

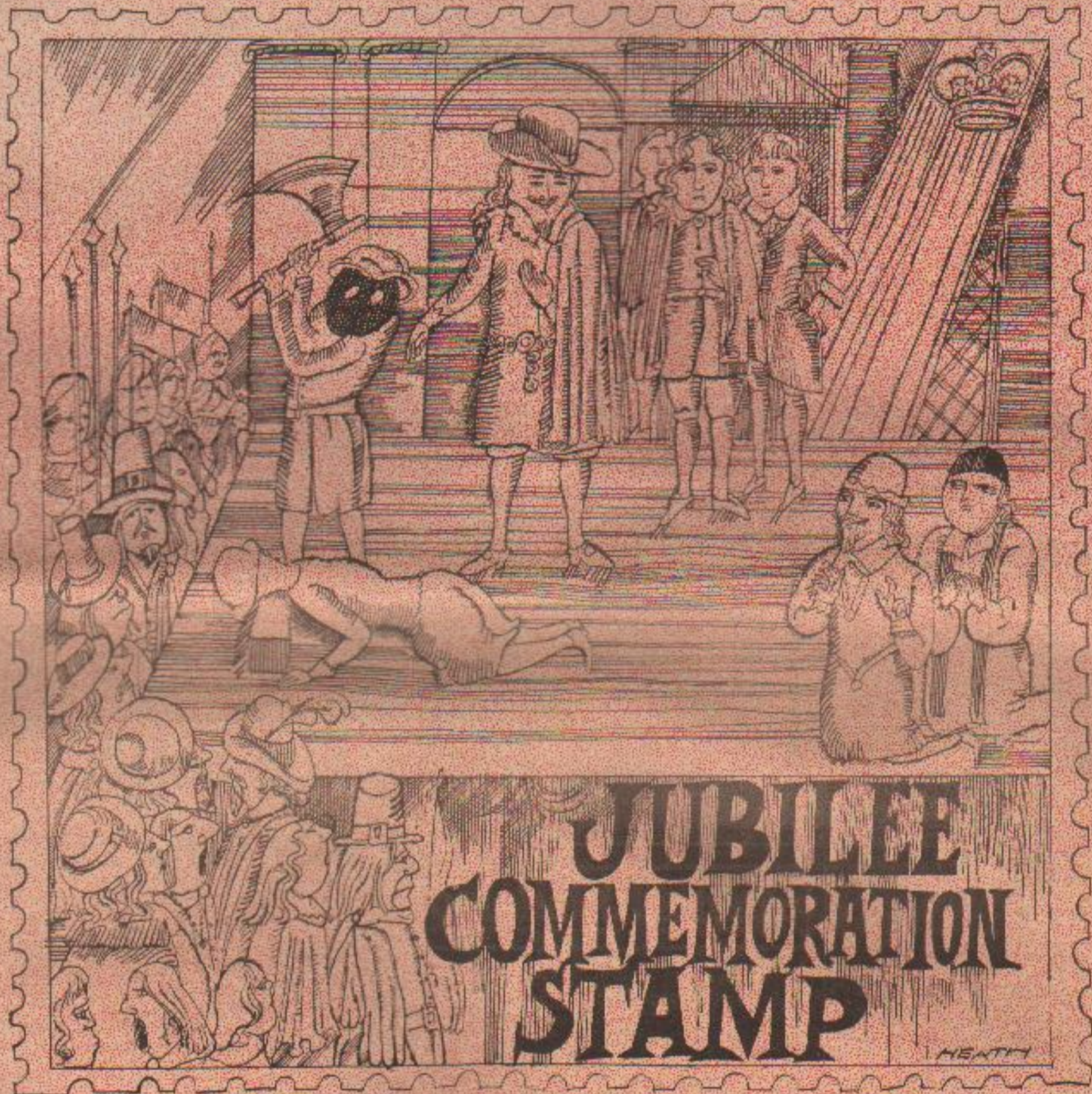
# Socialist Challenge

BUILD A SOCIALIST OPPOSITION FOR A UNIFIED REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

12p

9 June 1977, No. 1

## CHARLES I b.1601 executed 1649



## CHARLES III b.1947 . . . . . ?

# The crisis in the Communist Party

The Communist Party leaders have banned a pamphlet written by Charlie Doyle calling for a rejection of the Draft of the new 'British Road to Socialism'. We print Doyle's 'platform of opposition'.

Oliver MacDonald asks Communist Party members some questions on workers' democracy and the suppression of internal democracy in their party.

We explain what the crisis is all about.

Turn to pages eight and nine.



# Editorial

Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.  
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## our tasks

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE aims to create a new tradition on the British left. Till now we have seen two types of newspapers.

The first consciously aims at breaking the monopoly of the capitalist press by publishing news stories not to be found elsewhere. (The old *Seven Days* and the present *Leveler* are two examples of this.) Journals such as these play a useful role but they operate within self-imposed limitations: they are not interested in building any organisation.

The second type is the party paper. In this category fall *Socialist Worker*, *Red Weekly*, *Newsline*, *Morning Star*, etc. The use of these papers lies precisely in the fact that they are consciously utilised to build a particular organisation. Their weakness lies in the fact that they, in general, cannot mobilise forces larger than their own organisations.

### SOMETHING DIFFERENT

*Socialist Challenge*, while recognising the merits of other papers of the workers' movement, nonetheless aims at achieving something different. We want our paper to be utilised for constructing broad-based class-struggle tendencies in the unions and we want to place the question of revolutionary socialist unity at the centre of our political tasks today.

We believe that there are hundreds of thousands of workers who are responsive to the initiatives of the far-left, but are repelled by its lack of unity. That is why we will continue to appeal to other organisations to participate on the Editorial Board of this paper and help to shape its future. We do not believe that any revolutionary socialist organisation today is a party or even the sole nucleus of a future party. To pretend otherwise leads to sectarian posturing.

The International Marxist Group, which is launching this newspaper, wants it to become a paper of struggle utilised by different groups and by workers and other layers engaged in struggles. That is why we will open our pages to debates and discussion. That is why we will establish special sections in the paper which will be accessible to groups which have no other channels of communication. ('Open Forum', 'Speak Out', and 'Comment'.)

### A LOT TO LEARN

The IMG does not believe that it has a monopoly of the truth. On the central political questions we believe that we are, in general, correct, but we still have a lot to learn both from other organisations and from the masses in struggle.

We are convinced that unless the far-left understand the fact that internal democracy and open discussions are not a luxury, but a necessity in today's conditions, it will not be able to go very far. If it can grasp this fact and operate accordingly then the task of building a unified organisation will be facilitated a hundred fold.

Can we accomplish these tasks on our own? We doubt it. That is why we appeal both to other socialist groups in sympathy with our two aims to join with us and try and take the far-left forward. The cynicism and suspicions which exist on the left are perfectly comprehensible, but if they persist for too long then they become impediments which can only lead to further demoralisation.

We face an extremely serious challenge today. There is a big growth of the right in national politics. At the same time there is a large minority within the working class prepared to fight back against Labour's policies. If we fail in our responsibilities to this growing minority then we will not be able to repeat in five years or less: 'Social-democracy and Stalinism have betrayed'. We ourselves will have become part of the problem.

# First battle for equal pay won at Laird Portch

The women at Laird Portch and Jaeger have won their demand for job grading. After six weeks on strike in their battle for equal pay, the workers in the East Kilbride and Kilmarnock factories voted on 3 June to accept management's offer, which was endorsed by the stewards.

It will mean that job evaluation is now carried out throughout the Coates Paton textile giant, which the company has been strenuously resisting. When the demand was first raised, at the end of 1975, skilled women at Laird Portch were paid £1.10 above minimum rates, while unskilled men were paid £10 above the minimum.

ELLEN NICKLIN, the National Union of Tailoring and Garment Workers convenor at Laird Portch and a member of the strike committee, told Scottish Socialist Ann Henderson about the strike and its outcome.



'We never saw the officials who were negotiating on our behalf until the offer came last week. We never heard from them by letter or telephone. We were never consulted until a national officer conveyed management's offer.'

'We've had support from as far south as London and as far north as Aberdeen and Inverness: from trade union branches, clothing plants, engineering works, miners, Women's Liberation groups, the Working Women's Charter, the Socialist Workers Party, and Scottish Socialists.'

'At the beginning people didn't want to be involved on the picket line, but as the strike went on, more and more people participated.'

We had regular strike committee meetings to discuss where to go for support, what we could do for people facing severe hardship, and to organise public meetings to explain our strike.

'I would say we were opposing the Social Contract. All the other legislation which was supposed to favour workers — like the Equal Pay Act — none of it worked. But the Social Contract damn well worked. Everybody had their wage increases restricted.'

'We were very disorganised before the strike, and now we'll need to be more organised in our plant and in our union. The workers feel quite strongly about it. They feel that they are trade union members who were left out on a limb. They paid their money to the union and nothing was done at all.'

'We'll certainly be wanting changes. We want to keep in touch with other workers in our union. We want to know what their wage structures are, what their piece-work earns. We want to keep in touch with them regularly, not just when there is a strike or industrial dispute.'

'We have got what we asked for — what we were promised in 1976 — but this is just the beginning. The struggle starts now.'

'The company still deny that the wage structure is discriminatory, but admit that there are "small anomalies". They have said they will do job-grading for all hourly-paid employees at a national level. The money at the end of the day will not be offset against any national award in September.'

'Only our own strength can guarantee success. At the end of the day that is all anyone has. We will attend all negotiations on our case. Everything will be referred back to the work-force, even the most trivial detail. We have called for a national meeting of Jaeger stewards. Our mass meeting showed that people want to maintain the bond that was forged in the strike and spread to other places.'

'Within the Coates Paton group, Jaeger in Kilmarnock came out on strike with us. Ladybird in Finnieston refused to do any work normally done in our plant; so did Collins in Springburgh. They normally work for us but they have boycotted it.'

'In the Kilmarnock factory the wage structure is much the same as ours. The only difference is that they probably don't have a man in their plant to compare with but that is neither here nor there as they can compare themselves with a man in a different plant belonging to the same employer. The company have stated that anything they concede in our plant they must apply throughout the group. And it will also have an effect on other companies.'

'An industrial tribunal wouldn't even consider our case unless a job evaluation had been carried out proving that we were at least as skilled as the unskilled men in our plant. Unfortunately, the Equal Pay Act is inadequate and one of the loopholes is that there is nothing to say that an employer must do a job evaluation exercise. Our strike was never made official by the NUTGW. The rule

'Only our strength can generate success'

book states that for a strike to be made official in the NUTGW a ballot must be taken in the plant. The result must then be sent to the executive board who may then sanction an official strike. This would have given the company time to get a lot of unfinished work out of the plant to meet their

orders.

'Our members were not prepared to wait while this happened. It would only have prolonged the strike when we did come out. Anyway, if it had been made official it would only have meant £2.50 a week strike pay, so it was not a great deal to forfeit.'

## Equality: the sordid record

THOSE WHO ARGUE that women should rely on legislation to achieve equality were given a rude shock last week with the publication of the first annual report of the Equal Opportunities Commission. The report revealed:

\* Women's earnings as a proportion of men's are only 64.3 per cent.

\* The leeway to be made up on equal pay in comparison with other leading European countries 'is, if anything greater

today than it was in 1964 or 1971'.

\* There remains a huge difference in the number of young men and women who get day or block releases from work, and the proportion of men and women who take up apprenticeships. 43 per cent of young men take up apprenticeships or training leading to a skilled occupation, but only 6.5 per cent of young women do.

\* Up to December 1976 tribunals rejected a total of 496 equal pay

complaints out of 709 submitted.

\* Women who wrote to the Commission spoke of how they had been threatened with the sack for raising the issue of equal pay.

\* The report comments that as well as the hostility of bosses, women pressing for equal pay suffered the opposition of the Government and unions, who regard equal pay as 'a marginal issue'.

# OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

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

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

all necessary means the power of the capitalist state.

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

3 The interests of workers and capitalists are irreconcilable on a world scale. Capitalism has not only created a world market, it has created world politics. Thus we fight for working class unity on an international scale. This unity will in the long run be decisive in defeating both the

imperialist regimes in the West and the brutal dictatorships they sustain in Latin America, Africa and Asia.

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

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

### WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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

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

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

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



## Grunwicks...



THE ATTEMPTS of George Ward, Grunwick boss, to break the strike continues. Our pictures show some of the 70 people still working at the factory, some of whom may still join the strike despite management pressure.

Ward has just opened a new film-processing factory in Mansfield. London may see the last of him if he does not succeed with his injunction against the Arbitration and Conciliation Advisory Service. He accuses ACAS of having acted illegally by interviewing Grunwick

strikers. He maintains that they have nothing to do with Grunwick since the time he sacked them.

His most enterprising strike-breaking has been the hiring of a private plane to replace the orders lost in the strike from the Continent. The plane has unloaded at Heathrow, Cambridge and Luton. Now Ward is looking for less conspicuous airfields.

Photos: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

## As Strike Goes Into 44th Week

THE GRUNWICK workers' strike committee, in conjunction with their white collar union APEX, have put out an urgent appeal for full backing for a week's mass pickets beginning Monday 13 June.

The arrest last week of Jayaben Desai, a leading Asian woman militant in the 43-week-old strike, is only the latest case of the harassment and intimidation which must be ended if the workers are to draw the dispute to a successful end. The mass pickets will be an important step in this direction.

With the holiday season beginning, and hence an upturn in Grunwick's film processing, the next few weeks are vital in bringing the bosses to heel. The strikers themselves have done all in their power to organise a total boycott and win support, speaking at meeting up and down the country and abroad.

### PROBLEM

The real problem lies with the APEX leadership. They have channelled the struggle through industrial tribunals and 'conciliatory' bodies like ACAS. And they have failed miserably to back up the picket line. Aiming to get themselves off the hook, APEX officials have tried to shift responsibility onto the postal workers. They argue that the strike

can be won only if the UPW breaks the law and boycotts the



Mrs. Desai

mail. If the UPW did back up the workers at the local sorting office it would have a big

effect, but so would a strong picket line outside the factories. APEX officials haven't been so ready to disregard the forces of law and order themselves on this point.

Take the case of the mass picket called when Grunwick's managing director attacked one of the strikers. The 200-strong picket was reduced to merely a symbolic protest when the vast majority were directed to the other side of the road. This great reverence for the law has only prolonged the strike. And it certainly hasn't stopped the arrest of pickets.

### SUPPORT

Support for the week of mass pickets is growing. The Work-

ing Women's Charter Conference pledged its commitment to ensure supporters of the campaign turn out in force on Monday. Brent Charter group has organised a creche for that day at the Trades and Labour Hall.

### UNEMPLOYED

But if Grunwick bosses get through the next few weeks — arm in arm with the police and the National Association for Freedom — a favourable resolution of the dispute is not in sight. This would not only be a loss for the Grunwick strikers, but further demoralise the whole work force in an area already hit by the rapid decline in local industry and high un-

employment.

### SUCCESS

A success at Grunwick will spur on three other struggles in NW London. And it will have its impact on the anti-racist front. Mass pickets will how the bosses and union leaders that other militants in the labour movement are just as determined as the Grunwick strikers in proving that the so-called forces of law and order will not deter the struggle.

Mass pickets beginning 13 June. Arrive at 7.15am each day. Pickets report to Brent Trades and Labour Hall, 375 High Road, Willesden, NW10. [Willesden Bus Garage or Dollis Hill tube.]

# News from nowhere

### More 'infiltration'

DAVID H. POPPER, retiring US ambassador to Chile, last week told *Newsweek* of the junta's improved 'human-rights practices' and 'internal security situation'. Asked what the US Government would do if free elections were held and the left came to power, he said it would respect the views of the majority.

But 30 per cent of the people is not a majority, he said. What is the significance of 30 per cent? 'We, as a rule of thumb, think of the leftist groups in Chile as 30 per cent of the people'.

A useful 'rule of thumb', considering that Allende got 43.39 per cent of the vote in 1973! And, it has just slipped our minds, how many votes did General Pinochet get?

Bear in mind that the present Labour Government won only 40.4 per cent of the vote in the last general election — 3 per cent less than Allende. Their proportion of

those eligible to vote is about ... 30 per cent! Are we next in line for Popper-style democracy?

### Jubilee secrets

THE ATTRACTION of fascism in the Thirties for sections of the British ruling class is an established fact. The recent attention focussed on the Mitford family explains the phenomenon as an eccentricity.

What is less well-known is that a British monarch, Edward VIII who later was forced to relinquish the throne, was a strong admirer of the Nazi regime.

A TV documentary shown earlier this year carefully omitted this fact lest the present-day occupier of the throne was embarrassed in her Jubilee year. In reality the main reason for abdication was not the issue of marrying a 'divorced commoner', but the fact that the commoner in question had been an intimate of the Nazi ambassador

in London, Ribbentrop. This, coupled with the known Nazi sympathies of Edward, made the marriage a dubious political proposition.

In the year preceding his abdication the monarch was not shown any state papers relating to British defence and intelligence operations. Even after his abdication he was sent off to the Bahamas during the war for fear that if he remained in Europe the Nazis might use him as a Quisling King after they invaded Britain.

The researchers who uncovered these facts were politely told to keep their mouths shut.

### CP expulsions

ON THE FACE of it the debate on the Communist Party's 'new' programme is proceeding amicably in the pages of *Comment*. However, there are traditional bureaucratic responses at work underneath.

In Glasgow a growing opposi-

tion to the party's rightward turn has compelled the apparatchiks to resort to the traditional method of resolving the problem — expulsions.

Full-time officials have expelled several Young Communist League branches in Scotland. The inspirer of the oppositionists is well-known Labour historian John Foster, who has organised the Scottish CP's annual 'Festival of Marxism'.

Foster refused a few years back to accept the Isaac Deutscher Memorial Prize for fear of being tainted with 'Trotskyism', thus embarrassing two members of the Prize Committee, Eric Hobsbawm and Monty Johnstone. He has now unceremoniously been booted off the party's education committee.

When John Gollan last visited Glasgow he was heckled by Glasgow CP members at a public meeting and received the support of only a handful of the audience. Given the fact that Scotland is a vital party stronghold, it

is hardly surprising that 'disciplinary measures' are being taken.

### Sins of Sydney

SYD BIDWELL, Tribune MP for Southall made a flying visit to the conference on British Withdrawal from Ireland organised by the British Peace Committee over the last weekend in May.

He began his speech by announcing that he was a bit 'shamefaced' about his activity on Ireland, although he revealed that he had many pleasant chats with Bernadette Devlin and Gerry Fitt.

He continued his name dropping when he mentioned Tariq Ali, and in an outburst which brought cries of 'shame' from the audience said that Mr. Ali should either join the Labour Party or go back to Pakistan.

When the protests died down Mr. Bidwell said, 'Well, you should see what he's doing in my constituency'. Presumably he

meant the near 1,000 votes the IMG got in the recent GLC council elections in Southall.

### Trot-hunter

'TROTSKYITES' make up the bulk of the Polish Workers Defence Committee, according to the Polish ambassador in London, Artur Starewicz.

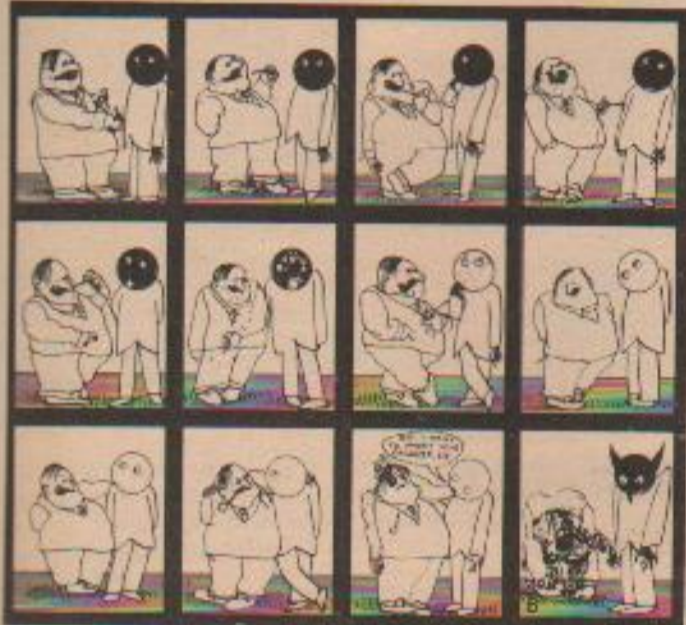
Starewicz repeated the charges against WDC members that they are working for hostile foreign organisations. What seemed to worry Mr. Starewicz was the fact that the WDC is composed of intellectuals rather than trade unionists.

True — but then who were the hundreds of thousands who went on strike in December 1970 and June 1976?



# Blacks get mid-night knock in South London

## Racist of the week wanted



EVERY WEEK this spot will highlight the activities of individual racists.

We intend in this way to show how widespread racism actually is in British society. In other words it is not merely confined to the fascist groups and their friends on the right wing of the Tory party.

There are racist solicitors, racist magistrates, racist judges, racist cops, racist trade union officials,

racist teachers, racist employers, etc.

We trust our readers will keep us regularly supplied with information on this front. Make sure you get your facts right, and try and include a photograph or a sketch of the racist in question.

If you are shy of writing, then give us a ring at 01-359 8189 and we'll take the information down.

**NIGHT-RAIDS** by police in Camberwell, south-east London, led to the arrest of 21 black youths last week. Among those roused from their beds were young people of 14 years of age and a young mother.

According to the police, they were picked up in connection with a spate of robberies in the area. A senior police officer said 'we have been watching a gang who we believe has been responsible for at least 90 per cent of the street crime in the past six months'.

Talk of 'mugging' surrounded the 21's court appearance on Friday. No-one was granted bail.

The courtroom broke out in uproar following the magistrate's decision to remand the 21 in custody on police recommendation. A street meeting was called on Saturday to protest the arrests and the treatment of the 21.

But the police made their position clear on how they would treat any defence campaign. Following the street meeting, organised by *Flame*, three people were arrested including John Deason, recently acquitted at the Old Bailey after his arrest on the Right to Work march.

Moves are underway to establish a defence committee.

The *Camberwell* carve-up takes place during the trial of 18

youths in Islington arrested for conspiracy to rob persons unknown on dates unknown.

At the time of their arrest last October, the '18' were subject to a press witch-hunt — 'eagles of mugging and violence' was the background to the trial. The 27 May issue of the *Islington Gazette* continued this tradition of 'British Justice'.

'Carnival Trail of Terror' read its front page. This hysterical treatment prompted journalists at the *Gazette* to contact the 'Islington 18' Defence Committee. A meeting was held between the committee and representatives of the Federated NUJ chapters of the North London Press Group (including the *Hornsey Journal*, *Camden Journal* and *Islington Gazette*) on 4 June.

The meeting arranged for representatives of the 18 to address the *Gazette* chapel at its next meeting. The Chapel has already passed a resolution condemning the headline, and supported a call for a picket of the *Gazette* at 4.00pm, 14 June.

# Youths fight police kill-joys

**TWENTY-FIVE POLICE** were militarily positioned outside the Rainbow Theatre in Finsbury Park, North London, last week. Squads of police were also placed nearby — at the tube station, near bus stops and down side roads. The 60-100 youths standing outside the Rainbow were not an unusual sight for the night of a performance. What was different was their colour.

For these were black youths — waiting for their friends or thinking of ways to get in to see the evening's performer, Bob Marley. And they were targets of the increasingly common police

harassment and intimidation at black social gatherings.

In response to such racist intrusion and kill-joy tactics of the police, black youths have taken up the challenge. In Handsworth, Birmingham, several people were injured following a sell-out appearance of Sugar Delroy Wilson, at the Rebecca Club. Nine hundred fans were turned away, but many remained at the club in the hope they might be allowed in. The police were called in and a battle began. At least 14 police officers were reported injured following the battle.

Tunde Makuru

# £50 fine

**REMEMBER** the pictures from the 23 April of a thug charging through the crowd followed by an anti-fascist demonstrator slumped on the ground with blood pouring from his face? Result: said thug fined £50 for possession of an offensive weapon, a knife, at Tottenham Magistrates Court.

The police are claiming that because the victim did not come forward to give evidence, they were unable to charge his assailant with a more serious offence — despite the fact that many bystanders gave statements on the day!

This is just one small instance of the partiality shown by the police and the courts around the events of 23 April. The game was given away by a Special Patrol Group officer in court last week.

He said that the police had lost control of the situation and were unable to keep fascists and anti-fascists apart. So what happened? They promptly turned on the

# Romford paper rages over anti-racist attack

The racist *Romford Observer* is extremely unhappy. The whole front page of last week's issue is devoted to defending the paper against the attack made in the Campaign Against Racism in the Media's pamphlet, 'In Black and White: Racist reporting and how to fight it'.

It was the *Romford Observer* which between March and June last year master-minded a local campaign to hound an extended Asian family from a council-owned 'mansion' house. It employed such subtle headlines as: 'Asians must get out', 'Asians given deadline', 'Asians warned', 'Asians go in secret'.

## NO DEFENCE

Needless to say, the paper has no defence against this rabid rubble rousing. But it does provide a powerful advert to alert militants that the pamphlet is a must.

David Edgar, author of 'Destiny', is one of the speakers at a CARM conference on Saturday 9 July, where journalists and anti-racist militants will discuss how the press should deal with racism.

It follows the excellent initiatives taken by journalists on the *Hornsey Journal*, *Islington Gazette*, *SE London Mercury*, and *Hockney Gazette* during last month's local elections.



Romford Observer [top] — no defence against its racist witch-hunt [above]

Journalists from these papers and others will be attending the working conference, to be held at Central London Poly, Marylebone Road, NW1, from 10am-6pm.

Details of conference and pamphlet (price 35p plus 10p postage) from: CARM, 13 Cleve Road, London NW6.

# Journalists step up battle for closed shop

**JOSEPHINE KIRK SMITH**, formerly a journalist on the *Lady* does not have a very high opinion of the NUJ. Editors, she believes, should have total freedom to hire and fire, and control over editorial content.

The union, she considers, has already fallen down on its 'professional duties in its attempts to control the reporting of racial matters'.

So Ms Smith, now employed on the *Darlington and Stockton Times*, has refused to join the NUJ, and last Friday over a hundred journalists in the North of England Newspapers group came out on official strike to defend their post-entry closed shop.

The struggle comes only a fortnight after journalists in Kettering successfully fought a bitter 24-week lock-out to maintain a 100 per cent union shop. And it took resolute support at the union's annual conference in April to marshal the forces that the NUJ leadership had failed to call on.

The journalists now out in Darlington, Teeside and Durham are determined not to be isolated in their battle. Already practically all the supply unions have refused to cross the picket lines.

But given the ability of editors to produce local and provincial

papers with a little help from their friends in the reactionary Institute of Journalists (which Ms Smith joined immediately the strike began), the solidarity of print-workers is vital. To date the print unions, which have long enjoyed the benefits of a closed shop, have shown little support for the NUJ's attempts to follow their example.

'We believe the closed shop is important because it is the only way we'll improve our bargaining position, especially with the threat to jobs posed by new technology,' Mike Duggan, NUJ father of the chapel for the North of England papers, told *Socialist Challenge*.

'When it comes to freedom of the press, we ask whose freedom it is. It's newspaper managements generally who suppress views and exercise censorship.'

The NUJ's Code of Conduct includes provision for the right of reply, as well as opposition to the editorial promotion of racism and sexism. 'If the closed shop means more effective implementation of the Code', Mike adds, 'I will be very pleased'.

Resolutions of support, donations, details of pickets from: NUJ Strike Ctee, 9 Victoria Road, Darlington. Phone 0325 50282.

GEOFFREY SHERIDAN

# Calling socialist students

'AN ULTRA-LEFT PLOT' was how Sue Silpman, President of the National Union of Students described it. 'A threat to democracy' was the reaction of Minister for Mis-Education Shirley Williams.

They were talking about the special 12-week subscription offer *Socialist Challenge* is making to cover the students' summer break.

Their panic is understandable. *Socialist Challenge* will continue to expose the anti-democratic manoeuvres of the executive majority of the NUS, as it does in this issue when it reports the smear campaign launched by the NUS against Soweto militant Mashinini. It will continue to politically nail the betrayals of the Labour Government, and it will give unrivalled coverage of student politics.

This is why *Socialist Challenge* is essential reading for all student militants. But we know that many students have difficulty receiving left-wing papers during the summer break. That is why we are making our special subscription offer to cover this period — 12 issues for £1.50.

Don't feel inhibited if you're not a student, this is good value for an introduction to *Socialist Challenge*. Just fill in the form below.

To: Distribution, *Socialist Challenge*, 328/329 Upper Street, London N1.

Please send me the next twelve issues of *Socialist Challenge*. I enclose £1.50p.

NAME.....

College.....

Address to which the paper should be sent.....

[Cheques & P.O.'s should be made payable to 'Socialist Challenge']



# As Port Talbot strike ends Stewards receive ovation

The strike of the 560 electricians at the British Steel Corporation's Port Talbot works ended last Friday. As the strike entered its eleventh week the men voted by 206 to 130 to accept the terms of the management and union officials.

This means there will be an immediate payment to those few workers involved in working at the new Sinter plant, there will be an 'in-depth' review of the ratio of technicians to electricians, and negotiations are to begin on the effects of new technology in the works.

The deal, which was little more than could have been achieved at the beginning of the dispute, was sold to the strikers by Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications and Plumbing Union national negotiator Eddie Linton.

Throughout the strike EETPU officials had done everything they could to smash it. Linton had refused to use the agreement he had negotiated at the Shepote

Lane plant, Sheffield which had established the principle the Port Talbot electricians were basing their demands on.

He had refused to make the strike official thus sabotaging attempts of the strikers to gain the support of Swansea dockers, where steel coil usually supplied by the Port Talbot works was being imported.

In a fawning and patronising speech to the strikers on Friday, Linton appealed to 'you lads' and ignoring his own role in the strike claimed 'you're my boys'.

But although the vote went against the advice of the shop stewards leading the strike it was they, not Linton, who received the five minute ovation at the end

of the meeting.

The convenor of the strike committee, Wyn Bevan, made his determination to carry on the struggle clear when he told *Socialist Challenge*: 'We will continue the fight inside the gates of the works as vigorously as we did outside'.

So while the outcome of the strike was not satisfactory for those involved, the support the shop stewards still enjoy, and the determination of the stewards themselves means that British Steel Corporation have not heard the last of the electricians at Port Talbot.

\* Last Friday the workers occupying the British Steel Corporation works at Greenwich voted to continue their action. At the mass meeting only one voted against the occupation continuing and two abstained. The workers occupied the works after six of them had been sacked for taking part in NUPE-called 11 May action in London against the cuts.

# Union Conferences COHSE

JUST BEFORE DELEGATES set off for the Confederation of Health Service Employee's annual conference next week, their branches will have received a terse instruction from general secretary Albert Spanswick.

His latest circular concedes the need for area and district committees — consisting of COHSE members only. 'Under no circumstances can they involve representatives from other organisations', Spanswick warns.

It will be a central fight at the conference, with motions calling for the maximum inter-union co-operation against the cuts, together with the formation of joint shop stewards committees.

For the first time, women's issues make their appearance on the agenda, with a call from

Tameside for the adoption of the demands of the Working Women's Charter and affiliation to the Charter Campaign, and a proposal from Sutton to reject Devon's abortion Bill.

COHSE's membership has just passed 200,000 — a threefold increase in ten years, with women members outnumbering men by three to one. Yet the leadership has barely paid even lip service to taking up women's interests.

It has been equally silent on the upsurge in racism — except for recommending to the Royal Commission on the NHS that the service's 'dependence on overseas doctors' should be reduced.

Racism is thinly disguised in a conference motion from Levensden branch in St. Albans calling for the cutting off of NHS services to the 'many people who arrive in

this country who do not contribute to the NHS'.

Pay policy and the cuts will be the central issues around which the increasing left-right split will take place. The most solid opposition to the Social Contract comes from the East Birmingham branch, which rejects any 'orderly return' to free collective bargaining, and calls for a 11% increase, with automatic protection against inflation and a 35-hour week.

On the basis of its motion, East Birmingham has called the first organised periphery meeting at a COHSE conference, to organise opposition within the union to the right-wing policies of the majority of executive members. The meeting is to be held on Monday 13 June, at 5.30pm, in the council chamber at Blackpool Townhall.

# NUPE

THE POLICY ON WAGES finally decided upon by the NUPE conference called upon the union executive to 'submit claims for and prepare to lead action in support of'

- \* a minimum wage of £50 (a 30 per cent increase for most NUPE members)
- \* threshold agreements
- \* a 35-hour week
- \* a minimum holiday of 4 weeks a year
- \* retirement at 60.

CHARLES SUDDARDS, a NUPE branch secretary for Stafford Hospitals, told *Socialist Challenge* how he sees the outcome of the conference

The majority of us no longer believe that the Government is attempting to control prices and

we see the Social Contract for what it was — a con-trick. Our branch policy is to press for a £60 minimum wage, for automatic increases to keep pace with the cost of living, and a 35-hour week.

Despite Alan Fisher's claim that the union conference showed its support for wage restraints, in fact it passed a resolution calling on the Executive Council to campaign for very similar policies to these.

But putting up a real fight to secure these demands must not be left to the full-timers' shadow boxing. Anyone who thinks Phase 3, however flexible, will give us these policies cannot be relied upon to lead a fight. We have to organise inside the union nationally to make sure that the leadership can't walk away with less than what's required.

We believe that NUPE's days of

action were more a publicity stunt than a forceful mobilisation. Our own Divisional Council gave no clear lead as to what was to happen.

The members realise that the situation is deteriorating, with our own district £78,000 down on last year. The answer for us is to demand massive injections of funds into the public sector, and to prepare for action locally.

To attain this we have begun to establish a shop stewards committee embracing all the unions in our district.

We should also be demanding that districts should open their books when redundancies are threatened. Again we must take up the mouthings of the leadership and force them to put action where their words are.



Ten thousand marchers flooded the centre of Newcastle on 3 June in protest against rising unemployment in the area. The mobilisation was so impressive that even the Lord Mayor of Newcastle felt constrained to give his support. The march was headed by a contingent from CA Parsons, the Heaton power plant where jobs are threatened by the failure to build the Drax B power station. Workers from other plants faced with sackings joined the march: from Clarke Chapman, Vickers, Plessey and Jackson the Tailor.

# Wanted for strike breaking

NAME: Alun Law  
EMPLOYMENT: Union official in Birmingham for the Transport and General Workers Union.

CRIMES: 1. Selling out the Randolph Hotel Strike, Oxford. Law was chief figure in the bureaucracy of the T&GWU responsible for the defeat at the Randolph Hotel on 17 May.

2. Sabotaging the three-month strike at the Night Out Club in Birmingham, during the same week as the Randolph sell-out.

Although Law claimed he was

'committed' to winning the dispute, he stopped the limited regional boycott of the club and called off the regular mass picket.

Law agreed that the cause of the dispute — the sacking of a waitress by THF for union activities — should go to arbitration.

3. Sabotaging the strike of drivers at Morton's (BRS) transport company in Small Heath, Birmingham. The drivers were out for a sickness benefit scheme and realistic insurance cover. The officials persuaded them to go to arbitration, the workers continued picketing until they were promised a bonus for clearing the backlog of work.



Law's reaction? 'The men were carried away by over-enthusiasm', he generously suggested. 'They are just ordinary working people who have been out on strike and want to go back to work.' Law made them withdraw their bonus demand, and on 24 May sent them back to work.

Known Associates: Trust Houses Forte management, and the National Association for Freedom, who intervened to break the Randolph strike.

What to do: Organise independently of such craven union officials, and fight to remove them from office. Organise against the policies they stand for.

# Ballot rigging blown

An astonishing attempt to rig a trade union ballot received a resounding militant defeat last Thursday.

The ballot was conducted amongst members of the National and Local Government Officers Association in the social services department of the London Borough of Camden.

The issue was over whether these workers were prepared to take action against cuts in the social services which had meant the loss of 18 jobs over the past year.

As early as 10 March the NALGO members affected had met and voted unanimously to ban visitors at lunchtime, ban calls and visitors for a half day each week, ban all inquiries from councillors and MPs and ban the preparation of court reports for first offenders.

But the local leadership and officials of Camden NALGO did everything in their power to sabotage the action.

\* They delayed discussing the members' vote for action, finally deciding that the members had to be balloted. This ballot eventually took place last week — nearly three months after the original vote had been taken.

\* They framed the questions in

such a way so as to make them as complicated as they could.

\* Most remarkable of all, the letter which went out accompanying the ballot paper included the final sentence: 'Please note that a non-return will count as a negative vote'.

So if members couldn't be bothered to vote, wanted to abstain, lost their ballot paper, or were on holiday, they were to be automatically counted as a vote against the action.

But the attempt to rig the result produced an angry backlash. Of the 220 members entitled to vote, 185 ballot papers were returned, and of those 168, 153 and 138 voted respectively to support the three actions. In the end, when announcing the vote the local leadership did not even bother to count non-returns as no vote, so humiliated were they.

That leadership refused to explain to *Socialist Challenge* their policy of a non-return counting as a negative vote. NALGO district officer Gareth Jones was conveniently on holiday when the vote was taken but his superior, the District Organi-



sation Officer, Andrew Jack, was available. Asked why this unique procedure had been adopted he said: 'I won't explain it, it's a matter for NALGO internally. I have no comment to make whatsoever'.

But the social service workers in NALGO, organised by an unofficial shop stewards committee, made their comments loud and clear — a massive vote for action.

By TOM MARLOWE



# SNP Conference Trying To Turn Scotland Into Switzerland

NEIL WILLIAMSON reports.

From a fringe group of poets and small business people ten years ago, the Scottish National Party has become West Europe's fastest growing political party. The object of the conference in Dundee last month was to consolidate this growth, and to shed the hangovers from earlier 'extremist' nationalism.

This was seen at its clearest in the debate around the party's proposed Scottish constitution. It envisaged no real change in an independent Scotland's political life — a constitutional monarchy under parliamentary sovereignty. The leadership moved into the debate in an obviously co-ordinated way to defend the House of Windsor. Even the aged founder member of the party, Arthur Donaldson, was trundled out to explain to delegates how the SNP had 'always'

supported the principle of monarchy.

The nearest the party got to radicalism was the support it gave to the proposal to have referenda built into the new constitution. It was spoiled when the mover explained that his aim was to model Scotland on the politics of Switzerland.

## MANAGED

The rest of the conference was very much a stage managed affair, which did not exclude differences. Given the real prospect of parliamentary and political gains for the SNP, petty jealousies and rivalries abound.

Inside a bourgeois party like the SNP, the terms 'left' or 'right' amount to little. Donald Stewart, their parliamentary leader and a parochial reactionary of the first order, is vehemently opposed to the Social Contract. The so-called 'left winger' Margo McDonald argued at length against any joint work with the STUC.

Arguing for a constitutional reformism of the most timid nature, and with a firm commitment to the capitalist 'mixed' economy, the SNP is now confidently asserting its political credentials to rule Scotland on

behalf of private capital.

Part and parcel of this is the party's aim of winning support inside the labour movement. It has just appointed its first full-time trade union organiser, Steve Butler, an ex-ASTMS steward from Rolls Royce.

Like so many others in the party, Butler takes his model from Scandinavia and has no difficulty in seeing the interests of management and labour as reconcilable, although there is a 'grey area where conflict is often inevitable'. He claims, probably correctly, to have 'paper members' in every single plant in Scotland. Butler's job is to get them organised.

## MIDDLE CLASS

But it would be wrong to exaggerate these trends. The active membership at constituency and regional level is still overwhelmingly middle class, and hostile to any consistent involvement in the labour movement.

So much so that the party is actually opposed (privately, of course) to fighting against the political levy to the Labour Party, because of the immediate confrontation that this would bring with the trade union bureaucracy, and the necessity it

would provoke of lining up in an organised way outside purely electoral politics.

As the SNP conference proved time and time again, this is no party of flag waving lumpens. Its electoralism, its constitutionalism, and its hostility to self organisation of any kind, may yet prove its biggest weapon in turning working people against the labour movement.

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LABOUR'S SCOTLAND  
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# Torturer to be Army boss in Ireland

by GEOFF BELL

THE BRITISH ARMY is to have a new General Officer Commanding in the North of Ireland. And the nature of the appointment offers positive evidence that the army's torture, murder, and 'dirty tricks' are to be stepped up.

The chosen boss is a major-general, Tim Creasey, whose military record includes service in Aden and Kenya. Most significantly, Creasey, as a serving British officer, was commander of the Sultan of Oman's armed forces from 1972-75.

The record of repression in Oman in those years is frightening, even by the standards of the British Army. The British forces, which included a strong contingent of SAS members, were operating as 'advisors' to the tyrannical Sultan, backed by Britain against the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman. Oman's oil accounts for Britain's involvement.

The way Creasey directed his band of official mercenaries was publicised at the time by the PFLO. In 1975 a memorandum to Amnesty International, the PFLO listed the activities practised by British and Jordanian officers. The tortures overseen by Creasey included:

- \* Plucking the hair, nails and teeth of the prisoners
- \* Burning them with cigarettes and gas torches
- \* Electric shock treatment
- \* Putting prisoners in sacks and dipping them alternately in hot and cold water
- \* Forcing prisoners to stand on one leg for several hours
- \* Keeping prisoners chained with shackles
- \* Preventing prisoners from sleeping by using loudspeakers.

Political parties and trade unions were banned. Hundreds of political prisoners were detained without trial, others 'disappeared', never to be seen again. When trials did take place they were held in secret.

As well as the PFLO, the Oman Red Crescent — the Middle East version of the Red Cross — testified to this repression, responsibility for which rested with the British Government and its

military representatives headed by Creasey.

The International Committee of the British Labour Party, in a report on Oman in January 1976, acknowledged this responsibility when it reported: 'It is generally accepted that British influence remains dominant in the government of Oman.'



Replying to these charges the then British Foreign Secretary, James Callaghan, wrote in *Labour Weekly*:

*'Stability in the Arabian Peninsula is vital to our commercial interests generally and our oil supplies in particular... We should do everything we can to ensure that a Communist dominated regime does not take over a country whose territory commands the narrow channel through which two-thirds of our oil comes from the Gulf.'*

The 'everything we can' Callaghan mentioned included not only the tortures listed by the PFLO and Red Crescent, but permanent martial law, the bombing of crops and animals in liberated territory, and the placing of prices on the heads of members of the PFLO.

Two of the major British representatives responsible for these policies were from 1972-75, Creasey, and from 1974-76, Roy Mason, then Minister of Defence.

Now Mason is Secretary for the British Occupation of Ireland, and his teaming up again with the torturer of Oman Creasey shows just how successful the Loyalists' demands for stricter 'security' have been.

**IT'S HER OIL**

So why are many Scots old folk cold and undernourished? Why do 5,000 die of hypothermia every year?

THE SNP is no party of flag waving lumpens, but threatens to turn working people against the labour movement.

# Turf Lodge women say "We will form human barricades"

from Ron Daley in Belfast

British 'justice' in the north of Ireland struck again on 27 May. In a Belfast court a judge jailed four members of the Loyalist paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Forces for their part in two armed robberies in 1975.

But seven more were only given suspended sentences. This is in spite of the fact that all admitted various firearm offences and membership of the UVF.

In freeing the men the judge explained that he 'accepted that they all joined the organisation out of a sense of loyalty, not out of a sense of working to their own advantage'.

He added touchingly, 'I hope the court is not asking too much by letting you at large'.

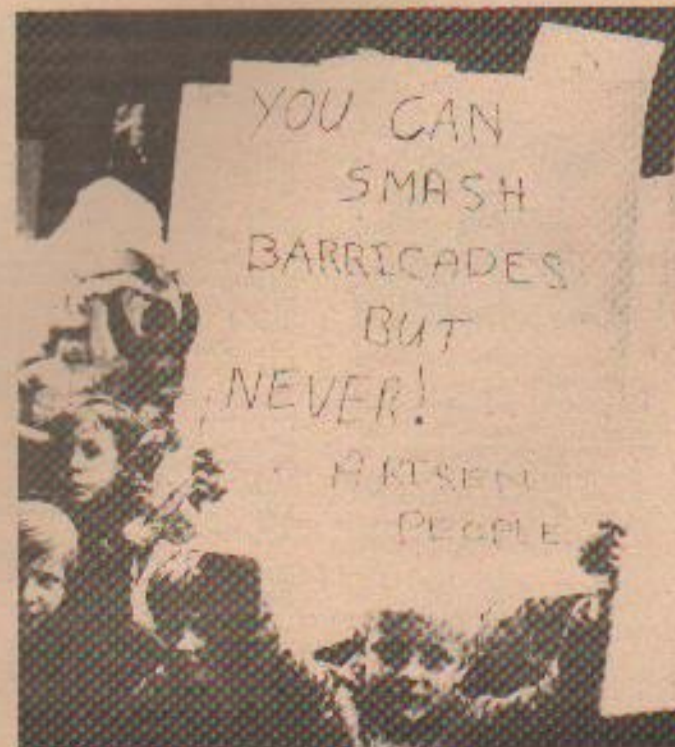
The same attitude of forgiveness and repentance was not shown the previous day when another judge jailed Brian McGuigan from Drapersdown for two years for belonging to the IRA and 'collecting information useful to terrorists'.

In fact the people of Drapersdown know quite well that McGuigan has never been a member of the IRA and that he was tortured at the notorious Short Strand RUC station last year when he was 'persuaded' to sign

a confession.

Such examples of British justice help to explain the renewed determination of women in the Belfast Catholic ghetto of Turf Lodge to resist the British Army. They declared last week that they 'will not tolerate this physical and mental torture inflicted on us by these uniformed thugs and from today we will form human barricades to block the entrance to the estate in an effort to protect the lives of our children, and we repeat again — you killed Leo Nacey, you killed Brian Stewart, you are destroying our homes, you are destroying our children.'

'The British Army and the thugs in it have killed and wounded their last person in Turf Lodge. We the women will ensure you stay out of the area.'



# Revolutionaries stand in South Irish Elections

The electorate of the 26 Counties of Ireland go to the polls on 18 June for the first general election since 1973.

The present government — a coalition of the former fascist Fine Gael Party and the Irish Labour Party — face Fianna Fail led by former prime minister Jack Lynch.

According to the opinion polls unemployment will be the major issue in the election, although the inability of either the coalition or Fianna Fail to cut the dole queue is reflected in the fact that in one poll 20 per cent of those questioned said there would be no difference in unemployment no matter who was elected.

One candidate who has first hand experience of unemployment is Joe Harrington, a member of the Movement for a Socialist Republic (Irish Section of the Fourth International) who is standing in Limerick East as a candidate of *Bottom Dog*, a local trade unionists' newspaper.

Joe, who has been sacked from a number of jobs in Limerick and Shannon for trade union activity, is making women's rights, the right to work, repression in the 26 Counties and British occupation of the Six Counties the central features of his campaign, which he fought under the slogan 'For A Socialist Republic'.

There are a number of other independent socialist candidates standing in the election. The Irish

Republican Socialist Party is fielding a number of candidates and two independent Labour candidates are standing in Dublin.

One is a leading figure in the Irish trade union movement, Matt Merrigan, who recently called for Britain to 'name a date' for withdrawal from the North of Ireland; the other is Noel Browne, a former cabinet minister and a long time opponent of the power of the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Both Merrigan and Browne were refused nominations by the Irish Labour Party, whose record while junior partner of the present government on such issues as wages, civil liberties and the North of Ireland makes even the British Labour Party appear progressive.

\* Joe Harrington and the MSR are desperately in need of funds to promote their election intervention. All readers of *Socialist Challenge* are asked to rush donations to their campaign at: *Bottom Dog*, 109 O'Malley Park, Southill, Limerick, Ireland.



# An Appeal for Socialist Candidates

The INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP and BIG FLAME are launching an appeal for Socialist Unity candidates at the next general election. This is a new initiative which needs some explanation. Our starting point is the performance of the Labour Government under which living standards and the quality of life have drastically declined.

Inflation is averaging 20 per cent and real buying power has fallen by £10 a week in two years. £8 billion pounds has been chopped from public expenditure. This means less houses and higher rents, less hospitals and longer waiting lists, less schools and fewer teachers and less nurseries and facilities to care for the elderly.

The centrepiece of Government policy, the Social Contract, has been shown to be a con-trick. The promised decreases in unemployment, price controls and investment increases have predictably failed to materialise. While working people have faced wage cuts, tax relief and profits soar for big business.

At the same time many civil liberties and hard-won gains are under attack. Black people face racist attacks, spurred on by the Government's repressive immigration laws. The few concessions won by women are under threat, especially the right to abortion. And in Ireland, Britain's bloody and costly war continues, while Irish activists in Britain are con-

stantly harassed.

The result of these policies is clear. The complicity of the union leaders has limited the fightback, and working class apathy and disillusionment is growing rapidly. The danger is that such disillusionment is linked not just to Labour but to socialism in general. The humiliating defeats for Labour in the recent by-elections show the fruit of their policies and give the lie to the notion that only by supporting Callaghan's policies could we keep the Tories out.

## DANGER

The other danger has been the rise in the votes for the fascist organisations like the National Front. No matter how false the solutions offered by the fascists, they will appear as an alternative to the bankrupt policies of the major parties and are gaining working class votes. Their hope is to become a respectable part of the system by standing enough candidates to get television time and compete with the Liberals as the third major political party.

Therefore we think it vital that a radical socialist alternative be put forward at the next general election. Parliament will not solve the problems facing the working class. But election campaigns can give us the opportunity to do two things. The first is to present alternative socialist policies, a programme of action that deals with a wide range of issues facing us today.

However, we are not solely concerned with propaganda. The election campaigns must be used to advocate and develop practically the fightback against Labour's policies. In this sense we must convince people that we are more than an election campaign. We have to be there before and after, building the struggle.

Support could be given to local campaigns against the cuts and racism, for better housing, for the struggle of women and so on. A radical socialist slate would therefore be building a coalition of militants and organisations based on their activity in class struggle.

What is needed is the bringing



Door to door canvassing in Stechford, when Big Flame worked for IMG candidate Brian Heron.

together of all those political community, labour movement, women's and black organisations as well as individual militants on national and local lines who would be committed to such a fight. We aim to build towards a conference in October, open to all organisations and individuals who would broadly support such a campaign.

## PROGRAMME

Before and at that conference a democratic discussion must start to thrash out a national election slate. Such candidates wherever possible, should be representative of the class struggle in their area and be elected by and responsible to the widest possible forces in the working class movement. Hopefully, such unity in action could be continued after the elections in ongoing campaigns.

An agreed programme would have to be worked out. We shall

be presenting our ideas, but we want the process to be as open as possible, with local coalitions contributing ideas and eventually having the option of flexibly

relating the final programme to local situations. But such a programme would have to take its starting point from the view that the working class can take no responsibility for the crisis of capitalism.

Instead it would fight for the power, independent organisation and control over its conditions of life in the working class. It would oppose the Social Contract, cuts and unemployment. It would fight for the rights of women and black people, and against British intervention in Ireland and Southern Africa. Finally, it would link these national issues with the key local ones.

The conference would also have to discuss raising money to finance such an intervention; how the campaign should be organised; and the attitude of such an alliance to other candidates, particularly Labour.

We urge all organisations and individuals on the left to sponsor this conference. In the shorter term, we are calling for a national planning meeting that can set up a much broader based organising committee to build towards the conference and local meetings and coalitions. It could also decide to issue a new and broader appeal.

Sponsorship does not imply support for any particular programme or financial commitment. Merely support for the conception of Socialist Unity candidates and the necessity for organised discussion of the political basis for such a campaign, including the October Conference.

NAME .....  
ORGANISATION .....  
ADDRESS .....

Please indicate if you intend to attend the National Planning Meeting which will be on 2 July at the "Golden Eagle", Hill St (near New Street Station), Birmingham, starting at noon.

All correspondence and inquiries should be addressed to: Conference Planning Committee, 3rd Floor, 14 Piccadilly, Manchester 1.

INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP  
BIG FLAME

# Speakout JUBILEE BLUES

'It is marvellously good for business; the hotels are packed, the purveyors of such tawdry items as 70p Union Jacks, Jubilee tankards and red, white and blue bios are all making a killing...'

ROGER PROTZ looks at the Jubilee.

THE FOLLOWING front-page story appeared recently in the *Daily Mail*, owned by Lord Gathorne: SCROUNGERS MAFIA MILK THE NATION

'A highly organised group of social security scroungers, who move around the country one step ahead of the authorities, are milking the nation of hundreds of thousands of pounds a week.

'One group, dubbed the "Scroungers Mafia" by social security officials, are a shadowy organisation without known surnames, but their leaders are known as Liz and Phil.

'As a result of their massive welfare handouts, the group live in luxury in several secret homes dotted around the country. *Mail* reporters have spotted them in London, Berkshire, Norfolk and Scotland.

'When they feel that the authorities are close on their trail, they slip abroad in a large yacht that is also funded by public money.

'Last night the Tory spokesman on the social services, Sir Geoffrey Yahoo, said: "These disgraceful facts show yet again that while industrious middle class people are being milked by the taxman, idle ne'er-do-wells are lining their pockets at the expense of the thrifty...'

That is fantasy of course. But when a society is in crisis, reality and fantasy sometimes get curiously mixed.

The press has been screeching about 'scroungers' for years. At the same time the self-same newspapers, whose editors do not have the decency to blush at their appalling hypocrisy, have worked themselves into a lather cajoling us into celebrating the royal jubilee.

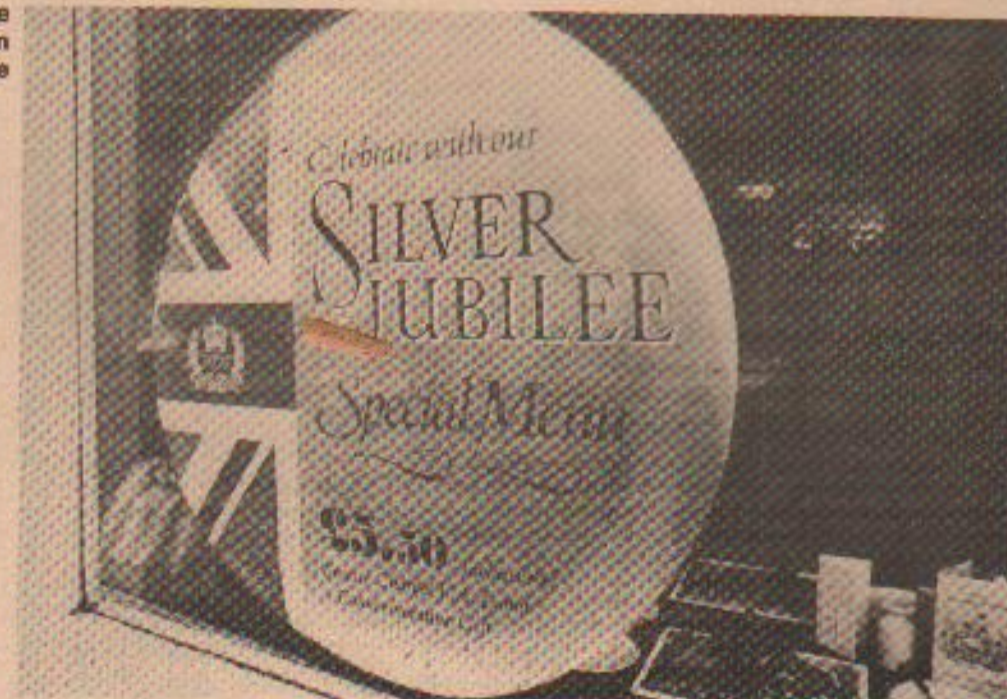
## SCROUNGING

The nation is in a mess, they tell us. We must all tighten our belts and put our noses to the cliché to bring our battered old nation back onto the right economic course.

And yet untold millions of public money are being squandered on a mammoth, synthetic celebration for a tiny group who represent all that is so desperately wrong with our present system and its twisted priorities.

If our press was truly independent and fearless in its quest for the truth it would tell us that, when it comes to scrounging and social contract busing, the royal drones leave the rest of us standing.

The Queen could teach some of the feeble brethren of the TUC a thing or two when it comes to



pay bargaining. She has a private fortune of her own — she is reputed to be one of the richest people in the world — yet she screws a tidy sum from the Government and is never satisfied.

Last year the Government, after much private lobbying by the Queen, increased her allowance by £265,000 — that is an increase of £5,300 a week. Her total allowance is now £1,665,000 a year. The Govern-

ment said the increase was necessary to 'take account of inflation' — the same Government that continually prates about wage increases being inflationary.

Other members of the royal family did well out of the deal, too. Prince Philip's allowance went up £20,000 to £85,000 a year, the Queen Mother's from £95,000 to £140,000 and Princess Anne got an extra £10,000 a year. Princess Margaret got £15,000

more, no doubt to compensate for the fact that she is a one-parent family.

This is fine according to the sycophants of the press. The royal family are part of the nation's stirring history, they attract overseas visitors, they work terribly hard planting trees,

launching ships, packing suitcases to move from Buckingham Palace to Windsor or Balmoral or Sandringham or the royal yacht. By jingo, they deserve all that money from the taxpayers.

In sharp distinction are coal miners, car workers, and the millions of working people who produce real, tangible value by their labour. Their pay should be savagely pegged by the Government because, unlike the royal family, they are of little social value, they have contributed nothing to the nation's history.

And should they have the misfortune to lose their job, then their families deserve to be branded as scroungers when they seek to recoup some tiny fraction of their contribution to society through welfare benefits.

## SMOKESCREEN

The jubilee celebrations, desperately conjured into life by the Government and the media through a largely apathetic population, are a gigantic smoke-screen, a diversion from our real problems and a crude and nauseating attempt to get us to unite around some clapped-out, socially irrelevant totem pole.

It is marvellously good for business: the hotels are packed, the purveyors of such tawdry items as 70p Union Jacks, jubilee tankards and red, white and blue bios are all making a killing.

But for the million and a half jobless, the million and more without a home, the millions living in deepening poverty, it is all a calculated insult.

And on this mawkish and sickening occasion I send the following disloyal greeting to the royal family: Please seek the urgent attention of a taxidermist.

# Speakout

Photo: MICHAEL SHERIDAN (IFL)



# THE CRISIS IN THE COMMUNIST PARTY

## The story behind the banned pamphlet

**THE COMMUNIST PARTY leadership will carry the vote on the new Draft of the British Road at the Party Congress in November. But it is not so clear that they will be able to carry the membership as a whole behind it after the congress.**

The pre-Congress discussion is bursting through the formal channels of what is called 'inner Party Democracy' within the Communist Party. There is even talk of the danger of a split. The spectre of the split in the Swedish Communist Party is being roused.

Charlie Doyle, an old and respected worker militant in the Party, has written an alternative to the British Road New Draft. He submitted it to *Marxism Today* and *Comment* who rejected it on grounds of length (though it is not even a quarter of the length of the leadership's draft). So Doyle published the piece as a pamphlet.

Then the Executive Committee banned its distribution, saying that the E.C. meeting in July will discuss whether further action should be taken. Meanwhile, there are reports of some Party members being suspended for selling the pamphlet: Gordon McLennan confirmed two such suspensions in Yorkshire to *Socialist Challenge*. Yet the pamphlet is still being passed around 'clandestinely' and its supporters have started sending it anonymously through the post to likely sympathisers (a tactic used by the Trotskyists in the bureaucratised Soviet Party during the 1920s).

### PARTY RULES

An even more menacing event is the planned mass meeting of opponents of the draft at Merton Civic Hall on 9 June. This meeting drives a tank through the Party rules, but many members are expected to attend.

*Socialist Challenge* is printing the summary contained in Charlie Doyle's pamphlet, not at all because we agree with his general views. But because we think that a vital practical principle of Leninism is involved in the banning of his pamphlet, a principle of concern to all socialists, inside and outside the Communist Party. As one writer in *Comment* said: "Socialist Democracy of course means all things to all Communists." (John Holford, *Comment*, 25 December 1976). Hence the necessity of spelling out what we mean by 'democracy'.

Leaving aside minor, subsidiary currents, there are two main factional groupings inside the Communist Party today. The differences between these two groupings are pretty deep.

### SURREY DISTRICT

One, sometimes called the Frenchites after Sid French of the Surrey District Committee, calls the new draft a "left social democratic programme" (*Comment*, 30 April) while at the same time backing the bureaucratic regimes in

Eastern Europe.

The other grouping, around the leadership, combines what is indeed a left social democratic programme, with correct, though very partial, criticisms of bureaucratic crimes against the working people of Eastern Europe.

### UNEASY FEELING

The Party members are thus effectively given a choice between a left social democratic strategy for Britain and a grouping that backs bureaucratic dictatorships in the East.

Some members feel uneasy about backing either wing, though they agree



GORDON McLENNAN

with aspects of what both say. Some might take the view of *Socialist Challenge* and back a revolutionary Marxist strategy in Britain while at the same time wanting militant solidarity with those in Eastern Europe fighting against the bureaucracy for socialist democracy.

The leadership of the Party has come down in favour of the right of a plurality of tendencies and parties after the revolution as a principle of workers' democracy. They are also for maintaining the army and bourgeois state machine throughout the revolution. This machinery is designed to crush the real political participation of the mass of workers, a principle directly opposed to workers' democracy, but that is the subject of another discussion. Why are we in favour of the right for a multiplicity of currents

functioning after the revolution? To be nice to everybody? To show how 'unstalinist' we are? Because we have become worshippers of democracy first, and socialists only second? Not at all: workers democracy is vital for purely practical reasons. There is no other way of deciding between the difference choices of popular opinion and the decision of the majority. Any other view involves an abandonment of materialism as well as a petty bourgeois contempt for the judgement of the mass of working people.

Formally the rules cannot be changed at this stage in a pre-Congress discussion. But if the CP leadership was genuinely concerned to get a thorough discussion before the Congress and avoid a confused split it would waive formalities at the July Executive Committee meeting and immediately grant the right of tendencies and factions and the other measures suggested there. If the membership didn't support this action it could always censure the outgoing E.C. at the Congress. But this is hardly likely since all members of the CP would surely be in favour of maintaining the unity of the Party.

### SIMPLE ANSWER

Any Party member who reads this article will probably be saying to himself or herself: what the hell has the situation inside the Party got to do with people outside the Party? Above all, why are the Trotskyists sticking their nose into the CP? The answer is quite simple.

Of course, we have particular political reasons for concerning ourselves with the debate in the Communist Party; we want to convince the many dedicated socialists and working class leaders in the Party to take up the fight for a revolutionary line against reformism and to take up a fight against bureaucratic crimes in the workers' states.

### STALINIST METHODS

Many thousands of workers and socialists in Britain today are watching the British Communist Party and wondering whether the Party has decisively broken from Stalinist methods. These people have noted what the leadership has said about not trying to establish its monolithic monopoly of power if the Party gains the leadership of the working class. They have noted what the Party leadership has said about allowing other political tendencies to operate, organise and function openly, and they welcome this recognition of the right of tendency in the political arena.

But if the leadership is genuine on that then why does it not allow such rights of tendency to its own membership, as some Trotskyist groups like the IMG do? Can we really expect the CP leadership to operate in a prin-

cipled way with people outside the Party on the issue of workers' democracy, yet simultaneously bureaucratically dominate its own membership and deny it the indispensable right of tendency? Who can believe that?

For our part we see it as part of our task to struggle for workers' democracy throughout the labour movement. This for us is a basic practical principle and it requires that we defend the rights of socialists whose ideas we don't necessarily agree with at all. That is why we consider it a necessary service to CP members themselves to publish Charlie Doyle's platform in *Socialist Challenge*. If it is read by many CP members then we will have helped to weaken the bureaucratic restrictions of the CP rule book. And that is something worth fighting for.

The rules allow any individual member to put 800 words into *Comment* and 900 words into the *Morning Star*. Individual branches can also pass resolutions for Congress or amendments 'The British Road'. And the Party has a public discussion in the labour movement with other trends including the IMG and the SWP speaking on it from the same platform as the Party leadership.

### GOON SQUADS

Is this not 'very democratic', 'generous and very 'unstalinist'? Is not a striking contrast to the bad 'undemocratic' days when Trotskyists used to be beaten up or worse by Stalinist goon squads? And would

## The British Road Socialism Draft Revolutionary or diversion?

MY TOTAL OPPOSITION to the concept of 'The British Road' can be summarised up as follows:

### First

Britain is neither immune from the laws of social revolution nor the possibility of some unforeseen, unpredictable violent social upheaval, although they may be based on peculiar British circumstances and characteristics.

### Second

The most dangerous and futile thing a revolutionary can do is base political programme on prognostications of unknown future developments which is not only foolish but impossible. We are revolutionaries, Marxists-Leninists, not fortune-tellers.

### Third

'The British Road' settles for the easiest of all possible options, thereby disarming the working class of its most important ideological weapons. It substitutes the social democratic, revisionist evolutionary path for the revolutionary path.

### Fourth

It fails to understand the nature of the state in either bourgeois or in socialist society, confuses bourgeois democracy and socialist democracy and fails to see where one ends and the other begins.

### Fifth

It negates the Communist Party's vanguard role and merges it in some broad democratic alliance whose composition is not yet visible in the realities of British political life.

### Sixth

It makes a mechanical separation between the international and national, and relies on a superiority to the relationship of forces on the world arena, giving the document a decidedly chauvinistic character.

### Seventh

Because of this mechanical separation, we surrender by default our main strength and w-



# COMMUNIST



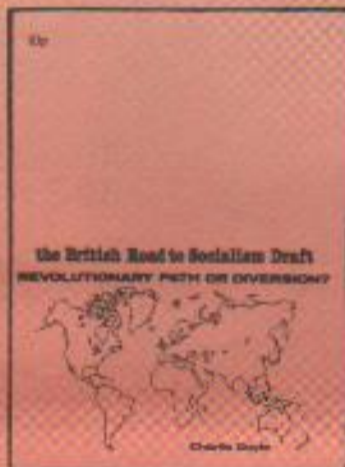
be 'unfair' to give Charlie Doyle 3,000 words when every other member, apart, of course, from the Executive Committee, gets only 800. And the IMG doesn't have a running debate week after week in public in its paper — in the past it has only allowed each tendency to say its piece once or twice in the pages of its paper. Though it gives every tendency equal space!

Nothing shows the conflict between the organic development of the differences in the Party and the bureaucratic character of the internal structures more clearly than the black farce over Charlie Doyle's pamphlet. Factions are banned, so secret factions are formed. The Frenchites are banned from organising support round the country, so they do it anyway in clandestinity. Opposition platforms are

prohibited so Charlie Doyle produces a *samizdat* platform. At this point administrative measures are started against political dissidents inside the Party.

What will we hear next? That the Frenchites are being funded by hostile circles abroad, not a hundred *versts* from Moscow? Some individuals in the Party are already raising this sinister foreign bogey in private, off the record, remarks to *Socialist Challenge*. It's probably true. But so what? Is it not possible to prove to the entire membership of the CP in open debate the leadership's point of view. Can a little Moscow gold tip the balance? And anyway, why not expose Moscow's *general* gangsterism openly to the membership? Is that not possible for the CP leadership in 1977?

## ...d to ...t: ...path



should distinguish us from all other parties, as a party of social revolution. That is, that we are a contingent together with the socialist countries, the liberation movements, the international working class and peace forces, in the forefront of the anti-imperialist struggle.

## Eighth

'The British Road' confuses objective developments with subjective desires. Wishful thinking in place of Marxist dialectical analysis.

## Ninth

It overstates the democratic traditions and understates the brutal history and cunning of the British imperialists, which is also part of our heritage.

## Tenth

The adoption of 'The British Road', no matter what its content, has a deadening effect on Party democracy. Basic policy is discussed only every nine or ten years.

All other Communist Parties, including the Italian, French, Canadian, Spanish, The United Irish, USA, etc., in fact every other party, adopt a political resolution at their party congress which deals with the relationship of forces in the world and at home; the immediate and long-range problems facing the party and working class; a vision of the future society and what must be done in order to achieve it. These resolutions are valid only from one congress to the next, so that basic policy is under regular review at each party congress.

It is time to explode the myths that surround this sacred of sacred cows — 'The British Road' — which has become a substitute for an ongoing Marxist analysis of the party's tasks in a changing world.

It is my hope that at our 35th Congress in November comrades will end this charade of pretence and self-deception. Adopt a realistic political programme in line with both our aims stated in every member's card and the realities of the historic moment. I am convinced our Party will be a healthier, stronger, more united Party for it.

Copies of the whole text of the pamphlet from Cassidy Publications, 111 Asletti Street, London SW18.

## Some questions to CP members

OLIVER MACDONALD

1. The leadership has put forward a new draft programme. Can trends that oppose it put forward a complete alternative of similar length for circulation through the Party and for voting at Congress?

2. Does the rule book allow a clear polarisation between the leadership and the pro-Moscow grouping in the debate? Or does it allow a united leadership on one side and a pulverised, atomised collection of individual 800-words on the other?

3. The leadership has been organising public meetings on a draft *not yet agreed* by the membership and invites Tribunites, SWP and IMG speakers onto the Platform to debate this draft, and attack it. Can the currents among the Party's own members opposing the draft also speak on the platforms against the speakers from the leadership? And if not, then isn't this *apparent* 'democracy' on the part of the Executive Committee in reality a means of *inhibiting* open and serious debate amongst the Party members?

4. If the debate is to *clarify* to the maximum the differences between the main trends of opinion within the Party then can the opposition groups and trends call supporters of their views in different parts of the country to meetings to clarify the views of the trend and put them down in the most effective way in a common resolution or discussion document?

Would this not minimise distortions of opponents' positions and eliminate some red herrings? Would it not also mean that instead of having to plough through hundreds of different documents and thousands of different resolutions, the membership could have a few basic political documents from the main currents to read and digest? And is this not a thousand times more democratic than thousands of bits of opinion that no hard-pressed working person could possibly have the time to completely master as a

delegate to the Congress?

5. Can the leaders of different trends travel to membership meetings throughout the country as of right and paid for by the Party centre, to put their point of view to the membership, or is it only the leadership that can exercise these rights? And can the supporters of these different trends choose who their best speakers are, so their point of view can be put over in the best possible way at such meetings? Or is this right confined only to the leadership?

within the Executive Committee put their views to the membership and try to gain support for these views before a Congress? Is the membership banned from forming tendencies and factions while the leadership is bound to act as a unified faction against minority trends in the membership?

Some comrades in the Communist Party may not know the answers to all these questions. The leadership certainly knows the answers. And so does anybody who knows the rule book of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: the rules of the CPSU and the CPGB are not in essence any different. (That is why the 'Frenchites', though denied elementary minority rights, don't challenge the rules.) Most members of the Communist Party think that these rules embody democratic centralism, Leninist norms for 'inner Party life'.

## comment

THE STUDENT MOVEMENT TODAY  
Ray Hughes MP on devolution



## BOLSHEVIK PARTY

If they look at any of the debates inside the Bolshevik Party during the revolution — for example the Trade Union debate between Lenin and the dangerously-mistaken Trotsky in 1920-21 — they will see that a really revolutionary Party like the Bolsheviks understood what democratic centralism really means and it has nothing in common with the bureaucratic centralist model that the British Communist Party rule book still embodies.

The present norms for Party debate (with all the liberal frills of public discussion including a forthcoming Granada TV show of the debate so that millions can join in!) add up to a situation where the membership is unable to really clarify the differences, get to the bottom of them and democratically decide on a course of future action. 100 flowers can bloom in *Comment*. The more different brands the better because they add up to a fragmented series of responses to the great sun which is the leadership.



# Spanish elections on 15 June

## His Majesty's Communist Party

The Socialist Challenge team covering the Spanish elections on 15 June includes Josu Torrealday and Rouge correspondent G. Bengochea in Spain and Richard Carver in London. This week: what the opinion polls are saying and the politics of the Communist Party. Next week: a full rundown on the election campaign.



Photo: ANN DECKER (Hickney Flashers)

## Socialist ~ feminist conference

### 3,500 women meet in Paris

Over 3,500 women converged on Paris last weekend for a highly successful international socialist feminist conference to discuss the relationship between the women's movement and the workers' movement. Although the conference — the first of its kind since the new rise of women's struggles in the 60s — was primarily devoted to an exchange of information, proposals for future co-ordinated action met with an enthusiastic response on the final day.

A common statement on the fight for women's right to abortion was drafted, including proposals for an internationally co-ordinated action early next year. Solidarity for women in Bolivia — imprisoned for their central role in continuing the tin-miners' struggle once the miners themselves had been viciously repressed — was one of the many tasks that came out of the workshop that discussed women as victims of state repression.

A workshop of 600 lesbians issued a statement to the conference, appealing to the women's movement as a whole to take up the special oppression they faced. Finally, a wide range of themes for co-ordinated actions on International Women's Day was greeted with applause. Plans to organise meetings to prepare this are now underway.

These proposals were the result

of 3 days of intensive debate both in workshops and in the many stalls set up on the campus of Vincennes University. The desolate campus — earmarked for closure thanks to its militant tradition dating from 1968 — was transformed with the arrival of coachloads of women from all over Europe.

They came from Spain, Italy, France, Switzerland, Britain, Austria, Sweden, Holland, Portugal, and even from America, Mexico, and different African and Latin American countries. The Fourth International stall — complete with publications from many of its sections — sold a specially produced broadsheet in three languages.

After Saturday's opening plenary session in which different countries reported on a wide range of themes, Sunday was devoted to workshops on topics

including abortion, women and the unions, homosexuality, violence against women, repression, the right to maternity, women's organisation on the job, domestic labour and women's centres. For five hours over a dozen large groups of women met to listen to up-to-date reports on struggles in each country and to discuss lessons and proposals for future common actions.

Monday morning was the high point of the entire weekend. Every proposal for action was met with a ready response from the women assembled.

The day's afternoon session was the most disappointing. False accusations that the Conference Planning Group did not support the struggles of black women, lesbians or prostitutes resulted in confused wrangles at the microphone at the expense of thrashing out proposals for action.

With the exception of the final session, the weekend proved that there are growing numbers of women socialists who see the need to organise against their oppression on an international level. Fortunately for those who were unable to attend, the Paris Planning Group is now preparing the publication of a book about the weekend's events.

DODIE WEPPLER

It is hard to see what the right wing is frightened of. A well-groomed young professor appears on millions of television screens — we are for democracy, he says, we are not totalitarian and we certainly are not opposed to private property.

Ramon Tamames, tipped as Santiago Carrillo's successor for the Communist Party leadership, might have added that we are not opposed to the monarchy either, we don't give the clenched fist salute and we supported the scabs in the recent Basque general strike.

No, the right is afraid of something else: the hundreds of thousands of workers who will vote for the party, not because they want to pay homage to Juan Carlos but because it is *their* party, the party of forty years underground opposition to Franco.

CP members in Britain may be puzzled too when Santiago

Communist Party (PCE) who feel the same way.

But there is a logic to the position. In 1936, and again in 1976, the PCE had a single aim — democracy. And democracy in that context meant capitalist democracy.

A year ago that prospect looked very distant. Then it



Eva Forest after her release from a Spanish jail last week. She has been held for nearly three years for suspected involvement in 'terrorist' activities. No charges have ever been brought.

Carrillo arrives for the 'People's Jubilee' in London this month. How can you invite a pro-monarchist to an anti-jubilee event?

Many CP members will remember the International Brigades. For them the question was a simple one: are you for or against the Republic? And now their party has given the wrong answer. There are many members of the Spanish

was seen as necessary to mobilise the mass movement, but in alliance with 'democratic' capitalist parties.

Now a modicum of democratic rights has been established. The mass movement, no longer useful. Far more important to ally with the man who is bringing 'democracy' to Spain — Adolfo Suarez.

And never mind that he is the same man who sends the police

into the Basque country to murder striking workers, because those workers are a threat to bourgeois democracy — a threat because they are beginning to discover that the Spanish revolution does not begin and end on 15 June.

Mass assemblies of workers in the factories and the neighbourhoods are a hundred times more democratic than the Cortes elections. Many of the workers who understood that were PCE members, or will vote for the party next week. But they could see that when it comes to meeting the needs of their struggle workers democracy gives effective answers where the PCE has nothing to offer.

In fact, the party doesn't have much going for it when it comes to bourgeois democracy either. Instead of mounting a fight for immediate elections to a Constituent Assembly, under conditions of full democratic freedom and an end to the repressive apparatus of the dictatorship, their support for the present constitution is unconditional.

It has become something of a joke that the right winger Fraga is a centralist in Madrid and a devolutionist in Barcelona or Bilbao. The PCE is not so different. It does not support the election of assemblies in the oppressed nationalities to determine their future, though it does come out with some very nice phrases when it is confronted by an audience of Basques or Catalans.

At least Fraga has consistency on his side. He doesn't recognise that the nationalities are oppressed. The PCE does. But, as far as it is concerned, they can stay that way.

They won't be rushing to put their crosses by Carrillo's name in the Basque country. But they will be elsewhere. Workers throughout the country will understand that they must vote for a working class party.

Many more will vote for Suarez. After all, they will say, if I want Tory policies, why not vote for a Tory?

## Reading the tea leaves

Opinion polls are unreliable things at the best of times. In Spain there are even greater problems for the would-be clairvoyant, not least the fact that a regular 40 per cent of those questioned either 'don't know' or 'don't care'.

But if you look at the more respectable polls over the past few weeks, they are agreed on one thing: the left is gaining ground.

A majority of the popular vote for the working class parties now looks a possibility, if not a likelihood. Of course, that wouldn't mean a majority of seats: the men who drew the electoral boundaries made sure of that.

The traditionally conservative rural provinces have been consistently favoured. Sorla, in Castile, has a deputy for every 33,000 electors and a senator for every 26,000. In Madrid and Barcelona a deputy represents 40,000, with a senator for every million.

Add that to the fact that the king can appoint a large proportion of senators himself and the outcome will certainly be a

senate which could compensate even for an outright majority for the workers' parties in the lower house. And even that consideration is within the bounds of possibility.

It is hardly surprising. Early opinion polls reflected the fact that the right-wing Popular Alliance, led by Fraga, has been campaigning for months and that Suarez had all the advantages of an incumbent Prime Minister. The legalisation of the Communist Party was timed deliberately late to give it as little time as possible for campaigning.

But even in that short campaigning period it has emerged that, while Suarez may be able to

form a Government, he will have to rely on either right or left to do it. The result is that even some of the more right-wing papers, like *La Vanguardia* of Barcelona, are beginning to get less enthusiastic about their liberal darling.

Richard Gott of *The Guardian* comments that the centre will probably fall apart and goes on to note that nothing would upset the Communist and Socialist Parties more than an electoral victory. The reason is simple: their programme differs hardly a jot from that of Suarez.

Although both parties have worked hard to ensure that no working class action upsets the holiday atmosphere of the campaign, the large vote they will get reflects the battle which the Spanish working class has fought for an end to the dictatorship.

If they get a majority there can be no alternative but for them to form a government. They will wriggle like mud to get out of that one.



# Eyewitness in Poland

The Belgrade conference to examine what has happened in the one year since the Helsinki agreement on human rights is approaching.

That year has proved a number of things, not least that the imperialist powers can offer no support to the fighters for human rights in the Eastern bloc. But it has also been a year of rising

opposition — and therefore of increased repression.

Anatoly Shcharansky, a Soviet oppositionist arrested in March, was last week charged with the capital offence of treason. His crime was to monitor the implementation of the Helsinki agreement.

Just as reminiscent of the show trials

of the 1930s is the 'confession' of Czechoslovak human rights activist Vaclav Havel. Recently released from prison, he has disowned the confession published by the authorities and reaffirmed his commitment to the Charter 77 manifesto.

In Poland the Workers Defence Committee, which now commands wide support in the workers movement, has

been the particular object of repression in recent days. Socialist Challenge has received this account of recent events from an eye-witness. We are publishing the article in two parts. Next week's article will deal with the attempts to ban Andres Wadja's new film. Of particular interest in this week's account is the 'trial' of militants by a Student Union.

7 May, Cracow Old Town.

In a doorway in Szewska Street, Stanislaw Pyjas, a fifth year language student and active member of the Workers Defence Committee, was found dead.

The official police statement on Pyjas maintained that he had fallen to his death down a flight of stairs as a result of heavy drinking. But some have said that his head and face were beaten beyond recognition.

Sunday 15 May

In Cracow, several thousand people carrying black flags marched through the streets to the house where Pyjas's body was found. The procession then moved to the Old City Square and from there by torchlight to the Royal Castle on Wawel Hill, where a statement concerning Pyjas's death was read out by representatives of the WDC. The police were undoubtedly present, but at that point did not intervene.

Of those on the Executive Committee of the WDC in Warsaw who tried to get to



Student demonstrators in Cracow carry black flags protesting at the death of Workers Defence Committee member Stanislaw Pyjas.

Cracow for the memorial service, only three were known to have arrived. The others were arrested and taken into custody during their journey.

Later two representatives of the Warsaw Committee, Wojciech Onyszkiewicz and Krzysztof Lazarski, were involved in a head-on collision

with another car when a lorry forced them on to the wrong side of the road. The lorry did not stop and the two are now critically ill in hospital.

## PICKET THE POLISH EMBASSY

Portland Place, London W1.  
Friday 24 June, 4.00-6.00pm.

- ★ For free and independent trade unions
- ★ For the right to strike
- ★ For an end to political harassment and torture

Called by the Polish Workers Defence Campaign

end to the repression of students and workers, and a public inquiry into Pyjas's death. The formal trial was postponed and rescheduled to involve representatives from the alternative student group.

This is the first time in five years that there has been any protest mobilisation in Lodz. In spite of the present mobilisation, the students cannot be said to be ready to challenge the authorities as a body. Many still demand 'proper evidence'. In response to a cry during the meeting for an end to the repression, others shouted 'What repression?'. Not all the students were convinced that Pyjas had been murdered, but others responded with accounts of their own police interrogation.

TAIL

Meanwhile the harassment continues, some of it rather crude. Three women students, for example, leaving a friend's house in Lodz one night, found the same car waiting outside that earlier in the evening had followed them quite openly at 5 miles an hour on the way there. As they walked towards the car the engine started. One of them asked the driver if by any chance they were going in the same direction. The driver replied that yes, by chance they were, and gave them a lift home.

However, on 23 May, 25 students and members of the WDC were arrested. (Details of these arrests are unknown, but the story has been confirmed from two sources.) In Warsaw, several of the people arrested and prevented from going to the memorial service were still being held on 27 May, without charges and despite the legal 48-hour limit for police custody without charge. Student solidarity committees, formed after Pyjas's death, called for a successful boycott of the May Student Festival.

22 May, Lodz.

Three students, held in police custody in connection with the organisation of the memorial service there, were promised release providing that they would be given a 'trial' by the Students' Union Executive, representing the Polytechnic, the University and the Polish Film and Acting School, and that they would be suitably punished.

TRIAL

The student trial was not publicised. But word of mouth led to the expectation of a demonstration outside the building where the trial was due to take place. In the event this did not occur — probably because of the timing, around the examination period. However, the trial was effectively disrupted by about 200 students who crowded into the Executive offices.

After a somewhat confused meeting it was agreed that an open letter be sent to the Mayor of Lodz, demanding an

## South Moluccan sieges

### 'What sort of twisted logic demands that you poison people so that they are not put at risk?'

More European countries are to use the expertise of the British Special Air Service to combat 'terrorism'. That was the decision of a conference of Common Market Ministers last week in London.

Quite appropriately the meeting was chaired by Merlyn Rees. He has first hand experience of the SAS — it was he who sent them into South Armagh last year. As Northern Ireland Minister he presided over all sorts of dirty tricks — spying, agents provocateurs and the rest — carried out under the proud banner of the SAS.



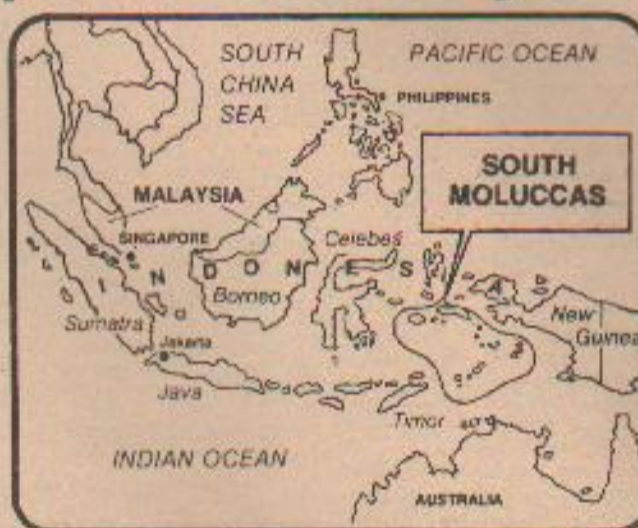
A South Moluccan militant.

Revolutionaries have not always been taken seriously when they said that the war in the North of Ireland was a testing ground for all the European capitalist states. The intervention of the SAS in the South Moluccan kidnap operation and the decision of the Common Market ministers show that we were not joking.

### IMMIGRANTS

Of course the SAS's rescue of the kidnapped Dutch children was hardly marked by its finesse. What sort of twisted logic demands that you poison people so that they are not put at risk?

For the Dutch state the campaign against the South Moluccans is a convenient part of a general move against immigrants



from the former colonies. The kidnap coincided with the general election. All parties agreed that it should not become a 'party issue', but the campaign of press hysteria was particularly ugly when you remember that this election featured the return of fascism to the electoral arena after 40 years.

The South Moluccans themselves are a pathetic case. The former shock troops of Dutch imperialism in the East Indies, their short lived 'Republic of the South Moluccans' folded up when their colonial masters cooked up a deal with the Sukarno regime in Indonesia and they were shipped back to the

former Nazi concentration camps in the Netherlands.

For a while they remained a favourite cause for the Dutch far right. Yet the repression of the Dutch state brought about a new radicalism — imprisoned youth were asking to read Che and Mao. These are the sort of people who carried out the kidnap.

The South Moluccan Republic they dream of is an absurd and reactionary fantasy, but the defence of their democratic rights in the Netherlands can only bring them closer to a general fight against racism and immigration controls.

RICHARD CARVER

## IN BRIEF

**FRANCE:** A major row is brewing over state attacks on *Rouge*, the daily paper of the French section of the Fourth International. Last June the paper published an exclusive story of torture in a French police station. Since then the director and an editor of *Rouge* have been charged with 'public defamation' under a 1944 Press Ordinance. The row centres on whether *Rouge* is obliged to reveal the name of the author of the article. All the French press has joined in the debate on 'professional secrecy' — not all of them, needless to say, in defence of *Rouge*.

**USSR:** Dockers in all the major Baltic ports are operating an overtime ban in protest at the

import of luxury goods which they never have a chance to consume. The bureaucrats for whom the products are destined have organised parties of scabs to unload the ships.

**LIBYA:** Cuba is sending more personnel to Libya to boost the 400 already there. The best known defender of the Gaddafi regime in Britain is Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party. Healy does not believe that Cuba is a workers state, one of the main reasons for his refusal to join the reunified Fourth International in 1963. We are also interested to hear his comments on the charges of 'Trotskyism' against dissidents recently executed in Libya.





Idi Amin: in his British Army days

# Amin: royalist with a reason

The top Sunday papers vie with each other in their venom towards Idi Amin. A few weeks ago The Observer published a report by Amin's doctor on the lunacy of the syphilitic sadist.

Not to be outdone The Sunday Times has just printed the exclusive revelations of the murder of Dora Bloch and the Archbishop of Uganda. The story is neatly timed to coincide with the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference which Amin was promising [or threatening] to attend.

What neither paper mentioned — and it is surely worth a few lines in jubilee week — is that the Crown Agents, the concern responsible for all Crown lands, deals with tens of thousands of pounds worth of transactions with Uganda each year.

Of course, the popular press finds Amin's jubilee Spirit a bit unpalatable because he's black.

But there is no gutter racism in the respectable Sundays; they just don't bother to mention his massacre of tens of thousands of people. It is only the Dora Blochs and Archbishop Luthums of this world who get a mention.

Amin is a royalist with a reason. It is not just the Crown Agents who keep him in business. Already this year more than 100 Land Rovers and trucks have been bought by Uganda. British Leyland denies selling vehicles to the Amin regime. ICI, Dunlop and Barclays Bank are among other household names with a big stake in Uganda.

Britain is Uganda's major

trade partner. For example, £32 million of coffee exports reached Britain from Uganda last year. Ninety-five per cent of the revenue went on luxury goods for the ruling elite and on arms. Sixty-five per cent of national spending goes on the army.

Amin's relationship with Her Majesty goes back a bit further. In 1971 Milton Obote was out of the country — ironically at a Commonwealth Conference — when Amin's Israeli tanks and Israeli-trained troops took over Kampala.

Her Majesty's Government distinguished itself by being the first government to recognise the regime. And the same newspapers which now fulminate against this arrogant black man fell over themselves to welcome the

loyal subject who had got rid of the 'pinko' Obote.

They had good reason to trust him. He had joined the Kings African Rifles in 1946, distinguishing himself in the campaign against the Mau Mau rebels in Kenya by 'leading attacks on the terrorists and repeatedly torturing and killing men suspected of Mau Mau sympathies', according to the New York Times.

His record in the ranks made him a natural candidate for leadership as the 'wind of change' swept Africa and Britain opted for neo-colonial regimes. Trained as an officer at the School of Infantry in Wiltshire, he made it to army Chief of Staff in 1966.

With the undercover help of British businessmen, and the more open support of the Israeli regime, he began plotting his power bid.

By one of those happy coincidences the coup came just at the moment when

Obote was trying to persuade the Commonwealth Heads of State of the need for a total arms embargo on South Africa.

It is no surprise that nowadays the power behind the Kampala throne is a group of (white) former British army officers.

But it is also no surprise that, suddenly, British imperialism and its press finds Amin's lovable British qualities — royalism, regimental pride and ruthlessness — less to their taste.

The Kremlin now looks favourably on Amin, supplying him with Mig jets. And the collapse of the Ugandan economy and the growth of the opposition have convinced Britain that Amin is not the stable bulwark they had hoped for.

That is the reason — and the only reason — why they don't want him at the jubilee party.

CHRIS O'BRIEN

# NUS slanders Soweto leaders



Tsietshi Mashinini: target of smear campaign

Last week the majority of the National Union of Students Executive took the sectarian step of withdrawing their invitation to Soweto student leader Tsietshi Mashinini to speak on the platform of the 18 June Soweto anniversary demonstration.

They capped this off by launching a smear campaign against Mashinini in a document circulated to all their affiliated unions. A minority statement, including a detailed refutation of all the Broad Left's slanders, has been produced by Colin Talbot, Socialist Student Alliance member on the NUS Executive and the working party for the demonstration.

It is no coincidence that the Broad Left is led by members of the Communist Party and that, as their document makes clear, the initiative in this affair lies with the African National Congress of South Africa, in turn led

by members of the South African Communist Party.

For many years the ANC has been posturing as the leaders of everything that goes on in South Africa, despite their clearly wan-

ing influence after the defeats of the early 1960s. Certainly ANC militants were involved in the recent upsurge and their imprisoned leaders, like Nelson Mandela, remain political symbols to the mass movement. But the ANC is only one current in a much broader vanguard.

## POLITICAL HOSTILITY

Tsietshi Mashinini is part of one grouping which has resisted the ANC's overtures. He has been subjected to the full blast of their political hostility which, as with their attacks on the Pan-Africanist Congress in the '60s and more recently the expelled minority, ANC (African Nationalists), has taken the form of a slander campaign.

In their document the Broad Left say they 'condemn any attempts by any political grouping to use the situation in Southern Africa to fulfil their own political purposes'. But that is just what the Stalinists of the Broad Left and the ANC are doing by making the NUS into a tool for their objectives in southern Africa.

Already a number of organisations (including the Socialist Students Alliance, the National Organisation of International Socialist Societies and the Manchester area NUS — have demanded that the NUS Broad Left reverse its stand or they will organise an alternative, non-sectarian platform for the 18 June demonstration.

Roy Alexander

## TRUTH HELP EXILES IN BOTSWANA



This is the 'evidence' of Mashinini's food-raising activities — a leaflet calling for financial aid to South African exiles in Botswana.

To aid in bringing this [harassment in Botswana] and the US role in perpetrating apartheid to the attention of the American people, the National Student Coalition Against Racism and the International Defence and Aid Fund are touring two central leaders of the Student Representative Council who are among the leaders of the massive student demonstrations against apartheid in Soweto....'

## SLANDER

'A key element in the present strategy being pursued by the US Government in particular, spearheaded by UN Ambassador Young aimed at undermining the liberation struggle is to withdraw young people from the Southern African arena to be educated in the US. There is evidence of confusion amongst the activities of Tsietshi Mashinini and his Soweto SRC in London who have launched a major campaign to provide more such scholarships, largely in the USA.

(Extract from NUS circular to affiliated organisations.)

ANGOLA: We had intended to carry an analysis of the recent coup attempt in Angola. However, the scandalous attack on Tsietshi Mashinini by the NUS Executive has meant we have held the article over.

## CSE Annual Conference 1977

July 2,3,4 Bradford

Theme: The Restructuring of Capital, Class Struggle and the State

The Conference will start mid-morning on Saturday 2nd July, at Bradford University, and end on Monday evening. Apart from short opening and closing plenary sessions discussion will be held in workshops, arranged in sequence streams.

Topics include: Economic Policy, Crisis and the Cues, Public Sector Struggles, Social Policy, Housing, Social-Democracy, Trade Unions, Labour Process & Science, Changing Forms of Working Class Struggle, Ideology, Theory of the State, Law, Post-War Reconstruction, Internationalisation of Capital and the IEC, Neo-Colonial State, Regionalism, Local State, State Apparatus.

Registration: To register (for accommodation, conference papers etc.) contact John Humphrey, Centre for Latin American Studies, 96/8 Bedford St, South, Liverpool L69 1BX

## What's Left

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

TYNDALE BENEFIT with the premier of Whistling at Mile Stones by Alex Glasgow, presented by Pirate Jenny — plus rock group, Thursday 8 June, 8pm at Caxton House, St. Johns Way, London N19.

TWO NEW PAMPHLETS from Big Flame.

The Revolution Unfinished — A Critique of Trotskyism, 50p. Crisis in Education, 30p. Add 10p postage.

From: Big Flame Publications, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1. Trade orders from Publications Distribution Cooperative.

WEST LONDON Anti-Apartheid Group, Cider and Cheese Party, Namibia/Zimbabwe Medical Aid, Saturday 18 June, WMA Hall, Westbourne Park Rd, W11, 8.00pm.

MANCHESTER Big Flame presents Women's Theatre in 'Coats Del Triolo' play about the Triolo strike, Monday 13 June, 7.30pm, Frances Shaw Social Club, Corbett Street, off Ashton New Road, Manchester 11. Admission 80p.

NATIONAL ABORTION CAMPAIGN: Public Meeting. Fight for an outpatient abortion clinic in the West of Scotland. Sponsored by Scottish TUC, Sunday 12 June, 2pm, City Halls, Glasgow.

TYNESIDE Socialist Centre meeting, 'A Unified Revolutionary Movement, Why and How?' Speakers: Tariq Ali (IMG), Christine Davidson (Big Flame), Steven Marks (Workers League), Wednesday 15 June, 7.30pm N.E. Miners Engineers Institute, Neville Hall, (near Central Station), Newcastle.

MANCHESTER Area readers: Socialist publications and Workers Vanguard now available at Grassroots. AUBREY/BERRY/CAMPBELL Defence Committee. Next meeting 6.30pm, 14 June at Northumberland Arms pub, Kings Cross Rd (opp. Royal Scot Hotel), London (tube Kings Cross). Further details on campaign from ABC Defence Com-

mittee, c/o Time Out, 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1. Tel: 01-278 2577.

MUTANTS' MARCH. Show your opposition to any further development of any nuclear industry. Gathering Riverside Gardens SW1 (by the North end of Vauxhall Bridge) at 2.30pm. Organising meeting 8 June, 7.30pm, 8 Endeavour St., WC1. Further details tel: 01-837 9795.

EAST ANGLIAN Workers Delegate Conference, Sat and Sun 18/19 June, 10am till 4pm each day at the St Margaret's Institute, Almonds Rd, Lowestoft, Suffolk. Doors open 9.45am.

For — End the Cuts, Free Collective Bargaining, Withdrawal from Common Market, Fight Low Wages, End Unemployment, Implement Socialist Policies Now. A National Price Freeze.

Trade Union and Labour Movement Speakers.

Delegate Credential, £1 each from B. Cooper, Org. Sec., 327 London Rd, South, Lowestoft, Suffolk. Tel Lowestoft 62473.

MARXIST BULLETIN No 5 on sale now price 40p. New Light on the Political Revolution in Eastern Europe. Center and 'Bourgeois Democracy. The Lib-Lab pact. From left-wing bookshops or Sam Stacey, c/o 9 Clifton Rd., London N22.

POLISH WORKERS Defence Campaign Bulletin No 2. Price 2p plus post, from 265a Seven Sisters Rd., London N4.

SCOTTISH CONFERENCE on Wage Control and Labour Movement Democracy, Sat 25 June, 10.15am, Cowans Centre, Cowans St., Stirling. Called by Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement. Supported by Central Scottish Federation of Trades Councils, Scottish Socialist League, Stirling SWP. Speakers invited from strike committees at Port Talbot, Grunwicks, THF and Laird Parish. Other speakers include Alan Thomsett of the CDLM, Rowland Street, Stirling TC, Ian Wyles, Chairperson, Stirling LP.

Details, credentials, sponsorship forms and transport from B. McLennan, 18 Carrington St., Glasgow.



# surplus value

## The House of Windsor

The first of two articles by TOM NAIRN

GENUINE SOCIALISTS have always detested the Windsor monarchs. In the pandemonium of Jubilee Year their loathing is growing in proportion to the row. They appear to confront a nation sucked into helpless crown-worship, without a single ounce of decent republicanism in its make-up. While they dream of communism, the country has not advanced out of this old feudal rhapsody. The 'serious' bourgeois Sunday papers lead their bloodshot cousins into new levels of hysteria. Everywhere Labour councillors slobber over the Regal fingers and the Dynastic feet. Huge crowds and street fêtes testify to the continuing popularity of monarchy.

Yet the socialist challenge to this vast bewitchment is often noticeably feeble. 'Parasites and Scroungers!', to quote a recent anti-jubilee leaflet handed round by one group. 'The cost of all this frippery!', as William Hamilton and others from the fading non-conformist traditions of the labour movement tend to say. Marxists sometimes go beyond these homilies, but it is usually to give a standard, somewhat mechanical dismissal in their own terms: monarchy is a deliberately maintained illusion, a class opiate meant to dull and divert class consciousness.

### POPULAR UNREASON

Our ruling class has always been strong on ideology, far superior to coercion as a method of domination when it can be made to work; this is one of its strongest ideological arms, and certainly one which works.

This is good enough, as far as it goes. However, few really feel it is far enough. Confronted by the appalling popularity of monarchy, it is not enough to choke with despairing indignation, or console oneself with tales of the one or two honest Queen-haters there were in the pub last Saturday night. Such attitudes lead either to a sort of disgust with popular unreason — the masses who let themselves be duped by a meretricious show — or to ~~unrealistic~~ notions of a people not really fooled by it all, secretly commonsensical behind the Union-Jack facade.

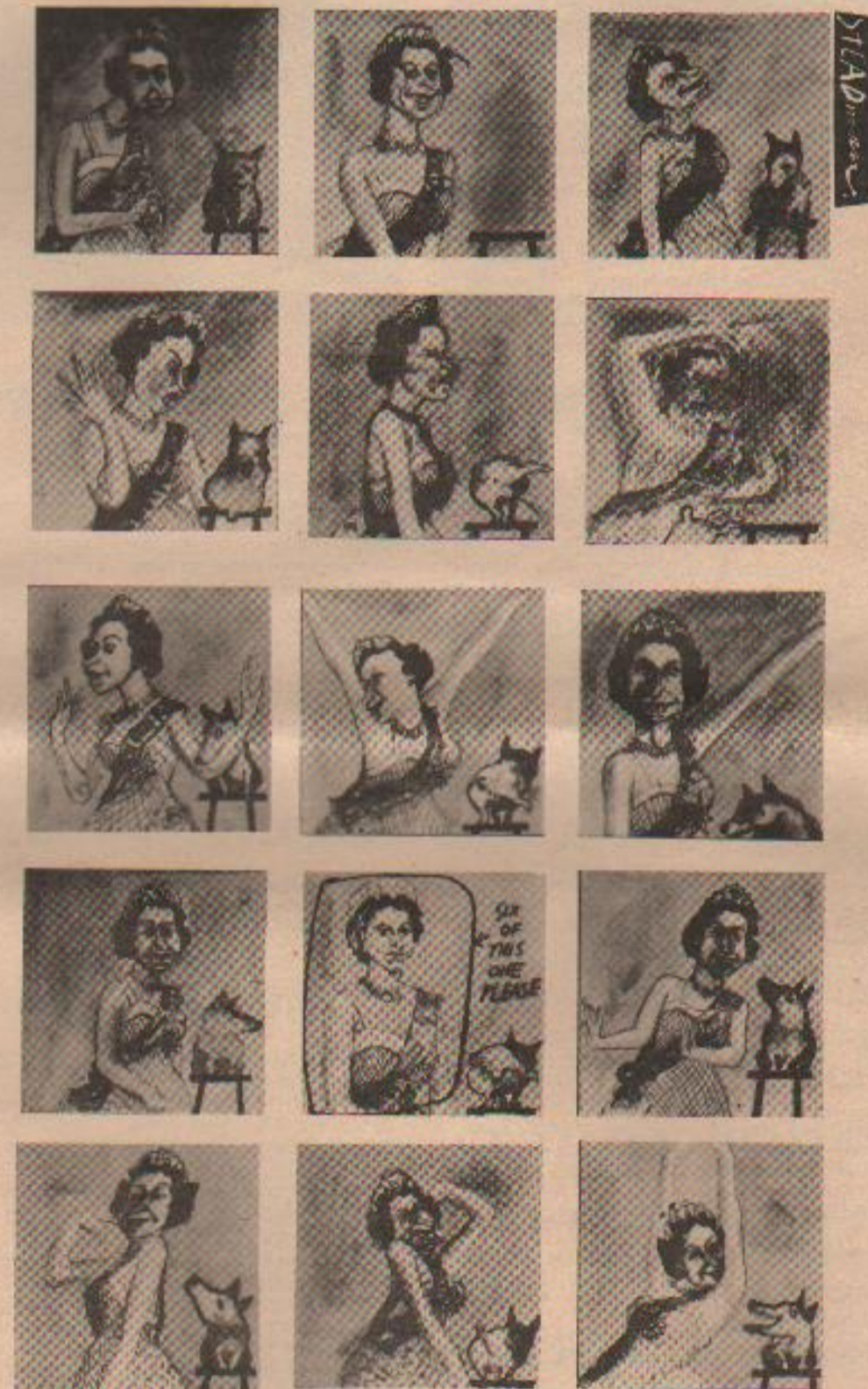
Both notions are dangerous to socialism. It is much more important to ask what are the historical reasons for the Great-British monarch's specific character. These cannot be reduced to abstract considerations of ideology and class. Furthermore, it is these same characteristics which help us to grasp the causes of the institution's popularity. The British people are not daft because they still adore a Crowned Head; but they are the victims of a political culture which is in certain definable aspects retarded and limited. These peculiar limitations descend from the experience of empire, and are rooted in the nature of the existing state. It is useless to criticise monarchy in isolation from these things.

### BENIGHTED DESPOTS

On the death of Queen Anne in 1714, the British ruling class invited the monarch of an obscure German princely state to step into her shoes. They did this to ensure the preservation of the social order established by the limited bourgeois revolutions of the previous century — 1640 and 1688. It was essential that the new dynasty should be controllable, and Protestant. No other formula would guarantee the 1689 Bill of Rights, and the union with a mainly Presbyterian Scotland achieved only seven years earlier.

The dynastic pretext for the change lay in the Hanoverians' distant blood connection to the old Stuart line. However, this was a secondary (though still quite important) technical question. Their distance, their Protestantism, and their foreignness were what counted. At home the Electors of Hanover were petty absolute rulers of the kind that still dominated the European political landscape. But the British élite calculated, correctly enough, that the culture-shock of transplantation from their small homeland to a great mercantile state would keep them quiet.

Much more was at stake here than the desire for a quiet life. The post-1688 ruling caste of landlords and merchants dreaded the return of absolute kingship — still the normal form of government almost everywhere else. To gain some idea of the universe of mummified reaction which kingship represented at that time, one need only turn to Perry Anderson's brilliant



analysis of the period in his *Lineages of the Absolutist State*. It was still a world of benighted despots, showing few signs of following the Dutch or English path of revolution.

The closer Stuart pretenders — with a far better blood-claim to the throne than George I — yearned to return the British Isles to that world of sanctified traditionalism. We should remember that the threat was not finally dispelled until thirty-two years after George was brought in, with the defeat of Charles Edward Stuart's rebellion at Culloden in 1746.

This was the negative side of the installation of the House of Hanover (who later retitled themselves as the House of Windsor). But the positive aspect of the operation was more important. As well as preventing the return of Catholic Absolutism, the new family was forced to adapt itself to the character of the post-1688 state. This was — and still remains — the crucial point. From the outset the modern monarchy has been one part of a distinctive state-system, and it has been from this source that its renewed magic derived.

### 'WEE GERMAN LAIRDS'

In the late-feudal world the British state was of course a revolutionary force. It was the first great achievement of bourgeois revolution, transcending the city-state limits of earlier forms of middle-class power. The enormous impetus it gained from the break-through would carry it, in a short space of time, to the defeat of France and a headlong career of colonial expansion.

And yet, this astonishing creation still unavoidably bore the marks of its epoch. This first-born capitalist state — like the first-born socialist states of the 20th century — suffered profound deformations which reflected its struggle against the hostile world-environment. Until 1746 its very existence was in doubt. The Bourbons and Hapsburgs were at the door, waiting on one false move from the upstart. They had powerful internal allies still eager to undo the Revolution Settlement, nor all of them in Ireland or the Scottish Highlands.

Part of the pattern of betrayal and compromise imposed upon the new state

was the monarchy. The penalty of being first into the new political universe was that the ruling clique had to feel its way into permanent hegemony, through a long process of shifts and strategems. Judged in the light of the radical republicanism that had flowered during the revolutions themselves, these were shameful concessions. The gilded empiricism of the 18th century state could easily be depicted — and was — as an abject surrender to the epoch. Just as Soviet Russia can be caricatured as re-born Tsarism, so the Old Corruption of Walpole and Pitt could be seen as no better than the other *anciens régimes* of the continent.

In effect, the post-1688 political system could not help being a bastard form. It cleared a path towards bourgeois egalitarianism, the more rational constitutional order of the 19th century — yet never, itself, quite arrived in that novel world. The original great capitalist state never became a typical one. The ruling class fell foul of its own pragmatism, and became locked in the bizarre illogic of its transitional polity. To begin with, the Hanoverian kings were merely a part of that odd compromise position.

### COMIC VENGEANCE

Afraid of a return to Divine Right, the governing class did not feel able to dispense with kingship altogether. Quite rightly, they thought that a show-crown would help them to keep authority, both internally and in foreign affairs. Such a stage or 'constitutional' monarchy could help over-awe a still unpoliticised people at home, and keep their end up in transactions with the continental despots. To this purpose, the oligarchy embarked upon a mighty programme of showmanship whose fruits are with us still. They were helped by the 1745 revolt, and the paroxysms of bourgeois relief which followed its defeat.

However, this primitive version of *la société du spectacle* registered quite limited success. It was not in fact simple to transfigure the 'wee German lairds' into an acceptable simulacrum of Great-Power Monarchy, and — as early 19th century radical history showed — popular scepticism about the institution rekindled fairly strong. The personal limitations of early specimens of the family had constricted the campaign; George III's dotage and the debauchery of the Prince Regent threatened to cripple it altogether. In the Royal Pavilion at Brighton, the true spirit of absolute kingship wreaked comic vengeance upon its phoney successors.

The usual myth that Queen Victoria cured all that, through the personal charisma of a genuinely bourgeois monarch: prudish, sober, penny-pinching and deferential to the norms of a middle-class state. School text books have always dropped a veil of decency over the preceding decades, with suspect insouciance (incidentally, this is one reason why the Regency has qualified so notably as a period for romantic historical fiction). One recognises here a typical idealist inversion of the historical process: a personality is made responsible for the change, rather than a material change for the personality.

### MORAL RETRENCHMENT

In reality it was military and colonial success that transfigured the stodgy British monarchy into the Disneyish charade of modern times. The British state's victory over the more radical bourgeois revolution in France had been the key. It is as if — pursuing the analogy with socialist states mentioned before — the Brezhnev regime were to conduct a successful conquest of China and carve up the whole Asian continent afterwards. Even the most doltish and reptilian of Establishments could hardly fail to acquire a new lease of life.

In the context of the times, the Windsor régime's successes were if anything greater than that. For a period, it virtually 'occupied' the world. The advances of its industrial revolution delivered continents into its paws, in a way that no subsequent state would ever be able to emulate. The rich life-blood of a world's wealth rushed to its head, lending a new magnificence and meaning to its mediocre dynasty. It is true that only a distinctly more *petit-bourgeois* life-style in the Royal Household made it quite acceptable to the newly-rich middle classes; however, this was only the necessary condition of the apotheosis, not its cause. Moral retrenchment was a petty price for external glory; and the glory was reflected from the state's position of primacy and imperial dominance.

\* To be continued next week.



# LETTERS

Letters to Socialist Challenge [maximum 400 words] should be sent to 'Comment', Socialist Challenge, 328§9 Upper Street, London N1.

## Jubilee Rhymes

I WAS recently doing some research on the origins of English nursery rhymes and I came across a number of interesting facts. 'Ring a ring of roses' originated during the Great Plague and its last line refers to the deaths.

More interesting for your purposes was the following rhyme:

'Rock a bye baby on the tree top,  
When the wind blows the cradle will rock,

When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall  
And down will come baby, cradle and all.'

What appears to be an innocent ditty is in reality a reference to the execution of Charles I and the overthrow of the monarchy. It was sung by republican children and soldiers alike in Cromwell's days.

Best wishes for the new paper.

AMELIA ROSS (London)

## On SWP

MARTIN SHAW'S 'Open Letter' to the SWP leadership is rather pathetic. He still shows such a touching faith in the so-called 'IS tradition'. Yet what is this tradition? For 25 years now it has counterposed itself to the organised tradition of revolutionary Marxism — the Fourth International.

Since its break from Trotskyism in 1950, when the Socialist Review group, as IS was, supported the right-wing Labour Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin's intervention in the Korean War on the side of US imperialism, the IS followed a right-wing course in the Labour Party. Similarly, in the 1960s they called for British troops to be sent to Rhodesia after UDI, and of course supported the sending of the troops to Northern Ireland. The exception to the rule — their support for the NLF in Vietnam, occurred only under the pressure of a mass movement led by the Fourth International, in Britain and abroad.

Since its discovery of the shop stewards movement in the 1960s, IS has combined syndicalism with its opportunism. Their own rank and file organisations have consistently fought against socialist policies in the trade union movement, in the name of more militant trade unionism.

This leads them, for example, to line up with the right-wing bureaucrats against elementary demands such as a rising scale of wages to

defend workers' living standards against inflation. Their present position of uncritically tail-ending the Communist Party, is no more than the logical conclusion of this line of degeneration.

With the arbitrary declaration of itself as the Socialist Workers Party, the IS has now reached a similar stage of degeneration as the Workers Revolutionary Party at its outset. The SWP, like the WRP, consistently substitutes itself and its 'own' rank and file front organisation for the real movement of the working class. Again this is only logical, for them.

Something of the true nature of the SWP's sectarianism and bureaucratic centrism comes through in Martin Shaw's Open Letter, when he writes that the SWP leadership saw Red Weekly as their 'enemy'. This has always been their attitude towards Trotskyism. Every single Trotskyist opposition tendency, and even those only moving towards revolutionary Marxism, have been bureaucratically expelled by Cliff and company. This is no accidental mistake; Cliff's politics, which derive ultimately from Menshevism, are in fact the antithesis of revolutionary Marxism.

Unfortunately, some of us, like Martin Shaw, have had to learn all this the hard way. Others should be spared the experience.

JOHN STRAUTHER (Liverpool)

# GREETINGS

## From Philip Agee

TOMORROW I leave this country temporarily, deported by a Labour government under pressure from the CIA. Before going, I would like to thank all those who fought against the deportations, and I hope that this experience will be valuable in the fight against the Official Secrets charges and any other attempted repression of this kind.

The campaign against the deportations contained militants of difference political groups; perhaps the majority were unaligned. But they all united against this measure of the Labour government. I hope this united approach is followed in other fields of struggle — it should be one of our strengths.

If Socialist Challenge can play a role in uniting the left then I send it my greetings and wish it success.



## From Roger Protz

ROGER PROTZ has been active in revolutionary politics for 17 years, especially as a journalist and propagandist. He edited Keep Left in the early sixties, and was founding editor of Socialist Worker, from which he was dismissed in 1974. He is an executive member of the National Union of Journalists.

THE SPECTRE OF SECTARIANISM is haunting the left in Britain. The challenge to the left is clear: unemployment climbs; racism grows and stokes the flames of reaction; civil liberties are under attack as journalists who seek to discover the truth are hounded and persecuted; years of pay restraint have tied the union

leaderships to the State machine, while their members' incomes have been decimated by inflation; the Labour Government lurches more and more to the right and prepares the armed forces for possible civil war at home through its activities in Northern Ireland.

Faced by this steady drift to the right and the ominous growth of the fascist movement, the left has frittered away many opportunities to grow and establish a firm base in the labour movement.

The grouplets proliferate as organisations split over insignificant doctrinal is-

sues. Some organisations that seemed healthy and internally democratic have assumed the airs and graces of Ruritanian stage armies, puffed themselves up out of all proportion to their real size and strength and rudely dealt with those who disagree with the folly of small groups declaring yet more 'workers' parties'.

We will pay a heavy price for sectarianism — and that price could be a vicious, authoritarian regime in Britain that would ruthlessly smash the organised labour movement. It is time for socialists to join together in common endeavour to spread socialist ideas and to lay the groundwork for a

# Socialist Challenge EVENTS

LIVERPOOL: Wednesday 15 June, Socialist Challenge supporters meeting, Stanley House, Upper Parliament St., 7.30pm.

NORTH LONDON: Socialist Challenge launch meeting, Tuesday 14 June, Manor Gardens Library, N19.

GLASGOW: Friday 24 June, Socialist Challenge/Scottish Socialist dance. Half proceeds to NAC Dance to 'Mephisto' plus bar extension till 11.30. Entry by ticket only from Scottish Socialist, 64 Queen St., Glasgow. Tel: 221 7481.

SOUTHALL (West London): Tuesday 21 June, IMG Public Meeting, Mobilise Against Enoch Powell (who's speaking in Hounslow the following day), Southall Town Hall, 7.30pm.

BRISTOL: Socialist Challenge Public Meeting, 'Remember Soweto', Friday 17 June, 7.30pm, Baptist Mills Centre, Horley Rd., St. Werburghs (near M2). Speakers: Soweto student leader, IMG and Anti-Apartheid representatives.

BRISTOL: Thursday 9 June, Socialist Challenge Discussion Group, 'The Politics of the IMG', The Swan, Stokes Croft.

\* Send all details of Socialist Challenge activities to this column.

Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

# 'The worst bargain ever made'

'If the British want to go on eating meat, they had better aim at ox-livers, beef-burgers, breasts of lamb, and bellies of pork — and leave the better cuts for the richer consumers', said the managing director of Dewhursts butchers.

WILL REESE reviews a new pamphlet on the effects of the Social Contract.

'The corporate sector's gross trading profits climbed by 26 per cent in the first quarter of 1976, and by 30 per cent in May-June. But in the same period manufacturing investment was 11.9 per cent.'

These are two extracts from 'The Case Against the Social Contract', a pamphlet produced by a group of independent socialists (mainly ex-members of the SWP) in Coventry. It is a review of the effects of the Social Contract on the living standards of the working class over the last two years. All the 'arguments' of the Government and popular press are exposed from the standpoint of the working class.

And in the process literally hundreds of useful facts, statistics, and quotes from the ruling

class are thrown up. For this reason alone the pamphlet is excellent value at 10p — a valuable propaganda weapon against the Social Contract and the policies of the Labour Government.

Apart from the serious omission of a clear demand for equal pay for women, the formal demands raised in relation to wages, unemployment, and the cuts correspond closely to those advocated by Socialist Challenge.

In particular, the pamphlet's proposal that wage agreements should be open-ended and reopened if prices keep rising comes very close to the call for automatic wage rises for every rise in the cost of living. This is an important step forward from the syndicalist position which sees this demand as a threat to the militancy of the

working class.

But while the factual arguments arranged in the pamphlet are extensive, the political conclusions are only partial, tacked on almost as an after-thought. The pamphlet dodges the political problems of the role of the trade union and Labour leadership — as if facts alone will convince people of the need for a socialist alternative.

Nevertheless, it is vital that all those who can be won to the kind of demands indicated in the pamphlet are united in a fightback against the Labour Government.

'The Case Against the Social Contract'. Available from: 31 Gresham Road, Coventry. Price 10p plus postage.

## From Scottish Socialist League

THE Scottish Socialist League was set up in March of this year by socialists who had been expelled from the Scottish Labour Party by its reformist leadership. It was founded as a revolutionary Marxist organisation committed to fight for the creation of a united all-British revolutionary party and the unification of those organisations of the far left in Britain divided by questions of tactics rather than principle.

The SSL welcomes the setting up of Socialist Challenge as a step on the road to creating a class struggle opposition to the Labour Government and its anti-working class policies.

We will be submitting regular coverage of developments in Scotland, from industrial struggles to the rise of Scottish nationalism. Our members will be selling Socialist Challenge and see it playing a central role in

the political intervention of our organisation. STEVE KENNEDY National Secretary, SSL.

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE SSL? We have branches or supporters in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee, Stirling, Falkirk, Carlisle, Hamilton, Paisley and Ayrshire. If you want to know more, with a view to possible membership, please contact: Scottish Socialist, 64 Queen St., Glasgow or phone 041-221 7481.

# The lost Honour of K

Faced with the right-wing Axel Springer press on the one hand and the repressive West German state on the other, one can imagine — in one's more paranoid moments — drawing conclusions about their all-powerful dominance. But in The Lost Honour of Katherina Blum Volker Schlöndorff and Margarethe von Trotta inflict their paranoia on the audience for a tedious 106 minutes.

These film makers chose to deal with the crucial questions of the strong state, the gutter press and the way they combine to reinforce bourgeois society. But

what they do is to simply reduce the relationship between the two to that of a crude 'super-conspiracy' (the chief prosecutor handing over documents to a

reporter and vice-versa), alongside completely ham-fisted assertions that the press is hypocritical and nasty and the State brutal, devious and strong.

The former is achieved by showing the reporter, disguised as a hospital doctor, trying to get 'dirt' out of Katherina's dying mother — with the result that she passes away. The latter is demonstrated by the proliferation of tanks and armoured cars at the arrest of Katherina's 'anar-



# STATE OF REVOLUTION

## And in the wings

LAST WEEK a hundred technicians at the National Theatre in London returned to work after a six-day strike in defence of a shop steward sacked for his 'technical attitude' to work. Strangely, it took management two years to discover that the steward, Ralph Cooper, a plumber, was not a satisfactory worker. Even more extraordinarily, the sacking followed several incidents in which Cooper had been prominent in leading opposition to management's attempts to break demarcation in the mechanical services departments.

The strike ended when the technicians, members of the National Association of Theatre and Kine Employees, were given an assurance that Cooper would be re-instated pending the case going to a board of arbitrators acceptable to NATKE, the management, and the striking technicians.

But the strikers demand for an Arts Council inquiry into the running of the National was refused by its director, Peter Hall.

It is Hall's arbitrary running of the theatre which appears to be at the root of the problem. Plans for future productions are made with proper consultation with the technical administration, and in a row that flared up four

weeks ago over the planning of 'Madras House', Hall made it clear he was not interested in 'technical problems', but only the 'artistic policy' of the theatre.

Hall is paid approximately £26,000 a year, plus a free flat, not to mention a hefty sum for the 'Aquarius' TV programme. Many of his actors are on a basic of £55 per week.



OUT NOW! Single copies 80p plus 15p postage. Subscription: £3 for 4 issues from International, 328/329 Upper Street, London N1. Cheques and POs payable to Reigocrest Ltd.

It is highly unusual for a leading British playwright to choose as a theme the struggle of the working class for state power.

But this is what Robert Bolt has done in 'State of Revolution' — an examination of the role played by the central figures of the Russian revolution, particularly that of Lenin.

The play, at the National Theatre in London, opens with the Bolshevik school in Capri, and ends with the Party Congress which confirmed with Stalin as general secretary.

In between Bolt attempts to deal with such major political events as the February and October revolutions, Brest-Litovsk, Kronstadt, NEP, and the beginning of the degeneration of the Soviet Communist Party.

### SKETCHY

Inevitably, in spite of the long performance, it is a sketchy history and the characters are often over-simplified or mis-represented.

However, the play is essentially an honest attempt to deal with the momentous events of revolutionary Russia; and the problems confronting the Bolshevik Party after 1917 are treated sympathetically.

But Bolt's main political mistake is a fundamental one. He regards the degeneration of the revolution — and indeed the revolution itself — as inevitable.



Trotsky [Michael Kitchen] and Lenin [Michael Bryant]

Time and time again, Lenin — played by Michael Bryant of 'Roads to Freedom' fame — emphasises that it is not what he, Lenin, does or decides that is important, but the historical forces at work in the class struggle.

By concentrating — deliberately — on the general historical factors operating on the new Soviet state, Bolt omits the supremely self-conscious role that Lenin mapped out for the Bolsheviks, who led the Russian working class to set on

history. The rise of the bureaucratic clique above the workers and peasants, the suppression of workers democracy, the tragedy of Kronstadt, the Red Terror, and finally Stalin's domination are all viewed with a definite fatalism.

The last-ditch struggle by Lenin, and after his death by Trotsky, against this degeneration appear as a hopeless task in the face of blind historical forces.

As a result, the real political

problems and choices are largely absent, while the central characters are buffeted by forces beyond their control. It is this which accounts for the artificiality of the scenes portraying meetings of the Party Central Committee.

Bolt's technical device for overcoming this problem is to make good use of humour, irony, and even bitter sarcasm, which does at least make 'State of Revolution' entertaining.

JOHN GRAHAM

# Genesis of a Renegade

ABOUT FIVE YEARS AGO, I met Steve Cohen outside Kings Cross station late one Sunday night. He was running away, so he told me, from the IMG, and borrowed a couple of quid from me to get back to Manchester.

The other week, when he came to Liverpool to read some of his poems, I reminded Steve of this previous encounter. He replied that escaping was the most liberating thing he had ever done.

These poems — which are very funny, cynical, extremely intelligent and sensitive, sometimes quite reactionary — often poignant — show us Steve Cohen as he is today: a gay, Jewish, socialist comedian, and how he got there from having been a revolutionary Marxist militant.

The result is a pamphlet that all militants, especially Marxists, should read. The intense subjectivity, even self-obsession, of these poems, is something we can all learn from. We need to, if only to save ourselves from the smug self-satisfaction of the sectarians.

Steve's poem about the Blackburn anti-fascist demonstration last year is an excellent example.

Like there's something else I wanna state  
The solidarity on this demo is great  
We all feel collectively strong  
As we march and sing our songs  
But when we get to the end of the demonstration  
The solidarity will end  
And we'll all return to our individual isolation  
There'll be no more comrades adrenaline  
Like did the person marching next to me through Blackburn town  
Give a damn that my head was going through a nervous breakdown  
Like when I was on that demonstration  
I knew fuck all about my comrades personal situation  
To me they just accompanied me on the bus ride  
For them their heads might have been full of suicide  
Now fascism is denying that the personal is political  
Now socialism is international  
It means smashing the United Nations  
And replacing it with world wide personal relations.

## JACK BEAUMONT reviews 'The Jews and the Genitals', the poems of a gay, Jewish, socialist comedian.

This also gives us Steve's own highly personal and ultra-left definition of politics. Not only is socialism personal relations, but so is fascism:

Last night began as poetry  
It ended as fascism  
Not the fascism of organised movement  
— cos the jackboots were inside our own heads  
As we attempted to smash the skulls of those we love  
Accusations of selfishness and non caring  
— made in the most selfish and non caring way  
(Poetry and Fascism)

Steve is obsessed with the problems of antisemitism, homosexuality, and fascism. The real subject of all his poems is himself, and like any middle class individual, he tends to confuse his own problems with those of the rest of the world.

I've got the tired and radical businessman's lawyers' blues  
I'll do any case you choose  
I'll even appear for Christians and Jews  
'Cept I won't do prosecutions  
Defend rapists, landlords, fascists  
Or director generals of state institutions  
That's why I've got the  
Poor tired radical businessmen's lawyers' blues

Steve's attitudes reflect the confusion and immaturity of many of those around revolutionary politics. Sometimes this descends to Trot-baiting or worse. A cartoon depicts 'Trois' as pigs. A brilliant satire on the Jewish Family — 'The Epsteins and the Frankensteins' — ends on a reactionary, even Zionist note.

But everyone out there —  
all you christians  
you are christian communists, christian Trotskyists  
christian Stalinists  
you who analyse everything but feel nothing —  
you just gotta know one thing —  
we didn't go voluntary into the ghetto —  
and we went crying into Zion —  
and we didn't see any of you 'revolutionaries'  
doing much about anti-semitism —  
many of them murderous —  
but we were on our own —  
and that's your fault.

Which is, of course, a slander against the militants of the Fourth International, such as Abraham Leon, Marcel Hic, and many others who died in the resistance to Nazism. But then, as Steve himself admits:

I am Jewish  
When I was eight days old my parents had my prick circumcised  
They took me home  
And spent years circumcising my mind.  
[Cohen Cohen... Conn.]

But he is also honest with himself:

I like if we want to smash the fash  
— and personally I'm not the street fighting kind  
Then first we've gotta smash the trash  
Right out of our fucked up minds  
Like all white people are racists  
Like all men are sexist  
Like I'm a white man  
Like all christians are anti-semitic  
And boy they don't let you forget it  
Cos I'm one of the Jews  
But that don't excuse  
My own racism or sexism

Steve's honesty deserves our respect, and there is enough truth in his words to command our attention. When Steve ran away, the IMG lost a militant. But we also need renegades and critics like him.

JACK BEAUMONT

# Katherina Blum

Jane Clarke and Carl Gardner

...ist' lover. It is subtly reinforced by her 'accidentally' stumbling into a nest of special branch men dressing up in Arab robes and drag (f) for surveillance operations. All this while she is supposed to be in custody!



never be allowed near a camera again. But no doubt they will be, precisely because they represent no danger to the status quo at all, having no useful understanding of it.

And this is in spite of the furor the film caused on release in Germany because it ostensibly dealt with a situation similar to the Baader-Meinhof trial. As the film goes on, however, one realises that far from being a politically conscious fighter

against capitalism — an 'anarchist' — the man seemingly being pursued by half of Germany's armed forces is simply a deserter who has robbed the regimental safe!

The way the central figure — Katherina — is represented is worth commenting on. On one level the film is praiseworthy here because one of its strongest themes is that women carry the blame for sexuality. A woman is guilty the moment she enters into a sexual relationship with a man. Man is human; woman is a sex type.

Thus Katherina is punished because she felt desire for Ludwig and slept with him the

first night they met. She has transgressed, and all her past and future is translated in terms of this so she becomes the object of contempt to every man in the street. Thus the constant threatening phone calls and disgusting letters she receives after the press have 'exposed' the fact that 'the Nun' felt desire.

One another level, though, the film subscribes to this very analysis of women's sexuality by 'explaining' Katherina's desire in terms of 'love at first sight'. Katherina meets Ludwig at a party, they exchange glances and immediately they are one .... All her past behaviour and personality fall away as she recog-

nises the grand passion. By inscribing such a totally mystifying 'phenomena' as the main-spring of the film's action, it endorses the view that it is wrong for a woman to feel desire unless it's love. So while the love theme is supposed to render Katherina more sympathetic, it in fact undermines the only progressive theme the film has.

If this sounds absurd, it is. Films like this discredit the left, in every way. This has got to be the worst film ever made with radical pretensions and Schindler and von Trotta should



# Socialist Challenge

## KILLERS ON THE LOOSE!

Rhodesian troops mounted a major raid into Mozambique last week. After killing 32 people in an initial raid on two camps, they moved on to occupy Mapai, 47 miles inside Mozambican territory and only 30 miles from South Africa.

The commander of Ian Smith's army, the man who ordered the raid, is a former British officer Lieutenant-General Peter Walls. Formerly an officer in the Black Watch, he got his brutal training with the Special Air Service in Malaya.

After five days the invading racist troops withdrew. Raids such as these are nothing new. They are a regular feature of life on the eastern and southern borders. A year ago Mapai was attacked leaving 18 civilians dead. Two months later the Zimbabwean refugee camp at Nhazonia in Mozambique was devastated by Rhodesian troops. 800 blacks were massacred.

David Owen, Labour Foreign Minister, throws up his hands in horror. Not particularly for the sake of the

people of Zimbabwe, but because the raid could threaten the Anglo-American 'peace' formula. For the same reason as Vorster's racist government in South Africa was so concerned about the raid.

Both imperialism and Vorster want a negotiated settlement and an end to the armed struggle. In this they have the backing of the front line states. But such a provocative attack threatens to lose this black support, and particularly from the President of

## Racist troops invade Mozambique



Walls the butcher

Mozambique, Samora Machel.

Some initial reports attempted to portray the Rhodesian attack as the work of the army behind the backs of the more reasonable Ian

Smith. Later it became clear that the raid was agreed on 29 May by the War Council, headed by Smith. The Rhodesian Government knows it is losing the war with the guerillas. The white

population is emigrating as fast as possible. White farms stand vacant with no buyers. Foreign investment is drying up.

Smith recognises the need for a negotiated settlement and wants to establish the best possible bargaining position. Raids, such as the one on Mapai, in trying to weaken the black guerillas, are bound up with the talks. Smith wants to negotiate, but with a pistol at the head of the Zimbabwean nationalists.

Inside Zimbabwe the repression of the black population is equally fearsome. Last month two leaders of the African National Council were sentenced to hang for allegedly recruiting to the guerilla army. Since April 1975 112 blacks have been given the death penalty. How many have been carried out is unknown as the Smith government refuses to announce the names of those executed.

Every week hundreds of Zimbabweans flee the country from the harassment and repression of the racist security forces. In Francistown, Botswana, 800 refugees arrive every week.

David Owen and US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance are not going to stop the white racist offensive with their diplomatic notes. Nor do they want to. The 18 June Soweto anniversary demonstration in London must be a massive display of solidarity with the struggle of all the Liberation movements of southern Africa.

\* Support can be sent to the Zimbabwean refugees and the camps in Mozambique through Zimbabwe Medical Aid. Donations should be sent to ZIMA, 84 Tindall Street, Balsall Heath, Birmingham B12 9QS.

RIC SISSONS

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)



Bob Pennington, national organiser of the IMG appeals for funds for the new paper.

## Wide support for new paper

SEVEN HUNDRED people crammed into St. Pancras Assembly Rooms in London for the rally to launch Socialist Challenge.

They heard speeches from the paper's editor, Tariq Ali, from Carl Brecker, a leading spokesperson from the joint shop stewards committee of Hounslow Hospital (at present under workers' occupation against closure), and from Brian Haddow, one of the six teachers at the William Tyndale school recently sacked by the Inner London Education Authority.

International greetings were given by speakers from Spain and Ireland.

The main speaker at the rally was Ernest Mandel, Secretary of the Fourth International. He analysed how Parliamentary so-called 'democracy' was a sham for the overwhelming majority and how socialist democracy under the dictatorship of the proletariat would involve a radical extension of democratic rights for the mass of



Ernest Mandel

people.

Messages of support for Socialist Challenge were sent to the rally by Barney Motkale and Selby Semela, Sec-

retary and Treasurer of the Soweto Student Representative Council.

Out of the country for 'other reasons' was Philip Agee, who also sent greetings and support for the paper. (See page 14)

The rally gave a particularly warm welcome to the following message from Wyn Bevan, officially on behalf of the Port Talbot electricians:

'Fraternal greetings from the electricians of Port Talbot on the successful launching of Socialist Challenge. May I, in expressing my apologies for not being present this evening, thank you for all the most marvellous and magnificent assistance that you gave us this last three months. It will not be forgotten.'

The members have decided to return to work on

assurances by the union and the employers against our advice. So now we will continue the fight inside the gates of the works as vigorously as we did outside.

'We have not been beaten, neither do we intend being beaten. Our purpose is to continue fighting for a successful conclusion and that fight will begin in earnest again on Monday morning.'

'Finally I can assure you that your invaluable assistance will not be forgotten.' Wyn Bevan, Convenor, EETPU Shop Stewards Committee, BSC, Port Talbot.

The rally responded to a rousing speech by Bob Pennington, National Organiser of the IMG. His appeal for funds to back up the political objectives of the new paper was answered to the tune of £600.

And that's the sort of money — £600 to be precise — which is needed every month to keep the paper going. So that is the target for our Monthly Fighting Fund. So... send in your comments on the new paper, send in your articles, send in messages of support, but above all send us your money. It's our life-blood.

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

## Socialist Challenge

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Please complete and return to:

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Please send me ..... copies [state number] of Socialist Challenge each week for sale.

I enclose a donation of £..... [state amount].

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