Socialist Challenge

DISBAND THE SPG!

A message from
Police Chief McNee
to black people:

'If you keep off the streets of London and behave yourselves you won't have the SPG to worry about.'





Casting on the series. The readers 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:

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

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

The interests of workers and 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

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

The Communist parties in Europe 270 in crisis. Neither the 'farecommunist' 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 secing internal democracy not as a luxury but as a vital necessity. This means the right to organise factions and tendencies.

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

I am interested in more information about activities in my

 I would like additional literature and enclose 50p to cover costs. (Delete it not applicable)

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Send to Socialist Challenge, 328-9. Upper St. London M.

Defend Charter 77

THERE are two open opposition movements in Eastern Europe — the KOR in Poland and Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia. Now Charter 77 is under attack from the regime. The arrest of 10 of its members, including two of the three Charter spokespersons and the editor of its Information Bulletin, represents the most serious attempt yet to suppress the open opposition movement.

This month is the third anniversary of the workers' action in Poland in 1976 which led to the founding of the KOR. The Charter was formed soon afterwards, and last year formal links were established between the two opposition movements. The existence of such open opposition movements is vital, because it is the only way in which the masses of those countries can formulate their political aspirations and learn from their

common experience. If those movements do not exist then the social explosions which are inevitable in Eastern Europe will only involve much more violence and bloodshed.

Without the solidarity and practical support of the international labour movement, Charter 77 is in danger of being destroyed by the Stalinist apparatus. It is imperative therefore that the Labour Party in this country, and the other parties of the workers movement in Western Europe, come out clearly and officially in defence of the Charter. Protests must be organised through the entire labour movment.

The Czech lawyer who in the past has defended Charter activists has been expelled from the legal profession. The labour movement here must take up this question and take steps to organise Charter's legal defence. This means demanding that the Charter members have the right to lawyers of their own choice, that any trial must be open, and that the Labour Party should have the right to send an official observer to any trial. Funds are also urgently required to support the families of those who have been arrested, as well as the dependents of the other political prisoners.

If the labour movement and the left-wing organisations internationally do not defend and give support to the opposition movements in Eastern Europe, then these oppositions have nowhere else to turn but to such reactionary alternatives as the Pope and the Catholic Church. The responsibility of the labour movement is clear: Defend Charter 77.

Cops 100% innocent - OK?

DAVID McNee's statements regarding the Special Patrol Group are an utter disgrace. Justifying the SPG's activities, McNee blamed black people for daring to demonstrate on the streets.

In reality McNee has let the cat out of the bag. The police riot in Southall was not just designed to provide the NF Nazis with a platform. It had another aim. To teach black people a lesson. To harass, intimidate, beat and arrest them in order to weaken their self-confidence.

Why were SPG thugs carrying coshes? Simply in order to exact a heavy price from those who dared to oppose the NF presence in Southall. In the course of their activities they killed Blair Peach. According to McNee's logic, Blair's death was his own fault. For if he'd stayed at home like a good 'law-abiding citizen' he would still be alive.

And this rubbish comes from a force which spent £250,000 to ensure that one Nazi (Martin Webster) marched in Manchester nearly two years those whom they seek to victimise. And if the loony police chief of Manchester had his way, all the political prisoners taken at Southall would by now be in a labour camp.

The reaction of McNee to criticisms of the SPG makes the campaign to disband it and force a public inquiry even more vital than before. In the meantime we are confident that black people and white anti-racists will not be intimidated by McNee's attack on our democratic rights.

FIRST WORD

What lies behind Thatcher's budget

By John Ross

THE announcement of the increase in VAT to 15 per cent and the increase in minimum lending rate to 14 per cent was reportedly met by gasps in the City. Share prices fell rapidly.

The surprise of the capitalist class was not simply the result of the economic effect of these measures. It is because the budget is a real shift on the part of the government from what it was expected to do.

Tactics

Thatcher had spelt out her tactics before the new government was elected

First, defeat workers in the public sector and increase unemployment. Only after this take on the task of driving down wages in the industrial working class. This was the way to avoid a Heath-type crushing defeat, she argued.

The economic basis for this was to be changes in tax. Raising VAT would immediately cut the real wages of the low-paid, leaving skilled and higher paid industrial workers better off for six to nine months.

It was hoped that this would keep them out of the wages fight for a time, allowing the public sector to be smashed.

This is what allowed Thatcher to demagogically campaign against incomes policy and capture votes in the more 'prosperous' South East and Midlands.

The Tory budget makes this impossible. Instead of a VAT increase of 10 or 121/2 per cent it is an increase of 15 per cent, coupled with a rate of inflation which the latest leaks coming out of the Treasury put at 20

Rapid

This means that by the end of the summer every single section of the working class will experience a rapid fall in real wages.

A major confrontation on wages is likely to come far earlier than the Tories had planned.

What caused this turn around?

The reasons are to be found tucked away amid the statistics brought out by the Treasury to accompany the budget and by the secret projections which were leaked to last Sunday's Observer.

These statistics show that the rapidly deteriorating state of the world economy is more powerful than



the political tactics government.

The international economic recession is going to create in Britain, even according to the Treasury's own figures, a 20 per cent inflation rate and two million unemployed in the next year.

The Tories' original plan was to initially overcome the declining rate of profit in British industry by pumping money into the private sector through cuts in public expenditure. This is what the £1½ billion in cuts were designed to achieve.

But by the end of 1978 the financial deficit of companies was

already over £2½ billion and accelerating rapidly.

This year the situation has declined still further with the rising exchange rate of the pound cutting profits from exports, the United

States economy going into recession and the increase in oil prices.

The deficit in industry facing the Tories is not one or two, but five or six billion pounds. Even the most maniacal cuts couldn't find that kind of

Adverse

The only alternative was an immediate attempt to drive down wages in the private sector. This is what lies behind the budget measures.

There will be enormous consequences this autumn and winter.

The international deterioriation and the budget measures mean employers will have to stand up and fight against wage increases.

In fact the budget will temporarily adversely affect profits due to the increase in the exchange rate of the pound and the increased cost of bank borrowing.

The Financial Times clearly spelt out what is involved for the Tories' strategy to succeed:

Balance

'This involves not only a change in attitudes, but a change in the balance of industrial power. Years in which militancy has consistently won money gains have trained people to respond to a militant lead ..

'Breaking this psychology --which has in fact been done in some enterprises — means bringing home the realities of risk and reward... Elsewhere it could be a more brutal matter of resisting and defeating militancy. This is the prospect for the near term.'

Thatcher has lined up a formidable array of weapons for the coming struggles. Hysterical press attacks and laws against the unions are a certainty. Before the election she spoke of referendums to defeat major struggles. And she has refused to rule out a total wage freeze.

But Thatcher's problems can be an opportunity for the working class. There is a real possibility of major

struggles on cuts, unemployment and most certainly wages, this autumn and winter.

The NUM in 1972 and 1974, the Ford workers and lorry drivers last winter, showed that even a government can be defeated when the real power of the working class is mobilised.

Thatcher is going to have to risk major confrontations with the strongest sections of the working class — and far earlier than she expected.



BLAIR PEACH 1946-79

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward. Never doubted clouds would break.

Never dreamed, though right was worsted, wrong would triumph Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better, sleep to wake.

—Robert Browning

THE distinguishing characteristic of socialist militants is their virtual anonymity. They work quietly. Here they can be seen selling a paper, there wielding an ageing duplicator.

Ask them what their weekly activity consists of and you will receive a litany of meetings: trade union branches, internal party aggregates, anti-racist committees, women's group. The list could be indefinitely extended.

It is a never-ending process. Tiring, at times irritating, but necessary. Very necessary.

A militant's existence is an honourable one.

There are no immediate rewards. And when the final victory is won there still will be no personal rewards. A revolutionary militant is fighting for the emancipation and victory not of individuals, but of a social class and of all the oppressed.

This existence is not widely acknowledged. How could it be otherwise in a bourgeous society? Is not the aim of this existence the very extinction of the bourgeoisic?

Thus militants are acknowledged and recognised only by those with whom they are in regular contact. Friends and enemies. Comrades, trade union colleagues, lovers, union bureaucrats, Special Branch operatives,

They alone know the militant in question. They alone know his or her worth.

It is only when death strikes suddenly, without warning, that the socialist milit nes known to a wider public. Such was the

Death was inflicted on him by a brutalised l wound-up thug of the Special Patrol Grou wielding a cosh. Blair Peach, known till then to a tiny group of people, became universal. His death was reported in Britain and throughout the world.

Bourgeois society utilises all its institutions to seal off those who are its most consistent opponents. It seeks to enclose them in a small circle, whose diameter is the only boundary of the dissent that the ruling class is prepared to If this border is violated then all hell is let

loose. We saw this in Southall. In 'normal' times the militant is reviled by the media, atomised by capitalist society, treated as an oddity by many work mates. The life he or she leads is a constant battle against the stream. As such it cannot but be an abnormal existence.

It is only in death that the qualities of the

militant can be safely appreciated.

Blair Peach's anonymity ended death. On a slightly he afternoon on Wednesday ing of last week. 2.4 arched behind the hearse carrying I body to the East London Cemetery. Lab MPs were there - Demis Skinner, Emie Roberts, Neil Kinnock, Joan Maynard, Tony Benn; trade union leaders were present — Ken Gill spoke officially for the TUC General Council.

But the mass of people were militants like Blair. Jayaben Desai marched silently recalling the SPG's brutality outside Grunwick; Mahboob Ahmed, the leader of the Garners strike committee, was also there, as were

hundreds of Asian workers

John Walsh and Micky convenor and deputy con well the ein bourgeois society, m workers and teachers.

It was a silent march, but in low conversed with each other. Why was it the deaths brought us together? Others are asked and answered. The mo-

inching solich The East Londo s Ca essed a political fo ace the war. Gently the m

Dick North, from the NUT ementive, is the ster of cerem ies. He is Anti-Nazi League; Ken Gill for the TUC.

An old friend of III speaks emotionally and so murdered him. A pupil wh Phoenix School expresses h

Amanda Leon expli with the 'Rank and File' gro Tony Cliff concludes for the SWP.

Then, as the coffin is lower 'International' resounds as thous sing the hymn of the international was movement. With fists raised, thou militants pay their tributes to a murdered brother. Blair is buried. He will not be forgotten.

And his killers? What of them? That depends on us. The political campaign for a public enquiry and the disbanding of the SPG must be seen as a priority.



painting from Dan Jones, available as a full colour poster 20 x 30 ins. The price is £3, including p&p, from: Tower Hami Trades Council (Publications), 2 Cable Street, London E1.

Money raised will be contributed to the Blair Peach Memorial Fund and the Southall Defence Fund.





'The NUM's here!' came the shout from a group of young miners in the thick of the mass picket outside the Nottingham Post on Saturday, their arms linked to journalists, printers and local militants — all trying to stop the sports edition reaching the streets.

The 1,000 pickets lost that battle, but the turnout by NUJ, NGA, and SLADE members showed that the 28 journalists sacked from the Post when they joined a national pay strike last January are by no means on their

The Post went to war against the unions six years ago, when it first introduced new technology, and printworkers are just as anxious as the journalists to re-establish union organisation.

The managing director of the newspaper, T. Pole-Carew, is High Sheriff of Nottingham, which has nothing whatever to do with the high level of arrests on the picket line, or the heavy fines handed out by the Nottingham judiciary.

The NUJ now needs to implement the decision for a one-day national strike taken at the union's annual conference, and hold a series of such actions to prepare the way for the conference's other decision: to ballot on whether to hold an all-out national strike. The sacked journalists are producing a weekly newspaper, the Nottingham News, which has achieved a local circulation of over 10,000. It would help if this paper supported the labour movement. Last week's issue didn't even mention the journalists' own picket.

By Tommy Cusack

THE WORKERS in the British Oxygen Company, who smashed through the ten per cent pay limit in 1977 with an all-out strike, and who last year won pay well above Denis Healey's five per cent formulated their new pay claim last week.

The claim includes:

 A £25 per week rise in basic wages An extra five days holiday a year (bringing it up to 5 weeks annually)

• For all negotiations to discuss pounds and pence, not percentages For the annual wage deals to be

dated from May 20 as from next year. This in effect makes the present claim an interim one from this October until next May.

Already BOC International is claiming that profits are down because of militancy in the Gases division in the UK.

There is no doubt that out of the £14.3 million profit BOC International made in the first quarter of the year a large chunk has been channelled into the bosses' strike

BOC International is preparing for a fight, there is no reason to believe the workers are not ready to take them on.

At the national meeting which formulated the claim all the biggest and most militant depots were all represented.

By Mark White

LEAMINGTON's civic centre is the latest venue selected by the National Front for its annual conference, expected to be held in October. This follows the successful campaign to persuade Great Yarmouth council to deny the Front civic facilities.

Leamington's anti-fascist committee learned of the NF's latest application last week, and immediately launched a campaign. This will include pickets of the Tory-controlled council meetings at which application will be considered.

The campaign already has the support of the local trades council. constituency Labour Parties, and Asian organisations. Housing estates are to be visited to gain signatures for

a mass petition. Send letters urging the refusal of the application to: Clir Leo Howlett, Warwick District chairperson. Council, Town Hall, Leamington,

If you earn less than £5,000p.a., you're out of pocket

By Jude Woodward

For the rich:

A married person earning £25,000 a year will be putting a neat £3,000 extra into their pockets as a result of Howe's Budget.

In other words, before the Budget their income after tax would have been £12,600 and now it will be

That's an increase of 25 per cent. For the poor:

A married person earning £2,000 will only be putting an extra £70 a year

into their pocket. Their former income after tax was £1,880, and now it will be £1,950.

That's an increase of 3.66 per

Of course, for the millions of unemployed on social security and unemployment benefits it will mean no increase at all.

And for the millions who already paid no tax on their earnings it will mean higher prices and absolutely nothing extra to pay for them.

The Chancellor himself has predicted that his Budget will result in a 4 per cent increase in the retail price index, while Treasury leaks point to an annual inflation rate of 20 per cent by the end of the year.

The Low Pay Unit has compared the effect of the VAT increases with that of the cuts in tax and formed these conclusions:

For a family earning £60 a week the two aspects taken together will mean a weekly loss of 30p to 40p. Earning £35 a week, the same family would suffer a net loss of 29p.

The VAT and tax changes taken together will mean a net loss for families with incomes up to £100 a week. So if you are among the two-thirds who earn less than £5,000 a year, then the increases in VAT alone will ensure you lose out.

Moreover, these figures do not take into account the inflationary effect of the budget on prices in

They do not include, for example, the rate rises that are likely to be forced by the cuts in the rate support grants to local councils.

They do not include the increases in petrol prices through higher duties, or the financial problems resulting from the £1 million lopped off nurseries' expenditure.

The government has proudly announced that 1,300,000 more people will not have to pay tax at all but this does not necessarily make them better off. Many of these people were paying negligible tax anyway.

There is a dishonesty in the way this figure is presented by the Treasury. The Rooker-Wise amendment to the tax laws ensures that the personal allowance (tax-free income) has to go up by at least the rate of inflation each year. In other words, this Tory 'concession' would have had to have been implemented anyway.

There's no question about it, the budget was good for the rich and potentially disastrous for the poor.

But then. Howe and Thatcher have made no pretences about it. They have said all along that the important thing was to make Britain attractive for the rich, through 'incentives', and let the poor go to the

Under the guise of offering us'choice', the Tories give the wealthy more money to spend and leave the poor worse off.



Alternative needed to **NALGO** policies

By Dave Burn, Islington NALGO

THE BUDGET dominated the NALGO conference at Balckpool this year, although the Tories had already made their intentions clear as far as local government was concerned by announcing a complete freeze on new appointments within days of coming to office.

The Budget was bound to mean even more cuts. The only question was how bad they would be, and the response of the NALGO leadership. The latter was predictable: heavy on words and nothing on action.

General secretary Geoffrey Drain said that the TUC, including NALGO, would be mounting the 'strongest possible' resistance 'every bit as bitter' as that against the Industrial Relations Act.

But the resistance would be 'constitutional' - the majority of people had elected this government and we would have to live with it.

For the national executive, this meant no action against the cuts. Its emergency resolution on the cuts limited the practical proposals to a declaration of support for any branch which decides to take industrial action against redundancies. Since a freeze on new appointments doesn't involve redundancies but a loss of several tens of thousands of jobs through non-replacement, the executive is not committed to a fight against this

But the left at the conference had no response to Drain's right-wing policies. The Broad Left, based on the Scottish and Metropolitan (London) districts and dominated politically by the CP, was not willing to organise any opposition to the leadership at this stage, in the interest of the maximum unity of the trade union movement against the Tories. An amendment to the executive's resolution on the cuts from the Metropolitan district, calling for a national demonstration against the

cuts, was withdrawn. Supporters of the NALGO Action Group were alone in organising any national opposition to the leadership, and attracted 60 delegates to their nightly meetings. They also held a meeting on the impact of new technology on NALGO members, which attracted almost a hundred delegates.

Next year NAG should put forward alternative resolutions on all the key economic debates.

A democratically-run national conference of NAG should decide on the policies to confront the executive. and attract the large number of Broad Left supporters who are looking for a way to fight the Tories. Support has to be organised for any branches which launch a struggle against cuts

The left at the conference was able



SQUATTERS' leader Piers Corbyn was sentenced to 28 days in jail on 13 June for his part in opposing the mass eviction of the Huntley Street squat in London last summer. He was released pending appeal. Support for the campaign in solidarity with Piers and Jim Paton, the last of the defendants to come to trial, is urgent. Speakers and films available, from: Huntley St Defence Campaign, c/o Camden Law Centre, 146 Kentish Town Rd, London NW1. Tel 01-701 5691

to win a comprehensive policy on maternity and paternity provisions, and through a National Abortion Campaign meeting attended by 70 delegates was able to organise to prevent the supporters of a motion calling on NALGO to withdraw from NAC from getting their resolution heard.

The executive felt obliged to make a statement vigorously supporting NAC, reeling, no doubt, from the battering it received over the

much-publicised strip show for delegates. This event, organised by the Blackpool branch, had been included in the official programme, and the stripper was only withdrawn after a big campaign by delegates who were promising to wreck the show.

A 60-strong picket supported by 'Nalgo Left' supporters from Liverpool protested at what was still a sexist event, including as it did two 'blue' comedians.



Petrol prices down!

To the rescue... oil tanker drivers

By Geoffrey Sheridan

DRIVERS who toured the South-west last week to avoid high-priced petrol should say a big thank you to the Transport and General Workers' Union. Oil tanker drivers in the TGWU threatened to boycott racketeering garages, and succeeded in cutting prices.

At the beginning of the week, one garage in Teignmouth was charging £1.20 a gallon. By Wednesday, after union intervention, the price had come down to 99p. On the same day, the union discovered at 4.30pm that a BP garage had hiked the price of a gallon of diesel fuel to £1.50. By 6pm it dropped to £1.

Peter Adams, the union's regional trade group secretary, says: 'We told the oil companies, 'Either you'll get these prices down or we will'. They did. All the cases of over-charging taken up by us have been solved without any aggro.'

Adams acknowledges that the tanker

Adams acknowledges that the tanker drivers who make regular deliveries to the garages can readily monitor their prices, but he is concerned to stress:

'We're moderate people in the South-west. We wanted to stop profiteering, but we would run into problems if we kept it up too long. Some of the militants would want to be judge and jury, controlling everything.' A fate worse than death, no doubt.

But the message has not been lost in the South-west. Adams describes the number of letters of support received at the TGWU's regional office as 'astonishing'. What is perhaps more astonishing is the rarity of such action by the labour movement.

The previous occasion in Britain was some five years ago when warehouse workers at Allied Suppliers in Glasgow refused to make deliveries of lentils because the firm was attempting to take advantage of a world shortage by selling old stock at newly inflated prices.

Having waved goodbye to the (relatively toothless) Price Commission, and now looking forward to further bonanzas from the Tories, the City would have a fit of apoplexy if trade unionists exercised control over prices. Manipulation of prices and supply fattens profits, as the Chilean workers appreciated

when they took action to stop black market operations by store owners during the Allende government.

The producers and distributors of goods — workers — together with those who consume the bulk of them—working class people—are ideally placed to monitor price levels, and to take action to reduce them.

Boycotts, pickets, and the like would make a sharp impact on the retail side, but when it comes to the manufacturers and giant monopolies, such as the oil companies, local actions cannot effectively confront the manipulators.

As the following article shows, the profits of the oil companies happen to have leapt up during each 'oil crisis'. Nationalisation under workers' control would put a stop to that. The Tories, surprise, surprise, are moving in the opposite direction. They want the City to pocket its share, so a chunk of BP will be handed out to the Stock Market.

How the profits gush

Many will suffer from the impact of the present 'oil crisis', but — if their account books are anything to go by — the giant oil corporations will not be among them, writes **Brian Slocock**.

The following figures show the net profits, after tax, of the three British oil 'majors' (Shell, BP, and Esso) for the three years before the beginning of the oil crisis in 1973, for three years following, and for the two years after that, in total and as annual average:

Post-tax Profits of British Oil majors

	ı otai 🦠	Annuai average
70-72	£1431.1m	£477m
73-75	£3950.6m	£1316.9m
76-77	£3901.7m	£1950.8m

The upturn in company profits started almost as soon as world oil prices began to move in 1972-73. Shell's went from below the £400m mark to over £1000m; BP's from around £100m to over £300m; and Esso from a loss or a 'mere' £15m in a good year to a figure getting on for £100m.

Since the first big jump, however, profits have not tended to move again. Perhaps the latest 'oil crisis' is just what they've been waiting for.

We can't afford to wait 5 years

By Rich Palser

INFLATION at 20 per cent and two million unemployed. That's the future set out in the Tory Budget.

The leaked Treasury figures say so. Both Callaghan and the TUC have warned so.

So what does the labour movement intend to do about it?

Callaghan and miners' leader Joe Gormley have

made their position clear.

It's wrong to take industrial action for political ends, says Callaghan, since this would be saying that we do not believe in democracy.

It's wrong not to let the government 'get bedded in with industry', says Gormley.

The Tories are already 'bedded in' with industry — they are the party led by company directors and financed by big business.

Looking after the bosses at the expense of workers' living standards is what their politics are all about.

Callaghan can talk about democracy, but who ever voted for two million unemployed and 20 per cent inflation?

Both of them want to avoid the real issue — that basic rights and living standards are coming under attack from the Tories.

Are they or are they not prepared to lead mass action now to defend those basic rights?

Callaghan and Gormley have made their position clear — we have to wait five years for an election before we can act.

But if Callaghan and Gormley paid more attention to the democracy of the labour movement they might remember the motion passed by the last Labour Party conference to campaign for free



collective bargaining, and the TUC's similar opposition to the 5 per cent limit.

They might also remember some of the socialist policies to defend living standards and jobs that will be vital in mounting a fightback now.

The TUC policy to prioritise winning a 35-hour week with no loss of pay in this pay round.
The priority of ending

low pay through a minimum wage. The Labour Party women's conference set a target figure of £70 last weekend.

Just as dangerous as Callaghan and Gormley's antics is the attempt to put off a fight by public sector workers. Comparability would be honoured by

Thatcher, the National Union of Teachers special salaries conference was told last weekend.

Pinning any hopes on that would be foolish when the inflation forecast is 20 per cent. The problem is not comparing wages with other workers, but protecting wages against inflation.

This was the original objective of last year's claim by the National Union of Public Employees for inflation-proofed wages through automatic increases.

A United fight this winter around these policies can defend living standards. Those like Callaghan and Gormley who stand in the way must be removed.

Teachers' salaries split

By Bernard Regan

AS 200 teachers lobbied the National Union of Teachers special salaries conference last Saturday, general secretary Fred Jarvis spent 110 minutes explaining why the government's offer was being recommended for acceptance.

Little was said in favour of the offer of 9 per cent plus a £6 monthly supplement on account in advance of a comparability study. Rather more was said about why it was not possible to fight for more — that it was not possible to fight a government just elected on a strong mandate, that the other teaching unions had accepted, and that the

membership would not be prepared to fight.

Delegates opposing the deal pointed out that over 60 union associations had already rejected the offer, and that the Budget had left no-one in any doubt that they needed more to defend living standards. A move by the union president to take the vote by a show of hands only was defeated, and in the division the deal was accepted by 188,226 votes to

The organisers of the lobby, Rank & File Teacher and the Socialist Teachers Alliance, held a fringe meeting attended by 80 delegates. They are now discussing a joint left platform for the union elections.

Engineers' leaders manoeuvre

By Ron Thompson

THREATS of a national overtime ban and one-day strikes came from the National Committee of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers last week. Negotiations have been taking place over the union's claim for a national minimum time rate of £80 for skilled workers and a 35-hour week.

The right wing, now in full control of the union executive, has been trying to negotiate the claim away. First they agreed to shunt discussions on the 35-hour week and maternity pay off into a separate working party which would report within a year.

Since the vast majority of

engineering workers negotiate local rates well over the minimum time rate, the 35-hour week demand was the main component of the claim which could unify any fight.

Then the right wing tried at the National Committee to make the implementation date the main point of issue with the employers' offer of £68 for skilled workers. But this was rejected. The executive was also told to demand from the employers a one hour cut this year, with further reductions to 35 hours by 1982.

A national meeting of conveners and stewards in the industry has been called for 7 July in Sheffield in an attempt to force the executive to act.

HOW DO WE STOP THE RETREAT?

TONY Cliff's article contains an important warning: do not think that all was well until 1974 and then it all went sour.

Fundamental weaknesses of the labour movement were very much in evidence before 1974, and these were reinforced to the point where they decisively limited the resistance to the Labour government. These weaknesses will not go away just because Thatcher is in office, and we have to tackle them as such. That is the essence of Cliff's message.

So what are those weaknesses? The first that Cliff identifies is sectionalism. In 1972 and 1974 the miners were seen to be fighting for all and won active solidarity from other workers. Under Labour the firemen were betrayed by the TUC and no-one came to their aid.

So why was this sectionalism reinforced after 1974? One factor rejected by Cliff is that unemployment had dampened militancy. And it's true that this has not yet demoralised the class to the point where they fear going out the gate lest they get the sack.

Recession

Nevertheless, there has been a not unimportant change in the economic situation — the first synchronised world capitalist recession since before the war, which hit Britain in 1974 and reached its low point in 1975.

Firms are no longer just rationalising production and moving machinery from one plant to another. A factory sit-in no longer seems enough to stop redundancy, because a firm going bust has nothing to lose from sitting it out.

The workers have not been demoralised, but nor do they believe any longer that the situation will get better soon. They are right to begin to look for more far-reaching solutions.

Offensive

Last winter's wages offensive remained sectionalised partly because workers in Ford could squeeze more out of profits, whilst workers in Leyland saw no such easy way out. Part of our job in fighting the sectionalism within the movement is therefore to fight for socialist policies which do show a way out.

Socialists in the unions

DEFENDING OUR UNIONS is the theme of the conference organised by Rank & File which is taking place this weekend in Manchester.

It could not have come at a better time. The Budget shocked a lot of people. Even workers who voted Tory in the last election are more than a little angry at such blatant wage rises for the rich and price rises for the poor.

The mood for a fightback this winter is growing, and with it a realisation that basic union rights like picketing must be defended.

But if major battles are on the agenda, will the labour movement be ready for them? The retreat of the last five years should be enough to make us reflect a little.

In a recent article in Socialist Worker [26 May], Tony Cliff gave some answers as to why that retreat occurred. Below, RAY VARNES [NUPE ILEA Schoolkeepers] and JANET MAGUIRE [ASTMS branch secretary], both delegates to the Rank & File conference, take up the discussion.

It's not a matter of just making speeches for the nationalisation of the 250 monopolies — although such propaganda is never wasted — but a matter of showing how these policies can meet the real problems which we confront in our struggles.

Of course this is not the only reason why the movement's sectionalism has been reinforced. If common objectives are needed to unite the struggle in the form of socialist policies, Cliff is also correct to say that what was able to overcome the sectional struggle under the Heath government was the common enemy.

The whole movement rallied around the 1972 and 1974 miners' strikes because they were seen as a common way through Heath's incomes policy and then Heath's government. But 'the alternative to the Tories meant the Labour Party. Once Labour was in power that general opposition collapsed.'

Alternative

Workers saw no alternative to Labour — and Callaghan in particular. The left in the Labour Party, and in the trade union leaderships, subordinated everything to keeping Labour in office. But it was not only them. That loyalty to Labour extended right through the ranks of the workers.

Eventually the workers began to fight back, but this started with sections less dominated by Labourism

— teachers and dustmen under Wilson in the '60s, firemen and the public sector under Callaghan. The fightback took longer to develop under the Callaghan government because of the deeper economic crisis and the problems which that presents to workers.

Downplaying

In downplaying these factors Cliff tends to reduce the problem to one of organisation. Thus he makes a major point of the fact that the number of full-time convenors has risen from around 500 in 1969 to something like 6,000 today.

He says that this gives a much wider base to the bureaucracy than existed before. The problem is that 'the organisation inside the factory relating the individual shop stewards to each other still goes through the convenor.'

Presumably Cliff thinks that the solution is to provide some other means for stewards to relate to each other, and that is what is meant by 'rank and file organisation'. But this is wrong.

First, the problem is not in and of itself that convenors are full-time — what's decisive is that they are paid the average workers' wage, are elected and recallable, represent the workers rather than participate with the bosses in running the company, etc. When a convenor pursues right-wing policies our job is to remove them — not set

up unofficial bodies.

This does not mean that socialists never argue for unofficial organisations when the official structures become an obstacle to organising the fightback. The national docks shop stewards committee is an example.

But workers will only turn to unofficial organisation when they see the need to — when they have no choice. They first turn to the official union, and rightly so — that's what the unions are there for. Only when they see through the arguments of the union officials and are committed to a fight and find the officials blocking it will they try to organise through other means.

Ignored

Nor was organisation the major problem in mounting a fightback under Labour. The lorry drivers' strike showed that, when the stewards committees ignored the union's code of conduct and won active solidarity through flying pickets.

It was the political fight we lost under Labour. The rank and file leaders in the workplaces — the shop stewards in particular — saw that militancy was no longer enough and fell for the 'national interest' and 'don't rock Labour's boat' arguments.

Rank & File failed to take account of these problems when it called a one-day strike in solidarity with the firemen at its last conference. That strike call went totally unheeded, because the problem is not just creating an unofficial union organisation to make the call for action when the official leaders fail to — it is to win the political fight with those official leaders.

So where does this leave us in fighting the Tories? The same right-wing leadership which said 'don't rock the boat' is stronger today than it was when Labour came to office. 'The unions should keep out of politics — get the best deal possible from Thatcher' is the cry of Gormley and Chapple.

Nor will the economic crisis go away. Showing how a fight for socialist policies can take place now will be vital if we are to defeat that right wing.

One thing will change however. The 'left' union leaders who collapsed in the face of a Labour government will be getting their militant speeches out of the drawers and filing cabinets where they put them five years ago.

A small minority of workers will remember their role and not put any trust in them. But a far larger number, who will want a fight against the Tories will not have that memory.

Tories, will not have that memory.
Rank & File has to see that the lefts are put to the test of the next few years. It has to go to them and say, 'if you support a fight around these policies, organise with us on a democratic basis to do so'.

That's what was done in the CPSA union in the civil service when members of the executive started talking left. The 'Broad Left' was turned into an open activist body — one which fought for action from the official structures, and within which different political positions could be argued out.

It was almost unique when Labour was in government, because the left leaders elsewhere were silent. Now it could be the exception that proves the rule.

WHAT'S LEFT

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

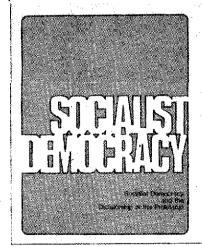
MALE GAY socialist seeks cheap and spacious living space. East/South London from Autumn. Tel: Roland 01-274 999 daytime.

WOMEN's Voice school on new technology. 30 June. Central London Poly, New Cavendish St, London WI. 10.30am-5pm. Creche. Further information from: Women's Voice, PO Box 82, London E2.

URUGUAYAN comrade needs room. Phone: 01-229 1750.

IRELAND Socialist Review No 5 is now out. Articles include: women and the national liberation struggle; Northern Ireland economic trends; analysis of the general election result in the six counties; plus reviews. Price 40p (inc. postage) from: ISR(B), 60 Loughborough Rd, London SW9.

TUC General Council supports imperialism! Picket Congress House, Great Russell St, London WC1. 27 June, 9.30am. Smash the Prevention of Terrorism Act! Organised by Revolutionary Communist Tendency.



THE removal of references to the dictatorship of the proletariat from the programmes of many Communist parties has provoked sharp debates and even solits.

The question of socialism and democracy has been of constant interest to socialists since the emergence of mass social democratic parties. This pamphlet is the text of the resolution—

This pamphlet is the text of the resolution — Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat — adopted by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

It will be discussed at the forthcoming World

Congress of the FI.

It shows that Stalinist bureaucracy and the limited 'democracy' of capitalism are not the only choices available to the working class.

Pamphlet 35p plus 10p p&p from The Other Bookshop, PO Box 50, London N1.



Gay Pride 79

Ten years on from Stonewall

By Jamie Gough

TEN years ago this month the patrons of the Stonewall bar in Christopher Street, New York's gay enclave, fought the police on three successive days in fury at the continuous harassment and violence that they had suffered.

Last month, 5000 gays in San Fransisco stormed the City Hall and burned police cars in protest at the mild sentence given to the murderer of the city's gay councillor, Harvey Milk—the biggest eruption in an American city since the black rebellions of the late 60s.

In the ten years that separate these two outbursts, the organised gay movement has undergone important changes. In this article we examine the new class struggle methods that are increasingly coming to the fore in the struggle for gay rights.

Attacks

New methods of struggle have had to emerge over the last two or three years, as the pace and scale of attacks on lesbians and gay men in the imperialist countries has sharply increased.

These attacks have not mainly come from the governments, or from the organisations of big capital.

Rather, middle-class reaction has risen up, alarmed by the economic crisis, horrified by the disintegration of the family and the rebellion of young people, and has vented its wrath, if not on the cause, at least on a symptom of the 'malaise'— the increasingly open existence of gays.

Traditional

The cadres who maintain the social fabric of capitalism — the headteachers, magistrates, church activists and police — have in their various ways sought to turn back the clock.

The seriousness of the new attacks has pointed to the inadequacy of some of the traditional strategies of the gay movement. They have made it clear that capitalist society does not of itself produce ever increasing enlightenment and liberalisation. That polite lobbying can suddenly be rendered massively irrelevant.

They have also indicated that the increasingly public existence of gays is not something that will go on broadening by example. On the contrary it is something that will be challenged by powerful forces and must be defeated by powerful forces.

Contrast

There has had to be a turn towards the defence of gay rights by mass action, involving not only gays themselves but non-gay organisations of oppressed groups and the labour movement.

The contrast between the two major struggles in the US in this period shows the kind of political development that has taken place.

When Anita Bryant campaigned in Miami for the repeal by referendum of a gay anti-discrimination law, in her notorious 'Save Our Children' campaign, the ad hoc coalition that opposed her relied on media advertisements and sponsorship from celebrities.

It prevented activists from canvassing or holding public meetings.

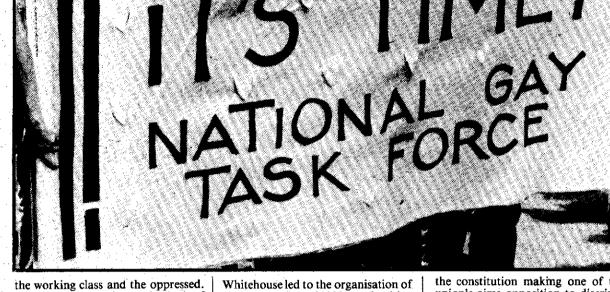
The vote was lost; but the loss shocked gay people.

Coalitions

When Senator Briggs introduced his referendum proposal in California to exclude gays from the schools, the lesson of Miami had been learnt.

The right wing of the gay movement was still there of course. The Concerned Voters of California insisted that the presenters of TV ads, for which they were paying, be non-gay and as right-wing as possible.

But that did not prevent the formation of coalitions throughout California which adopted open and militant campaigns of canvassing, voter registration and demonstrating, focussed on winning the support of



The National Organisation of Women gave strong support to the campaign, which supported the demand for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.

A 'Workers' Conference Against Briggs' attracted hundreds of trade unionists from diverse sectors. School students went on one day strikes to help in the campaign.

The climax of the campaign was a demonstration a quarter million strong in San Francisco, a third of whom were women and including thousands of Chicanos and blacks, and with delegations from the largest unions in the city.

The Briggs proposal was overwhelmingly rejected, contrary to all expectations. The same turn has been made in other countries.

In Sydney in June and August 1978 gay demonstrations were brutally attacked by the police as part of their campaign against all militancy in the city.

The gay movement, allied with the women's movement and the left, fought for and won support from the trade union movement against this repression.

In Britain, the successful prosecution of Gay News by

Whitehouse led to the organisation of a demonstration of 5000 people with a representation of women's and anti-fascist organisations unprecedented on a gay demo, as well as small but significant support from the labour movement.

Similarly, in Canada, forces were mobilised in massive opposition to the prosecution of the **Body Politic**, to a police raid on a gay bar in Montreal when 140 people were arrested, and to Anita Bryant's tour of the country.

The efficacy of these mobilisations is shown by the passing soon afterwards of an anti-discrimination law by the Quebec State parliament and by the unexpected acquittal of the **Body Politic** defendants.

Allies

The trade union support obtained in these mobilisations did not emerge spontaneously, but had in most cases been built for over the years by gay caucuses in the unions allied closely with the left.

A recent example in this country is the overwhelming approval by the Civil and Public Services Association conference, against the recommendation of the executive, of a change in the constitution making one of the union's aims opposition to discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Winning this kind of formal support is vital in laying the basis for mobilising the unions against attacks on gays at work or outside.

The importance of close links between the gay movement and the labour movement is also shown in Spain, where close collaboration was built up, of necessity, between clandestine gay groups and the Neighbourhood Commissions under Franco.

Today, these links ensure a massive presence of non-gay organisations on gay demonstrations in Spain, and effective protection of the still illegal gay organisations.

The experience of the last few years of the gay struggle points to the need to win support from other organisations of the oppressed and to fight with class-struggle methods.

This becomes increasingly important as big capital gives increasing support to the demagogic politics of the petit bourgeois right.

In this way the fight for gay liberation will become part of the struggle for socialism in reality as well as in ideas.

Judge frees abortion debate

By Teresa Frances and Joseph

ATTEMPTS to crack down on the press and on abortion in Portugal failed last week. Journalist Maria Antonia Palla was acquitted of charges arising out of a TV film on abortion.

Abortion is illegal in Portugal. But there are at least 180,000 abortions a year, killing at least 2000 women.

In August 1974, Palla and several other journalists and filmmakers began a TV series 'Name: Woman' to look at women's problems and the gains they were making in the new revolution.

The final programme in the series, in February 1976, was ironically entitled 'Abortion is not a crime'.

Women were shown explaining why they had been forced to have abortions, although they were kept in semi-darkness so they could not be identified.

And the film showed an abortion actually being done, by women themselves in a popular clinic, by the Karman suction method with an

ordinary bicycle pump.

Perhaps most important, it gave a

clear explanation of how the abortion was to be done, so that any woman watching would know how a good abortion should be done.

The Church and the right-wing parties were outraged — and Palla was interviewed by the police. But no action was taken.

Suddenly, three months ago and three years after the TV programme, Palla was charged with an 'assault on public morality' and 'incitement to crime'.

The trial was widely interpreted as an attempt to curb some of the freedoms that both women and the press won after 1974.

Palla alone was charged, and not the other makers of the film. This was probably because she is vice-president of the union of journalists and has been an outspoken proponent both of freedom of the press and women's

But the attack drew surprisingly little public support from the right, and many came to Palla's defence. For example, although the Socialist Party did not publicly defend her, two prominent Socialist deputies [MPs] gave evidence on her behalf.

Palla was particularly encouraged by the letters and telegrams that



MARIA PALLA giving evidence to the judge during her trial

poured in from Europe, the US, and

Canada

In acquitting her, the judge called the charges an attack on the freedomof the press, and said abortion should be discussed.

And it will be. This weekend, 24
June, the national campaign for
contraception and abortion [CNAC]
will be holding a counter tribunal to
show the effect of the present law,
which bans all abortions.

Up to 1000 people are expected to hear doctors, sociologists, and psychiatrists talk about the horrifying conditions abortions are conducted under, and the physical and mental harm of repeated illegal abortions.

Ordinary women will publicly admit to abortions and tell why they were necessary. And trade unionists will stress that so long as contraception is not widely available and abortion is illegal, women will never be able to take a full part in the structure.

But if the acquittal of Maria Phas made it easier to talk abortion, it has not stopped government's attempts to down.

The first women in memory to arrested for having an abortion on trial in Lisbon on 5 July. She'll well known like Maria Palla and need support from women thus out the world if she is to be accused





Bevan, left leader of the '50's, talking to Wilson. Scargill's choice for today is Benn.

The question is not just whether we but what we do as an alternative. In

At a miners' gala in Barnsley last week Arthur Scargill, President of the Yorkshire NUM, repeated his call for Callaghan to go as leader of the Labour Party.

its leader, he said that any new leader i this is done I am certain that the next le said.

Calling for a change in the constitution to allow the party as a whole to elect

So what way forward does the Lab

Why has the Labour Co-ordinating Committee sponsored a resolution for this year's Labour Party conference censuring the last Labour

I'm glad you say it's a motion censuring the government since some people have construed it in other ways.

It's not that the last government tried to implement Labour Party policy and failed, but essentially that it failed to try to implement that - in fact in some cases it strenuously sought not to do so. In my judgement and that of many others, this was one of the reasons why the government met with election defeat.

Not only had it lost a radical edge - which has historically been associated with Labour governments — but it failed to ensure even basic social democratic commitments to high public spending, or attempt to achieve full employment and defend the fabric of the welfare state.

Does the censure apply to all members of the government? I'm thinking of people like Tony

The wording of the censure also criticises some members of the National Executive Committee for not fighting effectively to defend elements of the party programme in the period prior to the election.

It is important to stress that there were some honourable exceptions to that situation. Some members of the NEC did not put up an effective fight, others did.

Since the defeat Benn has decided not to participate in the Opposition Front Bench. Some people on the Labour left, such as Eric Parter, have opposed this move. Do you ove of it?

Benn's decision is essentially for him, though I Think I can understand why he may have

It's important nonetheless for people to recognise the extent to which what happens to the left, so called, within the Labour Party which I think is an area which extends much more to what has been called the centre of the - is not exclusively related to the personal decisions of an individual.

I wonder who could be included in the left the 'honourable exceptions' on the NEC that you talked about, who defended party policy during the last government? There was no real opposition to the right-wing of the order, for instance, of the Bevanite left in the '50s.

In the '50s, leading government members resigned over prescription charges. Nobody resigned from Callaghan's government, except perhaps Bob Cryer over the Kirby Manufacturing Co-op and one or two others. In general, there was no real opposition. How do you account for that?

It's a false parallel between the 'Bevanite opposition' during the '50s and the role of the NEC in the '70s.

Whereas in the '50s, we had an executive which was effectively dominated by the right of the party — in that instance by the big union battalions —in the '70s there was, in conventional terms, a left majority on the

It's very important, if you look at the kind of positions taken by the executive through successive conferences, that the executive criticised the government time and again, and asked for conference support for such criticism of the government for not implementing party policy.

The key question is how it is that we can have a labour movement in which there is neglect in crucial respects for conference decisions and in certain cases direct contempt for such decisions by a Labour government in office. That is a basic question of internal party democracy, which itself is a basic question of political power.

The turning point in such a difference in the relations between the conference and the movement, and the parliamentary party and

government came with the Gaitskelites from the late '50s.

The post-war Labour government, for example, discovered that the party draft to nationalise the coalmines was incredibly short. But Attlee didn't put the whole thing into a Royal Commission to consider whether or not there was a case for nationalisation, he simply instructed the relevant Minister to make sure that a detailed draft on how to nationalise the mines was put before the Cabinet.

In the early '70s, on industrial policy, we drew up something like 150,000 words of detailed argument on the extension of the public sector, new forms of planning control, and industrial democracy.

But that was disregarded, and in key respects it was gelded by the government in

Yet there was no association with workers in struggle, no real action — demonstrations even -called by the NEC.

You're right, of course, to say that there was criticism of government policy, but at best it was veiled and verbal. There is, surely, all the difference in the world between sharply critical resolutions - no matter how important such things are — and a serious opposition.

There was no opposition, for instance, to the Social Contract, which was the cornerstone of the wages policy and of the government's policy in general.

It's important to understand the way in which the Social Contract was initially framed, which was in opposition to the concept of a traditional incomes policy.

The experience of the '60s meant that unions could no longer rely on a Labour government to interpret what was in the interests of the working class in general or the trade unions in particular.

In that context, the Social Contract was put forward as a means of avoiding a permanent incomes policy on the basis that in return for perceived and clear progress on key aspects of party policy, especially concerning the economy, the unions would negotiate certain levels of recommended stress - wage increases with the recommended government which would be then be put to

. That could have brought the unions into the area where they could demand the defence of public spending, the extension of public ownership, the opening of the books of big business, and genuine forms of industrial democracy

It failed for reasons which are much wider and endemic to the labour movement than simply the activity of personalities within the NEC or the Parliamentary Labour Party.

With the honourable exceptions of Lucas Aerospace and the Vickers shop stewards, there is no extensive demand to move beyond the conventional framework of wages and conditions as the defined and confined role of trade unions.

It's quite ironic that among those who pushed most strongly and clearly for planning agreements on big business, which were supposed to be a process of tripartite negotiation, was David Basnett. In that sense, the conventional view of 'moderate' or 'centre' is open to question.

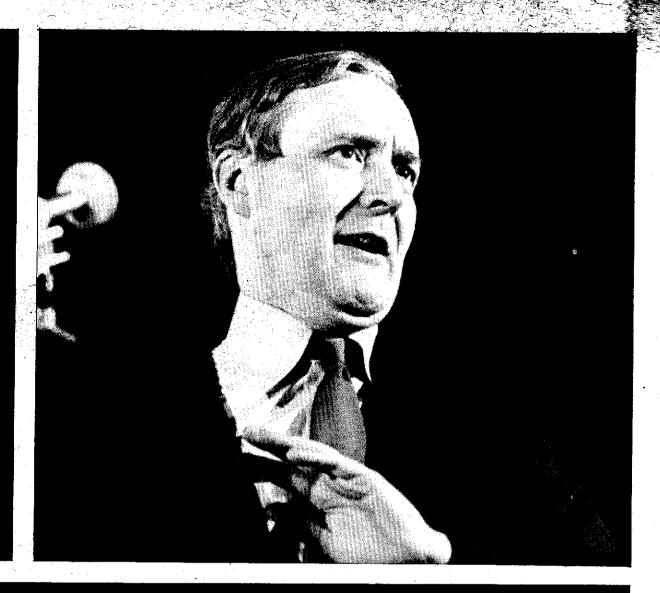
Certainly, while militant demands for higher wages are necessary today, they are grossly inadequate to meet the depth of the crisis and to resolve it in the interests of the working class.

You were associated with the National Enterprise Board, and in particular with the demand for the nationalisation of 20 to 25 of the top monopolies.

What makes you think that this demand, and even that for compulsory planning agreements, wouldn't have been sabotaged? Do you think such a demand could be implemented with a future Labour majority in Parliament?

If you launch what amounts to a major ideological challenge, which in a sense we did, it





ppose the Conservatives, terview with Stuart Holland, MP

carry out conference decisions. 'If of the party will be Tony Benn', he

As part of our ongoing debate on the way forward for the labour movement after the election we spoke to Stuart Holland MP — one of the main ideologues of the Labour left. He is a member of the newly formed Labour Co-ordinating Committee, and author of the book entitled, perhaps ironically, The Socialist Challenge.

left offer, and what are its policies?

these time both to make an impact and to ranslate an intellectual agreement on the need or certain policy changes into an intuitive rasp that those changes are not only desirable ut necessary conditions for the defence of even proventional objectives such as full imployment, a high level of public spending,

What has been quite important, I think, has een the fact that those policies did come into be mainstream agenda of debate, discussion, and struggle within the labour movement.

They are still on that agenda, and in this case they have entered much more widely into oth people's perception and experience of the inds of economic and social problems they are acing today.

This didn't mean that we expected that they fould necessarily be adopted by the overnment. In the Green Paper on the Natnal Enterprise Board, we stated clearly that here will be tremendous forces tending to rient any extension of the public sector into lassic loss-making industry — the econstructing role by the state for capital; so I on't think we're surprised in that respect.

m not convinced that there was any lack of athusiasm about nationalising 25 of the top lonopolies. There was massive support for the 973 Labour Party manifesto - certainly greater athusiasm than for any manifesto since the lime of the Atlee government.

But if we come onto the question of applementation of such a policy, how is it assible through legislation to take the top

onopolies out of the bands of private owners?

The Attlee government, for example, found extremely difficult to nationalise the steel dustry because the steel bosses were prepared break the law and boycotted the institutions stablished by the government to effect the ationalisation, to upon the books, and so on.

Trade unions may have won a legitimate ole in society, but how are such policies to be uplemented if workers are not to control the conomy and rule in society?

I didn't say there wasn't major interest in the policies in the early '70s, and I was obviously delighted that there was.

What I'm saying is that the kind of appreciation of the policies was not so extensive that they entered into the automatic reaction of trade: unionists to government policy initiatives.

The question of how is it possible to

implement radical policies is very open-ended.

One of the striking things it seems to me in relation to some groups on the ultra-left is that for 30 years or more they have been talking about the impending crisis of the system, they have also been arguing that in such a crisis there would be a spontaneous mobilisation of the working class in order to smash the state apparatus and transform state power.

The crisis has occurred but the transformation has not happened.

What's important is less to refer back to Attlee's difficulties in nationalising steel—which was attempted until very late in the 1945-51 government—than to draw attention to what can now be done by the Labour Party and the trade union movement in the face of one of the most reactionary and class divisive Conservative governments that we've seen for 50 years.

It's important to realise the extent to which the intensification of the general economic crisis on a global scale, which will be aggravated in Britain by Conservative measures of public expenditure cuts and so forth, will highlight for the labour movement the question of not simply whether we oppose the Conservatives, but what we actually do as an alternative.

I'm not saying that the conference hall itself is the ante-chamber to socialism — it's not. If there is to be change then it has to be part of a process of perception, reaction, and action by working people themselves.

It's important nonetheless to stress that unless you have a relatively specific strategy for dealing with particular kinds of change within society, then basically you are thrust back

purely on spontaneity, and in a spontaneous situation people may spontaneously react in a reactionary sense rather than react progressively.

What role can the Labour left play in achieving the 'action' that you talk about?

With the trade union leadership having swung to the right since the early '70s—and they will dominate policy decisions at the Labour Party conference—is there a need for the Labour left to go directly to the ranks to mobilise around its policies?

The labour left has derived its strength in many if not most cases from constituency parties and from the trade union base.

It's extremely important that the maximum feasible campaign should be undertaken within the labour movement to show that this crisis cannot be resolved either simply on the wages front or by passing resolutions at conference.

In that sense, we must move the terms of reference of the debate beyond wage bargaining and opposition to the re-introduction of wages policy. We also must move beyond a defence of welfare statism or the assumption that with sufficient appeasement of capital we can restore full employment and economic welfare.

The scale of the crisis on which we've embarked is greater in one sense than that in the 1930s, which was one of underconsumption, where state spending essentially on armaments contributed to the recreation of employment.

The crisis today is one of major disproportionality — between big and small businesses, between advanced and declining industry, between regions with inner city deprivation and decline, and between social groups and classes.

These forms of the crisis are the consequence of the post-war boom itself, since capitalism is inherently unequal and uneven in structural, social, and spatial distribution. Therefore, unless we think now in terms of

extending our analysis of this crisis into an alternative socialised mode of development, then there is little chance of making progress in the latter part of the century.

With vast technological unemployment on the horizon in the form of the micro-chip, but also upon us already in certain crucial areas, we must both reduce the working week and also question the whole role of work in society.

And that really implies moving beyond the question of the means of intervention into the economy to the end for which that intervention is directed; a social bill of goods and services beyond full employment and an X-hour working week to one of useful employment and extension of individual freedom by transcending the form of alienation in capitalist

In one sense socialism was never more clearly on the agenda than it is in this country and some others in Western Europe today.

What sort of left should we be building in the labour movement?

First and foremost, one not only within the labour movement but also within the Labour

It has been argued for half a century that while it may be less compromising to form one's own group untouched by the compromises of others, it is clear to me that the Labour Party is not only the necessary instrument for major change, but also its strength of commitment to democratic institutions is a desirable one.

Nonetheless it is also important in any democratic society that politics should be genuinely plural, and both within the Labour Party and without there seem to me advantages to such a plurality of groupings rather than an exclusive channel.

But iif the left is to gain strength from diversity, it also must be able to reinforce agreement rather than difference. Otherwise, we risk ritual protest against adversity sathar than common strength against our adversation.

12 August demo

THE organisers of the 12 August demonstration marking the tenth anniversary of the despatch of British troops onto the streets of the North of Ireland have applied to the Department of the Environment for the use of Trafalgar Square. The intention is to use the square for the rally at the end of the demonstration.

Since 1972 the square has been banned to rallies associated with Ireland. Only two exceptions have been allowed by the British government — the rally held by the Peace People, and a small meeting organised by the Better Life for All Campaign.

Seven MPs have now backed the 12 August demonstration: Joan Maynard, Cyril Smith, Stan Thorne, Ernie Roberts, Syd Bidwell, Frank Maguire, and Leo Abse. Sponsoring organisations include the National League of Young Liberals, the Campaign for Democracy in Ulster, Women and Ireland, and from Belfast the Association for Legal Justice and Turf Lodge Tenants Association.

The protest calls on the British government 'to commit itself to a policy of withdrawal from Ireland'. But the United Troops Out Movement, which is also backing the demonstration, will be organising a separate 'troops out now contingent.

Further information and sponsorship forms are available from Steven Dawe at the National League of Young Liberals, 1 Whitehall Place, London SW1.

People's Festival

COMMUNIST Party stewards at last Sunday's Festival' tried to get the police to remove a 'troops out' stall outside the festival. But the cops refused to intervene.

The United Troops Out Movement had previously applied for a stall inside the festival. But as has become common practice over the last few years, the festival's organisers turned down their application. So UTOM organised their own stall outside the

But even this was too much for CP stewards, who tried to seize the 'troops out' banner and remove the stall. When challenged the stewards claimed that they were acting under police instructions. But the police told UTOM members that on the contrary they had been asked by the stewards to remove the stall but had refused.

The stall was defended by UTOM supporters, including members of the Socialist Workers Party and Inter-national Marxist Group, and eventually the stewards were called off.

European elections

Why Bernadette was right to stand

BERNADETTE McAliskey received 33,969 first preference votes in the EEC election constituency of the North of Ireland.

McAliskey stood as an anti-repression candidate, and her credible performance was achieved in spite of an active campaign against her by the Provisional Republican Movement. The Provisionals were calling for a boycott of the election, and at one point described Bernadette as a 'scab' for refusing to

But it is clear from the election results that the Provisionals' boycott campaign attracted little active support. Although the 57 per cent turn-out was significantly lower than in the general election, it was, for instance, higher than in the South of Ireland.

Furthermore, the level of abstention was much the same in both the Protestant and Catholic communities. If the votes of the straight Loyalist candidates are taken [Democratic Unionists, Official Unionist and Northern Ireland Unionist] and added to the straight 'Catholic' vote [SDLP. Anti-Repression, and Republican Clubs], the Catholic percentage of this total works out at just over 34 per cent - which approximates to the Catholic population in the North as a whole.

But if the Provisionals' boycott campaign had comparatively little effect, the results of the Officials were disastrous, with two Republican Clubs candidates polling under 7,000 votes. What the election did show was that the SDLP retains significant political support among the Catholic population something which could have been further undermined had the Provisionals joined with McAliskey in her campaign. As it was, John Hume of the SDLP received a massive 140,622 votes.

On the Loyalist side, Ian Paisley secured another impressive victory with 170,688. The most sectarian extreme of Loyalism has never been more popular among the Protestant population.

In the run-up to the election, Republican prisoners in H Block issued an open letter to McAliskey explaining their opposition to her candidature. This letter and McAliskey's reply are reprinted below.

The criticisms of Republican prisoners...

A Chara.

We are addressing the following letter to you and our comrades in the freedom struggle in Ireland and to all our relatives and friends outside. It is not a personal opinion but is written on behalf of the blanket men, the Republican prisoners of war in the H-Blocks.

It concerns your stand as candidate in the European elections. Our outlook towards these elections is that we totally object to taking part and we fully support the call for a boycott of this election.

The following are the main reasons for our call to boycott:

you should be successful in your election campaign and become an elected member of this set-up what changes can you even hope to make?

Have we in Ireland not seen all too often how useless and irrelevant the politics of the establishment are and have been regarding our position in the Six Counties?

Has anyone ever gone into the existing set-ups and brought freedom any

What makes you think it will be any different in Europe when it comes to questions on Ireland?

Ranged against you will be a coalition of those who run Westminster, Leinster House and their supporters in the rich European countries. From these can you expect

anything but a majority opposition?

Are we in the H-Blocks not here as a direct result of the position created by

these same people?
What good can your campaign against repression do in a place where the perpetrators of this repression have such a powerful position?

Did you achieve any-thing at Westminster? What can you hope to

achieve at Strasbourg/ Luxembourg?

Will you stop the torture of political prisoners in the H-Blocks or the brute force repression against the people in the

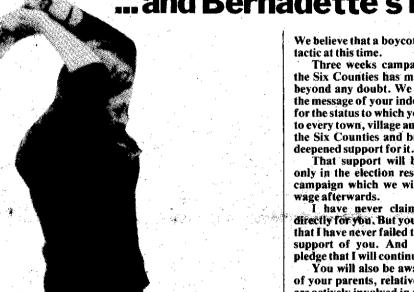
We the Republican prisoners in the H-Blocks don't consider so. We, at the roughest end of British repression, don't consider that you will make one iota of difference.

We know only too well that the only way to remove the H-Blocks, the repression, forever, is to boot both it and the people (the Brits) who build H-Blocks out of our country at the point of a gun, which is what our comrades and their supporters outside are now doing and will continue to

The reason why we are here in the H-Blocks on protest is not for any reform, but for change, real change, revolution and freedom.

Republican Prisoners. H-Blocks 3, 4, 5 & 6.





We believe that a boycott is the wrong

Three weeks campaigning across the Six Counties has made that clear beyond any doubt. We have brought the message of your indomitable fight for the status to which you are entitled to every town, village and townland in the Six Counties and broadened and

That support will be shown not only in the election result but in the campaign which we will continue to

I have never claimed to speak directly for you. But you will be aware that I have never failed to speak out in support of you. And you have my pledge that I will continue to do that.

You will also be aware that many of your parents, relatives and friends are actively involved in my campaign, not at all because they are committed to me, but precisely because they are passionately committed to you.

I do not say --- and you seem to be under a misapprehension about this - that I can make the H-Blocks crumble through activity in the European Assembly. Of course not.

What I do say is that I can use the European Assembly to take the message of the H-blocks and of the Castlereagh torture chambers, repressive law and the British presence, on to the highways and by-ways of Europe and make imperialism's last obscenity in Ireland stink throughout the world.

Already our campaign has put H-Blocks on to the front pages of newspapers in France, Germany, Italy, Holland, Belgium and Denmark in the last fortnight alone. And that's just a start. When we are finished the H-Blocks will haunt Britain everywhere. Every British politician and bureaucrat will walk in the shadow of the H-Blocks wherever they go in Europe. I'll see to it.'

International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland Final Hearing: London, 7/8 July, Conway Hall Delegates credentials from International Tribunal, 47 Wilsham Street, London W11

By Roy Alexander

THE vote by the US Senate in favour of lifting sanctions against Rhodesia makes it more certain that the Tory government will move towards recognising the Salisbury regime in the autumn, once the embarrassing obstacle of the Commonwealth prime ministers conference is over.

But this could turn out to be the Tories' first big political mistake, for there is increasing evidence that Bishop Muzorewa's phony 'black majority' government is already running out of steam.

over before there was a falling out among the thieves who concocted the internal settlement. Chief Chirau's Zimbabwe United People's Organisation (ZUPO - a political group originally set up with support from the Smith regime to oppose the nationalists) joined with Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole's ZANU to denounce the internal elections and demand a new poll under British supervision.

Their real complaint was that they did badly in the election, and therefore in the ensuing scramble for choice government posts.

friends have been counting on to force casualties. A very disturbing feature

Tories head for fall on **Zimbabwe**

Hardly were the rigged elections Muzorewa into ever greater reliance upon them in the new set-up. But it also has the effect of undermining the internal settlement and boosting the Patriotic Front as an alternative to the whole gang of Muzorewas, Sitholes and Chiraus.

> This is, of course, the other front on which Muzorewa is under fire. Even the pro-government Rhodesia Herald pointed out in a recent editorial that the promised flocking of guerillas to the new regime under the post-election amnesty has failed to materialise, and that in fact the war has continued to get worse.

Of course, this is just the sort of This is borne out by the rising division which Ian Smith and his official figures on war deaths and This is borne out by the rising of these is the increased number of 'terrorist collaborators' (as opposed to straightforward 'terrorists') turning up on the death lists: 21 out of 52 in the most recent figures.

Since the security forces are not shy about labelling anyone a terrorist on the least pretext, it must be assumed that 'terrorist collaborators' are unarmed civilians caught displaying some form of sympathy for the Patriotic Front.

The final headache for Muzorewa and the one which could eventually be his undoing — is shown in the increasing time spent by the security forces in recapturing cattle appropriated from white farms by inhabitants of the black rural areas rather than in 'terrorist'-hunting. One Muzorewa

supporter connected with the agricultural workers has recently warned the government that 'there is a crisis of expectations among the millions of black people in our land'.

Meanwhile municipal employees are grumbling about recent wage restrictions, while black teachers are up in arms about the failure to give them public service status (which give them perks like interest-free home loans which have so far been limited to white civil

The Tories are heading for a fall over Zimbabwe. But a foreign policy disaster will only give the government real trouble if there are people in this country prepared to hold the Tories to account for their reactionary policies.

The coming victory of the Zimbabwe people can be ours as well by turning Rhodesia into a noose for the Tory government.





Sandinistas pin down Somoza

By Dave Kellaway

YOUTH in the Nicaraguan slums are using Coca Cola bottles as Molotov cocktails against the Guards' automatic rifles. National

A Panamanian minister of health has left his desk to fight and die alongside the Sandinistas.

President Somoza sweats in his

fortified bunker, sending in his airforce to bomb the workers' area a mile or two away across the lines of barbed wire.

Over 2,000 are dead, thousands more refugees look for somewhere to go, and people loot for food famine is officially recognised.

The decisive battle for the capital, anagua, and for the future Nicaragua has begun.

Nicaragua (population two and a half million, with agriculture accounting for 80 per cent of its export earnings) is run less as a country than as a family business empire. Somoza's wealth is estimated at £500 million and this includes ownership of 15 per cent of the land, many industries, all the drugs and prostitution rackets, and great benefits from the '72 earthquake disaster relief funds.

Illiterate

Meanwhile 50 per cent of the urban and 70 per cent of the rural population are illiterate, per capita income is £187 a year, and 36 per cent of the population are unemployed.

From latest reports the final outcome of the war remains uncertain. The Sandinistas control the northern towns, but suffered a setback in the south when an attempt



NICARAGUA's President Somoza, sweating in his bunker while his National Guard (above) bomb workers

to set up a 'liberated' zone adjacent to their bases in Costa Rica was thwarted by Somoza. All eyes are now on the fighting in Managua.

The last offensive in September was a defeat for the masses, leaving 10,000 dead. But the speed with which the opposition has regrouped has convinced the US that Somoza has to go, whether he survives the present offensive or not.

This time the Sandinistas are better armed, more unified, and have larger forces in the field. The level of mass mobilisations in the cities,

particularly in Managua, is also

In fact the self-organisation of the masses in the insurrection will be the key military and political factor. Have the Sandinistas politically prepared the masses for an uprising which will avoid the bloody defeat of September?

Last time, set piece battles between heroic groups of Sandinistas and the National Guard ended with losses for the guerrillas and massive reprisals against many workers' areas left defenceless once the guerrillas had been pushed out of the towns.

The Sandinistas express all the combativity of 40 years of mass resistance to dictatorship, but also all the classic political weaknesses of a national liberation movement unclear abut the relation between the anti-imperialist and socialist tasks of the revolution.

It is mass resistance which has weakened the regime. Yet the Sandinistas continue to allow the bourgeois opposition within the National Patriotic Front to dictate its

Radical

Thus they propose a 'government of national unity', and a radical reform of the National Guard rather than its dissolution — demands which are designed to maintain bourgeois and imperialist interests by undermining independent working class organisation.

But despite these problems in the Sandinistas' strategy, their struggle at the head of the Nicaraguan masses against Somoza requires the fullest support.

Solidarity in Britain is presently being coordinated by the Central American Human Rights Committee (59a Church Street, Old Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 6BE), who are organising meetings around the country with a feature-length film on the struggle. Get your organisation to sponsor a meeting and order leaflets and posters.

• For further background on the struggle in Nicaragua, readers are referred to articles by Fausto Amador in Intercontinental Press/Inprecor (Vol. 17, Nos. 21 and 22).

HUGO Blanco, a deputy of the left-wing FOCEP alliance in the Constituent Assembly in Peru and a well-known Trotskyist leader, has been charged by the military regime with six offences: sabotaging production, offences against public security, disturbing the peace, sabotaging the agrarian reform, 'destruction', and anti-state agitation.

Blanco is the third left-wing deputy to be arrested. The Constituent Assembly ruled that there was no case against Victor Cuadros of the UDP and Hernan Cuentas of FOCEP. But the Assembly's mandate expires next month, and the regime could then decide to take further action against them as well as proceeding with the charges against Blanco.
All three were arrested because

they have refused to play the regime's parliamentary games and have instead used the Assembly as a forum to champion working class struggles. With a new wave of strikes now sweeping Peru, the regime's most urgent need is to prevent the emergence of a national opposition to the dictatorship.

THE British government has jailed four Trotskyists in Hong Kong for unlawful assembly. Our 'democratic' rulers objected to a peaceful picket of the 'New China News Agency office on 5 April in solidarity with the democratic movement in China.

The four imprisoned, three members of the Revolutionary Marxist League and a sympathiser, are: Leung Kwok Hung, a garment worker (two months); Chan Chung Wah, a student (three months); Wong Chung Ching, a shopkeeper (three months); and Hou Man Wan, a delivery worker (two months). Three other RML members were given suspended sentences.

THREE Welsh rugby clubs — Llanelli, Cardiff and Newport — face opposition to their planned tours of South Africa this summer from the 'South Wales Campaign Against Racism in Sport', which aims to stop what will inevitably be a boost to the beleaguered apartheid regime.

The campaign has already put out statistics showing the level of discrimination against 'non-whites' in South African sport. One example is state awards for sport. Out of 523, none have gone to Africans or Asians, and only 24 to coloureds.

A tour of factories by a Soweto student to build support for the campaign is planned, and there will also be a mass picket on 28 June of the Stradey Park Hotel in Llanelli, where the Llanelli 'bon voyage' dinner (guest speaker Edward Heath MP) will take place.

THE Friends of Astrid Proll have produced a 30-minute videotape discussing her case and its implications. It includes interviews with her friends and workmates and compares the political situation in West Germany with that in Britain. The treatment of Irish political prisoners, in particular, is placed in the wider context of European cooperation. For information on hiring and distribution, phone 01-359

APOLOGY

LAST week's report from Peru should have been credited to Robin Hamer and Colin Chapman. The accompanying photo was by Colin

Intercontinental **Press**

THE Kurdish and Arab struggles in Iran are featured in the latest issue of Intercontinental Press/Inprecor (Vol. 17, No. 23), which also includes major articles on Kampuchea, the struggle for the 35-hour week in Europe, and the attitude of socialists to the Moscow Olympics.

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

Khomeini's 'national fist' fails to land knock-out' Change in the land with the land of the land with the land wit

By John Leadbetter

AN ALL-POWERFUL president is the main proposal in the draft constitution for Iran drawn up by the Khomeini regime. The draft suggests that the president should be elected by universal suffrage for a four-year term, and should be able to choose the prime minister, dissolve parliament, and act as commander-inchief of the armed forces.

The aim is clearly to remove the regime as far as possible from any accountability to the masses. Thus the draft equally fails to make any mention of regional autonomy or the principle of minority self-rule.

But no piece of paper is going to settle the issue. Many of these questions are already being fought out in struggle — as in the Arab province of Khuzestan. Here nine Trotskyists of the HKS [Iranian section of the Fourth International] and three leaders of the local oil workers committee are being held in jail in the town of Ahwaz.

Sedition charge

The Trotskyists were seized by the local Imam Committee after they issued a statement condemning an attack by government troops against the Arab population of Khorramshahr. They now face long sentences and possibly execution on charges of sedition and incitement to insurrection.

This repression is the regime's response to the demands of the Arab people of Khuzestan for basic democratic rights. They form the majority of the working people in the province. Yet they have been denied all national and cultural freedoms, and live in extreme poverty in a region which — with its extensive oil-fields, large chemical plants, and other industrial installations — produces more wealth than any other in Iran.

The Political Front of the Arab People and other nationalist groups first raised their demands at a rally in Khorramshahr in early May. These included: recognition of Arabic as the first language of the Arab people; representatives in the constituent assembly and on all local, regional and national councils; use of a percentage of oil revenues for development of Arab education and the Khuzestan area; and the incorporation of these demands into the constitution.

The local Imam Committees, which are made up of non-Arabs, responded with a campaign of daily attacks on Arab organisations. Prime Minister Bazargan and Admiral Madani, governor-general of Khuzestan, censored all reports from the area and attempted to misrepresent the just demands of the Arab people by raising the spectre of 'separatism'.

Madani in particular boasted: 'To-day we raise the national fist of Iran. We will not permit the separation of one centimetre of the land of Iran. Our fist will smash the heads of all those who try to separate any part of Iran.'

Islam

The 'national fist' of Iran cannot be wielded indefinitely, however. Behind the scenes, differences between the religious and secular forces still remain unsolved.



Bazargan has attempted to rebuild the old army and state structures in order to regain the confidence of both domestic and foreign capital. But his efforts are being undermined by the trials and executions of top army and civil service personnel, which have been authorised by Khomeini's 'revolutionary' Islamic Council, as part of a plan to construct a new type of state, backed by a thoroughly purged army, with a cohesive Islamic ideology.

Failure

The continued failure to reach a compromise on this question severely hinders the ruling class from reintroducing order and stabilising the new regime.

Not surprisingly, dissatisfaction and impatience is growing throughout the country. Unemployment stands at 3.5 million, nearly a third of the labour force. As yet, government

promises to create projects to absorb the jobless have come to nothing.

In some factories, struggles around economic questions are beginning to re-appear. Workers are implementing the 40-hour week by simply not turning up for work one day each week.

Organisation

In Kurdestan, a high level of independent organisation still exists despite the attempted pogrom by government forces two months ago. There is a possibility that a National Assembly of Kurdestan will soon be convened.

The HKS has consistently supported these and other struggles throughout Iran and is the only group effectively able to counter attempts to divide the workers along religious and national lines. That is why it has become a target for the crackdown by the Khomeini regime — and why it must be defended.

A WORLDWIDE defence campaign has been launched by the Fourth International to free the nine HKS members, as well as the three jailed members of the Ahwaz oil workers' council. Actions are known of in more than a dozen countries, including pickets of Iranian embassies and consulates.

A particular feature is the labour movement

A particular feature is the labour movement support already won. In Sweden, telegrams have been sent by the harbour workers' union, the seamen's union, and the metal workers' union at Volvo (Gothenburg). The printworkers' union congress in Switzerland sent a telegram. Telegrams or petitions have also been signed in many countries by leading trade unionists, MPs, and party leaders.

In Britain those who have taken up the case include Amnesty International, the Tribune Group, the Iranian Women's Solidarity Group, the Campaign for Solidarity with Iran, and many student unions. Telegrams and appeals should be sent to: Mehdi Bazargan, Prime Minister, Tehran, Iran; and to the Islamic Revolutionary Council, Tehran, Iran.

SALT means more nukes!

By David Frankel

ACCORDING to its supporters, the SALT II arms treaty is a step towards peace. 'It will restrain the nuclear arms race. It will lessen the likelihood of a nuclear war', US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance declared.

But the truth is that the Pentagon's nuclear arsenal will be

expanded under the proposed treaty.

Since the SALT I treaty was concluded in 1972, nuclear arsenals in both the Soviet Union and the United States have roughly doubled.

According to a speech on 5 March by Senator Mark Hatfield, the number of Soviet warheads increased from 2,100 to 4,000, while the number of muclear warheads in the Pentagon's arsenal went from 4,600 to 9,000.

The same process will occur under the SALT II accord. Summing up its expectations in an editorial titled 'We Support SALT', the US journal New Republic explained on 5 May: 'Because of submarine and bomber advantages, the US currently has double the total warheads that the Soviets do; in 1985 we will have 12,000 compared to the Soviets' 8.000.'

Here we are presented with an 'arms limitation treaty' whose supporters foresee a 25 per cent increase in the number of nuclear weapons deployed!

Those who accept the SALT framework offer the lame argument that it is necessary to support the treaty because without it the increases in the arms budget might be even greater.

But the whole purpose of the SALT debate, from the point of view of the ruling class, is to try to prepare public opinion for precisely such increases in the arms budget by playing up the supposed Soviet threat while at the same time presenting Carter as a man of peace.

Carter, who has vowed to continue jacking up the military budget by at least 3 per cent in real dollars each year, is now able to present his new weapons programmes as necessary concessions to hawkish senators who would otherwise refuse to vote for the SALT treaty.

Kenneth Bacon bluntly explained the tactic to readers of the Wall Street Journal in an article on 12 December: 'Even if an arms control pact is ratified...the debate is likely to leave many people feeling less secure about US strength, more suspicious of Soviet intentions and, therefore, more willing to increase US defence spending.'

Since coming into office in January 1977, Carter has had a consistent policy — within the limits imposed on him by the anti-war mood of the American working class — of increasing arms spending and pushing towards military intervention abroad.



The boldest moves have come in the Middle East in the wake of the Iranian revolution. These include:

• The \$5 billion worth of new arms being shipped to Israel and Egypt.

• Trial balloons about the possible establishment of US air and naval bases in Israel and Egypt, and a treaty that opens the door for basing US ground forces in the Sinai.

• The sending of \$540 million in US arms to North Yemen, along with contingents of US 'advisers'.

• The dispatch of a US naval fleet, including the aircraft carrier

Constellation, to the Gulf of Aden during the conflict between North and South Yemen this March.

• Plans for the creation of a US

'Fifth Fleet' in the Indian Ocean.
The establishment of a 100,000-strong Mid-East intervention force.

Along with these moves has come a serious attempt to reinstitute the draft. As New York Times military analyst Drew Middleton explained on 2 May, the attempt to restore conscription is due to 'a belief that in the (next) decade the Army will be summoned to intervene and perhaps to fight in defence of American interests outside continental Europe'.

In other words, the imperialists are well aware that they will have to fight new Vietnam-style wars if they are to contain the social upheavals that threaten their profits.

Carter is not pursuing a contradictory policy. The proposed SALT II treaty is not an isolated move towards peace in an overall policy of imperialist aggression. On the contrary, SALT II is part and parcel of the imperialist war policy.

By John Marshall

THE 1972 miners' strike was one of the most famous working class victories in Britain. It was the start of two years of struggle which destroyed the Heath government. Learning the lessons of this struggle is a vital part of organising any fight against Thatcher today.

The strike began amid working class defeats. In early 1971 the Tories had scored a major victory in the public sector by thoroughly defeating a seven-week strike by the postal workers. The government's wage policy that each major settlement must be 1 per cent lower than the last was holding firm.

But Heath still faced the major problem that victories in the public sector were not nearly enough. The employers could only reverse the tremendous decline in the rate of profit in British industry by inflicting major defeats on the industrial unions.

Here the government had a much tougher fight on its hands. In 1971 the Ford workers had waged a major strike against the company, and workers at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders had occupied the yards against closure. The government had to take on and defeat a major group of industrial workers to impose its economic policies. It chose to confront the miners

Confidence

Preparation by the government for the strike was intensive. Enormous coal stocks were built up. The City of London Newspaper wrote: 'Months before the coal strike started, ministers were saying in private that the government would establish their "anti-inflation" policy by a resounding victory over the miners.'

The Times expressed the confidence of the government and employers: 'Coalstocks away from the pits are large enough to withstand a strike for weeks, if it does not spread, with marginal disruption to industry and commerce as a whole.'

These words 'if it does not spread' were to be the key to the whole strike.

Sympathy

Certainly the TUC did nothing to help the miners. It refused to call a meeting of transport unions to organise solidarity with the strike. The seamen's union, asked to boycott the import of coal, said it was sympathetic but 'it must be remembered that our members are on articles (the regulations of the Merchant Shipping Act) when on board ship and they cannot break these'.

Worst of all, the EETPU and the GMWU agreed pay deals for the power workers just as the miners' strike was getting under way.

There was enormous sympathy for the NUM in the working class, but it was being blocked by the union leaderships. The decisive question was whether the miners would wage a struggle determined enough to rally working class support against the sabotage of the TUC.

Right from the start the government did everything possible to isolate the miners and break the strike. It cut down power supplies to impose hardship on the rest of the working class and try to turn them against the miners — a policy it was to use again in 1974 with the three day week. The press went on about how the miners were making everybody suffer.

The government's attempts to break the strike were not confined to propaganda. The employers and the state used the toughest possible measures.

Injuries

At Dover scab lorry drivers, armed with iron bars, were paid £20 a day to drive through the picket lines. At Grimethorpe three miners were injured when a scab lorry driver smashed his lorry through a picket line. At the firm of T.Simpson a picket had his foot crushed and another was injured by a scab wielding a meat

The police and the law openly collaborated with the scabs and the employers. When a newspaper photograph of a scab wielding an iron bar was sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions he wrote back:

'It would be necessary for the prosecution to prove that the truck driver carried the bar with the intention of using it to injure. If therefore he was merely holding it so as to cause the pickets to move away from his truck so that he could drive away without danger to himself or anyone else, I do not consider that an offence would be established. I do not therefore propose to take any action in the matter.'

Respectable

Faced with these vicious ruling class attacks the situation was very clear. Either the strike would go beyond any of the forms of struggle used since the war or it would be smashed.

But the NUM leaders held back. Gormley was very careful to say how 'respectable' the miners were. He told the Morning Star in December 1971: 'If we are forced to strike from

If it does not spread' The 1972 miners' strike



9 January it will be the first official dispute of the NUM since it was formed towards the end of the last war... We did not rock the boat when fuel was in short supply.'

The desire to be respectable also came up in the first key choice of the strike — whether the safety men should come out. When they did in most pits this was attacked by Gormley. He told The Times: 'The men are being a damn sight more militant than we would want them to be.' Another view entirely was put by pickets from Murton pit in Durham to the newspaper 7 Days: 'We've held ourselves back too long because we were sold out by our own leaders and the Labour Party. They want the pickets to be respectable. Being respectable got us where we are — at the bottom.'

But if the NUM leadership hesitated to act at the beginning of the strike, the rank and file did not. They set out determinedly to smash the employers' offensive.

The first step was the massive use of 'secondary' pickets. The government had calculated that the miners would just picket the pits. The TUC refused to call for a boycott of coal and simply said that union members should refuse to cross picket lines. There must have been a few wry smiles pulled at the General Council of the TUC over this.

With 31 million tons of coal stored away

With 31 million tons of coal stored away from the mines, what did it matter if drivers could not reach any pit-head stockpiles? If the miners had followed the normal strike procedure of merely picketing their places of work the agreement not to cross picket lines would have been useless.

But if there was no point in placing pickets on the pits, the answer was to take the pickets to the workers. The mass pickets began to spread across the country.

Blockade

The key targets were of course the power stations, which were picketed until they shut down. These pickets were so complete that in London a 'naval blockade' was established. Miners took over a pleasure boat and went down river, complete with loudhailers, to stop coal being transported by water into Battersea power station.

The clashes on these pickets were ferocious. They reached their culmination when one miner was killed by a speeding scab lorry. But the miners struck back with real workers' self-defence. Scabs were pulled from lorries and loads dumped on the road.

At Keresley the floodlights were shot out with an air rifle, the junction box for the lights was smashed with a sledge hammer, six inch nails were embedded in the drive, and broken glass spread on the road. At Alderman's Green power station the oil line set up by the management was torn out.

The fiercest struggle came at Longannet power station, where the electricity board was prepared to use helicopters to bring in workers and six naval boats were used to bring oil in. Special 'hard' squads of the police were brought in, who threw workers in jail without bail or trial. Mick McGahey, the Scottish Area President of the NUM, was assaulted by the police.

Fiercest

If Longannet was the fiercest battle, Saltley coke depot in Birmingham was the greatest victory. For a week six hundred police fought to keep the depot open. Four police and countless miners received severe injuries. After four days of pitched battles between roughly equal numbers of police and pickets, the working class of Birmingham acted.

Two hundred shop stewards from all the major factories in the East Midlands district of the AUEW met. The following morning further police reinforcements were called in, and six lorry loads were got out of the depot.

Then it started. Forty thousand workers struck. Eleven thousand poured down the hills onto the picket. The police were swept aside. At 10.45am on the morning of 10 February 1972 the gates of Saltley coke depot were slammed shut. They never re-opened until the end of the strike

Saltley was the end as far as the ruling class was concerned. The violence of the scabs, the campaign of the press, and the open use of the law had all failed.

As Tory MP William Deedes put it: 'The crux at places like Saltley was not how the law was interpreted but how it could be enforced. It was not doubtful law but numbers which held the police back.'

At Saltley and in hundreds of other unsung struggles the rank and file of the NUM had broken the back of the capitalists' assault. The government's income policy was smashed.

There were still setbacks to come. In 1973 the hospital workers suffered a severe defeat. But the government of Heath had been shaken to its foundations. It had been shown that a government could be defeated in struggle by a major industrial union.

The second miners' strike of 1974 rammed home the lesson by bringing down the Heath government. In the February 1974 election the Tory Party received its lowest proportion of the votes in any general election this century.

The great lessons of the 1972 miners' strike still apply today. The TUC and union leaders are no more prepared to wage a struggle now than they were then. But the Ford and lorry drivers' strikes last winter showed once again that the industrial working class have the power to destroy any government policy.

The lorry drivers' strike in particular showed the power of mass picketing and why the Tories are so determined to destroy it. No victory for the Tories in any other field can make up for decisive defeats by the core of the working class. Victory is possible by mass struggle against even the most reactionary government.

As in 1972 it will be the fight between the industrial unions and Thatcher that will determine the outcome of the class struggle.

Fighting Zionism and anti-semitism

I FOUND Steve Cohen's article on the links between anti-semitism and immigration controls (7 June) really interesting. But the lesson that he drew regarding the links between fighting Zionism and anti-semitism seemed to get everything upside

Why should every criticism of Zionism be linked to an attack on anti-semitism? This might have been the case after 1945, but it's not now. We shouldn't base our opposition to Israel and Zionism on the grounds that it's a false answer to anti-semitism.

The opposition of revolutionaries has to be based on the fact that Zionism, by its very nature, was and is a colonial project. This meant that the Israeli state could only be established at the expense of the Palestinian Arabs. Specifically, this meant expelling them from their homes.

We should oppose Israel and Zionism because we support the rights of the victims of colonialism. This means that we should support the rights of the Palestinian Arabs to return to their homeland (regardless of the fact that this may mean the destruction of the Israeli state).

There are two other points that need to be made. If one looks at Steve's points from the standpoint of a Zionist, then one can only conclude that there is something to be worried about. After all, there's no smoke without fire. More importantly, if you look at the same thing from the point of a Palestinian, then you can only conclude that people who say such things are so worried about offending Zionists that they're not likely to be good ailies.

Opposition to Zionism cannot be based on a capitulation to anti-semitism, but nor should we go out of our way to appease the Zionists. We do have to take up the struggle against anti-semitism. But it is a political error to confuse the two battles.

In Britain our job is to support the rights of the Palestinians by building a solidarity campaign with their struggle and to take the fight against anti-semitism into the anti-racist movement where appropriate. But these are two jobs, not one.

MIKE BARR [Hounslow]

Facts on the French CP

MARTIN Meteyard (24 May) writes that French Communist Party leaders 'now cynically admit that they broke the Union (of the Left) because the SP rather than the PCF was recruiting out of it - a rather startling admission of the bankruptcy of their own policies'. Perhaps Martin Meteyard could tell us where and by whom this indeed 'startling admission' has been made?

It seems to me to show the same degree of ignorance (with the usual anti-Communist venom added) as his statement that François Hincker was one of the authors of a recent book, The USSR and Us'. Everyone who knows anything about the French CP knows that the authors of this book were Adler, Cohen, Decaillot, Frioux and Robel.

A.S.Simmons (London SE14)

• The pre-conference contribution by PCF political bureau member André Lajoinie in l'Humanité (19 April) included the following statement: 'For the first time in history, the union on a programme did not allow the Communist Party to grow stronger, and it was, on the contrary, the Socialist Party which alone profited from this experience. I still find this a rather breathtaking comment by a mainstream party leader on the PCF's policy between 1972 and 1977.

Comrade Simmons is quite right to pull me up for misattributing the authorship of The USSR and Us. I apologise to all concerned. However this does not alter my substantive point: that Hincker was removed from the central committee because, as editor of the party journal Nouvelle Critique, he had allowed too much scope to dissidents.
MARTIN METEYARD

Chartists and the SCLV

ON behalf of Socialist Charter I would like to correct some major inaccuracies that have appeared in your columns in regard to our tendency. Although this is hardly the place to take up the basic differences between us, any future serious debate (to which we look forward) will not be helped by misrepresentations and confusions about other comrades'

In your article 'The Challenge for revolutionaries' (10 May), you state:
'Workers Action and the Chartists took wrong and sectarian positions on major questions such as the ANL and the devolution referendum.' As a matter of fact, we have always given support to the ANL — as far as our limited resources allow - and have made certain criticisms within that context. Moreover, we unreservedly called for a 'Yes' vote in both devolution campaigns, just as Socialist Challenge did. The comrades seem to be mixing us up with our SCLV allies in Workers

Jon Duveen (31 May) accuses us of giving critical support to some of the large rate increases in London boroughs (which is true), but then goes on to call this 'amending the SCLV's programme at will'. Your readers should be aware that the SCLV is not a monolithic disciplined body but a broad and open forum for the whole far left in the Labour Party (a 'class struggle left wing', you might say). The SCLV as such retains its opposition to rate increases (though this could be changed at the autumn recall conference); meanwhile it is conducting an open and democratic debate on the issue, which divides both organised tendencies and

independent activists.

Finally, our change of mind on the rates issue is alleged to reflect an opportunist relationship to left councillors like Knight Livingstone, rather than being the result of a sober and thorough discussion amongst us as in fact occurred. Duveen's letter (which incidentally fails to explain how else he thinks Lambeth or Hackney could build council houses or pay NALGO members like myself) is reminiscent of the poison-pen journalism of the Spartacists or WSL — implying fellow-Marxists are all liars and

MARTIN COOK (London SE24)

Scotching rumours (2)

MANY thanks for your article 'Scotching rumours' (31 May). Yes, the national press lied about the behaviour of Scotland's soccer fans. With a friend I went as an Engalnd supporter to my first England vs. Scotland match. A brief precis of events will perhaps convince everyone of the value of Socialist Challenge as an essential 'fact' giver.

We boarded a tube at Baker Street for Wembley Park at 1.10pm. Everywhere was packed with Scots. Everyone was excited for what the Scots regard as the game.

NO SCOTS

The tube ground to a halt before Dollis Hill and for half an hour we were left in appalling conditions. The air was stale, the heat overpowering, and the crush became unbearable. People fainted and everyone felt ill.

My friend is an officer in the fire service and is always talking of his work in hair-raising life-and-death situations. However, he said he'd never been so scared; so he wedged open a door. Then he grabbed a policeman by the throat, telling him that people would die if the doors remained closed.

At 3pm the match that people had travelled hundreds of miles to see kicked off. This coincided with the first effort to communicate with the 'animals'. We were told that the doors would be opened on one side of the train and that the electrified rail had been switched off to enable us to walk along the line to the next station. A special train would then take us to the match.

This we dutifully did. But on enquiring about the 'special train' a railworker told us that this was a 'con', and we would have to walk to Wembley. In fact we ran a mile before catching a bus to complete the distance. Finally we got to the match about 3.20pm.

After the game a loudspeaker announcement informed the crowd that Wembley Park station was closed, and that spectators should use Wembley Central. After walking

about a mile towards this station, people walking back told us it was closed! A policeman informed us that there wasn't any public transport. So the 'army' walked back past the stadium to the West End.

I was amazed at the way we were treated. But what amazed me even more was the quite exemplary behaviour of the Tartan Army. Throughout the day I saw no violent act although the circumstances were the most intimidating I have faced. In fact the Scots' attitude made me embarrassed to be English. Thank you once again for the truth.

DEREK JONES (NATFHE member,

Solihull)

Lloyds Bank and Chile

I HAVE always wondered why a so-called 'revolutionary' paper like yours banks with Lloyds. But an article in **Tribune** of 1 June — pointing out that Lloyds has contributed more than 200 million dollars to the Chilean junta over the past two years — and your rather abject appeal for funds in your issue of 31 May have prompted me to write.

I ask you therefore why Socialist Challenge continues to bank with Lloyds when there is a socially owned bank, the Co-operative bank, and the nationally owned Girobank in existence? I await your explanation with interest, and in the meantime see no reason why I should pay you a standing order through a capitalist

SIMON PARTRIDGE [London N7]

Tories' win

I BELIEVE that at this point in time an overall Tory victory was necessary to illustrate to the majority of British voters that there is a deep-seated crisis in the capitalist system which renders a Thatcher-type programme an anachronism in 1980s Britain, one which has no chance of working save at the expense of the vast majority of the population.

I am confident that the main repercussions of this result will produce a sharp and permanent swing to the left in British politics, and eventually force the British workers to reassess the relevance for them of the parliamentary democratic system. CAROLE HODGE (Glasgow)

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

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

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE EVENTS

NORTH WEST

MOSS SIDE Socialist Challenge supporters sell the paper at Moss Side Centre, Saturday, 11-1. MANCHESTER SC Centre has been closed because of fire damage, but will be reopening shortly. All mail/enquiries should meanwhile be sent via the paper's national office in London.

OLDHAM SC sales every Saturday, 11-1, outside Yorkshire Bank, High St. For further details tel. 061-652 7851.

NORTH EAST MIDDLESBROUGH Socialist Challenge sales, Saturday lunchtime near the lottery stand at Cleveland Centre. Also available from Newsfare

DURHAM Socialist Challenge Supporters Group. For details contact: Dave Brown, 2 Pioneer Cottages, Low Pittington, Durham. MIDDLESBROUGH paper sales, Saturday hunchtime at Cleveland Centre, near lottery stand opposite Woolworths. Also available from Newsfare in Linthorpe Road and inside

Cleveland Centre.
STOCKTON-ON-TEES readers can buy Socialist Challenge and Revolution from Green Books stall upstairs in Spencer Hall indoor market, Stockton High St.

SCOTLAND For information about the paper or its supporters' activities throughout Scotland please contact Socialist Challenge Books, 64 Queen St, Glasgow. Open Wed, Thurs, Fri and Sat afternoons. Phone for alternative

arrangement (221 7481). Wide range of Fourth Westminster Bank. 12.30-2.00pm. International publications.

HAMILTON supporters sell Socialist Challeng every Saturday in the Hamilton shopping centre, 5pm. For details of local activities contact John Ford, 553 Eliot Crescent, Hamilton,

group meets regularly. Phone George at 031-346 0466 for details.

EDINBURGH Socialist Challenge supporters

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

MIDLANDS COVENTRY SC group meeting: 'New Technology'. Tues 26 June, 8pm, Wedge

BIRMINGHAM supporters sell the paper outside New Street station every Saturday, 10-4. Phone 643 9209 for details of SC activities.

LEICESTER SC group meets monthly at Highfields Community Centre. Paper on sale at Blackthorn Books.

LEAMINGTON Socialist Challenge group meets every other Sunday. Contact 311772. YORKSHIRE HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Thursdays at the Friendly & Trades Club, Northumberland St.

DEWSBURY Socialist Challenge sales regularly on Saturday mornings in Westgate at the Nat.

LEEDS Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday Elland Rd - when Leeds Utd are playing at

HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge sales regularly Saturdays Ham-Ipm in the Piazza.

YORK Socialist Challenge is on sale at the York Community Bookshop, 73 Walmgate or from sellers on Thursdays (12.30-1.45) at York University, Vanbrugh College; Saturdays (11.30-3.30) at Coney Street.

SOUTH WEST

FOR INFORMATION on activities in the South-West, write to Box 002, c/o Fullmarks,

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

BRISTOL Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday, 11am-1pm in the 'Hole in the Ground', Haymarket.

ISLE OF WIGHT readers can buy Socialist Challenge from the Oz Shop, 44 Union St, Ryde.

BATH Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday, 2-3.30pm, outside Macfisheries. Ring Bath 20298 for further details.

SWINDON supporters sell Socialist Challenge Ham-1pm Saturdays, Regent St (Brunel

PORTSMOUTH Socialist Challenge sales, Saturdays 11.30am-1pm, Commercial Road

SOUTH EAST

NORWICH Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday in Davey Place (opp. market) and bookstall Thursdays at University of East

COLCHESTER SC supporters meet regularly. For details phone Steve on Wivenhoe 2949.

BRIGHTON SC forums fortnightly on Tuesdays. Contact Micky on 605052.

TOWER HAMLETS Socialist Challenge Group meets every fortnight (phone 247 2717 for

PADDINGTON/N KENSINGTON supporters sell the paper every Saturday at noon at junction Portobello Rd/Westbourne Park Rd, W11. BRENT supporters sell every Saturday, 2.30pm, at Kilburn Sq, Kilburn High Rd, London NW6.

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD supporters meet regularly on Sunday evenings. For details phone Mick on Hemel Hempstead 41037. Also paper sales Saturday mornings in Times Square.

WALTHAMSTOW readers can buy Socialist Challenge regularly from Sheridan's Newsagents, 86 Hoe St, E17.

LEYTON readers can buy from Patel's Newsagents, 326 Lea Bridge Road, TOWER HAMLETS Socialist Challenge

supporters sell every weekend: Saturdays meet 10.30am, Whitechapel tube; Sundays meet 10am, Brick Lane (corner of Buxton St).

HACKNEY supporters sell every Saturday, 12-2pm, in Kingsland High St, Dalston -outside Sainsbury's.

HARROW Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly, details from Box 50, London N1 2XP. HARINGEY paper sales at Finsbury Park and Seven Sisters tubes, Thurs evening; Muswell Hill and Crouch End Broadways, Saturday morning.

Also available at Muswell Hill Bookshop, Muswell Hill Broadway; Vares newsagent, Middle Lane, N8; and Bookmarks, Finsbury

S.E.LONDON SC group meets Saturdays 11am outside Midland Bank, Deptford High St. for paper sale in market. All local supporters please note. Watch this spot for details of next SC

CAMDEN SC group public meeting: 'Why did Labour lose?' Speakers Ken Livingstone and John Ross. Room B8, North London Poly, Prince of Wales Rd. Wed 27 June, 7.30pm.

HACKNEY SC group meeting: 'No to school closures'. Speaker Mike Colley (NUT, Clissold Park School). Thur 28 June, 7.30pm, Britannia pub, Mare Street, E8.

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Where the media fear to tread

A SOCIALIST review of Arthur MacCaig's first feature-length documentary The Patriot Game could concentrate on the failings of its political 'line'.

Bulky paragraphs could be assigned to pointing out the romanticised vision of the Provisional IRA contained in the film; its dismissal of other political forces — such as the Social Democratic and Labour Party, inaccurately described as 'conservative nationalists' — and its failure to offer any explanation of the consciousness of the Protestant working class.

But such a commentary on The Patriot Game would only be penned from a socialist visitor from outer space, unaware of the context in which it is to be screened in this Great Britain of 1979. That context is the millions of footage of film that has been seen propagating British myths about its Irish war.

Occasionally such efforts have timidly sought to correspond to some abstract conception of 'balance', but overwhelmingly the media, visual and otherwise, have been one more arm of the heroic British war effort, or rather the heroic British 'policing' effort, because the last thing to be admitted is that there is an actual war taking place in the six north-east counties in Ireland.

To all this The Patriot Game is a reply. It is, to quote from the distributor's press hand out, 'unashamedly pro-Republican'.

As such the film is long overdue, not just in the interest of going some small way to restore 'balance', but because the Irish Republican view of the root of the problem in the Six Counties does happen to have a significant contact with reality.

The Patriot Game portrays that reality by a brief historical introduction; a narrative of the years from the civil rights' movement to the present day; contemporary scenes of everyday life in Catholic Belfast, and interviews with leading Republicans.

What emerges above all is the determined and cheerful spirit of resistance of the Catholic ghettos.

In this sense the best shot in the film is a scene in a Belfast social club when the goings-on are interrupted by a visit from the British Army. The spontaneity of the response should warm the cockles of many a heart.

For the rest, the role of the British Army is adequately dealt with by the scenes of their violence and general thuggery, and although the shots of the IRA in training suggest an amateurism which the Provos do not have, they at least could attract to the film a certain notoriety.

For all this The Patriot Game is unquestionably the best readily available film on Ireland so far. Show it at meetings, talk about it, and urge any who are 'confused' about Ireland to see it.

*The Patriot Game is available for hire from The Other Cinema, 12/13 Little Newport St, London WC2. Tel 01-734 8508/9. And from UTOM, Box 10, 2a St Paul's Road, London N1.

The British premiere is on Sunday, 24 June, at the Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square, London SW1. Performances at 4.30pm and 7.30pm. Tickets £1.50. There will be a discussion after the film with its director Arthur MacCaig.

Objective: a film on the totality of the Irish struggle

Before the pogroms occurred in 1968, I knew very little about Ireland, and less about the North. Like most other people, I was completely ignorant. In '68 I was travelling around Europe and I was able to come to Ireland for a

ARTHUR MacCAIG, the American who made 'The Patriot Game', was interviewed by Angela Martin at the Cannes Film Festival last month.

while, and it started there.

But it took a long time before I could figure out what was happening. Even for people involved in the struggle in Ireland at that time, it was a very confusing period.

I dismissed from the start that it was a religious conflict — I had enough sense to realise it was political. But most of the sources of information in the US — let's say the left-wing sources — almost all of them accepted the point of view of the Official IRA, beginning in 1969, simply because it was an openly so-called Marxist organisation.

From that point of view, people got the idea — at least in the US — that the Provisionals were some kind of pure nationalist organisation, almost fascist-like gangsters.

I visited the north of Ireland for the first time in 1972, and I spent some time in Belfast, in nationalist areas like the Ardoyne — and that just blew my mind, because all the ideas I'd previously had were shown to be completely false when you're in the reality there.

Ordinary

This was the first time I had really seen the strength and the power of a mass struggle — when the mass of the people are directly involved in that struggle. Ordinary people directly participated in organising their communities, organising the defence of their communities and trying to improve the social welfare of people in those districts.

For over 50 years, people had been so demoralised, so oppressed, and the previous armed struggles of the IRA never really mobilised the mass of the people, so nationalists were generally very passive.

In most of the nationalist districts unemployment was anything from 25-50 per cent, and this is over two or three generations. Well, after 50 years of that people finally began to seize control of their lives and of their communities.

Then I met people in the Provisional Republican movement and my perception of them was that they were dedicated revolutionaries.

The Provisionals were almost a product of the mass struggle. In the beginning, things were so confused it wasn't actually them organising the mass struggle, they were much more a product of it.

Ambitious

When I set about making The Patriot Game I had a problem. I knew most people, almost anywhere, knew very little about the situation and the



IRA man in training - from 'The Patriot Game'

struggle. I felt it was absolutely necessary to try and do a film that would treat the situation in its totality, and place the struggle in a historical and economic context.

The problem with that is, for a first film, it's extremely ambitious. And when you're starting out on a first film with that idea, and the determination but not the money, it's almost crazy.

It involved spending a lot of time in Belfast and Derry and some of the country areas, trying to get to know as much as I possibly could about the Republican movement and different aspects of it. That was mainly to show the kind of changes people had gone through over the 10-year period beginning 1968-9.

And then, doing research, trying to track down different film documents that had been shot over that period, because, of course, there's no way I could have been there filming.

The advantage with something like Northern Ireland is that almost every major television company in the world has shot stuff on it. And there's just miles and miles of footage and some terrific stuff.

But most TV stations are enormous bureaucracies. They don't care about what you're doing, and they're very expensive. It's expensive just to research the material and even more expensive to actually use it, to buy the rights. Virtually a third of The Patriot Game is made up of this

documentary footage, which cost over £5,000.

A lot of the material came from RTE, the TV station in the 26 Counties, who were tremendously helpful and had really terrific stuff because they've got a crew up there almost all the time.

We shot four hours of our own material over a three week period: some interviews, the taxi sequence, a sequence in the pub, stuff like that, an interview with a couple of people in the Republican movement, and with a woman in the Relatives Action Committee.

It's a black and white film, and the film and lab costs up to the first print of the material we shot came to around £4,700.

The idea was to give as much information as possible — not too much, but as much as is possible for people to handle in an hour and a half. Otherwise it's very difficult to figure out what's happening.

What I'd really like to say about

what I'd really like to say about the film is that I think it's objective in a real sense of the word. I think it gets to the root of the problem there.

It touches on the truth more than, let's say, the classic TV documentary which will interview a loyalist, then a nationalist—except they'd say they'd be interviewing a Protestant and then a Catholic. For me, the objective truth is the historical truth of the situation based on the experience of the mass struggle.

w **a**nti-abortion Bill

CORRIE'S LAW-FORCED CHILDBIRT



AS Socialist Challenge went to press, Tory MP John Corrie seemed to be on the verge of announcing a Private Member's Bill to introduce further restrictions on the control a woman may have over her own body. On 12 June, Corrie, the MP for North Ayrshire and Bute, had this to say in Glasgow's Evening Times on women and abortion:

'A girl has to be very naive not to know by 16 weeks that she is pregnant. If she is having an abortion she should have had it by then. After 16 weeks she should be made to have her baby.'

These three sentences strip the anti-abortion argument of all the sanctimonious, sugary sentiment in which it is normally wrapped. Corrie says it plain and simple: a woman 'should be made to have her baby'.

No matter if the woman concerned was 'naive' and didn't know she was pregnant.

concerned would face enormous mental or emotional pain if she gave

No matter if the woman concerned was raped and too 'ashamed' to do anything about her pregnancy before.

No matter, is Corrie's argument; the woman will be 'made' to give birth.

It hardly needs spelling out that what is involved in Corrie's Bill is an attack on democratic rights as basic as this most reactionary Tory Parliament is likely to see. What Corrie is moving towards is not just marginal restrictions on the control a woman has over her own body, but a policy of forced birth which carries with it truly horrendous implications.

So this isn't just an issue for the women's movement; it is an issue for progressive, even liberal individual and organisation in the country.

have a lot of women's libbers pounding me'. That is not a quarter of it, Mr Corrie. From this week on the hope is that you will be so denounced as the reactionary, authoritarian specimen which you are that you will be afraid to pop your head out of any

The National Abortion Campaign has formulated plans which can defeat the Bill — but only if these plans receive the massive backing they deserve from the entire women's, student and labour movement. The plans include a demonstration and rally to coincide with the second reading of the Bill, estimated to take place on 13 or 20 July; emergency resolutions at the TUC and Labour Party conference; calls on the Women's TUC to honour its pledge to organise a national demonstration in October.

From this week on the maximum. unity and the maximum action is necessary to bury Corrie's Bill. From this week on it should be the number one issue for all of us,

It's not only Corrie

Werseyside Abortion Campaign

EIGHT people on Merseyside are standing in the way of women having access to safe, early abortion on the NHS.

These are the gynaecologists in Rodney Street who will perform abortion, but only if you can pay up to £100 for it.

Only three out of ten women in Merseyside can get an abortion under the NHS.

The area health authority, nearly three years ago, agreed to a day-care unit in Liverpool, which would not only be cheaper for the NHS, but safe and simple for women.

However, the gynaecologists refuse to operate this, not on moral grounds, but because they will lose

Angry at the hypocrisy and greed of the gynaecologists, the Merseyside abortion campaign organised a picket outside the private rooms in Rodney

In front of a huge banner, about 60 people chanting slogans marched along the street and managed to block off the road outside the consultants' rooms for a short while, shouting: You only believe in it when we pay

Our reason for being there was made clear when a Rolls Royce slid past and into the back entrance of the consulting rooms.

A day-care unit in Liverpool's Sefton General Hospital is a real possibility.

So, the next day we occupied the out-patient clinic at the end of a family planning session to make our point.

A letter was read out stating that the out-patient clinic would be a suitable place to carry out early abortions. All the facilities are there, including several trained doctors willing to perform abortion.

These actions were just the first of many planned by the Merseyside abortion campaign to secure a day-care abortion clinic.

Next Saturday, 23 June, a day of action with stalls and street theatre is planned for the centre of Liverpoot.



keg beer still tastes as if it's polluted with raw sewerage in comparison with real, traditional ale.

That was John May's verdict after finishing a month's sponsored 'dry-out' to raise money for Socialist Challenge. Luckily for John real ale is available in his part of the world, and luckily for us he was able to keep going for a month without a drink knowing he would get a decent pint at the end of it.

With his letter came £14, and there's more to come when he tracks down a few more debtors in the local pubs.

That does not mean we don't want individual contributions - we do. Our thanks to those contributing in the last two weeks:

Cardiff SC	2.50
J.E.Spragg	1.00
2 French comrades	5.00
J May's dry-out	14.00
Camden SC Group	25.00
Sales of fruit	20.00
Ed Mahood (Canada)	10.00
Hackney SC benefit	25.00
Camden IMG	40.00
Marianne Ebel	20.00
Tower Hamlets IMG	1.43
AUEW Shop Steward	1.00
AHN	10.26
Bristol SC supporter	2.00
DH	10.00
Red Drinker	6.00
R.Jeffrey	5.00
Glasgow subscriber	5.00
Weekly Total	221.19
Cumulative Total	£1,428.48

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