

# Socialist Challenge

# TORIES STEP UP RACE WAR FIGHT BACK! BUILD THE CARNIVAL



# CARNIVAL!!!

AGAINST THE NAZIS ■

SUNDAY APRIL 30/EVE OF MAYDAY\*11a.m. RALLY/TRAFALGAR SQUARE  
MARCH TO VICTORIA PARK\* TOM ROBINSON BAND AND STEEL PULSE

ORGANISED BY ANTI NAZI LEAGUE, 12 LITTLE NEWPORT STREET, LONDON WC2, TOGETHER WITH ROCK AGAINST RACISM, HACKNEY CAMPAIGN AGAINST RACISM, HACKNEY CIRC, AND TOWER HAMLETS MOVEMENT AGAINST RACISM & FASCISM



# EDITORIAL

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## Electoral alliances and left unity

THE LAMBETH by-election has once again brought the whole question of left unity to the fore. What should be the basis of such a unity? Who should we unite with and why? As in previous elections, Lambeth will witness the pathetic spectacle of two major far-left candidates opposing each other. The Socialist Workers Party and Socialist Unity are fielding separate candidates. Regardless of who receives the bigger vote, this situation does not advance the cause of revolutionary socialism.

Why do we stand candidates in the first place? Because we believe that Labour's policies are pro-capitalist and anti-working class. That therefore socialists, where they have a limited political base, must challenge Labourism at the polls and offer a socialist alternative to the masses. Our aim in contesting elections cannot be seen exclusively in terms of recruiting individuals to our respective organisations.

We must have slightly more ambitious aims. We must seek to generate currents which are broader than the entire far left put together. The objective basis for this exists today. The entry of the Socialist Workers Party into Socialist Unity would be the largest single boost to developing a real and united fightback which would involve thousands and thousands of militants who will not join any particular organisation at the moment.

The development of a large current to the left of the Labour Party obviously raises the question of the Communist Party. It is our opinion that there is a fundamental difference between the Communist Party and the revolutionary organisations of the left. This is a difference of programme and strategy. The politics of the Communist Party are fundamentally not different to those of left social democracy. The SWP approaches the CP for a joint candidate in Glasgow are therefore either a crude manoeuvre, in which case they will have little impact. Or they reflect an adaptation to political questions, which would be unacceptable to the overwhelming majority of the members of the SWP.

How can an approach to the CP be justified and unity with Socialist Unity be rejected unless politics are considered irrelevant?

Let us make our position quite clear. We are not, in principle, opposed to backing Communist Party candidates where they represent real class-struggle forces. We were in favour of a vote for Jimmy Reid in the past. If the CP's leader in the Indian Workers Association, Vishnu Sharma, would stand against Bidwell in Southall on the question of fighting racism and repealing the Immigration Acts, we would seriously consider backing his campaign.

If local CP candidates back the fighting programme of Socialist Unity or the SWP we could support them. But these would be exceptions. The general line of the CP is summed up in their formula: with left social democrats against the far left.

The Communist Party in Lambeth has declared: 'We believe that the best contribution we can make is to work alongside all democratic and progressive forces in support of the Labour candidate to help bring the defeat of the Tory and the routing of the racist candidate.' But the Labour candidate stands on the record of the Callaghan Government. He defends Government policies, which are encouraging and fomenting racism.

The Socialist Workers Party has stated that it is prepared for a non-aggression pact with Socialist Unity in the next General Election. This is a small but important step forward. But it does not go far enough. In the face of the Nazi campaign and the big increase of racism we need something more. We need a joint SWP/SU slate of 150 candidates so that we can really take the offensive; make a national political impact, and get time on radio and television to answer the filth of the Nazis.

The only objection to such a development is a narrow and sectarian one: the comrades of the SWP say that their only interest in elections is to 'build the party'. We have already indicated that this is the wrong approach. A real unity would lay the basis for the construction of a large and powerful unified revolutionary organisation, which would become a pole of attraction for militants looking for an alternative to the weak and discredited formulas of Labourism or the flabby politics of those who cling to these formulas in King Street.

# HOME NEWS

# How world trade sank Healey's bonanza

THE Budget Speech by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Denis Healey, will be the first one to be broadcast [by radio] in this country. And all the expectations are that cuts in income-tax will be announced of the order of around £2 billion.

Is this the start of the long-heralded expansion of the British economy, with the revenue from North Sea oil eliminating the previous ever-present balance of payments problems? The CPS, a group of socialist economists, explain.

Certainly, the experience of 1977 could be thought at long last to give the Chancellor some room for manoeuvre. After all, the rate of inflation has fallen to single figures. Interest rates have been reduced dramatically. The pound has recovered from its plunge in October 1976 and UK reserves have increased five-fold.

World commodity prices have been falling, and some small growth is expected in the UK economy this year — for the first time since 1973. So this picture does seem to provide some hope of reducing the high levels of unemployment.

### FAVOURABLE

The financial background is much more favourable than for several years, so at last something can be done about the real economy without a return to the stop-go of the 1950s and the 1960s. And the first thing is to give people more money to spend — a tax bonanza in the Budget.

### FORECAST

At least, that was the picture last autumn. Today everything looks rather different. The reason basically lies in what has happened to the exchange rate and what has happened to world trade. For in his mini-budget last October, Healey's plans for the future were based on the forecast by the Treasury of a large UK current account surplus in 1978 (trade in goods and services and trade in 'invisibles' — banking, tourism, insurance, shipping).

The forecast was for a surplus of about £1.5 billion. It was based on the assumption that the UK exchange rate would remain unchanged and that there would be a fairly large growth in world trade in 1978. Both of these assumptions have turned out to be wrong.

Let's look at each of them in turn. First, the exchange rate.

## Budget forecast



This is the price of a currency in terms of another currency.

If there is a balance of payments deficit — that is, imports are greater than exports — then one way of dealing with this is to make exports cheaper and imports more expensive — that is, by letting the pound fall. Otherwise the deficit has to be financed either from the reserves (of gold and foreign currencies) or by borrowing. But eventually the reserves will run out, and nobody will lend to the UK (at least not without strings attached). So the pound has to fall against other currencies.

Now look at a slightly different situation. The day-to-day price of a currency depends on the demand and the supply for it. If the demand increases sharply, then there will be pressure for its price to rise. This is what happened last October.

When the success in conforming to the IMF's conditions for their loan (in October 1976) became very apparent, and with inflation rapidly falling because of cuts in living standards, there was a huge speculative demand for

sterling. In October alone £3 billion flowed into the country.

In order to try and eliminate these speculative flows, the Government allowed the price of sterling to rise. But, as we have seen, this makes exports from the UK more expensive, and imports into the UK cheaper. And this, on top of a situation in which in 1977 imports of consumer goods rose by nearly 14 per cent, whereas expenditure on UK produced items remained constant!

So we can immediately predict a rapid end to any prospects of sustained growth in the economy — for it will just suck in imports. Notice here how the revenue from North Sea oil has disappeared. Instead of being invested in the UK industries, it will be used simply in order to balance trade.

Like North Sea gas before it, it will be used to finance trade deficits and to pay off foreign debts. In this way, the oil revenues will be used to regenerate manufacturing industry, but obviously they will flow towards the industry which is most efficient — and that is not UK industry.

Yet why can't exports be

increased to compensate for increased imports? After all, greater export production means greater employment, incomes and prosperity.

This brings us back to the second Treasury assumption: world trade. Last autumn the Treasury forecast that world trade in manufactured goods would increase by 9 per cent in 1978.

### HALVED

The latest forecasts have halved this increase. Indeed growth in the world economy will be no greater than last year, and so the high international levels of unemployment will remain. Since in the UK, exports of goods and services are about one third of Gross Domestic Product, this has depressing implications for future prospects.

But the situation is worse than that. The forecasts are for a world recession in 1979, and to combat this, various people (including Mr. Callaghan) are urging a coordinated boost to demand by all the major industrial countries.

Yet West Germany will not reflate until the US does something about its balance of payments deficit. The US will not do anything at present about its balance of payments deficit (which means doing something about its imported energy consumption) until West Germany reflates. And every country is worried about Japanese export penetration.

### TRADE WARS

Not only is the world economy depressed and unstable, with hints of protection and trade wars in the air; the world is also awash with American dollars in a disturbingly similar manner to the late 1960s just prior to the acceleration of inflation.

In sum there is not a very great deal Healey can do. His budget will be a cautious one which will not produce any substantial fall in unemployment. The prospects of an inefficient UK economy in an anarchic world in which the post-1945 long boom has disappeared, and the economic challenge to US dominance is intensified, are indeed dismal for the working class. For in the long run the Government can only stabilise the capitalist economy by trying to force the working class to bear the burden of the crisis.

# OUR POLICIES

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

Socialist Challenge believes that the two vital tasks confronting revolutionary socialists are:  
• To build broad-based class struggle tendencies in opposition to class collaborationism in the labour movement. These should be non-exclusive in character grouping together militants holding a wide range of political views.  
• To begin to fight for the creation of a unified and democratic revolutionary socialist organisation which can, through an application of united front tactics, begin to be seen as an alternative by thousands of workers engaged in struggles.

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

**1** The struggle for socialism seeks to unite the fight of 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 incinerated 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 that 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-communists 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 real necessity. This means the right to organise factions and tendencies.

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

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

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

[Delete if not applicable]

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

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





Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

## 'From school to dole queue'

Brixton Socialist Unity is a breakthrough. The democratic campaign structure has attracted an unprecedented number of militants, including organisations and individuals from the black community.

RICHARD CARVER talked to three of them: JOHN CHASE of the Croydon and Brixton Collective, the Lambeth by-election candidate; LLOYD, also of the CBC; and A.X. CAMBRIDGE, editor of the Black Liberator.

EVERYONE was a little cautious when talks began on running a candidate in the Lambeth Central by-election. For Socialist Unity groups like the Croydon and Brixton Collective were a bit of an unknown quantity.

The black organisations knew more about us, the predominantly white left, and they didn't like what they saw. They feared that Socialist Unity just wanted a black candidate for its own reasons.

A couple of weeks working together has dispelled the initial wariness. Socialist Unity has shown that it is serious about working towards unity within a common revolutionary framework.

### SOLUTIONS

The CBC explains the political importance of running a black candidate in an area like Brixton: "One must look for the section that is most oppressed, the section that is most deprived of everything, and if there is a representative of that section who is able to articulate the problems, to start to find solutions, one must support this organisation and individual."

The CBC is an autonomous black organisation; but they explain that: "There has never been a struggle by the CBC that has been divorced from the white working class. We support struggles by black people inside trade unions — Imperial Typewriters, Mansfield Hosiery, and lately Grunwick."

John Chase came to Britain from Barbados 12 years ago

and works in Clapham Post Office where he is active in his union.

### LABOUR

He is scathing on the Labour Government's record, particularly on education, which has been one of the CBC's main campaigns: "I think the record of the Labour Government is bad in relation to meeting our aims."

"For example our children are not educated. The general thing is from school to the dole queue. I feel that the Labour Government just doesn't care."

20 per cent of young blacks in Brixton are unemployed and a third of all unemployed school leavers in London live in the Lambeth borough: "When they come out of school they become cannon fodder, victims of the society that put them in that position."

The CBC sees this being dealt with in two ways. On one side is

## candidate speaks on Brixton

education: "Black children are still in ESN schools and the lower streams of the comprehensives and at the moment they are unable to rise out of that situation."

"We want to see education socialised, in the sense that it becomes part of the community as a whole. Supplementary education that black people have participated in should be seen as a major part of the educational process and more should be spent in that area."

### UNEMPLOYMENT

On the other side is a programme to deal with unemployment. Ricky Cambridge points out that youth unemployment is used as an excuse for police attacks on blacks.

All agree that it is mad to have, for example, building workers or teachers unemployed when houses need to be built and renovated and classes

are enormous. But where can the money be found to put people to work in useful ways? Lloyd: "Councils have to pay money to loan sharks as interest and money is still being paid to former owners of nationalised industries. With all the costs, the money being paid in dole is probably more than enough to employ people in constructive work."

### NATIONALISE

"The Labour Party in opposition always says it will nationalise the banks and financial institutions. This is pie in the sky. We must nationalise these institutions without any compensation. These people have lived for years on speculation and push up the cost of living."

All the black comrades stress that the Green Paper on nationality and the Select Committee report on immigration will be at the centre of the campaign.

"The Green Paper would change the position of all immigrants — black people and Irish people. It will eradicate the 1948 citizenship law and bring forward laws that will make us aliens and guest workers."

### NEGATIVE

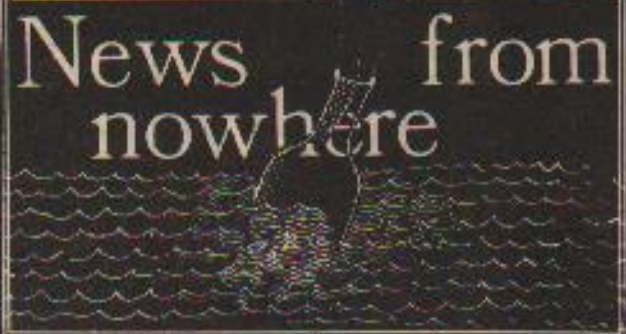
Ricky Cambridge is just as hard on the local Labour Party and its parliamentary representatives: "After 25 years and with an 8000 majority you become, well, relaxed. So it was a good thing Marcus Lipton moved away because he well and truly served the community — in a negative way."

Lloyd is optimistic about the electoral chances of Brixton Socialist Unity, but all agree that that is not the most important thing.

John Chase: "On 21 April we have to be able to say we have had an impact on the community and helped the struggles in the area. That will be the measure of our success."



LAMBETH Socialist Unity meeting



### Hitler's birthday in Chicago

THE AMERICAN Nazis will be celebrating Hitler's birthday on 20 April in Chicago. All attempts to deny them the right to march by legal appeals have now been defeated. The Nazis will be marching outside the city hall of Skokie, Illinois. This is a Chicago suburb of 70,000 people. Of these 40,000 are Jews, including 3,000 survivors from the concentration camps.

On 27 January this year the Illinois state Supreme Court dismissed the suits filed by Jewish survivors and decreed that the Nazis could march. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) backed the Nazis in the name of the First Amendment. The Nazis' mobilising poster displays three rabbis ["loose-tipped Hebes"] sacrificing a child. A Nazi pamphlet blames Jews for the "niggerisation of America."

The local residents have now decided that they will organise a counter-march. Already large numbers of American Jews have withdrawn support from ACLU. It has lost 20% of its membership. It is likely to lose even more if the Nazi march goes ahead. All eyes will be on Skokie on 20 April.

### Science vs democracy

THE Radical Science Journal was produced to encourage and foster discussions amongst Marxist scientists. Its main inspirer was Bob Young, an American historian at Cambridge University. Its editorial collective has on it talented young scientists such as Luke Hodgkin from the Communist Party.

The recent turn taken by the RSJ is, however, extremely disturbing. Information reaching us suggests that a theoretical absolutism is now in full swing. In the current issue there is a ferocious attack on Steve Rose and his positions on the current debate on IQ. The language deployed in the attack stinks. It is more reminiscent of the tone of crazed American sects such as the National Caucus of Labour Committees (an outfit which was infiltrated by the state and whose main aim was to break up meetings of left groups in the United States). The fact that the author of the attack is Les Levidow explains many things. Levidow is also responsible for ultra-left and provocative articles on the left and Grunwick in *The Leveller*.

Let us, however, leave all that aside. The point is that Hilary and Steven Rose received a copy of this diatribe. They penned a reply. The RSJ collective pondered over it for eight weeks. They then informed the authors that they had "unanimously" decided against publishing their response.

And this from a layer of people who pride themselves on their "libertarianism" and are constantly decrying the "bureaucratism" of the left groups. This scandalous decision must be reversed. Steven and Hilary Rose have done more to combat the pernicious influence of Eysenck and Jensen than all the Levidows of this world. A question for the RSJ collective: does democracy apply only to those who agree with you?

### Police and Computers

(This is the winning item from the NFN competition on computers)

HIS FRIENDS in the New Nationalist Party had been right. In the past half hour, while PC Burke had been watching the pub, he hasn't seen a single person going in who wasn't long-haired or coloured or generally suspicious-looking.

Burke's thoughts were interrupted by the appearance of a long-haired guy walking along the pavement in his direction. As the guy approached Burke's plain car, he jumped out pointing a gun at the suspect, and after getting him to chain himself to the fence using the handcuffs he had thrown at the 'sus', Burke proceeded to search him, turning a deaf ear at the usual nattering of legal rights. It was a good thing the police had been given the extra powers, they could do the job more efficiently. Before, as used to happen about five years ago in the late 70's, the 'sus' would run away while you were checking up on him.

Burke got into the car and after 'firing' at the 'sus' with the micro night-vision camera/transmitter-with-memory, he called CompuCrime by pressing the code on the keyboard which he had slid out from under the dashboard. The television in the dashboard lit up with:

Name: Robert S. Boulter  
Age: 35  
Address: Bradley Tenants Co-operative  
Job: Tool-maker, British Lowlands Workers Co-operative  
Character: untrustworthy dogmatic ruthless  
and flashed on and off  
Press: EMP: Employment  
History — POLIT: Political  
Activities — CR: Criminal  
Record — AD: Past Addresses

The flashing indicated entries, so Burke pressed POLIT and on the screen appeared:

Peoples Revolutionary Party since 1979 — AUEW Militant since 1977 — Press: Polit 1: Past Political Activity

It's enough to know that the guy is a conmie, Burke thought, and by pressing CR he obtained:

Convicted: Possession of 2 grams of cannabis 1968. Numerous arrests at picket lines and factory occupations. For details press CRI.

The sergeant at the Police College was right about the worrying rapid growth of the PRP during the past few years and the need to curb its popularity. The guy had come from a pub, so drunk and disorderly wouldn't be an unreasonable charge. A night in the cell and he won't be able to prove anything.

Burke got out of the car and pointing his gun started "Alright, you're..." but was cut short at the sight of the empty handcuffs dangling from the fence.

(All characters fictitious)  
AT THE beginning of this week, a 'push button' system for checking criminal records came into operation at Scotland Yard. It will greatly reduce what the Yard describes as 'several tons of paper work' which make up existing records.

Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM (JPL)



## North Sea

# Rigging the oil revenues

The recent publication of the Government's White Paper on what to do with the oil revenue has once more held up the prospect of vast riches just waiting to be picked up. But how true is this?

Blowout, an organisation set up in Aberdeen to fight for unionisation on the oil rigs, examines the attitude of the Labour Party and Government on North Sea oil.

In the White Paper of 1974, the Government pledged itself to taking 'majority state interest' in all existing North Sea oil field licences. The Labour Party election manifesto of that year (and since 1964) talked of the North Sea and Irish Sea oil resources, needing to come under full public ownership. Getting and distributing them, should come under Government control as well.

Tony Benn is reported at the Department of Energy conference in June 1976 as favouring oil resources being in the 'hands of the State'. This was after the British National Oil Corporation was set up in January 1976 as a first step to ensure this task. Thus sprang up the much vaunted state 'participation'.

The White Paper said that majority state interest was standard practice in every other oil producing country in the world, and it was a fair policy since the 'State contributed its share of the costs'. The Labour White Paper was thus proposing similar terms as the Middle East countries in terms of the ownership of oil. The reality of 'participation' was rather different.

The formation of the British National Oil Corporation meant an increasing role for the state, but a role is quite different from control. In an article in the *Sunday Times* (16 Jan 1977) Lord Kearton, the appointed chairperson of BNOC, put it in perspective: 'Mrs Thatcher was quite right

to chide us in the early days when the policy of 51 per cent State participation was interpreted as the BNOC buying a 51 per cent equity in existing fields'. And he goes on to outline BNOC's policy as being largely a means of getting information so as to tax company revenues properly. What BNOC wanted was an option to buy 51 per cent of a company's oil at full market price and a seat for BNOC on the board of all companies operating in the oil fields.

All that this entails is securing a certain supply of oil and making sure that the oil companies, as is their habit, do not avoid taxes. Its options to buy would bring in 24 million tons of oil a year, said Kearton, but it is not going to exercise these options.

### AGREEMENT

In the case of B.P. for instance, BNOC only exercises a small part of the option between 1979 and 1981. BNOC will buy only 12 to 16 per cent of oil. The corporation will, from 1982 to 1989 retain only 16 per cent and 12.75 per cent in the remaining years. Tony Benn said of this agreement that it was of 'major significance', and that 'the corporation would have an effective voice in the running of all commercial oilfields in which B.P. has an interest.'

This is certainly a far cry from the Labour Manifesto proclaiming the need for public ownership and control. Under the guise of controlling

decisions in the national interest BNOC took only a non-voting presence on B.P. operation committees. Referring to the agreement with B.P., Kearton was quoted in the *Scotsman* as saying 'we have not nationalised anyone, all our agreements have been voluntary.' The oil companies certainly did not put up much of a struggle.

### REVITALISE

It is being argued by all the political parties in Parliament that government revenues from oil can create a surplus in the balance of payments, and for revitalising the economy. Revenues will build up in the next five years to around £3,500 million and by 1985 to £5 million at 3.5 per cent and 5 per cent of the Gross National Product respectively. Benn is already campaigning and winning in the Parliamentary Labour Party and in the NEC for the setting up of a special fund to deploy £4,000 million of the North Sea revenues to reduce unemployment. Jack Jones is crying for this £4,000m to be realised in the April budget. Callaghan and Healey are arguing for about half this amount which is about 2 per cent of GNP. Most likely they will win.

It has already been argued in *Socialist Challenge* (20 Oct, 1977) that, most likely, 1 per cent will be used for restructuring industry and, due to the coming elections, Labour will be likely to put the other 1 per cent into decreasing taxes and boosting health and education expenditure.

In Benn's schema, one or two per cent is little in terms of international competition and investment. Britain has lagged behind Scandinavian countries, Japan and Germany in investment by as much as 10 per cent in GNP terms. One



per cent is not going to make much difference to the performance of British industry, where 70 per cent of companies are multi-national so there will be little profit ploughed back. There will be no significant impact on unemployment as, even the 1 per cent will be marked down for industries that are capital intensive and highly technical, and will therefore not require much labour. A persistent

balance of payments surplus, as will happen in 1980, is not the solution to Britain's ills, as most likely this will drive up the value of the pound and make exports even more uncompetitive.

Labour's policy on North Sea oil indicated once again a refusal to break with the 'rules of the game' of international capitalism, thus ensuring that the crisis continues. The only

way out of this impasse in a socialist direction is by a 'reorientation of the British economy towards international planning of production and trade based on the international workers movement', as Ernest Mandel has put it. Control over natural resources in the form of nationalisation under workers control is essential for breaking out of this impasse.

## Unemployment conference

# Liverpool jobs—falls at every fence

**THIS WEEKEND** Liverpool Trades Council is holding a delegate conference 'to organise opposition to closures and unemployment on Merseyside to give a future to our people and youth'. It has been called in the wake of massive redundancies and closures, writes **MARK TURNBULL**.

Only last Friday Western Ship Repairers announced that they would be sacking almost their entire work-force — 625 people. And earlier in the week 60 distribution workers in the city centre were also given notice of redundancy.

If the planning meetings for the conference and sponsorship list are anything to go by it will be an extremely large gathering. But without a clear programme of policies and action, the conference will be yet another talk-shop.

The proposed closure of Triumph No. 2 Plant and Lucas are likely to dominate the discussion as they are part of large national combines and involve almost half the 8,000 workers on Merseyside due to

be made redundant in the next few months. And it is with these two factories that the idea of alternative production has been linked.

The suggestion is that the Lucas Aerospace workers produce a new, almost pollution-free, engine to be fitted into a new sports car at Triumph in Speke. Labour lefts like Eddie Loyden are championing this idea to duck the issue of a strategy to fight unemployment as a whole.

At Birds Eye a strike last November by skilled Engineering Union members led to the immediate lay-off of the, mainly women, Transport Union production workers. Just before management settled the engineers' pay claim they announced 456 redundancies.

They then said that a return to work was conditional on the acceptance of these redundancies, as well as a new productivity plan and work re-organisation in the plant. The immediate response was for the traditionally divided AUEW and TGWU members to close ranks and declare their intention to fight.

But sheer militancy and good intentions were totally inadequate. So when management sacked the entire

workforce of 1,200 they had no answer.

The stewards committee went to management and begged for their jobs back, saying they would accept the 456 redundancies and other terms. The Board of Directors took over a week to reply, to further rub salt in the wounds, and decided to let them back.

But a different response has been given at the Fashion Design Centre in Kirkby. The women workers have occupied the place after the Swiss multinational owners, Starlux, announced its closure. Already many factories in the area, including the KME workers cooperative (Fisher-Bendix) have offered support.

### SLUMP

If this occupation and the fight against Speke and other closures are to be successful then a clear lead has to be given by the Trades Council conference.

Western Ship Repairers made it quite clear when announcing 625 redundancies that the attacks on jobs are due to the capitalist crisis:

'This slump in demand has resulted in substantial losses amounting to over £800,000 in

1977 and would have been considerably greater but for the temporary employment subsidy.'

'Every endeavour has been made to obtain work in the face of severe international competition and excess ship-repairing capacity.'

The conference will discuss policies to completely oppose all closures and redundancies, voluntary or otherwise, and for occupations of all plants threatened with closure or redundancies.

Action committees, democratically elected, if organised in all factories and workplaces and in the communities, would lay a strong basis to fight redundancies. The Trades Council should establish a permanent Merseyside Action Committee to unite these bodies.

Policies that can put Liverpool workers in the lead in fighting against Labour's attacks include:

\*For full work-sharing with no loss of pay

\*For a programme of public building and works to end unemployment (Merseyside has one of the worst records for housing. The council direct works department should be

expanded and hundreds of young apprentices taken on).

\*Alternative plans of production, based not on

profitability but on social need, financed by the Government, under workers control.

\*Nationalisation of all firms threatening redundancy or closure (Stop the phoney employment subsidies to firms which simply go to boost

profits. Older workers are being sacked so that young school-leavers can be hired on the cheap under these fraudulent schemes).

As the first shot, the Conference should call a one-day general strike on Merseyside, with picketing to ensure its effectiveness. A fighting fund to finance this and all future action is vital.

Mark Turnbull is a delegate to the Conference from the 61522 branch of the TGWU.

## Trade Union Diary

This column is open to all who wish to advertise trade union events. Copy must arrive at Socialist Challenge offices [328 Upper Street, London N1] by the Friday preceding the publication date.

**LIVERPOOL** Trades Council conference against unemployment: Sunday, 9 April, 10.30am, Everyman Theatre, 10 Hope Street, Liverpool. Delegate applications to: Liverpool Trades Council, Victoria Street, Liverpool 1.

**OXFORD** 'Democracy under threat in the TGWU' confer-

ence open to all T&G members, Cowley Community Centre, Oxford. Saturday, 8 April, 1pm, at Cowley Community Centre, Oxford. Conference details from: P Cullen, 23 Overmead Green, Blackbird Leys, Oxford.

Coaches to the conference will leave from the following places:

**Birmingham:** Hall of Memory, 10.30am

**Coventry:** Poole Meadow, 10.30am

**East London:** Stratford Broadway, 10am

**Central London:** Kings Cross, 10.30am



# NUT conference in Blackpool Teachers need united left

**EDUCATION SECRETARY Shirley Williams defended the Labour Government's record on education at the National Union of Teachers conference in Blackpool last week. This record includes £600m cut from the education budget and 40,000 unemployed teachers.**

Williams announced that such measures would be extended. 'Schools will need to be closed,' she demanded. From Blackpool **JONATHAN SILBERMAN** reports

Shirley Williams spoke with complete confidence. She knew the conference had endorsed the NUT executive's proposals which would prevent any effective union resistance to the Government's policies.

**On salaries:** the executive recommended acceptance of the present ten per cent offer and the dropping of the fight for the full claim. Other teaching unions are to maintain the withdrawal of voluntary services by teachers in pursuit of a better offer.

**On cuts:** the executive put forward a strategy based on local action. The national policy of the Government was accepted, leaving action against only its most dramatic effects or particularly odious Tory education authorities.

## CUT OFF

The executive argued that teachers were unable to do more on their own. They then proceeded to put forward policies on every major debate which cuts teachers off from the trade union movement.

**On what is taught in schools:** the executive maintained that only the 'teaching profession' was qualified to judge.

It rejected proposals from Lambeth and Westminster associations which called for links with parents, students, and the community — proposals which argued that only an alliance with the trade union movement would safeguard education.

**On racism:** the executive

opposed a resolution from Westminster and Barking which called for a militant policy against racism and fascism, both in schools and society at large.

The executive argued that motions calling for a campaign with other sections of the labour movement against immigration controls and the use of schools by fascist organisations were 'alarmist'.

## COMMUNITY

This attitude flowed from the executive's opposition to the section of the motion on racism at the Trade Union Congress which called for participation in local community relations councils and anti-racist committees.

In all these policies members of the Communist Party either spoke on behalf of, or in support of the executive. Leading CP members even went so far as to vote against the TUC Women's Charter, which was defeated on a show of cards by 63,000 votes.

## DISGRUNTLED

The CP suffered as a result, and they no longer have any of the three executive members they used to. Some CP members undoubtedly voted for the motions on racism and women's rights, but if the alliance between the CP and the right wing is to be broken, it will take more than the disgruntlement of individual members of the Communist

Party.

It will mean building a strong and united left opposition with the NUT.

The Socialist Teachers Alliance is the main grouping pledged to such a policy. STA members spoke over 30 times at the conference, and moved or seconded motions and amendments on all the major debates. But the STA is not the only left grouping.

Rank and File Teacher members made about ten speeches and proved themselves an

important part of the left in the union.

## STEERING

Executive and Rank and File member Dick North also argued in favour of 'rebuilding the left' in the NUT, while the STA and Rank and File have agreed to establish a joint steering committee after conference to prepare next year's motions and ensure a united left slate in the union's elections.



TREVOR PHILLIPS: elected NUS president

THE FIRST results of the National Union of Students conference elections were coming in as we went to press. Broad Left candidates topped the poll in both the presidential and vice-presidential elections, with the candidates of the Socialist Students Alliance coming second in both instances.

The most marked difference from last year is a dramatic slump in the votes for Tory candidates whose first preference total were almost halved from last year. This means that

the SSA came second in both the presidential and vice-presidential first preference polls for the first time.

Votes in the election for president included (first figure is first preference vote; second figure is final total): Broad Left, 348; 358. SSA, 112; 115. National Organisation of International Socialist Students, 104; 110. Federation of Conservative Students, 74; 77.

In the vice-presidential election: BL, 314; 403. SSA, 181; 198. NOISS, 100; 107. FCS, 81; 88.

## LEICESTER — ABORTION

**A DOCTOR was recently jailed for 18 months for carrying out an illegal abortion in Leicester, where legal abortions are hard to come by.**

**FIONA RANGLES, from the Leicester Abortion Campaign, tells the story.**

The woman concerned, whose marriage was breaking down, first saw her family doctor. He refused to refer her for a National Health abortion, saying that there were no physical or social grounds.

He also refused to prescribe her anti-depressants as he feared that she might misuse them. The second doctor in the practice also refused her a National Health abortion, but advised her to go to the British Pregnancy Advisory Service in Birmingham.

The woman did not follow this advice as it would have meant an overnight stay and she was worried that her relatives might find out what she was up to. Instead she went to a doctor in Leicester who was willing to do a backstreet abortion. She was later admitted to hospital with an incomplete septic abortion.

When the woman first went to her own doctor there were clearly psychiatric and social grounds for referral for a safe, legal NHS abortion, even under the restrictive 1967 Abortion Act.

The National Abortion Campaign in Leicester continues to fight for the proper implementation of the 1967 Act, for an outpatient NHS Abortion clinic and for a woman's right to choose whether to continue with a pregnancy.

Until the availability of abortion facilities in Leicestershire improves there will continue to be a market for backstreet abortionists and women's lives and health will be at risk.

## EDINBURGH — GAS WORKERS

**PUT your mark in the box marked 'No Strike' was the advice given to members of the Edinburgh gas branch of the National and Local Government Officers on 17 March.**

The recommendation came in a letter from management at Scottish Gas at Granton near Edinburgh.

But 1,500 clerical and administrative workers ignored the letter and voted overwhelmingly to strike from 24 March in defence of 14 of their co-workers who had been sacked for taking strike action in support of a re-grading claim.

Management of Scottish Gas had earlier decided to 'bring matters to a conclusion' by sacking the 14 wages clerks who had been on official strike since 3 December, and the solidarity action of the NALGO Gas branch is now in its second week.

The Government's Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service was brought into the dispute at the weekend, but talks held by ACAS have so far proved unsuccessful in persuading management to withdraw its dismissal of the striking workers.

Support for both the sacked 14 and for the solidarity action taken by NALGO gas branch is urgent given the state of the gas industry. Like other nationalised industries, hundreds of jobs have been lost in gas in the last few years on the altar of high technology while the drive for increased productivity will mean the loss of 2000 more jobs by 1980 if Sir Denis

Rooke, chairperson of British Gas, has his way.

The strikers themselves have yet to tackle all the bosses' attempts to break the strike. Scottish Gas has assembled managers from all over Scotland at the Commodore Hotel in Edinburgh in an attempt to keep the gas headquarters open and maintain the functioning of computers.

The calling of mass pickets every Monday is a step to halting this and the strike committee is organising pickets of those gas showrooms which remain open.

The call last week by the strike committee and the local NALGO Action Group for the setting up of an open strike support committee is a first step towards involving workers throughout the public sector in defence of the right to strike.

But as much support as possible is necessary, both in Edinburgh and nationally. The strike committee can be contacted at: Edinburgh Trades Council, Picardy Place, Edinburgh. Tel: 031-556 3006.

## GLASGOW — ABORTION

**THE Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child held a public meeting in Glasgow on Monday night. The meeting was part of SPUC's campaign to make its anti-abortion position a central issue in the Garscadden by-election.**

Even the local pro-abortion campaigners, who had good reason to know how high feelings were running in the area, were surprised at the turn-out in support of SPUC.

The Tory and SNP candidates both confirmed their earlier anti-abortion positions. Dewar, the Labour candidate, said that he thought the 1967 Act had been much too liberally interpreted for the last ten years. He supported the implementation of the report of the Select Committee on Abortion which called for a tightening up of so-called abuses of the law.

Most shocking of all was the statement sent by the CP candidate, Sammy Barr, who succumbed to the pressures of the anti-abortion bandwagon. Barr stated that although he supported a 'woman's right to choose', he did not agree with 'free abortion on demand.'

His attempt to maintain his credibility amongst women while hopelessly compromising with reactionary forces will not slip by unmarked.

## POWER WORKERS

THE POWER workers national joint shop stewards committee urged a 'no' vote to the employers' latest pay offer at the weekend. Balloting on the offer began on Monday, and George Wake, spokesperson for the shop stewards, criticised the union leaders involved for their attitude to the offer.

'Proper leadership,' said Wake, 'would have mobilised the rank and file and forced the employers to meet the original claim for a substantial increase in scheduled salaries. We believe that the lack of leadership is again shown as ballot papers go out without a recommendation.'

Four unions are involved in the negotiations covering 90,000 workers — electricians EEU, engineering ACEW, transport TGWU, and general and municipal GMWU.

The offer itself provides for only a 7 per cent increase in basic pay, together with a productivity deal. Productivity deals in the past in the power industry have meant the loss of tens of thousands of jobs.



ABOUT 300 delegates and 2,000 in all attended the Labour Party Young Socialists conference last weekend. The Conference was entertained to a mixture of distortion and bravado from the YS national committee.

It claimed to have led the major anti-fascist mobilisations over the last year, including Lewisham; it slandered the Womens Liberation Movement by accusing it of wanting to set up separate trade unions for women; and told lies after lies about

the role the Provisionals are playing in the anti-imperialist struggle in the North of Ireland.

The national committee even went so far as to accuse the Provisionals of strike breaking during the FBU dispute, a total distortion of what took place. A number of successful fringe meetings took place including ones on the WLM and Ireland where the slanders and lies were actively countered.

Photo: MARK RUSHER (DFL)



Build the Carnival

Socialist Challenge — one year on

By TARIQ ALI

EVER SINCE Margaret Thatcher's notorious interview on World in Action, the whole question of racism has become a central issue in British politics.

The leaders of the Labour Party responded to the Tory offensive by playing the numbers game. The answer of Callaghan, Rees and Co. was based on one point: 'There are hardly any blacks coming in. So what's all the fuss about?'

Once you fall into the numbers trap you're finished. Because you've accepted that there is a rational basis to the arguments utilised by Enoch Powell and the National Front.

Thatcher was quite explicit on this point. She said that there was a 'genuine' fear on the part of people, who felt that they were being 'swamped'.

HYSTERIA

Callaghan replied that this was not the case. The only blacks being allowed in were either highly-skilled or dependents of those already living here.

'Dependents', responded the Tories. 'What dependents? Restrict their numbers. Establish a register.' Hysteria and paranoia must be encouraged at all costs. Frighten the populace so that it rejects Labour at the polls. Conserve British culture with the Tories.

But Labour hadn't quite finished. They weren't prepared to be outflanked so easily. Wait for the Select Committee report. It wasn't long in coming. The report pleased every racist in the country. Its recommendations were unanimous. Tory and Labour racists linked arms to defend the white race from the black hordes.

Sydney Bidwell, to his everlasting shame, marched shoulder to shoulder with Enoch Powell. Racist prejudices are, after all, very widespread in the British labour movement.

Well, what has this all got to do with the Anti-Nazi Carnival on 30 April? It has everything to do with it. For all the happenings of recent months have aided and strengthened the Nazis. The renewed Tory offensive on race this week will provide even more support for the racists and fascists. A counter-offensive is essential.

'But the Anti-Nazi League hasn't got the right line on fighting racism', someone might say. True, we reply. It hasn't. But it does not prevent you or anyone else from marching with your own banners against immigration controls and the Immigration Acts.

These are the banners which Socialist Challenge supporters will be carrying. These are the banners which the students active in NOISS and SSA will also be carrying.

No one will be excluded from the Carnival. Except for those who choose to exclude themselves.

It will be our first opportunity to let Tory and Labour politicians know what we think of them. It will be a show of strength by the anti-racist and anti-fascist movement on a national scale.

We must not just back it with words. We must build it. We must participate in it. We must help to make it the largest and most powerful display of anger at the growing tide of racism which is sweeping this country.

All out on 30 April. Let nothing stand in the way.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE will be a year old in June. It is a good time to stand back and take stock. What are our strengths and weaknesses? How can we take the paper forward in the present period? How can we help to develop a network of local correspondents? What should they be concentrating on?

These are some of the questions which Socialist Challenge supporters will be discussing at a one-day conference on Saturday, 27 May at Conway Hall in London.

The conference is aimed to establish a more consistent and organised dialogue between the newspaper and its supporters. The current editorial board will be proposing the adoption of 'Our Common Ground' as the political basis of Socialist Challenge, and — as part of the discussion around the need for revolutionary unity — will propose full support for the Socialist Unity campaigns, particularly leading up to the general election.

It was on the basis of 'Our Common Ground' that the paper first approached other organisations to join the editorial board. Although this offer was rejected then, some recent progress has been made. Richard Kirkwood now attends

editorial board meetings as a formal observer from the steering committee of the International Socialist Alliance, set up following the 150-strong conference of ex-IS militants in London.

Just as important, Socialist Challenge supporters groups have spread, and developed a life of their own. There are now groups in 60 towns and cities involving IMG comrades, non-aligned militants, and members of other political organisations.

Conference will be discussing the activities undertaken by these supporters groups and how to co-ordinate future initiatives. The editorial board feels that in addition to activity around elections, anti-racist

the moment, there is growing feeling that if they remain talk-shops they will become increasingly ineffective.

COMMITTEE

It will also be necessary to elect a national Socialist Challenge committee at conference to meet regularly (quarterly) and provide the overall direction and general policy of the paper in conjunction with the editorial board. This should include representatives from every area — including the North-west, North-east, Midlands, South-west, South-east, Wales, Yorkshire, Scotland and the Home Counties.

This is the body which in our view should be about 20-strong and should elect the new editorial board. Clearly, membership of the new board — which will have to be London-based for practical reasons — should not be limited to comrades elected to the national committee, or else new political groups or currents would not be able to join the board between conferences.

NOMINATIONS

The new editorial board should in our opinion give all political organisations or tendencies supporting the paper proportional representation.

Both these steps will improve the paper, but equally as important is the need to have regular regional meetings of convenors of Socialist Challenge groups and of local correspondents. We also hope to have a series of schools on revolutionary journalism in the months following the conference.

Nominations for the national committee which controls the paper are now open. To facilitate voting, we suggest 200 word motivations for each nomination be published in the pages of Socialist Challenge in the weeks before the conference.

CONFERENCE

The conference will be open to all supporters of the paper. We propose that every militant who sells the paper has a vote at conference. Attendance should be organised wherever possible through local Socialist Challenge groups. Where none exist, write directly to the editorial board for your credentials.

We will be inviting observers from Big Flame, Socialist

Voice, Workers Action, Socialist Worker, Socialist Review and New Left Review. And we encourage comrades who actively support the paper in Workers' League, the Libertarian Communist Group and the International Socialist Alliance to attend with voting rights.

Many Socialist Challenge groups have invited members from the editorial board to come to their meetings in the next month in preparation for the conference. We hope these debates will be reflected in the paper and invite 500-word contributions.

But to give comrades wishing to make more extensive contributions that possibility, we are proposing a Socialist Challenge special conference bulletin. We ask supporters to limit their contributions to 2000 words and have them at our offices by 17 April on stencils.

WHAT TO DO

In the next weeks before the Conference we urge all our supporters to:

\*Join your local Socialist Challenge group, or set one up if none exist.

\*Invite a member of the editorial board along to your group's next meeting.

\*Write up your views on the project behind the paper and our proposals for the conference debate, for the bulletin and for Socialist Challenge.

\*Submit nominations for the national committee.

\*Select a convenor of your local group and/or a local correspondent and send us the name and address of the comrade(s).

\*Register for the conference.

\*Organise a fund-raising event to ensure an optimistic finance report.

REGISTRATION FORM

I would like to attend the first annual conference of Socialist Challenge supporters on 27 May in London.

Name:.....

Address:.....

Socialist Challenge Group (if any):.....

Enclose £1 registration fee to cover the cost of the bulletin and the hall. (Cheques, POs made payable to Socialist Challenge.)

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



IN BRIEF

Southall

THE LARGEST black workers' organisation in Southall, West London, is the Indian Workers Association. Its main leader is Vishnu Sharma of the Communist Party.

After hearing of Syd Bidwell's role on the Select Committee, Sharma told the Southall Gazette: 'I am staggered and lost, and most surprised that he could agree with some of the points in the report.'

Bidwell was invited to attend a public meeting of the IWA in the Dominion Cinema last Sunday. He initially agreed, but backed out at the last moment. His reasons?

'I'm not going into a bear garden on the stage of the Dominion Cinema. This is not a matter that can be resolved at a mass meeting.'

The meeting took place nonetheless. But only 200 people turned up. They were addressed by Vishnu Sharma, Lord Avebury and Alex Lyon. The last two defended much of the Report, but attacked sections of it. Lyon went out of his way to defend Syd Bidwell as 'an honest and sincere man, who is wrong on some questions'.

Sharma criticised Bidwell for refusing to come to the meeting, but suggested no way forward. There was no discussion on how to fight the proposals of the Select Committee.

It was, as if having got their feelings on Bidwell of their respective chests, it was back to business as usual. However anger is building up within the local Labour Party. The Ealing

and Southall Labour Party is on record as opposing the Immigration Acts.

The question is what they will do. It is now almost definite that unless the LP ditches Bidwell, there will be a Socialist Unity candidate against him in the General Election.

by OLIVER NEW

Hammersmith

SOCIALIST UNITY will be standing three candidates in the White City Ward in Hammersmith, West London. It was decided at an election campaign meeting on 30 March.

The three candidates are: Charlie Van Gelderen, who was a Labour councillor in Hammersmith for four years; Kate Truscott, a member of Big Flame and a full-time worker for the Hounslow Hospital

Occupation; and Ginny Hill, a student at North London Polytechnic and an activist in the women's movement.

The first task of the campaign is to look for headquarters in the area. Serious canvassing will start next week.

White City was chosen as the ward to contest because one of the National Front's most serious candidates is standing there, and because of the situation in the White City housing estate. This is one of the Greater London Council's worst sink estates, which it is presently trying to palm off onto the local council.

Next week's issue

Socialist Challenge hopes to publish an interview with Lucas shop stewards on the alternative plan they have drawn up to avoid redundancies by producing socially

useful products. A major feature on housing will be published, as well as extensive coverage on the Lambeth by-election, and a report of the Women's Liberation National Conference.

The issue of the paper that follows will have a slightly different character as it appears at the time of the conference of the International Marxist Group.

In order to enable our designers, type-setters and editorial staff to participate in the conference we have to prepare a large section of the paper in advance.

We will be publishing the second-place winner of the paper's Xmas short story competition, Pretty Bubbles in the Air by Stephen Chake; a feature on Cuban cinema by Mike Chanani; 'Captain Nerve-wreck', the widely publicised cartoon strip from Republican News; as well as a striking case of how a black doctor confronted racism at his hospital.



# SEXUAL POLITICS

Since the first Women's Liberation Conference held in this country almost a decade ago, the movement has gone from strength to strength. More and more women use the collective strength that the movement has given them to take up all aspects of their oppression.

The existence of the WLM has begun to force the labour movement to seriously consider the question of women's oppression and start to involve the whole of the working class in these struggles. The

revolutionary left has been forced to discuss the real meaning of the old slogan 'No revolution without women's liberation, no women's liberation without revolution', and to begin doing something about it.

The fight for abortion, for equal pay and for equal opportunity have been widely fought for by both men and women within the labour movement. New aspects of women's oppression are continuously brought to the attention of society as a whole. More women are being drawn into struggle — at their

workplaces and in the community — for nurseries, better conditions, and to fight against all forms of discrimination.

At the Women's Liberation Conference this year violence and rape will be one area of debate. Women meet violence in some form nearly every day of their lives. JUDE WOODWARD considers some of the problems sexual violence poses for socialists and feminists, and she reviews the new pamphlet that has been produced by Women Against Rape.

## Sexual violence against women

# 'We have a new confidence to speak out'

A WOMAN in Shepherd's Bush, London, was held prisoner overnight by a violent rapist. When she ran into a betting shop the following morning screaming for help, her cries were ignored and the man was able to drag her out of the shop and rape her again without any opposition.

A young woman on a train to Paddington was savagely assaulted and thrown onto the tracks. She is still lying in a coma in a West London hospital.

With cases like this reported in the press virtually every day, it is not surprising that the issues of rape and violence against women will be a major discussion at the Women's Liberation Conference this year.

It is generally accepted that violence against women is increasing, in the context of an acute social crisis when all forms of violence are on the increase.

Many women have seen the need for a seventh demand for the women's movement on the question of rape and violence against women. Most women are agreed on the need for such a demand. But different approaches for action have been suggested in the wide-ranging discussion about what

should be done.

One response has been that a large number of women sympathise with calls for higher or minimum sentences for rapists. There are problems with this approach. Above all, as socialists, we do not wish to be associated with demands that seem to lend credibility to the bourgeois courts as the way of solving the problem of crime, whether the criminals be rapists, 'muggers' or wife beaters.

This is not only because we understand the origin of these crimes in class society. It is certainly not that we think, because they are committed largely by working class people, that they are somehow more forgivable than crimes

committed by the bosses or the state.

In many ways they are less forgivable. In so far as they are crimes committed within the working class, they split and divide that class and hinder the development of a united working class movement against the State and the bourgeoisie.

Of course, we should not accept too unthinkingly the media's biased reporting. The popular press loves to exploit the racist and sexist fears of the blacks from the ghetto threatening 'our' women, and so routinely sensationalises every case involving blacks.

The main reason we cannot call on the courts to solve these crimes is because in their defence of the status quo, they themselves are sexist and racist. The courts will not actually seek to prevent these kind of crimes, and when they implement the law they will generally do so in a racist, sexist and anti-working class manner that divide us from each other still more.

In practical terms, the research that has been done into the penal system in other areas of the law tends to suggest that longer sentences do not tend to act as deterrents from crimes of violence.

However, in calling for judges and magistrates who make blatantly sexist judgements to be removed from office, as with McKinnon after his racist judgement, or demanding that a woman's sexual history should not be brought up as evidence in rape cases, the emphasis is different than in calling for higher sentences.

Here the aim is to expose the real bias of the courts against their commonly assumed 'objectivity'. And to defend women against harassment if they choose to go to law. In this context, women can usefully look at other areas of the law that needs changing, not because we see a solution to rape and violence lying in such changes but to expose their offensiveness to women.

For example, the idea has been discussed of campaigning for a change in the rape law from 'without consent', as it stands at the moment, to 'against our will', which would take into account the numerous ways that women are forced into sexual liaisons by psychological pressure that they feel unable to refuse. Other suggestions include demanding that the possibility of rape within marriage should be recognised in law.

In the United States, a movement towards vigilante tactics developed among feminists, and some women have suggested that they would like to see similar activities in this country.

While emphasising that it is fundamentally important that women learn self defence — and in local areas, where kerb crawlers, attacks and harassment demand it, women should organise groups to protect themselves — it is vital that women do not allow themselves to be lined up with white vigilante groups who attack blacks on the basis that they are 'muggers', and it would be utterly counter-productive for women to find themselves in jail for crimes of violence.

In any case, this is more likely to rouse further attacks on women than ameliorate the situation.

In the discussions that followed the workshop at the Socialist Feminist conference in January it was felt that perhaps the most productive way to approach the problem is from the point of view of women themselves, and how capable they are of responding to male violence.

Most women are not able to handle themselves adequately, because they are not trained to do so through physical education or by fighting in the playground as children. Men, when they attack women, often depend upon the fact that most women are too terrified to even attempt to kick them on the shins.

We must insist that girls in schools receive the same physical education as boys and that part of their physical training should be geared towards teaching them to defend themselves. Local

authorities should provide self-defence classes for all women who want them, to enable us to overcome some of our fear.

A general theme has been the importance of linking rape with other questions of sexism

### DID YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE RAPED IT IS LIKELY THAT:

- You will know your attacker (66%)
- He will live in the same area as you (82%)
- You will be raped in his or your home (56%)
- He will have planned the rape (82%)
- He will use some degree of force (85%)
- He will use beating or choking (71%)

and violence: in advertising and the media, where a view of women as the passive objects of male sexuality, fosters attitudes that lead to violence and rape; the violent and often

downright sadistic treatment of women in hospitals and clinics, particularly during childbirth and in mental hospitals; and the need to fight against the concept of 'conjugal rights' in marriage.

There should also be adequate care, counselling and help for women who have been raped, through centres run by women and under their control. Finally, there is a need for an all-out assault on the myths that are current about rape; such as that rape is due to men's sudden and uncontrollable urges, or the result of provocation on the part of women. Most rapes are planned and most take place at home.

One of the great gains of the women's movement has been that by fostering a sense of sisterhood and shared experience, many women have gained the confidence to speak out against the violence that haunts the whole of their lives. Through developing this and building on it we can gain the strength to force society to change.

# National WLM Conference in Brum

Ladywood Girls School, Freeth Street, Ladywood

The three main areas of discussion will be: How do we oppress each other within the women's movement?

Existing campaigns — their effectiveness and alternative forms of organisation and activity.

How do we come together to organise to achieve these aims?

It is hoped that women will stay in the same groups to discuss all these areas during the conference.

Registration fee: £3 or £1.50 for claimants.

Cheques (crossed) and P.O.'s only no cash, payable to National Women's Liberation Conference 1978.

Send to Women's Centre, 76 Brighton Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham B12.

Please try and register in advance enclosing SAE.

### IF YOU HAVE BEEN RAPED OR SEXUALLY ASSAULTED

How can the Rape Crisis Centre help you?

The Rape Crisis Centre is willing to talk to any woman who has been sexually assaulted or raped, about anything, at any time of the day or night. Our service is free and confidential. We can give you: — emergency and on-going support.

— information about VD clinics, doctors and medical procedures.

— information about police, court and legal procedures.

— we can accompany you to a clinic, police station or court.

If you need someone to talk to, or medical or legal help, phone the Rape Crisis Centre on 01-340 6145.



Photo: ANGELA PHILLIPS (FL)

# Review Women at WAR

WOMEN Against Rape's new pamphlet *Women at W.A.R.* contains much moving testimony to the abuse that women suffer, not only from the experience of rape itself, but at the hands of the police, courts and medical profession after a rape has taken place.

Karen Crocker in 'No

Lasting Harm?', describes the incredible medical tests that she was expected to subject herself to in order to ascertain that she had been raped.

'They demanded that I should refrain from intercourse for three days and then have a test, then have intercourse (with her husband) and then have another test.' And this on top of a whole series of examinations.

One woman writes of the experience of rape in marriage

— the psychological difficulty in coming to terms with the idea that her husband's sexual demands should correctly be seen as rape.

Others describe the particular difficulties faced by black women; of the traditional view of white men that black women were placed on earth for their sexual gratification; and of lesbians, who are often told that they are asking for it by trying to do without men.

The pamphlet is clearly and

directly written, without being over emotional. However, the problem is that it does not offer any solutions for women beyond demanding financial independence from men. It does mention that women should organise for their self defence, and it details the complete lack of concern for women evidenced by the courts in their treatment of rape cases.

But to suggest as the pamphlet does that all violence against women can be explained by their lack of money is to ignore the complexity of the situation. It is even worse than the kind of economism which says that the whole problem of women's liberation lies in equal pay or struggles in the work place,

It overlooks the ideological oppression of women and the many ways in which women and men are taught to view each other.

### MISLEADING

It is one thing to say that women would gain from financial independence from men; it is quite another to maintain that they will be free from all the oppression that they suffer by a few pounds in their pockets. And it is particularly misleading to imply that this will free women from the violence that they meet everywhere in their daily lives. The violence of men's attitudes to women — 'I gave it to her last night', the violence on the

street and at home, in the media and in women's own attitude to themselves.

Women will not be given their liberation by hand outs from the State. They will have to fight and win that liberation for themselves.

Women organising together can gain the individual and collective strength to ensure that their demands do not go unanswered, in their own homes and in society as a whole. The pamphlet begins by demonstrating this clearly, but seems to back down at the end.

*Women At W.A.R.*, price 50p plus 10p p&p is available from: Falling Wall Press Ltd, 79 Richmond Rd, Montpellier, Bristol.



# HOME NEWS

## Brixton Socialist Unity Putting blacks back on the map

THE BRIXTON Socialist Unity campaign is on the road. They have printed sixty thousand copies of the manifesto reprinted below which will be going into every house in Lambeth Central.

The other parties have ground into action too: workers have had the smiling Wilsonian face of Labour's John Tilley drop through their letter box, standing on 'the record of the Labour Government'

The Liberal, David Blunt, has produced a leaflet called 'Blunt Speaking' [ho, ho!] which offers community-based politics with no policies except support for the Lib-Lab pact.

The Tory has not been seen and only the faithful still believe in his existence. The National Front has been just as scarce.

A fortnight ago a few of them turned up to sell papers, but last Saturday the Anti-Nazi League and the local anti-racist committee, backed by the Socialist Workers Party and Socialist Unity, held a picket and street meeting. The fascists gave it a miss.

### ACCOUNTABLE

Sadly it wasn't possible to have agreement between Brixton Socialist Unity and the

Flame/SWP. The SWP made a last minute offer to allow other people onto their campaign committee, but would not negotiate on the choice of candidate. A Socialist Unity open meeting had already decided on the need to elect a candidate who would be accountable and felt unable to accept the SWP's position.

On this page we reprint the Brixton Socialist Unity manifesto and local militants say why they, along with many others, are backing the campaign.

Perhaps most importantly supporters from all over the country can contribute to the campaign by reaching in their

pockets. Parliamentary elections take a lot of cash and that is just what Brixton Socialist Unity hasn't got.

### FUND RAISING

Fund raising events are planned — one is advertised on this page — but individual donations will have to make up the bulk of the money. You may not be able to come down and help actively but show your support this way.

Send to Socialist Unity c/o Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N1. Cheques should be made out to Socialist Unity.



JOHN CHASE, Lambeth Socialist Unity candidate

Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM (IFL)

## Brixton manifesto Fight the big lie

### WHAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR:

#### HOUSING:

WE WILL fight for the building of decent houses at rents and prices that people can afford. We would renovate run-down properties with 100 per cent grants to house-holders.

Empty council properties should be made habitable and let to those in need. Until there are houses for all we support the right of people to squat. **Freeze rents. Houses for People, Not Profits.**

#### UNEMPLOYMENT:

WE WOULD slash unemployment by reducing the working week to 35 hours with no loss of pay. Reduce the retirement age by 5 years on full pay.

**No Redundancies — Work or Full Pay.**

#### WAGES:

LABOUR'S social contract means that a family of four has suffered a £10 cut in purchasing power in the last four years. We demand an end to wage controls and a guaranteed minimum wage, linked to rises to the cost of living.

#### WOMEN:

WOMEN must have full and equal rights at work and in society. We must have the right to choose whether or not we have children.

We support free abortion and contraception on demand. The scandal of sterilisation of women against their will (especially black women) must be stopped.

#### NURSERIES:

MORE nurseries must be built, open 24-hours and run under the control of people who use them.

#### HEALTH:

HOSPITALS and health care are a right not a luxury. We demand an increase in spending, better medical facilities and no dental, prescription, or spectacle charges. And end to private practice.

### EDUCATION:

WE DEMAND an end to the cut-backs in spending and the unemployment among teachers. We shall fight to improve the quality of education. Our children deserve the best.

### WHERE WOULD THE MONEY COME FROM?

— Take over the assets of the bankers and insurance companies.

— Abolish all arms expenditure.

— Stop all payments to the owners of nationalised industries.

— **'IMMIGRATION' AND 'RACE'**

BLACKS are over 20 per cent of the population in Lambeth Central. This is why race is a central issue in the by-election.

Unemployment amongst black youth is 20 per cent; housing policies discriminate and exclude us; the standard of our education is 'sub-normal' and our young are brutalised as part of everyday police practice.

For these reasons we have to define our stand on race and 'immigration'. Abstention is no solution even though this by-election is not about power.

### Education

The situation of the ESN school intake is 75 per cent black. And in the low streams of the comprehensive and secondary modern schools, our children are no better off.

The local education authorities do nothing about the Young National Front or about racist and fascist teachers in schools. We must combat racism in the literature our children read.

### The State

Local police continue to brutalise black youths and arrest them on sus, conspiracy and attempted theft.

Local magistrates continue to give black youth heavy sentences on frame-ups and minor charges.

We demand a public enquiry into police racism in Lambeth.

### The Established Parties and the National Front

Racist attacks come in many shapes: Labour's Green Paper on a new 'nationality law' and the Select Committee's Report on Race and Immigration (both adopted from the Tories) is designed to keep blacks out of the UK and to control the movements of those here.

They will take away the few rights that up until now black people have had. These include: the vote; the right to be on a jury; the right to stand for public office; the right to work in Government's service.

The National Front puts all these racist positions together and adds fascism.

### FIGHT BACK!

THE solutions of the established parties and the NF are not acceptable to the people of Lambeth, especially black people.

We have no alternative but to fight back.

This election gives us the chance to fight for a socialist solution.

'Immigration' is not the problem. It is a lie to divert attention away from the real source of the problems. The Labour Government offers no solutions.

Tilley, the Labour candidate, will be as guilty as Lipton was in supporting racist legislation.

**UNITY SOCIAL**  
Action packed social for Brixton Socialist Unity. Two new wave bands. 75p admission.

Saturday, 8 April, 8pm till late, Waterloo Action Centre, Baylis Road, London SE1

We say no to immigration controls and we demand the immediate repeal of all immigration laws. Don't give the state the right to deport black people.

### DEFEND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS:

WE ARE for the disbanding of the Special Patrol Group; the repeal of the PTA; the repeal of the Criminal Trespass Act and against the harassment of all minority groups and gay people.

### AGAINST IMPERIALISM:

WE ARE for the rights of all oppressed people in their struggle against imperialism.

We are for the right of the Irish people to self determination and the withdrawal of all British troops from Ireland.

We support the people of Zimbabwe in their fight against the white regime. We reject the puppet coalition of Smith-Sithole and Muzorewa.

We demand the Labour Government breaks all links with the racist regime in South Africa and gives full support to the black peoples' struggle for independence.

**USE YOUR VOTE VOTE BRIXTON SOCIALIST UNITY VOTE JOHN CHASE**



PICKETS at the second day of Kim Gordon's trial

## Why we back Socialist Unity

**SIMON WHITE, secretary, All-Lambeth Anti-Racist Movement and NALGO member (personal capacity).**

'Racism is a key issue nationally because of the current racist debate on immigration. This gives the Lambeth by-election a unique significance.

'Black people in Lambeth suffer from racist housing allocation policies, from massive unemployment particularly among youths and from police harassment using sus and conspiracy charges.

'It's essential that nationally we build an alternative to the Labour Party's capitulation on race and that locally we build a strong united campaign in the community to defeat the interests of black people.

'I'm particularly hopeful that the Socialist Unity campaign will bring black and white groups together in common struggle and that this unity will continue after the elections.'

**LIZ DROMFIELD, member of a local socialist-feminist group (personal capacity)**

'There are two things that are strikingly different about Brixton Socialist Unity. First, it is the only campaign that is democratically organised. This means that the socialist-feminist groups are able to have an independent voice within the campaign.

'Secondly, it is the only campaign which recognises and supports the autonomous women's movement. As such it provides a way of getting across information about the women's movement and of supporting and stimulating the existing campaigns in the area.'

**A.X. CAMBRIDGE, editor Black Liberator (personal capacity)**

'Socialist Unity is an obvious new development in Central Lambeth, although it poses organisational and ideological problems that shouldn't be underestimated.

'But if it is an advance I would hate to see that it only existed to take on issues around the election and didn't continue. Because it's an advance, if it didn't continue it would be a retrograde step.'

**LLOYD, a spokesperson for the Croydon and Brixton Collective**

'It is a tremendous develop-

ment inside the white left as a whole: sections of the white left coming together and working out a policy around which people can organise and develop a programme of struggle.

'For so long the left has been fragmented to the point where they become null and void, where nobody takes any notice of them and they're unable to make any impact on the working class as a whole.

**MINNIE JANSEN, Lambeth Trades Council member (personal capacity)**

'The thing about elections is that all parties are forced to put their policies to the fore. And we're no exception.

'We've got a manifesto that puts forward a programme and arguments against the Labour Government and the union leaders which we can present to the mass of people in Brixton. And let's face it, that's not something revolutionaries are able to do very often.

'But this also provides a chance to help the various campaigns fighting for these policies. There's the central question of fighting racism, obviously, but we also hope we'll be able to support local workers fighting on cuts and wages, the abortion campaign, the Tribunal on Ireland and so on.

'We don't and shouldn't ask these campaigns and struggles to support Socialist Unity, obviously. But we do hope we'll be able to give them the maximum help.'

**ALISON LOWTON, TGWU, worker at Union Place print shop, which unanimously agreed to back Brixton Socialist Unity (personal capacity)**

'The Labour Party has not just been inadequate at representing the interests of working people. The Labour Party in government in the last four years has carried out more vicious attacks even than the Tories before it.

'I don't think we're in elections simply to provide a parliamentary alternative. It must be much more than that. It must be a way of organising and co-ordinating all those people who have suffered under the Labour Government and want to fight back. And that must go way beyond elections.'

Photo: MARK RUSHER (IFL)



# HOMENEWS

## Wembley Asians react to select committee

# "Collective action needed in Asian community"

THE ASIAN community has not been slow to react to the Select Committee Report on Race Relations and Immigration. At the community centre in Wembley, Subhash Patel has a huge queue of Asians who have come to see him, not for the usual discussion about housing and the social services, but to ask him 'What is our future? Where do we stand? Is this a second Uganda?'

He has little to say to reassure them.

JUDE WOODWARD talked to SUBHASH PATEL, community worker in Wembley and MARY DINES of War on Want.

Both of them are confident that the recommendations of the Select Committee will be implemented. 'Above all', said Mary Dines, 'we should be clear that the essence of the report is nothing new. It just shows that they are developing their old policies.'

'Since 1970 people have been pushed back and back on waiting lists for immigration. This will just make people wait longer — particularly wives and children of people who are already in the country.'

The other aspects of the report are nothing more than an attempt to 'persuade' African Asians to go to the Asian sub-continent rather than to Britain. This is being done by tightening up on British entrance procedures, and by making life difficult for new arrivals in this country.

Subhash Patel is particularly angry about the Labour Government. As far as he is concerned, it is carrying out Tory policies. 'The essence of Thatcher's statement is what is written in the Select Committee's report'.

### ALARMIST

It is not just the report that angers him. The Labour Government's past record on immigration has shown that it cannot be depended upon.

The strengthening of the law in 1974 to put a stop to 'convenience' marriages revealed the direction that Labour was going to take. This law is now being applied against the arranged marriages of the Asian community. The Select Committee takes this practice one step further. It suggests that immigrant workers should adopt the 'traditional British' practice of

the bride going to the country of her husband.

Subhash Patel does not think that the Asian community are being alarmist.

'We should have expressed ourselves more strongly in 1968, then we might have delayed this kind of development. It is certainly not alarmist to speak out now.'

### IGNORE

The suggestions in the Select Committee report ignore the real social problems of immigrants from different cultures in this country. A Government genuinely concerned about the problem would make a concerted effort to approach it by improving and extending education, social services, housing and employment.

Instead, Labour gives the go-ahead for prosecuting employers who take on people without work permits; proposes to tighten up the pursuit of 'overstayers'; and plans even harsher obstacles for dependants and fiancés wanting to come to Britain. Furthermore, it is out to stop the payment of Child Benefits and tax rebates for dependants not living in this country.

Mary Dines pointed out that these economic sanctions against immigrants could make a difference of more than £54 a month to some people. This will make it very difficult for Bangladeshis in particular to keep up payments to their families at home.

It's a far cry from the Government's declared intention of encouraging 'Aid to the Poorest of the Poor', by sending money and help to areas like Bangladesh.

What Subhash Patel is most



SUBHASH Patel [right] and Mary Dines [left], at a press conference in London last week.

concerned about is how the left can help the Asian community to organise a fightback against Labour and Tory racism. The community is held back by the conservatism of its traditional leaders.

Many Asians came to this country from East Africa where they enjoyed privileges at the expense of the African Blacks. The experience of being agents and bosses for the governments in Africa means that they are not reconciled to thinking of themselves as working class. They don't understand what capitalism is, or what class society is.

'Many of them still believe the myth that there is not a class society in Britain.' However the experience of Grunwick, the strike at Imperial Typewriters and others has shown that the

Asian community is learning how it must fight.

The white left needs to be very sensitive to these developments and to the problems of political work amongst the immigrant community. One of its tasks is to support Asians who are beginning to challenge their traditional status-seeking and money making leaders. And militants need to promote and aid movements like that of the Asian youth in Southall.

It is especially the young people who are open to political ideas and are concerned about the current situation. They see themselves as British, having known no other home, and they are breaking out of the old influence of the caste system which still provides a strong

conservative force in the Asian community.

Mary Dines points out that the Asians need a common approach to the social services and housing authorities. 'At the moment they see their problems in a very individual way. If the Social Service department turns down an application for a grant, the person concerned sees it as 'I have been refused', and not as a collective problem.'

Subhash Patel added that if they could learn to fight these attitudes of the social service and local authorities in a collective way the experience would politicise them on the broader issues.

Finally he said that the important lesson concerned the Labour Government. 'The Labour Government has done

nothing for the working class in this country. It is laughable that it still has a name as a socialist party. It's time that the labour movement woke up to the fact that the 'Labour' in Labour Party is only a name. Today, its policies do nothing for labour, they are Tory policies.'

Syd Bidwell, the Labour MP in Southall who signed the Select Committee's report, says that Asians should look at the report more thoroughly. 'How thoroughly need we look when it suggests we should carry identity cards?'

'Looking at it thoroughly' does not give me any helpful advice for people who come in here week after week asking me what is going to happen, and asking me which way they should vote.'

# ANTI-RACIST NEWS

### CARF Conference

THE CAMPAIGN Against Racism and Fascism, together with the London Anti-Racist Anti-Fascist Co-ordinating Committee, is organising a conference on 3-4 June.

The organisers say the aim of the conference is 'to bring together the various anti-racist, anti-fascist bodies, to strengthen the anti-racist movement by unifying and co-ordinating the various elements which comprise that movement', and to 'formulate the basis on which a national anti-racist, anti-fascist committee... may be set up'.

The conference is open to local committees, shop steward committees, trades councils, immigrant organisations, ethnic minority organisations, and community groups. Speakers will include playwright David Edgar and a Sivanandan, director of the

Institute of Race Relations. For more details contact: CARF Conference, Box 53, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

### Wolverhampton

Wolverhampton Anti-Racist Committee is waging a defence campaign for those arrested during the 2,500-strong anti-racist demonstration in Wolverhampton on 11 March.

Jefny Ashcroft, secretary of the committee, explains: 'It is significant that the two main slogans of the demonstration were "End racist attacks" and "End police harassment"'. The march was well stewarded and orderly, but was used by the police to continue their bully-boy tactics.

'One drunk bystander... attack-

ed the march and this was used as an excuse by the police to pick up several militant black youths and the treasurer of the anti-racist committee, Dave Stevens.'

Ashcroft adds: 'We would like to know how the police managed to let one individual through their ranks to attack the march. Not for us the police protection afforded to the National Front.'

The committee believes that Dave Stevens was picked up deliberately. He is well known in Wolverhampton as a leading figure in anti-racist activities and was the committee's liaison officer with the police on the demonstration.

The other arrests were made at the end of the march. Three people were arrested while attempting to go home.

Wolverhampton Anti-Racist Committee had compiled a dossier on racists' attacks in the town, which contained strong criticisms of the role of the

police. Jefny Ashcroft believes the arrests were linked to the dossier.

'The committee feels that the bad publicity the dossier had given them and were worried about further possible exposure. They decided to make an example of a few people, particularly Dave Stevens, in order to frighten off our committee.'

The committee is calling for the dropping of all charges and for no victimisation. It is attracting significant support in the town. Dave Stevens spoke at a meeting of over a thousand called by the Indian Workers Association, and was given generous financial support by the meeting.

The defence campaign will be holding its first picket in Bilston near Wolverhampton on 17 April. Donations for the campaign should be sent to: Trevor Coore, 23 Oak St., Wolverhampton.

### Leamington

LEAMINGTON Anti-Racist and Anti-Fascist Committee, together with Leamington Trades Council, is organising a demonstration and rally for the afternoon of 29 April. For some time the Leamington and Warwick area has been the focus for the activities of various racists and neo-Nazi groups.

This was where Robert Reff put up his 'For Sale to Whites Only' sign. Later this year two members of the British Movement — an openly Nazi organisation — face trial for inciting racial hatred after a demonstration in the area.

And two weeks ago Ku Klux Klan boss David Dukes visited Robert Reff at his Leamington home.

It is to counter such provocation that the anti-racist demonstration has been called. It will commence from Automotive

Products Ltd in Tachbrook Road, Leamington at 2pm.

### Blackburn

ACTION Against Racism in Blackburn, Lancashire, is organising a mass picket of a National Front meeting at the Public Halls, Northgate on 5 May at 7pm. In a statement the committee says:

'We apologise to the people of Blackburn for any inconvenience or expense this picket may incur, but better a small price now than concentration camps and gas ovens later. We firmly believe that this is what the policy of the NF and its leaders' statements would lead to.'

Action Against Racism will be leafleting homes, factories and offices in an attempt to attract maximum support for the picket from local people. The organisers are also hoping for support from surrounding districts.



# IRELAND

## Anglo Irish summit in Copenhagen

# Is Jack Lynch stealing the Provos clothes?

JIM CALLAGHAN and Irish Premier Jack Lynch met in Copenhagen last weekend at the EEC summit to discuss the North of Ireland.

The meeting took place in the context of what is probably the greatest crisis in British policy in Ireland since the collapse of power sharing in 1974. GEOFF BELL explains.

Originally Northern Ireland Secretary Roy Mason and the Irish Foreign Minister Michael Kennedy were to meet in Belfast. Mason had asked for the meeting in early February to discuss cross-border security.

For weeks, the Irish Government allowed Mason's requests to rest in a pigeon hole. In the middle of March came the reply that the Irish Government would consider such a meeting, but in Dublin not Belfast and that such a meeting must cover more than security.

All aspects of Anglo-Irish relations should be included in the agenda, said an Irish Government spokesperson. A reluctant Mason agreed, then the talks were postponed by the Irish because of the death of a former President of Ireland. The Callaghan-Lynch meeting was finally agreed on instead.

### CONTROVERSY

The implication of the Irish Government seeking — and largely winning — diplomatic victories over the British is a correct one, and they follow a series of events in which for the first time since Bloody Sunday in 1972 an Irish Government has taken to criticising, not just British policy in Ireland but its very presence.

The controversy began on 8 January when Lynch said in an Irish radio interview that Britain should indicate 'they'd like to see the Irish people coming together and that they don't wish to continue subsidising a small corner of Ireland to the extent they have been doing over the past ten years.'

### THEME

The British media reacted hysterically to the statement, claiming it was a blunt call for Britain to get out.

It was nothing of the sort, but since then Lynch and his Fianna Fail (Soldiers of Destiny) party have returned time

and again to the theme. At the Fianna Fail conference in February Lynch declared:

'It would take nothing from the honour of Britain or the right of the majority in the North if the British Government were to declare their interest in the unity of Ireland by agreement.'

### EXCHANGE

Then in a British TV interview on 9 March the following exchange took place between Lynch and the interviewer:

Interviewer: 'In the end isn't what you want and the Provisional IRA want exactly the same thing, which is the breaking of the link with Britain?'

Lynch: 'The Provisional IRA perhaps do want the same thing ultimately but are going about it in a way we abhor.'

Interviewer: 'But the end is the same, the breaking of the link?'

Lynch: 'The breaking of the link, yes, there's no denying that.'

### CONSTITUTION

Coupled with the expression of such sentiments, Lynch has set up a governmental study group to review North-South relations, and his Minister of Finance George Colley has promised that in any united Ireland the constitution 'might provide for different laws in the North with special built-in protection for the Loyalist culture and tradition.'

Nor is the Lynch Government alone in talking such language. The major opposition party, Fine Gael, has called for 'an end to UK involvement in Irish affairs', and the smaller Irish Labour Party is also reviewing its previous pro-partition position.

The change all this represents in the views of the major Irish political parties should not be underestimated. Under the previous Fine Gael/Labour coalition Government, British



IRISH PREMIER Jack Lynch seen on board a police motor-cycle

policy and British presence in the North of Ireland was backed to the hilt.

During the Irish General Election campaign late last year, the chief ideologue of the outgoing coalition, Conor Cruise O'Brien, made Fianna Fail's supposed support for Irish unity a major election issue.

### MYTH

Fianna Fail denied the charge and attempted to play their Republican traditions down, but the result of the election — Fianna Fail returned with a large majority and O'Brien losing his seat — made many think again.

Rumours circulating in Dublin suggested that in a private post-election public opinion poll conducted by Fianna Fail it was their very Republican tradition which won them the election.

So the myth that the people of the South of Ireland wouldn't touch Irish unity with a barge pole was shattered. Other myths have since gone the same way. By calling on Britain to declare its intention to pull out, Lynch has rejected the favourite notion of Conor Cruise O'Brien and many in Britain that a blood bath would follow such a declaration.

Lynch shares with the Provisionals the view that the

Loyalists would look to the South for some form of arrangement if Britain said it was going. Other Fianna Fail spokespeople have stolen other items of the Provisionals' clothing in suggesting a possible Irish federation with the North having a measure of home rule.

There is no doubt that the Provisionals and the Northern Catholic minority in general bear much of the credit for these changed attitudes. Their unwillingness to give in to the massive British repression operating in the North has discredited Mason's claims to have beaten the IRA. Politically, too, the British Govern-

ment's policies are at a dead end with the only movement being one towards greater integration of the North into Britain.

All this in turn has had an effect on the main Catholic reformist party in the North — the Social Democratic and Labour Party — who have also renewed their calls for Britain to go.

To many in the Catholic ghettos in the North, moves to unity by Anglo-Irish diplomacy may appear a more attractive proposition than either the armed struggle of the Provisionals or the moves toward a more mass orientated campaign which have been developing in the North.

It cannot even be ruled out that sooner or later Britain may be willing to make some form of mild declaration that it won't stand in the way of Irish unity.

### SOCIALIST

But both for Lynch and Britain there remains one vital precondition for the implementation of any such move — the smashing of Republican and socialist militants in the North and South.

The influence of revolutionary socialist ideas is growing, albeit in a confused way, among militant Republicans in the North; there remains a chance that within the next few years a movement will grow in Ireland which will be capable not only of driving out Britain but securing throughout the country a socialist republic.

Possibly Lynch realises that better than Britain does. His pleas for Britain to see sense and participate in the setting up of a bourgeois all-Ireland is a plea for realism; a plea to give this much now before Britain is forced to surrender much more.

### RESPECTABLE

Lynch also knows that a simple commitment by Britain not to stand in the way of Irish unity would mean little in practical terms. After all, Britain promised the entire Irish nation the right to have some measure in ruling themselves as far back as 1912.

Nevertheless for socialists in Britain the statements of Lynch and the other political parties in the North has one major advantage. Suddenly Irish unity has become respectable again.

Demands by militants in this country that Britain get out of Ireland could have an audience more receptive than at any time in the past five years. The 'mad' bombers are proving not so mad after all.

# Irish court terror



SPEAKERS at a Dublin meeting on 15 March to defend the IRSP

THE TRIAL continues in Dublin's Special Criminal Court of four members of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, charged with robbing a mail train in April 1976 of over £250,000. RORY McNEILL reports from Dublin.

The trial is the largest and perhaps the most extraordinary to take place in Dublin. It is the only case outstanding from the 'law and order' reign of the previous Coalition Government.

A public meeting in Dublin recently heard speaker after speaker allege that not only were those on trial brutally beaten and tortured, but that

the trial was the culmination of a massive State conspiracy to smash the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

The only evidence against three of the four defendants is their signed confessions, beaten out of them by the now infamous Garda 'Heavy Gang', an elite squad of detectives whose brutal methods were exposed in the Irish Times.

The trial began in the middle of January and will continue until early May. Its result will have far-reaching implications for the Government in the South. The real defendants in the Special Criminal Court are the Gardai and the repressive policies employed by successive Dublin administrations.

The court has heard half a

dozen doctors, and both prosecution and defence witnesses, give detailed accounts of the extensive injuries suffered by the defendants at the hands of the 'Heavy Gang'.

The prosecution claims that the prisoners beat each other in order to furnish the 'good name' of the police force — an allegation which the British Army and the Royal Ulster Constabulary never tire of making against their victims.

The Special Criminal Court is presided over by three judges who are usually chosen for their right-wing prejudices and, unlike those in ordinary courts, can be dismissed by the Government if their rate of convictions does not come up to scratch.

The rules of evidence of this 'Special Court' are different from other courts, and a person can be sent to jail for IRA membership on the evidence of a high ranking policeman, who merely has to say that he knows this person to be a member of the IRA.

International solidarity can play an important role in exposing the role of the Southern Government and in strengthening the hand of Republicans and socialists in Ireland. The campaign to defend the 'IRSP Four', which is being supported actively by Republicans and revolutionary socialists, is in dire need of financial support.

Contributions should be rushed to: IRSP Defence Committee, 34 Upper Gardiner Street, Dublin 1, Ireland.



# INTERNATIONAL

## Black unions in South Africa

# A question of politics

The third part of SAM MHLONGO'S discussion of South Africa today deals with black workers and the trade unions.

Ninety-eight and a half per cent of the black labour force has no trade union rights. These are the African workers.

Only the Coloureds (mixed race) and Asians enjoy some form of limited union rights — often at the capricious fancy of the white working class and employers.

Although black workers have no trade union rights and therefore their being on strike is a criminal offence, South Africa is continually hit by strikes by these workers.

### VIOLENCE

After the lull that followed the Sharpeville demonstration and massacre in 1960, black workers' industrial struggles returned to the scene about 1972. Despite the fact that the workers face the possibility of imprisonment, the strikes have continued, albeit spasmodically.

Although a measure of state violence was used against strikers there were hardly any deaths. The Government and

capitalists learnt some lessons in the 1960s.

The fact that many of these workers are skilled and not easily and cheaply replaceable has a restraining effect on the Government and the capitalists whose interests the police protect. The fear of a proletarian revolution is another reason for this 'restraint'.

### STRIKES

To diminish the snow-balling effect of the strikes the Government and capitalists have brought in various schemes to undermine the economic struggles of these workers. Factory work committees which must first meet the approval of the employers are being set up.

The Government has set up a technical college in Durban to train black 'trade unionists' with Chief Buthelezi of the Kwa Zulu 'homeland' as chancellor. The Government and capitalists fear the inevitable development of strong and independent movements of black workers whether above or underground.

But the occasional and unchanging pattern of the strikes shows that the workers by themselves have been unable to broaden their struggle beyond the confines of economic improvement. This seems to be the case regardless of whether the workers operate legally or illegally.



PRIME MINISTER Vorster

It was after a study of forms of trade unionism and their results that Lenin concluded: 'The history of all countries shows that the working class,

exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e. the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the

employers and strive to compel the government to pass the necessary labour legislation, etc.'

But, like Lenin, South

## TUC and South Africa Weak on action

Not many people will remember the January 1977 week of action on South Africa as a 'tremendous success', but that is how the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, who called the action, described it. JONATHAN BLOCH reports.

The National Association for Freedom stopped the postal workers' solidarity action through the courts and Tom Jackson, the Union of Postal Workers' leader, gratefully acquiesced in the decision.

The only success in Britain was Portsmouth workers who refused to move brake linings bound for South Africa. The situation was not much better in other countries.

Could it be that real solidarity was the last thing the ICFTU and its chief member, the TUC, wanted?

Until recently the TUC spent more time and money with the organisations of white shop floor supervisors that still go by the name of trade unions.

The white Trade Union Council of South Africa is run by Arthur Grobellar, friend of the Bureau of State Security. In 1973 he invited Vic Feather, then TUC general secretary, to visit South Africa.

### WHITWASH

The TUC delegation's report on the visit whitewashed the apartheid system's denial of trade union rights to black workers.

Only a few months before the delegation arrived many subsidiaries of British firms had had to pay out their first real wage increases in 25 years because of the famous Durban strike wave.

Lord Vic took note of this black anger against starvation

wages. Those British subsidiaries who shore up the South African economy shouldn't be so mean to their black workers.

Couldn't they see that: 'If non-white people are given free democratic rights in industry South Africa could become the workshop, the banker, the merchant and a principle influence for true civilisation and democracy in the whole of Africa.'

Even the Rand Daily Mail, Johannesburg's white paper, had to comment: 'Had the delegation bent over backwards much further its credibility would have suffered a slipped disc.'

Continued black worker militancy in 1974 forced congress House to persuade fellow ICFTU members to start winning influence among the

troublesome black South Africans.

A coordinating committee of Scandinavian, Dutch and German ICFTU members agreed in June 1974 to help the British pour money into two groups of white ex-students who were helping black workers set up unions.

The Urban Training Project (UTP) and the Institute for Industrial Education used this aid to help a score of black unions get off the ground.

The aid groups were told that the ICFTU money was for 'straightforward training — no frills and no politics'.

### COVER

Eric Jyracke and Loet Doekes Dekker were the UTP leading lights who most faithfully observed this edict. But then they had both formerly worked for the TUCSA's African Affairs Department.

The TUC participates in the Ariel Foundation, which arose in 1976 out of a series of



meetings between union leaders and high level Foreign Office officials.

Private Eye pointed out that: 'These foundations have long been used as a cover for British Intelligence gathering and covert support for foreign movements.'

Among Ariel's pay-outs was the air fare of 'Skake' Sikhakhane, the exceedingly moderate leader of the Sweet, Food and Allied Workers Union, for a three month union officials course in Britain in 1976.

In 1977 J. Legodi, the UTP training officer, came to an Ariel-funded British jamboree called Industrial Relations for Overseas Trade Unionists.

### HOSTED

Some moderate black unionists connected with the UTP have been more directly hosted by the Foreign Office. B. Vose, the Labour Attache at the British Embassy in Pretoria picked Jan Hlogwane of the Engineering and Allied Workers Union and Clement Montsho of the Transport and Allied Workers Union for a three week study tour of Britain in 1976.

Organisational coordination for these and later moves has reportedly taken place during regular meetings of the little known Overseas Labour Consultative Committee. The TUC, CBI and Foreign Office send

delegates and South Africa is invariably featured on its agenda.

In November 1977 the UTP and the black unions associated with it were about the only black organisations not banned by the South African regime after the murder of Steve Biko.

### FUNDS

This is partly because of the regime's fear of taking the rank and file members head on. But it also showed how effectively those members were controlled by their moderate leaders.

In its 1976 Annual Report the UTP had disassociated itself from the Soweto uprising. It had insisted that black union leaders were 'first and foremost concerned with building up of a healthy relationship with the employers not public disorder.'

The UTP now receives funds from the International Monetary Fund, Misereor (a German Catholic fund which receives money from the West German Government), the Dutch Trade Union Foundation for International Development Cooperation (funds primarily from the Dutch Government), the Swiss Federation of Christian Trade Unions and the Confederation of Dutch Christian Trade Unions.

With the slump in the consumer durable market, the less profitable operations have been pruned.

In South Africa where black unions are effectively barred 'operating costs are reduced'. In Britain where union organisation is stronger the answer has been closure.

The TUC-backed week of action on South Africa appears to have passed unnoticed by Brother Murray and Co.

But the APEX GEC branch at Preston has called on APEX, regionally and nationally, to organise delegate meetings to plan action against firms dealing with apartheid and for combine meetings to take the issue into the factories.

With Minister Denis Howell in the APEX Presidential seat, GEC APEX members have considerable interest in seeing whether well-meaning TUC and Labour Party policy can be applied against GEC for starters.

\*Further information from Counter Information Services, 9 Poland Street, London W1, 01-439 3764. Research by Research Associates International, 4a Compton Terrace, London N1.

African Marxists can point out that any action by black workers against capitalists is a political act since strike action is illegal.

The workers, through no fault of their own, have had no theoretical training and are unable to think in a theoretical way.

### SHEBEENS

South Africa also doesn't have the kind of organisation that Lenin had in mind when he wrote: 'Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.'

Revolutionary theory needs thinkers and this is what is missing in the working class movement in South Africa.

South Africa's black intelligentsia is either busy acquiring a string of bourgeois university degrees or it is so demoralised that its leisure hours are spent in the shebeens (bars). It was not surprising that one of the targets for destruction by fire in the recent pupils' revolt was this flourishing shebeen industry.

The working class needs this intelligentsia on its side — on the side of the socialist revolution.

South Africa's black movements have largely been nationalistic in orientation and therefore bourgeois in character. Although workers and a few Marxists are in these movements, the leadership and political domination remains petty bourgeois.

## GEC workers back black unions

by JOHN PARKINSON, Branch Secretary APEX GEC Preston [personal capacity]

THE closure of yet another factory in Liverpool and British involvement in South Africa may appear to have little in common.

But the loss of 670 jobs at GEC's English Electric plant on Merseyside has brought the issue of apartheid home to a greater number of GEC workers than ever before.

In 1977, GEC's South African turnover of £140 million represented a new level of investment in the racist regime. Despite company claims that expanding plant and production mean greater benefit for the local workforce, the South African Electrical Workers' Association insists that GEC South Africa is very difficult to deal with.

Many British trade unionists in GEC would agree. At the Traction plant in Preston, the Joint Staffs Committee is starting to take GEC's South African operations seriously.

A four page questionnaire has been submitted to the management with a request for a meeting to determine the real extent of the company's dealings in apartheid.

With the slump in the consumer durable market, the less profitable operations have been pruned.

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As Sadat and Begin negotiate

## Israel's 'final solution' of the 'Palestinian problem' meets opposition

COLIN TALBOT, who visited the Palestinian front lines in southern Lebanon last year, reports on the background to the Israeli invasion.

The Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon up to the Litani river has long been expected by the Palestinian resistance.

When I talked to Palestinian fighters only a few miles from the Israeli border last August, they pointed out that Israel had already invaded southern Lebanon several times, and only refrained from permanent occupation because they could rely on the Phalangist (fascist) militia to do their job for them.

There was clear evidence of Israeli incursions, including three Israeli tanks which the fedayeen (Palestinian fighters) had destroyed in April 1977.

Several fedayeen also pointed out to us that the militant Zionists claim the area south of the Litani as part of 'Eretz Israel' (greater Israel).

The press constantly refers to the 'Christian villagers' of southern Lebanon fighting the Palestinians. But many Christian villagers support the Palestinians.

Some we visited welcomed them, pointing out that they had been neighbours long before the Zionists came and took away the Palestinian lands.

### INDISCRIMINATE

They said the Palestinian presence gave them security against the Israelis, who frequently bombed and shelled indiscriminately.

Many southern Lebanese Christians are not as sympathetic to the Palestinians, but the majority of those fighting with the Israelis are not southern Christians at all.

They are from the fascist strongholds in and around Beirut, shipped south, armed and supplied by Israel, to 'protect' southern Christians.

It is part of the deal between the Phalangists and Israel which included huge Israeli arms shipments during the Lebanese civil war.

Israel was clearly trying to set up a buffer-zone. This project was doomed to failure, the Phalangist militias being no match for the fedayeen.

Israel constantly had to make raids, and carry out bombing and shelling of Palestinian targets, to aid their friends. In November Israeli bombers hit targets in the south, killing over

a hundred Lebanese civilians.

Any area not controlled by the Phalangists was fair game, and many areas bombed contained no Palestinians, military or civilian. The pretext in November was the death of three Israelis in a Palestinian rocket attack on Nahariya.

Only five days before the Israeli invasion it was reported on Israeli radio that a delegation from the Phalangists had visited Israel to appeal for more aid because, they said, they were being defeated by the Palestinians.

### INVASION

The Israeli invasion had been planned for some time, and the Al Fatah raid into Israel merely provided the excuse.

The aim of the Israeli invasion was made abundantly clear — a 'final solution' to the problem of the Palestinian armed forces in southern Lebanon by 'severing the evil arm'.

The political preconditions for the invasion had been laid, not by the Al Fatah raid, but by Sadat's 'peace initiative'.

Sadat's accommodation to Israel assured the Zionists that they could invade southern Lebanon, eliminate the 'evil arm', and leave again without fear of any reprisals from the Arab regimes.

On that point they were correct. Sadat made the minimum possible protest, which amounted to a tacit

approval.

His willingness to resume 'peace' talks, while over 20,000 Israeli troops are invading another Arab state to wipe out the Palestinian resistance, shows just how much he is willing to concede.

As for the supposed 'militant' states, they have not even responded to the Palestinian Liberation Organisation's appeal for arms, let alone come to their direct assistance.

Like Sadat, they thought the problem would not last long, as the Israelis would complete their mission and return to their borders.

Unhappily for them, for Sadat, and for Begin things have not gone quite as expected. The 'evil arm' has shown a remarkable desire not to be 'severed' and, to the amazement of the press, has fought back.

On the spot reports spoke of significant Israeli casualties, of the fedayeen 'fighting the Israelis like a regular army', and of 'the excellent terrain for guerilla warfare'.

The Israelis had badly miscalculated. The most obvious example is their decision not to attempt to take Tyre, the 'capital' of the region.

They admitted that their 'blitzkrieg' would get a severe mauling if they tried to do so. They contented themselves with trying to level the town by a massive air, sea and land bombardment which rendered thousands homeless.

Taking Tyre proved impossible, just as 'pacifying' the area did. The rolling, rocky hills and valleys are excellent terrain for a guerilla

force.

Moreover, as I saw myself, the fedayeen have had a long time to establish hidden bunkers, supply caches, and to learn the terrain thoroughly.

There is one further factor which few people have taken into account — the morale of the Palestinians. For years the bulk of the Palestinian fedayeen have not had contact with the Israeli army.

Their major battles have been against Arab reaction — against the Royal Jordanian Army in 'Black September' 1971 when 20,000 Palestinians were massacred by King Hussein and against the Phalangists in the Lebanese civil war.

They gained experience from these battles, and are a formidable military force, but they were fighting enemies whom, from their point of view, they did not want to fight.

Today, as they see it, they face their real foe. For the first time ever they are in a position to fight the hated Zionist armed forces in open combat.

Their reaction is plain — in all the television and radio interviews with fedayeen an unmistakable enthusiasm comes across, a determination that this time it is they who are going to do the 'pushing around'.

### INTOLERABLE

Israel's major sponsor, the USA, has quickly realised Israel's error — that she has trapped herself in southern Lebanon.

To leave would be to admit defeat at the hands of a 'bunch



of terrorists'. To stay would put intolerable strains on the growing accord between Israel and Sadat.

So the US has been the moving force in trying to replace the Israeli occupation force with the more acceptable UN forces.

President Carter has also sought to maintain a 'balance' by his mild pressure on the Begin regime, to maintain his arbitrator's credentials as far as Sadat is concerned.

The UN forces are not to 'keep the peace' but to keep the Palestinians in check and allow Israel to make a face-saving withdrawal.

The 'peace' in southern Lebanon has been 'broken' by the Israeli invasion — yet who has even hinted that the UN should train its guns on the Israelis instead of the Palestinians?

While Israel is in an embarrassing situation, and one which is already having serious internal political repercussions the success of the Palestinian military struggle will not itself turn the tide.

The Al Fatah operation in Israel is indicative of the Palestinians' strategy. Militarily the Palestinians can never hope to defeat the Israeli state, which possesses a huge military capacity (courtesy of the USA).

Palestinian actions have therefore all too frequently been individual acts against military and often civilian targets.

The fedayeen who carry out actions like that on 11 March are certainly brave and courageous,

going as they do into situations where they will almost certainly perish and facing a frighteningly powerful enemy.

But these actions do very little to further the Palestinian fight.

The only hope of ever defeating the Zionist state lies in the mass mobilisation of the entire Arab peoples. But the PLO maintains a policy of 'non-interference' in the Arab states.

During the Lebanese civil war for example, the PLO/Leftist alliance controlled 80 per cent of Lebanon and could have overthrown Arab reaction once and for all by seizing power, establishing a workers state and a collectivised economy.

Instead they simply marked time, only to be eventually dislodged by the Syrian 'peace-keeping' force.

The PLO still shows a preference for diplomatic deals and manoeuvres, with the armed struggle merely a pressure which can be brought to bear when needed.

Whatever criticisms may be made of Palestinian policy, however, one thing is perfectly clear — the Palestinian fedayeen are putting up an heroic life-or-death struggle against a massive Israeli aggression which has already killed hundreds and rendered hundreds of thousands homeless.

The first task of socialists is to mobilise the fullest possible support for that struggle and to do everything possible to expose and isolate the Zionist regime.



TWENTY THOUSAND Israelis rallied in Tel Aviv on Saturday demanding that Prime Minister Begin negotiates for peace instead of claiming more territory. A highly significant development in the present struggle, the rally was led by reserve officers who would be frontline troops in a war. A month ago, 300 reserve and noncommissioned officers signed a letter to Begin calling for peace.

## What's Left

MIDDLESBROUGH Socialist Unity Grand Social. Punk Sounds Disco. Bar. Raffles. Wed 12 April, 7.30 till late. R.A.O.B. Club, Woodlands Road. All proceeds to Socialist Unity Election Fund.

ANTI-APARTHEID Public Meeting. Slide show on Soweto, speakers Bob Hughes, Labour MP, Anti-Apartheid Chairman, Bob Wright, Asst. Gen. Sec. AUEW, 8pm Council Chambers, Municipal Offices, Walsworth Road, Near Elephant and Castle, South London. Everyone welcome. 7 April

BRISTON Socialist Club. The Canterbury. Canterbury Grasses, Brixton, South London. Which way now for the hospital occupations in London. Speakers from Hounslow and the EGA and from 'Fightback Music from Health Hazard, a band made up of workers from King's Hospital, 8pm Fri 7 April. Adm. 50p.

F.I. LITHO LTD, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1, urgently needs an experienced Touch Typist or someone willing to learn. 35 hour week. £55. Please apply, enclosing full curriculum vitae, to the manager at the above address.

'FOR A SOCIALIST AFRICA' badges, ideal for selling to your workmates after the Anti-Apartheid month of action in March. Or 'End Immigration Controls' badges. Put yourself on the other side of the class lines from Callaghan and Thatcher, use them during the run up to the local elections. 15p each plus 7p p&p, or 11p each for orders of ten or more. From J. Wilson, S.C. Badges, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Cheques payable to J. Wilson.

ISLINGTON Communist Party Election Benefit, music from The Rest, food, disco, Sat 8 April, 8pm, Caxton House, St John's Way, London N7. Adm. £1.

MEN'S CONFERENCE, 22 and 23 April, East West Centre 188 Old St, London. Workshops and discussions on sexual politics, work, family each other. Registration: £3.50, payments £1.50. This includes three meals. Cheques (P.O. to Mens Conference), 7 Nassington Rd. London NW3. Tel: 01-435 5857.

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION — WHO BENEFITS? A series of six meetings to be held on Saturdays at the Bridge Hotel, Newcastle. (near the High Level Bridge) commencing:

LABOUR'S POLICY — AN OBSTACLE TO SOCIALISM? Speaker: Mike Cooley (Lucas Aerospace Combine Committee). Saturday 5 April, 1.30pm, at Bridge Hotel.

THE NATIONAL ENTERPRISE Board, Planning Agreements and the Government's Industrial Strategy. Speakers: Shop stewards from Chrysler & Massey Ferguson, Coventry & British Leyland, Spire. Saturday 22 April 11.00am.

THE PROBLEMS OF BRITISH Capitalism and the Reasons for Government Involvement. Speaker: Bob Sutcliffe (author of British Capitalism, Workers and the Profit Squeeze). Saturday 29th April 11.00am Bridge Hotel.

PROSPECTS FOR THE NATIONALISED INDUSTRIES. Speakers: Peter Heathfield (Area General Secretary Derbyshire NUM), John Chapman (Consultant Iron & Steel Co.) also speaker from British Shipbuilders. Saturday 5 May.

LABOUR RELATIONS Legislation — its effect on the Trade Union Movement. Speakers: Keith Hodgson (Trade Union Studies Information Unit), Bob Clay (Tyne/Wear PTE). Saturday 20 May.

WAGE RESTRAINT: The Public & Private Sectors. Speakers: John Palmer (TGWU 5128 Branch, S&N), Tom Sawyer — NUPE Organiser. Saturday 5 May.

FIGHTBACK BACK — What Organisations. What Policies. Final Discussion, 10th June. Details to be arranged.

This series is supported by Newcastle & Sunderland Trades Councils. All speakers in a personal capacity.

WOMEN'S ONLY PARTY in aid of Irish Women United, with Capperlaw and Pansy's Disco. 8pm-12midnight. Fri 14 April at Waterloo Action Centre, 14 Baylis Rd, London SE1. Adm. 80p claimants 50p.

UNITED TROOPS OUT Movement open meeting for all London supporters and everybody interested in building the movement. 7.30pm Fri 7 April, St Clements Building (1st Floor), LSE Houghton St, London.

TROOPS OUT Movement Forum: 'The Irish Socialist Movement and the Struggle Against British Imperialism'. Speaker: Sean Hallahan. Mon 3 April, The Redbuck, Tottenham Court Rd, London.

LIBRARIES AND RACIALISM Day school, 11am-5pm Sat, 8 April at the Library Association, Ridgmont St, London WC1. Speakers will include the Children's Rights Workshop, Centre for Urban Education Studies, Black Bookshops Association, and the Anti-Nazi League. Registration Fee £1. Creche available if notice is given. Contact Dave Keen, 20 Cedars Ave, London E17.

ELECTRIC CINEMA Club, Forobello Rd, London W11. Aid for Argentina, special screening of 'The Hour of the Furnaces' and 'The Tiger has Pounced and Killed, But He'll Die, He'll Die'. To show solidarity with the struggles of the Argentinian people, and as a benefit to help pay for the screening of the two films in Scotland prior to the World Cup. Sun 12 April, 12.30am. Adm. £1.



'FIGHT RACISM' badges, sell them to your local anti-racist committee friends and all anti-racist activists to show Thatcher and the NF what you think of them. 15p each plus 7p p&p or 11p each for orders of 10 or more. From J. Wilson, S.C. Badges, P.O. Box 50, London N1. Cheques payable to J. Wilson.

THE NEW SCIENCE for People is a special issue devoted to Health and includes articles on Women and Sex-Help groups, the Medical Profession, People with Disabilities, the State and the N.H.S., the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Women's Hospital, Electric Shock Therapy and Alternative Medicine plus reviews of recent books/pamphlets on health and a contact list of health organisations. A follow up conference on health is being organised. The Science for People health issue costs 30p + p&p and is available from the British

Society for Social Responsibility in Science (BSSRS), 9, Palace Street London W1, (01-437 2725).

SPELLING COUNTS is the new play from Haringey Mobile Theatre on the conflicting and often contradictory commands which are placed on a teacher — with slides and songs. The group is completely amateur and not financed by any grants. We would like about £20 a performance but we're flexible. To discuss bookings ring 01-808 3457 or 01-656 8906.

MARX'S CAPITAL AND Today's Global Crisis, a new pamphlet by Raya Dunayevskaya with an introduction by Harry McShane. Includes critique of Mandel's introduction to Capital and of Tony Cliff on Lenin. £1 from 17 Hornsey Park Road, London N8.

EAST END WOMEN'S Action Festival, 10 to 15 April at Soutfields Community Centre, Hanbury Street, London E1. 10am to 4pm each day. Stalls, workshops, films and theatre groups.



# FRENCH ELECTIONS

France 1958-1978

# Twenty years of Gaullism

by ANTHONY BARNETT

FOR THE MILLIONS in Europe who look for a new radical way out of the present political and economic impasse, this was to be the year of France. Here, perhaps alone on the continent, the elections and strength of the left held out an opportunity. At the very least a Communist Party was on the verge of government in a major European state, for the first time since the Cold War. But in a brutally improvised fashion the PCF stepped back, and their six month attack on their Socialist allies presented the marionettes of the centre — Giscard, Barre — with an undeserved victory.

It is now of the utmost importance to analyse what has happened in France. The PCF was about to enter the cabinet, but broke its electoral alliance. What does this tell us about a party of 'Eurocommunism'? At the same time half the population of France has again been excluded from any effective say in government. What does this tell us about the structure of state power? These two questions are of course linked.

A major indictment against the PCF is that its leadership turned upon Mitterrand and the Socialists with a savagery that should have been reserved for the Right, for the dominant class. To see why, we must start with the Right itself, with their hold on power. Only then is it possible to assess the destructive achievement of Marchais' recent campaign. For this did achieve something. In a deeply conservative way, it can be said that there were two victors in the election: De Gaulle's Constitution and the Communists. Both have convincingly conserved their previous positions. Out of office, the PCF has nonetheless retained its bloc of support within a new generation of voters. But the legacy of De Gaulle is dominant, it still orders politics in France.

De Gaulle's constitution is a very impressive construction. It has enabled the politicians of the right to overcome the divisions of the most deeply fractured ruling class amongst the major powers. The extent of these divisions can be symbolised by an absence: in

France since the 1940s, no 'natural' bourgeois party, equivalent to the Christian Democrats, Republicans or Conservatives, has continuously dominated the right.

The fractures may be traced back to the 19th Century. Their post-war intractability, however, stems from the War itself. For France played a double game then, and fought on both sides. Its government did not go into exile after the German breakthrough in 1940, instead it negotiated Vichy. Only a minority of the bourgeoisie followed De Gaulle.

## CONTRAST

After the war came the trauma of collaboration, exacerbated by the pressure of the Communists, who played a major part in the resistance (after Hitler ordered the invasion of the Soviet Union). In a way it appears that because a section of the bourgeoisie joined the Resistance during the war, this divided and embittered ruling class organisation after it, even though Communist gains were limited.

At least, it seems so if the contrast is made with Italy. There, of course, Fascism was Italy's own creation — Mussolini's rule was hardly challenged seriously after 1922. Thus when the Italians surrendered with the Allied landings, the old ruling machines simply Americanised itself. The absence of any bourgeois leadership in the underground, in contrast to France, ensured the PCF's almost complete dominance of the labour movement

after the war (and also helps to explain why the PCI recruited from quite senior Italian families).

## DISGUST

By the same stroke, the bourgeoisie itself was not divided internally, while the Catholic Church united it ideologically. The Church too had made its concordat with Fascism, but the Vatican was able to play its 'independent' card, as a world institution merely situated in an Italian landscape. The Christian Democrats in Italy hold power through their party strength. The events in Rome between the two rounds of the French elections provide another confirmation of this basic resilience. Corrupt and self-seeking, the gaggle of CD leaders may be a horrid sight. Organised by Catholic fealty against the largest Communist Party in the West, however, their long succession of ministerial crises have in reality been mere inner-party disputes, amongst those sure that they will hold power continuously.

In France, on the other hand, the splits within the bourgeoisie created a succession of party conflicts, as government followed government. Alliance with the PCF was made taboo, but without it stable rule was impossible. De Gaulle retired to the side-lines in disgust. For at the same time as they were unable to resolve their fratricide, French politicians aspired to the status of a major power, on a world scale (with colonies) and as part of the victorious alliance (a sector of Germany). The strain was too great, and the Algerian crisis propelled De Gaulle to power in 1958. He dictated his presidential solution and created today's Fifth Republic.

It is said that his constitution gerrymanders the results to favour the right. But this is not really its most outstanding contribution to the history of representation. The British electoral system, for example, is far more inequitable than the French one, although more haphazard. The labour movement may also benefit, for Britain is a country in which the

two-party system is strong, where the representation of the bourgeois interest is securely anchored in the manipulations of the national machines.

De Gaulle had no such confidence. He therefore created a constitution that would overcome the ineradicable instability of the French political associations. Apart from the Communist Party these have waxed and waned like so many moons without a stable orbit. We have just seen the latest of such fluctuations with the Giscardians — no more than a groupuscule in the Assembly ten years ago, they now approach the Gaullists in their number of seats.

## PRICE

The basic instruments which govern the Gaullist State are the double-layer of shared power held by the President and the National Assembly, and the two-round system of voting. The process of *désistement*, of standing down between the ballots, allows the leading anti-communist contender whether in Presidential or Constituency elections, to concentrate the vote of the right. The first round operates as a kind of anti-Communist primary for the French Bourgeoisie, and this State-imposed mechanism functions, therefore, as a means of overcoming its divisions: it literally organises the right.

While the two round system ensures the least possible fragmentation of the right-wing parties, the 'arrangement' of the constituencies gives them a major advantage over the left. At the same time the President, himself a beneficiary of *désistement*, utilises his powers of appointment and pressure to manage the right coalition in the Assembly itself. His own hold on office is unitary, and its role is unifying — for the bourgeoisie. Giscard won by a fraction of a percent of the popular vote in 1974, but his legitimacy is as complete and his power greater than a President of the United States.

Further advantages still remain to be used. Were a coalition of the left to win a majority in the Assembly, the President can deploy his powers to divide it. For example, after a suitable soft-

ening up by the media, he could call a referendum over the heads of the Cabinet in major issues, such as nationalisation.

Were the Socialists to gain the Presidency, the need to draw the Cabinet from the Assembly would provide a *de facto* alliance of the right and the social democrats, unless the President dissolved the Assembly immediately. Even so the Communist Party would find itself without any institutional hold over the major office. The fact that Assembly and Presidential elections are not simultaneous, therefore, provides yet another break to any socialist alliance.

The strength in depth of this extraordinary constitutional appliance is not merely a defensive one, it should be stressed. In no other major country would a politician from such a small party as Giscard have been able to gain the Presidency. Although he was not the Gaullist candidate in party terms, he was the Gaullist in essence — the man outside 'party interest' in 1974, if not yet 'above' them. Pompidou, Jobert, Barre have all been men of the administration, summoned into the political mainstream by Presidential fiat. De Gaulle's system, therefore, is also an innovative one in terms of small adjustments

and new faces. This is a quality of which the American system is capable from time to time perhaps, but which other European countries mostly lack. The right in Germany and Britain suffers from a dearth of talent, their equivalents to Pompidou and Barre languish in the permanent apparatus. One need only glance at the last three Tory leaders in London: Home, Heath and Thatcher, to take the point. Not the least strength of De Gaulle's Constitution is its ability to renew, as well as reinforce, right-wing leadership.

Any electoral strategy for socialists in France must overcome the obstacles and survive the boobytraps of this formidable apparatus. What other political systems obscure, De Gaulle's Gallic clarity has made evident. We can now ask: if these are the rules of the game, what is the price for Communists who obey them?

[In a subsequent issue Anthony Barnett will discuss the dilemmas which now confront French Communism]

Anthony Barnett was a member of the editorial board of Black Dwarf; the editor of Seven Days; and is currently on the New Left Review editorial board.



Gaullist leader Chirac under the shadow of De Gaulle.

# Where do we go from here?

Pour chasser Giscard-Barre !  
Pour en finir avec ce régime d'austérité  
Votez POUR LE SOCIALISME

IRAC 3 POUR LE POUVOIR VOTEZ 6  
RPR POUR LE PARTI

MEETING DÉBAT A 20'30. AVEC  
ALAIN KRIVINE  
L'UNION G.MARS. 12 RUE PÉPIN  
ÉCOLE BINEST. SÉDRA. MONTREUIL-TAISE

Photo: G.M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

JEAN-CLAUDE BERNARD works at Renault, the French motor giant, and is a member of the Political Bureau of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), the French section of the Fourth International. He talked to RIC SISSONS and PAM HURST about the prospects facing the working class after the elections.

“ We must consider various factors. The first is that the electoral defeat of the Socialist Party (PS) and Communist Party (PCF) is a political defeat for the whole workers' movement.

The second is that despite the electoral failure of the PS and PCF the social base of the right-wing majority has not been broadened. In fact, the majority still confronts the same problems as before the elections.

Thus they face the dual difficulty of trying to broaden their social base and the necessity of advancing a policy of austerity against the working class. The crisis of leadership of the ruling class remains basic-

ly the same. Giscard may appear to be the immediate winner of the election but the Gaullist Rally for the Republic still represents an important force.

This means that the battle we have already seen among the fractions of the bourgeoisie will continue, but more fiercely.

The Union of the Left will be forced to confront a new political situation.

Already the President of the Left Radicals, Fabre, has announced that he relinquishes any responsibility he had for the Common Programme.

He did this two hours after the election to allow himself the largest room for manoeuvre in the new political situation. He hopes to operate as a pivot

between the PS and PCF and the Giscard-Gaullist majority.

The next lesson of this election is how to overcome the divisions within the working class, which will have left deep scars.

This applies both to workers influenced by the PS and PCF as well as those confused by this fight between the two apparatuses insofar as the working class was reduced to an impotent bystander.

Georges Marchais, PCF general secretary, has explained that the problems remain the same as before the elections: unemployment, inflation and so on. But this is only part of the reality.

The other is that the problems remain the same but in a different political context. The PCF and PS leaderships will be unable to avoid drawing a balance sheet of their overwhelming responsibility in the failure of the elections.

The workers unity which we advocate must have two immediate consequences. First, a

united debate in the entire workers' movement on the political tasks and perspectives.

The responsibility of the PS and PCF cannot be overlooked. In any case this debate will occur within the largest workers' organisations since it is obvious that both the PS and PCF will not be immune from a crisis after this failure.

Secondly, the necessity of working towards unity in action within the trade unions to oppose the austerity measures which the new government will try to implement.

The French ruling class cannot possibly apply any other policy than trying to raise unemployment and lowering the buying power of the working class.

We know that at least for a few months it will be difficult to lead united mass struggles against the Government's policies.

Nevertheless this has to be our objective — one which meets the interests of the working class. ”



## Inaccurate

Socialist Challenge, like the News Line, has stated mistakenly that the picket of Grunwick on 14 March was called by APEX London and Home Counties Area Council, and was intended to be massive.

The picket was in fact called by the Trade Union and Political Staffs Advisory Council, which covers some 2,500 APEX members employed mainly by trade unions in London and the south-east.

It was never our intention that numbers should be colossal. Our decision, made early in February, was based on the hope of trade union staffs conducting 'a support picket in order to boost the morale of the strikers.'

Given our limited objectives, and that the picket was organised exclusively by telephone on 13 March, it can be regarded as a reasonable success. Interestingly, the police operation was massive, and quite out of proportion to the numbers we expected or were present. What prompted this mobilisation can only be guessed at.

The picket was an initiative by rank and file APEX members. The kind of inaccurate reporting we witnessed in last week's Socialist Challenge does not help those of us in APEX who are working for policies which will win this strike.

Peter Davidson (London SE15)

## School students & teachers

The article 'School students more militant than teachers' (Socialist Challenge 38) gives a misleading and impressionistic picture of the events at the end of last term. The headline, in particular, seems designed for journalistic effect rather than political clarity.

The breadth of action by teachers was highly significant. It indicates an important growth of trade union consciousness amongst teachers. The action was taken despite the short notice and lack of preparation by the executive, despite the piddling and unsatisfactory character of the sanctions, despite the narrowness of the gap between the 9 per cent offer and the 10 per cent which everyone knew the union executive would accept, and despite the fact that arbitration had not yet started.

If teachers are prepared to take this action over 1 per cent, what will it be possible to achieve if there is a serious pay claim to fight for next year? There are still many barriers to the teachers' unions becoming effective trade unions, but please don't underestimate the militancy of teachers (particularly when Socialist Challenge failed to carry a substantial article on the action).

There are other problems with Redmond's article: unfortunately he fails to make any assessment of the teachers' actions. Whilst we are critical of the form of action called by the executive, it is the case that teachers have no obligation to carry



out lunchtime supervision, and that an important demand is for the elimination of any such supervision. When the NUT refers to the "sterling unpaid work that teachers perform 'maintaining discipline' during meal times", this is true, and it's no use Redmond being disparaging. By failing to take up these points, the article gives an impression that the teachers' action is wrong because it attacks the rights of kids. The sanctions may well have been a bad tactic, but to print an article which makes no mention of the real culprits is dangerous.

The article makes the assumption that 'action' by school students is a good thing, irrespective of its direction or content. Some school students were supporting the teachers, some were asserting their own rights (particularly over free school meals). But at the other extreme, the actions were directed against the teachers and their claim, or were just pure and simple destructiveness (which may have its roots in social discontent, but cannot be supported by socialists). We also know for a fact that in some schools the NE played a role in initiating the action.

Socialist teachers must support the NUSS (strangely not mentioned by Redmond despite his enthusiasm for a youth organisation), and argue for its recognition by the teaching unions. We recognise the negative consequences that flow from the attitudes of most teachers to school students and their rights.

Redmond's conclusion: 'By taking up and encouraging students to organise themselves in the schools, the left in the NUT can win many school students to an effective alliance against the education authorities.' Agreed. But that goal is little advanced by Redmond's article and its implicit assumption that the school students' action was good just because it was action.

William and Anna Thompson (Coventry)

## Ireland - time for honesty

IN YOUR 16 March issue you published a letter from three comrades who criticise my call for an IRA cease-fire. They accuse me of 'pessimism'; but if they think their position through they will find that it is much more pessimistic than mine.

It is as well, from their point of view, that there has been an escalation of the IRA military campaign, and an increase in direct attacks on the security forces. But where is this campaign leading? It is only an escalation when compared to the previous six months; compared to the military campaign which preceded the collapse of Stormont it is puny. The security forces have prevented any repetition of the large scale car-bombing in town centres which was the most formidable aspect of the early stages of the military campaign, and they have been able to reduce their total military commitment, and the total numbers of deaths and casualties of the security forces. How can the comrades deny that the present escalation is only one more fluctuation in a trend for the IRA to become progressively weakened in relation to the security forces?

One helicopter does not make a Tet Offensive, and the most important event of 17 February was not the killing of the Green Jackets' C.O., but the La Mon bombing which was a hundred times more demoralising for the Catholic minority than was the death of one army officer for the British government. They pay soldiers to die, and are concerned only when the scale of death and injury is such as to impair the morale of their forces, and cause political problems at home. The only problems they had on 17 February were how to promote and to outflank the Tories in reactionary statements.

If we accept the comrades' view of the results of a cease-fire we will have to conclude that the present escalation by the Provos has merely postponed the eventual disaster.

They make the same error of perspective in relation to the political struggle. It is true that there has been an episodic rise in Catholic militancy, but the main problem is how to consolidate this into an ongoing campaign, as the Coalisland conference tried to do. Events like the La Mon bombing demoralise and divide the Catholic ghettos, preventing the re-emergence of mass resistance. It is true that the swing back to anti-partitionism in Southern politics will give legitimacy to, and strengthen the mass opposition in the North. But we should not delude ourselves into thinking that Lynch and Fitzgerald are doing more than holding the line on behalf of the SDLP, against a total capitulation to the Unionists by the British government. The only way to take advantage of this turn is to reunite the anti-imperialist forces in the North in a mass campaign which will prevent the SDLP from cashing the political cheque handed to them by Dublin. Again, events like the La Mon bombing run counter to such a perspective.

Why do I keep stressing the La Mon

bombing. Not because, as the comrades claim, I accuse the IRA of 'only attacking soft targets', but because I believe that a military campaign has a logic of its own, which is only partially amenable to political ends. The Provisionals have painstakingly built up a brave and committed military force, but to sustain it they must keep it in action. Since operations against the security forces are more difficult to mount, require more experienced volunteers, and more sophisticated intelligence and planning, they will be obliged to return to economic targets 'to keep their hand in', once the present Active Service Units are hit by arrests and casualties. This has always been the pattern before, and I see no reason for it changing now.

I believe there should be a cease-fire because the military campaign, so far from forcing the Brits out, is only making them more determined to stay, and constantly throws up obstacles to the re-building of mass resistance. I appeal to the three comrades to think again, to think things through to their logical conclusions, and above all to realise that solidarity does not mean uncritical support for the Provos, but a responsibility to be honest with ourselves, and with them.

Bob Purdie (Warwickshire)

## Jewish fears - a reply

WHILST sympathising with the problems raised by Clive Gilbert in 'Jewish Fears' - 2 March - I feel the comrades makes some points which could be developed.

The Jewish masses all over the world did not turn to Zionism, even after the Second World War. Until various times after the establishment of the Israeli state (in 1948) Zionism was, for example, opposed by both the Reform and ultra-Orthodox wings of religious Jewry. It was unsupported by the half of Jewry living in the Arab and Eastern countries.

Many individual Jews were also opposed to any Israeli state. The specific process by which British-organised Jewry, in the vast majority, came to support Zionism, and the simultaneous post-war development of an increasing racist attitude among wide layers of British Jewry, (e.g. the 'good job it's the blacks getting kicked, not us' idea) needs to be examined.

Most importantly, the extremely complex relationship between Zionism and anti-semitism has to be taken into account. The main factor in the Jewish equating of anti-Zionism with anti-semitism was not any fault of the European left (except the historical fact that the revolutionary society, free from discrimination, has yet to be established). It is due to the strident efforts of Zionism to insist on the identification.

It is Zionism which holds that even a Jew who is anti-Zionist must be anti-semitic - a psychologically self-hating Jew; that all Gentiles are potential anti-semites; and above all that anti-semitism is a permanent and unalterable facet of life amongst the Gentiles, and hence must not be

fought but retreated from into an exclusively Jewish society.

Furthermore there are many documented examples of Zionists welcoming anti-semitism on a certain scale, as an encouragement to Jews to emigrate to Israel. Additionally, one aspect of Zionism has led to an anti-Arab attitude in Jews.

Thus it is not possible to win Jews to the struggle against all racism (and to that for socialism) without confronting Zionist ideology. Of course, this must be done in a way that does acknowledge and answer the fears that arise from the historical persecution of European Jewry. Otherwise the introspective nature of Zionism will be reinforced rather than weakened.

The IMG explicitly recognised this in the position it took on the Zionism/free speech campus debate (opposing bans on 'Zionist' meetings and calling for a political defeat of Zionist ideas). In other words it is not primarily 'the left' which has alienated (British) Jews from the struggle against fascism, but the ascendancy of Zionism.

The European revolutionary movement has had to confront the 'Jewish question' throughout this century. There is certainly an existing theoretical basis for a clear analysis. The current rise of the National Front has reawakened amongst Jews the realisation that a further holocaust is a possibility. This means that there will be those, especially from the youth, with whom we can discuss and develop socialist ideas on these questions.

Clearly Comrade Gilbert and the Jewish Socialist Group have an important contribution to make to this dialogue.

PAUL ROTH (Sarbitor)

## Ecology

I WRITE AS someone who has recently started reading your paper and who has been impressed with the standard of debate on the Windscale issue. There is, however, an unfortunate impression given in correspondence that the level of political debate amongst environmentalists is very low. I would refer you to two particular organisations, both of which I belong to, who have been developing a socialist perspective on environmentalism.

Firstly, SERA, the Socialist Environment and Resources Association. This is a group with a significant base in the labour movement, including many trade union branches and MPs, whose purpose is to help further exactly the kind of debate contained in your pages. I enclose two of their leaflets and would particularly recommend that you attempt to start a dialogue with them if you wish to raise the level of environmental debate on the left and maintain it.

I also think you would be interested in the contents of Undercurrents magazine which is produced at 27 Clerkenwell Close. They have, for many years, been attempting to raise the level of debate amongst alternative technologists and disenchanted scientists. I hope you will find their work of use to Socialist Challenge.

I wish you luck with your attempts to unite the radical left and broaden the scope of its discussion.

John Ingham (London W2)

## Socialist Challenge EVENTS

### NORTH WEST

WARRINGTON Socialist Challenge group meets regularly. Ring Manchester Socialist Challenge offices for details. 061-236 2362.

GREATER MANCHESTER Socialist Challenge School students who support the paper and would like to get involved in anti-racist activity please contact Chris 273 5947 (daytime), or Steve 226 4287 (evening), or write to Manchester SC Centre, 61c 14 Piccadilly.

PRESTON Socialist Challenge supporters can be contacted by ringing Preston 54818.

LIVERPOOL Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Wednesdays at the Dolphin, Canning Place.

SOUTH MANCHESTER Socialist Challenge group meets every other Thursday at the Albert Inn off Winstow Rd. Help all Socialist Challenge between 11.30am and 1pm at Moss Side shopping centre or Longlight Market, Dickenson Rd. Further information from 061-236 2362.

### YORKSHIRE

HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge group meets next on 20 April and fortnightly thereafter, 7.30pm. Friendly and Trade Club, Northumberland Street (opp station).

### NORTH EAST

DURHAM Socialist Challenge supporters group meets regularly at Big Jug Pub, Claypath, Durham City. Details from J. Fox, 41 The Avenue.

DARLINGTON Socialist Challenge sales on Saturdays outside Northern Rock on High Row, 11am-1pm.

MIDDLESBOROUGH Socialist Challenge sales on Saturdays outside Boots at Cleveland Centre, 11am-1pm. Socialist Challenge is

also available from Harrisons (newsagent) in Linthorpe Street.

### WALES

SWANSEA Socialist Challenge group meets every other Wednesday at 7.30pm in St Helens Inn, Vincent St. All supporters welcome. Next meeting 12 April, and fortnightly thereafter.

### SOUTH WEST

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

### SOUTH EAST

COLCHESTER Socialist Challenge supporters sell the paper every Saturday outside Caters from 10.45am-1pm. Further information of local activities from Mike, 11 Angleson Rd, Wivenhoe.

BRIGHTON Socialist Challenge Forum, Tuesday, 11 April, 'Socialist Challenge: What sort of paper do we need?' Springfield Pub, near London Road BR station, 8pm.

BRIGHTON Socialist Challenge sales regularly on Saturdays at the Open Market, London Road, from 11am-1pm.

COLCHESTER Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly. Details from Steve, 1 Abigail Street.

### SCOTLAND

For information on Socialist Challenge contact Scottish Socialist/Socialist Challenge bookshop, 64 Queen Street, Glasgow. (Tel: 041-221-7451). Open weekdays 10-4, late closing Thursdays at 8pm. Wide range of Fourth International publications.

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

EDINBURGH Socialist Challenge meetings every second Wednesday. Contact George Keravan, 12 Merchiston Grove, Edinburgh. Tel: 031-348 0465.

ABERDEEN: Information about Socialist Challenge activities, ring Jim on 43695 (after 6pm).

### MIDLANDS

For details of activities of local supporters contact the Socialist Challenge Centre, 78b Digbeth High Street, Birmingham. (021-643 9209)

LEICESTER Socialist Challenge supporters meet fortnightly at the Highfields Community Centre. For details ring 0533 25854.

BIRMINGHAM Socialist Challenge Forum, 20 April, 7.30pm, 'Racism and the State' Julian Atkinson and Anita Bharia, Australian Bar, Hurst Street, Birmingham.

WOLVERHAMPTON Socialist Challenge Forum, Tuesday, 11 April, 'Women and the struggle for socialism'. Speaker: Alex Holt, translator of many of Kollontai's works. The Vine, Stafford Street, 7.30pm.

### LONDON

HACKNEY Socialist Challenge group meets next on 18 April at Britannia Pub, Mare Street, next to Town Hall. Meetings are fortnightly at 7.30pm.

GREENWICH (LEWISHAM) Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly. Details from Ray on 01-928 1157.

HARROW Socialist Challenge group meets regularly. Supporters of the paper please contact PO Box 50, London N12PX.

NEWHAM Socialist Challenge Forums occur regularly. Details from PO Box 50, London N11.

BRENT Socialist Challenge Open Forum. Supporters meet every other Monday. Next meeting, 10 April, 7.15pm at Anson Road School, Anson Road, NW2. Speakers from Socialist Challenge Editorial Board, Big Flame and Workers League.

LONDON CPSA Socialist Challenge readers. We are establishing a CPSA supporters group to work in the union and Broad Left. If you are sympathetic to Socialist Challenge's ideas, write to London SC organiser, c/o PO Box 50, London N11.



# UNDER REVIEW

## Pennies from Heaven A shabby world spattered by beauty

**ARTHUR** — the disingenuous hero of *Pennies from Heaven* — is 'in the music business'. The tramp who stumbles his way through each episode is an accordionist, playing hymns, for coins.

Music is the informing symbol of this television play — music is the food of love, music is food and love — it's everything: the balm to appease the oppressed, as well as the inspiration to revolt, writes **SALLY FELDMAN**.

The characters in this seamy profile of life in the '30s are transformed by song. To the strains of Elsie Carlisle, Al Bowlly, Lew Stone, and other dance band heroes of the era, they leave their despair for just a few moments, to indulge in their dreams.

### EXTRAVAGANT

It's no coincidence that most extravagant of media adventures — the Hollywood musical — flourished in the 1930s — a time when dole queues were growing, prices were soaring, and the world was racing towards war. It was at this time, too, that glorious,

untroubled music was floating across the wave-lengths: honeyed singing, dreamy choruses — a world without trouble.

It's an irresistible, but not a simple image. *Pennies from Heaven* are droplets of beauty, glimpses of the sublime, in a shabby world.

The image encompasses author Dennis Potter's own faith (told by him in ITV's recent *South Bank Show* interview) in the voice inside you that, however desperate you are, tells you everything's going to be all right.

Arthur (Bob Hoskins) tells the other salesmen: 'There's sunshine... inside your own

head.' But times are hard — people sell themselves. The noblest human experiences are marketed. Arthur sells music; the whores sell sex; the beggar (Kenneth Colley) sells hymns — his contact with... well, the divine, if you like. *Pennies* are the pinnacles bestowed on those that beg — Eileen (Cheryl Campbell) quibbles over half a penny for a sausage roll. Arthur's song sheets costs sixpence, his record needles twopence. He has to beg his wife Joan (Gemma Craven) for money. And for sex.

### DENOMINATOR

The tramp is everyone — humanity's common denominator. He's in touch with music, but he has to sell it. 'Thank you very, very much' — his chorus. An ironic thank you for the pennies he doesn't get. Echoed by Eileen when a cafe-owner is kind to her and gives her sausage rolls — pennies. His act of charity is angelic,

stemming from kindness. But there's little kindness in a world where selling is the value — where all men are pimps and all women products.

### SWEETNESS

The tinselled presentation doesn't detract from the harsh truths we're offered. If anything, the tragedies of a deluded world, hurtling to disaster, are heightened by its sweetness. But even these realities are the setting, rather than the theme of this magnificent play.

Its subject is the huge subject of all literature — the conflict between dreams and reality; the potential of all people to achieve greatness, and their sad tendency toward corruption; the paradox of human struggle or, as some would have it, the dialectic.

The final episode of *Pennies from Heaven* is on BBC-1 at 9.25 next Tuesday, 11 April. *Under Review* welcomes further contributions on this extremely inventive TV drama production.



**ARTHUR** (Bob Hoskins) and **Eileen** (Cheryl Campbell): a duet of destruction?

## Yeah, yeah, yeah The Rutles

From the centre of *Che Stadium* — that massive American sports arena named after Cuban revolutionary *Che Stadium* — came the unmistakable sound of the *Prefab Four* — **The Rutles**, writes **TONY GRAHAM**.

Walter Benjamin described the art of satire as the ability to display the subject naked among his or her costumes. Not only is nostalgia not what it used to be, but satire isn't either. If *Private Eye* is a yardstick for anything, then it's no longer a laughing matter.

Of course, the days of Lenny Bruce have long been over, but the satire famine shows no

signs of ending. So Eric Idle's full-length BBC-2 television special on Easter Monday aping the Beatles' rise to fame and cash was of some comfort, though not much.

### TECHNOLOGY

At the time it seemed as though the Beatles themselves had opened up a new era in politics, youth culture and technology. Yet behind the scenes the '60s also ushered in a new role for the mass media.

In particular, the record and television industries managed to do a great job of mystifying and distorting what went on in those years. It was this fact that featured largely in *The Rutles* — **All You Need is**



### Cash.

As the title neatly suggests, Tony Palmer's mammoth documentary on the rise of popular music was being taken for a metaphorical ride. In other words, it was less the Beatles themselves and more their promoters, interviewers,

advertisers, and managers who were being pilloried.

More than anything else, the programme was shaken into life through its technical and musical accomplishments. From the earliest days of Rutles' music in the Cavern, where fuzzy BBC documentary

film caught the new music at its birth, to the closing frames of Rutles astride a London roof in the 'Let it Rot' sequence, the camera and film parody must have been near perfect.

Fashion and set designers had a field day in re-creating Beatle cuts, jackets, Sgt. Pepper uniforms and transcendental plimsolls. Equally clever were the cartoon graphics unashamedly lampooning the dated psychedelia of Alan Aldridge's *Yellow Submarine*. Neil Innes (formerly *Bonzo Dog Band*) affectionately re-scored old Beatle hits and made the music sound surprisingly authentic.

Meanwhile, Eric Idle's *Palmer* interrupted with distracting and useless 'in-depth' interviews and background material.

### ADAPTATION

Perhaps our familiarity with the history of Beatlemania explains the lack of surprise in this faithful adaptation of reality. However, the promise of an amusing exposé of the links between media, the myth of pop stardom, and hard cash did not materialise.

The trouble was precisely the lack of this point. What makes this faintly disturbing is the well-orchestrated publicity campaign on behalf of the programme which has resulted in a full-length special, an accompanying record album and much press gossip. At best this is ironic; at worst a sell-out.

## COMING SOON...



### THE OTHER BOOKCLUB

A joint venture between **The Other Bookshop** and **Socialist Challenge**, this new bookclub is designed to make available at reasonable cost both new works of Marxism and classics of the labour movement.

**The Other Bookshop** will provide five selections of books a year from which members must take at least two. The first selection will be:

**1968 and After** by Tariq Ali

**Harry McShane; No Mean Fighter** by Harry McShane and Joan Smith

Full details in next week's **Socialist Challenge**.

## It's an unfair cop, guv

**CRIME** drama on British television has a well-established pattern. In each episode the police catch the criminals, writes **PIERRE KIPNIS**.

Although the Sweeney, for example, enjoys physical exercise more than Dixon ever did, we can be sure that his methods of detection and apprehension are still a confirmation of the criminals' guilt even prior to any judicial process.

The four part film play *Law and Order* — on Thursdays on BBC-2 at 9.30pm, beginning 6 April — opposes the view that the mechanics of law enforcement are ultimately justified by the comforting thought that the criminal has been 'put away'.

### DRUDGERY

Produced by Tony Garnett, it attempts to show an accurate picture of conventional British

justice by presenting four of its component viewpoints: those of the police, the criminal, the lawyers, and the prisoner as they each go about their daily lives, with all the drudgery and tedium entailed.

### REALISM

As with the recently banned play *Scum* about life inside a Borstal, the scripts for *Law and Order* were extensively researched and are the core of the play's realism.

Because of the scope of the task, the time scale of the four plays has occasionally been compressed. For example, in the first episode a detective inspector is seen receiving £3000-worth of bribes in a matter of days, rather than the month it might ordinarily take.

But this is a minor piece of dramatic licence compared with the conventional one-shot cop story, and the director, Les Blair, considers that the play understates its case.

## Law and Order

In each episode, we are presented with conflicting views of the characters: how they see and deal with each other; and how we see them. The viewer cannot make the usual identification of goodies and baddies.

### JUDICIAL

In the villain's tale the myth of honour among thieves is exploded, acting as a springboard to the third play where the tension lies in the expectation that the judicial system — in the face of gaping holes in the prosecution case — will right wrongs. The issue is undecided until the fourth play, which is probably the most powerful of the four.

### 'FUCK'

This is not because of the explicit language — it is a standard BBC drama ruling that 'fuck' and 'cunt' are removed or bleeped — but because it exposes the violence and degradation used to maintain the smooth running of an institution which remains one of the most secret societies in Britain.

As the writer of *Law and Order*, G.F. Newman, says: 'I don't have the answers or alternatives to corrupt policemen, violent criminals, crooked lawyers, or the prison system. What there are is a lot of questions sufficient numbers of us have yet to ask.'

**The Other Bookshop**  
328, Upper Street, LONDON N1  
01 226 0571

New from Ithaca Press

**Towards a Socialist Republic of Palestine** by Fouziel-Asmar, Uri Davis, and Naim Khadr — £2.50 plus 25p p&p

**Palestinian Arabs in Israel: Two Case Studies** by Amun, Davis, Sanallah, Elrazik, and Amin — £2.50 plus 25p p&p

Both books ordered together: Post free.



# WILL THE GENERALS KILL BHUTTO?

The central political question in Pakistan today is: 'Will the Generals kill Bhutto?' It is being asked by everyone. All realise that the death sentence, if carried out, will change Pakistani politics for ever, writes a correspondent from Pakistan.

The ball is now in the Supreme Court, but this is an empty formality. Pakistan's judiciary is a joke. In reality the clique of five generals who govern Pakistan will make the decision.

Lahore has always been recognised as one of the seats of culture in Pakistan. The populace is renowned for its love of poetry, its infectious sense of humour, its coffee houses full of cynical intellectuals and its large student population.

## DEMAND

It was here that the Generals chose to hang three criminals in public. It was a sad and humiliating occasion.

Tens of thousands turned out to watch the spectacle. Most returned home with the feeling that they had watched something unreal. And yet it was very real.

It was an apt symbol of what the military regime of General Zia ul-Haq stands for: a return to barbarism.

## SPECTACLE

Why do people come to these occasions? Out of a morbid curiosity, perhaps, but also because it is a spectacle. It would happen in most countries, including Britain, but it is humiliating nonetheless.

It is the way to acclimatise people to the idea of constant

bloodshed. Death by hanging is not to be considered unnatural. It is part of our life and our religion. That is the generals' message.

The response to Bhutto's death sentence has been sporadic but nationwide.

## DEFIANCE

As the author of 'Lahore Diary' in the liberal weekly *Viewpoint*, reported: 'There were scenes again of popular defiance and police repression, and there was tear-gassing and lathi(baton)-charges. Broken red brick again littered the roads, and broken glass from

## Pakistan

shattered windowpanes... Four Government buses were burnt.'

In other cities there were protests as well, but given that the entire leadership of Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party as well as thousands of its political activists are in prison, these demonstrations were limited.

There were student protests and a limited few strikes by factory workers in Lahore. In Bhutto's home province of Sind, the University and local colleges were closed down after pro-Bhutto demonstrations.

The PPP newspaper, *Mussawat* was banned and its printing presses sealed by the military

## National demonstration in London 7 May

MEANWHILE IN Britain there have been a number of demonstrations by Pakistani workers against the military dictatorship. The demonstrators have taken up and popularised the three demands we printed in *Socialist Challenge* three weeks ago. The overwhelming majority of Pakistani workers is opposed to the death sentence against Bhutto.

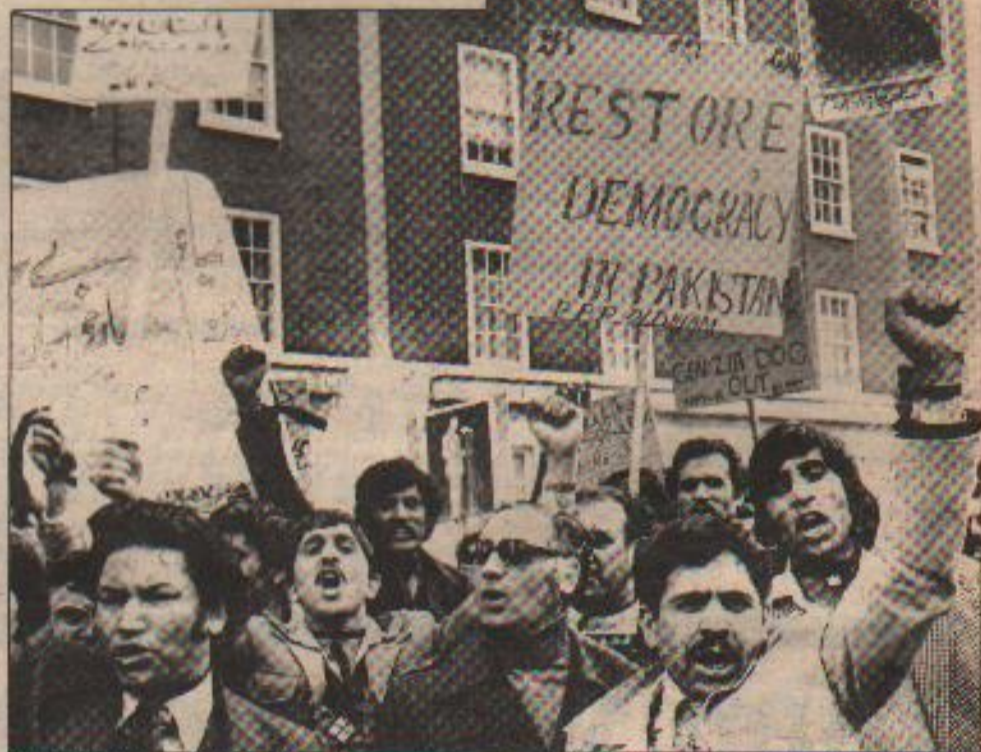
At Huddersfield last week, Tariq Ali, Editor of *Socialist Challenge*, spoke to a meeting of 2000 workers and outlined a plan of action against the military dictatorship.

A meeting organised by *Socialist Unity* in Birmingham

last Sunday saw 700 workers filling the Digbeth Civic Hall. It was chaired by Raghb Ahsan and the main speaker was Tariq Ali. Numerous contributions from the floor stressed the need to fight for democratic rights.

The meeting unanimously passed a motion calling for a national demonstration in Hyde Park in London on 7 May at 2.30pm. The Supreme Court is due to start hearing the case on 6 May.

A co-ordinating committee is being organised in Birmingham to ensure that there are 'at least two trains from New Street to Euston.'



PAKISTANIS picket the embassy in London to protest the military regime and the death sentence on Bhutto.

Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM (IFL)

regime.

From abroad numerous requests have arrived from Heads of State asking for clemency — though not from Saudi Arabia.

But the General has remained firm. Justice will not only be done, but will be seen to be done (presumably a reference to public hangings).

A fortnight ago we pointed out that what was at stake was not a debate as to the crimes committed by Bhutto. There can be no excuse for any of the atrocities carried out by his

regime. The issue now has become one of ending the military regime and restoring democratic rights. Socialists should defend the democratic rights of all political prisoners, not just those with whom they politically agree.

The military is preparing a new Constitution which will outlaw nationalisations and excessive land reforms. This too must be opposed. The very existence of Pakis-

tan is at stake. It will be ironic if Pakistan, whose founding father was a Westernised agnostic, is finally buried by the obscurantist maniac who heads the Pakistan Army.

Zia confronts an intractable dilemma. If he kills Bhutto there will be trouble. If he spares him there will be trouble.

In the first instance from the masses and in the second from within the army.

His decision will depend on which he fears most.

## OUR FUND DRIVE

# £15 Short of target

THE APPEAL for a last great effort to save the spring fund drive met a fine response. In seven days £293.12 came into our depleted coffers. This was around £15 short of our target. Like Tatlin's original tower, ours was never completed.

The original Tatlin tower, an immense monument to the Third International, only got to the stage of a model. Our fund drive was more successful. The final total for the first three months of 1978 was £1784.83.

A large part of this week's money came from an anonymous donation left in The Other Bookshop. Upon opening the envelope we were delighted to find 10 crisp, new, ten pound notes. Many thanks to whoever it was! Could we meet sometime?

The March bankers orders, totalling £138, were, as usual, a solid foundation from which to build.

Our thanks to:

Bankers Orders	£138
Renee	£5.00
Pakistani workers	£3.42
D. Evans	£2.00
M. Sleath	£0.50

Anon	£0.50
K. Kohler	£0.50
Anon	£1.20
R & A Spalding	£1.00
Badges	£1.00
Camden supporters	£2.00
R. Hurcombe	£0.50
Anon	£100.00
A. Newton	£30.00
Coventry student teacher	£3.00
London Cttee, IMG	£3.00

Next week we will have a new logo and a new fund drive

target. The continuing presence of *Socialist Challenge* is an uphill struggle which can only be maintained with the support of our readers. We need every reader to help sell the paper.

## BOOKSHOP

For example this week a reader in Ipswich has arranged for copies to be put in an Ipswich bookshop. From that

small beginning perhaps a new *Socialist Challenge* Group will bloom.

It also means we need the financial backing of our readers. The fact that we just failed to make this fund drive is an ill omen. It cannot be repeated. It is a warning to all our supporters and local groups. Organise now for the next three months' fund drive!

# SUBSCRIBE NOW!

Domestic: 6 months, £5; 12 months, £10  
Abroad: Airmail, £16.50. Surface, £10 per annum.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a donation for the Fighting Fund of \_\_\_\_\_  
Cheques, POs and Money Orders should be made payable to 'Socialist Challenge'.  
Complete and return to:  
Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.