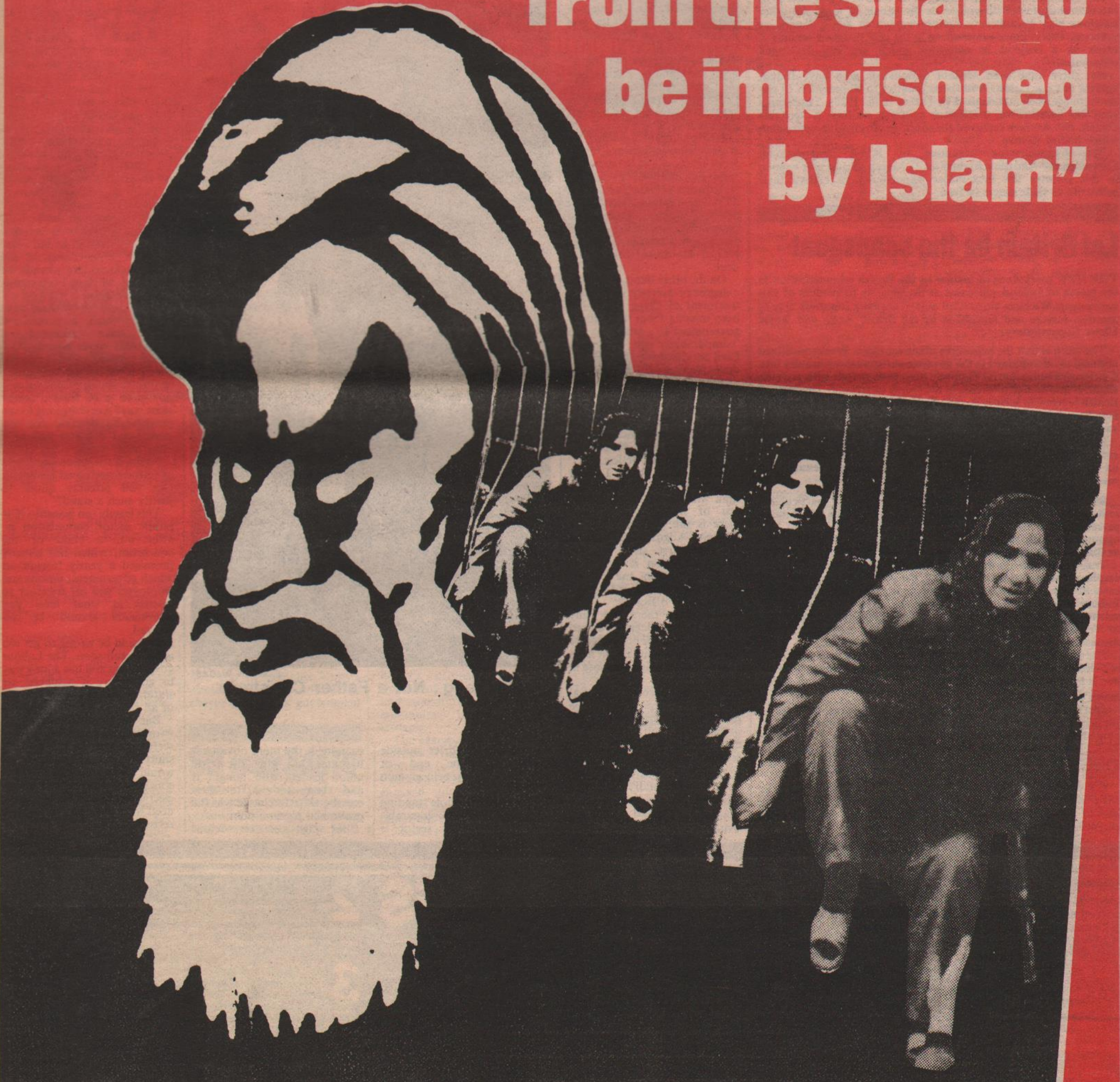


Socialist Challenge

**"We did not liberate ourselves
from the Shah to
be imprisoned
by Islam"**



IRANIAN WOMEN FIGHT BACK

EDITORIAL

Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.
Editorial 01-359 8180/9. Distribution/Advertising
01-359 8371.

Solidarity with Iranian women

FOR THE last two weeks tens of thousands of women in Iran have been demonstrating for their democratic rights. It is they who must determine how they live, what they wear and where they work.

We stand in total solidarity with them against all obscurantism. We recall the Muslim women in the Soviet Union who discarded their veils immediately after the revolution and were killed by religious thugs.

The Iranian government has passed a law making it a crime to attack any women's demonstration. But it is women and their supporters who must continue to mobilise against any attempt to deprive them of their rights.

All the women now protesting were strong opponents of the Shah. In retrospect they made a mistake when they donned veils to join the mass mobilisations which toppled the Pahlavi regime. For now the obscurantists are saying: 'Where were you when we defeated the Shah? All the women on those marches wore the veil.'

Not even the most liberal reading of the texts of Islam can lead to the view that it regards women as the equals of men. All other religions also discriminate against women in either theory or practice. This is more pronounced in the case of Islam because it exists as a religion in countries which are less developed economically.

But there have been Muslim nationalists who have fought against this regression. And the alternative to Khomeini is to cite the example of Kemal Ataturk in Turkey in the 1920s. There too a king was overthrown, a religious monarch no less. A veritable Caliph. But Ataturk removed the shackles of religious oppression which bound women.

The demonstration organised by ICAR (International Campaign for Abortion Rights) on 31 March should give women in this country the first major opportunity to extend their solidarity to their sisters in Iran.

Let Britain be the scapegoat

THE NEW revelations of torture by the British administration in the North of Ireland will come as no surprise to readers of this newspaper. We have chronicled many times the countless acts of murder, torture and repression by the British Army and Royal Ulster Constabulary.

The truth is that the exposures made on ITV's Weekend World and said to be contained in the government-sponsored inquiry into Castlereagh police barracks should not shock anyone with even the slightest knowledge of events in the North of Ireland. The facts of British repression have been reported in Irish national newspapers, they have been raised by the Irish government, and highlighted by various international human rights bodies.

There are signs that this time the Labour government may make some pathetic gesture to appease its Irish critics. There is, after all, an election looming, and the Irish vote cannot be alienated too much.

But the torture is not the result of a couple of particularly sadistic uniformed thugs, it is not even the result of the rather nasty personal traits of Roy Mason. The tactics employed to put opponents of British rule in Ireland behind bars are the only tactics available to Britain — apart from internment or mass murder.

Torture flows from the British presence, it will continue to be employed while Britain is in Ireland, for such has always been the case. So although the latest exposures may persuade some of the Labour 'left' in Parliament finally to ask a few questions (and a substantial vote against the forthcoming renewal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act would help), the time has long gone when demands for 'human rights' in Ireland are sufficient.

The denial by Britain of the right of the Irish people as a whole to self-determination is the biggest denial of human rights there is, and it is the whole issue of the British presence in Ireland which needs to be faced.

Just for once in the life of this Labour government, it would be pleasant to see the Labour left actually taking a principled stand on something. They could do no better than take such a stand on the North of Ireland, and to say that it is not individual soldiers or policemen who should be made the scapegoat, but rather the British presence as a whole.

But we don't have much confidence that more than a couple of MPs will make such an observation. Accordingly, socialists should think long and hard about how they can raise it in the forthcoming election. Let Ireland be an issue.

THE FIRST WORD

Towards a permanent incomes board?

By Tom Marlowe

THE photo-caption in the business section of last Sunday's *Observer* was quietly reassuring for its readership. 'Hugh Clegg', ran the inscription, 'not a Father Christmas.'

The accompanying article was satisfied that, 'If anyone can make any sense of the new in-word of comparability, Clegg can.'

The appointment of Clegg to head the standing commission on pay comparability in the public sector is one of the shrewder moves of the Labour government.

He was, after all, sacked by none other than Edward Heath from his position as chairperson of the Civil Service Arbitration Board when, in 1971, he played his part in the Scamp inquiry into local government manual workers' pay which produced what was judged to be an inflationary deal.

On the other hand, there was a degree of honesty in Heath's treatment of Clegg which has been missing from the Labour government's attitude to 'comparability' in the same Civil Service arbitration procedure from which Clegg was dismissed.

The Labour government has merely ignored the recommendations of the Pay Research Unit which pronounces on pay for civil servants. Hence the current industrial action.

Even if the Labour government does accept this time whatever Clegg and the rest of his experts decide, there is the problem that by the time August comes along and the first stage of the recommendation is supposed to be acted upon, the Labour government could very well be no longer in office.

Nor can there be any guarantee that Clegg will award hefty pay rises for public sector workers. The comparison he is charged to make is with those in similar jobs.

Take the case of hospital ancillary workers — or, to be more precise, those who work in hospital laundries. Can they expect a bulging wage packet in six months time?

Not if the comparison is made with other laundry workers. The wages council concerned has just reported that the 'typical adult grade' for those



EAMONN McCABE

Hugh Clegg: Not a Father Christmas.

working in laundries outside London at the end of November was the princely sum of £34 a week.

The more the whole standing commission on pay comparability in the public sector is

examined, the more obvious it becomes that what the trade union leaders who bought it and then sold it to their membership purchased was the proverbial pig in a poke.

But pigs can be vicious

animals. They can maim and injure; the real concern over Clegg's comparability board is the threat posed to the independence of the unions involved.

Leaving the long term future of the pay of public sector workers to some 'neutral' or 'objective' body throws into question the real function of trade unions.

If there is a Hugh Clegg deciding on what is a 'fair' wage for workers to receive, where does that leave unions whose job is to secure through their own strength what they consider 'fair'?

It is a question which concerns more than public sector workers. The suspicion is that Clegg's standing commission is a stalking horse.

That the Labour government with not a word of protest from the leaders of the TUC, is planning a long-term incomes board to cover all of industry.

The arguments used to sell such a scheme can already be imagined. Michael Foot stands up and declares:

'The low paid workers have accepted such a procedure. They have accepted a permanent wages board.'

'Are the rest of you, miners, car workers, lorry drivers going to turn round and say you will not agree to be treated in the same way? Are you going to say that might be fair for the under-paid but you will have none of it?'

'What trade union principles of fairness and equal treatment can you possibly quote to justify such a stand?'

This is only too possible. The public sector commission is, after all, a child of the concordat, which has already promised a yearly 'forum' at which government, unions and employers will get together to discuss at what level pay settlements should be restricted.

It would be wrong to get too alarmist too soon. The Labour government still has a long way to go before it achieves the statutory incomes policy dream of all capitalist governments.

But equally it would be wrong to dismiss the public sector commission as a short-term gimmick, just as it would be wrong to dismiss the concordat as no more than an election manoeuvre. They both need to be taken seriously and resisted.

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.

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 discredited socialism in the eyes of the millions of workers throughout the world. We are opposed to them and will offer full support to all those fighting for socialist democracy.

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

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

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



Fighting policies on offer Socialist Unity stands in Edge Hill

AFTER a hastily convened election meeting in Liverpool on Monday night, Socialist Unity declared its intention to contest the Edge Hill by-election on 29 March.

The by-election — caused by the death of Labour absentee MP Sir Arthur Irvine — is one of the most important to be held under this Labour government.

By Geoff Bell

Edge Hill, just east of Liverpool's city centre, cries out for a socialist opposition. As Socialist Unity's national organiser Bob Pennington puts it: 'If ever there was a seat to contest, if ever there was a time to stand, Edge Hill is that seat and that time is now.'

It is not too difficult to see what Pennington means. Edge Hill has the unbelievable unemployment rate of 34 per cent of the working population. It has 16,000 people on the council house waiting list.

Such conditions reflect the policies of the two 'big guns' in the election, Labour candidate Bob Waring and the Liberal Party's local whizz kid, David Olton.

On a national level, the Labour government's doubling of the unemployment rate since the October 1974 election has hit Edge Hill particularly hard.

On the local level, the decision of the Liberal-controlled council to sell off council housing is one explanation of Edge Hill's massive waiting list. And the chairperson of the council's housing committee? Liberal candidate Olton.

The Socialist Unity candi-

date is Al Walker. Speaking after the selection meeting, he emphasised that one aim of Socialist Unity's election campaign will be to charge the Labour government

SU candidate

Socialist Unity candidate **AL WALKER** is NALGO chairperson of Liverpool's housing shop stewards committee. He is also vice-chairperson of the City of Liverpool branch of NALGO and a trades council delegate.

with responsibility for the permanent crisis working people in Edge Hill live in. 'No doubt the Labour and Liberal candidates will be knocking on doors making the usual promises', said Walker, 'but we will be asking people to make up their minds on the records of the main parties.'

'Just one aspect of these records is that Edge Hill has the highest rate of houses with outside toilets and no running hot water in England!'

Socialist Unity — an election alliance supported by, among others, the International Marxist Group, Big Flame and the International Socialist Alliance — will not just be raising local

conditions. It will pinpoint the failures of many aspects of the Labour government's policy.

'We will also', says Bob Pennington, 'be trying to point to the solutions, socialist solutions, solutions which put the interests of the working class first.'

A major aspect of Socialist Unity's campaign will be opposition to the concordat and support for Merseyside's continuing local authority struggle.

The Merseyside public sector workers liaison committee continues to reject the national 9 per cent offer, and is currently engaged in selective strike action in pursuit of the full £60 minimum, 35-hour week claim.

Socialist Unity will be offering all its facilities to local public sector workers in a bid to help organise support for their struggle.

Other aspects of the Socialist Unity campaign will be the current controversy around British-backed torture in Ireland — the demand will be 'Troops out now' — and the struggle against racism.

If, as is rumoured, the National Front stand in Edge Hill, the anti-fascist struggle will attract special attention from Socialist Unity. 'We hope to distribute Anti Nazi League propaganda with our own election material', says Pennington.

Socialist Unity has already had experience in Edge Hill. A candidate stood in the local government elections in the

constituency's Fairfield ward in May 1978, as well as in two other Liverpool wards. The average vote then was 5.5 per cent.

Because of the speed with which the by-election was called, Socialist Unity is appealing for all possible help in its campaign.

Volunteers from all over the country will be made welcome at the election headquarters at 217 Wavertree Road, Edge Hill, Liverpool.

One of the groups in Socialist Unity, the IMG, has already written to the Socialist Workers Party appealing for a common campaign.

Bob Pennington sums up the importance of Edge Hill in striking fashion:

'We are now coming to the end of the most wretched Labour government since the war. Edge Hill is one of the last opportunities all socialists will have to join together and fight together for the sort of policies we all want to see.'

'In the campaign itself there will probably be disagreements, but what we are trying to build is a unity of opposition, of socialist opposition.'

'A by-election is a unique chance for socialists to agitate on all aspects of their policies and to gain national publicity in doing it.'

'I appeal to all readers of Socialist Challenge to do whatever they can to help us — from sending money to coming to Liverpool. Socialist Unity is on the road again, join us.'

News from nowhere

Sino-Chilean relations

EL MERCURIO was the most rabid anti-left daily during the Allende period. It is a staunch supporter of the Pinochet dictatorship. Last month it interviewed the Chinese ambassador in Chile, Hu Chang Fang. It reported:

'The Ambassador of the People's Republic of China in Santiago has confirmed to our paper the consistent solidarity of the Chinese against the international attack being suffered by our country in recent times.'

'In the words of Hu Chang Fang: "Chile and China have points in common which unites them against Soviet communism...if your country were subjected to an attack by this hegemonic nation or its lackeys in this continent such as Cuba, it would receive not only our moral support but, according to the circumstances of the moment, the appropriate assistance."

'The pragmatic position of the present Chinese leaders aspires to the creation of a broad system of informal alliances with the countries of the Third World, regardless of the circumstances of these countries or their ideological preferences. On this precise issue, this policy coincides with ours insofar as it contributes to the creation of an element of dissuasion against the hegemonic power of the superpowers which tends to manifest itself, whether by naked aggression or by constant interference in the concerns and interests of these countries.'

'The recent dramatic events in Asia show the reality of the present world balance of power, and provide important points to reflect on in the elaboration of the foreign policy of small countries like ours, which must maintain a real independence in order to succeed in their national objectives.'

The next step is surely for the People's Daily in Peking to syndicate Robert Moss's column in the Daily Telegraph throughout China.

We are Benned

SUPPORTERS of Socialist Challenge have been banned from holding meetings at Birmingham's Labour Club, a traditional meeting place for socialist and labour movement organisations.

Following a request to hold a public meeting at this venue, the Birmingham Socialist Challenge office was rung up by Martin Brooks, Birmingham City Labour Party Secretary. He declared that no-one associated with Socialist Challenge would be allowed to use the Labour Club ever again.

Brooks alleged that this was in retaliation for the 'attempted disruption' of a Tribune rally addressed by Tony Benn in Birmingham last year. The facts are somewhat different.

On the afternoon of the Tribune rally Benn spoke at Birmingham University. He was repeatedly asked by supporters of Socialist Challenge and by Iranian students to dissociate himself from David

Owen's statement of support for the Shah. This Benn refused to do: indeed he asserted that he 'accepted full responsibility' for Owen's statement.

This naturally outraged the Iranian students, who decided to go to the evening Tribune rally to ask Benn the same question again and ask the other Tribune MPs, including Neil Kinnock, what they were doing about Owen and Callaghan's support for the Shah.

When they arrived at the rally, however, they were refused admission by a group of stewards led by Martin Brooks. Socialist Challenge supporters, however, were admitted; only those of obviously Iranian appearance were prevented from buying tickets.

This naturally led to a furious argument, with supporters of Socialist Challenge and the SWP demanding that the Iranian students be admitted. This, according to Brooks, amounted to an attempt to disrupt the rally!

Brooks' decision to ban us from the Labour Club has been sanctioned by the Birmingham City Executive of the party. It now goes to a meeting of the party's Management Committee where it is sure to be contested. Socialist Challenge will be launching a campaign throughout the Birmingham labour movement demanding that this scandalous ban be reversed.

Broad Left buy British

ON 3 March there were divisional conferences throughout the TASS white-collar section of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers to debate and select motions for the annual conference. The Broad Left, organised by the Communist Party, is very strong in TASS. It controls most of the branches and can normally push through their resolutions.

At the London conference the following motion was put: 'This branch urges all union members personally to buy British goods whenever possible and where they can influence their employers' purchasing policy to endeavour to place orders with British companies.'

Now this line is in full accord with the Broad Left's vision of import controls. But since the BL had its own prioritised motions, they regarded this as an irritation. The motion had been put from a notoriously right-wing branch. But, argued some CPers, the motion didn't go far enough!

For instance, how could one be sure that underneath the 'Made in Britain' label there weren't products of multi-nationals like ITT, Ford, etc. The right-wing delegate moving the motion was 'overwhelmed' by these criticisms. He accepted that his resolution was insufficient and withdrew it from the agenda.

NfN readers will be pleased to hear that the flag of proletarian internationalism was kept flying by two delegates: one from the SWP and one from the IMG.

HOME NEWS

Rank and file reply

Birth of the 'Anti-Concordat'

IT WASN'T exactly a St Valentine's Day massacre. But when the TUC General Council put its seal to the new 'concordat' on 14 February, trade union militants could be excused any confusion on this point.

So-called 'left' trade union leaders completely caved in and offered no resistance. They had no answer to the offensive launched by the infamous 'Gang of 12' trade union leaders for a new alliance with the Callaghan government.

It was this which prompted the production of the 'Anti-Concordat — a rank and file reply', written by

four trade unionists — Bryan Macey, Secretary of the POEU North London Internal Branch; Des Bailey, Executive Council, Inland Revenue Staffs Federation; Ross Pritchard, NGA National Council; and Aidan White, NUJ National Executive.

The Anti-Concordat has since been produced as a Rank and File pamphlet with the sponsorship of a further 100 trade unionists.

Jonathan Silberman talked to one of the authors, AIDAN WHITE, about the Anti-Concordat and the campaign around it.



Aidan White, member of the National Union of Journalists' National Executive and signatory of the Anti-Concordat.

Why did you think it was important to produce this Anti-Concordat?

We were the way the organisation has taken up in the last few years.

The TUC, in its Concordat with the government, has turned its policy on free collective bargaining completely on its head.

This endorsement of the hysterical media campaign against the unions includes taking on board some of the most restrictive measures that were in force under the Industrial Relations Act. They've endorsed the sort of industrial relations strategy which the Tories are proposing should they get elected.

In this situation the need to build some form of resistance is very great.

How do you explain that there was no opposition at all on the General Council to the Concordat?

Well, it fits in with the role of the General Council in recent years. The General Council has not reflected the drive and the general demands of the rank and file.

For instance, over the FBU strike, the General Council made it quite clear, when it came to the crunch, that they were in favour of the social contract rather than supporting the absolutely legitimate demands — which had a great measure of popular support — of the firemen.

But there was a minority then...

There was a minority, that's right.

But there was no minority at all which was opposed to the Concordat...

That's right. Which indicates that the General Council — all of them — are becoming more distant from the rank and file of the movement. The Concordat is aimed at increasing their authority.

This question of authority and control is very important to them. The General Council are, I think, absolutely conscious that they have lacked control over the past few months.

They've been forced to assume roles which they really don't like assuming.

Trade union leaders assumed a militant posture — they had to because they knew they couldn't get away with anything else.

Anti-Concordat on lessons of 14 February

There are four important lessons rank and file trade unionists must draw from this experience:

1. Within every union we must struggle to establish full democratic control by the membership. The strength of rank and file organisation must make it impossible for the top union officials to treat us and our unions in this way again.

2. Within each industry and workplace we must campaign to establish a clear minimum basic weekly wage of at least £60 a week and secure one hour off the working day for all workers. Our demands cannot

be tied down by 'norms', 'comparability' or restraint of any kind. They must be determined by our needs.

3. We must recognise that the Concordat is a potentially highly damaging victory by the right wing of the trade union movement. This calls for real efforts in every union and industry to unite the left around fighting demands that can mobilise rank and file trade unionists to fight for working class interests against those of the employers and class-collaborators.

4. We must take the

campaign to defend our basic trade union rights into the heart of the movement. At shop floor and office meetings, shop stewards' and branch meetings, District, Area and Regional meetings, and at Annual and Biennial Conferences, we must argue:

[i] Reject the Concordat. No more social contracts. No more wage restraint.

[ii] Free collective bargaining now!

[iii] Defend the right to strike.

[iv] No restrictions on the right to picket.

But at the same time, it doesn't mean that they're different animals.

So in addition to adopting a militant posture, they put forward in the Concordat the idea of stopping unofficial strikes.

The whole of the General Council are united in their desire to control this situation more.

Another thing that obviously relates to the General Council's unanimity is that the traditional

left has come out with no alternative to the strategy of the Labour government.

What implications do you think this has in terms of what's necessary to reverse the trend?

It's going to require the building of an effective rank and file movement within the unions. It's going to require a political strategy which is harder.

It's going to require a strategy which will distinguish within the Labour Party the people who are clinging to it religiously because of their belief in Clause 4 and the people who are cynically members of it.

The planks are already there actually. The revolutionary left have the planks of a socialist strategy.

What is necessary is to put them together and to launch a concerted attack on the way

Liaison Committee on the defensive



KEN GILL, TUC General Council member from AUEW (TASS).

By Jonathan Silberman

ACCORDING to the Morning Star, last Saturday's conference organised by the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions had been called to discuss 'the way forward for the unions'.

Certainly, the resolution presented to delegates for voting as they arrived referred of the important issues facing trade unionists.

But the only positive action recommended by the conference was a lobby of the TUC on 5 September.

Within the resolution, as with the introductory speeches by LCDTU secretary Kevin Halpin and NUPE assistant secretary Bernard Dix, no perspective was advanced as to how to obtain the objectives listed. Just plenty of denunciations.

At least Halpin and Dix drew attention to the concordat, and Dix even — somewhat pathetically — dissociated himself from Alan Fisher.

But the first platform speaker after the lunch-break was Ken Gill, the very same TUC General Council member

who had publicly declared that it wasn't necessary to oppose the concordat. Yet not one floor speaker even attempted to criticise Gill.

In part this was because the floor speakers were, as usual, tightly controlled by the platform. This was made easier by the composition of the conference — perhaps the smallest LCDTU ever.

The conference organiser announced that 556 delegates had registered, but a morning headcount indicated that only 400 actually attended, an attendance which declined in the afternoon. Only 217 bodies sent delegates.

The sole polarisation of the conference came when ambulance driver Tony Ventham moved a motion sponsored by Rank and File. It called for support for anti-concordat lobbies of union conferences and for 'one day sympathy action in support of hospital workers and nurses on Wednesday 21 March'.

Although 60 delegates had signed a statement calling for the resolution to be voted on, Halpin's ruling that the motion was out of order was endorsed by the conference.

HOME NEWS

Building a left in NUPE

How Mr Fisher could meet his comeuppance

THE MANDATE from NUPE's annual conference for this year's pay claim was quite clear. The demand was to be for a £60 basic minimum wage and a 35-hour week for all those in the union.

A common settlement date was a central demand, allowing the united strength of the union's 700,000 members, together with the half million public sector workers in other unions, to be swung behind the claim.

But once again, Alan Fisher has been able to make a deal with the government, ballot his members section by section, and gain acceptance for the 9 per cent settlement from local authority workers.

By Patrick Sikorski

It is not the case that NUPE members were unwilling to fight on for the full claim. Taking the votes in the pay ballot in total, a majority of 17,793 rejected the offer.

Where the local shop stewards organisation is strong, as in Liverpool and parts of London, strikes by local authority workers are continuing.

Earlier on, determined local leadership won a big victory in Camden.

It is the lack of any national organisation within the union able to bring together these strands of opposition which has let Fisher off the hook year after year.

How else could Fisher ignore the rejection by NUPE's national executive of the offer he had negotiated — and get away with it?

How else could he afford to ignore the fact that London, with 100,000 members, voted two to one to reject the local authority offer — and get away with it?

Although there is a growing shop stewards movement within NUPE and the public

sector generally, the better organised areas remain isolated from each other and unable to prepare co-ordinated action on crucial issues such as the annual wage claim.

The executive's rejection of the pay offer last month stemmed from a fear of losing their elected positions if they had voted otherwise.

But because there was no organised national movement for all-out strike action, the executive was happy to reject the offer without putting forward any strategy for winning the full claim.

The big problem they faced was that such a call would have meant challenging the Concordat with low pay to which Fisher had just added his signature.

Instead of this collaboration, alternative policies fought for by workers' action were needed to beat low pay and the carve-up of the welfare state.

NUPE does have an alternative economic policy, embracing calls for re-investment in British industry, together with import controls and sundry nationalisation.

But none of this gives a lead



to workers fighting low pay and the cuts. Nor is there any attempt by the left leadership to mobilise members around their programme and against Callaghan and Healey.

Because the union has a 'radical' economic programme and a general secretary who makes fiery speeches at Labour Party conferences, the Communist Party says there is no need to organise a Broad Left in NUPE.

Instead the CP has a policy of sending in members or recruiting them from the middle-ranking full-time officials — a policy which gives no scope for organising opposition when Fisher kowtows to the government.

The task of organising an opposition falls to the far left working alongside militants who are carrying forward the self-organisation of the rank and file in the shop stewards committees.

Simply linking up a series of strong shop stewards committees is not sufficient.

It was not the lack of militancy which prevented the local authority workers winning, but the lack of alternative policies for winning the claim and convincing the membership that the money could be found to pay the increase without causing massive cuts in services.

At its first national meeting 18 months ago, the Campaign for Action in NUPE identified five main areas in which alternative class struggle policies need to be formulated if a broad-based, democratically run opposition is to be built in the union.

These were pay policy, cuts, women's rights, anti-racism and trade union democracy.

CAN is producing a pamphlet on the strike which will be used to build a national supporters' meeting within the next six weeks.

The CAN platform is to be expanded into policy papers, which supporters of the campaign will argue for their branches to adopt as resolutions for NUPE's annual conference next year.

The union would then have to circulate these papers nationally, providing an alternative to the executive's own policy documents.

Work has already begun on the production of a women's rights paper.

The NUPE East Midlands division has produced a report on nursery facilities in conjunction with the Nottingham Workshop, and a wider ranging report is being commissioned by the NUPE ILEA district committee on women in NUPE.

It is hoped to hold a national conference for women in NUPE in the autumn.

It is also planned to launch NUPE Against the Nazis from the London divisional council.

Campaigns on issues such as these, through which militants will be able to actively oppose the leadership, will provide the basis for building an opposition to take on Fisher.

'We'll treat them like Tories'

By Stuart Madewell

NUPE member LOCAL AUTHORITY workers in Tower Hamlets fight on. A mass meeting last Thursday voted overwhelmingly to escalate the action already being taken, placing all council employees on all-out strike.

This now includes home helps, meals on wheels, and staff at residential homes.

The all-out decision by members of NUPE, TGWU, and GMWU is in defiance of the agreement by these unions nationally to accept the government's miserable pay offer. We are demanding local negotiations.

The Labour-controlled council has been very obliging. Its only suggestion so far is that if we go back to work they'll talk about the claim.

The mass meeting had a

different idea. The message was: 'If the Labour council wants to behave like Tories we'll treat them like Tories.'

One of the Tower Hamlets councillors is Jamie Morris, the NUPE branch secretary at Westminster Hospital, whose determination to refuse services to David Ennals was rapidly followed by Morris's call to end all action in the hospital.

We wait with interest to see if turn-coat Morris can reconcile his ambition to be a Labour MP with support for our claim.

* A mass meeting of local authority workers in Hackney, East London, voted this week to end their all-out strike and return to work on Friday.

Their demand for local negotiations met with only one concession: to cut their 38-hour week by one hour from next August.

Lock-out No.2 at 'The Times'?

By Geoffrey Sheridan

'COBBLERS'. That was the most common view of the deal which has temporarily ended the lock-out at Times Newspapers put by Times workers as they talked in small groups after a meeting last Thursday.

The meeting was to have had a guest speaker, Tony Benn. But the negotiations between union leaders, Times management, and Employment Secretary Albert Booth which had continued into the early hours of that morning were considered by the Prime Minister too 'delicate' to allow any intervention by Benn.

So the Minister who has put forward an alternative future

for The Times — its takeover by the BBC — was forbidden by Callaghan from addressing the two hundred Times workers who had turned up to hear him.

In the event they learned more of the deal which has temporarily re-instated 3,084 sacked workers from the reports in the evening papers than from the speakers at the meeting.

In effect they have been presented with another date for a lock-out — 17 April. If agreement on the introduction of new technology and on a proposed disputes procedure aimed at weakening the power of the chapels has not been reached by then, management will once again turn its employees on the streets.

Meanwhile the Times presses remain silent — a tribute to the employers' view of press freedom.

The most urgent need is for mass meetings to discuss these developments; meetings which could begin to turn the tide of cynicism which has become the prevailing mood among Times workers.

The struggle against the liquidation of jobs at Times Newspapers — management wants to cut its workforce by about a quarter — has brought some important gains.

The two issues of Times Challenger, produced by a liaison committee of the unions at The Times, have provided a valuable forum for debate in the labour movement on new

technology and press freedom.

And the liaison committee itself has brought about a measure of unity between the half dozen unions involved in the battle.

But the offensive has otherwise remained on the side of management, and the threat of another lock-out will keep it that way unless the unions take action to challenge the bosses' 'right' to decide whether production resumes.

A work-in is the best means for the workers to take the offensive. It would rally support for the defence of jobs, and demonstrate in an eminently practical way the need for the labour movement to have its own mass daily newspaper.



HOME NEWS

Civil service claim

Involve the whole membership!

AN OFFER is likely in the civil servants' pay dispute; an offer which will almost certainly fall far short of the claim for the full implementation of the Pay Research Unit findings.

Lord Peart, the Minister responsible for the civil service, has revealed that the union leaders are prepared to accept payment in stages.

How can civil servants prevent their leaders capitulating on pay?

By Rich Palser

Lord Peart has now recommended that Pay Research findings be paid by April 1980, the amount being agreed by arbitration.

It takes little imagination to guess what the first stage increase would be — the 'going rate' established by the public sector of 9 per cent, or thereabouts.

This is nowhere near the demand of the civil service union conferences for unfettered Pay Research. The Pay Research findings are based on the pay position of civil servants now, not in April

1980.

You cannot pay today's bills with promises of increases next year.

The selective action which involves 1,300 union members will certainly force the government to give the 'going rate' — that much, in any case, was guaranteed by what the public sector workers have won.

More is needed to win the claim in full. The objective has to be to involve the whole membership in action.

In a review of its strike policy, the Civil and Public Services Association — the larger of the two unions taking

action — sets out the arguments for selective strike action.

The review argues that, unlike the private sector, the government is not motivated by profit, and because it can claim that strikes by civil servants interfere with the democracy of government, the unions cannot win a major confrontation.

Leaving aside the fact that this means giving up hope of victory before you begin, neither argument is right. Workers in the public sector do not hit directly at private profits when they take action. Their ability to win depends on gaining the support of other workers and isolating the government.

This requires the involvement of all the membership. The participation of 85 per cent of the members in the one-day strike on 23 February shows that they can be won to action.

The claim that strike action by civil servants disrupts democracy is on a par with the argument that action by health workers puts life at risk. Both

can be countered by explaining that it is the government which puts these things at risk.

To deny the civil servants the right to strike is to deny them their democratic right to organise in defence of their living standards.

With a paltry pay offer on the cards, civil servants should begin now to campaign among the membership of the CPSA and the Society of Civil and Public Servants against any staged deal, and for the stepping up of action to involve the membership nationally.

Branch and area committee pay action sub-committees are needed to involve members in deciding what action to take.

The SCPS is pledged to hold regional one-day strikes. CPSA members should organise in their union for a refusal to cross the picket lines, and wherever possible to join in the strikes.

Mass support on the picket lines of those taking selective action can be achieved by area one-day strikes, and the rejection of any staged deal.



FIVE thousand students marched through London last Friday as part of the National Union of Students' campaign for a 27 per cent increase in the basic grant, mandatory grant provision for all 16 to 19 year old students, and an end to the means test (a survey published in 1975 showed that 75 per cent of students did not have their award made up to the full amount by their parents). Photo: PETER CHILD

Birmingham strikers aim to shut down hospital

By Jude Woodward

BIRMINGHAM General Hospital faces a complete shutdown next Monday, when ancillary workers in NUPE go on indefinite strike and picketing action will aim to close the hospital doors.

At a mass meeting on Wednesday of last week the Birmingham Central branch of NUPE voted by a majority of five to one to step up action in support of their claim.

This decision was followed by a motion giving 12 days' notice to the regional health authority that Birmingham General Hospital would be completely closed, by indefinite strike action, from 19 February.

There were no votes against this motion.

The health authority has responded by saying that the hospital will be kept open at all costs, with volunteer labour brought in to cover the NUPE ancillary workers' jobs.

Not surprisingly, the threat to close the hospital has brought an outraged reaction from the local press.

The Birmingham Evening Mail headlined its editorial 'Contemptible threat to the General' and went on to explain that the strikers deserved neither 'sympathy nor a pay rise'.

The brunt of the attack has been borne by Dick Hackett, the NUPE branch secretary, dubbed 'Red Dick' by the

press. He is a supporter of Militant and active in the Campaign for Action in NUPE.

Dick's response to the health authority's threat to keep the hospital open has been to call on the local labour movement to support the picket of the hospital.

This is what he called for on local television last week. Birmingham trades council has also been approached to support the picket.

COHSE members in the hospital, who have nationally accepted the government's offer, have agreed not to do NUPE jobs, but they will not be out on strike themselves.

The chances are that a massive confrontation will

develop outside the hospital on Monday. No doubt the hospital authorities will ask the police to ensure that the scabs get through the picket line.

It is unlikely that the local union bureaucracy will intervene to call off the action. The feeling among the membership is so strongly behind the strike that it would be very difficult to call it off now.

Barry Shuttleworth, the NUPE West Midlands divisional officer and national negotiator, said that Dick Hackett was 'a sensible chap who reflects the views of his membership'.

The picket of the General Hospital will begin at 6am on 19 February.

TUC backs down on trespass law

By Jude Woodward

A RECENT circular from the TUC, signed by Len Murray, has instructed unions and trades councils to withdraw support from the Campaign Against the Criminal Trespass Law.

The circular, addressed to all affiliated unions and trades councils, claims that CACTL has been counter-productive and has 'caused confusion'.

The only evidence put forward for this is that at the last Labour Party conference various unions voted against CACTL's motion calling for the repeal of the Act, leaving the Labour Party with no policy on the issue.

The TUC call for amendment of specific sections of the Act, whereas CACTL calls for its repeal.

Len Murray does not seem to think that amendment is absolutely necessary.

In the circular Murray says that the Home Secretary has said 'there has been no evidence of abuse of the criminal trespass provisions nor of the Act having unfortunate effects in industrial disputes', if such evidence emerges then discussions on amendment would be in order.

The purpose of the Act is not to limit trade union activities and this had been pointed out to the police, the Home Secretary had explained.

But the Public Order Act wasn't introduced to stop anti-fascists mobilising and yet that hasn't prevented it being used that way.

CACTL has the support of well over 300 labour movement bodies, unions, trades councils and others who support the campaign for the repeal of the whole of the Act.

Len Murray's instruction that such bodies 'should not support or sponsor conferences being promoted by CACTL' should be roundly rejected.

Len Murray is the one who is being 'counter-productive and causing confusion'.

For the real facts about the effects and implications of the Criminal Trespass Law, CACTL have produced an excellent pamphlet, *Whose Law and Order?* At 20p plus postage it is very good value from: CACTL, 35 Wellington St, London WC2.

Demonstration Defence Unit

THE Demonstration Defence Unit was formed in London in March 1978 by legal workers and law students in response to the increasing number and randomness of arrests on anti-racist and other demonstrations.

It provides free 'legal first aid' on demonstrations, in conjunction with local law centres where they exist, by leafletting demonstrators about their rights if arrested, by taking on-the-spot witness statements, by attempting to secure the fast release of those arrested and by helping with the setting up of defence committees afterwards.

As a by-product of this activity, areas of unusually desperate legal need are sometimes found and we can help local groups in their efforts to set up emergency legal services.

If you are organising an event and would like some legal presence (London only), contact the DDU at 289 3876.



FORTY people occupied a Greater London Council 'dream home' at the Ideal Home Exhibition last week to demand 'ideal homes for all'.

The protest was organised by Housing Action against the hypocrisy of those who 'build ideal homes only to take them down again a few weeks later, while thousands of people are without

homes of any kind, and millions are condemned to live in sub-standard accommodation'.

Housing Action is a new group which aims to bring together the different strands in the housing movement. Further details from Housing Action, 52 Acre Lane, London SW4.

HOME NEWS

Remember racist murders

LET RELF ROT!

FREEZING RAIN did not deter 2,500 Anti Nazi League supporters from rallying in Winchester last Saturday.

They had come to oppose a National Front march in solidarity with Robert Relf, now on hunger strike to defend his 'right' to print leaflets proclaiming 'Nigger Muggers Unite'.

By Celia Pugh

The ANL supporters came from as far afield as Liverpool, Wolverhampton, Wales and East Anglia to chant: 'Racism is a crime, Relf should serve time'.

The Public Order Act was used to deny them access to the town centre to spread their anti-racist message. But their numbers and determination made sure that the police could not prevent them from marching to the prison itself.

Here they let Relf know what they thought of his racism: 'Remember race murders, let Relf rot'. Meanwhile the NF's 800 supporters were forced to wander through the deserted streets of Winchester to meet in a cul de sac a mile from the prison.

This encouraging mobilisation by the anti-fascist movement against the NF's attempts to recoup credibility in time for the general election now needs to be built on. For this we need a plan of action, which can best be drawn up through the holding of an ANL conference.

This would also allow us to thrash out the thorny problem of tactics which was once again raised at Winchester. At one stage the unity of the demonstration was badly splintered by confusion over its objectives.

Was our purpose to confront the NF physically on the streets or to counter their assault on the freedom of black people in the name of 'free speech'?

Should we have applied the same tactics on the streets of Winchester as we do when



ROBERT RELF

defending black communities in Lewisham and Brick Lane?

Last Saturday showed that we need clearer answers to these questions if the ANL is to build up its strength and unity in the months to come.

★The trial of three whites charged in connection with the racist murder of Michael Ferreira in Hackney last December has begun at the Old Bailey. The trial is expected to last all this week, and daily pickets are being organised outside at 10.30am. For details phone 01-806 5554 between 6 and 7pm.



A THOUSAND women marched through Leeds on Friday demanding an end to violence against women. The demonstration in Leeds was the culmination of a week of

action when women around the country organised a wide range of protests against violence.

Women's TUC - basis for advance

By Irene Bruegel
NATFHE

THIS WINTER thousands of low-paid women workers have taken strike action against wage controls.

But they didn't get a mention at last week's Women's TUC. Nor did women fighting for their jobs up and down the country. Worthy resolutions were passed without opposition and without political debate.

Nevertheless this year's Women's TUC was an advance.

Loud and clear was the feminist challenge to the 'traditional' family of male breadwinner and dependent, housekeeping, wife.

Discrimination within the trade union movement itself was attacked. The conference called for positive steps to be

taken to overturn the male domination of unions, for creches to be organised at trade union meetings, for union training to be more accessible to women, and for decision-making bodies to be opened up to women.

However, it will take a lot of activity and organisation by women within unions for any real changes to be made.

The key debate was on the new technology — those microprocessors which threaten 1½ million women's jobs in offices, shops and factories and which will expose women to unknown health hazards.

But conference didn't call for resistance, only the sharing of benefits — cutting hours of work so men take their full share of housework.

It was pointed out that 25 per

cent of fathers in Britain had never put their children to bed and 75 per cent had never taken time off to look after a sick child. Women argued that the new 'technological revolution' should be used to change that.

But how can it be, if the system of profits, of capitalism, is not overturned? In the unreal atmosphere of the Women's TUC, far removed from the workplace, the new technology was accepted and no programme of action to combat increasing unemployment was even considered.

The Women's TUC lacks muscle. The General Council can and do ignore it. They failed to respond to the call made in 1977 and 1978 for more women on the General Council (there are two — one for every 1½ million women trade

unionists).

This year the call was repeated. But since the TUC Women's Advisory Committee has more men nominated by the General Council than women elected by the Women's Conference on it, not much hope lies there.

The Women's TUC shouldn't be written off. It can be transformed into a fighting body representing women throughout the trade union movement.

To do that means, however, that male domination within each and every union must be fought by women organising themselves. If this were done the Women's TUC could no longer be ignored.

Welsh vote a setback

By Roy Davies

THE WELSH electorate voted by 4 to 1 on 1 March against the government's devolution proposals. In effect they were voting against separatism, and against any furtherance of local government bureaucracy.

For those who now believe that an irrelevant diversion has been ended, and the real stuff of politics can continue, it needs to be said that the actual problems of Welsh politics remain.

Wales still requires a national solution to the crisis of language and culture, it still needs a national economic plan to resolve the problems of the industrial valleys and the rural hill farmers, as well as the divisive communications network.

The Assembly offered the potential of a political body that could begin to address itself to these concerns. Instead the Labour leadership cynically presented it as a sop to nationalism, or as a would-be reform of unpopular local government.

The return of a Tory government has been hastened whilst a potential Welsh body of resistance has been removed.

The need for the left now is to further its understanding of Welsh realities and begin to evolve a programme that encompasses them. The campaign by Socialist Challenge supporters for a 'Yes' vote was a small but important step in that direction.

Plaid Cymru meanwhile pursued its half-hearted and uncertain attitude to the devolution proposals at the end. Although aware that the proposed Assembly was a recognition of emergent nationalism, they were frightened that their goal of an 'independent' Wales might be discredited in an ineffective talking shop.

Both nationalists and social democrats were unable to break out of the phony limits of their ideologies. Neither separatism nor an evolution of Westminster politics can provide any solution to Welsh problems.

It is the Labour Party which will suffer the more immediate

crisis. Not merely was its machine miserably inadequate in mobilising support for its own policies, but a vigorous campaign against Labour and TUC conference decisions was mounted by the 'Gang of Six' Labour MPs.

The irony of Labour MPs like Leo Abse urging rejection of devolution because of the example of decades of corrupt Labour rule in local government speaks volumes for the current state of social democracy!

As things stand now, the divisions within Wales between North and South, Welsh and English speaking, are likely to grow at the expense of working class unity and political programme.

It is here that the real setback of the devolution vote is to be seen. The chance of developing a real political body that could address itself to those problems that only the Welsh people can determine has taken a step backwards.

Scottish Labour says 'wait'

By Des Tierney

THE LABOUR Party in Scotland has effectively ditched its commitment to the setting up of an elected Assembly.

Although an executive statement to its conference last weekend 'welcomed the fact that a majority voted yes' and 'reaffirmed its commitment to devolution', the refusal of the executive and conference to demand the immediate setting up of the Assembly means that the issue is relegated to a pious statement of intent in the general election manifesto.

The party's commitment to devolution and the democratic rights of Scottish working people were less important for delegates than election year unity.

What is not clear is how this new policy will help Labour in Scotland at the next election.

Throughout Saturday's morning session the chants of an SNP and Scottish Labour Party demonstration outside the hall

could be heard. 'Scotland said yes', they declared, '52 per cent means yes'.

Such slogans, simple but logical, are bound to gain a hearing within the working class in Scotland. The tragedy for socialists is that these are the slogans of nationalists and not of the Labour Party or its leadership.

The Labour Party's decisions make it especially urgent that socialists actively support the Assembly and raise in the working class the case for immediate elections to it.

As an editorial in last week's Socialist Worker noted, the referendum outcome means that socialists 'should demand the government proceed with the Assembly and call on Labour MPs to vote in favour'.

Trade unionists, students, and Labour Party members should all demand that their representatives campaign for immediate elections to a Scottish Assembly.

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THE MURDER OF INTERNATIONALISM

The burial of the Comintern

SIXTY YEARS ago this month, delegates from 35 revolutionary organisations responded to an appeal signed by Lenin and Trotsky and gathered in Moscow. The Communist International was born.

Twenty-four years later its death was formally announced by Stalin and it was cremated without any fuss or pomp. In reality it had died long before that, and with it had been buried all the internationalist aspirations of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

The murder of proletarian internationalism four decades ago recently reaped its bitter harvest on the battlefields of Indochina. What went wrong?

By Tariq Ali

The theoretical basis of internationalism was deeply embedded in the consciousness of the entire Bolshevik leadership. One important fact determining the insurrection in October 1917 had been Lenin's belief that a revolution was imminent in Germany.

The revolution in Russia was seen by all Bolsheviks as the harbinger of proletarian revolutions throughout Europe.

The notion of 'building socialism in one country' appeared bizarre even six years after the revolution. In 1924 Stalin wrote:

'The overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a proletarian government in one country does not yet guarantee the complete victory of socialism...

'Can this task be accomplished, can the final victory of socialism in one country be attained, without the joint efforts of the proletariat of several advanced countries? No, this is impossible.

'To overthrow the bourgeoisie, the efforts of one country are sufficient — the history of our revolution bears this out. For the final victory of socialism,

for the organisation of socialist production, the efforts of one country, particularly of such a peasant country as Russia, are insufficient.

'For this the efforts of the proletarians of several advanced countries are necessary...'

The formation of the Communist International was, therefore, a vital necessity not just for the oppressed of the world, but also for the Russian workers.

There could be many criticisms of some of the tactics adopted by the Comintern in its early years, but its aim was never in doubt. The Comintern was created to unify revolutionaries throughout the world, to use the strengths of the Russian revolution in order to aid the overthrow of capitalism and imperialism on a global scale.

The message which emerged from the Soviet leaders was concise and clear: if you want to help the Soviet Union, then make the revolution in your own countries.

The first four congresses of the Comintern were held annually from 1919 to 1922. Following Lenin's death, the sharp split inside the Russian party, and the victory of Stalin, they became less and less frequent.

The sixth congress, which decided to label social-democrats as 'social-fascists', was held in 1928; the seventh and last congress was held in 1935. This latter embarked on the strategy of popular fronts, a grotesque caricature of the early Comintern positions on the united front. The logic was obvious.

From 1933 onwards the Comintern disappeared from Stalin's speeches and writings. There was one mention in March 1939 when he denounced as slanderous the allegation that the CI was fomenting revolutions. Then in 1943 he announced its dissolution, stating that it would 'put an end to a calumny'.

In reality the Comintern had ceased to be a revolutionary force after the fourth congress. It was increasingly being misused by the dominant faction in the Russian party.

Inner-party disputes in the CPSU determined the line in China in the 1920s. The defeat of the 1927 uprising in Shanghai was a serious blow for the working class in China and Russia.

By the 1930s the contours of present-day Soviet foreign policy had been firmly established. The defeat in Germany had been utilised to ram the theory of 'socialism in one country' down the throat of every Communist Party.

The main task confronting Communist parties throughout the world was, according to the Stalinised Comintern, to ensure the existence of the Soviet Union. How? Here Stalin stood Leninism on its head.

The tactics of CPs were to be determined not by the need to overthrow the bourgeoisie in their own countries, but by the narrowly defined interests of the Soviet state. Thus the CPs were to align themselves with the bourgeoisie of their own countries if the local ruling class was on good terms with the Soviet Union.

The zig-zags carried out by the Communist parties and their unquestioning loyalty to the Soviet state and its bureaucracy reflected a form of perverted internationalism. It destroyed them as revolutionary parties, however.

In France, in 1936, the CP helped to defuse a strike wave of revolutionary proportions; in Spain the CP organised a civil war within the working class by liquidating forces on its left; in Greece Stalin disarmed the partisans at a crucial stage. After the war the French and Italian CPs loyally accepted the agreement at Yalta.

Where revolutions were made they were carried out by parties which broke empirically with Stalin: Yugoslavia, Vietnam and China are the best examples.

The dominant characteristic of Soviet foreign policy became that of defending the status quo. For this was the best way of preserving the stability of bureaucratic rule.

Peaceful co-existence was first practised by Stalin, then by

Khrushchev, and finally by Mao, with devastating results for the international workers movement. The internationalism of Lenin was replaced by the national chauvinism of the bureaucracy.

In order to defend this regime the bureaucracy was quite capable of moving outwards. The assimilation of Eastern Europe, with the establishment of regimes modelled on the Stalinist monstrosity in Russia, was required to consolidate its military and political position in Europe. It was necessary to contain imperialism.

Secondly, the fact that the bureaucracy presides over a society in which capitalism does not exist compels it towards an objective tension with imperialism.

So, although Soviet foreign policy has no revolutionary content whatsoever, it is a fact that the Soviet Union provided vital military and economic aid to the Cuban revolution. An extension of that was the decision of the Russian leaders not to oppose the Cuban intervention in Angola.

There can be little doubt that the Soviet Union is the only major power which provides military aid designed to bring down the settler regimes in southern Africa. The important point is that it is quite happy to assign the accomplishment of this task to African nationalists.

The Kremlin is totally uninterested in aiding the building of even pro-Moscow Communist parties in the region!

Even where it is possible to create new Cubas (in the positive sense), the Kremlin advises caution and seeks to smother all spontaneous mass initiatives. Angola, South Yemen and Afghanistan are all states that are proclaimed by the Western press to be 'communist'.

In fact they are curious hybrids: isolated by imperialism, held at arm's length by Comecon, but constructing powerful state apparatuses with the backing of the USSR and East Germany.

All three states are in vital strategic areas. If they went the way of Cuba they would considerably weaken the imperialist hold in the region. But until now they have been used, in differing degrees, as instruments of the foreign policy of the Soviet bureaucracy.

It is a tragedy that sixty years after the Comintern was founded there is not the slightest trace of internationalism in the actions of those parties which once belonged to it.

On an international scale today the sole repository of the traditions of the early Comintern is the Fourth International founded by Trotsky in 1938.

Those of us who belong to it can be justifiably proud at upholding the banner of proletarian internationalism. But a gulf still exists between where we are and where we aim to go.

Gromyko, 1968

'OUR foreign policy is and will continue to be characterised by resoluteness in defending the state interests of the Soviet people, in safeguarding the inviolability of our land frontiers, maritime coasts and a space, and in protecting the dignity of the Soviet flag and the rights and security of Soviet citizens.'

—Andrei Gromyko, Soviet Foreign Minister, Pravda, 22 June 1968.

Trotsky, 1919

'SEVENTY-TWO years have passed since the Communist Party announced its programme to the world in the form of a Manifesto written by the greatest teachers of the proletarian revolution, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

'Even at that time communism, which had barely entered the arena of struggle, was beset by baiting, lies, hatred, and persecution of the possessing classes, who rightly sense in it their mortal enemy.

'In the course of those seven decades communism developed along complex paths, periods of stormy advance alternating with periods of decline; has known successes, but also severe defeats. But essentially the movement proceeded along the path indicated in advance by the Manifesto of the Communist Party.

'The epoch of final, decisive struggle came later than the apostles of social revolution had expected and hoped. But it has come.

'We communists, the representative of the revolutionary proletariat of various countries of Europe, America and Asia, who have gathered in Soviet Moscow, feel and consider ourselves to be heirs and executors of the cause whose programme was announced 70 years ago.

'Our task is to generalise the revolutionary experience of the working class, to cleanse the movement of the disintegrating admixtures of opportunism and social-patriotism, to mobilise the forces of all genuinely revolutionary parties of the world proletariat and thereby facilitate and hasten the victory of the communist revolution throughout the world.'

— Opening paragraphs of the 'Manifesto of the Communist International to the Proletariat of the Entire World', written by Trotsky and adopted unanimously by the founding congress of the Third Communist International.



OTTO GRIEBEL'S painting 'Die Internationale' (you won't spot any women). It now hangs in the East Berlin Museum for German History.

PROLETARIAN NATIONALISM

How can there be wars between workers' states?

By Livio Maitan

COUNTRIES which claim to be Marxist-Leninist, and where capitalism has been overthrown, are and have been involved in military operations or even partial wars against countries of the same social character.

This raises at least two questions: What are the causes of these conflicts? Is it possible that in future other conflicts of this kind will develop and take on the dimensions of a war unlimited in time and space?

Trotskyists characterise a series of European and Asian countries (not to mention Cuba, which is a very specific case) as transitional societies. But at the same time they specify that these societies have all suffered a profound bureaucratic degeneration or deformation.

This bureaucratisation consists of two basic elements: the absence of socialist democracy allowing the effective participation of the masses — and in the first place the working class — in political leadership, and the construction of 'socialism' within the limits of a single country.

In other words, if certain structural elements are absent or are completely deformed, the society being built concretely takes on very specific characteristics, and it is inevitably drawn into a different dynamic from that of a society actually advancing towards socialism.

The absence of socialist democracy means that the working class and the mass of working people in general are excluded from political leadership. It means, for instance, that decisions on

war or peace can be made without the masses being able to express their will and make it count.

The building of socialism in one country means that the national state — inherited from the bourgeoisie — becomes the framework of socialist construction. This is even necessary and preferable according to the theorisations of half a century (from those of Stalin/Bukharin in 1924 to those of the Communist parties today) and in the practice of the existing workers states.

This is a central element. The national state as such is presented as the foundation of the transitional society: in fact, it is the source of the bureaucracy's power.

Can one say that this has economic roots? Only in a mediated form, in the sense that the bureaucrats conceive of economic construction within this national framework.

But the source of bureaucratic power is control over the state apparatus — and the party apparatus which is essentially integrated into the state. That is why the basic motivation is a political one, which flows from the logic of a state constructed within a national framework, inherited from capitalism.

Conflicts between workers states are inevitable once one accepts such a framework and such a logic — once one denies what, for Marxism and as far as working class interests are concerned, is the absolute prerequisite for real socialist construction: an international economic unity which involves from the start the breaking down of existing national limits.

These conflicts can be fuelled by, among other things, different or even opposed economic interests. This was the case in the immediate post-war years in relation to the mixed societies between the USSR and the countries of Western Europe; and it could arise now in the event of certain specific choices made by Comecon.

But the fundamental causes are to be found on the political level: what international policy should be adopted in a given period, what agreements made and what alliances sought, what form of military preparation and defence should be chosen.

An example is the decisive importance at the start of the Sino-Soviet conflict of the problem of detente and relations with the United States (at the time the positions held were the opposite of what they are today) and the question of nuclear weapons (the Chinese refused to accept Moscow's thesis that the USSR was and should remain the nuclear shield of the entire 'socialist world').

From the viewpoint of 'socialism in one country' it becomes logical to accept and even to advocate a division into spheres of influence; and therefore to become preoccupied with the defence — and eventual extension — of these spheres. Border questions in turn acquire an importance which far exceeds their intrinsic significance.

In fact a terrible logic is unleashed which can escape the control of the bureaucratic leading groups themselves and carry them further than they would wish.

How can such disputes, based on the existence of different 'socialisms in one country', become transformed into armed conflicts?

On the basis of what has already occurred, one can outline three possibilities:

1. A bureaucratic leadership intervenes militarily when it considers that there exists a short-term danger of capitalist restoration in another workers state, whose leadership seems incapable of confronting the danger.

As we know, that was Moscow's justification for its interventions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. But in fact this theoretical hypothesis has yet to be translated into reality.

2. A bureaucratic leadership intervenes with its army to prevent or destroy mass anti-bureaucratic movements taking on a dynamic of political revolution. This is what happened in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968.

In these cases what occurred was more exactly civil war, where a 'foreign' bureaucracy intervened against both the masses and sections of



VIETNAMESE peasants killed by Chinese shelling in the Laokai city region last week.

the native bureaucracy, because Moscow considered that the latter were incapable of warding off the threats to the bureaucratic regime itself, or were involved in an extremely dangerous dynamic of concessions.

3. Bureaucratic leaderships engage in military conflicts without there being any danger of capitalist restoration or political revolution because of the logic of competing interests of 'socialisms in one country' — in other words, the defence or extension of spheres of interest, the maintenance of control by one country over another which seeks to win greater independence for itself, etc.

This is what happened with the Sino-Soviet conflict, especially in the present phase, and with the current conflicts in Asia.

This article does not aim to draw conclusions as to political orientation or to advance precise slogans. What it is concerned to underline is that the logic of socialism in one country — just like the bureaucratic denial of socialist democracy — has to be fought from a revolutionary position, from the perspective of a political revolution for the overthrow of the ruling bureaucratic caste.

This does not exclude the adoption of temporary tactical positions in response to particular attitudes or moves by this or that section of the bureaucracy.

But, from the strategic point of view, revolutionaries must fight — today more than ever — against all the bureaucratic regimes, whatever their specific characteristics and whatever the ideological/political justifications they put forward.



— The Soviet bureaucracy sends its army to crush the Hungarian uprising.



1968 — the Prague Spring is crushed by the Soviet invasion.

Army weakened but still intact

EYEWITNESS REPORT FROM IRAN

KAVEH AFRASIABI is an Iranian socialist who left the country only a few days ago.

He visited our offices to give his impressions of recent developments.

On the guerrilla organisations and the army

Although there are differences between the Fedayeen and the Mojahedeen — the former refer to *Das Kapital* and the latter to the Koran — what is interesting is that there is a growing unity in action.

Both are agreed on the necessity to smash the army and create a popular militia. Both groups were strongly opposed to any handing back of weapons.

Both groups are also in the forefront of the opposition to the weak regime of Bazargan. Rajavi, a leader of the Mojahedeen, recently attacked Bazargan for attempting to stop the 'permanence of the revolution'.

As far as the army is concerned, we must be very careful. I don't believe that it has been smashed. It has suffered a serious political defeat, and it is in no position at the moment to organise a coup, but it is still intact.

There is a common thesis on this within the left. It goes something like this: the Shah's generals were preparing a coup, but the United States saw no chances of success and opposed it.

They then organised against it and organised a counter-coup within the army. This was to involve dismembering the 'Immortals' and removing the generals. The officers who did that would then become popular. But the entry of the masses disrupted the plan.

However, the army remains a

pro-imperialist force. Recently Ralph Schoenman, an American radical, posed as a CIA agent and obtained a tape-recorded interview with Colonel Tavakoli, Khomeini's military adviser. In this Tavakoli admitted that the plan was to create an Islamic army and use Islam to polish off the left.

He mentioned getting rid of 500,000 leftists and stated that the younger officers were all pro-American. Well, Schoenman released the tapes to the Iranian press and Tavakoli had to resign, but the rest of the army is still there.

It is weakened certainly, and the rank-and-file are susceptible to mass influences — the Fedayeen have a strong base in the airforce. There are also links with rank-and-file soldiers, and four or five soldiers committees have been formed.

At the Kerman Shah military base there is an elected soldiers and officers committee which elects its own commanding officer. These committees control everything, dismiss corrupt officers, and maintain vigilance. But they are far from being generalised.

On the Bazargan government

The government consists entirely of bourgeois notables, most of whom are from the National Front. Without doubt they are the only instrument available to imperialism today.

Bazargan is exactly the same politically as Bakhtiar. Neither Bazargan nor Sanjabi (Foreign

Minister) have in any of their speeches over the past year shown the slightest trace of anti-imperialist rhetoric.

The clash between Khomeini and Bazargan is, in reality, a struggle between a shapeless petty-bourgeois populism and bourgeois interests. Thus Khomeini wants all banks nationalised and interest abolished, while Bazargan and Iranian capital are totally opposed to this scheme.

Bazargan has recently announced that he wants the Japanese petro-chemical industry to continue its operations in Iran. He is also prepared to allow US military advisers to stay in the country.

If he resigns after a clash with Khomeini the political crisis would escalate very rapidly.

On the working class

I spent three weeks in Abadan and the other oil cities. The oil workers are the most militant in Iran. This dates back to their early struggles against the British and then in the 1940s,

when the Tudeh (Communist) Party created a mass base for itself.

Politically the oil workers are divided into three wings. There is the Islamic pro-Khomeini faction, which represents about 50 per cent of the workforce. They are militant in the sense that they obey Khomeini's injunctions.

The Tudeh is the second largest force. A quarter of the oil workers are members or sympathisers of the Tudeh Party.

Then there is a group of workers which supports neither wing, but is more responsive to the far-left currents, especially the Fedayeen. The Fedayeen established a HQ there four weeks ago and are recruiting a lot of workers.

The strike committee which led the big strikes consists of the Muslims and the left. It was this committee which represented the 67,000 oil workers during the struggles.

Abadan is really a secular city and conditions are ripe for a rapid growth of the left.

Trade unions have not been formed so far, but the cells of these unions already exist.

However oil workers want to go beyond trade unionism. They actually want to determine how the oil industry is run and what prices are decided.

In Tehran's industrial suburbs and in other towns there are numerous examples of workers control. The General Tyre factory in Karaj (industrial suburb of Tehran) has been taken over by the workers completely after a sit-in which lasted 12 days.

In the Leyland factories the workers are taking more and

more decisions. The textile factory in Arak Road, Tehran, is also under a system of workers control.

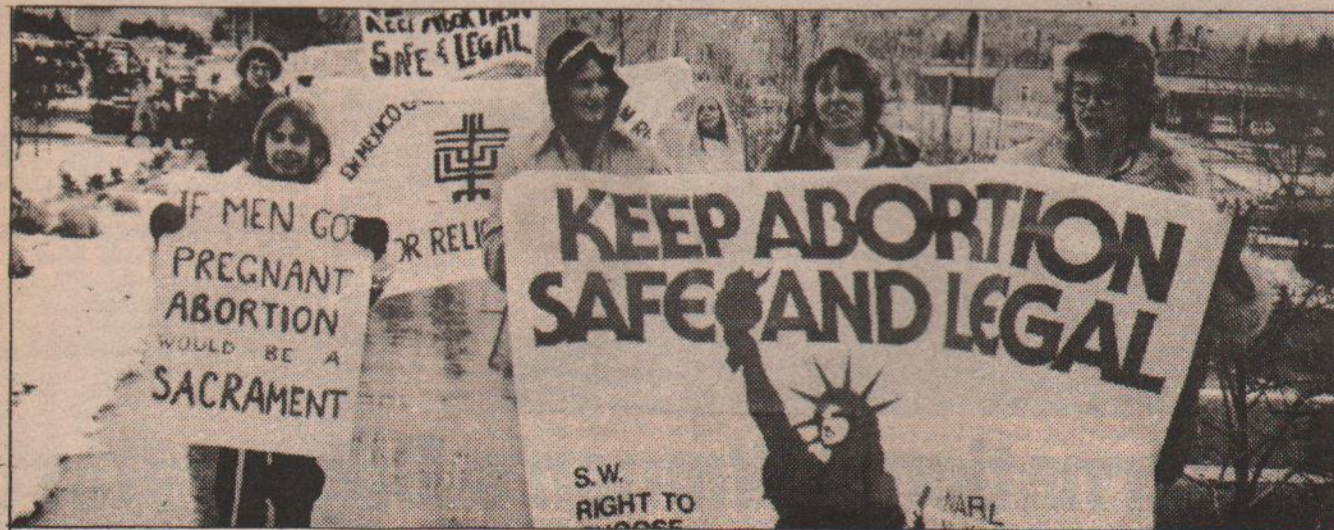
In Tabriz a tractor factory has been taken over by the workers, who have elected a workers council. In Kerman 16,000 factory workers went on strike in solidarity with fifteen arrested teachers.

Political awareness is growing. In a country where there is a 65 per cent illiteracy rate, this consciousness is the direct result of the workers' struggles.

The task now is to generalise all these developments. There are enormous opportunities for the left.



US demo planned for abortion rights



CAMPAINING for abortion rights in New Mexico.

By Rose Knight

FEMINISTS from Women's Health Centres across the United States have formed the Abortion Rights Movement in defiance of attempts by the National Organisation for Women to compromise with anti-abortionists.

Without consulting constituent groups or testing the opinion of the members, NOW

president Ellie Smeal called for a public meeting between anti-abortionists and NOW and an end to 'destructive confrontation'.

In a press statement on 22 January, the anniversary of the legalisation of abortion, NOW said:

'No-one is pro-abortion! Abortion is a choice of last resort, but it must nevertheless be a choice guaranteed to every

woman: the victim of rape or incest, the woman whose contraceptives fail, the teenager for whom no-one cared enough to explain the facts of life, the woman whose physical or mental health cannot stand the strain, the woman who is found to be at risk with birth defects...Abortion is an act of desperation.'

The Feminist Women's Health Centre in California

sent an open letter to women's groups arguing that this was not the view of the majority of feminists in NOW and advocating instead an Abortion Rights Movement:

'Many feminist activists view abortion as a legitimate method of birth control...we do not believe that abortion is only for women who have been raped, or for teenagers, or for women who cannot withstand the

strain of pregnancy...we do not want to reinstate therapeutic abortion. We want abortion rights for all women!'

The public meeting between NOW and the anti-abortionists took place after a decision that there would be no discussion except on areas of agreement. Many anti-abortion organisations refused to attend and two women disrupted the meeting by unrolling foetuses from baby blankets.

At the same time an abortion clinic in Long Island was set on fire as part of the violent campaign started a year ago by the anti-abortion movement.

In the last three years anti-abortionists have introduced a ban on the use of legal aid funds for any matter connected with abortion, a conscience clause for doctors and nurses, an exemption clause for religious hospitals, even when they are state funded, and the withdrawal of public funds for any abortion except where the woman's life is in danger. Many states have introduced restrictive clauses.

ARM's aims include fighting for greater access to abortion, resisting restrictive legislation and demanding that public

funds are used to pay for abortions for poor women.

Women from self-help groups are involved, so it is not surprising that ARM's objectives involve setting up such groups. They believe that women sharing information about their bodies can become independent of state institutions, at the same time as adopting a strategy of confronting these institutions and forcing them to recognise woman's 'inalienable and unqualified right to control her own reproduction.'

Women from feminist women's health centres will be involved in activities on 31 March, the International Day of Action on Abortion Rights. They will be joined by organisations like CARASA (Campaign for Abortion Rights and Against Sterilisation Abuse) and the North East Coalition for Reproductive Rights.

Demonstrations are being organised in Boston, Hartford, New York, Buffalo, Chicago and California.

In London there will be a demonstration from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square on 31 March, starting on 1.30.

IRELAND

Solidarity News

Women and partition

The unity of the bigots

Gallagher vs Mason

SOME people are going to extraordinary lengths to sabotage Brendan Gallagher's general election campaign.

Brendan will be standing against Roy Mason in Barnsley, and one aspect of his platform is the demand 'Free Speech on Ireland'. But free speech is the last thing he is being given.

Despite valiant efforts by the Committee to Elect Brendan Gallagher, no public meeting hall in Barnsley has been willing to accept bookings from the Committee. Nor has any labour movement institution, including the Labour-controlled council.

Only one pub in the town was willing to allow Brendan to speak on its premises, and eventually they too cancelled the booking.

Despite all this, the election campaign continues to gather momentum and support. For further details write to: Committee to Elect Brendan Gallagher, c/o 182 Upper Street, London N1.

Ireland Socialist Review

JUST out is the fourth edition of Ireland Socialist Review, which includes articles on the media and current British security policies.

This excellent journal costs 30p and can be obtained from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, London N1. Postage is 15p extra, but a three-issue subscription for £1 can be ordered from ISR, 60 Loughborough Rd, London SW9.

Dundee UTOM

MEMBERS of Dundee United Troops Out Movement joined forces on 3 March with Zimbabwean students. The occasion was the disruption of a meeting organised at Dundee University by the Monday Club.

Star speakers were a representative from the South African embassy and Loyalist MP Willie Ross. But the Tories eventually abandoned the affair after UTOM and the Zimbabweans prevented any further progress by drowning out the speakers.

The two groups then held their own joint meeting, followed by a UTOM demonstration to the centre of Dundee.

Torture fan

THE Queen's public house in Haringey, North London, is trying to live up to its namesake. Two weeks ago Pat Arrowsmith happened to be in the bar when she was refused custom. The reason was that Pat was wearing a 'Stop British Torture in Ireland' badge.

Last week a small protest was organised when about 40 people appeared in the pub wearing the same badge. Some had come from a nearby general management committee meeting of the local Labour Party.

But this did not impress the pub's landlord, who refused to serve everyone wearing the badge.

A PECULIAR merging of views has occurred in Ireland. Charles Haughey, said to be the most 'extreme' Republican in the Irish Cabinet, and Ian Paisley, arch-Loyalist from North Antrim, have adopted a common theme.

Both disguised it with moral phrases and sanctimonious speeches, but it was obvious enough all the same — the oppression of women.

By Geoff Bell

Paisley's outburst attracted attention when he opposed the Protection of Prostitutes Bill in Parliament on 6 March.

The Bill, introduced by Maureen Colquhoun, sought to abolish prison sentences for soliciting and give prostitutes better protection from exploitation and victimisation.

Ian Paisley didn't approve. His opposition to the liberalising measure was, he said, motivated by his desire 'to stand for the protection of all womenfolk'. Prostitutes, presumably, cannot be classed as 'womenfolk'.

Haughey was involved in a different controversy. The previous week he finally

introduced in the Irish Parliament his Bill on contraception, which, he proudly proclaimed, 'was not legalising the availability of contraceptives'.

Briefly, Haughey's proposals seek to restrict contraception, on a prescription only basis, to married couples. It is, said the Minister of Health, 'an Irish answer to an Irish problem.'

That description would no doubt win approval from Ian Paisley. For what Haughey was really saying was that his Bill was a Southern Irish answer to a Southern Irish problem.

Leaving aside for the moment the validity of Haughey's description, it clearly could not apply to all of



IAN PAISLEY

Ireland.

The population of the country's six north-eastern counties enjoy the same availability of contraception as applies in Great Britain.

Haughey's words were in effect as partitionist as anything Paisley has ever proclaimed. In that one phrase he founded and erected and defended an Irish border of morality.

Women, especially young unmarried women, will most



CHARLES HAUGHEY

acutely feel Haughey's ban on any form of control over their own bodies. But the political importance of the measure is not confined to democratic and women's rights. It relates squarely to the Irish national question.

Much the same can be said for the type of religious hysteria displayed by Paisley. His views are shared — on this, as on other issues — by a fair percentage of the Loyalists of

the North of Ireland. The Calvinistic strain in that ideology retains a significant influence.

The spectacle of a bigoted Protestant morality in the North and a bigoted Catholic morality in the South might, despite their often common agreement, suggest the propriety of two different states in Ireland, each legislating for its own religious majority.

But that would be getting the equation the wrong way round. Rather than justifying partition, such contrasts are a result of it.

A historical example illustrates this. In 1912 an Irish Home Ruler, Thomas Kettle, wrote: 'We Catholics voluntarily abjure the blessings of divorce, but we should never dream of using the civil law to impose our abnegation on those of another belief.'

Kettle wrote that sentence in an attempt to persuade Protestants in the North of the tolerance of the Irish Home Rule Party. His sentiments were probably indicative of the feelings of many Irish nationalists at the time.

But 25 years later the government of the 26-county Irish 'Free State' did more than 'dream' of such legislation — divorce was specifically banned under the 1937 constitution.

It was partition which allowed that constitution, heavily influenced as it was by Catholic theology, to be passed.

Would such legislation have had any chance of being passed in a 32-county Ireland in which one quarter of the population was Protestant?

Would Charles Haughey's contemporary restriction on contraception stand any chance of being introduced, never mind passed, in a contemporary 32-county Ireland?

The asking of these questions provides the answer.

The simple conclusion is that the rantings of both Paisley and Haughey have their roots in the division of Ireland.

Irish socialist James Connolly predicted in 1913 that the erection of a border in Ireland would offer up a 'carnival of reaction' on both sides of it. On the issue of women's rights alone, Connolly's prophecy has more than a passing relevance.

In the South today, growing socialist and women's movements will continue to fight and resist Haughey's edicts. But in isolation neither North nor South can be won from the existing theological influences.

That is why the struggle for women's liberation in Ireland is intimately bound up with the struggle to destroy partition.



RUC attack International Women's Day protest

By Anne Marie Loughran Belfast

MEMBERS of the Royal Ulster Constabulary attacked an International Women's Day picket outside Armagh jail on 8 March.

The 50-strong picket, called by Women Against Imperialism, was held outside the women's jail in support of the political prisoners inside.

A total of 37 women inside Armagh are currently being

punished by the prison authorities for demanding political status. They are kept locked in their cells for 24 hours every day.

The demonstrators sang and chanted to the prisoners, some of whom sang back and hung the socialist/republican starry plough flag from a cell window.

But then, at the end of the protest, as the pickets moved to the front of the jail to disperse,

four RUC jeeps suddenly appeared and within five minutes 13 people had been physically assaulted and arrested.

The 13 included members of Women Against Imperialism and Belfast Relatives Action Committee, as well as playwright Margaretta D'Arcy, who has herself just been released after spending two months in Armagh.

This attempt to intimidate the Irish women's liberation movement has not gone unanswered. Women Against Imperialism has already responded by announcing a mass picket of Armagh prison in a month's time, and women's conferences, groups and individuals are being asked to support this initiative.

Similar support from feminists in Britain would

demonstrate their understanding of the leading role women play in the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland, as well as the importance of the fight for women's liberation in Ireland.

For more information of next month's mass picket contact: Anne Marie Loughran, Women Against Imperialism, c/o 7 Rosedale Park Drive, Andersonstown, Belfast.

SURPLUS VALUE

Making trade union work political

THE FACT that the militant struggles against the government's 5 per cent pay limit have stopped short of a political challenge to Labour has aroused much discussion on the left.

This has been reflected not only in the pages of **Socialist Challenge**, but also in the press of the Socialist Workers Party.

Below we print extracts from one such contribution by STEVE JEFFERYS to the February/March issue of the SWP's Industrial Discussion Bulletin.

HOW in the present conditions of mass struggle should revolutionaries operate? What kind of strategy can we offer? Can the political and organisational vacuum be filled? Can the industrial militancy of 1979 be given a political content or direction?

The first point to make is that there is no simple answer. This article is just a contribution to the discussion. We need to have an open debate about it....

My own view can be briefly summarised as follows:

1. The continuing crisis of British capitalism, combined with five years of Labour government, has squeezed the left reformist leaderships in the trade unions and Labour Party virtually out of existence.

The working class remains ready to fight for class goals, but the lack of any organisational and political alternative capable of generalising and leading that struggle leaves leadership increasingly in the hands of the class collaborators, the conscious right reformists.

2. In the past we have placed too great an emphasis upon the fact that the trade union bureaucracy sells out because it is full-time, and not enough on the fact that trade union leaderships at all levels sell out because of their politics.

The 'left' leaders sold out not primarily because they were full-time officials, but because they started as left reformists who inevitably got pushed further and further to the right. Our work in the trade unions must recognise this and be much more political in future.

3. Equally, in the past we have exaggerated the independent potential of the shop stewards basically because they were rank and file representatives.

While it is true that this means they are both well-placed to give leadership to the class and to sustain shop floor organisation, there is nothing inherent in being a rank and file worker (or leader) that guarantees political protection from ruling class ideas.

Our activities in the workplaces must also recognise this and be much more political in the future.

4. The immediate threat to the working class is the danger of a major retreat by the right reformist trade union leadership before a new ruling class offensive (which we can expect just as soon as it recovers its nerve).

In this situation we must fight for a united front of all those ready to defend basic trade union rights, shop floor organisation and the notion of working class independence.

The work of our comrades in the EETPU and AUEW with 'Broad Left' supporters and CP members on wages, union democracy, and the amalgamation is the direction in which we should move.

5. The united front on specific issues within the trade unions is the key. But to work correctly inside it we have to be absolutely clear on our organisational and political independence.

This means that we do not dissolve existing Rank and File organisations which are politically independent of the reformist Labour and trade union leaders. Instead we work to strengthen them where they exist, and initiate them where they don't.

But as revolutionaries working with non-revolutionaries in Rank and File groups we argue for joint work on specific issues with individual and organised reformists.

6. Working inside a united front which includes left reformists makes it even more crucial that we establish and strengthen our organisational and political independence from the reformists.

For when workers are facing a Tory government and a TUC led by the 'gang of 12', Moss Evans and Alan Fisher can easily appear almost as welcome as Jones and Scanlon did in the late 1960s, and we know what their role turned out to be.

7. The necessary organisational and political independence has to be built both through our industrial strategy — stressing the need for self-activity and opposing collaboration with the employers and reliance upon the reformist trade union leaders — and through consistent and systematic socialist propaganda (through **Socialist Worker**, meetings and bulletins) winning workers away

from reformism which fails to represent working class interests whenever capitalism faces a crisis.

8. The unevenness in consciousness amongst workers cannot be overcome by sloganising. Some workers are open to our full revolutionary programme, and hence must be recruited direct from the picket line and workplace to the SWP.

Others are only open to a part of our programme (e.g. the demand for real democracy in the unions, or for militant opposition to wage controls). In periods of struggle such workers often realise in practice the limits of reformist organisation and look for organisational forms that extend and strengthen the struggle.

Rank and File groups and action

committees initiated by revolutionaries as well as strike and picketing committees spontaneously thrown up by the struggle can play this role.

We must encourage their development and after the struggle dies attempt to keep the maximum number of workers possible involved in sustaining the organisational links created in the struggle.

This rank and file work is not an alternative to SWP activity, but is SWP activity in which we should be totally open.

9. We must not exaggerate our size and immediate potential. There are only a tiny handful of revolutionary socialists in the working class today. In a small-scale struggle our views might get noted; in the present mass

struggle they get swamped.

But this must not mean that we confine ourselves to a pure propaganda role. Only by fighting, arguing and trying out our politics in practice in the actual struggle — around one hospital, one ambulance depot, in a school, an employment office, in one factory — can we begin to create a new leadership within the working class.

We have to use the opportunities thrown up by the struggle — the bankruptcy of Labour, the half-heartedness of the trade union leaders, the sense of frustration felt by hundreds of thousands — to build the SWP and Rank and File organisation so as to be in a more effective situation in the struggles of the 1980s.



'The work of our comrades in the AUEW with Broad Left supporters and CP members is the direction we should move in.'

IMG-ISA school

By Dodie Wepler

WHY has the far left failed, on a European scale, to emerge as a credible alternative to social democracy or the Communist Party?

Richard Kuper, a member of the International Socialist Alliance, argued at the joint school on 'Revolutionary Strategy and the Revolutionary Party' last weekend that part of the problem lies in the conception held by revolutionaries about how to organise.

For John Ross, speaking on behalf of the International Marxist Group, the answer to the crisis of the far left

can be found in its inability to get right many fundamental strategic questions, and he defended traditional Leninist forms of revolutionary organisation.

The school, one of a series, was organised to allow the IMG and the ISA — as well as other independent socialists who agreed with the appeal for revolutionary unity published in **Socialist Challenge** on 4 January — to discuss new areas or those where there are outstanding differences.

These schools were proposed some time ago, but it was felt that they would be most useful once joint work

was underway on a local level where there are members of both organisations.

Forty people attended the school, including a good number of independent socialists. Big Flame comrades, invited although they refused to sign the joint appeal, also attended.

Suggestions for future schools include such topics as 'Internationalism and the Fourth International'; 'The revolutionary party and autonomous movements'; 'Revolutionaries and the Labour Party'; and 'Socialist Democracy'.

REVOLUTION FUND DRIVE



REVOLUTION is not just something that we're all in favour of — it's the name of a youth paper. A youth paper initiated by the IMG to help establish a new revolutionary youth organisation. Why did we want to do this?

Most importantly, we want to encourage the self-organisation of youth. It's not that youth are second-class citizens, they are not citizens at all.

In the family they are totally dependent economically on the goodwill of their parents. This is used as an excuse for denying them their basic rights: to decide where they live, what they do in the evenings, how they can organise.

Youth are told that they cannot make up their minds about sexuality — to 'protect' them, they are denied any right to express sexual feelings. This has the effect of denying young women access to contraception.

The 'in loco parentis' law allows the school authorities to take over the 'rights' of parents. Youth are forced into humiliating school uniforms, subjected to petty rules, beaten and censored and denied the right to organise.

The schools students' union, NUSS, is banned by most school authorities.

At work young workers are the lowest paid, not integrated into the trade unions — which do little for their particular needs — and the least secure in their jobs. Youth are the biggest section of the unemployed.

The revolutionary left has often ignored the fact that youth are oppressed as youth. Revolution was launched to promote the self-organisation of youth against their oppression: through building a union in schools, organising the unemployed, fighting for social facilities.

At the same time, thousands of youth are already concluding that the only final solution to their oppression, and that of other sections of society, is socialism. And that the means to achieve it is through organising as revolutionaries.

Thus Revolution is the first step on the road to establishing a new revolutionary youth organisation. The IMG launched Revolution, but already it is under the control of representatives from Revolution groups around the country.

Between now and the autumn, when a conference will be held, we hope to see many more groups established so that a representative editorial board can be elected.

The success of these plans depends on regular monthly production of Revolution; it will also require a separate office, a telephone, and one or two workers. All this will cost at

least £4,000.

An added problem is that the youth — virtually by definition — do not have much money. To depend on Revolution readers to raise the cash is a lost cause.

So reaching this £4,000 target depends very heavily on your contributions.

Teachers, parents, lecturers in particular have a responsibility to contribute to helping the youth organise, as they play a direct role in their oppression. We appeal to them to send in contributions to Revolution's £4,000 fund drive.

The new Revolution is now out — its main theme is sexual politics. Make sure that we can produce another and another and another.

So start fund-raising activities, send in a day's wages as a donation, and win support for the Revolution rally to be held in London on 5 May to make sure that we meet that target.

THE DEER HUNTER_x



'BEST FILM of the year', 'the definitive statement about Vietnam', 'an unsurpassed anti-war movie'. These are some of the accolades currently being showered on *The Deer Hunter*, directed by Michael Cimino.

By Carl Gardner

Certainly, in technical and dramatic terms, *The Deer Hunter* is often a gripping, harrowing spectacle. It is reputed that even hard-bitten New York film critics broke down in tears at the preview.

But what is the film's meaning for a mass audience — particularly an American one, for whom it was primarily designed?

What vision of the Vietnamese war is reconstructed and re-presented four years after the fall of Saigon?

The blurred TV images grow distant now; the memories of that 10-year atrocity fade; the mass clamour of dissent has evaporated.

But guilt, doubt, anxiety linger on in US society — feelings of uncertainty about America's world democratic role still clutter the imagination.

The awkward legacy of Vietnam cries out for a re-interpretation in new colours, using simply, homely categories. It needs to be represented afresh; the ideological account must be settled.

The American public needs to be definitively re-positioned and reassured in relation to those events done in its name. This *The Deer Hunter* does insistently and well.

Here we had one of the poorest countries in the world invaded, blasted, defoliated,

corrupted and wrecked by the mightiest economic and military machine in the world, under the banner of 'freedom'.

Perhaps a little doubt is in order, perhaps a little guilt? Not according to Cimino's epic vision.

Our courageous boys, magically whisked across the globe, courageously did their best, suffered and died at the hands of a sadistic, inhuman enemy who played with prisoners' lives.

This is a film which revolves almost totally around the discomfort and pain of the oppressors; it is one in which that suffering and brutality emanates exclusively from the Vietnamese, North and South; one in which the historical agents of oppression — the American imperialists, the Pentagon, the presidency of the United States — completely vanish.

For Cimino, the Vietnamese experience becomes essentially a voyage of self-discovery for the central character, Michael (played by Robert De Niro). It is a voyage which affirms the supposedly timeless (and apolitical) virtues of courage, loyalty, friendship, love and trust.

These values — so empty in the face of the suffering inflicted on the Vietnamese people — in fact become the *raison d'être* of the film.

They are all that the USA can even half-seriously salvage

The Battle Hymn of the Republic, revised



from the whole disastrous imperialist adventure.

The principal meaning which emerges from the film's early episodes of the protagonists — Michael, Steve and Nick — at home and work in the industrial mid-West is the validity and importance of the macho, male, 'buddy-boy' life-style.

Everything is posed in terms of male action, virility, and togetherness: working, drinking, singing. Women are largely passive shadows or objects.

It is irrelevant to argue that this is how American workers do behave — treated 'realistically' and uncritically, and combined with an unquestioning US nationalism, it can only be stated and celebrated.

'Macho' behaviour and stars-and-stripes worship become virtues, rather than part

of the ideology which kept the USA in Vietnam for so long.

The second section of the film whisks us to Vietnam, just in time to see a lone NLF soldier barbarically blowing up South Vietnamese villagers (forget My Lai).

The three buddies are taken prisoner. We are then treated to the most racist treatment of non-caucasians since Alan Parker's depiction of the Turks in *Midnight Express*.

The NLF soldiers gamble as their prisoners are forced to play Russian roulette with a loaded pistol. Meanwhile the waiting victims are kept caged in the swirling river.

Forget that it was the *Saigon regime*, ably supported by the Americans, which extensively used 'tiger-cages' for their

prisoners.

Our three heroes escape to Saigon, but Nick and Steve are wounded and the group separated. Steve is shipped back to the US, minus his legs; Nick deserts; and Michael returns to his home town, but then goes back to Saigon, just before its fall, to redeem his pledge to Nick not to leave him there.

He finds Nick a mindless heroin addict about to take part in a back-room game of Russian roulette, surrounded by depraved South Vietnamese gamblers.

Despite Michael's pleading and his participation in the 'game' himself — the ultimate gesture of loyalty — Nick gets unlucky and blows his brains out. Back home at the funeral,

Michael, his family, and other friends solemnly sing 'God Bless America' as the closing credits roll.

The central symbol of the film is the Russian roulette device which is repeated on four separate, dramatic occasions. It clearly stands as a symbol for war.

For Cimino, war is simply a brutally abstract and meaningless game of chance, governed by blind fate; not a concrete historical event governed by real economic and political forces (plus human choices) which it is possible to understand and change.

War drops out of history — no guilt, no blame, no responsibility, nothing to be learnt. Well, at least for Americans.

What escapism is all about



By Sally Feldman

THE DIFFERENCE between comedy and cartoon is that comedy retains some roots in reality — it can derive its laughs from surprising things happening within a believable framework.

Cartoons don't need to bother with any of that. They can embrace the impossible, the ludicrous, the outrageous, without paying any reference at all to the likely.

The joy of National

Lampoon's *Animal House* is that, while seemingly adopting nice, familiar settings — American college life in the 1960s — the film is in fact pure cartoon with the added spice of having real people aping the wild excesses of caricature.

Nobody needs to worry about the finer points of character in this movie. You know who you're supposed to like and hate, and everyone is drawn into the same consistent net; they are all painted in extremes.

Animal House is much more concerned with seeking laughs out of everything than with deciding exactly what is the subject of its attack. Yet, beneath this anarchic approach, there is a fantastic tightness of design.

The 'goodies' are enjoyers — full of lust, energy, spirit. The 'baddies' are the Yes men and women, the arselickers, those who don't know how to have fun. Pure glorious hedonism is the winner — and the forces of control are what are being shot down in riotous flames.

Every feature of campus existence — teenage dating, the horrendous fraternity system, the cheerleaders, the wild, wild parties, exams, committees, sex is presented as part of the same procession of American life that is wrecked so magnificently in the film's grand finale. It's all turned on its head.

You don't need to analyse too deeply. You just have to accept that this is a world where motor bikes crash out of windows, drunks piss on other

guys' boots, horses get shot at, cars get wrecked...

And there's no need for one moment of anxiety because, as in all the best cartoons, everybody, even the bullies, always comes bouncing back again.

The epitome of all this is the irrepressible John Belushi — the walking cartoon character — who smashes bottles over his head, breaks guitars, roars and grunts and lumbers amicably through the movie as a kind of mobile libido. Don't just offend, is the imperative. Disgust.

Animal House really shows you what escapism is all about — doing everything you've ever even passingly thought of doing, but with more panache and gusto than you'd ever dared.

It's as if Marvel Comics had somehow got hold of the plot of *If and quadrupled it!* A silly, loveable film, that never dries up — and, against all odds, leaves your heart more or less in the right place.

Militant entertainment tour

MARCH
Sat 17 Cambridge Corn Exchange: Gang of Four, Misty, Red Express and the Ruts. Mon 19 Leicester Poly: Gang of Four, Misty, Ruts and Wendy Tunes. Tue 20 Cromer West Runton Pav: Gang of Four, Misty, Pain Killers and the Ruts. Wed 21 Coventry Lanchester Poly: Barry Forde Band, Leyton Buzzards, The Piranas and the Specials. Thur 22 Sheffield Poly: Barry Forde Band, Leyton Buzzards, Piranas and local band. Fri 23 Leeds Poly: Barry Forde, Leyton Buzzards, Piranas and Sheenv and the Gobs. Sat 24 Middlesbrough Teesside Poly: Leyton Buzzards, Barry Forde, Piranas and local band. Sun 25 Lancaster Uni: Leyton Buzzards, Barry Forde, The Only Ones and Interference. Tue 27 Edinburgh Clouds: Stiff Little Fingers, Mekons, 15.16.17 and Carol Grimes. Wed 28 Stirling Uni: Stiff Little Fingers, Mekons, 15.16.17 and Carol Grimes. Thur 29 Aberdeen Music Hall:

Stiff Little Fingers, Mekons, 15.16.17 and Carol Grimes. Fri 30 Bradford Poly: Stiff Little Fingers, Mekons, 15.16.17 and local band.

APRIL
Mon 2 Liverpool Uni: Angelic Upstarts, Aswad, The Only Ones and Tontrix. Tues 3 Manchester Poly: Angelic Upstarts, Aswad, The Only Ones and Exodus. Wed 4 Birmingham Regal Cinema: Angelic Upstarts, Aswad, Crisis and Iganda. Fri 6 Nottingham Mallibu: Angelic Upstarts, Aswad, Crisis and Slip Hazard. Sat 7 Cardiff Sophia Gardens: Angelic Upstarts, Aswad, Crisis and local band. Sun 8 Llanelli Glen Ballroom: John Cooper Clarke, Cimmarons, Sunsets and Belt 'n' Braces. Mon 9 Exeter Routes: John Cooper Clarke, Cimmarons, Bent 'n' Braces and Fans. Tue 10 Plymouth Woods: John Cooper Clarke, Cimmarons, Belt 'n' Braces and My Willie. Wed 11 Newport Stowaway: John Cooper Clarke, Cimmarons, UK Subs and local band. Thur 12 Bristol Uni: John Cooper Clarke, Cimmarons, UK Subs and X-Certs. Sun 15 London Ally Pally: Bands to be confirmed.



THE first issue of *Rock Against Sexism's* **DRAS**IC measures is now out price 5p with a long article 'Love Sex — Hate Sexism' by Lucy Toothpaste. Among RAS's aims is 'to fight sexism in music and to use music to fight sexism at large'.

More info from: RAS, 121 Grandison Road, London SW11. Badges (as illustrated) 15p plus 10p postage.

Socialist Challenge



FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE -

'I would have supported strike action'

Socialist Challenge EXCLUSIVE

IN an exclusive interview with this paper, Florence Nightingale had the following to say to nurses struggling for higher wages and better working conditions.

The interview was conducted in conditions of clandestinity in the upper reaches of the stratosphere.

You must have been observing the growing militancy of the nurses over the last few years. What does it look like from here?

The most disgusting aspect of what is going on now is the attempt by the press to portray the Royal College of Nursing methods as those I would have supported.

I hear the London Evening Standard and the Daily Express are providing hot soup and coffee to the RCN nurses. I would have thrown it back in their faces.

In fact I reject the image presented of me by the press. It is nothing but romanticised mythology.

I went to the Crimea to make

the life of the poor dragooned soldiers a bit better. If they'd had a union they'd never have gone there in the first place!

In other words, you would support those nurses in the Confederation of Health Service Employees (COHSE) and NUPE who are arguing for a strike. If so, why?

Yes, I would. The nurses and ancillaries have a joint claim for £60 basic and a 35-hour week.

The nurses are also fighting for the restoration of differentials to their 1974 levels, and for overtime payments at the same rate as ancillaries, as well as improvements in night duty rates.

The best way to win this claim is to strike. Show their power.

But you did not put in similar demands in your day. Did you demand overtime payment for night duties during the Crimean War?

I presume you're being flippant. You should know that we aren't living in the Victorian Age.

Much has changed. We had to work under appalling conditions. God alive, we could have done with a union.

The press are saying that you would have been a member of the RCN rather than COHSE.

Rubbish. This fits in well with the syrupy 'Lady of the lamp' image. I hate that picture of myself.

Of course the press has a purpose in boosting the RCN. They want to obscure the fact that the nurses won their rise in 1974 by successfully mobilising support from miners in

Yorkshire, Kent and South Wales, from Sheffield engineering workers and Ford workers.

This was done by an all-out strike with the provision of emergency cover.

It was the total failure of the RCN ever since the creation of the NHS (which, incidentally, I support wholeheartedly) that forced nurses to join a union to protect themselves and the health service.

The RCN are making use of the anti-strike fervour which exists to win support. They will fail.

Your views will probably surprise many people who have typecast you in a certain image.

One last question. If you were a nurse in the Royal Free and Margaret Thatcher were brought into hospital, would you tend to her?

Oh dear! I was hoping you wouldn't ask that. Can I reserve my opinion?

Interviewer: Brian Hearse

AS we went to press there were rumours that the National Front was planning another mobilisation for Winchester on Saturday 17 March.

Anti-fascists are asked to check with the Anti Nazi League (01-240 1714) later this week for further details and for news of any counter-mobilisation.

What is definite is that the NF appealed at Winchester last Saturday for full support for a 'mass paper sale' at Chapel Market, Islington, on 17 March.

Two separate leaflets handed to those on the pro-Relf demonstration made it very clear that the NF does not take kindly to the opposition they have encountered at Chapel Market whenever they have tried to peddle their filth.

As one leaflet puts it: 'Please come to Chapel Market and give us a hand to smash these red bastards once and for all'.

The Front is mobilising at 10.30am on Saturday morning at the Angel tube station. London readers are encouraged to be at Chapel Market at least half an hour earlier.

THE CYCLE

A superb film by Iran's best known director

Saturday 17 March, 1pm

Scala Cinema, Tottenham Street, London WC1

(Goodge St. tube)

Tickets £1.50 at box office

Benefit organised for Committee Against Repression in Iran

OUR FUND DRIVE

THIS week's total was £204.27. It certainly took us by surprise, but as you will see the bulk of the money came from our supporters in the Camden Labour Party. It was their way of celebrating the victory won by Camden NUPE, aided by left-wing Labour councillors.

Ed Mahood sent in his regular £10 from Canada. A word on Ed for our readers. He is a greatly respected figure in the labour movement in the Canadian prairies. For a while he was in the left wing of the Canadian NDP (social-democratic party) but some years ago he joined the Fourth International.

The Mahoods are all activists and we're glad that they find our paper useful. Thanks Ed!

As readers will see from page 3, we are backing Socialist Unity in the Edge Hill by-election. This means more resources for sending journalists and photographers up to Liverpool to cover the campaign. So don't be shy.

Another reader asked: 'I enjoyed your centre-spread on Camden in the first week of the all-out strike there, but why can't you do that sort of thing in relation to Birmingham, Newcastle or Liverpool?'

The answer is simple: it's not because we are in love with London, but going outside requires cash and our finances

do not permit us to do that regularly.

Thanks this week to:

S. Alwali	£2.00
G.M. Tomlinson	5.00
P. Stewart	5.00
Yannis Hitzos	15.00
Robert Johnson	5.00
Scottish supporter	1.00
Ed Mahood (Canada)	10.00
Camden LP supporters	100.00
Andy Bartlett	.50
Harry Wicks	5.00
Camden SC social	27.00
C. Cooper	1.00
Cathy Tooley	9.00
Other Bookshop Box	18.77
Week's Total	204.27
OVERALL TOTAL	£1,851.30

LOTTERY

SOCIALIST Challenge Spring Lottery. Tickets 10p or £1 per book. Prize is choice of 12 volumes of Trotsky's Writings or a £25 book/record token.

Draw is on 2 May in Socialist Challenge offices. Help yourself while helping the paper! Why not order a few books of tickets on a sale or return basis to sell locally?

Write to: Lottery, SC Offices, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Organised by D Weppier.

SUBSCRIBE!

Domestic: 6 months, £5; 12 months, £10
Abroad: Airmail, £16.50. Surface, £10 per annum.
Multi-reader institutions: double individual rate

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.