

Socialist Challenge

BUILD A SOCIALIST OPPOSITION FOR A UNIFIED REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

12p

4 August 1977 No. 9



DON'T LET THEM GRIND YOU DOWN

A victory was in sight. It was sabotaged by the union bureaucrats and Labour ministers. They put intolerable pressure on the strikers. We believe that the decision by a majority of the Strike Committee to bow to this pressure was a profound mistake. It has set the struggle back. The spirit of July 11 has been lost in a maze of legal decisions and bureaucratic manoeuvres.

Over the weekend, Brent Trades Council stated: 'On every day, including 8 August we urge a show of strength to remind Ward and the powers-that-be that Black Friday was only a temporary set back.'

Socialist Challenge asks all its readers to demonstrate their solidarity on 8 August. Coaches and trains must not be cancelled. Our support is more vital than ever before. Assemble at 6.30 am outside Dollis Hill Tube.

[We request you to observe the wishes of the Strike Committee throughout the day.]

BE THERE ON AUG 8

Is Marriner simply a Labour agent?

THE SOCIALIST UNITY election campaign for the Ladywood by-election started with a bang last Monday when it was discovered that Peter Marriner, acting chairperson and election agent of the Ladywood Constituency Labour Party was until 1976 a member of a virulent Nazi organisation in this country — the British Movement.

As the Socialist Unity candidate for Ladywood, Raghib Ahsan, a shop-steward at Rover Solihull, declared: 'It is a murky and sordid tale. We need a thorough labour movement enquiry into this whole affair. I will certainly be raising it in my election campaign.'

It was Socialist Challenge reporters who first investigated the story and made it available to Socialist Unity, who released it nationally. Marriner claims that he was merely infiltrating the fascists for reasons of research for his thesis. But Maurice Ludmer, editor of the anti-fascist journal Searchlight said he had enough evidence to suggest that 'Marriner was a right-wing infiltrator'. Marriner could not explain satisfactorily to us why he had joined a left-wing group, 'Workers Fight', in 1975, but Sean Magama, a leader of the group at that time said: 'We strongly suspect he was doing entry work for the fascists.'

In 1976 he was publicly acknowledged as a 'Leader of the

National Youth Movement', by the BM's organ British Patriot. He was also associated with Column 88.

Marriner holds high positions in the Labour Party in Ladywood. There is a large black community in the area. He recently said: 'We believe our policies would help anyone — be they black, brown, or white.' The question is which policies, Mr. Marriner? Socialist Unity candidate, Raghib Ahsan, will be repeating this question every day unless we get an answer.

For more information on Ladywood see Page 9

Editorial

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

The fruits of the Lib-Lab pact

LAST WEEK SAW the formal end of the Social Contract. Phase Two of incomes policy passed away, unlamented, on 1 August. But Healey and Callaghan are continuing artificial respiration through the TUC leaders' support for the 12 month rule.

Last week also saw a series of set-backs for the Grunwick strikers in the most important struggle in Britain today. First came the Appeal Court reversal of the High Court decision to support the ACAS recommendation for union recognition.

Jumping into the breach came Norman Stagg of the Cricklewood postal workers, Roy Grantham of APEX, and Labour Minister Denis Howell. By the end of the day they had successfully managed to end the postal boycott, withdraw strike committees backing for the day of mass action on 8 August, and open up a new period of bitter struggle to bring the dispute to a successful conclusion.

Although the main prop for the Government's right-wing policies is their partnership with the trade union leaders, they are not discriminating as to their choice of allies. The Liberals are happy to accept the role that Callaghan has offered them, policing the White Paper on incomes policy.

Now Callaghan can say to any group of workers who go into struggle against the wages norm that, if they succeed, the Liberals will bring down the Government.

But Callaghan has an even more obnoxious ally in the wings. It is now public knowledge that Michael Foot, ex-darling of the 'left', has concluded a deal with Enoch Powell and the Ulster Unionists. The Unionists' side of the deal is clear. They have already abstained on some crucial issues to back up the Government. What the pay-off from Labour amounts to is less obvious.

Certainly high on the list is increased representation of the reactionary bloc in the House of Commons, strengthening the Loyalists' hands in extracting more repression against the Nationalist minority in the north. But that may be a long time coming, so we can expect to see yet another boost to the repressive forces in Ireland following their big jump after the Loyalists' strike earlier this year.

These sort of alliances by Callaghan and Healey have one objective — making the working class pay for the capitalist crisis.

They are preparing the way for a massive Tory majority at the General Election. But the more sinister forces like the Loyalists and the National Front are also growing plumper on Labour's diet of austerity, and denial of democratic rights. Labour has forgotten that it was elected as a result of a successful miners' strike which brought down Heath. Callaghan & Co's attack on strikers and their pact with the Liberals will bring Labour down as well.

We believe that Labour's policies have to be opposed all along the line, including in the electoral arena. That is why we are giving full support to the Socialist Unity candidate, Raghieb Ahsan, in the Ladywood by-election. Socialist Unity is calling for the broadest unity of action against Labour's policies.

They will be utilising the campaign to stress the lessons of Grunwick and the need to fight fascism and racism. They will be combatting the politics of despair and promoting socialist policies to answer the crisis. Follow their example, and that of militants outside Grunwick. Don't let them grind us down.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE will be taking a two-week break in August. Our last issue before the break will appear on 11 August. The next issue will appear on 1 September. Supporters should increase their order for the next issue. Ring John East at 01-359 8371.

Grunwick strike on dangerous detour. Who's to blame?

TWO MAJOR blows were struck this week against the Grunwick strike for union recognition. One was the calling off of the day of action to stop the scab buses on 8 August — thereby allowing the massive support for the strike to be frittered away.

The other was the ending of the postal boycott at Cricklewood sorting office — originally initiated because of the mass picketing, as the first step towards the national boycott and solidarity action needed to bring rapid victory.

It was not Ward who delivered these blows to the strike through his whining appeals to the courts. Nor the National Association for Freedom, with its scab drivers and private postal network.

Nor were they the result of the weakness of the labour movement. The Grunwick strikers have shown their determination to maintain the strike. The Cricklewood postal workers showed their willingness to take action in support of the strikers, as have the thousands of others who have stood on the picket line.

These setbacks were unnecessary — the result of the misleadership of Roy Grantham and Tom Jackson and their supporters in the APEX and post office workers' union leaderships.

Instead of seeing that relying on the courts could only lead to defeat; that Ward's appeal and the Scarman inquiry are aimed at dragging out the dispute and demobilising the wave of support for the strikers, these 'leaders' prefer to 'take the heat out of the situation'.

And where has reliance on the courts led the Grunwick workers and the rest of the labour movement?

Tom Jackson argued that the boycott at Cricklewood had to stop because it might 'jeopardise the postal workers' hope that Parliament would restore their right to strike'. Since when has the best way to win the right to take industrial action been to stop taking industrial action when threatened?

PENTONVILLE 5

Had the Pentonville 5 done that, the unions would still be shackled by the Tories' Industrial Relations Act. The best way to make sure that postal workers were given the right to strike would be to spread the boycott, demand the support of the TUC, and appeal for action by the rank and file in other unions should the UPW be threatened.

Roy Grantham first suggested the court of inquiry to 'take the heat out of the situation'. 'Militancy within the law' is the slogan of APEX — which means



beating your chest with threats of action and mass pickets at a later date, while holding back the mass pickets and demobilising the mass support won for the strike.

Like Jackson, Grantham thinks that continuing the mass action might 'prejudice the court of inquiry'. This is certainly true.

CONFRONTATION

With the mass pickets growing, the boycott spreading, and the whole labour movement standing full square behind Grunwick strikers, the bosses are much more likely to put pressure on Ward through Scarman's inquiry to call it a day — before they find themselves in a still bigger confrontation with the labour movement.

Grantham and Jackson are not alone in their misleadership. Urging them on is the TUC.

Despite its call for all affiliated unions to 'intensify their practical aid to those on strike', at no time has it pledged itself to action in support of the post office union and called for an extension of the boycott. At no time has it called for the solidarity strike action which would mean an early victory in the strike.

The Employment Protection Act, upon which the TUC has placed so much emphasis as a fig leaf to cover its betrayals under the Social Contract, is now shown to be what it is — a long detour of inquiries which, even if the law lords do rule in favour of the strikers at the end of the day, force the employer to do nothing.

At the moment the 'peaceful' way of settling strikes — the Employment Protection Act — has been relegated to the dustbin. Grantham, Jackson and the rest should join it.

Fascists' answer to Grunwick strike: The Big Stick

THE NATIONAL Front has been keeping very quiet about Grunwick. Apart from NF members in such towns as Cambridge selling *Free Nation*, the paper of the National Association for Freedom, the Front has maintained a low profile on its attitude to the strike.

After all, it is difficult for them to argue against the strike as they like to pretend that they stand for the interests of working people — that is, white workers. For instance, in 1975 *Britain First* — one of the filth sheets of the NF — boasted: 'Only National Front trade unionists are totally dedicated to fighting for the principle of free trade unionism'.

But although the NF like to deny it, a basic principle of their fascism is the need to destroy the independent organisations of the working class. And now, in the latest edition of the NF's *Spearhead*, when they comment for the first time on Grunwick, that attitude is reaffirmed.

The article is written by John Tyndall, 'chairman' of the NF, and is entitled 'Grunwick: License for Revolution'. Tyndall doesn't beat about the bush on how the Grunwick pickets should be dealt with:

'The sensible course would have been to equip the police

with water cannon, tear gas and rubber bullets, with full authority to use those implements as the situation required. The police could then have broadcast a warning over a loudspeaker informing the mob of their intention to clear the area with these various means at their command.'

Tyndall is not content with attacking the Grunwick pickets. He also screams about 'the absurdity of our picketing laws'. He calls for legal attacks on the right to picket:

'The obvious sane policy is to pass a law stipulating a maximum number of picketing lines or empowering the local chief of police to use his discretion as to what the number of pickets should be depending on the size of the place of work.'

Tyndall's other main moan is about the 'tragic decision of the Attorney General not to take action against those interfering with the Grunwick mail'.

So, for the NF, trade union pickets should be tear-gassed, laws should be passed limiting the right to picket, and the type of solidarity the Cricklewood sorters showed is 'tragic'.

Such are the principles of the NF's 'free trade unionism'. You have been warned.

OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

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

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

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

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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

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

NAME

ADDRESS

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

News from nowhere

How to clean bowl racism

AT LAST it's happened. For the past decade socialists and anti-racists have been grappling with the problem of how to deal with racism, both in society as a whole and specifically in the police force. Now we have the answer supplied by the Newham police and community relation officers. It's so simple that it makes us look stupid.

All that needs to be done is to organise a cricket match between the police and the black community. This is supposed to 'ease racial tension'. The first cricket match between the Newham police and the UTT (United Uncle Tom's Team) took place at West Ham Park on 2 August.

No doubt we can now expect the 13 August Lewisham demo to be transferred into a massive cricket match. And by the way, the next time black people are being brutalised by the police they can put an end to it simply by proposing a game of cricket.

The Medvedev Saga: Part 2

SO FIRST the distinguished Soviet dissident Zhores Medvedev was debarred from speaking at the Communist University of London (a story first revealed by News from Nowhere). Now we learn that an interview with him which was scheduled for publication in the CP's theoretical journal Marxism Today is not to be published there — and not for reasons of space.

The censored interview was handed over to the editors of Socialist Europe, a Eurocommunist journal on Eastern Europe. But it seems that it is not to be published there either. Instead of submitting it to Red Letters and having it rejected there as well, we would suggest that it is sent over to us. Socialist Challenge will be delighted to publish it. What about it comrades?

Liberated Collets versus Occupied Collets

THERE ARE two Collets bookshops of note in London. One is 'liberated' Collets which sells all left-wing literature regardless of its content. This is the one on Charing Cross Road, opposite Leicester Square tube. The other is the new giant Collets International Bookshop further up Charing Cross Road, near Tottenham Court Road tube.

This is 'occupied' Collets, a house bookshop of the Soviet Embassy. The Guardian recently revealed that two Russian thought-politicians referred to as 'Starsky and Hutch' regularly visit it to check that no 'subversive' books are on sale.

A reader informs us that when she visited occupied Collets recently she was shattered to find a copy of *Our Own People* by Elizabeth Poretzky. The book by the widow of Ignace Reiss, a leader of the Soviet secret police who went over to Trotsky and was murdered by Stalinist agents, is a scathing indictment of Stalinist Russia. It has been almost completely unobtainable over the years. We would therefore advise readers interested in securing a copy to take advantage of the illiteracy of Starsky and Hutch and buy it immediately.

Gutter news

WHEN WE published the poem 'The Love That Dares to Speak Its Name', for which *Gay News* had been prosecuted, copies of the poem plus a press release explaining why we had printed it were sent by Birmingham supporters to the *Birmingham Post* and the *Birmingham Evening Mail*.

Having had ample experience of the politics that pervade these gutter rags, no one expected a response. However the comrades never expected the reply they got. The poem was returned in an unstamped envelope, inscribed with the immortal words 'Shove both of these right up your commiearse'.

Obviously whoever returned it had assumed that many more copies had been sent out. In fact these were the only two so the source is easily identified. The editors of both papers have failed to reply to requests for information about who was responsible, although John Porter, the NUJ father of the chapel, has expressed his horror and surprise and has promised to try and get to the bottom of it.



Gaddafi's Newline

Photo: News Line

THE DAILY *News Line* is a socialist paper. It supports the Workers Revolutionary Party. That is why its appalling coverage of the Libyan-Egyptian conflict defies description. The paper has been carrying a bizarre campaign defending Gaddafi, and its supporters have been parading with placards emblazoned with slogans such as 'Hands Off Libyan Arab Revolution!' 'Hands Off Gaddafi!'

The idea that somehow Libya is a more progressive state than Egypt is clearly false. Both regimes are run by bonapartist dictators. Libya is a brutal military dictatorship, despite all its anti-imperialist rhetoric.

If the Libyan Government were putting advertisements in *News Line* or any other paper to publicise its case there could be no objections. But for the paper to do it independently is scandalous. The use of the words 'hands off' is particularly inappropriate as that is what Gaddafi does to 'thieves' and other 'offenders' against Libyan law — their hands are chopped off.

As for trades unions and left-wing parties, they are not permitted. Communists and leftists are executed. *News Line* is clearly not helping the Libyan Arab masses. Whether it is helping itself is a totally different question.

A story of blackmail, intimidation and lies

How the vote was lost

by GEOFF BELL

ON MONDAY morning Johnnie Patel, a leading figure on the strike committee, stood on the picket line and said: 'I'm so confused I don't want to say much. We may have been on the picket line for 12 months but we are still amateurs in the trade union movement.'

Johnnie Patel was one of those on the strike committee who, after a lot of hesitation, had voted three days earlier to accept the 'offer' of APEX General Secretary Roy Grantham, and call off the mass picket on 8 August.

By the following Monday, Johnnie appeared like someone who'd had too much to drink the night before and was realising in the soberness of the morning that he had done things he wished he had not. 'We were under pressure', he said.

Pressure is an understatement. Throughout the week leading up to 'Bloody Friday', the APEX bureaucracy had threatened, misled and coerced the Grunwick strike committee. As Johnnie implied, compared to Grantham and friends, the strikers were 'amateurs'.

It began on Monday 25 July. Grantham descended on the strike committee. In the words of someone who attended the meeting, Grantham was 'agitated and angry'. For three hours he insisted the planned mass action be called off. Eventually the strike committee voted by 2-1 to press ahead with closing down Grunwick on 8 August.

But Roy Grantham is not the type to accept the wishes of his union members. Two days later the strike committee was summoned to appear before the General Purposes Committee of APEX.

Leading the attack this time was Denis Howell, one time president of APEX and, of course, a Government Minister. He left little doubt in the strike committee's minds that he was speaking for the Labour Government.

SLANDERS

Howell's tactic was to slander and witch-hunt. 'There is a conspiracy afoot to undermine the union', he thundered. And he implied that it was not George Ward, or NAFF that was behind this plot, but Brent Trades Council. Still the strike committee stood firm: 8 August remained on.

Once more the bureaucrats refused to accept the decision. On Thursday a new delightful trick emerged. Grantham and Howell said they would cut the strike pay of the Grunwick workers if they didn't come into line. This is not allowed under APEX rules, and it was undisguised blackmail. The strike committee still resisted and voted to go ahead with 8 August.

Then came Friday and it was blackmail time again. Normally strike pay was handed out at 2pm, but on this occasion it was put off until the result of another strike committee meeting and a meeting of all the strikers.

This trick had the added

advantage that those strikers who were not so involved in the picket line stayed for the full meeting. Being not so involved, they were more likely to toe the Grantham line. Those most involved, on the other hand, the Asian women, voted throughout for 8 August.

At 5pm Grantham was still getting nowhere, but his fellow bureaucrats in the Union of Postal Workers was having more success. At a meeting of the Cricklewood sorters, Norman Stagg, assistant general secretary of the UPW, said the postal workers' hardship money would be stopped if they continued to refuse to handle George Ward's mail.

Stagg threatened them with suspension from the union if they maintained their solidarity. As this would mean that they wouldn't belong to a union and as the Post Office is a closed shop, it also meant that the Cricklewood sorters would lose their jobs. It is difficult to imagine anything more sick than to argue that because of a trade union principle such as the closed shop the Cricklewood sorters would be sacked by actions of their own union. But it just worked. By 51 votes to 48 the Cricklewood sorters decided to stop the boycott.

COERCION

When the news reached the Grunwick strikers' meeting, Grantham used it for all his worth. One of the strike committee's arguments had been that to call off 8 August would let the postal workers down.

That argument now fell, and Grantham used it to his best advantage. This, combined with the coercion, the intimidation and the threats won the day.

As a concession Grantham promised he would see to it there would be 800 pickets, 200 on each gate, from now on. But by last Monday there were only a quarter of what Grantham had promised.

Another promise was that if Ward ignored Scarman, Grantham would call a mass picket. Quizzed on that afterwards, it was put to him by a strike committee member: 'Do you think Scarman will criticise mass picketing?'

'Yes.'

'And are you saying that the APEX executive will still call a mass picket despite this?'

'Well, it will be difficult.'

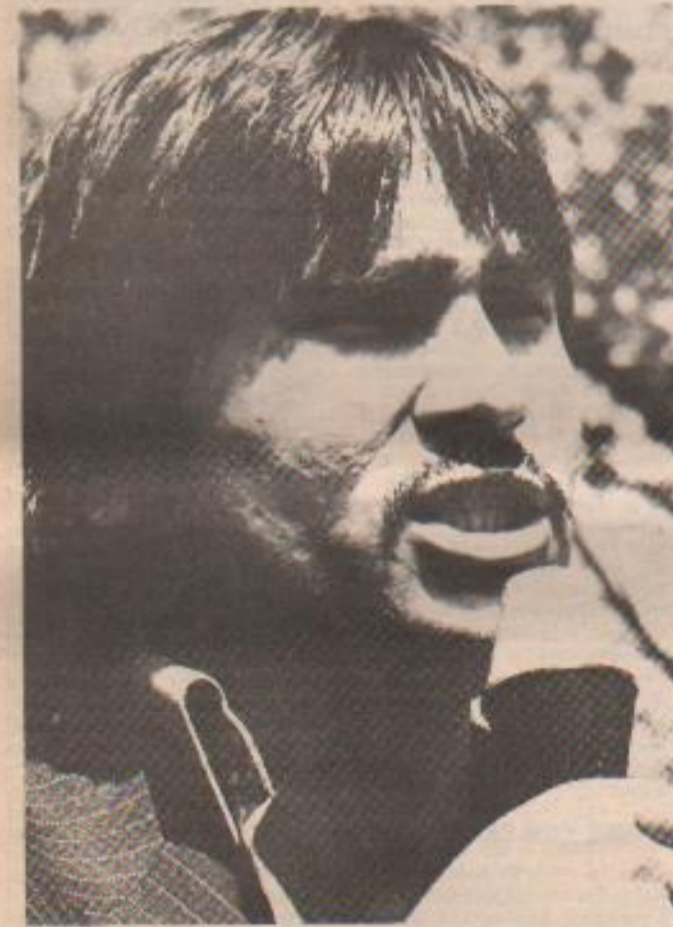
As the meeting ended on Bloody Friday, the strikers started shouting at each other. Jayaben Desai, the strike committee treasurer, was in tears. Mahmood Ahmad, the secretary, who had — like Desai — voted against the lifting of 8 August, was also angry.

Roy Grantham had done one more thing George Ward had failed to do — he had reduced the strike committee to tears, and even if only for a short time, divided the strikers.

By last Monday, Jayaben Desai was still too upset to talk much, but the little she did say needs repeating. 'We are the people who are creating the power, and with that power we will win in the end.' Or as Tom Dorkin, the chairperson of Brent Trades Council, put it: 'We will rise up again.'



Jayaben Desai: She was furious at the decision.



Mahmood Ahmad: He fought back.



Denis Howell: The referee who cheated.

Photo: ANDREW WARD (Report)

The watchword for NUPE members: Rely on Fisher, and we're sunk

THE LEFT FACE of public employee's leader Alan Fisher vanished last week as he cast his vote with the majority on the TUC General Council in favour of maintaining the 12-month rule for Phase Two pay settlements. Besides the well-publicised abstention vote of Jack Jones, four union leaders voted against the TUC statement: Clive Jenkins (ASTMS), Alan Sapper, civil technicians; John Morton, musicians; and Doug Grieve, tobacco workers.

Fisher's vote to endorse Healey's wage cutting package will have severe repercussions for public sector

workers. For a start, NUPE members will be denied the £50 minimum wage which their annual conference instructed Fisher to pursue.

At that conference many delegates were angered by Fisher's blatant misrepresentation of the vote for a £50 minimum wage as being a vote of support for discussions with the Government over Phase Three. A number of delegates have since issued an appeal for a meeting of left-wing activists to begin to organise for their views inside the union.

Ron Pearson, a NUPE member from Portsmouth

hospitals, told Socialist Challenge: 'It is not just the leadership's support for the wage cuts that concerns us. Cuts, unemployment, union democracy, the rights of women and black members — these are all issues around which the left must organise.'

Full details of the meeting, to be held on 3 September, can be obtained from Ron Pearson at 98 Stride Road, Portsmouth, Hants. Here we publish a contribution to the debate about how to organise in the union from MARTIN TOLMAN, NUPE branch membership secretary and shop steward from Birmingham.

Many trade unionists would probably think of the National Union of Public Employees as the union which has been at the forefront of the campaign against the cuts. Certainly this is true for public sector workers. In the past two years NUPE has increased its membership by 142,000 and now has over 650,000 members.

But the last union conference showed clearly that behind the 'militancy' of the Fisher leadership, lie the same policies of class collaboration that have been pursued by the union bureaucracy as a whole through its support for the Social Contract. NUPE's *Economic Review 1977*, endorsed by the recent conference, states: 'The objectives set out in the original Social Contract between the TUC and the Labour Party in 1973 have not been pursued by the Government', and argues that the Government's economic strategy 'was at variance with the manifesto commitments made by the Labour Party'.

Thus the NUPE leadership argues that the only thing wrong with the Social Contract has been Labour's failure to implement it!

This shows the 'campaign to secure a radical change in course in the Government's economic policies' in a clearer light — an attempt to persuade the Government through a pressure campaign to go back to the 'original' Social Contract.

CLASS COLLABORATION IN PRACTICE

The results of this approach have been demonstrated in the

cuts campaign. Local 'guerrilla action' — which left large sections of the membership isolated and never mobilised the full weight of the union — was substituted for national strike action against the cuts.

At the joint public sector union conference on the social wage in

January, Ruskin economists tried to persuade the Government that NUPE's policies were more 'realistic' for solving capitalism's problems. Protests, but no real fight launched. That would have meant a confrontation with the Government and the Social Contract.



Alan Fisher addresses the 17 November demonstration against the cuts last year. Then he promised the nationalisation of the banks, but so far he hasn't even resisted Government pay policy.

On wages it was the same pattern. After the £6 limit was introduced the executive accepted it. So, too, they accepted Phase Two. Then at the last conference Fisher argued that NUPE members had nothing to gain from a 'free for all'.

PHASE THREE

He said the door should be left open for the executive to negotiate on Phase Three. Yet everyone knew that the Liberals were only supporting Labour to get more wage cuts. In other words, Fisher would be negotiating how much wages were going to be cut. In addition to the 12-month rule, Healey has now introduced a 10 per cent wage limit, enforced for NUPE members by strict cash limits imposed on public sector budgets.

LEFT MUST ORGANISE

The failure of Fisher and the union leadership to launch any real fight against the Social Contract and the Government's policies is why we need an organised left wing in NUPE. All union activists who are opposed to the Social Contract and

believe workers must engage in mass action to defend their living standards need to come together to organise for these policies in the union.

The executive is organised to fight for its rotten policies because it controls the union machinery. The right wing is able to organise for its line because it has the capitalist newspapers pushing its policies.

The left can only rely on itself to organise its fight. This will involve militants from many different political organisations and parties — and many in none. A NUPE left must be democratically organised so that all can fight for their positions.

Minority positions and views have to be represented on any national co-ordinating body that is set up, and on the editorial board of any news sheet. Organising on a non-democratic basis, as happened in the Rank and File group in the National Union of Teachers, will make impossible the real uniting of different forces in the struggle.

COMMUNIST PARTY

Until now there has been no organised left in NUPE. Only *Hospital Worker* has existed as an organised force, and clearly this cannot organise the left in NUPE, if only because barely a third of the union's membership work in the health service. Responsibility for the lack of an organised left rests in large part with the Communist Party, who see the task of the left as pushing Alan Fisher and others on the executive gradually further to the left.

Where Fisher takes action such as calling the 17 November mass demonstration against the cuts, then of course the job of the left is to support that action and develop it into a still broader fight back. At the same time, the left must be prepared to act independently to organise against Fisher whenever he hesitates, or when he acts against the members' interests.

Never relying on left leaders is the watchword. This can only be done by being prepared to organise the left in the union so that it is not reliant on Fisher for a lead.

TASKS FOR LEFT

At the NUPE conference a resolution was passed calling for a minimum wage of £50, threshold agreements, a 35-hour week, and other policies.

This is not an ideal claim for NUPE members — I think that

an across the board increase is necessary to make up for two years of wage cuts. It should specify no time delay in receiving threshold payments so that net wages automatically go up by 1 per cent with every 1 per cent increase in prices.

IMPLEMENT POLICY

However, the first step is to demand the executive submits conference's claim and implements conference policy by preparing a fight for it. Because we know that a 30 per cent increase — which is what a £50 minimum wage would mean — would break the cash limits, we will have a real fight on our hands. But we won't win this fight by telling each other how weak we are compared to, say, the miners, as the executive did at conference.

We have to make ourselves as strong as possible. This means local government and health workers jointly striking for their claims. It means having national stewards' conferences to plan the fight. It means a campaign in the membership for the claim.

And it entails winning support from private sector workers, by showing that our wages, jobs and their services are best defended by aiding us to break through the cash limits. For this reason we should demand that social spending is automatically increased to keep in line with inflation.

An organised NUPE left could discuss this out, produce a broadsheet for the branches and workplaces, and campaign for these policies in the union structures. It can also prepare a campaign to reverse the union's policy at the next union conference.

STRENGTHEN RANK AND FILE

An organised left in NUPE is part of the struggle to strengthen the union at rank and file level. It is vital that we build joint shop stewards' committees in the workplaces, and increase the control over campaigns and strikes by those who are waging them through elected strike committees and regional and national conferences of workplace and branch representatives.

So, too, is a fight to democratise the union, with branches having the right to make strikes official, elected full-timers, and the right to recall all union officials.

An organised left in NUPE can only aid achieving these policies, and offer an alternative to the union leadership's class collaborationist policies on all fronts.

PUBLIC SECTOR ON THE MARCH

Weir fight continues

THE OCCUPATION of the Weir maternity hospital in South London to prevent closure has now been called off. This follows the manoeuvre by the area health authority to withdraw its proposals to convert wards into offices, and then use fake statistics to claim the Weir was unsafe and endangered lives, and therefore could not continue as a maternity hospital.

The local leadership of the public employees' union, NUPE, then forced through the calling off of the occupation at a mass meeting of union members where they attempted to stop stewards from the hospital speaking. The Weir support committee is still waging a campaign to save the hospital despite the ending of the work-in.

Liverpool health axe

FIVE LIVERPOOL hospitals and a quarter of the 680 beds in the Scliffon General Hospital are

under threat of closure. The 11.1 per cent unemployment in Liverpool will soar even higher if the health authority plans go through: 3,300 of the current 11,800 hospital jobs are on the chopping block.

These massive cuts are being carried out under the smoke-screen of a new B20-bed teaching hospital which is scheduled to open in October. But with the loss of 1,300 nursing staff and 1,000 ancillary workers, the new hospital will be totally inadequate to meet the needs of Liverpoolians.

Colin Barnett, regional officer of the National Union of Public Employees, has declared that the lightning strikes which have rocked city hospitals for the past fortnight will continue until the authorities have guaranteed that ancillary workers' take home pay will not be cut by the scaling down of the service.

Barnett's demands may save wage packets in the short-term, but they aren't going to save jobs or the health service. Unless the fight to defend wages is linked to that of jobs and the provision of health care, not only will health workers lose out, but the health of other workers will too.

Playground workers strike

ONE HUNDRED marchers mounted a picket at Hammersmith town hall, West London on Monday in support of the unofficial, indefinite strike action taken by the area's 50 playground workers.

The workers are disgusted with the pay and conditions of assistant play leaders. The local government workers' union, NALGO, has been negotiating for two years to place these workers in a grading scheme.

The strikers are demanding grade 3 wages of £2,000 a year, plus London weighting which they don't presently receive. They are also determined to change other appalling conditions — £38.40 for a 38-hour week, the lack of any sick pay until six months service, and the full 12 months of service necessary before holidays can be taken.

Support from local residents, children and labour movement bodies is growing. It is vital if the town hall picket in King Street, Hammersmith, is to be maintained.

Hounslow demo

A MASS RALLY and demonstration are the next steps in the vigorous campaign against the closure of the casualty ward and the threatened removal of 66 beds at Hounslow Hospital in West London. Hospital staff — entering the 23rd week of their work-in — have chosen 31 August for the next massive show of opposition to the area health authority's plans. This is the date for which closure has been scheduled.

In defending Hounslow facilities, the defence committee has placed responsibility for the crisis in the public sector where it belongs. Chris Potter of the defence committee explained: 'We refuse to accept the AHA decision that Government policy makes it necessary to put cash before patient care. We reject the Government's entire programme of cuts in public expenditure, whether it be health, education, transport or building.'

Assemble: Wednesday 31 August at 2pm, Hounslow Hospital, Staines Road, Hounslow (nearest tube, Hounslow Central).



Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM (IFU)

You never stand alone — on the dole queue

Unemployment reached a new peak this month. 6.8 per cent of the total working population of England, Scotland, Wales and the Six Counties was out of work. Hardest hit were school-leavers and women. In fact, married women account for 10 per cent of the unemployment register in contrast to 5 per cent three years ago. And yet the percentages cannot give a true idea of what unemployment really means. MARK TURNBULL reports from a traditionally high unemployment area.

'You'll never walk alone', the famous anthem of Liverpool football fans, is now the tune of Liverpool's unemployed. It's no longer one or two people in a street who can't find work, but whole districts of Merseyside.

By August there are expected to be a staggering 12,000 jobless teenagers in Liverpool alone, making the situation as bad — and possibly worse — as the 1930s. For many people it has always been like the '30s. The 'post-war boom' completely bypassed them. Traditional industries such as the docks, shipbuilding and construction have been in decline for decades, with no new industry to replace them.

The local papers show just how severe the problem is. Last week over 600 people applied for 11 jobs in a hotel. Four jobs are still going because most of the applicants were under age for work in licensed premises! Even the national press picks stories up when they are sensational enough. Like the one of 17-year-old Christine Preston. She was the lucky person out of 3,000 jobless youngsters to apply for a vacancy in the Knowsley area. It makes a great story for Fleet Street but never a word is said about the 84,000 others in Merseyside who are still left, waiting and hoping for work.

PACKAGE

No wonder that the Manpower Services Commission have singled out Knowsley and Liverpool as two of the principle youth unemployment black-spots in the country. But what does that mean? What is the effect of the five-year package that Employment Secretary Albert Booth has wrapped up? Not a lot.

When the Government first announced its plan for youth unemployment last month, it was widely greeted by Labour leaders. The TUC gave its full backing to the £168 million project.

The employers are not as enthusiastic. In a survey carried out by the Manpower Services

Commission last month, 78 per cent of the 1,300 employers interviewed said that they would not support the Government's plans. The vast majority said they would not take on extra workers whatever incentives were offered, but they would rely on getting more work out of their existing labour forces.

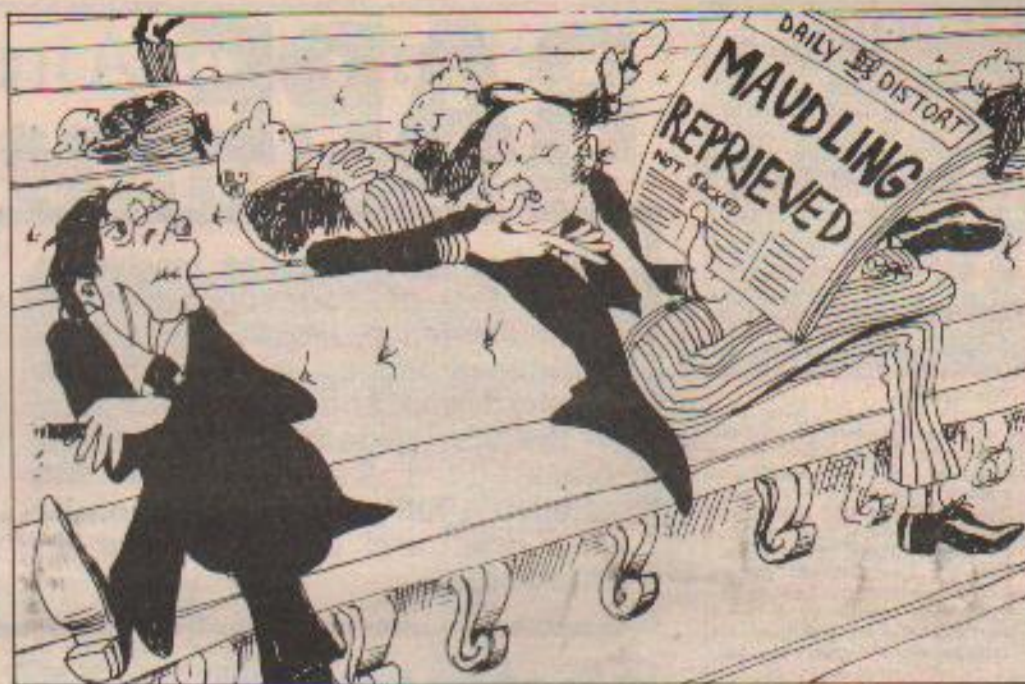
These job creation schemes have given work to some people — but it's only for a year and then it's back to the dole again. For new school-leavers there's the fantastic sum of £18 a week to tidy up, paint, sweep or clean.

PROMISES, PROMISES

Amongst unemployed young people the promises and forecasts of the Labour Government and the trade unions are met with distrust. The 3,000 delegates at the National Assembly on Unemployment who indicated their great concern for the unemployed in March 1976 have not been heard from since. Equally as silent have been the two 'left' MPs in Liverpool — Eric Heffer and Eddie Loyden.

When the wage and condition claims go in from 1 August the question of unemployment and working hours should be there. The immediate granting of a 35-hour week would make a big impact on the 1.6 million jobless figure. And it would be a good basis to go on fighting until there is a reduction of the working week without loss of pay so that everyone has a job whether for 25 or 35 hours a week.

The demand for such a sliding scale of hours can unite the trade union movement and win back to its ranks the unemployed. Trade unions and other labour movement bodies should keep a register of all unemployed people in their trade union and waive their union dues. In organising the fight to get their members work, they will reinforce the spirit of trade union strength and solidarity which has been lacking among the unemployed.



"Hah! And they say we're doing nothing about unemployment!"

Leyland workers must reject mouldy carrot

INDUSTRY Secretary Eric Varley made it quite clear last week how the Labour Government intends to try and impose continued wage cuts on British Leyland workers. He announced that the National Enterprise Board would be providing another £100 million for Leyland if it was satisfied that progress was being made on 'industrial relations reforms'.

Varley made it quite clear that in addition to corporate bargaining, this meant respecting Healey's pay norms. This thinly-veiled blackmail is nothing more than an attempt to split the workforce — accept the pay norms or jobs may be threatened.

With Varley's reassuring words backing them up, Leyland management are attempting to forestall a wages offensive by Leyland workers.

Faced with interim claims by Jaguar and Triumph workers who refused to settle under Phase Two, for between £15 and £20 a week, Leyland management have made an offer to the union ad-hoc committee which will go to the senior stewards' meeting in Birmingham on Thursday.

The offer dangles a rather mouldy carrot of £10 a week for some Leyland workers — parity payments in four stages over four years! But even this doesn't come for nothing in the Leyland world of corporate bargaining and a common starting date for all rises is asked in return.

The deal is aimed at soothing the toolmakers in particular, who are striking next Monday in order to hold a national meeting



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

Workers at Lucas in Birmingham are faced with the continuing threat of a lock-out in response to the toolroom dispute over a bonus system. The bonus system was agreed prior to 1975, but the management says it is outside Phase 2.

to consider further action over parity and differentials, at the same time as isolating the Jaguar and Triumph workers who threaten to open the way for other Leyland workers to restore the cuts in their living standards. The working party set up by the unions which discussed this deal with the management is the

same one which put forward the 'security of earnings' document so roundly rejected by Leyland workers in February.

The offer must be rejected again — and instead Leyland plants should submit claims to fight alongside the Jaguar and Triumph workers to restore living standards.

Ward's doubles ..in York

★ After having up to £28 docked from their wages, workers at Silverline Caravans, York, went on strike for a guaranteed wage. After promises from the management, they returned to work. But, about 60 workers had joined the Transport and General Workers Union. Two days later, 45 workers were sacked. Management's only comment was: 'You sacked yourselves when you brought a union in here'. However, the management had made a mistake — only 43 of the 45 were in the union.

Already support for the strike has come from various organisations and individuals, including a boycott by the Hull dockers — but the T&GWU refuses to make it official. Resolutions demanding that the strike be given official status should be sent to the T&GWU. Donations and messages of support from other trade unionists should be sent to: Alan Beard, 31 Lime Avenue, Stockton Lane, York. Your support is welcome on the mass picket called for 8.00am on 15 August.

...and Bristol

★ 'I AM GOING to stop you boys from ever getting a good job. I've done it before to other people I didn't like...' A typical comment from Arthur Radford of Radford Electronics in Bristol where a six-week strike for union recognition has just forced Bristol's George Ward to meet with an official from TASS, the Engineering Union's white-collar section.

Radford, who until now has consistently refused to see either ACAS or TASS, has also favoured sackings — for 'not sitting correctly', and 'for being overweight'. He also goes in for spreading excrement where the pickets stand.

His lackeys act in the same contemptible way. Radford's accountant drove into strike committee member Chris Clarke last Monday with such force that Clarke was thrown over the bonnet of the car.

The broad support gained for the struggle indicates the determination to stamp out the near-derth ways of the George Wards of this country. Mass pickets every Wednesday and Friday involve up to a hundred militants, including 50 workers from Welding Industry.

Heathrow workers have agreed to boycott Radford's products and one of them is scheduled to speak about the Grunwick struggle in Bristol.

Donations and messages of support to: Dave Yeomans, Room 5, 2nd Floor, York House, Bond Street, Bristol. Tel: Bristol 45808.

NUJ leaders barter press freedom

'The issue is the freedom of the nation'. With these pompous words The Times concluded an editorial last week on the strike by journalists in Darlington.

The strike is over the right of members of the National Union of Journalists to operate a closed shop on the Darlington group of newspapers owned by Westminster Press.

For The Times such a demand would place a great deal of power in the hands of the NUJ which 'is not entitled to the confidence which a stable and moderate body would enjoy'.

The reason for this outburst was a promise that this week the print unions working on the Darlington papers would give 'full and effective support' to the 108 striking journalists. If this promise is carried out it means the Northern Echo and Evening

Despatch will not be printed. But in securing this co-operation from the print unions, the NUJ made a massive concession on the issue of the closed shop and 'press freedom' which The Times fails to appreciate.

The NUJ leadership has agreed to abide by the six 'safeguards for press freedom' recommended by the recent Royal Commission report on the press. These include the statement that: 'Freedom of a journalist to act, write and speak in accordance with conscience without being inhibited by the threat of expulsion or other disciplinary action by his union or his employer'.

On the surface this sounds all very liberal and correct, but in fact it cuts across the NUJ's own code of conduct which is meant to be official union policy. For

example section ten of the code says: 'A journalist shall not originate material which encourages discrimination on grounds of race, colour, creed, gender or sexual orientation'.

The Royal Commission recommendation is an obvious contradiction to this. In giving journalists the 'right to speak', it means NUJ members can now write racist, fascist, sexist material and there is nothing the NUJ can do about it. It overrides the right of NUJ members to file complaints against those who defy the union's code of conduct, a growing practice within the union.

The essential reason the NUJ leadership have in effect abandoned the code of conduct is that they see the issue of the closed shop in entirely trade union terms — rather than as a means of using it as stopping editorial

distortions, and right-wing propaganda. Accepting the Royal Commission proposals may or may not win the Darlington dispute, but its overall effect is to reinforce the 'right' of editors and newspaper owners to say what they like in their newspapers. It is a license to lie, and a license to spread racism.

★ Our proof reader suffered a double blind spot. Last week's correction to Jonathan Hammond's contribution on 'The State of the Press' repeated a misprint in the original article. The correction is that: 'It is certainly not true to say that all or even most NUJ SWP members' share the view of 'hard-core SWP members in Journalist Charter' that it should be an outpost of the Socialist Workers Party. With apologies again.

LOBBY THE TUC CONGRESS

5 September. 11.00am Blackpool
Called by Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions

Supported by: Manchester AUEW District Committee; Manchester TASS No 10 Divisional Committee; CSEU District No 29

Socialist Challenge calls on all its supporters in the trade union movement to rally and demand:

- ★ Abide by conference decisions
- ★ No TUC deal with Healey. No to the 12 month rule
- ★ End unemployment. Reduce the working week without loss of pay
- ★ Wage claims to restore living standards with automatic compensation for inflation
- ★ Full support for picketing and boycott of Grunwick
- ★ TUC must support ALL workers in struggle

A fight on all fronts

IT WAS GOOD to see Socialist Challenge taking up the issue of rape and women's self-defence. However both Jane Petrie and Ann Bond wrote disappointing articles.

Rape is not only 'a product of sexist decaying capitalist society' but — like all crimes against women — has existed everywhere on a vast scale since the beginning of patriarchy and class society. And like all crimes against women it is never defensible, however much the attacker himself is oppressed and exploited by capitalism.

Rape is not only 'a product of sexist decaying capitalist society' but — like all crimes against women — has existed everywhere on a vast scale since the beginning of patriarchy and class society. And like all crimes against women it is never defensible, however much the attacker himself is oppressed and exploited by capitalism.

The new feminist consciousness that makes us want to fight our oppression as women is largely responsible for rape becoming an 'issue' at this time. Rape, like the battering of women, is always there in a male-dominated society, but it 'appears' and 'disappears' according to whether women are organising to fight it.

If we look at the experience of Women's Aid we realise that it is not a question of choosing one form of action and rejecting others. We have to fight on all levels. On the level of the bourgeois legal system we have to demand that it recognises rape as a crime and treats it as such.

Why do women not seek help from the legal system? Women hesitate to call the police, not just because we don't want repressive action taken against our attackers, but because we know that the police, far from helping us, will annihilate us and then turn our attackers into innocent victims. We know that the legal system works against women while pretending to defend us.

Revolutionary socialists do use 'reformist' demands around other issues. Why the hesitation over the question of rape? It would seem that the double standard applies here too. We should not criticise the Labour left for 'directing their efforts around the 1976 Act and calling for minimum sentences of 5 years', but criticise them for believing that the solution can only be found at this level.

Revolutionary socialists call for black self-defence and encourage self-activity of the working class. In these cases taking the law into our own hands is regarded as positive action but when rape and women is discussed attitudes change. The fact that women do not live in communities is a technical problem not a reason for not

organising our own defence, as the Socialist Challenge writers imply.

Black self-defence groups also 'open the door to State intervention'. If State intervention and fear of arrests prevents revolutionary activity we might as well not bother. So if women are arrested for 'retaliation' we become double victims of the rape attack under the bourgeois legal system.

If black self-defence is positive, why should Jane Petrie consider feminist vigilante squads to be reactionary or confused with fascists? She points out that women 'can't go out alone after dark'. Often women have to. Feminist car patrols around particularly bad neighbourhoods would be a good start. As conscious feminists we certainly don't intend to ask men to defend or retaliate for us.

According to Ann Bond, collective self-defence (feminist vigilante squads) are retaliatory and the only self-defence she supports is that of the individual, provided that her attacker(s) acts first presumably so that it can be seen to be self-defence. This is not only unrealistic but suicidal. Even after a few karate lessons the average woman alone doesn't stand a chance against a man. So in this case retaliation is our only defence.

Revolutionary socialists should support the following points for the women's movement to take up: (1) Rape crisis centres to be set up and controlled by the women's movement with the demand for state funding; (2) Support for the establishing of feminist vigilante squads and retaliation self-defence; (3) Work on the parliamentary level around the 1976 Act.

The links between the Women's Aid Federation and Women Against Rape are obvious. It would be a good idea if Socialist Challenge approached these two organisations for articles on rape to continue the debate. Finally, I found the illustration as ambiguous and confusing as the articles themselves.

BERT HUSBAND (Bradford)

On your point concerning the cartoon: our intention was to direct it against the guardsmen. In retrospect, we can see that it was open to an ambiguous interpretation, which we greatly regret. That was not our intention, and we shall be extremely careful in future.

RAPE...

Socialist Challenge has received a great deal of correspondence on sexual violence. Most of the contributions published here have had to be shortened, and others held over. In the first issue after the summer break, on 1 September, we will publish a full-page contribution by Ann Bond and Dodie Wepler on this subject.

What fate for rapists?

THE DEBATE inside the women's movement on the question of rape has raised a long overdue consideration on the left on how women must be defended against sexist attacks on capitalist society and our approach to anti-social behaviour.

As socialists we not only reject the bourgeois definition of crime but also the legal and penal system of the capitalist social order. We understand that social behaviour (within which we situate behaviour defined as criminal) is socially determined, and as such not biological or in any way inherent. Therefore the potentiality exists of its eradication with the transformation of social relationships.

In terms of bourgeois defined crimes, the vast majority are acts against property and as such relate directly to the alienation of the masses from the means of production. It is also a fact that the majority of the working class crime is intra and not inter-class in its choice of target and area of activity. The whole legal structure and its operation are a form of social control of the working class. Our task as revolutionary socialists is not to help the police and the courts or to design better prisons.

What is the correct response to the call for stricter (longer) prison sentences for people guilty of rape, or for that matter, any other anti-social behaviour such as racist attacks on blacks,

child battering and woman beating?

Does there not exist a contradiction between our understanding of social behaviour and the workings of the institutions of capitalist domination, on the one hand, and the advancing support for a call for the use of these very institutions for the trial and imprisonment of predominantly working class people?

As socialists and non-idealists we do not expect the sudden disappearance of all anti-social behaviour with the overthrow of the capitalist system. But with the victory of the proletarian revolution will come the dismantling of bourgeois institutions. And as part of an alternative structure to the present system of social control will develop an appropriate system based on working class organisation — the election of judges by the community and the abolition of the capitalist penal system of social control.

But given that State power at present rests firmly in the hands of the bourgeoisie, must we not reject the use of (or appeal to) the legal system as a solution (or partial solution) in such matters as rape and race attacks?

And by rejecting the use of the legal and penal system are we therefore saying that rapist or racist attackers should not be imprisoned?

Or do we under certain circumstances call on the legal system, even where the attackers are themselves the victims of capitalist social relationships and when placed within the legal system become the victim of the of the repressiveness of the bourgeois state? And if such exceptions are to be made, where and on what basis is the line to be drawn?

TUNDE MAKANA (North London)

Women are not the problem

NUMEROUS women, including ourselves, were appalled by some of the notions in recent articles on rape in Socialist Challenge. You ask 'is women's self-defence possible?' and then seem to conclude that no, it isn't because we might end up like white racist vigilante groups.

This is to pander to the suspicious attitude towards women organising themselves that is present in the labour movement and the left in general. We consider this attitude to be not so much pro-black as anti-women.

Women are only too aware that the only time the State and media care about rape is when they can use it as propaganda — against minority groups, during wars, etc. (Most men are not angry about the suffering of women as people but about the violation of their property.) Women cannot and will not be made responsible for this.

In the 1930s, the Association of Southern Women Against Lynching fought a brave campaign disassociating themselves from the lynching performed in 'their' name. Feminists today have the same attitude.

But nor will we keep quiet about rape — whether the attacker is black, white or martian. Rape has and will exist in all societies which treat women as inferior and is used to keep women intimidated. Many men in the labour movement collude in that intimidation, while falling short of actual rape. There is a huge fight to be waged against this mentality.

Women cannot wait for the

labour movement to protect them, but must build up their strength now. In making demands on the labour movement we must challenge the notion that women are the problem and it is they who should be cleared from the streets rather than the men who do the raping.

While there is no alternative, we feel justified in using the police and the law in seeking protection. But this does not mean we are unaware of the role of the State in women's oppression. We know that this society needs rape (particularly of 'deviant' women — who choose to live without men, go out alone, lead active sex lives and so on). Verdicts like the Holdsworth one which bless rape should be challenged and at the same time women should organise to defend themselves.

Isolated, dependent women can be used by reactionary forces. Strong, confident and organised women cannot — hence the revolutionary dynamic of the women's movement. That women are now beginning to re-discover their physical strength should not be patronised, criticised, but encouraged. And Socialist Challenge should support them.

The debate on rape is to be welcomed, but Socialist Challenge must avoid taking a 'more-revolutionary-than-thou' attitude, particularly in view of you cartoon trivialisation of rape (the 'woman enjoy it really' syndrome). We expect this of the News of the World — but not from a revolutionary newspaper.

EILEEN FAIRWEATHER, DIANE LAMBERT, SIOBHIAN LENNON, JOANNE O'BRIEN, MARIA JASTRZEBSKA (West London)

Self defence is vital

WHILST I would say that the title over my article on self-defence — 'Is Women's Self-defence Possible' — was a misleading one, I don't think that it provided the basis for the misrepresentation of my views on the question that occurs in the above correspondence.

My support of women's self-defence stems from a very direct experience of the necessity of such defence. After finding myself in a hospital casualty ward after an attack directly as a result of attending a women's disco ('you filthy lesbian' were the words used at the time), my feminist anger and frustration plus a very sore head encouraged me to take up karate.

In my opinion, the formation of women's self-defence groups is one of the most positive aspects to come out of the fight against rape and rapists. I stated in that article that it is positive that women are developing their strength and learning to fight with skill and precision.

Furthermore, I did not exclude the possibility of women organising in groups for the purpose of self-defence. I do believe that we

must not align ourselves with reactionary calls for vigilante groups against muggers, and suchlike. But equally I have no qualms in agreeing with Women Against Rape that women capable of defending themselves and other women should be used to protect demonstrations and action against rape. It is important in cases such as the attacks which have been occurring in South London. Women are now beginning to consciously organise — they are going to and from the disco in groups, and escorting each other around the area. This is the type of on-going self-defence which women can organise collectively.

Finally, I would like to remark that, as far as I know, there is no group of women within the revolutionary left who are organising themselves into self-defence groups. Hopefully, as women become more proficient fighters, they will be able to pass their knowledge on and instruct their sisters on the revolutionary left.

ANN BOND (London)

& GAY BASHING

PETER BENYON was clubbed to death by a gang of six or seven armed with chair legs in North London a fortnight ago. The sole reason for this attack — as well as that on ice-skater John Curry — is that Benyon was gay. He was attacked as he left a gay club by a well-armed gang, out to deliberately severely injure or kill a gay person.

The blame for this particular death must be laid where it belongs. It occurred in the wake of the hysteria whipped up by Mary Whitehouse and her so-called morality crusaders. There is little doubt that her queer-bashing exercise in the courts has given these attacks respectability and encouragement.

This point was made by speaker after speaker at last Saturday's march through Earl's Court in London in defence of Gay News. Marchers heard parallels drawn with a gay man who was lynched in the United States in the midst of Anita Bryant's vicious anti-gay campaign.

This kind of violence stems from the extreme hatred and fear of gay people built into a society based on the heterosexual family. To be brought up in a family where the only example of adult sexual relations is a heterosexual one — and where this is seen as the model for every child's future

Gays march against assaults

— means that gays are feared, and that potential gayness of children is stifled.

Openly gay men present a frightening image to heterosexual men. In gays they see what they most fear in themselves — to be no longer a 'real man'. Lesbians present an even greater threat. In refusing to relate to men sexually they challenge men's sexual domination of women and bring into question forms of sexual expression which are dominated by the penis.

For these reasons lesbians suffer continual violence from men in public and private life. One particularly horrific example has been the attacks against

women leaving the women's disco in South London. Last month one woman lost an eye as a result of this violence.

Ending violence against gay people involves much more than simply putting an end to the propaganda and victimisations of the ruling class. It entails supporting the right of gays to collectively defend themselves against physical assault, and ending the massive compulsion to be heterosexual.

March against attacks on gays: Saturday 6 August, 1.30pm. Wood Green tube station to the Rainbow (where Peter Benyon was killed).



Gay News Defence march in London last Saturday.

Belfast women recount Army brutality

The victims who have no names

Annie Norney, Kathleen Stewart, and Roisin McCooney visited London to protest about the murder of their sons by the British Army. LIZ GREENE accompanied them for part of their tour.

If you are in England, the deaths of Irish people whom the British Army regards as part of the enemy population appears as impersonal statistics. While ambassadors, businesspeople and SAS captains have names, wives, husbands, children and personal histories, the Catholic working class victims of the 'security' forces have none of these.

On top of their personal grief, the three Belfast women and their families had to suffer the lies, deceit and unbelievable callousness of the Army as it tried to cover up its guilt. It was this above all that hardened the women's attitudes.

The day after 13-year-old Brian Stewart died, his skull crushed by a plastic bullet, an Army major had the gall to appear on television and say that Brian was a 'ringleader, a notorious stone-thrower' and that he 'deserved what he got'. Brian had in fact left the house only three minutes before he was shot.

DELAYS

Danny McCooney was said to be 'violently resisting arrest'. But as Roisin McCooney said: 'How could one person resist arrest against eight soldiers armed with rifles? That's farcical.' And then there was the delay. 'My lad was taken at midnight and beaten and interrogated, and they didn't take him to hospital till 2.55am. And he was bleeding internally and screaming with the pain in his stomach. Why those three hours then?'

Leo Norney never went to hospital at all. 'I want to know', Annie Norney said, 'why he was taken to an RUC station after he was taken from the path where he was shot. He was lying on the path bleeding for 45 minutes. They beat him, they trailed him, then they chased the civilian ambulance away till one of their own Salads came.'

'Instead of taking him to a hospital if he was alive, or a mortuary if he was dead, they took him down to Springfield Road barracks. Then he was taken out in a jeep and dumped in a yard like a sack of potatoes. That was where the undertaker found him.'

PLANTING GUNS

Annie was not told about her son's death till more than 16 hours after it happened — in spite of having her house raided by soldiers in the meantime. When she got him back, she took a photograph of his hands: 'They were so badly mutilated they couldn't even join them in the coffin. Sure they were burnt, bruised, tramped on ... They were trying to put a gun in his hands to make sure they left

fragments on them, but it just didn't work.'

She now regards the Army as such a threat that she accompanies her two other sons, in their early twenties, whenever they go out.

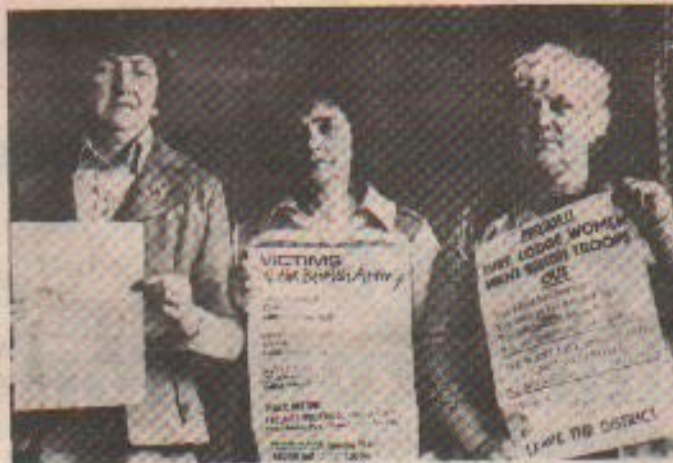
RESISTANCE

The single over-riding concern of the women was to get the Army out of their lives. 'We are being tortured daily,' Kathleen Stewart said repeatedly, 'they are destroying our children.'

She was adamant that the Army was the cause of the problems in the areas, and not, as the press would have it, some mysterious cabal of 'godfathers' turning the handle to wheel the children into the front line. 'There's no godfathers in Turf Lodge,' she said. It's the things the Army is doing to the children that makes them pick up stones and throw them at the troops.'

The women of Turf Lodge became so desperate that before Easter a deputation contacted the local fort and asked the Army if they would stay out of the area in the Easter holidays while the children were off school. The reply from the fort? 'The soldiers will go where they like, when they like and they'll do what they like.'

The protests of women such as these are put down by the press to 'Republican propaganda'. Yet the three mothers have no association with the Republican movement. The catalogue of daily atrocities by the Army is quite sufficient to explain the intensity of the popular resistance in areas such as Turf Lodge.



'First the Loyalists attacked us, now it's the Army'

In the previous few days before the women visited England, a small boy was hit on the cheek by a plastic bullet and had to have stitches both inside and outside his mouth. A 12-year-old girl was hit in the leg. A 14-month-old baby in a pram was hit by a plastic bullet. Kathleen Stewart's 11-year-old son was beaten up by soldiers in a play park. And so on.

Any suggestion that the Army might be protecting them was ridiculed. Roisin McCooney said simply: 'First we had the Loyalists attacking us, now it's the Army.'

The women laughed, too, at questions about the 'peace

women'. Kathleen went on a number of their early marches, but like the others she has no time for them now. Annie Norney made a number of scornful asides: 'Betty Williams — where I come from we call her Jaws for short', and 'We couldn't get an office like they have, nor four or five buses for a march at the drop of a hat.'

She explained: 'When Brian Stewart was killed, the Turf Lodge mothers organised a meeting and invited them to come along. They didn't have time, not any of them ... Nor did any of us have a card of sympathy from them for the loss of our sons.'

7 DAYS in the 6 COUNTIES

'Quit our hospital' staff tell Army

At 4.30am on 31 July 1972 British tanks and bulldozers smashed through the barricades protecting the 'No Go' areas in Belfast and Derry. Operation Motorman was in action.

In the months which followed, the path was cleared for Loyalist assassination squads and their close collaborators in the SAS. Schools and recreation grounds in anti-unionist areas were fortified to serve as permanent Army bases, and a number of new 'wild-west' type fortresses were erected.

In the past few weeks in Belfast attention has focussed on a slightly different type of fort — none other than the Royal Victoria Hospital, the pride and joy of the medical profession in the Six Counties.

Sir Thomas Brown, chairperson of the Eastern Health and Social Services Board, has just announced increased 'security' for the hospital with the statement: 'Any facilities the armed services want they can have.'

A new £8,300 post of 'chief security officer' is to be created for the hospital; entrances are to be cut from twelve to six; one of the boundary walls is to be covered with barbed wire and floodlit at night; and more staff are to be recruited, to provide guards and patrols, equipped with walkie-talkie sets.

The hospital, whose patients tend to come from the anti-unionist population of West Belfast, is now only to have one vehicle entrance open all day.

That is the Broadway, a street running off the Falls Road towards the Loyalist strongholds of Sandy Row and the 'Village'.

At this entrance the British Army have a permanent fortified garrison and elsewhere in the hospital there is at least one military observation post which is used to spy on the surrounding republican areas.

COLLUSION

Over the years continuous accusations of collusion between British troops and Loyalist assassins have led to mounting demands for the demilitarisation of the hospital. But these were ignored, and the murder of two anti-unionists by assassins who entered the hospital by the Broadway entrance did not produce moves to either close the entrance or to hire a chief security officer.

But then on 8 June Gerald Tucker, a hospital porter, was shot dead by the Provisional IRA as he was leaving the Royal. He was a part-time member of the UDR, he had appeared in court accused of murder, and he was carrying a gun when he was shot.

Two days later the Provisionals stated that as long as the hospital was used as a military post it would be liable to attack. Following this the staff of the hospital called upon the Army to leave.

HARASSMENT

But rather than do that, Loyalist politicians attacked the staff as having 'republican sympathies' and now the authorities have announced the increase in military presence at the hospital. Just what that means in practice was illustrated a few days ago when after a riot in the anti-unionist Turf Lodge area a young boy was admitted to the Royal with the fingers of his hand smashed by a plastic bullet.

At the hospital the RUC charged him with 'rioting', with the comment that, after all, he was only a 'Fenian bastard'. The sort of harassment can only be expected to increase as the RUC and the British Army turn the hospital into a permanent barracks.

When people in Britain call on the Army to 'withdraw to barracks' rather than get out of Ireland lock, stock and barrel, they should remember the 'barracks' at the Royal Victoria Hospital, and the way it is used to arrest people at their hospital beds.

1984-style charges against socialist

Frank Murphy, of the London branch of People's Democracy, was one of the speakers at a PD meeting held in London last week to protest at the arrest in Belfast of PD general secretary John McAnulty.

Comrade McAnulty has been charged with the 1984-type crime 'the possession of illegal documents'. To add to the force, the RUC cannot even state when McAnulty was supposed to have these 'documents' (one of which was a map); they merely state he was in possession of them 'sometime between January 1976 and March 1977'.

McAnulty is not the first member of the revolutionary socialist People's Democracy to be intimidated and harassed. Over 40 members and ex-members of the organisation have recently had 'visits' from the security forces.

As in McAnulty's case, the arrests which follow are nothing but another form of internment. Those charged are often held for 18 months on remand, and then — when they are due to face trial — the charges are dropped.

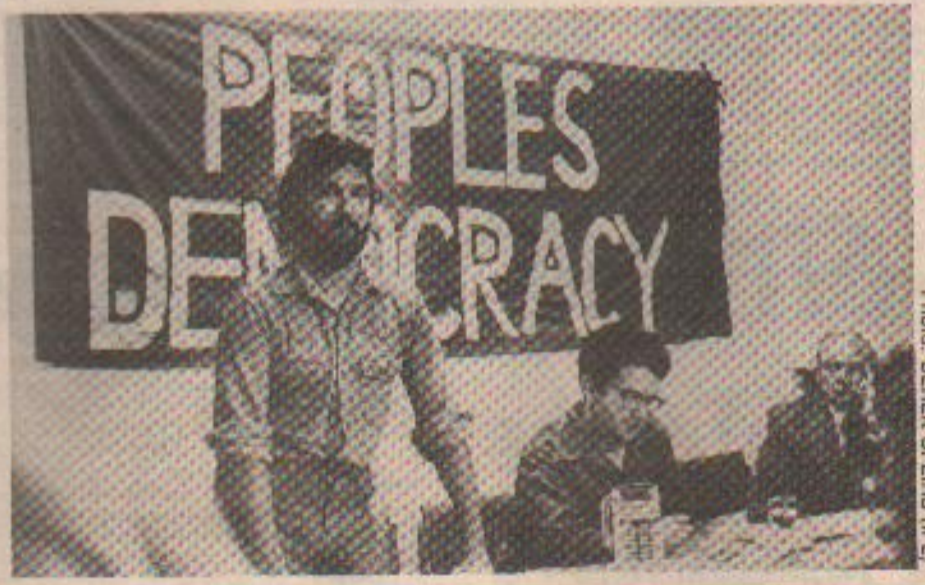


PHOTO: DEREK STEVENS (IFL)

Government balancing act on devolution

by ALAN FREEMAN

MICHAEL FOOT has just unveiled the Government's latest plan to split the second round of devolution legislation into two Bills, one for Scotland and another for Wales. In an attempt to avoid another sabotage from Labour's ranks, Foot issued a stern warning that to 'slam the door' again on devolution would be 'a great disaster for the UK as a whole'.

Under enormous pressure on the devolution issue from all fronts — especially the nationalist vote in Scotland — Foot

believes that the Lib-Lab pact will pull the Liberals into line. He's not far off the mark.

Although David Steel has said that 'four and a half out of five' conditions have been met, in reality few changes have been made.

Two of Steel's supposedly hard-bargaining conditions amount to little more than changing the titles of assembly officials. Proportional representation — an important plank of Liberal policy — is likely to be defeated because Foot has declared a free vote for Labour MPs.

No independent revenue-raising powers are proposed for the assembly, and the power of veto will reside with the judicial committee of the Queen's Privy Council — although Westminster would retain general reserve powers to 'protect matters that are not to be devolved', such as defence, trade, industrial relations and the economy.

The Labour Party is attempting to act as a broker between different ruling class interests that it will take more than an assembly to reconcile. The Scottish National Party's plans to redistribute the oil surplus on a

Scottish basis is in contradiction with the needs of British capital as a whole.

And there is always the prospect that the working class will be encouraged to intervene with its own demands, no matter what 'constitutional limits' are placed on the assembly. Limited though it is, the assembly will be elected and function as a public forum to discuss what the ruling class would like to keep behind closed doors.

The Thatcher wing of the Tory Party, anticipating a General Election victory, has been mounting a calculated offensive

to ensure that it has a strong bargaining position with the SNP.

PARLIAMENTARY MANOEUVRING

The last Tory conference steered away from taking a determined stance against devolution. The coalition concluded with the SNP on Glasgow council politics shows how hard the Tories are prepared to fight in forcing the SNP into settling major issues privately.

Both are agreed that at all costs a mobilisation of the working class on its own demands must not be allowed.

The parliamentary manoeuvring now underway indicates how little concern any Westminster party has for the aspirations and rights of Scottish and Welsh workers. It raises the need to campaign for the right of assemblies in Scotland and Wales; for the right of the people of these countries to decide what their own form of government should be, and what — if any — should be their relation to the British state.

FIGHTING RACISMS

Haringey lit the fuse Lewisham is the explosion

On 13 August the fascist National Front aim to blow the Lewisham powder-keg sky-high. The July edition of its magazine *Spearhead* promises that on that day there will be 'the biggest manifestation of the National Front that South East London has ever seen'. Their call to 'clear the muggers off the streets' is not directed at the racist police but it is an open incitement to violence against the black population of the area.

MICK GOSLING reports:

Three local Labour MPs have called on the Home Secretary to ban the march but have done nothing to mobilise the local population against it. The *London Evening Standard* of 26 August begged for the NF march to be re-routed out of black areas — 'or face another Cable Street'.

But it is the labour movement and black population which will have to deal with this outrageous provocation. Far more than 'nigger-bashing' is the aim of the Front. Electoral successes have not been turned into hard-core organisation and NF members have been champing at the bit since their humiliation on the streets of Haringey on 23 April.

Increased calls to 'get the reds and smash the blacks' have led to bitter in-fighting in the NF's national directorate and the successful infiltration and take-over of several London branches by the ultra-Nazi British Movement. Lewisham is the NF's attempt to regain lost ground on the right, to prove how hard it is. It can point to the 45 per cent of the vote it and the National Party got in a nearby ward by-election a

few months ago as evidence of local support. But it is paid thugs recruited from the East End underworld that will be making the NF's 'point' on 13 August.

In recent weeks there has been a spate of petrol bombings, random attacks on blacks, beatings up of socialist paper sellers. NF members are reliably reported to be preparing for an anti-Asian rampage on the Isle of Dogs on the eve of the 13 August. Many in the North London gay community also believe fascists may have been responsible for the brutal beating to death of a homosexual in Finsbury Park the weekend before last.

IMPACT

The fascists' activities have had their impact. There were few black faces on the demo which marched through the streets of Lewisham in support of the 21 on 23 July. This situation must be reversed on 13 August. Positive steps have already been taken in this direction.

Faced with a potentially disastrous split over tactics between the local anti-racist united front and the Socialist Workers Party,

the London Anti-Racist Coordinating Committee, at the instigation of the International Marxist Group, stepped in last week to urge support for a united fight against the fascists. As a result the All Lewisham Campaign Against Racism and Fascism has brought forward its demonstration to the morning and will march towards the NF's assembly point.

This is an extremely positive development and deserves the whole-hearted support of all anti-fascist militants. The march will allow the left to mobilise the support of the black community through demonstrating the same unity of purpose and determination that brought hundreds of West Indian and Cypriot youths onto the streets against the fascists on 23 April. And by showing in practice that we are the best builders of united action against the fascists, the far left will win wider and bigger support for the rally at Clifton Rise, the NF's assembly point.

So far, it is only the Lewisham Communist Party which has (by no means unanimously) demonstrated its sectarianism by refusing to have anything to do with

the rally at Clifton Rise. The revolutionary left must ensure by its actions throughout the day that the reformists are not allowed to throw the same charge at us.

The Lewisham anti-fascist mobilisation should aim to marginalise the impact of the NF march — if possible by preventing it assembling — and give confidence to the black community to organise its own self-defence against the police as well as the racists. After all, the methods used by the police in the arrest of the 21 — violence, damage to personal property, strip searching, racist abuse, surveillance by photographers and television cameras — would have been of credit to the Front. And it was Commander Randall, boss of the local 'P' division, who called in the thugs of the Special Patrol Group in 1975 after feeding the press with alarmist statistics about the level of street crime.

STATISTICS

The statistics in South London that are alarming are these: 40 per cent of black youth in Brixton unemployed; 30 per cent in Deptford; and an average of 20 unemployed people chasing every vacancy in the borough.

When we march and rally in Lewisham on 13 August it won't just be to aid black self-defence; it won't just be to demonstrate that the fascists belong in the drains and shouldn't even be entitled to pollute our gutters.

It will also be to demonstrate that there is a socialist alternative to the brutality of a society which throws so many of its youth, black and white, on the scrap heap at 16 and thus provides the rubbish dumps on which white racism and fascism breed.



Lewisham fever

Sheffield police have contacted a touch of Lewisham fever. They have been harassing and assaulting blacks over the last few weeks. IAN DAVIDSON reports:

THE INCIDENT of 4 July resulted in 8 people being arrested. It started with two plain-clothes cops being seen dragging a black youth along a road in the Birmingham area of Sheffield. A few hours later they returned and were seen assaulting another

black youth. It was later stated that they had been arrested on suspicion of stealing £1500 which had supposedly been left in a parked car (itself a rather odd occurrence in this area). A group of black youths went to protest at the

rough treatment receiving a uniformed police officer and assaulted. Their brutality that white residents try and prevent violence. Eight arrests of four blacks were made. One was charged with assaulting a police station. They were forced to

Police on the rampage

IN A RECENT display of police violence against black people in Nottingham a 54-year-old West Indian man was handcuffed to a fence opposite his home, and five other black people arrested, most of them charged with assaulting police officers.

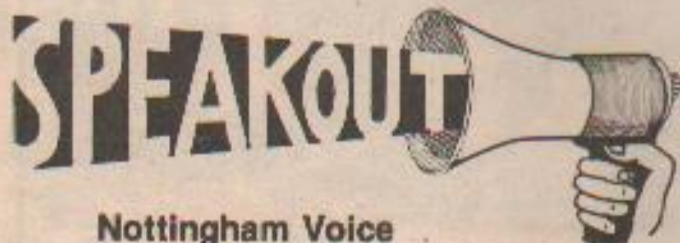
We cannot give any details relating to these charges. But we can give details of the way the police handled the affair and the way they went about arresting people.

The trouble started in Tennyson Street on 4 July when a window was broken by a cricket bat while about a dozen black teenagers were playing cricket. No-one has been charged in connection with the broken window.

A white woman living on Tennyson Street will be lodging a complaint against the police. Her statement says:

'As a white person living in a black community I am bound to protest against the police brutality against young black boys. In one such case I was witnessing a policeman doing his job investigating an incident where a window was smashed.

'I was shocked to see instead of the policeman asking who had broken the window he immedi-



ately approached a boy who he knew and accused him. When the boy replied and told him it was not him, and before the real culprit could own up, the policeman pulled and ripped the black boy's jumper and told him to get into the car. On this the black boy got upset and pushed away the officer.

'The policeman sent for reinforcements. Then the boy's father came over and asked his son if it was him that had broken the window. The son replied "no" so the father sent him home. Then the father turned to explain to the police officer. But the police officer completely ignored the father and went after the boy.

'The reinforcements arrived and before much longer a scuffle had broken out — started by the

police. Children, elderly people and women were hurt during this fight, including myself. I received a bruise on the back of my calf after picking a two-year-old-boy from the middle of the scuffle. This was done by a police sergeant.

'I would like to state that the whole affair was avoidable if the police had acted in a proper manner. The result in this matter was that a group of six people was arrested. And may I add that none of these was responsible for smashing the window.' — C.E. Smith (Miss)

Mrs. Marquis, mother of the 15-year-old arrested, told the *Voice* that she was coming from the shop and found Tennyson Street 'blocked with about twelve police cars and there was a black maria outside my house'. Her

immediate thought was that someone may have been run over so she rushed round to see. She heard Peter shouting and saw 'about eight policemen on him. Two had him grabbed by the hair, one was holding a handcuff to his neck, and one was kicking and punching him'.

After Peter and his father were handcuffed Mrs. Marquis said that Peter's brother came out of the house without a shirt or shoes on... 'One policeman thumped Michael while two more held him and put on the handcuffs.

'...A policeman grabbed my son by the hair, pulled him to the floor, and kicked him while three more held him on the floor. I lay down over him and said "that's my son, don't kick him, kick me first". One punched me in the side. My daughter screamed "don't hit my mum again". A policewoman came and held her hand while a policeman tried to put handcuffs on. But she escaped.'

On the following day the *Evening Post* quoted Chief Superintendent Alf Bowley as objecting to the way West Indians have a 'disturbing habit of banding together to support one another'.

MUHAMMED HAQUE was threatened with deportation by the Labour government. A short campaign pointing out the obscenity involved in this saw the decision reversed. Here Muhammed writes a special message for us and urges support for Raghilb Ahsan's campaign in Birmingham and the Lewisham demonstration on 13 August.

THANKS TO the campaign in the socialist and sections of the national press, the deportation order served on me has been withdrawn. However the issues which it raised are important and need re-emphasising. Rees argued that my marriage in Denise was one of 'convenience'. This was based on the information that we were not living together openly. In reality within weeks of our marriage we applied to the local Housing Authority for a council flat. We were unable to obtain one. The Home Office was aware of this fact.

The arbitrary methods employ-

ed by the Home Office were based on lies, a deliberate suppression of facts and an attempt to deny me the right to appeal. I was relieved because my case was taken up and publicised. There are thousands of others who are deported without even a mention of the fact in any paper. The immigration laws are racist laws. They discriminate against black people and they discriminate against women, both black and white. Denise's right to live with a man of her choice is denied if that man is not a British citizen, a distinction which does not operate the other way round. That is why all anti-racists should

SM NATIONWIDE



in Sheffield

brother arms outstretched and subjected to insults and racist abuse from the police arrived. The protesters, so shocked and nervous by the police brutality, were back at the court in a cell. The four whites against a

wall for an hour and a half their arms outstretched and subjected to insults and racist abuse from the police. This was not an isolated incident. There have been attacks on and harassment of black youths throughout Sheffield. However the public display of arbitrary police brutality has triggered off a response in the whole community. The Residents Group have organised regular discussions and meetings and a

'people's enquiry' is being organised. A petition against police harassment is being circulated, though white racists fuelled by anti-black press reports are organising a rival petition pledging 'moral support' to the police. The atmosphere still remains tense and events could take a serious turn, especially if the police continue their offensive against black people. What is important is to organise continuing solidarity.

Muhammad s staying

around the repeal of these laws. It is vital that trade unionists fight to get rid of these laws. Their failure to do so will ultimately rebound against them for the laws aim to divide workers on the basis of colour. But this also means that black workers in trade unions must be more active, must play an active part in the political life of this country. The fascists are growing in strength and numbers. They cannot be resisted by racist rhetoric alone. A real campaign has to be waged to create people against racism. It is in this context that the decision of Socialist Unity to

stand Raghb Ahsan, an Asian shop-steward from Rover car factory as their candidate in Ladywood constituency is to be welcomed. Raghb's campaign should be one of our answers to the Home Office and the racist establishment. The other answer must be on the streets in Lewisham on 13 August in the counter-march against the fascists.

Raghb Ahsan needs the support and backing of all socialists and trade unionists. His fight is our fight. That is why I shall be campaigning for him in Ladywood. Support Raghb!

Ladywood by-election Asian steward fights for Socialist Unity

by STEVE POTTER

FIGHTING RACISM AT THE POLLS is not new to the Socialist Unity candidate in Ladywood, Raghb Ahsan. Ahsan, a 28-year-old Transport Union steward at the Rovers car factory in Solihull, contested the May local election in nearby Saltley. He gained over 11 per cent of the vote, soundly beating the National Front candidate by 290 votes.

AHSAN recognises that racism will be at the centre of the Ladywood poll. 'Over a quarter of the people in Ladywood are black. Council neglect has meant that the whole area is decaying. Four years ago, residents had to threaten to burn down dangerous derelict buildings because of the lack of action in the constituency.'

Police harassment under the 'sus' laws is a permanent feature of the life of young blacks in the area.

Unemployment is chronic in Birmingham with 7 per cent out of work. There are 8,500 unemployed school leavers alone.

Labour's cuts have resulted in a Catch 22 situation for the area's

hospitals. Martin Tolman, a local NUPE steward and supporter of the Socialist Unity campaign, explains. 'First of all they closed down casualty units in Birmingham hospitals on the basis that the ultra-modern Accident hospital in Ladywood would take all the patients. Now they are closing that too.'

The election also takes place at a time of growing unrest against wage cuts in the Birmingham car industry. As Ahsan's candidature was announced, 7,000 workers at the Lucas factories in Birmingham found themselves faced with the threat of a lock-out when they return from their holidays. Management might take the action to divide striking tool-room workers from the rest of the workforce.

Ahsan's election address comes

out against the 10 per cent norm and 12-month rule being peddled by the Labour Government and insists that a fight should be made for claims which fully make up for the loss of earnings under the Social Contract, with automatic compensation for inflation.

These are not paper words. Ahsan was one of a group of stewards at the Rover factory who successfully fought to base their upcoming wage claim on the same principles.

He is scathing about his Labour opponent, John Sever. 'This guy is meant to be a member of APEX. But he hasn't done a thing about the Grunwick dispute. Sever also had the dubious distinction of being Birmingham's youngest Justice of the Peace. I intend to ask him

how many black youth he has sent down in his magistrates court', says Ahsan.

The Socialist Unity manifesto says that the Labour Government's claim that Social Contract policies are necessary to keep them in office is a sham. The manifesto says that instead they are bringing back the Tories. 'The Labour Government's policies are so rotten that they have to unite with the anti-socialist Liberals and Enoch Powell's Irish Tories to get them through', it goes on.

Socialist Unity urges support for Ahsan saying that the election campaign can be part of the fight back against Labour's betrayals.

The Socialist Workers Party candidate is a young black militant, Kim Gordon. Gordon has played a leading role in the fight against fascists in London as secretary of the Lewisham 24 Defence Campaign. National newspapers threw the spotlight on the campaign when Gordon confronted Prince Charles with detailed evidence of police attacks on black youth in South London. He says: 'I will be fighting to expose police brutality in Birmingham and to mobilise support for the demonstration against the Nazi National Front in Lewisham on 13 August.'

Hunt stands 'to break back of socialist movement'

JAMES HUNTE is a candidate in the Ladywood election. He claims to represent the West Indian community in Britain. This claim is only too readily taken up by the city's right-wing newspapers. Even more so since Hunt says he is standing 'to break the back of the socialist movement'.

Hunte is a leading light in both the West Indian Federation Association and the Mutual Benefit (or protection) Association. The latter organisation was set up by Mr Hunte to protect those individuals who were the victims of the notorious 'pyramid selling' racket run under the auspices of Julian Hodge (the banker friend of Prime Minister Callaghan).

Hunte appears to be a pillar of strength in the West Indian community, standing up for those 'people who have lived and worked in this country for over 10 years to find that they haven't been able to save a penny'.

But not everyone has the same high opinion of Mr Hunte as he evidently holds of himself.

Fights broke out at a meeting of the West Indian Federation Association on Sunday 6 March this year as allegations were made that Hunte had misappropriated £20,000 of the organisation's funds. The meeting ended in confusion and was reconvened the following Wednesday. Then the police started to investigate the charges.

West Indians whom Mr Hunte claims to represent and the voters of Ladywood will be looking to the results of the enquiries with some interest.



RAGHB AHSAN

What is Socialist Unity?

NEVER DOES disunity on the revolutionary left become so apparent as in elections. That was the conclusion of those who are now building Socialist Unity after the by-election in Stechford last year.

Candidates of the International Marxist Group and Socialist Workers Party received nearly 900 votes, a joint anti-racist demonstration two months before was the largest that Birmingham has seen for years, and effective propaganda was made by both candidates. But with coordinated activity the impact could have been multiplied and strides made towards greater unity.

So, appealing to the SWP to join them, organisations and individuals nationally and from Scotland, Thameside and Hull met last month to establish Socialist Unity as an ongoing national coalition. The aim is to

unite all those willing to fight for socialist policies and action to meet the bosses' crisis.

Ric Hatcher, the Socialist Unity Ladywood election agent, explained:

'It is greatly disappointing that the SWP refused to even answer the appeal and went ahead to stand another far left candidate in Ladywood. But Socialist Unity will be fighting for united action between the candidates and organisations during the campaign'.

Socialist Challenge has launched a special appeal for funds to assist Socialist Unity. Send cheques/POs to Socialist Challenge (Election Fund), PO Box 50, London N1.

If you can give part of your holidays to help in the campaign report to 76b, Digbeth, Birmingham (5 mins from main line station), or phone 021-643 9209.

Stopping them dead

NATIONAL Front candidate in the by-election is Anthony Reed-Herbert.

Reed-Herbert has figured in our pages recently as 'Racist of the Week'. A former champion of the Young Conservatives, he is now a member of the National Directorate of the NF.

Reed-Herbert's activities in Leicester are given extensive coverage by the notoriously right-wing Leicester Mercury. In an interview with this paper on 29 April this year Reed-Herbert explained how the main plank of his manifesto, compulsory repatriation of black people, would be implemented:

'As far as the degree of compulsion is concerned this will obviously depend on the response of the immigrants... If we are talking about a breach of the law we will either have a government prepared to meet violence for the good of the people or we won't.'

Last Monday Reed-Herbert said, 'We want all immigration stopped dead'. In the light of his Mercury statement this sentiment takes on a new and sinister meaning.

The National Front postponed plans for a big Ladywood rally and demonstration to clear the decks for their Lewisham 'Drive the Niggers off the Streets' demonstration.

'Niggers' for the NF means black people. That's why rallying to support the defence of the black community is vital on 13 August throughout the Ladywood campaign and beyond.

Ethiopia Somalia war The horn of a dilemma

by CHRIS O'BRIEN

THE CONFLICT between Ethiopia and Somalia, like any war, is a battle of claims and counter-claims. All that is clear about the military situation is that the bulk of the Ogaden province of Ethiopia is in the hands of the West Somali Liberation Front, which wants the area ceded to Somalia.

This is a setback for the Ethiopian dictatorship, the Derg, which has already lost control of all but three towns in Eritrea, the northern seaboard nation annexed by Ethiopia in 1962.

The struggle in the Ogaden is a similar fight for national self-determination. The region's inhabitants, predominantly nomadic, are Somalis, with a right to

affiliate to the nation of their choice.

The Ethiopian and Somali regimes are less than altruistic in their interest. For both, Ogaden is seen as a test of military strength and national pride. And neither will have failed to notice that the arid desert region is a potentially rich source of oil and gas.

Thus far the issue is fairly simple. The complications are a result of the interest of foreign powers in the strategically important 'Horn of Africa', of which both countries are part. The Horn protrudes into the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, providing an important springboard for control of the southern entrance to the Red Sea.



That explains the long-standing Soviet interest in the area. For a number of years they have been the chief political

backers and military suppliers of the Said Barre regime in Somalia, which has generally been regarded as the most faithful of the Kremlin's African allies.

But recent months have seen increased Soviet influence in Ethiopia, Somalia's bitter enemy. Earlier this year the Derg broke links with its previous backer, the United States, and began to get arms from the USSR. Thence the present ludicrous situation where two armies are drawn up in opposing battle lines each with the same weaponry.

Another complication is the recent independence of Djibouti, the tiny former French colony. There is no doubt that the majority of its 25,000 inhabitants would favour integration into Somalia — which is ruled out by the continued French military presence — but Ethiopia would see this as a threat to its access to the sea, a consideration which is sharpened by the impending loss of the entire northern coastline to an independent Eritrea.

CYNICAL

The Cuban regime has provided a convenient ideological gloss for cynical Soviet intervention in Ethiopia. *Granma*, the Cuban party paper, makes no secret of its admiration for the 'Ethiopian Revolution' and its leader Mengistu Haile Mariam ('a true revolutionary'). The shoot-out on 3 February when Mengistu wiped out an opposing faction in the Derg, is hailed as the moment 'when the left and the true leaders of the revolution took control and the process was directed along revolutionary lines'.

No mention of the absence of any democracy (either bourgeois



Members of the Ethiopian peasant army captured by Eritrean nationalists.

or proletarian), the horrific massacres of oppositionists, the suppression of the rights of the national minorities, or, no small matter, that, despite the sweeping land reform, power rests in the hands of a fraction of the bourgeois army.

When the Kremlin made its foreign policy turn in the Horn it foresaw problems over the Ogaden, but tried to cook up a compromise which would make it possible to ride the mutually hostile Somali and Ethiopian regimes in tandem. The effect has been quite the opposite.

Even before the present conflict Somalia was negotiating an aid programme from Saudi Arabia, neatly poised on the other side of the Red Sea. It is Saudi money which is now paying the arms merchants of the USA and Britain who have stepped into the breach left by the Somali-Soviet split.

If the Soviet interest in the Horn is cynical and directly opposed to the interests of the mass of people in the area, it is purely strategic and military. The British and Americans, backed by the brutal dictatorships in Iran and Pakistan, are out to establish a vast counter-revolutionary bloc around the

Red Sea.

And, though Somalia itself is only a pawn in this game, the Saudi aid programme offers another opportunity for the imperialists to get their hands on some oil money through arms sales. Britain, in alliance with Kenya, has an additional interest in building a pro-British bloc of states in East Africa, while the US has been stepping up arms supplies to the Sudan.

The Kremlin's *realpolitik*, its desire to arm the petty bourgeois regimes in the Horn rather than support the struggles of the oppressed masses, can only help this imperialist design.

In the midst of these global considerations, the democratic rights of the nomads of the Ogaden have been all but forgotten.



Somali women soldiers in training, with wooden rifles.

Zimbabwe: Land and bread

Bishop Abel Muzorewa, leader of the United African National Council, last week announced that the principle of 'one man, one vote' was not a necessary precondition for talking with Ian Smith's white minority Government.

Behind many of the manoeuvres of the nationalist factions lies the question of land and its racial division — the better half for the whites, the arid land for the blacks — as JULIUS KARANJA explains.

Intertwined with the question of racial oppression it has been the land question that has galvanised thousands into prolonged and militant activity. The 'white' lands are not only the most fertile regions, but those with the most developed infrastructure of water supply, electricity, roads and services.

In 1930 the Land Apportionment Act formally divided the country into 'white' and 'native' areas, and, with the rise of the Rhodesian Front, this division of land was further strengthened in the Land Tenure Act 1969. The result was that, given the small size of the white population, per capita each white had over a hundred times more land than the black.

The poverty and backwardness of the Tribal Trust Lands forced large sectors of the black population to seek employment either permanently or, more often, periodically. This huge reservoir of cheap labour was avidly exploited by both local and international capital, and among the most exploited were agricultural labourers who still today receive the lowest wages — \$201 a year.

Furthermore they are classified as 'domestic servants' under the hated Masters and Servants Act, and are thereby denied the right to strike or to form unions.

But the enormous crisis of the Smith regime forced it this year, on April Fools Day, to pass the Land Tenure (Amendment) Act which formally allowed Africans

to buy land in the white farming areas. Twelve right-wing MPs resigned in protest, but the Act fooled nobody, since few Africans are in a position to find the capital to buy any land in these areas and being black in Rhodesia is a poor guarantee for receiving loans from banks?

In spite of the many disputes among them, very little difference can be seen in the programmes of the various nationalist movements on the land question. Information about the positions of Mugabe's wing of the Patriotic Front is sparse and ambiguous, so we cannot comment.

Recently there has been a hive of activity with seminars and meetings organised by the Rhodesian National Farmers Union (representing the 6,000 or so white farmers), Society of Chartered Accountants, Association of Rhodesian Industries and others, to which G. Chiwanduka of the UANC (led by Bishop Muzorewa) and J. Chinamano of the ANZ (Joshua Nkomo's vice-president) have been invited.

Both these worthy nationalists have been assuring these people as to the safety of their properties; for the economy as a whole both talk of 'backing the private sector'. For the UANC the economy should contain 'the very best out of capitalism and the very best out of socialism', while the ANZ states that 'we are not Communists, we are not capitalists, we are simply African'.

that only abandoned and uncultivated land will be nationalised: 'gainfully used land will not be touched', says Chinamano, while Chiwanduka states, 'we don't want to interfere with big farms'.

In effect the vast majority of the black masses will remain relegated to the existing Tribal Trust and African Purchase Lands where, it is envisaged, communal ownership will be transformed into private ownership of land. Instead of a redistribution of land the nationalists have a programme of introduction of black ownership of large farms.

It is in this light that the \$2 billion Zimbabwe Development Fund must be seen. It will provide the necessary capital for insinuating a sector of the black petty bourgeoisie into an area where it will develop into a future bourgeoisie, dependent on imperialism. While a portion of the ZDF will be used to 'compensate' whites who either abandon or sell their land, its prime function (as was the similar fund in Kenya in the 1960s) is a political one.

For the agricultural workers the prospects are not good. Chiwanduka has already warned that wages claims 'if pitched too high ... could lead to unemployment'. Thus the continued existence of the Tribal Trust Lands and the division of land that has historically been the cause of the extreme poverty of the masses remains unchallenged.

As the UANC Draft Statement of Basic Policy puts it: 'The right of all persons to access to land on traditional lines shall be preserved for the time being as this will remain the main social security mechanism for peasants.'

The recent farmers' union



BISHOP MUZOREWA: 'one man [sic], one vote' is no longer a precondition for talking to Ian Smith.

seminar was told by one nationalist: 'The free enterprise system we are discussing now will depend entirely on whether a peaceful political settlement is reached soon.'

But given the continued strength of the military activities and that the coming 'independence' will further galvanise the masses towards providing their own solutions to their problems, the hoped for plans of the nationalists seem unlikely to be put into practice easily.

Either they will have to adapt

them substantially or face exposing themselves by the use of repression against the very forces who will have put them in power.

The number of Africans in employment last year fell by 7,000, and with the increasing population growth rate (at present 3.6 per cent a year), the future government of Zimbabwe faces massive problems in providing jobs and a real solution to the land question. Whatever 'peaceful' transfer of power may take place, the aftermath is unlikely to remain peaceful.

Soweto plans autonomy

FIFTY-TWO people were arrested and many injured at the weekend after the murder of a student by police last Friday and a ban on a mass rally organised by the Soweto Committee of Ten.

The Committee of Ten, which has the backing of the Soweto Student Representative Council, is a body to plan for an autonomous black-controlled municipal authority in the townships after the official Urban Bantu Council resigned wholesale two months ago.

Most members and supporters of the Committee stress that the aim is not a duplication of the previous system of self-administration on behalf of the racist state but an instrument in the campaign against Bantu, that is third class, status in education and local administration.

The Government-controlled administration board has set up its own anonymous 'Committee of 13' which, apparently, is giving 'wonderful cooperation'. The Committee of Ten on the other hand, insisted on the rally planned for Sunday as a way of submitting their plans to the people of Soweto and gaining a mandate for future negotiations.

The rally was banned after violence in which many students were injured and 19-year-old Regina Nhlapo killed by a police bullet. The police account of the incident is that students stoned a police sergeant in a school yard, who answered by opening fire.

But teachers and students all tell of police bursting into the classrooms, baton-charging the occupiers and setting dogs on them. Some tried to escape by jumping through second floor windows.

A *Rand Daily Mail* reporter visited students in hospital. One said: 'I was in class on the second floor. The police dashed in, set dogs on us, and assaulted us. I ran downstairs into the staff room. I ran into the laboratory. My clothes were covered in blood. I ran out and escaped.'

The acting Soweto police chief told reporters: 'I said at the weekend that police baiting is bloody dangerous. I meant it. You can quote me if you like.'

IN BRIEF

POLAND: The Polish authorities have freed five workers imprisoned after the food price protests in June 1976 and five members and four sympathisers of the Workers Defence Committee, set up after last June. One of the WDC members, Jacek Kuron, said that the authorities had been surprised by the extent of popular support for those arrested and thanked those who had taken solidarity action in their defence.

IRAN: 64 Iranian lawyers have signed an open letter calling for the freeing of the judiciary and legislators from the executive and demanding respect for human rights. This is the latest in a series of open protests which have been circulated by Iranian intellectuals and professionals over the past two months.

PERU: Central Peru has been hit by an illegal miners' strike for higher pay, despite Government moves to jail union leaders involved in the recent mass strikes against the austerity plan. The Government is now expected to drop many of the most unpopular measures, including certain price increases, and has even promised a return to civilian rule within three years.



Carlos Romero

EL SALVADOR: A report by the Latin American Bureau gives extensive evidence of torture and political violence since the fraudulent election of General Carlos Romero as President in February. Repression against priests is particularly harsh. The Latin American Confederation of Priests has evidence of the massacre of 1,000 people in February.

BRAZIL: Police arrested a total of 38 people alleged to be involved in far left organisations after a new wave of unrest in Brazil's universities.

BOLIVIA: An underground rightist group, apparently with the support of the authorities, has threatened to track down and murder all drug traffickers, prostitutes... and gays.

INDONESIA: An Indonesian political prisoner has smuggled out a letter giving details of window-dressing by the authorities during a recent visit by the International Committee of the Red Cross. Many prisoners were moved to detention camps for fear that they would tell the delegation the truth about prison conditions.

THAILAND: A combined force of 10,000 Thai and Malaysian troops has been combing the south of the country in search of a force of left-wing guerrillas. Despite heavy aerial and artillery bombardment almost all the guerrillas seem to have escaped and are still playing cat and mouse with their pursuers.

GIBRALTAR: After the long strike by civil servants in Gibraltar, the colony seems set for a clash between the Government and the local branch of the transport workers union. The TGWU is demanding 100 per cent parity with British workers in the public sector. The union has started a go-slow.

SOUTH AFRICA: British Petroleum (Government-controlled) board members include Uncle Tom Jackson of the postal union) has found a large coal deposit in the Eastern Transvaal. Mining is expected to start in 1981.

Interview with PLO leader Ceasefire in Lebanon

RUTH CHALLIS reports from Lebanon.

On 21 July a ceasefire, applying of course only to the rightist Lebanese forces and not to the Israelis, was announced by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, after discussions between that organisation, the largely Syrian Arab Deterrent Force and the Lebanese Government. This agreement prepared the ground for the implementation of the 1969 Cairo Accords to regulate the Palestinian presence in Lebanon.

The following day Abu Ilyad, the leader of the PLO delegation to these discussions, gave an interview to a group from the British Anti-Zionist Organisation.

Israeli-rightist cooperation has been a marked feature of the civil war in Lebanon. Indeed the British group itself witnessed such military cooperation in the south, as well as seeing captured Israeli and US material.

Israel has not only supplied ammunition and light arms but

heavy weapons like armoured personnel carriers, 12mm rockets and at least 22 T-34 tanks.

Abu Ilyad stated that a primary aim of the ceasefire was to prevent Israeli occupation of the south by breaking up its alliance with the rightists, to prevent the partition of Lebanon and to end inter-Arab fighting in order to allow the Palestinians to concentrate on the main enemy: the Zionist state.

The ceasefire would help frustrate the Israeli attempt to 'arabise' the conflict in the

Middle East — that is an attempt to find a force in the Arab world to 'deal with' the Palestinians.

That, said Ilyad, was why the PLO had made concessions on the Cairo Accords, but there were two points which were not negotiable. First, the Palestinians must retain an armed presence in Lebanon. Secondly, they must be allowed freedom of military action against Israel in the south.

He expressed satisfaction at the disarray into which the ceasefire had thrown the rightists. They recognised the ceasefire as a defeat, a setback to their aim of ridding Lebanon of the Palestinians.

Ilyad said that the PLO's relationship with the Syrian regime was improving. He gave three reasons. The Syrians were afraid of the danger of growing rightist strength; they were afraid of an Israeli incursion into southern Lebanon; and conflicts were deepening among the Arab regimes about the presence and role of Syria in Lebanon.

He dismissed the idea that it was possible to speak of progressive and reactionary regimes in the area. He simply said, 'there are bad and worse'. He predicted that there will be no peace settlement in the near future and that Arab regimes will lose out in their attempt to gain one.

UPTURN

Ilyad even reckoned that the Arab liberation movement was on the upturn, that the end of the year will see the overthrow of many of the present Arab leaders, and that although the situation of the Palestinian resistance is bad now, change for the better is imminent and it has a greater role to play in the future.

The discussion turned to President Carter and the new Israeli Prime Minister, Menachem Begin. Abu Ilyad felt that some Arab leaders' illusions in Carter would soon be exploded and he

said he expected the worst from Carter's meeting with the terrorist Begin.

He did not expect any large-scale military activity by Israel until October at the earliest. Rather the Israelis would concentrate on building settlements on the West Bank of the Jordan and consolidating their hold on the occupied territories. This assessment was dramatically borne out by the legalisation of the three Israeli settlements on the West Bank several days after the interview.

Ilyad acknowledged Israeli nuclear capacity but considered that even the most hawkish elements in the Zionist state realised that such methods would be suicidal. But he then repeated the prediction, made by many Palestinian leaders, that the Zionists may resume the policy of assassinating Palestinian cadres.

• Socialist Challenge will be publishing further reports from Ruth Challis next month.

Mr Begin goes to Washington

Menachem Begin's public relations staff has been working overtime. Determined to shake off the Israeli Prime Minister's hard-line, terrorist image, they used his recent visit to Washington as a mutual congratulation session with Jimmy Carter. And they carefully cultivated the impression that a Middle East settlement is nigh. Nothing could be further from the truth, as RICHARD CARVER explains.

In reality, the only settlements on the horizon are the Israeli ones on the occupied West Bank. Begin legalised three of them right after his return from Washington, provoking gasps of horror from the international press, which had been churning out paeans of praise to his 'moderation'.

The substance of the supposed breakthrough in Washington is that the Geneva peace conference, broken by the 1973 war, will now reconvene in October. Begin announced that there would be no preconditions on attendance at the conference and admitted the possibility of Palestinian representatives, though not, he was at pains to stress, from the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

In fact Begin's position contains nothing new. The assiduously leaked plan he presented to Carter was only a reiteration of the Zionist state's intention to hang on to all the occupied territories.

HOMELAND

The significant point, most commentators noted, was that Carter seemed prepared to go along with this, at least for the sake of getting Geneva back on the road. It was reassuring, everyone said, that he had dropped all this nonsense about a Palestinian homeland.

But the notorious Massachusetts 'homeland' speech in March made a very specific point: 'There has to be a homeland provided for the Palestinian refugees...' Not, you'll notice, the Palestinian nation.

That the distinction is not purely semantic was revealed by the former Israeli Foreign Minister, Yigal Allon, who commented that of course the refugees must have somewhere permanent to live (he, like Carter, suggests Jordan); that's what Israel has been saying all along.

ZIONIST

In other words, Carter obviously has never said that the Palestinian nation should return to its homeland — at present occupied by the Zionist state — but nor did he take the PLO

position of a West Bank Palestinian state sandwiched between Israel and Jordan.

Whatever tactical turns are demanded by the diplomatic situation, the underlying direction of both US and Israeli policy is clear. The Zionists will accept no Palestinian state and demand the retention, in one way or another, of the territories occupied after the 1967 and 1973 wars.

GUARANTEE

American imperialism is ultimately prepared to back Israel to the hilt to guarantee its continued existence as its political, economic, and military policeman in the region.

Nevertheless, the ambiguity of Carter's Massachusetts speech was calculated. It initiated a phase in US foreign policy which was directed above all at the most conservative of the Arab states, softening them up for the 'peace initiative' and, quite an important consideration at the moment, selling them arms in exchange for oil revenue.

The apparently dramatic turn around when Begin visited Washington only signalled the end of this phase, though Carter has tactfully sent his Secretary of State on a tour of the Middle East capitals this week and has taken the opportunity to announce a new arms deal with Egypt.

BARGAINING

With Israel and Egypt, the key to the US plan for a Geneva settlement is Syria. The Syrian regime, which previously had no bargaining counter against Israel, has used its invasion of Lebanon — enthusiastically backed by the US — as a way of claiming control over the Palestinian resistance.

The PLO's agreement to a cease-fire last weekend strengthened Syria's hand. It is a reflection of the bankruptcy of the PLO's refusal to intervene in the affairs of the Arab bourgeois states, as once again they throw away the possibility of mobilising the Lebanese masses against the rightists and their Syrian protectors.

But one thing is certain — and this is where the Syrian and US plan will come to grief. The PLO, by its very nature, will not accept any deal which fails to establish some sort of Palestinian state. The Zionists, of course, can countenance no settlement that does.

So once again US imperialism's plans will break up against a Palestinian resistance which can only continue to fight, despite its leadership's desperate bids to compromise.

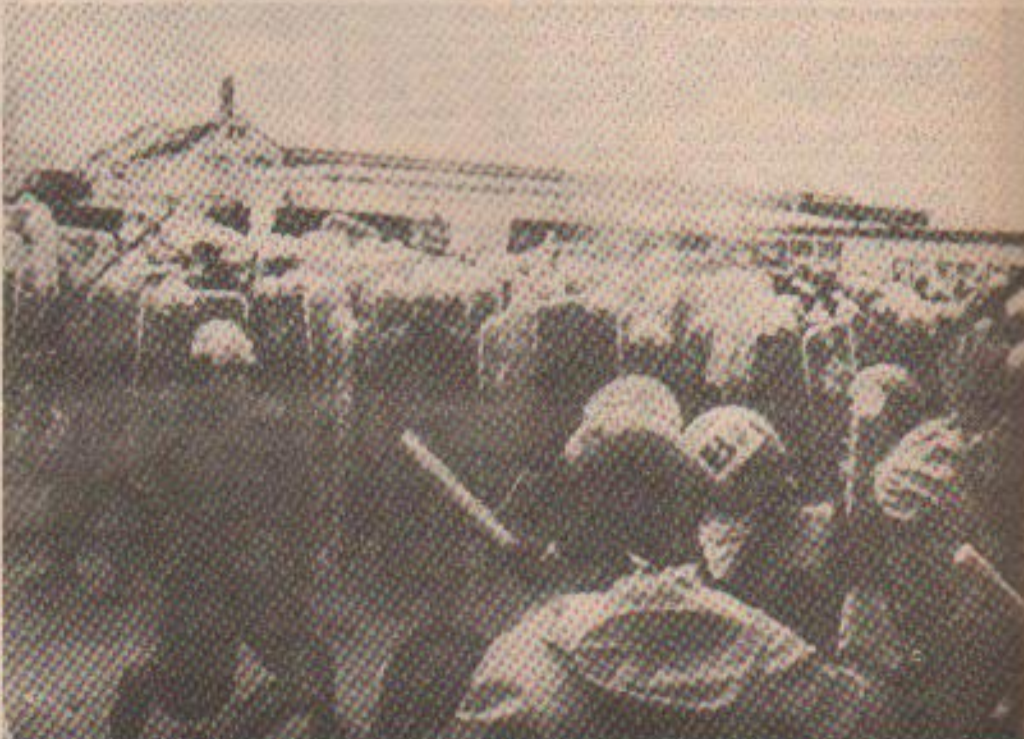
PIPE-DREAM

Washington understands all this. 'We realise that a Geneva conference which fails can be worse than no conference', said one senior member of the Administration. But they are banking on the faint hope that Begin will give way on a PLO presence. Thereafter their policy is based upon the pipe-dream that the Zionists and the Palestinians can come to an agreement.

Another Administration official rather pathetically explained that 'while we see both sides as constructive, they don't yet see each other as constructive'.



* Israel's newly "recognised" settlements



One person died and 100 were injured when police attacked a demonstration against the French plutonium reactor at Greys-Malvilles. Most of the injuries were the result of the police firing tear-gas right into the middle of the 30,000-strong march.

The Super Phoenix reactor is a joint project with the West German and Italian Governments, so the organisers of the protest, which was refused support by either of the two major working class parties, enlisted help from anti-nuclear protestors in those two countries. The local Prefect took the occasion to make remarks about a 'second German invasion'. But the French authorities' chauvinism did not stop them getting the advice of the German police on how they dealt with anti-nuclear marches [above].

Avanguardia Operaia: Betting on a long shot

Student activists go up to the podium wearing elaborate peacock-feather headgear, let go of balloons, and declare, 'We are all metropolitan Indians.' ANNA LIBERA continues her series with a look at Avanguardia Operaia [Workers Vanguard].

Young activists come to talk about the 'youth circles' and women activists criticise the organisation's activity from the standpoint of their integration into the women's movement.

THE 'OTHER SOUL'

If the crisis of AO has taken a less striking form than Lotta Continua's or less radical than PdUP's (Party of Proletarian Unity), it is no less acute, as shown by its congress. The crisis has been reflected in the departure of a third of the membership, the loss of a parliamentary representative (Silviano Corvisieri), the drop in sales of the paper (to around 7-8,000) followed by the decision to stop

production of a daily paper, and the lack of participation by the student and youth members in the recent mass upsurge.

If Corvisieri was delighted to see AO's 'true soul' expressed through women and young people, he seems not to have heard the 'other soul' being expressed by many worker members. These comrades criticised AO's tailing of the trade union 'left', its failure to put forward a political alternative in the mass movement, and warned against the 'movement-itis' that seemed to predominate at the congress.

'The party must intervene in all the mass movements that spring up, but must not lose sight of the central problem: a defeat for the

working class would be a defeat for all the movements as well.'

Like the rest of the Italian far left, AO was created in 1968 out of an ultra-left scheme for building a new workers movement alongside the reformist organisations, which was concretised in the formation of the rank and file unity committees (CUB).

Beginning in 1972-73, AO implemented a series of organisational turns, which were ratified by its Fourth Congress in 1974. That congress affirmed the need to concentrate on political work in the unions — the CUB being presented as structures composed of AO sympathisers — and on the tactic of struggle and unity with the reformists.

SELF-CRITICISM

This turn was not accompanied by a self-critical balance sheet of past activity; on the contrary, the new line was presented as a continuation of the old.

The leadership had clearly understood the need to recruit hundreds of left trade union cadres in order to build a viable revolutionary force in the working class. However, since it was incapable of offering them an alternative political framework to that of the reformists, it tended to subordinate AO to their continual vacillations with respect to the bureaucracy.

Nevertheless, the recent congress did introduce a number of notes of self-criticism. The first concerned the tendency to economism. The organisation had developed by concentrating on immediate struggles in plants, without being able to set goals that could link these struggles to the central political questions. The consequences of this became



The Italian far left and the crisis

obvious in the aftermath of the 20 June elections last year, when all struggles posed the problem of a 'political framework'.

Rejecting the PdUP's reformism, the report tried to lay out a transitional course. 'We must explain clearly that proposing an opposition economic programme means that the opposition's coherence does not come from it advancing an overall economic plan, but from its adherence to a political class line...'

The second area of self-criticism concerned the political openings and the slogan of the 'government of the left parties'. While the report criticised the purely 'institutional' character that AO gave this slogan during the elections, it nonetheless preserved its 'ultra-left' character as conceived by AO.

OPPORTUNISM

A 'government of the left parties' means a government of the Communist and Socialist Parties and the revolutionary left, based on a revolutionary programme. The report drew the conclusion that, in view of the present weakness of the revolutionary left, it would be difficult to differentiate this perspective from that of the 'historic compromise' proposed by the Communist Party. Thus it should be seen as a long term strategic goal.

The report reflects the contradictory nature of this self-assessment. While on the one hand there is an attempt to go beyond economism by means of a transitional approach, this approach is one-sided and limited to economic demands, without putting these demands in the context of the indispensable political openings. On the other hand, the immediate attitude towards the 'political framework' creates all kinds of openings for opportunist support to governments combining reformist and bourgeois parties.

LONG-SHOT

It was a long-shot bet that Avanguardia Operaia made at this congress. It was betting that it could be the medium for reconstituting the future revolutionary party of the working class. To carry it off, AO must find a way both to neutralise the centrifugal forces that emerged at the congress and counteract the 'ultra-left' currents, as well as working out an overall political orientation, which it still lacks and which would enable it to recruit from the trade union left.

Finally it must reconstitute a leadership torn apart by clique rivalry and cut off from the organisation, at the very moment when 'history is breathing down its neck'.



'Rank and file unity' contingent on a Milan demonstration.

Teng back in favour restored to all his former posts

THE MOST notable thing about the rehabilitation of Teng Hsiao-ping has been its delay. It was logical, after the sustained attack on the 'radicals', led by Chiang Ching, that the 'moderate' Teng would once more find favour.

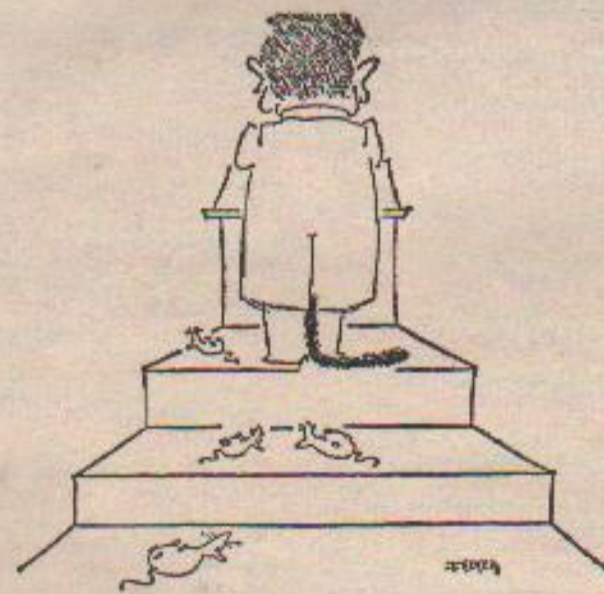
The sloth in bringing about the recently completed rehabilitation is easily explained by the potential threat Teng might present to Chairman Hua Kuo-feng, a lustreless character who shares none of Teng's impressive credentials as a political leader.

Socialist Challenge asked Shuang Shan, a veteran Chinese Trotskyist, how far Teng's rehabilitation represents a break with Maoism.

'Both Mao and Teng are of the same category of politicians. In other words Teng is a Maoist. There were no, and there will not be, fundamental differences between the policies pursued by Mao and Teng. In this sense we cannot say that the downfall of the "gang of four" and especially the rehabilitation of Teng mark the end of the "Mao era".'

Shuang stressed that there are ambiguities in this assessment: 'But there were and there will be differences from Mao's approach in the way in which Teng and his company try to solve the problems of China in the building of socialism. And in this sense we can say that the "Mao era" has come to an end.'

The description 'radical' and 'moderate' applied to the 'gang of four' and Teng are misleading. It was Chiang Ching, for example, who initiated the purge of anti-bureaucratic forces dur-



'What does the colour of a cat matter, so long as it catches mice.' [Teng Hsiao-ping]

ing the Cultural Revolution. The 'moderates' can hardly be seen as consistently to the right of the Chiang Ching group, nor are they more liberal in terms of inner-party practice.

But there are important policy differences between the factions. For example, one of the most important clashes has come over education. Mao's policy was one of 'selecting students from among workers and peasants with practical experience, who should then return to production after a few years' study.'

Teng, on the other hand, rejected the idea of 'class struggle every day', arguing that the main contradiction was not between the proletariat and the bour-

geoisie but 'between the "four modernisations" and a backward science and technology, as well as a backward culture and education.'

It follows that Teng favours a development of technical expertise which should not be subject to considerations of ideological purity, and stands opposed to the 'fascist dictatorship' of the 'radicals' in the arts.

Against the 'radicals', who were responsible for a levelling down of wage rates, Teng maintains that 'it is basically wrong to adopt an indifferent attitude towards the livelihood problems of the masses'. How far the post-Mao leadership will be able to meet such needs, combined with

its ambitious modernisation programme, is quite another question.

It would be a mistake to identify the 'radicals' too closely with the policies of Mao himself. Mao's own political utterances over the years are sufficiently inconsistent and contradictory for every faction to claim his mantle — with some justification.

But Shuang stresses important differences between Mao and Teng on the question of the 'mass line': 'Neither Mao nor Teng have tried to abolish the bureaucracy as such, but they do try to fight against the corruption of the bureaucracy. To fight against corruption Mao was able to resort to the masses while Chou and Teng would not. But the difference is not fundamental, because Mao's "mass line" does not mean "let the masses govern", but "let the bureaucracy make use of the masses to a strictly defined degree".'

'Mao's fight against corruption by making use of the masses failed. (The Cultural Revolution eventually escaped the control of any section of the bureaucracy.) Teng's attempt to cope with corruption without the help of the masses is doomed beforehand.'

Shuang points out that, despite certain policy differences, the faction fight which has concluded with Teng's rehabilitation is primarily a struggle within the bureaucracy: 'The basic reason for their failure lies in their failure to understand (or their reluctance to accept) the truth that without socialist democracy and a genuine internationalist revolutionary strategy, to build socialism in one single country (especially in a backward country like China) is impossible.'

What's Left

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

WANTED: Room in flat in Liverpool for Scottish comrade from anytime in September. Phone 0224 572949 before 13 August. 031-332 6431 after.

BRENT Socialist Challenge group meeting, Tuesday 9 August, 7.30pm at Willason Junction Hotel, Station Road, NW10. Discussion on Left Unity.

SOCIALIST in need of accommodation seeks room in house or second person to look for flat in London. Contact Geoff at 01-988 9177, or leave a message with Martin at 01-407 3038.

CONFERENCE on Women and the Unions, called by SE London Medical Branch of ASTMS, to be held on Saturday 22 October at 1pm, at NUR Unity House, Euston Road, London NW1. Further information from: Janet Maguire, ECG Dept., Guys Hospital, London SE1. Tel: 01-407 7600, ext. 3182.

OUTCOME Latest issue, No. 4, A sexual liberation magazine produced by gay people. 20p incl. postage from 35 West Road, Lancaster.

DESPERATELY needed. Place in flat for two IMG comrades in London (preferably South) from beginning of August. Phone 258 8371 and leave message with Cath. This is urgent!

TROTSKYIST CURRENT Awareness and Abstracts Bulletin, No 1 July 1977. Out now. An indexing and abstracting service of Trotskyist literature. The bulletin is composed of two sections. An index of current articles indexed alphabetically and an abstracts section, 20p plus postage from R. Bonner, 21 Kinnoull Mansions, Rowhill Road, London E5 8EB.

THE OTHER BOOKSHOP is a new left bookshop which will be opening within a fortnight at 328 Upper Street, Islington, N1. Beautifully designed, it is intended to have a wide range of socialist books, novels, poetry etc. Its wood-paneling is to be utilised to display painting and drawings by artists unable to gain access to a gallery. For further details write to Alan Lennox, The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, London N1. Tel: 01-226 0571.

RED BOOKS NEWS

Searchlight. The August edition of this anti-fascist journal contains a very interesting exposure of the background of David Irving, the author of that recent controversial book Hitler's War. It also examines how fascist groups are attempting to rewrite the history of Germany under the Third Reich. Price 30p (+7p p&p).

The Future in the Present by C.L.R. James. This is the first of three volumes of these selected works of the West Indian Marxist, C.L.R. James. Covering the period 1929-1971, it includes extracts from 'World Revolution 1917-1939', 'Stalin Capitalism and World Revolution', James' report to 1948 congress of the SWP (USA) on black people and many other essays and extracts. Price £2.95.

Western Marxism, a Critical Reader, from New Left Books. A series of essays setting out the theories of the main figures of Western Marxism. Those examined include Lukacs, the Frankfurt school, Gramsci, Althusser and Colletti. Price £3.50. New Left Books have also reprinted two of Lukacs' works in paperback: Lenin (52), and Tactics and Ethics: Political Writings 1918-1929 (53).

Postage: Unless otherwise stated, under £2.50 include 25p for p&p; £2.50-£8 include 10%; over £8 post free. Red Books, 182 Pentonville Road, London N1.

The question of cannabis prohibition seems of marginal importance, yet it is a serious one as long as nearly 1,000 people are imprisoned in Britain each year and thousands more harassed and fined for 'crimes' related to a drug about which the only conclusive proof is that it is less harmful than alcohol or tobacco.

Endless reports that marijuana is harmless, linked to the fact that the Government makes little fuss over the 3,000 people killed every year in industry, give the lie to the claim that cannabis is prohibited to safeguard the nation's health. Why then is cannabis illegal, and why was it made so originally?

Parliament never investigated the effects of cannabis use when it was first made illegal in 1925. They were following expert advice recommending prohibition at the Geneva Conference in 1924. The 'experts' in question were the Egyptian Government (a British protectorate), the South African Government (a British Dominion) and the Indian Government (a British colony).

At the Geneva Conference, cannabis was blamed for all the ills of the Third World countries. 'The illicit use of hashish is the principal cause of most of the cases of insanity in Egypt'. Cannabis 'reduces man to the level of the brute and deprives him of health, reason, self-control and honour'. Cannabis was regarded as dangerous as opium. No-one bothered to verify this: it was too convenient to have a drug on which to blame the problems of colonisation. The possibility, for example, of lack of food being a cause of ill-health probably did enter their heads — but it was soon dismissed. At Geneva Britain and France were prepared to tolerate a certain amount of cannabis use among 'the natives'. The British rejected total prohibition in India, so did the French in the Congo. But when it came to 'white men' the picture was different — mustn't let lack of self-control and honour spread to Europe.

'ORIENTAL SEAMEN'

Britain was most concerned about cannabis use 'among Oriental seamen visiting her ports'. A passage from an American medical journal sums up the British attitude: 'The dominant race and most enlightened countries are alcoholic. The races and nations addicted to hemp and opium have deteriorated both mentally and physically.'

In the 1960's, when the drug laws were revised to introduce police powers to stop and search, racism was one of the main undercurrents. The drug laws were expanded as part of the battle against the 'permissive society', against any alternative culture or lifestyle. The ideology of self-control, family life and so on was under attack and drug use was seen as central to 'alternative cultures'. Racism is evident among much 'expert' medical opinion. The Chairperson of the North East Committee on Drug Abuse, Dr. Muller, stated that 'certain cultures like West Indian smoked cannabis and always had. Reports from Birmingham said that the West Indians were none the worse for it, but that whites were.' The saving grace for Scotland, he claimed, was alcohol. 'The traditional mood alterer is alcohol and this may insulate us a little against drugs. The drug gives them power to do something they couldn't ordinarily do, like ringing up their professor and telling him "Go to Hell".' Thus it is not the mood alteration that constitutes the risk, but the anti-authoritarian attitudes.

'DEBAUCHERY AND SEXUALITY'

Reading the 60's press you'd be amazed what cannabis leads to. Anslinger, head of the US Narcotics Bureau: cannabis results in 'debauchery and sexuality'. The London evening papers revelled in the prosecution of the Rolling Stones in 1967. The *Evening News* had an article entitled 'The Hippy Way of Life Catches On'. 'The hippies' revolution aims at doing absolutely nothing. Their negative philosophy involves the rejection of everything, including work, war, paying rent, home life and responsibility. Instead they indulge in drugs, nude parties, drawing on walls...'

The *Evening Standard* surpassed this with a series, 'Turn On, Tune In, Drop Out', whose flavour is apparent from a quotation about the position of women in hippy California: '... their extremism becomes comprehensible when one considers that this state sells the highest number of birth control pills per head of population than any other society in the world... Nobody has yet seriously appreciated the enormous psychological difference that total absence

of fear of pregnancy from the age of puberty onward might make to the female sex. The only extraordinary result so far is that the California girls have by their permissiveness vastly accelerated the growth of the hippy movement... Hippyism can be described as a combination of nihilism, socialism and hedonism.' In this unbelievably misogynist article 'liberated' women are seen as leading poor boys astray into the evil world of drugs.

In February 1967 *The Times* reported a speech of the Secretary of the National Association on Drug Addiction, who said he had information about 'young lads being enticed into homosexuality after attending drug parties where the reefer cigarette was used. There was also evidence that the side effects from smoking marijuana can produce criminal tendencies. Permitting people to smoke marijuana encouraged the spread of other scourges. Some young people had contracted venereal diseases while under its influence.' A month later a correspondent to *The Times* wrote: 'I know of at least one girl who became pregnant while at a marijuana party. As a result of this crisis she moved on to heroin...' (Not

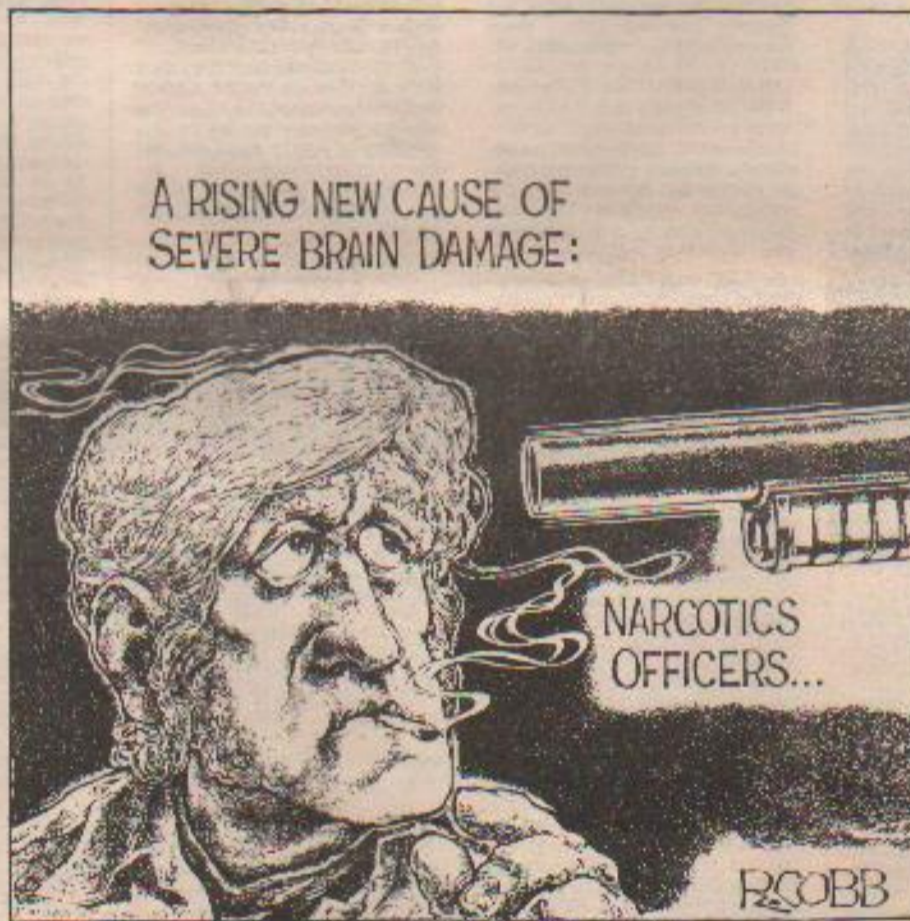
only does cannabis lead to heroin, pregnancy does too!) Finally, Anslinger again: 'How many murders, suicides, robberies and maniacal deeds it causes each year, especially among the young, can only be conjectured.'

So each and every threat to our way of life was connected with the use of cannabis. Donald Johnson in *Indian Hemp: A Social Menace*: 'It would be easy for the Soviet Union to add cannabis to its export of grain and flour and so aid the success of totalitarian propaganda!'

Cannabis, then, threatens white men, heterosexuals, family life, property and hard work — What other central ideas of Western Civilisation does it threaten? — war. And in 1968 for the Americans that was important. 80 per cent of conscripted soldiers in Vietnam were reported to be 'on pot'. Cannabis was called 'the other enemy' by officers because 'pot-smoking GIs refuse to go into battle in Vietnam... Cannabis lining up with Communism again! However, when American soldiers slaughtered over 100 South Vietnamese at My Lai their excessive zeal was put down to the fact that they used marijuana. Cannabis

Making a hash of it

Release, the aid and welfare agency, is ten years old this summer. It has been best known as a campaigner for the legalisation of cannabis, but still no reform of the drug laws has been forthcoming. SARAH HART and PAUL CRANE of the Release collective look at the truth behind prohibition.



must be one of the most overused scapegoats of the century.

On the subject of cannabis and health, there have been endless contradictions. When cannabis was first prohibited it was because, if unable to get opiates, addicts would turn to cannabis. Now it's the exact opposite: one of the main arguments against the legalisation of cannabis is that it leads to opiates! So long as cannabis is linked with physically addictive drugs, no-one is concerned about details.

Every major Western survey on cannabis and heroin use has found no causal link. Nevertheless, during the debate on the Misuse of Drugs Bill in 1970, Home Secretary Reginald Maudling stated: 'I understand that more than 90 per cent of those addicted to hard drugs started on cannabis.' No doubt 100 per cent 'start' on alcohol and tobacco!

ALCOHOL

The dishonesty of the claim that public health is at the bottom of cannabis prohibition is nowhere more obvious than in the absolute refusal of Western governments to make comparisons between cannabis and the legal, socially accepted drugs. 100,000 British tobacco smokers die every year, and there are 2,000 alcohol-related deaths. There is not a single known case of someone dying as a result of cannabis use! All the claimed results of 'cannabis addiction' could quite legitimately be attributed to alcoholism.

The law prohibiting the use of cannabis has no basis other than the suppression of behaviour which does not fit in with dominant norms. But does it matter if there are laws against certain forms of pleasure seeking? First, laws have an important function in upholding the dominant ideology. Because of the whole myth of the impartial legal system and the justice of British law, most people believe that what is illegal is bad. There are many laws against activities which harm no-one — homosexuality for example — which are maintained because they support the white Christian ideology of Western capitalism.

Secondly, it matters that these laws are used. In July 1967 the Government unexpectedly introduced wide powers authorising the police to stop and search people for drugs. The Home Office Minister ranted on about the 'half-world' of the young Californian hippies as revealed in the series of *Evening Standard* articles and concluded 'I think you will be as concerned as I am that such a phenomenon should not arise here'. Although governments have always claimed to be after the pusher not the user, these powers are aimed specifically at apprehending the user. The *Daily Mail* in 1970 claimed 'the police have learned how to go for the pushers without bullying innocent citizens or overloading the courts with minor offenders'. However, in 1969 there were 6,800 convictions for unlawful possession, 250 for supplying; in 1970, 9,350 for possession, 400 for supplying; 1971, 12,300 against 500 and 1972, 15,400 against 500. The success rate of recorded police stop searches for drugs nationally has never exceeded 30 per cent and in some areas is as low as 8 per cent.

RACIST BIAS

Cannabis use is now something which spans all sections of society, but searches and prosecutions are selective, whilst sentencing is arbitrary. Over 20 per cent of people convicted of drug offences were born outside the UK. The rich, middle class and employed are relatively safe. The drug laws together with the notorious 'sus' laws are an ideal cover for police harassment in the streets of certain sections of the community.

As with other laws, judges show a racist bias in their sentencing. Although, of course, there are no official statistics to prove this point, take two court decisions in March and April this year. 27-year-old West African Ibisolo Salim, who had no drugs convictions, was sent to prison for 12 months for possessing £6 worth of cannabis. A month later, 26-year-old Gerald Fruewith, also with no drugs convictions and otherwise a respectable white man, got a suspended sentence of 6 months imprisonment for possessing £200 worth of cannabis.

Overall, from 1965 to 1975 the annual number of people sent to prison has increased fourfold. State repression of cannabis users has come full circle. Just as the introduction of cannabis prohibition was seen, above all, as a bulwark of white capitalist ideology, now police implementation of the drug laws is a potent instrument for the repression of black people and others — hippies, squatters and so on — who are perceived as a threat to the 'values of our Western society'.

ZIONISM and RACISM ~ a Palestinian voice

FRED HALLIDAY'S article on Zionism and Racism (Socialist Challenge, 14 July) came as an excellent, firm and very clear stand giving [from my point of view] a correct answer to the letter from Mr. Alan Macdougall [the chairperson of Essex University Communist Party] of a few weeks previous.

As a Palestinian socialist, I would like to state my views on both the CP's letter and Fred's article:

1. In general, from a formal Marxist-Leninist viewpoint, CPs all over the world are for a strategic alliance of all liberation movements in the Third World or elsewhere.
2. As far as the PLO and the Palestinian struggle is concerned, all CPs, including the Israeli CP [Rakah], have a clear policy. The British CP appears to be an exception [except for some individuals]. Its confusion was reflected in Alan Macdougall's letter. Despite our discussion with him this year he still doesn't see a racist element within Zionism. Who knows, perhaps he will soon apply similar criteria to the Vorster and Smith regimes in South Africa.
3. As an oppressed Palestinian I agree totally with the analysis presented in Fred's article, except the section on an 'Israeli nation'. This is a sensitive issue. In reality it is at the heart of the entire conflict in the Middle-East.

Jewish 'nation' was, and still is, one of the major problems confronting Marxism. Marx, Lenin and Trotsky's work on this issue, though fragmentary, ended with one conclusion: religion is only one element out of many which defines a nation. So none of them accepted the idea of the Jewish 'nation'.

But arguing that because the capitalist world created the state of Israel, therefore the Israeli 'nation' exists is not too dissimilar to arguing that there is a white Rhodesian and a white South African nation. It is to passively abuse oneself before accomplished facts.

It seems to me that the basic argument between Fred and myself is in defining the Palestinians. For any Marxist Palestinian this means those indigenous people, regardless of their religion (Islam, Judaism, Christian) living in Palestine before the creation of Israel. For Fred it appears to mean Christian and Moslem Arabs, whereas by Israeli he refers to the Jewish people alone and not just those living in Palestine now, but all Zionist Jews throughout the world, whom by definition and

the Law of Return are Israelis.

4. I believe that the only solution for the Palestinian problem is not the de-Zionisation of Israel, but the creation of a new, democratic popular state in the whole of Palestine. All the indigenous people of that land would live together in such a true socialist state and fight for a united socialist Middle-East.

5. I completely agree with Fred [and this is the position of the Palestinian Society at Essex University] that the purpose of the anti-Zionist campaign must not be to call for the banning of Jewish societies because that would amount to anti-semitism. But as I see it, Zionism started at universities and higher education colleges in Europe, Britain and the USA, so we must defeat it there first, where it was born. I do believe that socialists in Britain and Europe are growing in strength every day and in the long run that will be a victory for oppressed people throughout the world.

H.M. EL-GHANEM (Executive Committee, General Union of Palestinian Students in the UK and Ireland).

Anarchist greetings

THE ANARCHIST Workers Association extends its comradely greetings on the appearance of Socialist Challenge.

Our last National Conference passed the following motion:

'That AWA welcomes Socialist Challenge and regularly reviews its commitment to it.'

'That AWA contributes articles and individuals are free to sell it.'

'That the public sector alliance is discussed in the pages of Socialist Challenge.'

We welcome any genuine attempt to overcome the counterproductive nature of the divisions on the left.

We understand that unity must be consciously fought for. At times Socialist Challenge gives the impression that unity

can be built simply by declaring its desirability and that the block to unity is purely structural.

Different historical traditions have resulted in real ideological differences. Unity must be built through practical work in united fronts within the class and the clear demarcation of differences as the basis for genuine theoretical debate.

The opening up of the pages of Socialist Challenge to these issues may serve as a vehicle for this. Hence, AWA hopes to participate in future issues of Socialist Challenge in the manner contained in the above motion.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE, Anarchist Workers Association.

Socialist Challenge EVENTS

SCOTLAND

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

YORKSHIRE

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

LEEDS Readers meet fortnightly. For more information contact 153 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds.

YORK supporters meet every fortnight on Sunday. Next meeting Sunday 6 August, 7.30pm Spread Eagle pub, Walmgate, York.

NORTH EAST

DARLINGTON Fortnightly Forums. Next meeting on Eurocommunism, Tuesday 2 August. Public Library, Darlington.

NORTH WEST

For details of activities in the NW write or ring the Manchester Socialist Challenge Centre, Third Floor, 14 Piccadilly, Manchester 1. 061-236 2362.

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

MANCHESTER. Series of educationalists for readers.

Thursday 4 August. 'The Crisis in the Family'.

Thursday 18 August. 'Racism'.

Thursday 1 September. 'Need for a Revolutionary Party'.

All at the Manchester Socialist Challenge Centre at 7.30pm.

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

MIDLANDS

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

WOLVERHAMPTON Discussion Group. 'What are the causes of inflation and unemployment?' Tuesday 9 August, 7.30pm at the Vine Hotel, Broad Street, Wolverhampton.

LONDON

For details of activities ring 01-263 3081, 10-5pm.

SOUTHALL. Supporters group meets fortnightly. For details phone 01-573 5056.

HOME COUNTIES

READING Readers meeting. Every Thursday evening, 7.30pm, 89 Amity Road, Reading.

SOUTHAMPTON Readers meet fortnightly on Thursday in the Anchor pub, East Street from Thursday 28 July. For further details phone Paul at 0703-501132.

BRIGHTON Summer Forums.

Thursday 11 August 'Revolutionaries and elections'.

Thursday 25 August 'The Working Women's Charter'.

Thursday 8 September 'Save the EGA'.

All at the Springfield pub (near London Road/Station), Brighton at 7.30pm, at 7.30pm.

From the very beginning the

~ what the IMG thinks

THE International Marxist Group has received a number of requests for clarification of its position on denying a platform to Zionists. The Political Committee of the IMG passed the following resolution on 28 July:

'It is not the position of the IMG to deny a platform to Zionists or to call for the banning of Jewish societies. In our opinion it is only by vigorous

political confrontation with the Zionists can we defeat them ideologically in this country.'

COLCHESTER IMG comrades write:

'We have participated extremely actively in the anti-Zionist campaign initiated by the Palestinian students. The resolution calling for solidarity with the Palestinian people and con-

demning Zionism as a form of racism was carried overwhelmingly at a Union meeting of well over 600 students. The IMG initiated the project of a clear statement, signed by all groups on the campus active in the campaign, which opposed any bans on the Israeli society. We argued for this position within the Socialist Students Alliance as well.'

NUPE witch-hunters

I READ Bob Pennington's report in Socialist Challenge (14 July) concerning the possible expulsion of five hospital workers in Southampton.

According to the report the aims of the rank-and-file news-sheet Challenge are for democracy in the workers movement and opposition to wage restraint. These aims are also in line with the objectives of my hospital branch. Therefore we must be accessories to the group around Challenge. Are we then also to be charged under Rule 18(ii)?

This rule, incidentally, is also linked to Rule 42(i) which states: 'Any member of the union who, in the opinion of the Executive Council, has injured or attempted to injure the union or worked contrary to the interests of the union and its members, or otherwise brought the union into discredit, may be expelled from the union by the Executive Council.'

If, for example, the five are expelled, only then will they know the charges against them. Rule 42(ii) states: 'The expelled member shall afterwards receive notice of and the reasons for his (sic) expulsion.' So much for union democracy that the right wing claims to support.

Democracy is a key element for an effective fightback against the bureaucrats and those who strive for this objective will undoubtedly fall victim to the right wing. The latter will utilise endless slanders against their militant opponents, to discredit, isolate and, where possible, expel them. Real union democracy including freedom of speech for all oppressed layers inside it can only be attained through an organised and internal left wing.

Finally, could Bob Pennington please desist from using the term 'reds and commies' — once

"It is a very good poem"

I HOPE the majority of Socialist Challenge supporters will not agree with the views expressed by Jill Simons about James Kirkup's poem The Love that Dares to Speak its Name. In claiming that the poem glorifies necrophilia she makes the same philistine error as the bigots who have suppressed it, and incidentally makes the common error of the left on cultural matters, i.e. that a work of art is to be understood as a piece of propaganda, and to be judged by whether or not we agree with the message it is supposed to convey.

It seemed clear to me that the poem was an attempt to express the connection between sexual feeling (in this case homosexual attraction) and religious feeling. The irony is that although the main inducers of the poem claim to be Christians the poem is as intensely religious as it is homosexual. If Marxists were to criticise the poem, the fact that it is imbued with religious mysticism would be a much more apt criticism than that it advocates necrophilia, or an alienated attitude towards sex.

But Marxists should not criticise it on these grounds either. Religious feeling is an objective fact, which motivates a very large percentage of our fellow human beings. We may not agree with their superstitious convictions, but we have to try to understand them.

James Kirkup's poem was a very clear exposition of the link between ecstatic religion and sexuality, and as such was a valuable contribution to such an understanding. I found it much more valuable, in fact, than Neil Bellon's disappointing piece on the Catholic Church in a previous issue. Bellon made the bourgeois liberal error of trying

should be enough — and concentrate on writing more mature reports in the future.

STEPHEN PAGE (Senior Steward, St. Andrews Hospital, Norwich).

to understand that Church in terms of an unexamined nationalism, which stands by its blinkers as under the key element which holds together this contradictory institution, namely that people believe in religion, and that they do so for ascertainable reasons.

Many thanks to Socialist Challenge for making the poem available. It is a very good poem and we are right to defend it not just on civil libertarian, but on cultural grounds.

BOB PURDIE (Warwickshire)

Squeezing a reformist lemon

HAVING just read the poem The Love that Dares to Speak its Name in Socialist Challenge — I missed the original in Gay News — and being both a gay man and a socialist, I am writing to express my views about the whole controversy and hope you will print my letter.

Firstly, it is obvious that Gay News must be defended against Mary Whitehouse. The court case should be seen as a political attack on all gay people. But my original defensive reaction to the court's decision is the final ironic comment on the kind of conservative political game that Gay News as a paper is engaged in. I watched Denis Lomon on 'The Editor's TV programme the other night and it appears to me that he approached the publishing of this poem with all the naive glibness of the good liberal. He does see himself and Gay News engaged in an exercise in 'responsible journalism' and seems totally bemused by the savagery of the political reaction.

The politics of Gay News are never made very explicit, but they are implicitly reformist. That is, the editor and paper seem to talk-end DHE (The Campaign for Homosexual Equality) and believe that homosexuals can be liberated within the confines of capitalist society. The political tactics that flow from this view is that the oppression of gays can be brought to an

Open letter to labour movement

AS A WOMAN who has regularly supported the mass picket of the Grunwick factory since 13 June, I am writing to clear up any doubts that those coachloads of male trade union militants may have had about the role or validity of women in that situation.

I and many other women feel very strongly about this issue, which is one of exploitation of Asian workers, most of them women, and have been prepared to be crushed and brutalised daily by large men in uniform for that cause, to say nothing of the problems arising for those of us who are mothers, over child-care arrangements every morning.

We welcomed your arrival in force at Grunwick's, and were

surprised and angry to find ourselves abused, patronised and generally pushed aside by some of your contingents. The women of the strike committee (for it has largely been the women who have stood on the picket line over the last 11 months) and its supporters have been waiting for the day when the people, male and female, trade unionists or otherwise, for we are all workers, will take over the streets and bring the factory to a standstill. It's quite enough to have to confront police violence without the pickets being divided amongst themselves. Next time let us unite our strength.

SARAH GREAVES (Independent Mothers Movement)

and by education, demystification and legalisation. Thus it makes sense to publish a poem that attempts to make gay Christians a little happier by suggesting that Jesus might have been gay too.

Denis Lomon sees this as being responsible journalism because many gay Christians feel a conflict between their sexual identity and their Christian belief. The object of this poem, therefore, was to help them reconcile their feelings of conflict.

It seems to me that attempts like this to make homosexuality respectable must always fail. Gay sex is an implicit attack on the morality of the family and since the family is the prime socialising agent of bourgeois society there is no way that gay people can become liberated without overthrowing it, or the crucible of overthrowing capitalist society gay people have to develop a consciousness and politics adequate to the understanding of their oppression and Christianity is an obstacle in the way of this understanding.

I was a little surprised, therefore, to see Socialist Challenge reprint this poem without any serious attempt at a political analysis of the politics of Gay Liberation in general and Gay News in particular. To publish this poem essentially is to accept the consensus, reformist view that we should placate Christians who experience gender as a result of the fact that they are also gay. It doesn't surprise me that Gay News does this, but I am surprised to see a socialist paper pandering to this kind of backwardness.

I am not suggesting that socialists should attack Christian beliefs in a confrontational manner — whether the Christians we may discuss with are heterosexual or homosexual — because it seems to me that there are more important issues. But when someone else makes the relationship between gay sexuality and religion an issue then, I believe, socialists should state clearly what the social role of the church is. By all means defend Gay News against Whitehouse, and gay people against the state, but don't cower to reformist politics or talk-end

responsible journalism' in the process, because this serves only to sustain the very social illusions socialists are attempting to dispel.

Who knows, perhaps we shall soon have a poem describing a homosexual act between Hitler and one of the Hitler Youth in his bunker immediately after his suicide so that gay members of the National Front can reconcile their conflicts!

PAUL CHASE (Hadden Bridge)

Wanted: feminist outrage

RE: THE CENSORED 'gay' poem circulated by Socialist Challenge. I think you were absolutely right to print it. I personally found its criticism quite attractive, but what I found offensive as a woman is its glorification of the male pick as an instrument of some kind of mystic liberation. Perhaps it was written by a feminist and is meant to be funny.

I am sure that there is no conscious connection between the publication of the poem and the fact that Socialist Challenge so far seems to reflect the historical problem of women's invisibility. We do not yet exist in your paper. The articles on rape do not express feminist outrage, anger or strength. Whoever did the layout and repackage of the Grunwick day of action could not see the women — socialist feminists behind the 'Women against Racism' and 'Fascism' banner, feminists on the picket line, women in the strike itself — and could not reflect their experiences.

Can we have a little more contact between professional and political content? This is supposed to be a revolutionary newspaper, not another version of the male-dominated bourgeois press.

REGINALD (London)

Punktual product of the crisis

by PAUL MARRIS

Musically, punk rock is remarkably similar to British pop music of the mid-60s. Its distinctiveness lies elsewhere: in its lyrical content and in its wider social context. The principal target for the punk fans' withering contempt is the former mainstream of rock, which threatened in the 70s to settle entirely into boring hip-easy-listening for 30-year-old ad agency accounts managers.

Rod Stewart, Elton John, Robert Plant, Mick Jagger became indistinguishable from the rest of that amorphous jet set of fashion designers, famous artists, cover-girls, politicians, footballers and movie stars — and even went into tax exile with the rest of them in Hollywood. (The Clash respond with their magnificent cry of *I'm So Bored with the USA.*)

Only reggae retained any credibility, and is in fact the favoured personal listening for Johnny Rotten of the Sex Pistols and Joe Strummer of The Clash. The Clash's rendition of the reggae song *Police and Thieves* is a minor masterpiece.

But Rasta can't pretend to be an answer if you're white. And from schools, colleges and small

clubs, punk rock emerged last year: short, raw, simple songs from four-piece electric bands, like in the mid-60s. Though still heavily concerned with boy-girl relationships, the new songs cover a far wider range of subject matter.

UNEMPLOYMENT

They're rooted in the white working class teenagers' world, in a Britain in capitalist crisis — school (*Bored Teenagers* by The Adverts), unemployment (*Career Opportunities* by The Clash), boring work (*Day by Day* by Generation X), pop culture (the work of the X-Ray Spex) and a violence that is part pose and part real (the songs of The

Damned; *White Riot* by The Clash).

Protest songs — not the sentimental, humanist protest of the early 60s, but an aggressive protest for the mid-70s. One of the only concrete vehicles of a much-needed expression for a hatred of the monarchy during the Jubilee this summer, for example, was the Sex Pistols' inspired vituperative *God Save the Queen*. It was widely banned, yet reached number one in the sales charts.

A white working class anti-establishment youth movement, mostly sexist, with a penumbra of violence, and emerging in a period of high unemployment and falling living standards. Is this a breeding ground for fascism? It obviously could be. Swastikas on leather jackets are not unknown at punk gigs. In Paris, 'Punk' sprayed on walls is often accompanied by the cross which serves as the symbol for the French proto-fascist movement.

But in London, at least, this danger seems to be receding. Even the patriotic Tory-voting Jam dropped the union jack from their promotional insignia in order to dissociate themselves from any hint of a connection with the National Front. The political colour of the punk music movement will be determined elsewhere — by the wider balance of forces operating in society and culture at large.

There is in fact a tendency within these new British groups towards a primitive socialist protest, most explicit in The Clash who wittily credited their anonymous session drummer as Tory Crimes. Their song *White Riot* aims at encouraging white kids to follow the example of their black brothers and sisters at the Notting Hill Gate Carnival last summer in taking control of the streets, while their most recent single *Remote Control* lashes out at a system that prevents us controlling our lives.

RALLYING POINT

But popular music — like other cultural forms — can best serve as an expression, and perhaps as a rallying-point, for the struggle for socialism. Its role can obviously never be decisive, will only



THE CLASH: they wouldn't be seen dead at the Proms

be secondary, a fact which The Clash recognise. In a recent *Record Mirror* interview, guitarist Mick Jones complains:

'The Clash have been pigeon-holed, everybody's favourite political band on the scene at the moment. We are not Top of the Political Pops. We are not the new leaders that everyone seems to be searching for.'

And vocalist Joe Strummer adds — in a rather ultra-left but essentially correct vein: 'We haven't got any control over the situation at all. We haven't got any control over our lives. We just get tossed about like everyone else. Look — political power grows from the barrel of a gun — and I haven't got a gun.'

but Susie just ignores their looks, she knows they cannot buy this lady.'

INVISIBILITY

Val Bailey sings the astonishingly powerful 'Invisible Married Breakfast Blues', frustrated at her invisibility from her husband: 'He kisses me without looking at me, / Then he turns at the door as if to see / If there's something he's forgotten, but there's only me.' And Judas, determined to resist the Roman occupation against Jesus's collaboration and other-worldliness, betrays his master with a kiss so that the struggle can go forward.

This is a romantic record, but don't let that put you off. It's romanticism which turns away the travelling wig salesman who, seeing a hirsute customer, offers him a hair remover. He then reveals that 'we sell everything'. When he gets no joy a second time he turns on his lost customer:

'If's people like you that are letting down the country when our democratic freedoms are at stake. / And if you don't buy the wheels will start to falter and after that it's on with the brake. / Then confidence will be destroyed and millions will be unemployed and anarchy will grow from our disharmony. / So tell me, sir, do you prefer to be a lousy saboteur or help to boost the national economy?' Just for once take his advice and buy this record.

Love, Loneliness and Laundry, by Leon Rosselson and Roy Bailey. LP issued by Acorn Records.

Music to riot by

by MICHAEL CHANAN

A SECULAR oratorio dedicated to Che Guevara was given its first British performance at the Promenade Concerts last week — Hans Werner Henze's *The Raft of the Medusa*.

The work has a certain notoriety. Its first performance in Hamburg in 1968 was cancelled because of a political demonstration — hardly imaginable in Britain, but less surprising in West Germany where concert hall music is still taken more seriously, even by the revolutionary left.

So a number of students raised a red flag — a symbol in the oratorio — over the stage. Part of the chorus refused to sing and it was removed. The police were called. Ernst Schnabel, who wrote the libretto, was arrested, and Henze — due to conduct — refused to conduct.

Why should an avant-garde musical work create such a rumpus? The story concerns a French navy frigate, the *Medusa*, which ran aground in 1816 off the African coast on its way to recapture territories lost to Britain by Napoleon. The common sailors — the 'many-too-many' in the words of the oratorio — were forced to build a raft for themselves from the ship's timbers because there weren't enough lifeboats. But then the lifeboats were unable to tow the heavily-laden raft, and cut it loose.

The oratorio tells of the fate of the sailors on the raft, of whom

only a few survived. At the time, the French painter Gericauld painted the scene. The painting, which now hangs in the Louvre, created a storm of controversy over its portrayal of the sailors as victims of ostious corruption.

In the oratorio they become representatives of all oppressed peoples. 'There is no law for us', they sing, 'and we're dying because kingdoms have no conscience. / We'll make ourselves a law, and dishonour all those who left us so alone. / We shall no longer be silent.'

Those who did survive, the narrator tells us at the end, having learned a lesson from reality, returned to the world eager to overthrow it. And to underline the point, Henze ends the work — which is mostly an utterly beautiful lament — with the percussive section of the orchestra hammering out the rhythm of the 1968 chant 'Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Min'.

I overheard an upper class woman saying afterwards that 'music like that at the end can drive people to rioting'. She, at any rate, had not mistaken the power of this music, even if the writer of the programme note is sadly correct in his wide comment that 'official socialist' long ago disavowed the connection between 'a progressive ideology' and 'progressive or avant-garde musical techniques' (and in spite of the fact, one might add, that Pierre Boulez, the leading composer of our time, also long ago called for music to adopt the path of 'permanent revolution').

THE OTHER CINEMA

25 Tottenham Street, London W1. Tel: 637 9308

COOLEY HIGH

Michael (Car Wash) Schultz's first feature that tells what it's like to be young, working class and black in Chicago in the '60s. Daily at 4.30 and 8.45pm.

WINSTANLEY

Brownlow and Mollo's beautifully shot film on the Diggers' Movement in 17th century rural England. Fri 5 August, Monday 8 Aug to Thurs 11 Aug at 6.30pm.

THE BATTLE OF CHILE

'The best documentary on Chile ever made' — *Time Out*. Sat 6 Aug: Part 1 at 4.30pm, Part 2 at 6.30pm.

SUMMER IN THE CITY

'Black Music in Britain'. Films: *Reggae & Step Forward Youth/Performance*: ASWAD/Discussion. Tickets £1.50. Sunday 7 August at 6pm.

COMMENT

Nowhere to drop

ALTHOUGH YOUR paper is generally of a high standard, particularly the coverage of international and home news (we especially like Open Forum, which has been lacking in other socialist publications) we feel that the review of certain TV programmes and recent happenings in the music world should be included in Under Review.

For the first time ever a record has reached number one in the face of a universal and politically-motivated boycott by the straight media — 'God Save the Queen' by the Sex Pistols. Punk expresses the abhorrence felt by the working class youth to a system which tries to impose rigid uniformity upon them, and tries to crush any variety, individuality and independence of thought.

The emergence of punk comes at a time when the working class and especially the youth are

paying for the capitalist crisis and differs from earlier music scenes such as the hippie movement of the 1960s which came about in relative economic prosperity.

Hippie pleasures were middle class pleasures — peace, free love, dope, the emergence of a sub-culture. Hippies rejected society. Society rejects punks. Punks are working class people who have nothing to drop out from.

We are not saying punks are socialist. They are part of a recent upsurge against a system which is becoming increasingly repressive in an effort to solve its crisis, and punk music is another means of expressing working class dissatisfaction.

COLIN CHARNLEY, Secretary, Warrington Socialist Challenge Discussion and Action Group.

Folk anti-heroes

by RICHARD CARVER

I don't know if Mary Whitehouse has anyone else in her gunsights after *Gay News*, but Leon Rosselson must be a fair candidate. He sings about Abiezer Coppe, the Ranter who claimed 'My body is my Church... God's dwelling is therein', and openly sides with Judas against the conjuror, Jesus.

Love, Loneliness and Laundry is the second record made together by Rosselson and Roy Bailey. Like their first, *That's Not The Way It's Got To Be*, it sets itself in the tradition of English folk music, rescuing it from the antiquarians and experts to become a potent

political weapon.

You might not agree with Rosselson that the folk idiom is the only one for political songs, but this record may well convince you that it is the most effective. With the help of Firoz Shapur (on brass and piano) and Martin Carthy (the best folk guitarist in the business) Bailey and Rosselson have made a record which is far more coherent, less eclectic, than their previous one.

BOMB

This time all the songs (except a setting of William Blake's 'Garden of Love') are by Rosselson, and reflect his political preoccupations: the drab aridity of

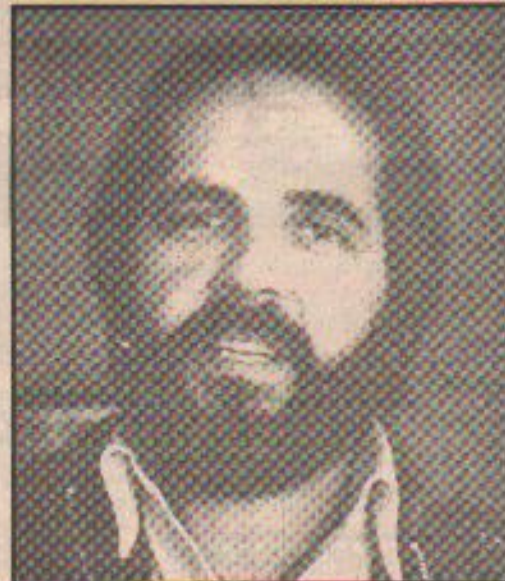
marriage, the repressive ideology of religion, the all-engulfing world of the property developers, and the bomb, threatening all humanity.

It doesn't all work. One or two of the tracks I found a bit impenetrable, but that was the exception. There are no slogans here. Perhaps the record's attraction is that — unlike a lot that has passed for socialist music — it is populated by anti-heroes.

Abiezer Coppe defies religious convention but then: 'To Newgate Jail they took him, the Ranter's dream was dead. / He had no taste for martyrdom / "I will recant", he said.' And the Soba stripper: '... the men who view her want her for themselves,



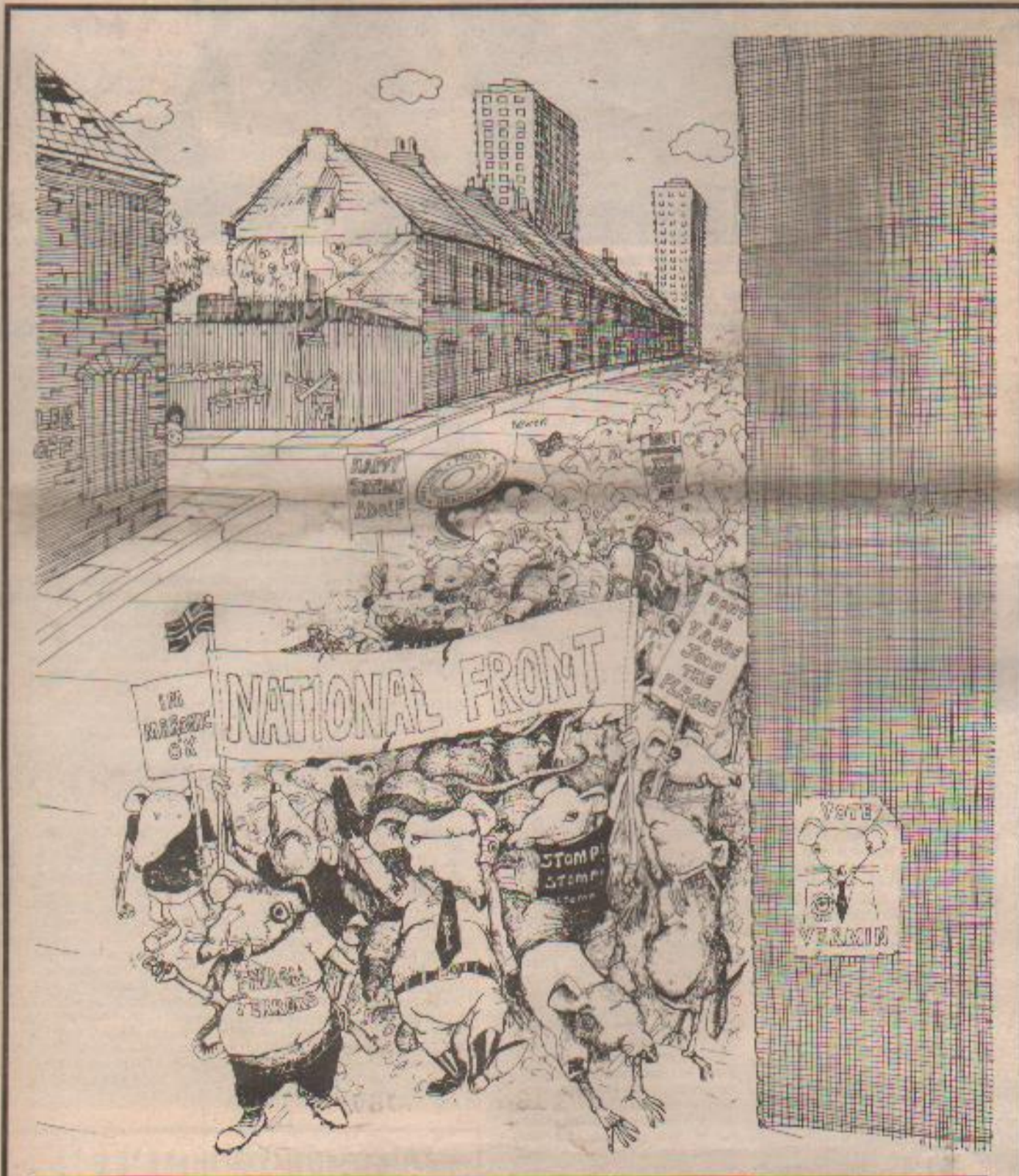
LEON ROSSELSO



ROY BAILEY

Socialist Challenge

MARCH AGAINST THE NAZIS



MARCH AGAINST THE NAZIS

Assemble at 11am, Ladywell Playing Fields, behind Lewisham Hospital off Ladywell Road [100 yards from Ladywell British Rail station].
 1am Rally at Clifton Rise [near New Cross Station].
 ★ Socialist Challenge will be organising a contingent of all our readers and supporters on the march and rally. Make sure you join us.

Single posters [25p + 29p p&p]. Bulk orders from HCAR, c/o HCRC, 245 Mare Street, London E8.

Registered with the Post Office as a newspaper. Published by Relgocrest Ltd. for Socialist Challenge, 328/329 Upper Street. Printed by Prestagate [TU], Reading, Berkshire.

SUBSCRIBERS AND SUPPORTERS

THE BIGGEST problem all socialist papers face is that the monopoly distribution agencies refuse to handle them. We are no exception.

From the response we have received we know that more people would buy the paper if they could see it.

Why not order more copies each week and sell to your workmates or while

you're queuing up to see a play or a film or a concert. We'll send you a post-free bulk order.

Fill in the form below and we'll provide you with more information.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

No. of copies required each week.....

Post to Socialist Challenge, Circulation Dept., 328 Upper Street, London N1.

Socialist Challenge

WILD & SOCIALIST OPPOSITION FOR A UNIFIED REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

Subscribe now!

Increased postal charges mean that we have had to raise the subscription cost. But they are still exceptional value.

Domestic: 6 months, £3.75; 12 months £7.50

Abroad: Airmail, £12.50. Surface, £9 per annum.

Name.....

Address.....

I enclose a donation for the Fighting Fund of.....

Cheques, POs and Money Orders should be made payable to 'Socialist Challenge'.

Complete and return to:
 Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.



Socialist Challenge continues to sell well, but our sales account for only 0.2 per cent of our potential market. Depressing? Not when you realise the size of that market. A recent poll carried out by the European Commission found that no less than 36 per cent of the British are 'dissatisfied with the present system of society'. Of these large numbers some 8 per cent think that our society 'can only be improved by revolutionary change.' This is roughly 4.8 million people or 480 times the present sales of our paper. We await your orders eagerly.

With the Ladywood by-election due on 18 August we need more money to help the comrades there (see centre-spread), but keep us going over the summer to ensure that your paper is in fighting form for September.

We got £122.10 last week, which raises the grand total to

£728.63. The dragon is beginning to weaken. Keep it up!

D. Stevens	2.00
Grunwick picketer	5.00
Nottingham IMG	10.00
Rochdale supporter	1.00
London reader	5.00
T. Driver	5.00
Leeds IMG	25.00
Portsmouth supporters	2.00
D. Russell	10.00
PM	.50
GC	.50
NW London teacher	5.00
JH	2.00
Barking supporter	2.00
JS	5.00
Hebden Bridge supporters	2.50
JD	1.00
D. Bradford	10.00
MB, Glasgow	15.00
B. Arnot	1.25
Birmingham supporters	11.25
TOTAL	122.10