue is, of course, another matter. Meanwhile, the union leaders are turning their attention to where the Government's policy will bite hardest — the submission and settlement of claims.

Mr Terry Beckett, Ford's boss in Britain, is the main force behind the hard-line approach of the Confederation of British Industry. He also conducted the mammoth public relations exercise involving the talents of Jim Callaghan as the building of a new engine plant in South Wales was announced last week. Not only will this project involve the loss of 1200 jobs in other engine plants in Britain, it is also a transparent attempt to twist the arm of the trade union side in the forthcoming wage negotiations.

## UNION CLAIM

The union claim includes 15 per cent on basic rates, automatic compensation for inflation and the long-standing demand for 80



Scanlon votes for 12 month rule to the jeers of his delegation

per cent of full pay for lay-offs.

Despite the fact that the claim goes nowhere near making up for the loss in living standards suffered under Phases One and Two, it does add up to about 25 per cent on current earnings if the whole package is stuck to. Beckett aims to chop this down to Healey's norm. Moss Evans, general secretary elect of the TGWU, who leads the union side in the negotiations, is already engaged in cutting slice after slice from the full claim.

## EXCEPTION

In another battle in the car industry, the Government and bosses are prepared to make an exception to the 12-month rule in order to force corporate bargaining down the throats of Leyland workers. The motive is that instead of wage bargaining being in the hands of shop stewards responsible to mass meetings on a plant by plant basis, it will be conducted on a national level under the auspices of full-time union officials.

Leyland stewards have already rejected the deal, in a move uniting both engineering and transport members. But now the individual union executives are trying to force discipline on their members to accept the deal — an action spearheaded by Hugh Scanlon.

Four right-wing NUM areas are demanding a pit ballot for the second time on productivity schemes. The first such ballot in November 1975, overwhelmingly rejected the schemes on the grounds that the unity of miners would be broken and that safety in the mines would hit an all time low in the drive for higher

output.

The last conference of the NUM rejected the scheme for the same reasons, and Joe Gornley was forced to break off negotiations with the National Coal Board. Now the aim of the new ballot is to cut off attempts by Arthur Scargill and leaders of other militant areas to reject the decision of the TUC and press ahead with the claim for £135 due to be submitted on 1 November.

The issue of cash limits will be central to the claim of one million council manual workers discussed by NUPE this week. The Government has pledged to the CBI that it will stand firm against claims over six per cent in the public sector, and it will use the threat of cuts and unemployment as the consequence of any bid by council workers to make up for the loss in earnings in the last two years.

The other half of the Government's proposal, to publish a 'blacklist' of private firms who have to pay out wage claims above the 10 per cent norm, is being followed up with the cancellation of government orders and contracts to produce unemployment.

## EFFECT

This policy is beginning to have an effect on some of the hundred or so wage struggles going on at present. Some shop stewards committees which have submitted claims for over 10 per cent are keeping the matter secret and refusing to seek support either nationally or from other workers submitting such claims, for fear that the Government 'will find out'.

Such hopes are naive in the extreme. Both the Government and the CBI have set up data banks on all wage claims submitted, together with management's response. The Government-inspired campaign of unemployment as the punishment for wage settlements over the 10 per cent norm can be defeated by a united response at rank and file level. With the trade union leaders' sabotage, conferences of shop stewards in every locality should now be called to take the initiative. The voice from the rank and file should be clear:

## ACTION NEEDED

\*Rejecting the TUC decision of the 12-month rule as unrepresentative of the trade union movement.

\*Pledging full support to all workers in struggle.

\*Electing steering committees to organise support and coordinate information on all claims submitted.

Similar action is needed in the public sector. Teachers, local government white collar workers and other grades of manual workers will be threatened with cut backs and loss of jobs once the manual workers submit their claim.

Meetings of stewards in every union affected by the claim should be used to call for local conferences of all local government employees and labour movement bodies to put their full support behind the claim.

Local organisation of this kind can lay the basis for a massive No from the rank and file to the trickery in Blackpool last week.

# OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

- To begin to fight for the creation of a unified and democratic revolutionary socialist organisation which can, through an application of united front tactics, begin to be seen as an alternative by thousands of workers engaged in struggles.

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

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

## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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

I am interested in more information about activities in my area.  
I would like additional literature and enclose 50p to cover costs.  
(Delete if not applicable)

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

Send to Socialist Challenge, 328/329 Upper Street, London N1.



Maoist wins praise of Tories' main backer

# Bad news at the Express

VICTOR MATTHEWS is the chairperson of Beaverbrook Newspapers, and someone who doesn't hide his politics under a bushel. Three months ago he said: 'It is very important in the present state of the country that the Beaverbrook papers should continue to express their views which are sympathetic to those of the Conservative Party and of capitalism.'

REG BIRCH is a senior official in the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers and a leader of the Maoist, Communist Party of Britain [Marxist Leninist].

Last Saturday Mr Matthews said of Mr Birch: 'I commend the responsible attitude of Mr Birch in this matter, and in persuading his members to accept our terms, which will allow the management to manage and the workers to work.'

The occasion of this flattery was the settlement of the week-long lock-out of AUEW members at Beaverbrook which had stopped the Daily Express, Sunday Express and Evening Standard from littering the streets of London.

## SETBACK

Matthews has every reason to praise Birch. The engineers have agreed to an 18-point statement drawn up by Matthews which is a severe setback for all workers in Fleet Street. It states there will be no union chapel meetings at 'inconvenient times', no payment to employees attending such meetings during office hours, and that tea-breaks will only be taken 'at the discretion of the overseers'.

The engineers have also undertaken to participate in 'meaningful negotiations' on 'management's desire to reduce existing staff levels'.

Beaverbrook's managing director Jocelyn Stevens was overjoyed at the terms of the agreement. 'We gave nothing away', he said, adding 'this is the most important settlement in the newspaper industry since the war'.

This jubilation is easy to understand. The traditional union practice of holding union meetings during working hours as a way of pressuring management has been signed away. The AUEW workers have accepted that many jobs will go, and the terms of the management victory establish an important precedent in Fleet Street. All the Beaverbrook engineers got in return was their re-instatement — they had been sacked and locked out after holding a union meeting in working hours.

## LOCKOUTS

The lock-outs came just three months after Trafalgar House, headed by Matthews, took over Beaverbrook. Trafalgar House made its money by property speculation and by specialising in industries where union organisation is weak — the catering and building industries. The company is also the largest individual contributor to Tory Party funds — giving Thatcher and friends £26,000 last year.

Matthews' views on the much vaunted 'press freedom' of the Fleet Street bastions is summed up in one remark he made when he took over: 'My editors will be guaranteed editorial freedom as long as they agree with my policies'.

Matthews lived up to these reactionary credentials during last week's lock-out. He threatened to close down the London printing operation entirely and transfer it to Manchester. He



Voice of the silent majority



'Voice of the silent majority' — the new slogan to adorn the Daily Express — turned into rabid hysteria in Monday's front-page editorial (top right) on the end of the lock-out. That printworkers allowed such a vicious attack to be published without a reply is a measure of the defeat imposed on the print engineers by Express boss Victor Matthews (above left) and the AUEW official he so much admires, Reg Birch (above).

barricaded the offices of the Express to prevent the engineers from entering the building. And he called in the police after the disappearance of machine parts following his instant dismissal of the engineers.

The threat to transfer all production to Manchester — made possible by the latest print technology — was one reason why the engineers worked normally on the Northern edition throughout the dispute. The other is the rivalry between print workers in London and Manchester, caused by the higher wages paid to the London workers and their past reluctance to support the fight of Manchester workers when their jobs have been threatened — as indeed they are now by the electronic transmission of completed pages.

Matthews did all he could to

**Credit**

Eventually those who would deny them the right to produce their newspapers — the bully boys prepared to steal and destroy in order to impose their own hooligan brand of industrial relations — were put to flight.

Everyone concerned must grasp the opportunity that Saturday's agreement offers. Anarchy must be put to retreat so that newspapers may survive without the constant threat of strikes and bankruptcy.

Much credit is due to Mr Reg Birch, the engineering union's

foster these divisions. When the Manchester engineers continued working he sent them a telegram praising them for 'your wonderful support'.

The only answer to these tactics was for the AUEW to forge unity against the bully-boy tactics of Matthews. But for a long time the bureaucracies of the unions involved in Fleet Street have sought to destroy the independence print workers have enjoyed from their union leaderships, especially after the recent rejection of the bureaucrats' deal on new technology.

Clearly the AUEW and Reg Birch in particular saw the lock-out as a way of re-establishing the authority of the bureaucracy. As the Sunday Times commented: 'A significant figure in achieving the settlement was Reg Birch...he urged the engin-

ers to accept the firm's conditions'.

Matthews is now likely to try and do to the printers what he has done to the engineers. The urgent need is to establish close links between newspaper workers in different parts of the country and in different unions, coupled with demands which would unite resistance to the threat to jobs posed by the new equipment. Job sharing and the use of expanded production facilities for labour movement and community papers would certainly begin to rob the barons of their press monopoly.

In the longer term, one union for all printing workers — to which most of the unions are committed on paper — provides the form of organisation which can deal with the barricade tactics of Matthews & Co.



## Mutual protection?

JAMES HUNTE was a West Indian candidate in Ladywood. We referred to him in our editorial on the subject. Last week the Daily Telegraph sent out its tame black reporter Amit Roy to Birmingham to do a job on the far-left. Roy did so by interviewing Asian business people and getting them to attack 'communism' and 'violence'.

More to the point is that Roy also interviewed James Hunte of the Mutual Protection Society (sic). Hunte told Roy: 'Older and younger West Indians are agreed on this one issue. They find the Asians are going to be the main threat to their future.' The next remark from Hunte was a logical corollary of the first:

'The most sensitive police in the country are at Handsworth. Supt. Webb is really a highly paid social worker and he understands the West Indian community better than any policeman in the country.' So that's what is meant by 'mutual protection'.

## New Swiss War-time Party?

THE TIMES recently featured an interview with Duncan Hallas, the Chairperson of the Socialist Workers Party. Hallas said a number of things which were unexceptionable and with which few socialists would disagree. There were two features of the interview which were, however, somewhat bizarre. Surely old Duncan isn't really serious when he implies that Socialism = War-time Planning + Swiss Cantons!

Swiss Cantons are not the best model of direct democracy (leaving aside their class character for the moment). Apart from the obvious weakness of parish-pump politics, there is another feature which has characterised them: women were only allowed the vote in 1971. One canton, Rhodes Exterior, near the Austrian border, still does not allow women the vote.

As far as war-time planning is concerned, surely the small matter of its coexistence with private property cannot be ignored. The Chairperson, if the quotations in The Times are accurate, should be a bit more careful in his public pronouncements.

## The conversion of Paul

SO PAUL JOHNSON has left the Labour Party. Is anyone really surprised? Not really. But the Tory press must be allowed to celebrate the event. Johnson's drift to the right had been apparent for years. Both he and Bernard Levin see themselves as the only 'thinkers' capable of fighting the evil menace of Marxism. The banner they have raised is one of 'individual freedom'.

And yet Paul Johnson is so obsessed with a hatred of all things left that he never writes about racism or the growth of the NF or the social conditions of the working class. He has realised that the crisis is serious and that his nice, country existence might not be all that safe. So he indulges in the politics of fear. He is frightened by the working class, so he attacks the trades unions. He is unable to either understand or combat Marxist ideas, so he talks about 'left wing fascists'.

Clearly his place is in the Tory Party of Margaret Thatcher. He could become her speech-writer thus displacing the even more right-wing Robert Moss, though the latter will not give up easily.

He could even become the Propaganda Officer for the Tory election campaign. Whatever he does, most members of the Labour Party will say: Good riddance. Let him work out his petty-bourgeois frenzies somewhere else.

## Visitors from another planet

THE BIG BOSS of the Scientologists, Ron Hubbard, was trembling in his shoes. His minions had reported the emergence of a rival. Scientologists throughout Britain were reporting the impact of this rival. Hubbard and his cohorts went into closed session. It is still going on.

What had driven them to despair? Our intrepid reporters finally succeeded in unearthing the true story. London's best-known centre of proletarian militancy, the Cambridge Theatre, is to be the venue of a pathbreaking series of lectures. This is what was worrying the Scientologists. The theme was 'philosophy'.

The speaker was to be none other than Gerry Healy of the Workers Revolutionary Party. Adverts for the lectures imply that he has made a major new theoretical breakthrough which, at a stroke, solves all the knotty epistemological problems posed by Kant, Hegel, and Feurbach. Gerry has stated: 'The practice of cognition is the building of the Workers Revolutionary Party.' Hubbard had better pack his bags.

## Letters from outside the Italian CP?

MARIA-ANTONIETTA Macchiocchi is a well-known intellectual and member of the Italian Communist Party. Recently she signed an appeal with various other intellectuals opposing the repression in Italy. Since this includes the repression carried out on orders from PCI mayors, the party leadership was not amused. Her membership card has not been renewed. PCI leaders are reviewing her 'political opinions' to see whether they are consistent with membership of the party.

## Monty's bombers

IN THE public debate last Friday between the Communist Party and the International Marxist Group, attended by a thousand people in St. Pancras Town Hall, Monty Johnstone of the CP, attacked the IMG for ignoring problems of 'peace and security'.

What he did not explain was (i) Why the French Communist Party supports the 'nuclear deterrent'; (ii) Why the Italian Communist Party defends NATO, and (iii) Why the Spanish Communist Party refuses to campaign for the withdrawal of American bases from Spain.

Is that the best way to defend 'peace' and maintain 'security'?







Photo: CHETIV DAVIES (Report)

# COHSE socialists form alliance Uniting workers in struggle

A number of activists in the Confederation of Health Service Employees met in London on 3 September and formed the COHSE Socialist Alliance. The call came from a meeting of 23 delegates at the union's last conference, dissatisfied by the leadership's continued support for the social contract, and determined to organise inside the union for socialist policies.

The new alliance intends to campaign around issues such as pay, the cuts, and women's rights. PATRICK SIKORSKI, East Birmingham branch secretary in COHSE and a member of the alliance, puts forward his views on what the left should be fighting for in the union.

COHSE has 200,000 members. Unlike other unions that organise health workers, all of COHSE's members are in the NHS. It is with great pride that it calls itself 'Britain's NHS trade union', and it is on this slogan that it bases its membership recruitment campaign.

So great is COHSE's desire to be 'the' NHS union, that its leadership would have us believe the other unions in the health service don't exist. Building joint shop stewards committees in the hospitals and areas has been consistently opposed by the union leadership. And joint action with other unions is only undertaken when the leadership feels it has no choice but to participate — as was the case on the big anti-cuts demonstration on 17 November last year.

Two weeks later in Birmingham we had the disgusting spectacle of COHSE branch secretaries giving interviews to the Tory press on why the National Union of Public Employees' Midland strike against the cuts was wrong.

Far from the test of a union being whether it only has members in the NHS, it is how a union represents and fights for its members' interests that counts. In this respect, COHSE has far less of a claim to fame, and its consistent refusal to work with other unions only weakens our members' fight against the cuts.

COHSE was one of the first unions to register under the Tory's Industrial Relations Act. In the 1974 nurses' strike it opportunistically put on a militant face to win nurses to the union, and then helped sell out the strike through the Halsbury Committee. The union leadership has consistently supported the wage cutting of the social contract.

But the union is changing. Where COHSE was once an amalgamation of two psychiatric hospital unions, with a tradition of trying to gain 'recognition for their profession' of very badly paid workers, the reality of cuts and conditions in the NHS today is forcing a change. The increased unionisation of women has forced even the Royal College of Nurses to turn towards trade unionism.

## PRESSURES

These pressures were reflected at COHSE's annual conference this summer. The number of motions on the agenda dealing with pay increased from one last year to 24; on cuts from 5 to 14; and on joint shop stewards committees from none to four. The obvious need to participate in the joint stewards committees now springing up in the NHS resulted in conference voting to support them — in spite of the executive's opposition.

These changes in attitude among COHSE's membership have barely begun to be reflected in the union — or its leadership. This is in part due to the lack of democracy in the union.

Many of the delegates at conference are not unware of motions, and little discussion about wages and stopping the cuts are

conference motions. Many delegates are branch secretaries who make up their own mind on the issues, and there is no standing orders committee elected from the floor to run the conference.

That is why an organised alternative is needed in COHSE — an organised opposition to the union leadership which can offer socialist policies to meet the changing concerns of the membership.

## FIGHT FOR PAY

Clearly, the most burning issue in the union is pay. Here, too, the union leadership's failure to fight for united action with other unions will hit the membership hard. With cash limits imposed to make the public sector the whipping boy for Labour's wage restraint, united action to restore living standards is essential. COHSE's executive is hardly likely to fight for that united action when it supports Phase Three.

That's why in Birmingham we got together with other stewards in NUPE and the T&GWU to discuss the hospital ancillary workers' claim which comes up in November. All the NHS unions have different wage targets — NUPE a £50 minimum wage; the G&M/WU £55 minimum; while COHSE has no target at all! So we worked out a claim which we will jointly demand the union leaders stick to.

We decided on a £55 minimum wage; the consolidation of Phase One and Two rises into basic rates; an automatic threshold to compensate for inflation; a 35-hour week, and five weeks annual paid leave. I think the pay claim should be jointly discussed with each of the health unions in every locality.

We are taking it further than that. We are getting together with other public sector workers to discuss a fight against the cash limits, through a West Midlands regional public sector conference for shop stewards to be held on 15 October.

## CASH LIMITS

The cash limits mean that better wages and stopping the cuts are

part of the same fight. The COHSE leadership has consistently opposed national action on the cuts, allowing branches locally to 'do their own thing'. Here again the joint stewards committees are vital.

The COHSE conference passed a resolution calling for 'participation in any local actions against health cuts, while recognising the urgent need for such action on a national basis'. We have to demand that the leadership implements this, while ourselves building for action through local, regional, and hopefully national joint NHS stewards meetings.

One of the most important issues in the union is that of women's rights. Over 85 per cent of the union's membership are women, yet only a fifth of the conference delegates were women and the proportion is even lower among full-time officers. The formal positions of the union on women's rights are very good — it supports the demands of the Working Women's Charter. But it stops short of action as the internal life of the union shows.

At conference a resolution calling for opposition to the Benyon Bill restrictions on abortion was defeated, despite the fact that delegates had just called for free abortion on demand by passing the Charter. Among those at the conference were SPUC supporters handing out leaflets, and one delegate with anti-abortion leaflets printed by the British Movement.

## CHANGING MOOD

On all these issues the changing mood of the membership must be given a direction — and that requires the left organising to offer an alternative. That is why the COHSE Socialist Alliance must be built.

COHSE's membership target as 'the' NHS union is a quarter of a million. The union leadership seems to forget that it was during the 1974 nurses strike that its biggest growth in membership took place. Pretending the other NHS unions don't exist will not build COHSE into a strong union. This can only be achieved by policies which can advance members' interests, and a willingness to wage a united fight for them.

The next meeting of the COHSE Socialist Alliance is on Saturday, 19 November, 1-3 pm, at 14A Piccadilly, Manchester 1 (entrance from Gore St.)

The Alliance can be contacted c/o Patrick Sikorski, 33 Cyril Road, Small Heath, Birmingham 10.

## Public Sector on the March

### Health axe dented in Liverpool

Campaigners against the closure of the Mill Road Maternity Hospital in Liverpool have notched up a success. SANDY TOMKINS of the Women's Action Group — which took up the defence of Mill Road as its first activity — reports on the battle.

During the campaign to keep Mill Hill open, supporters leafleted, petitioned, picketed the health authorities and established links with women clerical workers at the hospital. As the campaign began to involve workers from all departments of the hospital — even the matron changed her mind and signed the petition! — the unions started to take the closure seriously.

It was no accident that Mill Road was chosen for the chop — women, geriatric, and psychiatric patients are least well provided for by the NHS. The authorities used every argument in the book to justify the closure of Mill Hill — that it was under-utilised, that plans for rationalisation would provide more efficient care elsewhere, etc. But the interests of patients themselves never rated

high in their arguments.

Our success at Mill Road has meant that the Merseyside health authority is stepping up its attacks elsewhere. Rathbone Road Hospital, specialising in geriatric and psychiatric care, is due for closure. There are proposals for double labour wards in the Salford General, so that two women will give birth in the same room. Broadgreen Hospital is on the chopping block. And all these hospitals are becoming increasingly run-down.

That's why the position adopted against all cuts at a recent meeting called by the National Union of Public Employees in Liverpool is so important. The persistence of the women's movement in its defence of Mill Road needs to be emulated so that the current tactics of the health authorities to close wards rather than entire hospitals can be defeated.

### EGA to march on health boss

WOMEN'S GROUPS, trade union members, tenants groups, and local anti-cuts committees will be marching to the Department of Health and Social Services headquarters in South London on 20 September. The



demonstration co-incides with a meeting between DHSS boss David Ennals and staff of the Elizabeth Garret Anderson hospital, union officials and MPs, where campaigners hope to get the original decision to close the hospital reversed.

The campaign to save the EGA plans to open a new out-patient clinic — a women's health advisory service — relying on the public to implement this proposal. South Camden Community Health Council has agreed to investigate health provision for women in the area, and

with help from other organisations make proposals for its improvement.

The joint shop stewards committee at the EGA is appealing for resolutions to the DHSS against the closure, demanding that all the hospital's facilities should be restored, and for active support to prevent facilities and patients being removed.

March on 20 September, 3.30 pm, DHSS Offices, Alexander Fleming House, Elephant and Castle, London SE1. Rally and social following.

### Hounslow Hospital fights on

A PLASTER-CAST body on an operating trolley and a team of surgeons decked out in their green gowns arrived at 10 Downing Street on Tuesday. Armed with a 400-foot long petition, supporters and staff of the Hounslow Hospital work-in demanded that the hospital stay open as a community facility serving local needs.

If the Government refuses to reverse its decision to close the Hounslow the defence committee has made the consequences clear: 'If it is closed, then patients will not get admission to acute medical wards this winter. We say health cuts in Hounslow will kill.'

The committee has also challenged Social Services Secretary David Ennals to a public debate to explain his remedy for the chronic sick, who will be unable to obtain effective care in Hounslow.

### Council in line for thrashing

LANARKSHIRE: The spreading local government workers' strike

in Monklands, Lanarkshire, has sparked off talk of getting the army in to collect the rent — an idea which the strikers have dismissed as rantings. All council workers in the Monklands district are now on strike against redundancies, and support has been received from the postal workers' union locally.

Barney Whelan, chairperson of the Monklands Constituency Labour Party, is one of the workers whom the Labour-controlled council is trying to give the chop. He argues: 'Before talks can take place we want the status quo maintained and no action taken on the redundancies.'

The Monklands dispute shows how to fight the cuts. There has been instant strike action, solidarity from other workers and a firm stand on trade union principles.

The militant atmosphere in both district and regional branches has given NALGO officials little option to follow the course on which the rank and file have embarked. As long as the workers don't falter, Monklands Labour council will take a thrashing.



# Dockers plan national strike

## 'we are ready to sit out for a 20 pc pay rise'

The dockers intend to move against the Government's 12-month rule. The National Ports Shop Stewards Committee has announced plans for indefinite strike action in pursuit of a 20 per cent pay increase. Last week, Southampton dockers met and agreed to settle under Phase 2, but dockers in other ports are awaiting the call for action.

The docks are currently a

smouldering cauldron of disension over job cuts and wage restraint. Hull docks share the problems of every other port. Containerisation and mechanisation have vastly reduced the numbers of dockers employed. Bosses have re-routed work to unregistered ports — often far inland where part-time labour works for half the dockers' pay.

In Hull, the tonnage handled at the docks fell from 9.4m in 1963 to 6.3 m in 1971, accompanied by major closures. In ten years the number of dockers nationwide has dropped from 60,000 to 26,000. ALAN KIRKBY, vice chairperson of Hull Ports Shop Stewards Committee, told Socialist Challenge why dockers are determined to win their claim.

'We are ready to sit out for a 20 per cent wage increase or £100 a week. It's up to the rank and file because we can't rely on trade union leaders. If our officials won't do it, then we've got to do it ourselves. Unemployment has gone up — not down — in the last three years, contrary to what we were promised with the Social Contract.

'It's alright pulling together if these sacrifices benefit the unemployed, but the numbers keep going up. The lads on the dock are fed up with wage restraint. My union is the blue union, the National Association of Stevedores and Dockers. The white union is the Transport and General, which anyone can be in. But in my union you have to be a registered dock worker. Docks aren't important to the TGWU. There's been a reduction in dockers in Hull from 4,500 to 2,100 over the past 10 years. For a union like the TGWU, with 1.8 million members it's a drop in the ocean.

'We are ready for the strike. We learned a lot in the 1972 strike. It took place after the wave of opposition to the Devlin Report. The Report split the workforce. We wanted one employer and decasualisation. After it came out, we struck for four days. In Liverpool casualisation meant you got work on a roster. Also piecework was very hard, with unsafe hours and no time for meals.

'In the 1972 strike there was organised picketing. We

bought a bus and went everywhere, stopping at every port — like Scarborough. Every day there were a thousand police on the Trent. We were the first port in the country to come out. It was an official strike. We had flying pickets because of the mushrooming of other ports in unfair competition.

'The flying picket was very effective. The miners learnt it from us. We were the first to mobilise hundreds of strikers every day. When we went to Selby — where dockers were working up the Trent for half the money — all the police were waiting for us. We marched through the town in columns of four and closed the berths down. We got a bit of abuse but a lot of support.

'On the Trent we had 60 dockers arrested and each fined £50 in a kangaroo court. The police were very frightened. We were sending 700-1200 men a day. Police stopped cars and took away our hand-hooks and bill-hooks. Those are tools of our trade. They called them "offensive weapons".

'Women and wives worked behind the scenes. We in the blue union got no strike pay. I got threatening and abusive phone calls the third week, which worried me greatly — threats to my wife and family. My wife got a job to tide us over. The women weren't hostile. My wife had a typewriter here and did all the leaflets and bulletins.'

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)



## Journalists fight to maintain strike

THE STRONG whiff of a sell-out is in the air in Darlington. It comes from the attempts of the leaderships of the print unions to force striking journalists at North of England Newspapers to end their three month strike.

The employers' claim that the journalists' demand for a post-entry closed shop is a threat to 'press freedom' has always embarrassed the print unions. Now they have combined in trying to drive the National Union of Journalists into accepting an immediate return to work and 'mediation' at Darlington.

The demand came during a meeting last Thursday of the printing industries committee of the TUC when leaders of the print unions NATSOPA, NGA and SOGAT told NUJ representatives that if they didn't get their members back to work, they would tell printing workers to cross the picket line.

NUJ executive member Aidan White who attended the meeting says: 'A comprehensive sell-out is being organised by the print unions'. The NUJ chapel at Darlington is resisting the attempts to blackmail them into ending the strike. Mike Duggan, the strikers' father of the chapel, told Socialist Challenge: 'We are willing to accept a mediator in principle, but we are not prepared to go back to work in the meantime.' The strikers also point out that recommendations made by a mediator are not binding.

As we go to press, the NUJ executive meets to consider its attitude to the ultimatum of the print unions. Only a strong rank and file campaign among journalists and printworkers to build solidarity with the Darlington journalists can guarantee success for this important dispute. The NUJ rank and file group Journalists Charter is busy trying to get such a campaign under way.

# How brother Terry duffed up the Lucas strikers

The executive committee of the Engineering Union has finally achieved in the Lucas toolmakers strike what Fleet Street had been unable to do on its own. Last Saturday, Terry Duffy — AUEW official and the right-wing's presidential candidate, managed to get a mass meeting to vote 5-4 in favour of a return to work.

He was opposed by both the negotiating committee and the shop stewards committee. JOHN GRAHAM reports that management's so-called compromise is a far cry from what the workers were demanding.

The toolroom workers were beginning to feel the effects of isolation in their 12-week strike for higher bonus pay when Lucas made its offer. Throughout the strike, 'women revolt' stories appeared. But when the women demanded that management increase its offer to the strikers after they had met with the toolmakers, this story naturally didn't appear.

And although the toolroom workers organised factory tours to win support, the AUEW leadership dragged its heels all the way. In fact, the only reason the mass meeting was called on Saturday was because the executive committee had pushed Lucas to make another concession, above the heads of the negotiating committee.

The 11,500 production workers laid off by the strike, plus the massive lay-offs the strike was about to provoke in Leyland and elsewhere, made the situation too dangerous for the union bureaucrats. An excuse was needed for a mass meeting.

The paltry improvement which Lucas offered was a mere extra £50 compensation for the strike, on top of the £100 they had first come up with. The bosses didn't budge from their previous offer on the strikers' claim for an increase in the bonus scheme. The toolmakers accepted the £3 offer, but this is tied to an agreement that any future negotiations will be based on an entirely different bonus scheme.

Terry Duffy, backed by the AUEW divisional organiser Bill Jordan, got the union's Birmingham East district committee to agree to this sell-out by a vote of 16-9. Every argument in the book was used to convince the committee, especially the lay-offs suffered by production workers. A member of the committee countered by explaining how production workers would benefit from a victory. Lucas had implied that any settlement reached with toolroom workers would extend to the claim production workers will submit on their return to work.

The negotiating committee

dashed any hopes held by Duffy and Jordan that the return to work would be entirely smooth sailing. A substantial majority rejected the recommendation. Neither was the joint shop stewards committee convinced — 34 votes were cast against 24 to refuse the recommendation.

These votes didn't really matter from the point of view of the union officials. They got what they wanted — another chance to address a mass meeting.

And with the weight of the national leadership in the background, the negotiating committee found it difficult to put up a an adequate fight for rejection.

Production line workers in the car industry are frequently subject to lay off, and they aren't covered by lay-off agreements. Which is why it is vital that the unions take up the fight for the guaranteed pay regardless of the reasons for any lay-offs. This will focus attention on the real enemy — management — rather than those involved in the fight to maintain their living standards under Labour's attacks.

And it will also prevent craft groups, like the toolmakers, being left open to the type of arguments used by Bill Jordan last Saturday when he claimed that senior stewards representing production workers were waiting 'like parasites' to pick up for their own claim all the gains of the toolroom workers.

# Huge fare rises smashed in Leeds

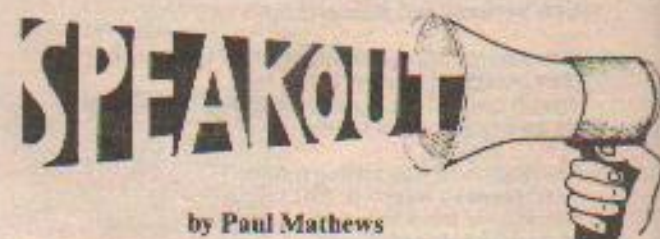
Council plans for proposed fare increases of 26 per cent in West Yorkshire have been rejected by the Traffic Commissioners. Not that these gentlemen were moved by compassion. They were faced with such a massive wave of protest that they had to take action.

A year ago, when the Labour Council raised fares by 16 per cent, only a handful of Leeds bus workers were opposed. But in the months that followed some bitter lessons were learned.

Increased fares led to fewer passengers, which meant reduced jobs and services, which in turn led to worse passenger-bus crew relations, with assaults on staff. This time there was a 2 to 1 majority in favour of a fight-back.

In the same 10 months period, Platform — the monthly newspaper of the Platform group of bus workers — has built up from selling only a handful of copies in Leeds to monthly sales of four to five hundred and a readership of twice as many.

The Platform group has been active within the bus workers branch of the Transport and General Workers Union, and has stimulated many more workers into attending branch meetings, and demanding action from their local union bureaucracy.



by Paul Mathews

Platform and the Leeds Campaign Against the Cuts combined on the fares issue to form a Public Transport Group. Leaflets were distributed and meetings addressed. The need for united action from bus workers and bus users was stressed. Support came from community groups, trade unionists, and political groups, among others.

The fight itself was not limited to the financial aspects. It was based on the social need for low fares and the social responsibility of the County Council to provide adequate, low cost transport. When faced with these arguments and, more importantly, with the evidence of mass protest the Commissioners told the Council to go away and think again — and in terms of 12 per cent instead of 26.

Although fare increases of any kind are detrimental, the rejection of the proposed 26 per cent was a major victory, directly

produced by united mass action. An understanding between bus workers and the travelling public has been achieved and morale is higher than ever before. We've done what was needed this time, and we'll do it again when the time comes — as surely it will.

\* Platform can be contacted at: 42 Ascot Terrace, Leeds 9.

### CORRECTION

We would like to correct an error which appeared in our report on the Right to Work Campaign two weeks ago. We incorrectly stated that Bernard Regan and Socialist Teachers Alliance had offered assistance to the RTW campaign. It should have said that the East London Teachers Association, (of which Regan is President) had offered support.



Photo: NEWSLINE





from An Phoblacht, paper of Sinn Fein

## Lewisham and Ireland

WHEN Republicans stated and wrote that the day would come when the police repression experienced for more than 50 years in Ireland's north-east, but particularly since 1968, would be suffered by the working people of England, many people at home and abroad laughed or sneered, some of them thinking we were out of our minds, others that we were indulging in a rather cheap and sensational form of propaganda, even though Kitson himself had said in Low Intensity Operations that he too visualised the dawning of such an era.

Now it has happened, but we have no wish to gloat over the matter. Rather the reverse. When the remnants of democracy are torn down anywhere not only the immediate sufferers but all mankind is the poorer. As Donoe said for his time and all time: 'Ask not for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for thee.'

Ireland's north-east has been used coldly and deliberately as a testing ground for the new technology of political control or, to put it in a more easily understandable way, the strengthening of imperialism against the more politically conscious people.

The parallel between Lewisham and the Bogside battles is striking. In both cases a bigoted, sectarian group was given police protection to taunt and insult the local people, all in the interests, allegedly, of 'free speech' and 'democratic assembly', the real intention being kept dark.

The tactical reasons for the Bogside exercise were traditional ('to teach the Taigues a lesson'); but there were also new immedi-

ate aims (to test CS gas). The hidden strategy was to give Stormont the excuse of banning at will all unwanted political demonstrations, to sweep politics off the streets, because the civil rights movement was succeeding.

In England, with increasing unemployment, the deterioration in the standard of living caused by inflation and the tough stand taken by the gommeen men, social unrest was inevitable. It was only a question of time before it would take to the streets. Grunwick mass pickets, and clashes between the police and trade unionists was the beginning.

We do not seek to tell repressed workers, many of them Irish, what to do to defend democracy in England. They have the Irish experience to contest the theories of Kitson and others. Already they have seen the danger to democratic association, democratic picketing, democratic marches. They will do their utmost to defend their democratic interests.

In the long term, the Irish liberation struggle can only gain from what has happened at Grunwick, in Lewisham and in Birmingham. Greater understanding of and compassion for the Irish struggle is bound to follow, with the inevitable comparisons and analysis. Already a beginning may be observed in the far more detailed and sympathetic reporting of the Irish struggle in Britain's radical press.

The Troops Out Movement and similar groups should find greatly increased support for the demand to withdraw British troops from Ireland and the breaking of the Crown's links with her last colony. The iron must be struck hard while it is hot and the mass movement weapon forged for victory.



## Long Kesh Letter

This week, Socialist Challenge opens a new column, what we hope will be a regular letter from an Irish political prisoner in Long Kesh in the North of Ireland. The letters are being smuggled out to us. In the words of the writer, the letter will 'reflect my own views, assessments, and solutions'.

You probably never heard of me as I am one of the many prisoners serving long sentences in the Six Counties for our political beliefs. I am doing several sentences on false evidence. My brothers are also imprisoned. Loyalist or British agents blew up my home with my brothers and sisters in it — luckily they are alive and despite their house being wrecked, they came out with only a few minor injuries.

Well the torture goes on daily; never was it so great. A comrade of mine was shot badly by the SAS in south Derry. He lost a lung, a kidney and had other injuries. After he recovered sufficiently he was taken to Castle-reagh barracks.

It is a dreadful place at the moment. He was tortured there for seven days. He withstood that but was moved to Coleraine police station for a further six days where he was even more severely tortured.

I am still young and have plenty of fight left in me. The future isn't black, and success can be achieved. In Ireland today very few politicians are prepared to face reality. Instead they take the popular route of condemning violence and calling for peace at any price.

This offends few while furthering their own political aims and ambitions. They are guaranteed



Photo: An Phoblacht.

Ireland may have been enslaved by Britain for centuries but there is no need for her to remain so indefinitely.

maximum publicity by the British-controlled media. All this helps to distort reality and fact.

Condemning violence is often a prelude to or an excuse for introducing further repressive measures against those who oppose British rule and the injustices perpetuated by that rule. How often do we see and hear well-fed politicians roaring 'go in and get them', while in their next breath appealing for understanding and compromise?

Almost daily politicians — supposedly searching for solutions — utter the same insipid platitudes about compromise, appeasement and 'everybody wanting peace'. They shy away from the stark reality that there can be no peaceful solution to the Irish problem within the confines of orthodox politics until the withdrawal of the imperialist power.

Ireland may have been enslaved by Britain for centuries but there is no need for her to remain so indefinitely. Many other recently liberated nations were once in a similar position but faced up to the reality that no peaceful settlement can be attained by consent or agreement in a country occupied by an imperialist power.

Recent examples bear this out. Vietnam, Angola, Aden, Mozambique, Algeria all achieved liberation, not by orthodox politics, but by waging a successful armed struggle with an accompanying socialist philosophy. In all these nations peaceful methods were tried and failed — as in Ireland.

Unless and until we in Ireland follow the example of these recently liberated nations we will be firmly in the yoke of British imperialism to suffer the resulting indignities and oppression.

I conclude that no peaceful settlement is possible in Ireland and that the decaying politics of our present crop of politicians will only prolong the inevitable

for a generation or more, adding to the great suffering already meted out to the Irish people.

The main obstacle is still the occupation of our country by the British. The only solution is armed struggle, however unpleasant that may seem. The sooner we realise that the better.

Yours,  
Tiocfaidh Ar La

## Belfast Jubilee Ballad

by PAT ARROWSMITH (a Brit)

They were meant to be peace-keeping forces, but they bludgeoned young Leo Martin; his torso and thighs, his back and his crotch they battered and punched black and blue.

Some bomb burst outside William Wright's flat they imagined was set off by him. They trampled his hands and kicked in his head — he carries the scars to this day.

Ms May's son was sitting quietly. Along came a bunch of Brit troops, banged his head on a wall, kicked and beat him until his face was indelibly scarred.

The McVeigh's have a hole in their ceiling. A nun's house was raided for bombs. People are tortured in army posts. Kids have guns stuck in their mouths.

Mary Graham, a seventy-year-old pensioner was prepared to answer her door, but they just broke it down and smashed half her home — I wonder what good this has done.

Plastic bullet struck a small baby. Women are threatened with rape. A hundred and ten pounds got stolen by soldiers carrying out raids.

Home upon home has been damaged. People galore beaten up — and all in the name of the British Raj, by now a total fake.

And it's not an Irish problem; it's the British who've got to get out. And until they do the blood will still flow. The message is, Brit Troops Out Now.

## NAC goes on the road

Festooned with balloons and blaring songs, the National Abortion Campaign caravan could be arriving shortly in your town. JUDY WATSON, who will be touring with the caravan, explains the aims of the tour.

The NAC caravan is to tour England next month carrying a giant-size exhibition of cartoons, photo-montages, and well-displayed information on a wide range of topics, including abortion and the law, the National Health Service, the women's movement, and myths and facts on abortion.

Local abortion campaign groups will prepare the ground before the arrival of the caravan by organising tour routes in their localities. On the list of local events will be visits to housing estates, hospitals, factories and market places, as well as public meetings. The Pirate Jenny II theatre group will perform their abortion rights play 'Bouncing Back'.



Tapes of songs and personal testimonies, a film, leaflets, badges, stickers and balloons will ensure that the arrival of the caravan will not go unnoticed.

The caravan is part of the build-up for the national demonstration scheduled by NAC for 29 October in Birmingham. This is the home of Professor Hugh McClaren, whose anti-abortion views predominate amongst doctors. The march will focus on the reactionary views of these doctors throughout the country who

impose their anti-abortion attitudes and the lack of NHS facilities. It is part of the campaign for free abortion on demand, a woman's right to choose.

If the caravan is to be a success in involving more people in the demonstration, it needs money. If you can help financially or want to ensure the caravan appears in your town write to: National Abortion Campaign, 30 Camden Road, London NW1. Tel: 01-485 4303.

### National NAC demonstration

Saturday, 29 October  
Assemble: 1.30 Victoria Square, Birmingham  
\* No restrictive laws!  
\* Women's choice not doctor's choice!  
\* NHS abortion every women's right!  
\* Out patient abortion clinics now!

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POLITICAL INTEREST on the left in the issue of devolution and Scottish independence seems to be directly related to the fact that it had become a contentious issue at Westminster, and had received a lot of attention in the bourgeois press. Yet this wasn't simply a question of the insularity of the English left, but of the importance of Westminster in deciding whether, or in what form, devolution is extended to Scotland, and the weakness of any extra-parliamentary pressure in deciding the issue.

What we have to face now is that devolution may become impossible, due to the structure of British politics; either a Tory/Tribune alliance may prevent a right-wing Labour/Liberal alliance from introducing it, or a defeat of the Government over the economic crisis may return a Tory government committed to traditional Unionist views on the British state. The real choice could become not devolution or separation, but independence or the status quo. The impact of this could finally swing the Scottish people behind the demand for independence; a possibility made more likely by the abandonment of devolution by the Scottish National Party. If this is a possibility, we ought to get down to the job of clarifying some of the issues involved.

One of the points made in the earlier debates was that a strict line had to be drawn between Scotland and countries like Ireland, which are oppressed nations, subjected to imperialist domination; Scotland, by contrast, having shared in the spoils of British imperialism. It is true that those who try to apply the traditionally understood Leninist theory of imperialism to Scotland will come unstuck. But, on the other hand, part of our problem about Scotland is that it defies our traditional understanding of nationalism and self-determination, and we are having to hack our way through an undergrowth of irrelevancy.

**OPRESSED NATION**

What is an oppressed nation? We generally think of an oppressed nation as being one which is economically and politically dominated by the interests of the advanced capitalist powers, to the extent that the resolution of its economic and social problems requires genuine national independence; and we also, usually, think of such countries as being non-European. This has meant that the national question has been conceived of (with the exception of Ireland) as being a problem of the Third World. This reflects

# Second Thoughts on Scotland



SNP leader Wolfe

A few months ago a debate took place in the socialist press on devolution and Scottish independence. This debate has receded somewhat in the national press. It remains, however, a potentially explosive issue in British bourgeois politics and thus deserves the interest of all socialists. Here BOB PURDIE gives his views.

therefore, an important component of Marxism up until the formation of the Comintern. The concentration of the Comintern on the national question in the non-European world was only natural in the light of the false stability which gripped Europe from the early Twenties, but the Second World War demonstrated that the Versailles Treaty had not eliminated it.

**CONSEQUENCE**

Indeed, as a direct consequence, Marxists in many European countries were faced by a problem which defied the crude colonial-world/imperialist world conception of the national problem. Were France, Belgium, Holland, etc, under Nazi occupation, oppressed nations? Should Marxists support their right to self-determination? Despite the diversion of large parts of their resources to the German war effort, they were not underdeveloped nations, and when liberated they would resume their exploitation of the colonial world. What attitude should Marxists take to their national independence? A few sectarians carried on as if nothing had happened, while the Stalinists solved the problem in their own way by becoming uncritical patriots. But the most creative elements within Marxism sought to infuse the struggle against German occupation with a more powerful democratic and socialist consciousness.

In the present-day world the national issues which contributed to two European wars have disappeared from sight, not because they have been eliminated, but because they have been subsumed in the larger conflict between capitalism and the workers' states. But as resistance to

the bureaucracy grows in Eastern Europe we are constantly reminded that the aspirations of the oppositionists for a genuinely democratic socialist construction are alloyed with national sentiments. And we should remember that Lenin was aware that the overthrow of capitalism would not eliminate the national question — his last political struggle was directed against the handling of Soviet Georgia by Stalin.

The purpose of this broad discussion is to demonstrate two things: firstly that the national question is, and always has been, an important issue in Europe and not something that happens only in the colonial world. Secondly, that it is manifested in societies with widely differing forms of economic and social development, and with different relationships to what we usually understand as imperialism. In fact I would go so far as to say that just about the only common thread is the fact that they are denied full political autonomy. In other words, nationalism is a political and ideological tool which nations take up in response to specific economic and social problems which they face under circumstances in which full independence of action is denied to them. It is not a mechanically pre-determined Marxist response to any given nationalist movement, apart from an initial commitment to proletarian internationalism. But what we must not do is to ignore the potential importance of nationalism, or to schematically divide the world into places where it can and cannot occur.

**DIVIDING LINE**

At the outset of this article I referred to the way in which some comrades, myself included,

have drawn a dividing line between Scotland and Ireland. On reflection, I would want to question that. One of the problems facing Marxists in analysing Irish history is the fact that Irish nationalist historians have presented a distorted picture of Irish economic development, which has depicted Ireland as covered with starving tenant farmers, driven into penury by English landlords. Nothing can eliminate the crimes of the English landlords in Ireland, but the reality was more complex, and a more adequate view of this question is relevant to the problems of Scotland.

**TWO SECTORS**

There were in fact two distinct economic sectors within Ireland, the 'mercantile' sector mainly engaged in supplying the British market with agricultural produce and manufactured foodstuffs, (and including an industrial sector in the North) and the 'subsistence' sector consisting of small, sub-divided tenancies in which the overcrowded inhabitants were reliant mainly on potatoes for food. The nineteenth century Irish nationalist movement developed on the basis of the 'mercantile' sector, but it created a mass base by taking up the grievances of the 'subsistence' sector.

It proved impossible, however, to get any resolution of this problem through Westminster, because any reform of the Irish land question challenged the land interests of the English landlord class, who feared the erosion of their own position through Irish precedents. When Marx said that the freedom of Ireland was a condition for the freeing of the British working class he meant, in part, that the Irish question was the battle ground against this entrenched reactionary influence within British politics. The problem was gradually eroded, but not before vast bitterness had been created in Ireland and the leadership of the nationalist movement forced into a more radical position than their economic interests would have determined. It was their misfortune that, just when the problem of the English landlords had been eliminated, a new division developed within the British ruling class, and the 'New Imperialists' allied with Orangeism to destroy Home Rule.



Bob Purdie

In other words, the emergence of a radical, republican and separatist national movement in Ireland in the first quarter of this century was not determined by the economic relationship of Ireland to Britain, but by the explosive clash of political interests within the British Parliament. No wonder the Irish sought, first through Home Rule and secondly through Dail Eireann, to create their own Parliament which would be free of these interests. Looked at in this way, the differences between Scotland and Ireland becomes one of degree rather than of kind. Scotland's economic and social problems are in no way as radical as those of Ireland at the turn of the century, but they are becoming more radical than they have been for decades, and Westminster is proving incapable of dealing with them. It is this which has tipped the balance in Scottish problems towards support for a Scottish parliament, if Westminster cannot set up an Assembly the balance may be further tipped towards independence.

If that happens there will not be the slightest use lecturing the Scottish people about their not being an oppressed nation and therefore not entitled to independence. In fact I think that there is a case for saying that if Westminster cannot produce devolution, Scotland will be an oppressed nation, albeit in a limited sense. I still think that a Scottish Assembly is the preferable option, but history is not a supermarket, and we cannot choose the problems with which it confronts us. We have to come to consider whether or not the option of an Assembly is going to remain open, and if it is closed — what then?

\* Views expressed in this column are those of the individual columnist and do not necessarily reflect those of the paper.

the fact that in the second half of the twentieth century the struggle against imperialism in the colonial world has been of fundamental importance to the strategy of revolutionaries in the advanced capitalist countries. We therefore forget that for the earlier Marxist movement the national question was primarily a problem of Europe.

One of the formative influences on Marxism was the failure of the liberal bourgeoisie to consistently pursue the democratic revolution. For example, the way in which, at the very point of its greatest achievement, the revolution of 1848, the German bourgeoisie turned against the national aspirations of the smaller nationalities around them. Lenin's famous illustration of the principle of self-determination dealt with Norway and Sweden, and he took pains to deny that the national question only concerned the non-European world. He was acutely aware that the failure of the bourgeoisie to resolve the national question in Europe could contribute to a war, the main burden of which would be borne by the workers and peasants, and his concern was amply justified. The importance of the national question in Europe was,



Gaol Roberts (CPI) speaking at Symposium



Paul Thompson (Big Flame) speaking

On Friday, 9 September, St. Pancras Assembly Rooms were jam-packed with 1000 people. The occasion was an official debate between the Communist Party (represented by Monty Johnstone, Sam Aaronovich, Rea Cambell and Geoff Roberts) and the International Marxist

Group (represented by Ernest Mandel, Dodie Weppier, Peter Gowan and Tariq Ali). This was the first occasion on which the CP has formally sanctioned a debate with a far-left organisation in Britain. The theme of the debate centred around the different ways of achieving socialism.

The debate was recorded on video-tape, which will soon be available to Socialist Challenge supporters both in this country and abroad. For details write to Education Department, IMG, P.O. Box 50, London N.1.



Ernest Mandel (FI) speaking at CP-IMG debate



Monty Johnstone (CP) at the rostrum

The first Marxist Symposium organised by Socialist Challenge attracted 700 people to its various sessions. There were heated and lively exchanges throughout the four days. As this was our first venture, we can regard it as a modest success.

The agenda for the Symposium was packed with debates on far-ranging subjects including the family in capitalist society, a

round-table discussion on strategy for revolution in Western Europe, and the Leninist party and socialist democracy. That the symposium had weaknesses is indisputable — there were too few seminars which would have allowed more comrades to speak, and some sessions tended to be dominated by what one participant called 'gladiatorial combats'. Most participants would agree

with us that in overall terms the Symposium represented an important step forward. All those who attended and would like to help us in ensuring that next year's venture is even better, please write your comments and suggestions to Socialist Challenge.

Tapes of the entire four-days' debate will be advertised as soon as they are available.



# Prepare for Tameside but learn the lessons of Lewisham

All the indications are that the mobilisation for the anti-fascist mass picket on 8 October in Tameside will be larger and broader than Lewisham. ANTHONY BARNETT maintains that there were some serious flaws in our reporting of Lewisham and argues that:

'There will not be any lasting, active socialist unity on a mass scale sufficient to challenge the bourgeoisie for power until socialists learn to tell the truth.'

THE 'BATTLE of Lewisham' was a setback for racist right wingers. For whether the event was of primarily local or national significance, the fact is that racists strove to gain the freedom of the streets in an immigrant area. Had they done so, they would have exercised their private terror in the wake of their public, police protected 'peaceful' march. Instead, they were driven to the back roads, broken up and stopped short. The direct counter-stroke against them was crucially aided by the far left. This was a victory.

Such an action is more important by far than the many words since written and spoken about it. Yet the effect of these is also important.

How, then, was this event itself described and justified in the revolutionary weeklies? In part by the use of a quotation from, of all people, Adolf Hitler. A quotation was given special circulation by David Edgar in *Destiny*—his play about the rise of English fascism which concludes with Hitler's own words, used in such a fashion that they become the message of his drama. The same words were used again in *Socialist Worker*; set out in display type on the page of their special account of the 'Battle of Lewisham'. Here too the words were used to endorse the action and bring the message home. This is what the leader of German fascism said: 'Only one thing could have stopped our movement—if our adversaries had understood its first principles and from the first day had smashed with the utmost brutality the nucleus of our movement'.

It was disheartening to see the same quotation, in bold type, at the head of an article on page 4 of the 'Lewisham Special' supplement of *Socialist Challenge*.

It is grotesque for socialists to quote Hitler in this fashion, not because it plays into the hands of those who claim that all extremist groups of right or left are the same, but also — and does this really come as a surprise? — because Hitler was wrong.

### CHARLATAN

His reputation as a charlatan, demagogue and as a fabricator of myths should, by now, be well established. True, he was also reputed to have had a hypnotic power over sections of the masses in pre-war Germany, and even Marxists have been known to fall under the sway of strange spells. But isn't it incredible that a paper influenced by Trotskyism could reproduce such arrant mystification? For the great political achievement which everybody — Trotskyist and non-Trotskyist alike — agrees upon is that Trotsky saw what the rise of Hitler meant, for Germany and for all Europe, and that he saw that Hitler could have been stopped, even as late as 1933.

Trotsky's eloquent and unimpeachable plea for a defensive united front against Hitler was confirmed by the votes cast in

Germany's last free elections. In October 1932 the Social Democrats and Communists together polled one and a half million more votes than the National Socialists.

But the working class movement in Germany went down with hardly any organised resistance. Why? Not because Hitler was not crushed in a Munich beer cellar some time in the early 1920s, but because the Communist Party refused to ally with the Social Democrats, against him. Hitler and his initial gang of followers could have been stopped early on, and should have been, although some larger reckoning with fascism in Germany would probably have been necessary. But his subsequent rise to power after he first received electoral prominence was not inevitable.

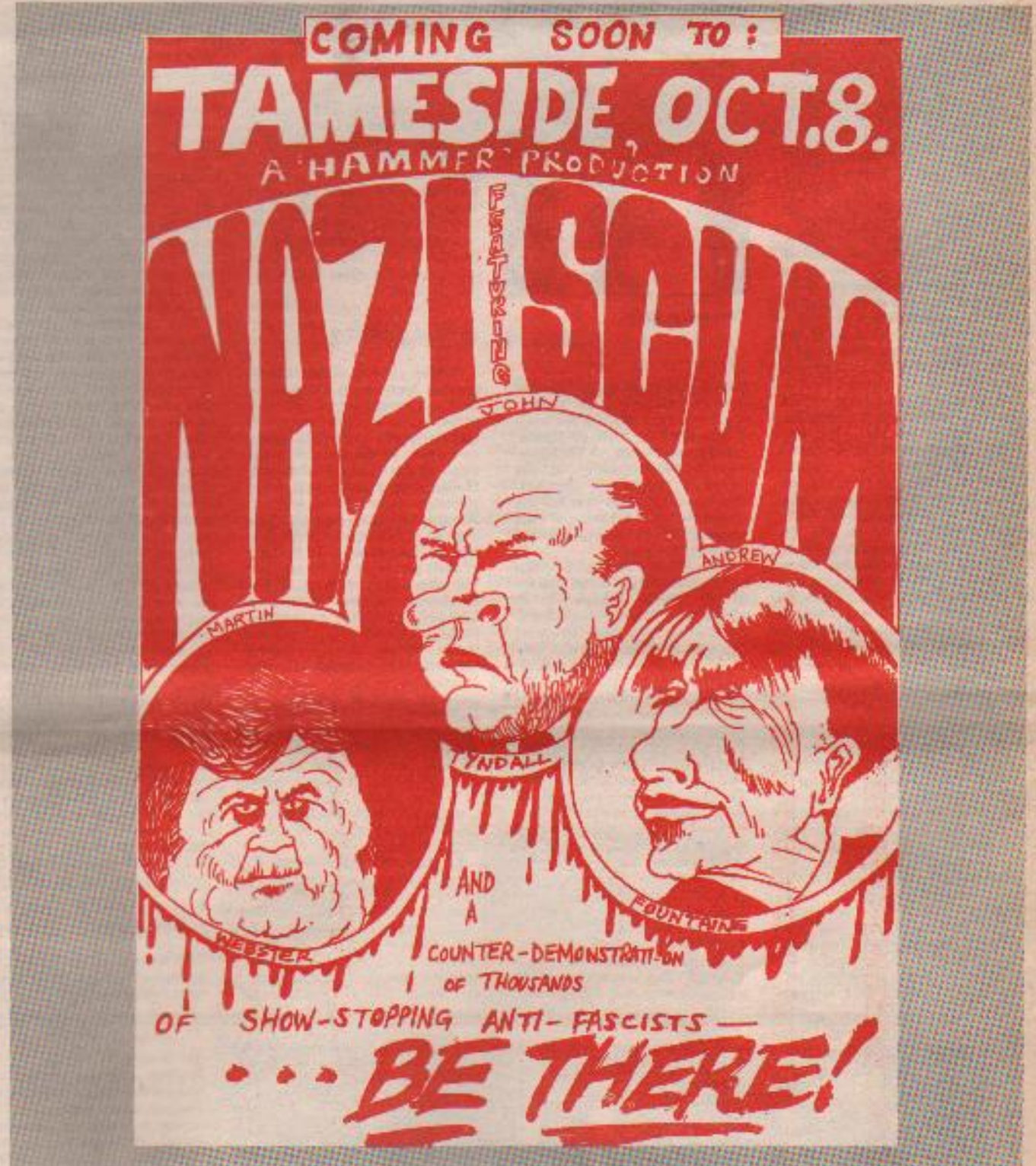
### NONSENSE

He said it was inevitable, and now we find *Socialist Worker* and *Socialist Challenge* breathlessly repeating his words. But he said so because it accorded with his fascist ideology. It allowed him to represent himself and his followers as the bearers of the essence of the Volk (with principles!) who would be unstoppable, once Germany got to know of them. To reproduce such nonsense in England today demonstrates a quite unrealistic fear: that a tidal wave of support for Tyndall and Webster will drown the trade union movement, unless it is dispersed now — with the utmost brutality. There are sound reasons for stopping the NF, but this is not one of them.

If some of its justification for Lewisham was misconceived, how accurate was the reporting of the event in *Socialist Challenge*? The lead article in the 'Lewisham Special' is headed: 'What really happened at Lewisham?' It denounces the media: 'All the screams about left-wing extremism, all the drooling about "democracy" serve one purpose: to cover up the real culprits.'

Very well. No drooling or screaming from *Socialist Challenge*, and certainly no cover-up. But somehow or other the article fails to mention the role of the Socialist Workers Party. On another page the SWP are cogently and, surely, correctly attacked for their failure to support the Socialist Unity candidate at Ladywood. But their leading role at Lewisham is simply not mentioned, although the press treated them as the political organisers of the main contingent. Was this something which did not 'really happen'? In which case was the coverage given to the SWP in the media really a part of the 'cover-up', which is mentioned three times in the article? Apparently not, as in the next issue of *Socialist Challenge* Tariq Ali fully acknowledges the role of the SWP.

Another incident was the use of ammonia. The mass media certainly



Over a hundred anti-fascist fighters have already faced the courts arising from 13 August. Already the fines are high. £50 for offensive weapons. £50 for threatening behaviour. Many of the defendants are due to appear for trial in October. Already defendants have received threatening phone calls from the NF.

The defence campaign needs more money for the carrying out of the work. We make an urgent appeal for money from all anti-fascists. The fines will be high and we need money to assist the anti-fascist fighters in paying them. We also make an urgent appeal for all possible witnesses to contact the defence campaign immediate at: 720 1320 [Tony]. Send money to the Lewisham Defence Campaign: c/o 6 Cottons Gardens E2.

ainly screamed about it. Now the use of ammonia, or any other general, anti-personnel chemical weaponry, is obnoxious and against the principles of socialism. Its use should be condemned. Not only is it necessary to condemn such weapons, it is also practical to do so, in order to retain the mass support which is the ultimate bastion against any fascist advance. Certainly its use cannot be implicitly support-

ed because Adolf Hitler suggested that his enemies should have used 'utmost brutality'.

### AMMONIA

The best way to support open coercive resistance to the NF includes condemning the use of ammonia. This is a detail but it has to be faced, not because the use of ammonia at Lewisham was widespread, but because the

media have made an issue of it. What did *Socialist Challenge* have to say? Nothing. Another awkward fact which did not 'really happen'.

The report in *Socialist Worker* itself, it should be added, was hardly an improvement. They said, 'most demonstrators first heard about "knives and ammonia" through the press — except for some SWP members who saw Nazis use ammonia in

Clifton Rise and grabbed the bottle from one of them and threw it away'. This too lacks conviction! Plural 'Nazis' with ammonia becomes a singular bottle. Some SWP members in the plural threw it away (it must have been a big bottle). Are we supposed to believe that they threw it into a dustbin? The evasiveness of this passage is literally incredible.

The question for *Socialist Challenge* to ask, however, is how it was possible for its reporters to indulge in their kind of evasions.

### 'OBJECTIVITY'

One explanation is 'sectarianism', or at least an aspect of it. Sectarianism is not just a matter of attacking others. On the contrary, the criticism of the SWP action at Ladywood mentioned above was constructive in tone, persuasive and realistic — it was not sectarian. But the absence of any mention of the SWP's role at Lewisham, just like the quote from Hitler, is sectarian in one significant respect. Both help to present a world view which accords with the prior organisational interests

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to challenge the bour-  
or power until socialists  
tell the truth.

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ARIAN

In the last decade various  
have been made at  
ing such a relationship,  
often blindly. *Socialist*  
can now draw upon  
of experience. The *Red*  
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*Black Dwarf* itself tried  
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usily attempted to create a  
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e class struggle success-  
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# Shirley Williams' racist circular



Photo: ANGELA PHILLIPS (JFL)

The Government's continuing blatant discrimination against overseas students appears to contravene the Race Relations Act. REDMOND O'NEILL explains how the Department of Education has got around the terms of the Act on this issue — one which is certain to be explosive in the autumn when college students return.

'Appropriate instruments for the authorisation of exemptions under Section 41 of the Race Relations Act will be made before 1 September 1977, by the Secretary of State for Education with regard to further education boarding charges, awards, tuition fees, and the admission of overseas students. Until that date indirect discrimination does not apply to further education provisions.'

In these words, a joint circular from the Home Office, Welsh Office, DHSS and Department of Education, both exposes the

hypocrisy of the Race Relations Act and reveals the Government's plans for removing an embarrassing obstacle to its blatantly racist attacks on overseas students. It seems that the Department of Education's discrimination against overseas students could make it liable to prosecution under the 1976 Act. The loophole is that such discrimination can be excluded from the terms of the Act 'if it takes place in line with special arrangements made by a Minister of the Crown'.

Shirley Williams, 'Minister of

the Crown' for Education, has now issued a circular to college authorities, outlining such 'special arrangements'. In other words she has given the green light to a new wave of attacks on Britain's overseas students. Within days of the circular being drawn up, the Inner London Education Authority has ordered all colleges and Polytechnics under its control to operate quotas to reduce the proportion of overseas students from 25 per cent to 10 per cent. If implemented, such quotas will not only act as back door immigration controls, they will also result in course and college closures as the student population drops. Last year a wave of occupations won guarantees from college authorities that no quotas would be operated. It is clear that the Government is shaping up for further confrontation in the coming academic year without so

much as a whimper of disapproval from the college authorities.

Last year's struggle did prevent the implementation of quotas in London, but on the decisive question of fee levels the campaign was defeated. Students returning to college next term will face fee levels up to 300 per cent higher than last year. The still higher levels for overseas students have already resulted in many having to give up their studies. The main responsibility for that defeat lay with the NUS Executive, who refused to oppose increases as such, preferring to urge students to negotiate exemptions for hardship cases — that is, they accepted defeat from the outset rather than stepping on the toes of the 'liberal' college authorities. A serious campaign to stop the quotas and other forms of discrimination next term cannot be based on an

alliance with authorities implementing quotas. Rather the demand must be for colleges and local authorities to refuse to implement discriminatory measures. If the NUS Executive again refuses to co-ordinate activity, plans to extend and co-ordinate action can be organised directly by the student unions prepared to fight the Government's racist policies, in conjunction with the labour movement. In the meantime we can find no inspiration whatsoever from the brave words of NUS Secretary Trevor Phillips: 'We are going to see our lawyers to see what can be done about it'.

NUS headquarters should be flooded with letters from student unions demanding a national meeting of activists right at the beginning of next term to map out a campaign strategy to defend overseas students.

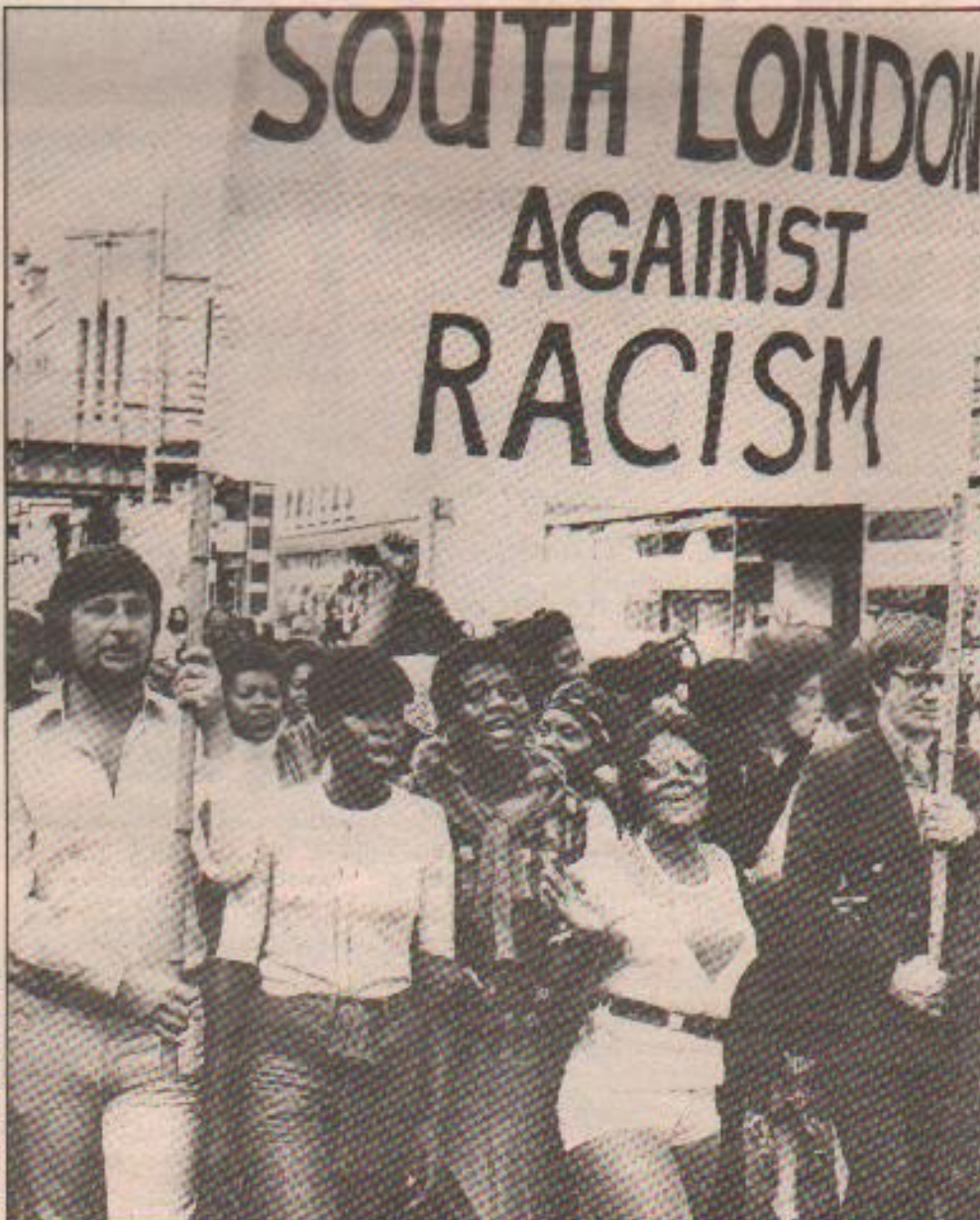


Photo: MARK RUSHER (JFL)

The South London Committee of Anti-Racists and Anti-Fascists' demonstration last Saturday attracted 1,500 militants. Attempts by the National Front to attack the march proved a dismal

failure. The handful of fascists who did try and provoke the demonstrators ran into trouble with some black youth and one of them was arrested after pulling a knife on a black girl. The

demonstration was supported by several local Labour Parties, trades councils and the far left, and by local residents.

## Fascists attack Labour Meeting

LAST WEEK forty National Front members broke up a Labour Party ward meeting in South London due to be addressed by right wing Labour MP Tom Cox. Wearing anoraks, black shirts and leather jackets the fascists marched into the meeting where about 20 people were waiting to hear Cox speak in support of the government's record. Continuous chanting of 'National Front, National Front' soon forced the outnumbered and frightened Labour Party members to leave the room.

Later the Lewisham NF organiser Richard Edmunds stated

that disruption would be repeated at other Labour Party meetings in protest against Labour Councils banning the NF from public halls. 'If we can't have meetings then we'll take over theirs.'

This sort of move marks the breakdown of the respectable image the fascists have tried to create in the past. No doubt it will give certain Labour Party members more opportunities to make peaceful protests against the Front. But maybe when it's themselves rather than blacks under attack they will begin to change their tune....

## Free Darcus Howe

DARCUS HOWE, editor of the monthly magazine *Race Today* and chairman of the Carnival Development Committee, was sentenced to three months imprisonment and a fine of £100. The sentence stems from an incident in May 1976 during which Howe was physically attacked and called a "black bastard and a black cunt" by a London Transport ticket collector.

The prison sentence was imposed after Howe was found guilty by an all white jury, following a most biased summing up by Judge Clover at the Knightsbridge Crown Court.

Howe was found guilty of a charge of occasioning actual bodily harm after defending himself against a vicious attack with an umbrella by a white barrister. The attack came in the same week as Enoch Powell's inflammatory anti-immigration

speech which eventually led to the death of Gurdeep Singh Jaggar and further deaths of Asian students in East London.

The *Race Today* collective points out that Howe has no previous criminal convictions and that it is most unusual to sentence anybody to a term in jail on their first offence.

We consider that the sentence is no accident in the wake of the backlash created by recent National Front activity and the climate of anti-black hysteria. We believe Howe has been imprisoned for his political beliefs and activities.

We intend to appeal at the first possible opportunity. In the meantime we warn the Home Secretary that he has not heard the last of this.

(Contact *Race Today*, 74 Shakespeare Road, London SE24 6PT. Tel: 01-737 2268.)



# Dr Owen gives the wrong prescription

THE Owen-Young proposals on Zimbabwe have so far not had a very warm reception from either side in the guerrilla war, with both the Smith regime and the Patriotic Front giving it a definite cold-shoulder.

Its main impact has been in a different quarter — with those nationalist leaders who hope the racists will crumble directly under imperialist pressure, without the additional spur of the guerrilla war. Thus Muzorewa and Sithole have now become ardent advocates of the Anglo-American settlement.

The one thing this does is drive a pretty firm nail into the coffin of Smith's proposed 'internal settlement'. But, as we have shown previously, this was always a shaky proposition, and these new developments do little more than speed up the inevitable.

But we must be clear about one thing in this country: the proposals are a blatant denial of the right of the Zimbabwean people to self determination, and as such must be opposed in a determined way by the solidarity movement.

Below we reprint excerpts from a briefing document issued by the Birmingham Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Birmingham Campaign for Justice



in Zimbabwe, which sets out clearly and precisely the implications of the proposals.

'ARE THESE latest proposals intended for the liberation and independence of the Zimbabwean people or for a "return to legality", the latter having been the aim of successive Governments and the Foreign Office since UDI? These latest terms presented by Dr. Owen are an exercise to make the "change" acceptable principally to the white minority—and to minimise the change...

The Commonwealth Heads of Government...stated that a genuine settlement in Rhodesia must entail not only the removal of the illegal Smith Regime but also the dismantling of its apparatus of repression.

'Do the recent Anglo-American proposals do that? No. The same judges will remain.

Emergency powers will be retained by the British Commissioner. While the document states that the aim will be to abolish discrimination, it nevertheless clearly declares some existing discriminatory laws or practices cannot simply be invalidated and "will take some time to work out". (Why should apartheid-type laws have to be continued?)...

### ENDORSES

'Anti-Apartheid campaigners are bound to conclude that HM Government is taking part in an exercise which endorses the system that has been operating under the Smith regime. There is no reference to the treason, the terror, nor the brutal effects of discrimination, nor of the use of mercenaries to prop up Smith's forces. An "Amnesty" is proposed, to wipe out the past acts



Is there a doctor in the house? Young and Owen (centre) meet Mugabe (left) and Nkomo, the Patriotic Front leaders, in Lusaka earlier this year.

and start anew—how then could the Tangwena people be restored to their land, or the displaced people get away from the barbed wire "protected villages" to their homelands?

The Bill of Rights proposed in the document presents the longest Right (no.v)—Protection from deprivation of property—in a manner which clearly protects the white population from expropriation. The compensation, if any, may be remitted abroad. Ownership of property is almost entirely in the hands of white people, who own half the territory—all the most productive land, although they are only one-twentieth of the total population.

### RIGHTS

'Another "Right" listed is the "right of individuals, groups, or

communities to establish and maintain schools at their own expense". But there is no declaration of, simply, "The Right to Education". So who will benefit?

### SOLIDARITY

'It would be more convincing that Anglo-American Negotiators were committed to true Zimbabwean independence if their proposals had recognised the right of the future people's Government of Zimbabwe to work out the details of its own political and economic structure, constitution and electoral system.

'Supporters of the Liberation Forces—our movements here in Britain—

'\*Must be active in pressing MPs and politicians to oppose the Anglo-American proposals;

'\*Get all possible material aid to the Zimbabweans in their various locations in Southern Africa;

'\*Constantly publicise the plight of prisoners and their families, and get churches and other organisations to raise humanitarian support, write letters and Christmas cards;

'\*Campaign for the continuation of sanctions — don't allow the argument abt settlement is in sight to cause lifting of sanctions legislation...

### FULL TEXT

For the full text of this briefing or further information about Birmingham AAM and Campaign for Justice in Zimbabwe, write c/o Margaret Stanton [Sec], 100 Oakfield Road, Birmingham B29 7EG.



## Catalans among the pigeons

by JOAN PUIG

1.2 MILLION Catalans thronged the streets of Barcelona on the Catalan national day last Sunday. Through the Plaza de Catalunya and the Ramblas there were hardly any of the traditional pigeons to be seen.

This overwhelming show of strength was a celebration of the restoration of autonomy to Catalonia after 39 years. What the press won't tell you, what the Suarez Government won't tell you, and what the Catalan political parties certainly won't tell you, is that the whole thing was a con.

Autonomy is a very limited concession anyway. It means the granting of a degree of self-government by the central government, which has the effect of denying the right of the oppressed nationality to determine its own future. But not even autonomy has been granted to Catalonia.

Instead there is the provisional restoration of the Generalitat — the old Catalan Government — in a purely advisory capacity. This non-elected cabal will have no formal power whatsoever. The 'legal' justification is that only when the Spanish Constitution is redrawn can the powers of the Generalitat be established.

The national question in Spain today is dynamite. Everwhere national and regional minorities are taking to the streets to

demand self determination or, at the very least, concessions from Madrid: a state of affairs which suits neither the Government — for obvious reasons — nor the reformist and capitalist political parties in the nationalities.

The present Catalan settlement, on the other hand, suits both sides. The Government hopes it will defuse the Catalan struggle and set a precedent for the other nationalities. The party bureaucrats are more certain of entrenching themselves in the autonomous governments if a non-elected 'transitional' regime is set up first.

Already the two major Basque parties, the Socialists and the Basque Nationalists (PNV), have made similar 'transitional' proposals. It is no coincidence that these two parties are the leading lights in the (non-elected) Basque Government-in-exile. They are hoping for the same deal as their Catalan counterparts.

There has been fighting on the streets between members of the bourgeois PNV and supporters of Basque independence.

The struggle in the nations of the Spanish state will now focus on a crucial question of democratic rights. Does each nation have the right to elect a Constituent Assembly to determine its relationship to Spain, or is that to be decided by a secret coven of party bureaucrats and Madrid apparatchiks?

## MC: crisis comes into the open

Few organisations can have had as many ideological affiliations as the Communist Movement [MC] in its ten year history. It has moved from Basque nationalism, through New Leftism and 'Trotskyism', to Maoism and thence to its present undefined leftism. Soon it will add another string to its bow: social democracy. RICHARD CARVER reports.

The MC is reckoned to be the fourth largest of the Spanish far left parties, behind the two Maoist organisations we have discussed in previous weeks and the Trotskyist LCR. Its origins were similar to those of the Basque Trotskyists.

The nucleus of the present MC was leaders of the 'Workers Front' expelled from ETA, the radical Basque nationalists, for 'liquidationism' in the mid-sixties.

Still its implantation is uneven. Like ETA (VI) its greatest weight continues to be in the Basque working class. It is the Trotskyists and the MC who carry the majority of the Workers Commissions in that area.

Yet all these gains are now in jeopardy. Despite its protestations of conversion from Maoism, its underlying politics have not changed from the days when it supported overt collaboration of workers' and ruling class parties in the Platform of Democratic Convergence. The MC is still a signatory to the defunct Democratic Coordination.

### POPULAR UNITY

But the big change came with the June election campaign and the announcement of the formation of a Movement of Popular Unity. The reference to Alende was deliberate — there are many Latin Americans in Spain — but the real political model was the GDUP of Otelo de Carvalho in Portugal.

The principal fault of the far left was suddenly diagnosed as sectarianism. The cure was a movement, launched through the



MC leader Darronsoro (left) now finds himself teamed up with the man who would be king: Carlos Hugo de Borbon-Parma, the Carlist Pretender to the throne (slightly to his right).

elections, which would draw in 'the broadest popular masses' and organisations involved in 'struggle', grouped on a programme which hovered uneasily between capitalism and socialism.

Centrism — the supposed middle way between reformism and revolutionism — can never have been more clearly stated. For example the programme defends the 'rights of the nationalities and regions', while simultaneously refusing them the immediate right to self-determination. The 'socialist transformation of society' comes in the 'medium to long term'.

And a 'democratic Government' is to be installed before free elections take place — a definition of democracy so subtle that it disappears up its own fundamental orifice.

Not surprisingly the rag-bag of organisations attracted to this programme were generally to the right of the MC: the Carlists, the

## Spanish far left



Only the MC itself missed the irony when its members made furious public defences of the politics of the very same people who had expelled them from ETA ten years before.

The process of political liquidation was complete. All that remained was its logical corollary: liquidation of the organisation itself. Popular Unity collapsed even before the election took place. Unabashed, the MC set out on its new project: the formation of the MIR. The monumental cheekiness of pinching the Chilean name disguises what is really taking place.

After a brief flirtation with the idea of entering the Communist Party, the MC leaders have chosen their target: the regional socialist parties. The trouble is that after their electoral fiasco most of these have been swallowed up by the large social democratic parties — the PSOE and PSP.

Where this has not happened, as in Galicia and Valencia, the MC courts them assiduously. In the Basque country its liquidation into EIA is almost a foregone conclusion.

### UNION WORK

The turn has thrown the organisation into crisis, with the virtual collapse of the joint trade union work with the LCR in the Workers Commissions in favour of accumulating a 'movement' inside the unions. And an opposition has emerged among the rank and file which could quickly gravitate to revolutionary politics. Many of its members will play a crucial role in the Spanish revolution, but the MC — or MIR — itself can offer nothing.

It is only the first organisation to confront the stark reality: centrists live in a limbo between revolution and reform. They can choose to stay there — and condemn themselves to a seelike existence — or they can move either way.

The ingrained anti-sectarianism of the MC compelled them to move. Sadly they went the wrong way.





# Democracy and revolution in Indochina

Last week saw the much-publicised publication of *Peace with Horror*, an investigation into atrocities in Cambodia. Many of the book's findings are fabricated nonsense, argues TARIQ ALI, but can socialists so easily dismiss the charges against the Indochinese regimes?

THE WAR by the United States against the people of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia must rank as the most brutal attack ever to be unleashed by an imperialist power against an oppressed people. For a decade and a half the most advanced, industrialised nation in the world used the Indochinese peninsula as a laboratory and its inhabitants as guinea-pigs.

In a desperate bid to stem the tide of revolution, the United States used almost every weapon short of nuclear missiles and bombs. They failed, but before they were driven out they left Indochina devastated: mass destruction of forests, use of toxic chemicals in paddy fields, saturation bombing of all the major industrial centres in Northern Vietnam.

They engaged in large-scale massacres of the civilian populations. The My Lai massacre was the best publicised, but there were many others.

## WILSON AND MY LAI

Throughout the war the most slavish defenders of American war policies in this country were the Labour government, *The Economist*, the bulk of the news media (more servile than the American press) and a variety of intellectual lightweights (among them Kingsley Amis and Bernard Levin).

Wilson as Prime Minister said that he did not think the My Lai massacre had taken place! William Rees-Mogg of *The Times* licked Nixon's arse so diligently that he defended the White House crook during the early stages of Watergate.

These facts set the context for the present campaign against Vietnam and Cambodia. It is part of the ideological campaign of the ruling class to try and recover some of the prestige lost during the Indochinese war and the Watergate crisis.

More to the point its intention is to prepare the public for direct US interventions elsewhere. Southern Africa could be one such arena.

## DIGESTED HISTORY

The book which is being used to unleash this campaign was published in the United States under the title *Murder of a Gentle Land*. It has been reprinted in country by Hodder and Stoughton under the title *Peace with Horror*. The latest media convert to Barron and Paul's horror stories is Martin Woollacott of *The Guardian*. He accepts without question the version provided by the two authors. Woollacott fails to see that Barron and Paul virtually ignore the role of the United States. The B-52 raids, the systematic destruction of the country are not considered important.

They openly acknowledge the partisan character of their 'diverse sources' of information: 'infor-



Lon Nol troops displaying humane treatment of Khmer Rouge prisoner.

mal briefings from specialists at the State and Defence Departments, the National Security Council and three foreign embassies in Washington.' This is hardly surprising as the journal for which Barron and Paul originally wrote is that well-known supporter of liberation struggles: the *Readers Digest*!

One of the better debunking operations on the Barron and Paul rubbish has been carried by the American radical-liberal weekly *The Nation*. A lengthy review of the 'atrocity literature' by Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman demolishes the press campaign and the more spurious books. They also cite an interesting example of propaganda carried out by the *Washington Post*:

'For example, on 8 April 1977, *The Washington Post* devoted half a page to "photographs believed to be the first of actual forced labour conditions in the countryside of Cambodia [to] have reached the West."

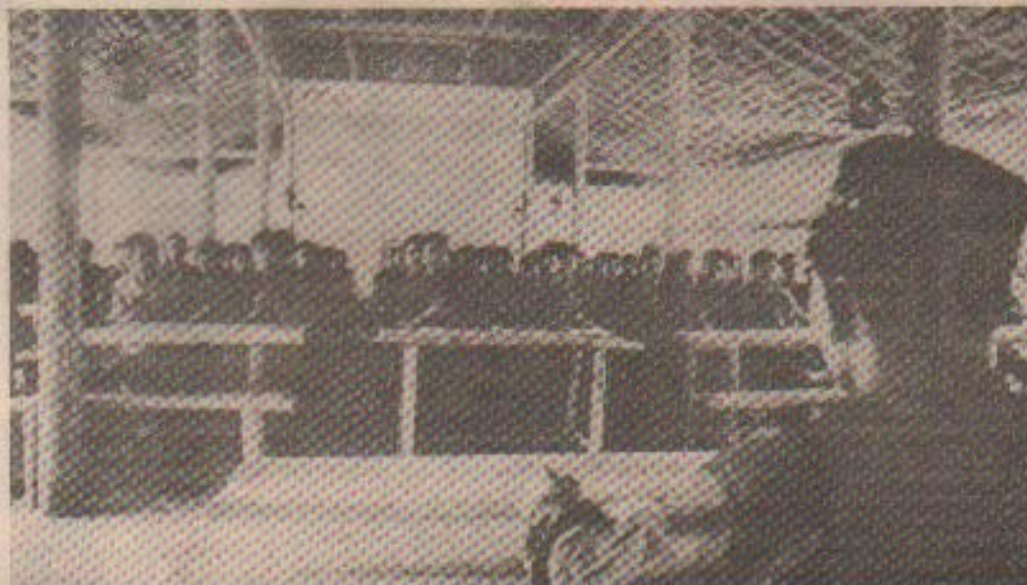
'The pictures show armed soldiers guarding people pulling plows, others working fields, and one bound man. "Tis not known if this man was killed", the caption reads.'

'But there is a slight problem. *The Washington Post* account of how they were smuggled out by a relative of the photographer who died in the escape attempt is entirely fanciful. The pictures had appeared a year earlier in France, Germany and Australia, as well as in the *Bangkok Post* (19 April

1976), with the caption "True of False?"

'In fact, an attempt by a Thai trader to sell these photos to the *Bangkok Post* was turned down "because the origin and authenticity of the photographs were in doubt." The photos appeared in another Thai newspaper two days before the 4 April election.

'The *Bangkok Post* then published them, explaining in an accompanying article that "Khmer watchers" were dubious about the clothes and manner of



Post-revolutionary 're-education' in Vietnam.

the people depicted, and quoting "other observers" who "pointed to the possibility that the series of pictures could have been taken in Thailand with the prime objective of destroying the image of the Socialist parties" before the election.'

## NO COMPLACENCY

Having said all this we ourselves must not fall into the opposite trap. Because imperialists tell lies, because confused journalists peddle State Department propaganda, we cannot afford to be complacent. To become apologists of Phnom Penh or Hanoi, not to mention Pyongyang and Tirana, cannot be a serious option for any revolutionary Marxist. We have to confront a number of truths, however unpleasant they may seem.

## FORCED EVACUATIONS

Let us take the case of Cambodia. While there is little doubt that the press stories are exaggerated and in some cases outright lies, on the other hand socialists have to confront the following facts: there have been limited border skirmishes between Cambodia and Vietnam; there has been a purge (whose exact magnitude is still unknown) within the Cambodian leadership; a forced evacuation of Phnom Penh was organised; the self-imposed isolation of the Cambodian regime has led to extremely serious nationalist deviations on the political level.

It is pointless to deny these facts. 'Socialists' who used to ardently defend Sihanouk in this country are now defending with equal vigour virtually every action of the Cambodian regime.

## NO JUSTIFICATION

To move populations *without their consent* cannot be justified. If anything it is an indictment of the planning models of the regime. Certainly there is a parasitic quality in all colonial cities, but socialists do not deal with that by deporting the traditional victims of urban repression.

They plan a different solution,

they ask for aid from China, from the USSR, from Scandinavia. To pretend that Cambodia can reach 'total self-sufficiency' is a thoroughly reactionary notion.

If 'socialism in one country' cannot be achieved in either China or the USSR only a bizarre nationalism could imagine that it could succeed in Cambodia.

The problems faced by the Vietnamese communists are of an even greater magnitude and yet they have not been shy in asking for and even demanding aid for purposes of reconstruction. They have been quite correct to do so. The leadership of the Vietnamese CP has years of experience in problems of war and administration.

Last July a meeting of the party's Central Committee admitted that 'the leadership had made gigantic mistakes' in a draft resolution on agriculture. They admitted massive food shortages. They explained it in terms of 'technical backwardness'. They dismissed the Minister of Agriculture to indicate the seriousness of the problem.

## COMMANDIST STRUCTURES

But despite the infinitely superior political and economic policies of the Vietnamese leadership, the country is still run on commandist lines. We can express the contradiction inherent in the situation in the following way: the populations of Hue and Saigon and other cities had access to more information under the heavily-censored press of the Thieu regime than they do today.

The new Government has established a total monopoly of information. It is worth recalling that Lenin and his comrades did not institute such a monopoly during the civil war in the Soviet Union. *Pravda*, *Izvestia* and other papers carried debates and discussions. They printed criticisms.

## WORKERS' RIGHTS

One of the problems of the new revolutionary regime is self-created. Its credibility, its functioning and its support would treble if it instituted a workers democracy. That is if it permitted real elections to new, democratic institutions and it lifted its monopoly of politics and information. In this way the *politicisation* of the masses would be increased a hundred-fold.

After all the programme under which the NLF fought and won was not just national independence, but 'democracy': 'To hold free general elections to elect the National Assembly in a really

democratic way, in accordance with the principle of universal, equal, direct suffrage and secret ballot ....'; 'To proclaim and enforce broad democratic freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom of the press and publication, trade union freedom, freedom to form political parties, freedom of creed, freedom of demonstration.' That is what the Political Programme of the NLF stated unambiguously in 1967. It was subsequently re-stated. It has not been applied.

Here the Stalinist origins and ideological training of the Vietnamese Communists win out. What experience has shown in Vietnam as in China before it (not to mention Cambodia, which is exceptional in any case) is that parties which break with Stalinism (in the sense of disregarding the immediate interests of the Soviet bureaucracy) still maintain the rest of the heritage.

While this tends to be underplayed during the revolutionary process it becomes dominant after the seizure of power itself. All the talk about 'democracy' turns out to be a subterfuge, a manoeuvre which we are told was necessary for that particular stage.

## REVOLUTION AND DEMOCRACY

And yet the future of these revolutions is intimately bound up with the question of democracy, a higher form of democracy certainly but democracy nonetheless. The lack of democracy distorts the internal development of the revolution even with the most enlightened and benevolent leadership. Moreover it provides imperialism with one of its trump cards.

Socialists in the West therefore have an internationalist duty to point these things out to comrades with whom they solidarised in the past. Not to do so would be both irresponsible and dishonest.

## In Brief

**ALBANIA:** East European sources claim that the regime has jailed thousands of pro-Chinese Albanians after the party leadership's recent rift with Peking.

**USA:** A judge who freed a young rapist in Madison, Wisconsin has been unseated by a woman lawyer in a special election called after an uproar among local citizens. The judge had claimed that the youth was only reacting 'normally' to the permissive society.

**COLOMBIA:** Trade union leaders have called a general strike for this week, calling for a lifting of the state of siege, an extended bonus scheme and higher wages.

**FRANCE:** A review of *The Army and Democratic France*, a book by CP leader Jean Marrane, in *Le Monde*, praises it for its 'Gaulist tone'. The review is by General Georges Buis.

**FRANCE:** The former mayor of St Etienne has written to *L'Humanité* complaining of the import of 2000 Soviet hunting rifles for sale at the fête de *L'Humanité*. This was quickly followed up by his Communist Party successor who denounced 'all imports of hunting guns, wherever they come from'.

**BASQUE COUNTRY:** Miguel Angel Apalategui, the Basque nationalist wanted by the Spanish police and held in France, has been given provisional liberty after a two month campaign for his release on both sides of the Pyrenees.

**CHILE:** 60 people picketed the Co-op in Newcastle last week in protest at the continued sale of Chilean foodstuffs. The picket, organised by the Chile Solidarity Campaign, had the support of the IMG, SWP, YCL and the major Chilean parties and gained support from Labour Party members and independent militants. There will be a picket of Tesco in Gateshead on Saturday 17 September from 12 noon to 2pm.



What's Left

Rates: 3p per word. Display: £1.50 per column inch. Deadline: 3pm Saturday before publication.

HARROW Abortion Obstacle Race, new 40-page pamphlet by Harrow NAC. Orders from: 01-863-2294.

MIDLANDS Socialist Feminist Conference: 'Feminism, Sexuality and Abortion' Saturday, 15 October, 10am-6pm. Lanchester Polytechnic, Coventry. Registration £1. Students and claimants 75p. Cheques payable to: Socialist Feminist Group, c/o Carolyn Pickering, 37 Gaveston Road, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.

CONFERENCE on Women and the Unions, called by SE London Medical Branch of ASTMS, to be held on Saturday 22 October at 1pm, at NUR Unity House, Euston Road, London NW1. Further information from: Janet Maguire, ECG Dept., Guys Hospital, London SE1. Tel: 01-407 7800, ext. 3162.

SWEDISH comrade seeks room in London 27 September-25 October. Please reply with details of rent and location to Birgitta Sandström-Lagerkvist, Svartensgatan 6111, S-116 20 Stockholm, Sweden.

CRITIQUE Conference: 'The 80th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution and the World Crisis'. Speakers: Georges Haupt, Ernest Mandel, Hillel Ticktin, Fernando Claudin, and Andre Gunder Frank. Oct. 21-23. Registration £2.50. Further information from The Secretary, Critique, 31 Clevedon Road, Glasgow, G12 0PH. Tel: 041-339-5287; or Critique Office, 9 Poland Street, London W1. Tel: 01-734-3457.

WOMEN in Manual Trades National Meeting. Women working in construction, or as mechanics, gardeners, printers etc., or interested in doing so, contact Women in Manual Trades, c/o Tessie McMahon, 16 Sholebrooke Ave, Leeds 7, (Leeds 629427 evgs.)

TO ALL NALGO members in London. Conference to unite against pay restraint and public service cuts. Sat. 24 Sept, 10am, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC2. All NALGO members welcome.

BROADSIDE Mobile Workers' Theatre requires administrator (full-time). Must be socialist, long term commitment. Phone: 01-490 8992/01-730 5396. Write to: 58 Holbein House, Holbein Place, London SW1.

DISCO in aid of Lewisham Defence Canteen. Fri 16 Sept, Joiners Arms, St Mary St, Southampton at 8pm.

WOMENS FIGHT, paper of the Working Women's Charter Campaign. First issue out now. New issue at end of September. Contact WWO, 1a Camberwell Grove, London SE5.

LONDON accommodation wanted. Socialist moving from Glasgow seeks room in flat or house. Phone Alan Freeman: 041-332 8728 or (work) 041-339 8855 ext. 7120.

BRENT Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly. Next meeting Mon 19 Sept at Willison Junction Hotel, Station Road NW10, 7.30pm on Trade Unions and the Labour Government. All welcome.

INTERNATIONAL solidarity meetings commemorating the first anniversary of ending of political status - including Basque country, France, USA. London meeting organised by Prisoners Welfare Group: Fri 23 Sept, 7.30pm at Rosebud, Tottenham Court Road. Speakers from: Relatives Action Ctee (Belfast), Prisoners Welfare Group, PAPTA, Tribunal on British War Crimes.

ASTMS Rank and File Conference, Saturday 17 Sept., 12.30-5pm. National Union of Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades Hall, 14 Jockeys Field, London WC1. Further information and proposed agenda from the Steering Committee at 1st Floor Flat, Elmwood, Abbots Lane, Kenley, Surrey.

CAMPAIGN for Democracy in the Labour Movement, Car Workers Conference, Sunday, 19 September, 11am-4pm, Digbeth Institute, Birmingham. Credentials from, Ken Lea, 44, Devonshire Road, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham 20. Price 80p.

CAMPAIGN for Free Speech on Ireland is now researching a study of media coverage of the Irish question. Please send any information, including personal experiences, to the Campaign at: c/o 84 Claverton Street, London SW1. All information will be treated in strictest confidence and all contributors consulted before publication.

NUCLEAR POWER. Special issue of Peace News gives full coverage of anti-nuclear activity around the world. 25p (inc. p&p) from Peace News, 8 Elm Avenue, Nottingham.

LOBBY LABOUR conference to demand abortion rights. Assemble: Conference Centre, Kings Road (between piers) 5 October, 12 noon, Brighton. London departure point: coaches leaving Hudson Place, Victoria at 10.00. Price: £1.50. For further details and booking contact: Astrid Lever, 57 Trinity Rd., London N2 8JJ.

REVOLUTIONARY Communist Group meeting 'Ireland, Britain's Strategy of Repression'. Speakers: Steve Palmer (PCG), Jackie Kaye (Prisoners Aid Committee), Tuesday, 20 Sept., 7.30 pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. admission 20p.

The Klymchuk affair NUS calls for Klymchuk 'Trial'

REPRESENTATIVES of the National Union of Students, the Ukrainian Students' Union and various other student and political organisations, met at NUS headquarters on 5 September to set up a committee to defend Andriy Klymchuk, the British student arrested in the Ukraine by the KGB on 1 August.

Andriy is charged with bringing money and literature from a 'bourgeois nationalist' organisation into the USSR. If convicted he faces up to 14 years in jail and administrative exile.

DISCUSSION

When the NUS called the meeting it had stated: 'We call for the immediate release of Andriy Klymchuk on the basis of the democratic right to transport literature across borders, independently of whether Andriy had any literature.'

The meeting was, however, dominated by fierce discussion around this point. NUS national secretary Trevor Phillips, Tory MP George Young and a representative of the Communist Party's students argued vehemently against any call for Andriy's immediate release.

In the eyes of this unholy alliance, we had to avoid at all costs a campaign which might threaten to embarrass the Soviet Government politically over democratic rights. They argued that we should be fighting for a

fair trial around demands for it to be public and for the release of all evidence to lawyers of Andriy's own choice.

Others pointed out that previous campaigns of political prisoners and dissidents had only been successful when they had succeeded in exposing publicly the suppression of democratic rights in the USSR, the most recent example being the release of Leonid Plyushch after a massive international campaign.

And not only that. The Soviet authorities would be only too pleased to organise a public, that is a show trial, in the not unlikely event of the KGB extracting a 'confession' from Andriy. In 1972 they used such a confession from a Belgian student to implicate hundreds of Ukrainian dissidents in an 'international conspiracy'.

Only a campaign based on the rejection of the Soviet Government's attacks on Andriy's democratic rights can lay a basis for securing both his rapid release and the defence of those the KGB may try to use him to smear.

The majority of the meeting finally decided to go ahead on

by REDMOND O'NEILL

the basis of demanding a fair trial with the proviso that the definitive decision would be at a further, more representative meeting of the campaign on 26 September.

It will thus be possible for trade unions, student unions and political organisations to send delegates to the next meeting and fight to reverse the campaign's political basis. It will also be possible to launch the sort of campaign of action which the Soviet Government really fears, including a massive picket of the Russian Embassy and regional pickets of Intourist offices (the firm Andriy travelled with), aimed at forcing Andriy's case to the attention of the international labour movement.

CYNICAL

For too long socialists have been prepared to leave the defence of democratic rights in the USSR up to people who fundamentally oppose both the bureaucratic dictatorship and the real gains of the October revolution. The cynical about-turn by the NUS Executive again falls into this trap, one for which they have been repeatedly censured by their own national conference.



LEONID PLYUSHCH: an international solidarity campaign freed him. The same is needed for Klymchuk, not calls for a 'fair trial'.

A nation of 'bourgeois nationalists'

The West Ukrainian city of Lviv—'Lvov' in Russian—where British student Andy Klymchuk is being held, is an interesting place, if you keep your wits about you. OLIVER MACDONALD concludes his look at the Ukraine.

Not so long ago, I went camping there. The city has a famous old cemetery. But I didn't see it, because a local citizen warned me away: the authorities were bulldozing some graves of people buried there decades ago. And those who went for a last look were being photographed by the KGB. The graves were a symbol of 'Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism'.

TRAFFIC

Then there is the Lviv traffic. For example, driving through the city's deserted streets at 10.30 one evening we were intrigued to notice a couple in a car behind — not too close, not too far off. Our curiosity roused after a while, we drove twice round a roundabout and the couple — both men — followed us: round and round the rather nondescript grassy island they went.

Who did they think we were? Bourgeois nationalists?

Then there was this personable young official at the Lviv camp site who offered us *Our Soviet Ukraine*, a book written by one of the ten most powerful men in the USSR: Pyotr Shelest, First Secretary of the Ukrainian CP and member of the Soviet Politburo. The book, printed in 100,000 copies, was hailed in the Soviet press when it came out in 1970.

We were suspicious. Could this be a provocation? For we happened to know that Shelest had been jettisoned in 1972 and his book was banned. For what? Why, 'bourgeois nationalism' of course. We told our kind official that our suitcases were full.

Shelest, a Podgorny man, seems to have been locked in combat with Brezhnev for some time



Ivan Dzyuba

before his fall and that was how he became a 'bourgeois nationalist': under pressure he tried to bid for popular support in the Ukraine. For example, in the face of Moscow pressure for more arrests of Ukrainian dissidents, Shelest reportedly said: 'This is not the 1930s and I am not Kaganovich'.

ADVANTAGES

Moscow concluded he was the wrong man for the job. After his fall *Kommunist Ukraine* of April 1973 explained: Shelest's book 'says nothing about the advantages of the Ukrainian people gained on entering the unified, centralised Russian state'.

Naive socialists and communists in the West may have thought that Ukrainian 'bourgeois nationalists' were all right-wing people. Quite wrong. They come in every

shape and size: religious people, non-religious, democrats and Stalinist chieftains like Shelest, literary people and Marxists like Ivan Dzyuba and Leonid Plyushch. It's precisely this which makes them so dangerous: you never know who may turn out to be one — they're everywhere.

Why is there a relentless drive against Ukrainian 'bourgeois nationalism'? The answer lies in what, for Marxists, is a bitter paradox: 60 years after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie in 1917, elementary bourgeois national rights are being trampled under-

foot in the Ukraine. The hopes that led the Ukrainian masses, however tentatively, to collaborate with the Russian workers in building a new multi-national alliance in the USSR were dashed by forced 'collectivisation' and its consequences: this was a drive by a Russian bureaucracy against an overwhelmingly rural Ukrainian people.

Afterwards, anyone, including Stalinists, who had the slightest experience of Leninist nationality policy was treated, quite rationally, as an enemy, a 'bourgeois nationalist', or even a 'fascist' by the man whom Lenin called 'a Great Russian Chauvinist bully'.

Russian bureaucratic domination is justified by the transparently nonsensical idea of a 'gradual merging' of the nationalities in the USSR into a new 'Soviet nation'. Anyone who resists this is nothing but a 'bourgeois nationalist' sticking criminally to antiquated prejudices.

Back in 1866 Marx blew such

nonsense out of the water in a letter to Engels about a meeting of the First (International) in London. He wrote:

'As was expected, the session eventually came to the question "of nationalities"... The representative of "Young France" — non-workers — came out with the announcement that all nationalities and even nations were "antiquated prejudices"....

The English laughed very much when I began my speech by saying that our friends Lafargue and others, who had done away with nationalities, had spoken to us in French, that is, a language which was incomprehensible to nine tenths of the meeting. I also suggested that by the negation of nationalities he appeared, quite unconsciously, to understand their absorption by the model French nation.'

Exactly. What will this new 'Soviet nation' speak? Soviet? No such thing — they will speak Russian, of course.

INDEPENDENT

Back in the 1930s Trotsky did not flinch from drawing the conclusions from this Russian domination of the Ukraine: the Ukrainian masses, betrayed by Stalinism, would fight to destroy the rotten frontiers of the old Russian Tsarist Empire and build a new, independent state of their own.

As the Lviv-based Ukrainian Workers' and Peasants' Union declared in 1960: 'We are struggling for an independent Ukraine which will provide for the material and spiritual needs of her citizens on the basis of a socialised economy as it develops towards communism.'

The writer of these lines was jailed for 15 years. The bureaucracy knows its mortal enemy. For these ideas can become the banner of millions of Ukrainians in the years to come.

And in alliance with the workers of the rest of Eastern Europe, they can wrench the Ukraine from the grip of Stalinism and embark on the road to a genuinely free, voluntary union of Socialist States of Eastern and Central Europe.





IN HUMANITY'S battle to control nature, international socialism and anti-alcoholism once marched shoulder to shoulder. 'It is a fact that labour organisation lessens alcoholism and that everything which decreases the consumption of alcohol increases the helping powers of labour movements ... Only those who can rule themselves are able and worthy to rule the world' warned the Belgian socialist Emil Vandervelde in the early 1900s, echoing the views of the mass of revolutionary militants of his time. Today, while the left ignores or avoids the issue, alcoholism raises two mighty obstacles in the path of proletarian advance. Physically it stands as the single most widespread health hazard encountered in the capitalist world. Culturally it massively restricts the most basic social intercourse and self-expression of the working class, narrowing its militancy and sustaining male chauvinism and other reactionary features of bourgeois society in its turn.

The extent of the physical damage is rarely popularly acknowledged, but US Department of Health officials have counted over 9 million alcoholics as direct victims and alcoholism is statistically rated third in the US list of health hazards causing fatalities, measured nationally. Add to that the deaths and non-fatal injuries due to alcohol consumption assisting heart disease, cirrhosis, pneumonia, road and industrial accidents, crimes, etc, and the scale of the problem is clarified. The medical consequences extend to hundreds of thousands of workers every day — yet the cultural impact presents the greater threat to socialist progress.

## PROLETARIAT

Lenin proclaimed that 'the proletariat is an ascending class; it needs alcohol neither as narcotic nor stimulant'. Yet the everyday life of the Western capitalist nations today allows no mainstream social activity to avoid its presence. The pubs of Glasgow and Newcastle form a major thread in British working class culture and imitating revolutionaries join crusades for 'real ale' which the brewers speedily and gladly commercialise.

The reactionary social role of alcohol is, however, very gradually re-emerging into view. As the economic recession persists and deepens, a drop in the consumption of nutritious foods is recorded by current government statistics. The same figures also demonstrate a proportionate rise in the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

Indeed, the underlying industrial trends towards automation and technological innovation constantly increase the social alienation of production workers and so enhance the role of alcohol as a source of relief from workplace stress.

Occupational breakdowns of the UK national labour force show the continued decline in craft jobs, which permit skilled workers at least a degree of job control and identification with their products and the drift to semi-skilled, monotonous assembly-line employment. In such circumstances, the appeal of the pub — as a lunchtime and post-shift refuge — grows.

## NEW OPPORTUNITIES

While revolutionaries may anticipate new opportunities for working class resistance to capitalism, it was A.E. Housman who prescribed ale 'for fellows whom it hurts to think/Look



Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

## Drinking your troubles away?

Richard Neubauer argues that socialists have ignored the effects of alcohol for too long.

into the pewter pot/To see the world as the world's not'.

The light of socialist analysis must shine on the cultural influence of alcohol in class society, where millions of workers hope to evade the harsh realities of periods of upheaval and dislocation, by one or other of the few available means.

## ORGANISATION

The present era of imperialist industrial organisation, capitalism's 'highest stage', logically offers little scope to alcohol and its many ramifications, if seen through narrow, economic eyes. The pioneers of mass production techniques vigorously opposed it. Frederick Taylor, the creator of 'scientific' management, demanded social conditions fit for the development of 'trained gorillas', motivated solely to operate assembly lines at the highest level of efficiency. The drunkard was excluded. Henry Ford, the automobile manufacturer, declared 'anything that interferes with our ability to think clearly, lead healthy, normal lives and do our work well will ultimately be discarded' — condemning alike the evils of alcohol, pre-marital sex and all 'un-Christian' practices. Imperialism, however, had to contend with a tradition of alcohol consumption dating

from the end of primitive society itself, and was to reconsider its approach.

Analyses of tribal societies (the grapevine was probably the first plant to be cultivated) suggest that the more backward the hunting and food gathering methods employed, the greater the degree of drunkenness within the tribe. By the time that agricultural society became established, alcoholism was relatively reduced, but remained a strong force in social existence. The advent of the early intercontinental trading societies saw fresh attacks on alcoholism, the Jewish tradition achieving control of the rate of consumption by its social and religious ritualisation (a concept contained in the Old Testament) and the Islamic tradition excluding alcohol altogether. With the dawn of the capitalist era proper, the demand for total prohibition was raised in Europe by the Puritan vanguard of the English bourgeois revolution. Cromwell's local administrators forcing the closure of hundreds of ale-houses in the 1650s.

## COMPROMISE

Early capitalist state policy, however, compromised on this as on other cultural fronts, and alcoholism thus survived to meet

the imperialist era. Indeed, one section of the ruling class, the brewers, held an obvious interest in defending it, and heavily financed the Tory Party in Britain to resist the party of imperialist industry, the Liberals. (The brewers still donate more to Tory funds than other sections of capitalism). As throughout earlier history, the rise to power of a new form of class rule based upon more sophisticated means of production brought with it a new assault on the discipline of alcoholism. Imperialism in the USA banned all alcoholic consumption between 1920 and 1933, the 'Prohibition Era'.

In Italy, it financed Mussolini's campaign which shut down 30,000 wine shops in only a few years. In Britain legislative action, such as the 1882 Act forbidding the payment of wages to employees in places of alcohol consumption, and Victorian moral crusading had combined to terminate the centuries-old 'trade footings' (linking apprenticeships to alcoholic rituals) and reduce the overall level of drunkenness, to meet industry's new needs. The death of alcoholism was in sight — at the hands of mass manufacture. A final lease of historical life, however, was to be granted by the cyclical nature of imperialist production.

The new social order brought in its train a hitherto unknown scale of economic crisis and its

child — war. The 'Great Depression' and the world wars which preceded and followed it gave alcohol a place in the culture of modern assembly-line society. In his memoirs, the Rt. Hon. G. Roberts, government Food Controller in Britain during 1914-18, neatly illustrated the point: 'When I was Food Controller, I had control of more beer than any brewer in the country, and the government at that time, confronted by growing unrest, caused beer to be diverted to places where industrial unrest was most acute, in order to allay agitation'.

Contemporary capitalist states know and employ the properties of alcohol in times of emergency and disaffection. And, in everyday life, alcohol has been awarded a 'special' niche in bourgeois society too. Various forms and methods of struggle against drunkenness have been tried and will be tried. In this connection, the first place must be taken by the women' wrote Leon Trotsky in 1926. This is because the cult of alcohol consumption (drinking a lot and not showing its effects, in current British practice) is broadly confined to males, women in our society being frequently isolated from general social activity by domestic and hence isolated work functions. The worst consequences of drunkenness are

therefore often visited upon women by wife-beating or aggressive husbands returning from the pub. For this reason the British Women's Total Abstinence Union once counted 250,000 members (in 1935), the overwhelming majority being working class, associated with the Co-operative Movement. Today, in fresh contrast, alcoholism is actually increasing among women in Britain, who find themselves in house-bound seclusion. Lone drinking appears as one antidote to exclusion from social activity.

Male chauvinism and alcoholism reinforce each other — many pubs outside of modern urban centres remaining in practice heavily male-oriented. The broad role of alcohol within capitalism having been briefly outlined, the task of overcoming it clearly passes to the socialist left and to the coming working class revolutions in the West.

Working class self-organisation was born in English pub meeting rooms. The early trade unions quickly encountered alcoholism in their midst and fought against it as a form of exploitation of the workers by the brewery trade interests.

Unhappily, the moralistic and frequently religious 'socialism' of the early labour movement infected its approach to alcohol, emphasising total individual abstinence as opposed to the need to combat human reliance on alcohol and not every occasional drink.

## TEETOTALLER

The emergent labour leaders, including Keir Hardie, Joseph Arch, John Burns and Arthur Henderson were teetotalers and in 1893 a widely-supported 'Labour Manifesto' called for a Veto Bill to 'put the rights and liberties of the people in relation to the Liquor Trade into the hands of the people themselves'. The American socialist writer Jack London in his brilliant autobiographical *John Barleycorn* swayed thousands to support legal prohibition, and one of the founding bodies of the Communist Party of Great Britain was a league of socialist prohibitionists.

With the birth of the first workers state in 1917, a rigorous campaign to abolish alcoholism was introduced in Russia by the Soviets. It was a condition of membership of the Young Communist League in Lenin's time that total abstinence from alcohol consumption would be maintained, and the state propagandised against alcohol even though one-eighth of its total budget came from surviving liquor taxes within its revenue system. Though today Stalinist rule in the USSR has eliminated genuine working class social intercourse (no real equivalent to pubs or public cafes are permitted) and thus fostered alcoholism within the home on a large scale, in imitation of the social life lost in the distant past, the historical link between socialism and anti-alcoholism formed a significant element in Bolshevik theory and practice and so remains on the record for future proletarian generations to consider.

## RESURRECT DEBATE

The objective in this short article has simply been to resurrect a significant cultural issue for debate in the socialist press. Perhaps, in common with religion and mysticism, alcoholism will endure until humanity's reliance upon the natural world is broken for ever. However, the international recession of the world capitalist economy, increasingly visible in recent years, is likely to revive the issue of itself, since the phenomenon flourishes on economic uncertainty and worry. Marxists should at least take the matter seriously at this time, however untrendy the subject in immediate terms. Alcoholism is presently extending its influence among workers across the Western world — and socialism will have to face this enemy again.



# Save The Other Cinema

THE OTHER CINEMA is faced with a grave financial crisis. If at least a part of the target figure of £25,000 is not raised within the next two months, the cinema will have to close. If this is allowed to happen then the left will lose one of its most important cultural assets, namely the only cinema in this country which is committed not only to showing a programme of left wing and progressive films, but also to developing an ongoing relationship between film and political struggles.

In the first nine months of its existence the cinema has worked with: The Campaign Against A Criminal Trespass

Law, The Portuguese Workers Coordinating Committee, the Cultural Committee of the Chile Solidarity Campaign, The Grunwick Strike Committee, Workers from the Chloride Occupation, The Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding, Music for Socialism and many other organisations. It has also shown films on many struggles in other countries, including a number on the struggle in Southern Africa. This programme has had a national impact, both through press coverage, and also by the fact that, since opening, The Other Cinema's film distribution has increased by over 30 per cent. If the cinema closes we will not be able to consolidate

and build on these gains, we will lose them.

In all this, however, The Other Cinema has made a considerable number of mistakes. When the cinema opened they were short of £15,000. This figure, because of interest charges and other accumulated debts has now risen to £25,000. Instead of confronting this problem from the outset, they have delayed and delayed until they are now faced with an almost impossible task. At the same time The Other Cinema has always lacked a concrete ongoing political relationship with its audiences and with the users of its distribution service, i.e. with the left in

general.

The left is not free from criticism in that we have always seen The Other Cinema as a service to our political work, rather than as an integral and important part of the struggle that we are all involved in. As such it is something that we should all support, criticise and fight for. Recently a small group of left wing people have come together with the aim of both helping save The Other Cinema, and of encouraging the sort of ongoing relationships that we feel are needed.

JAN WILLIAMS,  
C/o The Other Cinema, 12/13  
Little Newport St., London WC1.



## Unsafe for whites?

ONE THING that has been absent in the left press's coverage of the Notting Hill Carnival has been the uncomfortable fact that on the Monday night it was unsafe for a white person to walk the streets in that part of the city. Gangs of black youths roamed the streets in a two mile radius of the carnival and I myself was surrounded and mugged twice on my way home.

Although these black kids aged between about 12 and 17 are a small minority who are scorned by the black population as a whole, the problem cannot be ignored by simply saying 'the police are the muggers'. There is no doubt that the NF's propaganda around this issue will have a growing appeal amongst whites living in areas such as Notting Hill if this behaviour is not stopped and the hyper-tension and frustration which is behind it, is not channelled into activity of a more political nature.

Obviously for socialists more police repression is not the

answer. Their intimidation of the black communities over the years has bred a deep distrust and hatred which was evident in the street fighting at the carnival which generated an exhilarating feeling of solidarity amongst most people there. The police presence was resented and the message was kept clear of the carnival in future.

The only authority the black kids will ever respect will be the discipline of their own organisations. The stewarding forces will have to be strengthened and armed. In this sense our line on black self-defence groups patrolling the streets has a dual nature—to protect the black communities from racist and fascist attacks but also to organise and prepare their alienated youth for the struggles ahead. It will be their efforts in the former which, with our help, will determine their success in the latter.

DAVY SHILLINGLAW (London)

## Socialist Challenge EVENTS

### SCOTLAND

For information on Socialist Challenge contact Scottish Socialist/Socialist Challenge bookshop, 64 Queen Street, Glasgow (Tel: 041-221 7481). Open weekdays 10-4. Late closing Thursday 6.00pm. Wide range of FI publications.

**DUNDEE** Information about Socialist Challenge activities from 64 Queen Street, Glasgow. Join in SC sales outside Boots (corner of Reform Street) each Saturday, 11am-2pm.

### SOUTH/WEST

**PORTSMOUTH** Socialist Challenge readers group, every Monday, 7.30pm at Wiltshire pub (upstairs), Hampshire Terrace. Next meeting 19 September: 'Reformism, the Communist Party'

**SOUTHAMPTON** Socialist Challenge group public meeting. The Fascists must be stopped. Speaker: Raghib Ashen. Monday, 19 September, 7.30pm. St. Matthews Church Hall.

### YORKSHIRE

**SHEFFIELD** readers meet fortnightly, 7.30pm, the Lion Hotel, 3 Nursery Street (off the Wicker), Sheffield.

**YORK** Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Sundays. Next one on 18 September. Vietnam, the revolution two years on. Lowther pub, Kings Street, York at 8pm.

### NORTH WEST

For details of activities in the NW write or ring the Manchester Socialist Challenge Centre, Third Floor, 14 Piccadilly, Manchester 1. 061-236 2352

Open Tuesday 6-8pm, Thursday 6-8pm, Saturday 10-1pm. Room available for meetings. Duplicating services.

**LIVERPOOL** Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Wednesdays at Stanley House, Upper Parliament Street, 7.30pm. 21 September, 'TUC and After'.

**BURY** Socialist Challenge group meets at the Royal Hotel, Silver Street every Tuesday at 8pm.

**WARRINGTON** Socialist Challenge discussion and action group meets every Tuesday, 8pm at Bowling Green, Liverpool Road, Warrington.

### LONDON

**SOUTHALL** Supporters group meets fortnightly. For details phone 01-573 5085.

### HOME COUNTIES

**BASINGSTOKE** readers' meeting every Tuesday at Chute House, Church Street, 8pm.

**READING** Readers meeting. Every Thursday evening, 7.30pm, 80 Amis Road, Reading.

### MIDLANDS

For details of activities of local supporters contact Socialist Challenge Centre, 76b Digbeth High Street, Birmingham. (021-643 8208)

# England's left and Wales

IT WAS encouraging to see some mention in the paper of the situation that confronts socialists in Wales today. In South Wales social-democracy has been the dominant ideology for most of this century. And for long the result has been an ossified monolith characterised by blatant corruption, political paralysis and class-collaborationism.

Not surprisingly the result has been a rising nationalist movement. Yet a nationalism that claims to be the inheritor of Labour's early ideas. In Wales nationalism has not attracted the interests of a section of the native bourgeoisie. In part this is due to the virtual absence of such a strata in Wales (Julian Hodge - Carraghan's 'friend' - is a rare exception).

Since the war, nationalism has advanced from the intelligentsia, through the petty bourgeois ranks of teachers and white-collar workers into the working class. Such advance has been based upon and demanded a left political stance.

This absence of bourgeois support for Plaid Cymru distinguished it from the SNP in Scotland. Furthermore the cultural dimension of Welsh nationalism has always been a central feature. The defence of the Welsh language and culture has for the last fourteen years engaged an active generation of political activists in a consistent, sustained and massive programme of civil disobedience. That generation, which in England made up the youth vanguard of revolutionary politics, has submitted itself to large-scale imprisonment and repression with no support from the English left.

Of course pure nationalism as an ideology is a barrier to working class advance. Plaid Cymru has absorbed the parliamentarism of social-democracy. It further mystification by placing nation above class. But following nationalists do debate issues that range from workers control to women's liberation. Its politics are influenced by terrorism and pacifism inspired by

the struggles of the Basques and the national minorities in the USSR. These elements are becoming increasingly aware of the irrelevance of socialism.

If proletarian internationalism means recognising and leading a united struggle against class oppression that exists within nations, then the English left should devote some attention to Wales. This is beginning to occur in your pages.

But remember that the political ideas of Wales are complex. Glib lines based on superficial analysis should be avoided. The support of Socialist Challenge for a Welsh Assembly marks a beginning. Such an assembly would be an advance, if only by forging both Plaid and Labour to illustrate in practice their real commitment to defend the interests of Welsh workers. Nationalism will not depart in a hurry from contemporary politics. Revolutionaries will ignore it at their own and their class's peril.

DAVID OWEN (Llanelli)

# Sexuality and PIE

CHILDREN ARE able to exercise a conscious choice well below the age of sixteen. In fact, some little girls recently were described by a judge as 'little whores' precisely because their conscious choice was clear.

But the whole question of age of consent is complicated by various factors. First, there is a hidden (never explicit) idea that a boy is inherently incapable of consenting to an act which is a 'perversion of nature'. Even if it is quite clear that the boy did consciously consent, the idea is still maintained that he must have been corrupted. This is part of the general oppression of homosexuality.

Secondly, there is a difficult problem as soon as you begin to consider really young children. If you read our 'evidence' you will see how extremely complicated the question is. I do not envy any legal draughtsperson who has to draw up legislation on this point. The important thing is that we propose the abolition of age-of-consent not because we are longing to have sex with babies (as the newspapers suppose) but because we consider that age-of-consent is unsuitable as a method of ensuring the welfare of children. We insist that the important

question is not 'how old is s/he?', but 'what is the quality of the relationship?'

We say that society is unethical and morally unhealthy if it refuses to observe any distinction between a loving relationship and an unloving one. To brush aside all questions of love and affection, to establish rules simply in terms of age, and then consider the question only in terms of 'assault', reflects an attitude unworthy of a civilised country.

It is necessary to refer very briefly to the philosophy that lies behind this attitude. If a person believes that the flesh wars against the spirit, and that the object of our existence is to qualify for Heaven by resisting sexual temptations on Earth, then that person is logically justified in maintaining laws which aim at saving us all from Hellfire.

We say that the vast majority of people do not wish to live any longer under the direction of that philosophy, and we campaign for changes in public thinking which will lead to changes in the law.

DAVID C. GROVE, [Secretary, Paedophile Information Exchange]

## Hunte's vote

YOUR POSITIONS on the Ladywood by-election results reveals important confusions. The nature of the Hunte vote is not at all understood. The 'Special supplement' suggests adding the Hunte vote to the anti-racist platform, while the editorial in Socialist Challenge (SC No. 11) says that in no way can it be construed as political.

It is true to say that Hunte's vote should be seen as a 'personal' vote, but to conclude that this can not be included in any way as an anti-racist vote is to give credence to an extremely simplistic interpretation of bourgeois election results; i.e. that they are a direct representation of the political development of the masses. In other words the Hunte voters are simply seen as 338 material dependents of a hustler. The question of minority consciousness is in practice ignored.

It is a contradictory feature within imperialist countries that the political failures of the indigenous labour movements generate the tendency for autonomous movements, particularly within the super-oppressed cultural/social groups: Irish, blacks, women, etc.

It is totally consistent for the bourgeoisie to integrate the leading elements within these groups. Irish foremen for lump building firms employing Irish workers, women managers in workplaces with mainly women workers, black hustlers in black communities. Hunte's vote in a political context is thus very contradictory. Much of it must

## Italian far-left

THE SITUATION in Italy is a critical one and the face of the revolutionary left in Italy is likely to change again. However this is no reason to write off the various experiences and contributions that they can make to revolutionary communism.

What of the articles you have recently published then? First it is not true that Lotta Continua no longer exists as an organisation. Lotta Continua, like the whole of the revolutionary left, has gone through a crisis but as one comrade put it 'it was a crisis that we needed'. Sofri said in his report to the last Lotta Continua congress, 'What has always differentiated us is our rejection of all dogmatism and ideology, and yet we now find ourselves in the situation of having changed into ideology some aspects of our experience'.

The strength of Lotta Continua has always been its ability to learn from the experience of the mass movement. This can be contrasted with hard-line Maoists and Trotskyists who have always jealously guarded their timeless truths on which they were founded, even against reality itself. Lotta Continua gained a lot of experience in the struggle around the demand '35 hours paid 40', however it has never written programmes in isolation from the class struggle but instead recognises, as Sofri

put it, that programme must 'begin with the specific needs of each sector' working towards the recomposition and unification of the proletariat.

Lotta Continua seems to be accused of hiding itself at the head of the mass movements and yet not trying to politically hegemonise them. For the traditional left this may be wrong, but for people in struggle against capitalism this is the kind of organisation that they need, that synthesises the spontaneous and organisational elements of the class struggle, that recognises that everyone has a contribution to make for struggle is a liberating force both on a personal and a collective level.

The GCR underestimated the mass movement and above all they underestimated its desire for autonomy (with a little 'a'). They make some self-criticism on that which is a pretty big confession coming from those who claim they are the only revolutionary organisation in Italy. But what lessons are to be drawn? Because both the IMG and the GCR reduce reformism to the question of leadership, their attitude to reformist parties remains unchanged. It seems to me that the same mistake could easily be repeated.

ALLAN HUSBAND [West London Big Flame]

be construed as an anti-racist vote, but equally it expresses no confidence in the labour movement as it exists.

The logical conclusion is of course that we need a united anti-racist platform emanating from the labour movement. In practice this would be predomi-

nantly from the organised revolutionary left, but it would be able to considerably undermine the 'personal' aspect of the Hunte vote and simultaneously harness significant sections of a class-based vote.

JERRY LLOYD (North London)



## Exclusive! Socialist Challenge reveals Revie did not walk alone!

by GEOFF BELL

Whatever next, wondered Daily Mirror football editor 'Fearless' Frank McGhee commenting on the inability of the English football team to beat Switzerland last week: 'The nation that invented football has been humbled by the country that gave the world the cuckoo clock'.

The shame of it all, and this on top of the accusations in the same issue that former England team manager Don Revie tried to bribe opponents to lose matches while he was manager of Leeds United.

Revie recently opted out of the generalship of England's soccer failure, taking off for the United Arab Emirates on a £340,000 contract. So it's one humiliation after another. But now the Mirror with its exposé has done its patriotic duty and exercised Revie from the green and pleasant fields of English football.

### REVENGE

Revenge is the name of this game. If there is one thing disliked by the people who run sport in this country and the writers they feed whisky to at half time, it's 'bounders' like Revie, deserting England for some foreign Arabian clime in our hour of need — just as we are about to be eliminated from the World Cup.

Revie went for money, and football doesn't like such public manifestations of its own morality. So Revie is exposed. He was always a baddie after all, which is remarkably convenient, for it

explains not just why he deserted for oil money but also why England went from failure to failure under his leadership.

All our woes can be attributed to Don Revie; the modern computerised football manager now exposed and damned.

### FORGOTTEN

That Revie applied the same principles when he was in charge of the England team is conveniently forgotten. With the full agreement of his employers, the Football Association, he arranged all manner of 'sponsorship' for the England players. Money went to the FA, the players and Revie himself, for endorsing sporting equipment which the players probably never saw, never mind used.

Revie's alleged crime is that he went on to attempt to bribe players to throw games. But if he did, then he simply took the business ethic in sport one stage further. Is there really that much difference between a football club buying a player from another team so he can win matches and buying a player from another team to lose?

And others have long before laid down the golden cobbles stones over which Revie is said to have walked. The illusion that football is just a game is a pretty tattered one by now. The advertising hoardings on the football grounds, the multi-million football pools, the 'Big Match' on TV, the scarves, the magazines, even the peanut sellers on the terraces chant out 'business, business' with an enthusiasm which contrasts with that shown for the present performance of the England football team.

If Revie was responsible for bribery, he certainly did not walk alone. The money must have come from somewhere, and given Revie's reputation for watching his wallet, it is unlikely it came from him. There is the inevitable question: is he simply the one who has been found out? Stan Anderson, one of the players Revie is said to have tried to bribe, asked the Daily Mirror: 'Why are you doing it? Why go just for Revie? The game is full of cheats. He was just more successful at it, that's all.'

It is easy to determine why Revie is being singled out. If he hadn't left the sinking ship of English football there would have been no exposure. If he hadn't had the affrontery to try to quit before he was sacked and took his 'punishment like a man', the Mirror would never have bothered.

### £340,000

But Revie didn't do that. By taking his £340,000 from the United Emirates, he did a better job of exposing British football than the Mirror will ever do. By that single gesture he showed what big time football is all about — money.

To condemn Revie is like condemning an apple for falling from a tree; each is simply obeying the laws of its own environment. Revie's real crime was that he was a loser. He failed to restore English football to its long forgotten glory. He is not simply 'unpatriotic'. Much worse, he robbed the business and sporting communities of the millions that can be made from a successful national side.



DON REVIE: He's done a better job of exposing British football than the Daily Mirror will ever do.

So the Daily Mirror goes for his morality and according to one report, bribes—sorry, psys—informant Bob Stokoe up to £14,000 for spilling the beans.

If the indications are right, and the new English manager Ron Greenwood — Mr. Clean himself — has little success in winning as

Revie, just watch the campaign against him.

He wasn't tough enough, they will say. He should have been more ruthless, not worry about 'pretty football', but just make sure we win. Sack him, they will holler. And maybe present him with an engraved cuckoo clock for his trouble.

## TV violence aids police

BY RICHARD CARVER

THE LAST week or so has seen a lot of discussion on whether television violence can encourage 'delinquent' violence in young people. What nobody seems very interested in is whether it can be used to stimulate police violence. A recent example from Spain indicates that it can.

RTVE, the Spanish broadcasting corporation, bought a cop series called *Harrelson's Men* from an American TV network. The series is based on the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) units set up by the Los Angeles police after the Patty Hearst kidnap and whose major success was to roast the Symbionese Liberation Army alive.

### FAMILIAR FORMULA

The formula is familiar: a group of dedicated fighters for law and order, armed to the teeth, wages the struggle against organised crime, psychopathic political dissidents and racial and national minorities. Even many American critics denounced it as 'fascist'.

The Spanish public was even more hostile, provoking a defence from Steve Forrest, the series' leading actor: 'I repeat that *Harrelson's Men* is not a violent series. In any case it's for people who haven't yet matured intellectually' (!)

And he accused the Spanish of 'over-intellectualising'.

But there is an even more sinister aspect. RTVE bought the series when the GRAPO kidnaped two prominent public figures at the end of last year. It is well known that at the time the Spanish Government was thinking of setting up its own SWAT unit. Spanish journalists insist that the two events are not coincidental. And the blatantly political use of *Los Hombres de Harrelson* has continued.

### POWER STATIONS

One of the major political issues in Spain this summer has been the plan to build four nuclear power stations along 50 miles of the Basque coastline, which has met fierce opposition from the local population. Sure enough RTVE screened a *Harrelson* episode dealing with that very question to coincide with the protests.

The protesters are portrayed as megalomaniac (the leaders) and misled (the rank and file) and all of them are delinquent. The story degenerates into murder, the defence of civilisation as we know it, and so on. The method is so unsubtle you might not think it dangerous.

But a survey of Spanish teenagers' reactions to the programme showed that 86 per cent thought that SWAT was necessary in present society. The BBC has declined to comment on whether it has plans to screen the series here.

## A comedy of failure

'3s 6d library fine? I don't want to buy 'em'. Only the money has dated. So surprise yourself. Tune into Radio 4 every Tuesday at 10.30pm for the next few weeks and you'll hear the most distinctive theme tune ever, and a stammered gargle which says: 'H-H-Hancock's Half Hour'. CHRIS ROSEBLADE r-r-ruminates.

Anthony Aloysius St. John Hancock died nine years ago. Today he is a cult figure whose followers, if they are not quite as numerous as those of Bogart, make up for what they lack in numbers by their intellectual elitism. Attempts are made to analyse his humour which vacillate between pretentiousness and banality and would doubtless have had Hancock himself rolling in the aisles.

But don't be put off by the cult. In some ways Hancock was a reactionary — he was terrified, for example, that the public would think he was having a gay relationship with Sid James. Yet he was deadly serious, and the structures and subjects of his comedy are genuinely revolutionary in that they encourage you to doubt everything — even yourself.

### FAVOURITE MAXIM

It is no accident that 'doubt everything' was the favourite maxim of another man who loved to laugh, Karl Marx. And Hancock — like Marx — talks about misery, capitalism and failure. The only difference is that he doesn't describe it to you. He does it to you.

Like Terry Collier of *The Likely Lads*, he specialises in failure. He organises a reunion party to relive his glorious war years. And for half an hour destroys himself and his myths. He collects plastic bandmen from corn flakes packets. But can never get the set. His is a theatre of the absurd; of pretentiousness and failure, of cunning and wit. Identifying with Hancock is an intellectual and emotional process of involvement and distancing. You are him,

then you are laughing at him, then with him and then at yourself.

### CHARACTER

It doesn't do to get too serious about him — that in itself misses the point. Hancock did say this: 'The character I play isn't a character I put on and off like a coat. It is a part of me and a part of everyone else I see. The secret of my work is the knowledge of what constitutes living in general... I think'.

And it all hangs on 'I think'. Even then, on the verge of a serious analysis of the 'human condition' (call it what you will), Hancock draws back — is uncertain — can't take himself seriously. Yet his humour is always serious and sometimes clearly so. His is the Britain of the post-war boom; a world which is now in many ways distant from us. Yet his humour survives because it is about alienation, about the human condition, and about tragedy.

'Too much going on in my mind you see. Nuclear disarmament, the future of mankind, China, Spurs. Oh, it's very hard to be an intellectual these days. Let's have a look at old Bertie Russell. (Picks up the book, looks up every other word in the dictionary). Well if that's what they mean why don't they say so. "The limit and scope of human understanding". Well we've soon found out my limit — three sentences.'

That speech is from *Hancock Alone*. For half an hour he is on stage, parading around his bed-sit. He burns his lip, tries to read a book, shaves, gets stood on

a date, and breaks his TV. Nothing else happens — his final words as he puts down his book are: 'No I'll read it tomorrow'. The screen fades on him trying to blow a smoke-ring.

What should have been a recipe for boredom has not been boring. What might have been a didactic harangue on human futility or a tragedy has been marvellously funny.

So listen to Hancock. The shows, produced under pressure, are inevitably uneven. He didn't know the words of *The Blood Donor* when it was recorded and had to read them from chalked up boards because he was behind with rehearsals. But all of them are a quarry for good things.

### CAPITALISM

He shows you what capitalism is. He reminds you what the struggle for socialism is about. Above all he reminds us not to take ourselves too seriously. He'd probably have laughed himself silly at being reviewed in a socialist newspaper using expressions like 'the human condition'. Sometimes you just can't win.



TONY HANCOCK: The secret of my work is the knowledge of what constitutes living in general... I think

## THE OTHER CINEMA

25 Tottenham Street, London W1. Tel: 637 9308

### THAT COLD DAY IN THE PARK

The first film from Robert Altman. Made in 1966, these are the first showings of the unabridged version in London. 8.45 each night, Fri 16 Sept to Thurs 22 Sept. (This replaces advertised showings of *Canada de Chile*, unavoidably cancelled.)

### THE MAN FROM MAISINICU

Exciting new Cuban feature about the struggle against the CIA-backed bandit gangs in the Escambray region in the early years after the revolution. 8.30pm, Fri 16 Sept, Mon 19 to Thurs 22.

### MUSIC FOR SOCIALISM

Rare films of Bessie Smith, Charlie Parker and others, plus live performance by the Johnny Rondo Trio. 8.30pm Sun 18 Sept.



# Socialist Challenge

## Renew the Mass Picketing

Vital meetings take place this week to decide what official union action will be taken to implement the decision of the TUC to 'intensify financial and practical aid' to the Grunwick strikers.

The strike committee continues to call for the cutting off of all supplies and services to the Grunwick factory and these demands will dominate top level meetings of the TUC leaders.

At the weekend the strike committee did not know if it would be invited to the meetings, but one of their members, Jack Dromey of Brent Trades Council, was sure what was needed. 'A bonfire has been piled up', he said. 'What is needed is a spark. That spark can come from official union action or unofficial action.'

### ACUTE DILEMMA

The trade union leaders are in an acute dilemma as to what action to recommend. They are reluctant to do anything like cutting off electricity and gas, which might be judged 'illegal'. But at the same time they are uncomfortably aware of the strike committee's threat of a resumption of mass picketing if firm action is not taken.

Frank Chapple, general secretary of the Electricians' Union, expressed his willingness to cut off electricity to Grunwick, not as a way of showing his solidarity with the strikers, but because for him it was the lesser of two evils.

He asserted after the TUC debate: 'It is a question of weighing the balance of destructiveness and inconvenience. My view is that anything is preferable to another stand-up, knockdown confrontation between mass pickets and the police.'

### PERSONAL PREFERENCE

Chapple's personal preference for cutting off George Ward as the least embarrassing option is not preventing the strikers preparing their own arrangements. The strike committee has already had discussions with a number of rank and file workers who would be in a position to cut off supplies and services and it is determined to call for a renewal of mass picketing if the TUC drags its feet.

'We can win this strike either officially or unofficially', said Jack Dromey, 'it's up to the trade union leaders to decide which they want. Naturally we would prefer victory to come from official action, but if not we are prepared to organise effective action ourselves.'

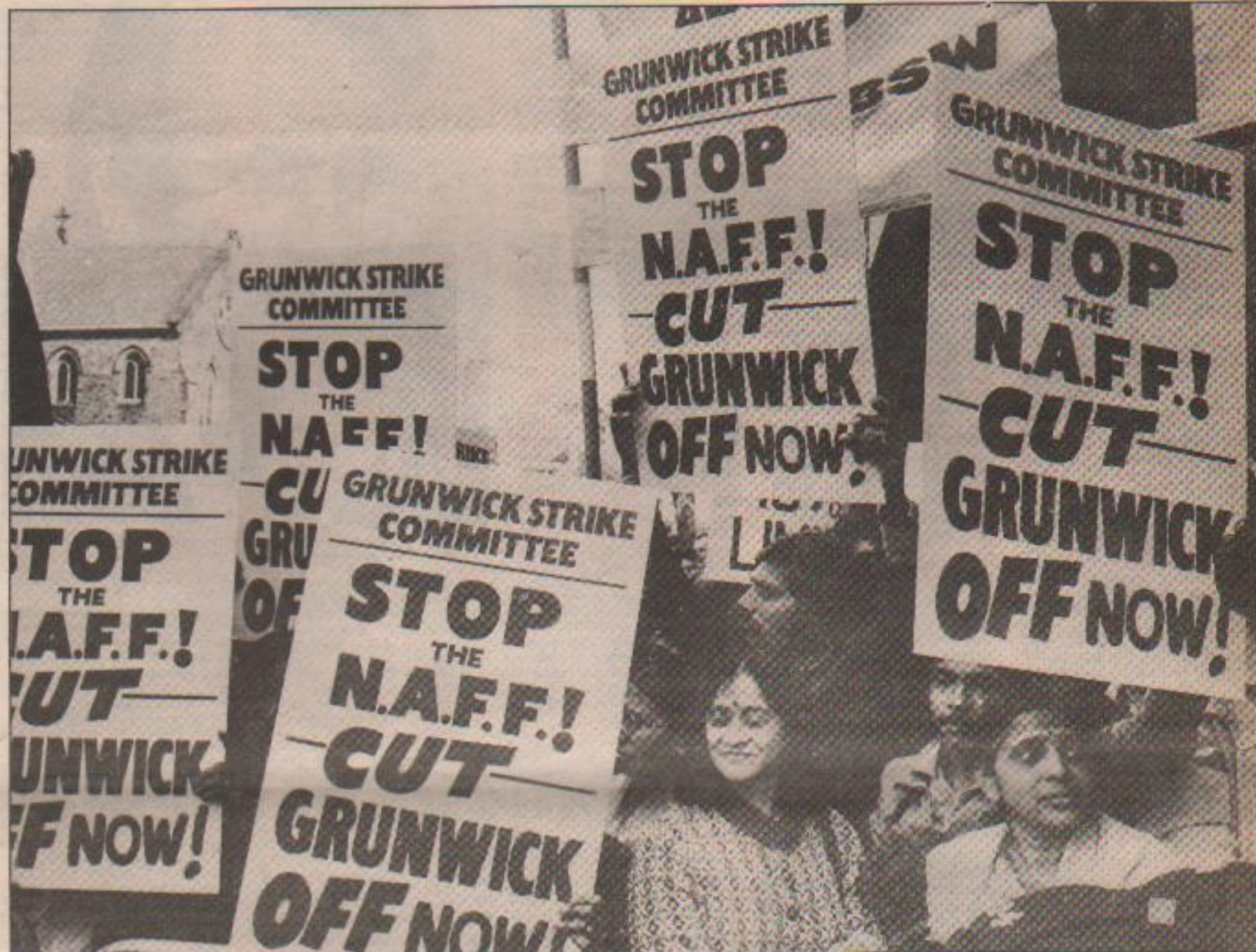


Photo: ANDREW WILKINSON (Report)

While the strike committee, the TUC, and even the Tories continue to make public statements on Grunwick, the Labour Government maintains its silence. But with mass action once more on the agenda, one simple move by the Government could bring victory for the strikers and answer George Ward's threat to close Grunwick — the nationalisation of the company under workers' control. Emergency motions to next month's Labour Party conference recommending such

policy are being considered in a number of constituency parties. Nationalisation would also put paid to the plans of N.A.F.F. and the 'Silent Majority and Self-Help' organisation (founded by Ross McWhirter and now run by the Dowager Lady Birdwood) to maintain supplies to Ward in the event of a boycott. Dowager's strike-breaking outfit, whose paper the *British Gazette* even carries the name of Winston Churchill's propaganda sheet during the General Strike, is vying with N.A.F.F. and Tory right

wingers to build the boss's answer to mass action. Victory at Grunwick will knock a sizeable dent in their hopes.

But even if a call for nationalisation is adopted by the Labour Party conference, the Government's record of ignoring its party's decisions means that other pressures are needed to persuade the Government to intervene. The renewal of mass picketing remains the most effective form of 'persuasion' available.

ATTACKS by fascists on left-wing organisations and individuals are on the increase. In Birmingham fascists burned a petrol-soaked cross outside the house of Socialist Unity leader and IMG member, Raghiv Ah-sun. Fascist slogans were daubed on the wall outside. Supporters are now guarding his house.

In London the SWP's headquarters in Cottons Gardens was attacked with petrol bombs and thousands of pounds of damage was done. The SWP comrades have launched an appeal for funds to repair the damage. All donations to 6 Cottons Gardens, London E1.

## Socialist Challenge

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### PEDALLING FOR SOCIALISM

*Illustrious Corpses* was shown at The Other Cinema last Saturday to a full house as part of a benefit performance for *Socialist Challenge*. Also screened, for the first time, was a short advertising film about *Socialist Challenge*. Three minutes of good reasons why the audience should rush to buy copies.

Every night at The Other Cinema, the *Socialist Challenge* film will soon be available for local showing. The exact proceeds from the benefit will be announced next week, and are a welcome boost to the fund drive.

Our supporters rallied round this week and sent in over £130. The final date for our target of £1,800 is the end of this month, so please make sure that the dragon is not left with its tail.

The enterprise of our readers seems boundless. A supporter

writes: 'While in the process of moving from Swansea to Cardiff I decided to get my bike there by cycling over; so we hit on the idea of a sponsored cycle ride for *Socialist Challenge*.'

That one ride raised over £14. All power to your pedals.

This week's total of £137.46 takes the overall figure to £1239.10. Our thanks to:

Coventry supporter	1.00
D.G. Ream	2.00
Reading supporters	21.00
T.G. readers	5.00
M. Bryant	0.88
C. Potter	1.25
C. Mulhem	2.25
I. Harrison	2.25
D. Abbot	5.00
R. Wade	1.50
M.B.	1.00
Oxford supporters	0.70
B. Moore	7.83
T. Harrison	2.50
P. Heshfield	2.00
Aron	14.25
J. Palfreman	15.00
T. Brown	2.50
total	60.00
total	137.46

