

Socialist Challenge

ONE YEAR AFTER SOUTHALL DEFEAT BLACK PEOPLE WIN IN BRISTOL



Photo: SOCIALIST CHALLENGE

**But police
prepare
backlash**

'They're in a position to take revenge. If we're walking on our own, they're bound to beat us up and who will believe us? They'll be thirsting for revenge, but we're prepared as well. If there's a next time we'll go to the city centre. We'll burn down Bridewell (police station). We'll fight back.'

INSIDE: Tariq Ali reports from Bristol, pages 2&3



CARNIVAL OF THE

ON WEDNESDAY 2 April, the mainly black population of St. Paul's, a Bristol inner-city district, responded to police harassment by mounting a counter-attack. The police are the most visible instrument of state repression of the black minority in Britain today. Almost exactly a year after the police riot in Southall, the black community of St. Paul's fought back against police brutality and won.

TARIQ ALI reports from Bristol.

IT IS Easter Friday. The train from Paddington is over-crowded. With difficulty I locate a seat and find myself sitting opposite Barry Record, a well-known Jamaican playwright. He grins at me.

'Why do you think they burnt down Lloyds Bank?', he asks.

'I don't know. A symbol perhaps...'

'If you're right brother, then it's the most encouraging thing to have happened so far.'

And here Record's staccato chuckles are suddenly transformed into a loud, infectious laugh, though it appears that I'm the only person to be infected thus. Others pretend they have not heard — an amazing feat given Record's loud voice — and stare out of the window.

At Bristol station local supporters of Socialist Challenge meet me and drive to St. Paul's. The past is clearly visible: old Georgian houses; a charming square, but in an advanced state of decay and inhabited largely by immigrants. It was Poles and Hungarians after the war, West Indians in the Fifties and Asians in the decade that followed. Those who built these houses have been dead for a long time. Their heirs have abandoned the inner-city and live elsewhere in suburban comfort.

Who were the prosperous merchants whose wealth was displayed with such grandeur two and a half centuries ago? Bristol, readers will recall, was the first slave port in Britain. Slaves were bought and sold and then transported to the West Indies. These old, dilapidated mansions now house the descendants of those very slaves who were forcibly uprooted from Africa in the 17th and 18th centuries.

There is a certain irony in this fact.

'The bank is for the moneymen. The majority of us are unemployed. We are on the dole. The bank represents the Margaret Thatcher government. We burnt it down...'

The chickens, as the late Malcom X used to say, have come home to roost. In this overcrowded district of Bristol one can observe the partitioned houses which accommodated the influx of labour from the colonies three decades ago. Here we have the history of colonial plunder in a nutshell.

But St. Paul's is almost a colony within a colony. The early immigrants have moved to better areas. St. Paul's houses those who are rejected by capitalist society and who have rejected it in turn. Most of them are young; they say that they have no future. Unemployment amongst black school

leavers is somewhere between 60 and 70 per cent.

By a strange coincidence I had debated in Bristol last year the Labour Shadow Home Secretary, Merlyn Rees, and the Assistant Chief Constable for Bristol and Avon, a Mr Shattuck. The subject: 'The Police are instrumental in the oppression of minority groups.'

Shattuck, in particular, had made great play of the fact that Bristol was a 'model' of good police-black relations. 'The dreadlocks in St. Paul's won't agree with a word you're saying', he had told me. The national press has taken up the same tune. Small wonder then that what has happened here is regarded by the Tories as irrational, illogical and utterly incomprehensible.

So what did happen on 2 April? The story which we have pieced together with the aid of local Socialist Challenge supporters, black youths and community workers seems fairly straightforward.

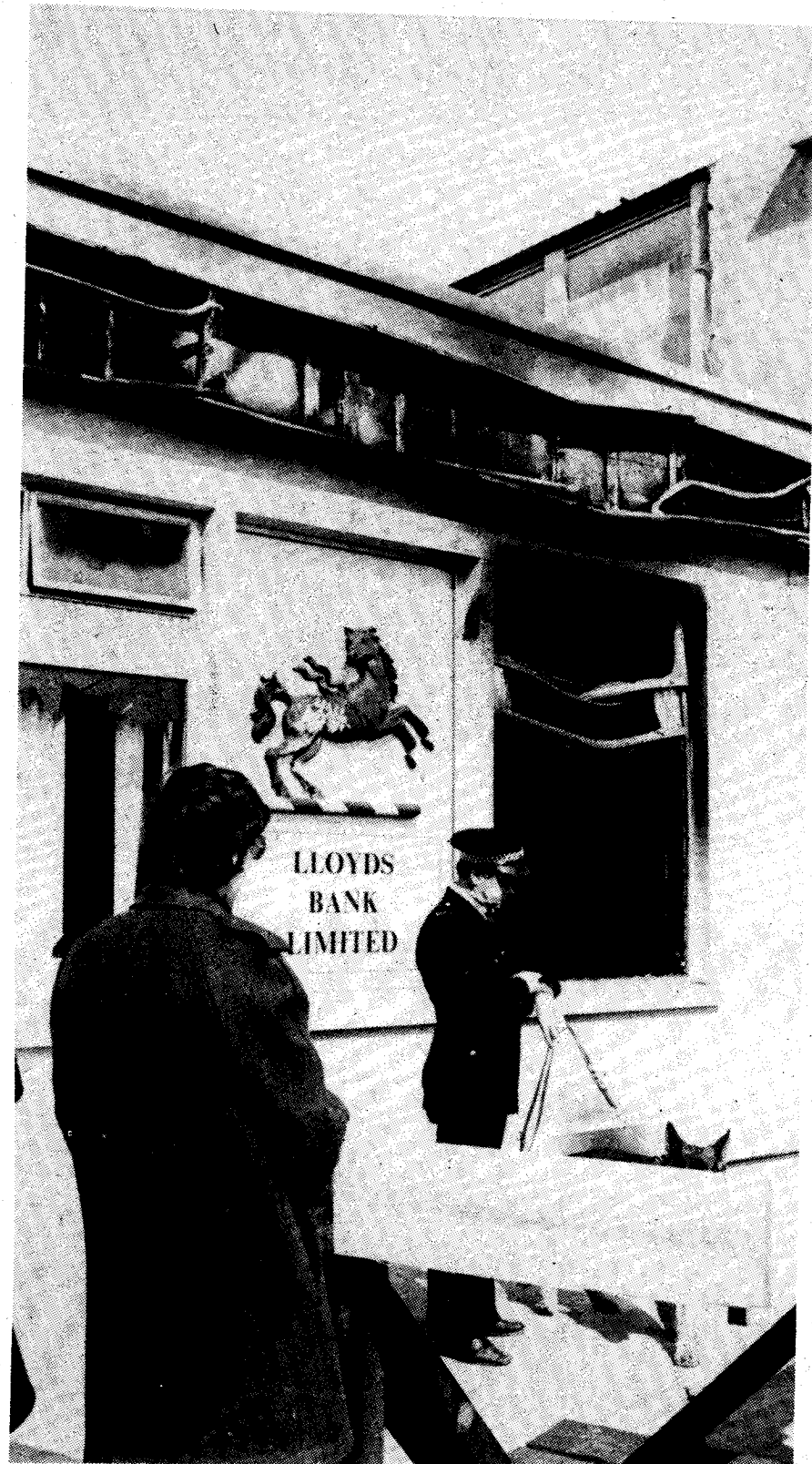
2.30pm: The Black & White cafe lies on Grosvenor Road. It is no longer allowed to serve drinks. The police have revoked its license. And yet everyone knows that drinks are served. Marijuana (or grass, the weed, the herb, *ganja*) is openly smoked. Two plainclothes policemen enter the cafe and order tea. They are instantly recognised. Rumours have been circulating that the police are about and Bertram Wilkes, the cafe owner, is not surprised. It's obviously the routine Easter raid. He thinks it will be over soon.

3 pm. Police cars and a van pull up outside. Uniformed policemen jump out, are joined by others who have been waiting around a corner and burst into the cafe. Police cordon off both sides of the Grosvenor Road, but by this time a few hundred black youth have already assembled outside the cafe. It is the first real Spring day and people are savouring the sun. A police truncheon fractures a cafe window.

A black woman resident from the Brunel estate who was walking home with her son, tells us:

'Vans and cars carrying uniformed and plainclothes police arrived. They jumped out and started attacking those in the club. Within minutes there must have been hundreds of police with dogs and truncheons. By this time hundreds of young people started throwing anything they could find. The police began to attack them and I saw dogs being used.'

All agree that the use of dogs was the most provocative. 'Pigs are bad enough, man', a youth told me, 'But why did they have to bring in the dogs?' A battle ensues outside the Black and White cafe and the police rush inside and barricade themselves in. The



number of black youths outside the cafe grows rapidly.

3.30pm: A police car is overturned and set on fire. Police reinforcements arrive, but more and more people are now coming out on the streets and the police discover that they are not confronting a 'troublesome minority', but the community as a whole.

3.30pm—5.30pm: Sporadic fighting continues. There are a number of lulls during which both sides regroup to prepare for the next round. The most amazing, though clearly unthought, provocation takes place during this period as the police attempt to retrieve their burnt out car; it is surrounded by dozens of policemen who use dustbins as shields and attempt to escort the car which is being lifted by a pick-up truck and driven away. Some of them shout abuse at the blacks. They are greeted by a new charge and are forced to retreat.

6pm—7.30pm: By this time the youths have realised that they have the upper hand. The police are utterly demoralised, have no clear strategy, no

aims. The Bristol Chief Constable, Brian Weigh, is not as experienced or skilled as David McNee or David Helm (the 'Butcher of Southall'). Some more police cars are set on fire.

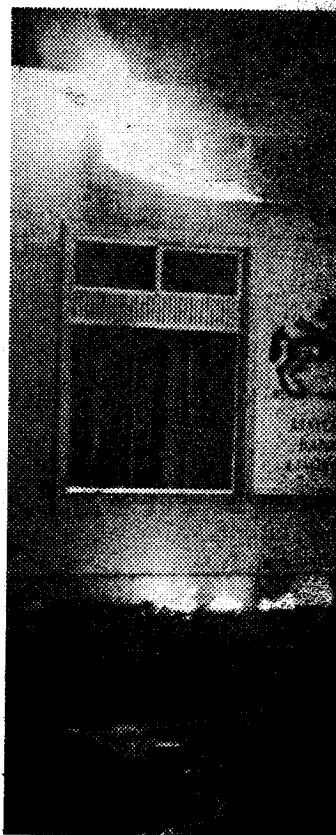
What the police thought was a routine raid has exploded in their face. As the shops begin to be smashed the police chief sounds the retreat and the police withdraw. The shops that are attacked are predominantly white. A white youth throws a stone at an Asian food store, but a group of black youths firmly, but fraternally, dissuade him.

One Asian supermarket is, however, attacked and looted. The owner, Manzoor, is extremely upset when I talk to him. Who does he blame? 'The police, of course. First they come and provoke the youths and

then they can't defend our property. The pub (West Indian owned) was untouched as was the record shop. A youth explained: 'You don't shit on your own doorstep, man!'

But why were the shops looted? Because the resentment against the racism which exists in society as a whole came out. While there is virtually no antagonism towards whites on the streets, the white shop-keeper is seen by some youths as an oppressor: 'When blacks go in and ask for bananas he make sure its the bunch which is close to rotting. When they hand us back to change they slap it on to our hands. They never count it, as if to imply we can't count.'

At 7.30pm the Chief Constable gives the order to withdraw. He



OPPRESSED



An old white couple, both of them pensioners, are seen walking into a supermarket. A quarter of an hour later they are seen emerging with a trolley full of tinned food, biscuits, soft drinks and other necessities. As the couple walk across the street dozens of black youths burst into spontaneous applause and cheer...

he has no desire to cause blood-

soft drinks and other necessities. As the couple walk across the street dozens of black youths burst into spontaneous applause and cheer them all the way back.

This continues for three hours and then the community, as if exhausted, retires to bed. At midnight the police re-occupy the ghetto. Like the Roman legions of old they march in with their shields raised and held facing outwards on every side. They are there to show their strength, not to test it. They observe people walking home with goods under their arms, but there is no interference. Only fourteen people are arrested in a ten-hour period. In Southall, they arrested 350 in half the time. These statistics are an indication of the relationship of forces.

Thursday 3 April: There is a big police presence, but there are no provocations. Black defeated blue the day before and blue bides its time. In the afternoon and the evening there is dancing on the streets. A rastafarian announces to no-one in particular: 'You can't sit around all day and smoke ganja. You've got to fight sometime.' Music is heard till late in the night. The blacks have won and the mood is euphoric. There is a real camaraderie between poor blacks and poor whites. People smile at each other. Laughter is heard at street corners and on the pavement outside the Black & White cafe.

I sat with a group of rastas in the sun on the Grosvenor Road and asked them how they felt. They talked without prompting. Here are some of the things they said:

'Man, marijuana has got to be legalised. Legalise the herb. Write that in your revolutionary paper. For the police are evil and until its legalised they'll carry on behaving like this.'

'This has been going on for the last ten years. Ten, I say, but really its four hundred and sixteen years. Yeah, man! Its 416 and we've been taking it cool. There have been many secret beatings in police cells, too many arrested on

suspicion. This time they pushed us too far and we fought. It was good.'

'I feel it's got heavier since Margaret Thatcher got in. She's been cutting public spending and talking about 'law and order'. The police feel more confident since she's in power. She's for the rich. She's not for the poor and she's not for black people.'

'Police think because they wear a uniform, we should respect them. But we don't treat them any different from other people. This fight wasn't black versus white. It was us all against the police. There's too much racism in the police force. We want no black officers.'

At this stage a car passes and a flashily dressed black waves at our little group.

'He's a bad man, that Johnny Sinclair. He owns a club and a building firm, but he employs no blacks. He's evil.'

I asked them how they felt after the events of Wednesday:

'We feel great. We feel confident. It was a victory and we were worthy of the victory. Yes, worthy of it. We don't want to fight the police. We want the

police to treat us normally. They treat us like animals. They think we don't have any intelligence and they have the government to back them up and the magistrates and the judges. They're all prejudiced.

'You go to school, you learn and then...nothing. The colour of your skin determines everything. We can't beat them in the courts, but we defeated them in the streets.'

'We set up a little blues club in a deserted basement. The police closed it down. This is our ghetto. We aren't troubling anybody. Then why they closed our club down? All the community clubs are useless. We can only use them when the owners let us use them. Never when we want to use them. The government is paying them for nothing. They don't do nothing for the community. Today is a holiday, but the youth club is closed and we're out on the pavement. They used to have a disco every Sunday, but they stopped that as well. We want a club which we can run ourselves. A community club should be run by the community.'

Why was the bank burnt down?

'The bank is for the moneyman. The majority of us are unemployed. We are on the dole. The bank represents the Margaret Thatcher government. We burnt it down. We'd like to burn her down as well!'

A few minutes after we had interviewed the rastas we met three youths. Andrew Edwards is 16 and has just left school. His eye was swollen. He explained why:

'I was walking up Campbell Street to see my girl-friend. I saw two coppers. One had a truncheon and a dustbin lid. The other had an Alsatian. He whacked me on the head with the truncheon. They dragged me into a police car and the one with the truncheon beat me up. One blow hit me in the eye. I was locked up with two other black kids in the cells. They released me on Thursday afternoon, but didn't charge me with anything.'

Mike Neblett, 17, has to report at Trinity police station every evening at 7pm. The CID came to his house, but he got away. 'I'm sure they'll try and pin something on us.' As we were talking an old West Indian shouted from the window: 'It was me. It was me. I started it all!' He then gave a loud laugh and disappeared inside again.

The builders are back at work. On the boarded up windows of Lloyds Bank is the sign: G. Hewitt and Son, Building Contractors Ltd., Bath.

The exhilaration felt by the community is visible on virtually every face. The way they talk about Wednesday it sounds like a carnival of the oppressed. And yet few have illusions about anything, including socialism and the revolution. Yes, it is a rough community. Yes, it has its share of hustlers, pimps and prostitutes. But that was not the reason for the rebellion as local Labour MP Arthur Palmer would have us believe. For the police maintain an active contact with hustlers and pimps.

No, St. Paul's erupted as a result of accumulated grievances: against the police; against the state; against the power structures of white society.

One of the major casualties has been the self-image of the police. Police propagandists portray the copper on the beat as 'the unarmed, friendly constable helping the aged...the young and those in distress; the determined but scrupulous pursuer of the offender; the neutral protector of life and property using a minimum of violence and intelligent crime prevention.' This cosy image was destroyed in Southall. It has been blown apart in Bristol. But in Bristol the police were defeated. Demands for an enquiry, for a defence committee and for organised self-defence are being heard from many quarters. A black youth summed it all up this way:

'They're in a position to take revenge. If we're walking on our own, they're bound to beat us up and who will believe us? They'll be thirsting for revenge, but we're prepared as well. If there's a next time we'll go to the city centre. We'll burn down Bridewell. We'll fight back.'

HOME NEWS

'THE only way to police a ghetto is to be oppressive. None of the Police Commissioner's men, even with the best will in the world, have any way of understanding the lives led by the people they swagger about in twos and threes controlling.

'Their very presence is an insult, and it would be, even if they spent their entire day feeding gumdrops to children. They represent the force of the white world, and that world's real intentions are, simply, for that world's criminal profit and ease, to keep the black man corralled up here, in his place.'

— James Baldwin,
'Fifth Avenue, Uptown',
Nobody Knows My Name

I wouldn't change my colour for anything

A JAMAICAN woman was invited some years ago to give a talk to a group of English liberals. During question-time she was asked if she would like to lose some of her customs. This was her reply:

'I look and I wonder what is my custom. Because if I was coming from Africa as an African, in my passport would be written a name like Shulu Afuyung or something like that. Instead I found myself at birth with a name like McGilpin, that makes me know that the man who owned my forefathers as slaves was a Scot, a McGilpin... so I lost my name there.

And then I realise I am not speaking in an African language, but I am speaking English language and I realise that my food, instead of being fufu, is crushed potato...

I would have landed at the airport in a sari or a pretty tie-head, instead I'm wearing the same clothes, so all that's left of me is the pigment, and I said this is what I dearly cling to, I wouldn't change it for anything.'

Flashback to 1979: The friendly bobby!

IN April last year two members of Bristol Womens Aid, who live in St Paul's, Bristol, also experienced the heavy hand of the law.

Returning from a late party they were seized from behind by two men who bundled them into a car. Too scared to protest for fear of being 'done over', they were driven up towards the Midlands. The purpose of this exercise was for prostitution, or what is commonly known as the 'white slave trade'.

Fortunately the car ran out of petrol on the M5 and while one of the men went to fetch petrol the other guarded the women.

Then a policeman and a policewoman from the Gloucester constabulary drove up. The two women leapt out of the car and told the police they were being abducted.

The policewoman contested this and said that they did not look as if they had been molested so they must have gone willingly. When they asked if they could get into the police car they were refused on the grounds that the insurance wouldn't cover it!

'Red Light'

The man with the women denied everything. The police radioed to Bristol to check the women's addresses; having received confirmation that the women came from the St Paul's area of Bristol, the police turned on the women and said that given that this was a 'red light' district they were the ones that must have been on the streets.

Complaining that they were having to work overtime, the police advised the women to return to the men's car. After some pressure the police agreed to take them in their car only to dump them off at the next motorway interchange forcing them to hitch back to Bristol on their own.

The women, shocked by the

vindictive behaviour of the police towards them, were at first too frightened to even tell the other women in Bristol Womens Aid about the incident, despite receiving threats from the two men concerned. Eventually they were persuaded to make an official complaint against the police.

However despite the provision of detailed descriptions of the men plus the registration number of the car, the police haven't picked up the men concerned although other people have seen them in Bristol frequently.

This article is based on the information supplied by Bristol Womens Aid in the December 1979 issue of *Scarlet Woman*, on *Male Violence*, price 45p.

Scarlet Woman is the newsletter of the Socialist Feminist Current. It is in dire financial straits and needs both donations and subscriptions. £2 for three issues available from 5 Washington Terrace, North Shields, Tyne and Weir.

Bristol councillors expelled from Labour group over cuts

EIGHT members of Bristol city council were expelled from the Labour group on 21 March because they refused to support the Labour-controlled council's 1980-81 budget.

They called instead for the budget to be referred back for a 'thorough revision'.

Andrew May, one of the dissident Labour councillors, says: 'The policy of the Labour Party nationally and locally is to oppose the cuts.'

The women, shocked by the



Photo: SOCIALIST CHALLENGE

AFTER THE BATTLE OF BRISTOL MEDIA WANTS LAW & ORDER

By Geoffrey Sheridan

BRING together in violent confrontation a group of black or mainly black people and a phalanx of police, and no matter what are the circumstances of the conflict, whatever the provocation or the outcome of the battle, most of Fleet Street will reach for an identikit headline.

The key words for the camouflage operation are: riot, race, mob, fury, rampage. The order doesn't matter much; the point is to convey the impression of mindless terror perpetrated by black thugs.

Thus the front pages of the so-called popular press last Thursday: 'Riot fury', the *Sun*; 'Race mob runs riot', *Daily Star*; 'Mob fury', *Daily Mirror*; 'Mob on rampage', *Daily Express*; 'Riot mob stone police', *Daily Mail*, and 'Rioters on rampage' in a later edition of the *Mail*.

Yet the uprising in Bristol could not be fitted into the usual formula of victory for the benevolent forces of law and order.

In Southall last April, for example, the more than two hundred arrests, the extensive injuries inflicted on the anti-fascist demonstrators, including the murder of Blair Peach, were all subordinated in the hands of the editorialists to the valiant role of the knights on white chargers.

A black community had been brutally put in

its place, so all was well with the world.

But in St Paul's in Bristol the victory was manifestly for the other side. The police fled, and this could not be disguised.

For the popular press, the solution was simple enough. Under the banner of 'Never again' (lifted with unacknowledged irony from the Anti-Nazi League) they demanded more policing.

Press

'We will need more specially trained squads — like the much maligned Special Patrol Group — able to disperse a mob before they can catch hold,' declared the *Daily Mail's* comment column on Saturday.

'Why was there no contingency plan to rush immediate reinforcements to such a potentially dangerous area?' asked the *Sunday Mirror's* leader article the following day, adding: 'Anarchy on such a scale should never have happened.'

The problem, of course, was that the St Paul's community had given no notice of their intention to strike back at the agents of repression, so that thousands of the latter could be marshalled for the event.

That it would require the permanent presence of thousands of cops in areas like Brixton or Moss Side to deal with virtually spontaneous uprisings against oppression does not seem to worry the leader writers of the Tory press.

Yet there were some salient facts about the events in St Paul's which could not easily be brushed aside.

Shopkeepers whose premises were looted

said that it wasn't simply blacks who were involved. Brian Weigh, the Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset, explaining that the decision to remove his police officers for four hours wasn't an act of cowardice, said that their presence was inciting disorder.

The television news bulletins related these facts. The *Guardian*, the *Sunday Times*, and the *Observer* sent reporters to find out why there was so much hostility to the police. Even the *Daily Mail* in its two-page coverage on Saturday included interviews with customers at the Black and White cafe about the sequence of events on Wednesday and their views on the police.

While the reports on TV and in the liberal press pointed to the mass unemployment and poverty which underlie the anger of St Paul's, their recommendations, needless to say, fell short of suggesting mass opposition to the policies of the Tory government which is presently the instrument of worsening living standards.

Tory

Although the Tories have taken over part of the National Front's platform — with their proposals about nationality, the offensive against 'scroungers', and Thatcher's election campaign remarks about the danger of being 'swamped' by immigrants — their racist programme is so far directed at strengthening the forces of law and order rather than unleashing a white backlash.

If the mass media's coverage of the St Paul's fightback could in any way be said to be restrained, it was within the constraints of the policies the Tories have mapped out.

programme, which has meant the axing of 200 houses which were to be built in the north-east of Bristol, and the likely dropping of rehabilitation schemes.

Council loans for mortgages have been slashed to £500,000, representing just 40 or 50 houses, while the council's housing waiting list has doubled over the past year to 7,000 applicants.

Rent

Nearly £1m has been cut from the maintenance of council homes in spite of the fact that a quarter of these houses and flats require maintenance work.

If these cuts weren't enough to anger Bristol council tenants, they have just been presented with a rent rise of 26 per cent — the largest ever.

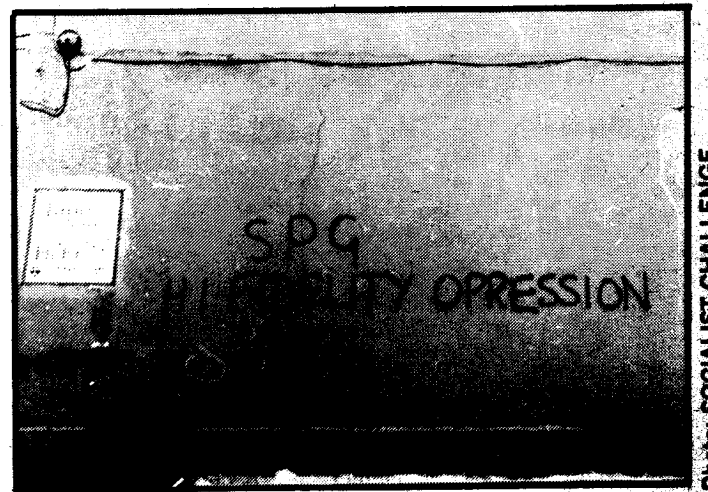


Photo: SOCIALIST CHALLENGE

HOMENEWS

Women to be deported for having children!

MIGRANT women who work in hotels, hospitals, and private homes as resident domestics and chambermaids face the threat of immediate expulsion from Britain.

Their 'crime' is to have concealed the fact that they had left children at home when they first came to Britain.

The Home Office decided that women in this category were 'illegal immigrants' in March 1978. Now the Court of Appeal has ruled that a resident domestic worker who entered this country while she had children is guilty of deception whether or not she was aware that these facts had been concealed.

Women employed as maids and domestic workers earn on average £50 per week before deductions for board and lodging, according to the 1979 New Earnings Survey they are often on call for extended periods without extra pay. Restrictions are far greater than British women will tolerate. Employment agencies therefore recruit overseas, especially in the

Philippines, Latin America, Portugal, and Morocco.

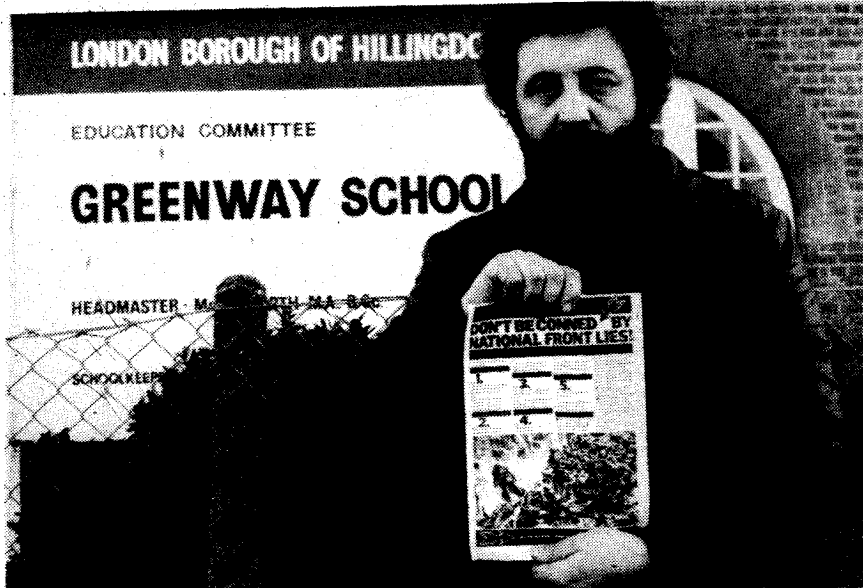
The Migrant Action Group sites evidence to show

that it is the agencies not the women who have bent the inhuman rules. On 30 March 300 Filipinos sent a telegram to the Home Secretary expressing their horror at the deportations which the court ruling now makes likely.

Labour movement bodies and women's organisations should do likewise. Report available from: Migrants Action Group, 68 Charlton Street, London NW1. Price 40p plus postage.



FILIPINO nurses — now facing deportation



DAVE POTTER — sacked for handing out ANL leaflets in a politics lesson

SACKED Hillingdon teacher Dave Potter, who made national headlines after being suspended for distributing Anti Nazi League leaflets in school, has lost his appeal against unfair dismissal.

After deliberating for four months, an industrial tribunal has upheld Hillingdon education authority's decision to sack Potter, a probationary social studies teacher at Mellow Lane School, Hayes.

Potter, an SWP member, told the tribunal that the authority had tried to disguise its dislike of his left-wing views and activities as local NUT secretary by claiming that he failed to reach acceptable teaching standards.

He was suspended after handing out ANL leaflets as part of a government and politics lesson at Greenway School, Uxbridge. A National Front candidate was standing in a local by-election at the time, and NF stickers and leaflets appeared at the

school. In his final term at his last school — Mellow Lane — Dave Potter was harassed to such an extent that he was the subject of 16 reports and 22 visits by advisers in just seven weeks. In fact at one lesson no fewer than three educational advisers sat in.

This was despite the fact that the education authority's first recommendation for Potter's dismissal in 1978, was overturned by the Department of Education — a rare event.

Photo: LINDA WESTMORE

Combine secretary faces the sack

ERNIE Scarbrow, secretary of the Lucas Aerospace Combine Shop Stewards Committee, is once again facing dismissal from the company's Willesden, NW London, site.

His job was eliminated by management, and he turned down an alternative job that was offered because it was entirely unsuitable.

The sacking was announced in December, but was withdrawn while talks were held between management and TASS, the Engineering Union's white collar section.

These have resulted in a 'failure to agree', and management is now rushing through the remaining procedures to throw out Scarbrow, who holds union positions at both plant and company level.

mobilizing support within Lucas over this affair,' the statement says, 'but a second Derek Robinson affair is an important matter for the trade union movement, especially with Tory attacks on strikers and trade union rights.'

Support

'So we're asking for your support...' To: 86 Mellow Lane East, Hayes, Middlesex. Or phone Ernie Scarbrow or Mike Cooley on 01-965 7777 ext 5.

Threats

A statement issued by the combine committee records a series of threats against Scarbrow by Lucas Aerospace management over the past ten years, as well as pressure on other shop stewards.

'Obviously we are

THE deadline for short news articles for this page is 10.30am Monday. Articles up to 200 words can be rung through on Sundays on 01-359 8189.

Women clothing workers on strike

By K Bastin

CONDITIONS at Kleins clothing factory in Salford are typical of an industry in which employers' attitudes correspond to the 19th century and workers are badly organised.

Accidents at work are frequent and victimisation is commonplace. The management's response to any complaint is: 'If you don't like it, there's the door.'

For the past three weeks, the workers at Klein, who are mainly women, have been on strike.

It began after three-quarters of the 110 workers joined the Tailors and Garment Workers Union. The employers' refusal to recognise the union was coupled with rumours of lay-offs. Sixty of the strikers have been sacked.

Although there has been little support from local clothing factories, where conditions are similar, the women pickets remain determined. Those who approach the picket line are greeted with a chorus of 'Come and join us'.

They have succeeded in stopping deliveries and refuse collections, and are calling for a boycott of all men's wear with a 'Bendyk' label. The strike is an important fight for women in a notoriously exploitative industry.

Support and donations to: NUTGWU, 409 Wilmslow Rd, Manchester 20.

ANNIVERSARY OF SOUTHALL

PICKET YOUR LOCAL POLICE STATION WED APRIL 23rd

DISBAND THE SPG

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION SUN APRIL 27th

Friends of Blair Peach Committee

Assemble 1pm Speakers Corner Marble Arch
March via Scotland Yard to Rally in Trafalgar Square
REMEMBER BLAIR PEACH

SOUTHALL ANNIVERSARY BENEFIT

Saturday 26 April
7.30pm, University of London Union, Malet Street, London WC1

THE PIRHANAS AND THE AU PAIRS
Admission £2

Labour Party recalls its conference

By Alan Freeman

THE Labour Party executive has convened a recall conference of the Party to discuss the cuts and oppose Tory policies. The conference is due to be held on 31 May.

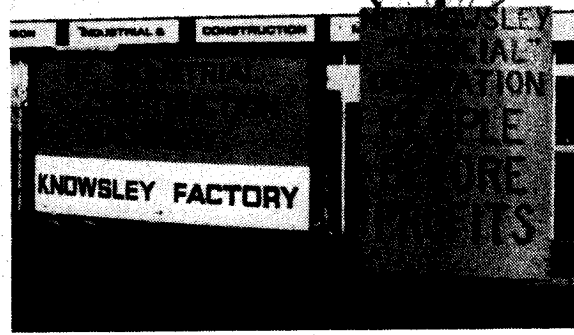
The decision was in response to a motion from the Transport and General Workers Union, which argued that the conference was needed 'to unite all factions around alternative policies to those of the present government'.

Although the implication is that discussion should be restricted to the policy of a future Labour government,

and not action against the Tories, the conference could prove explosive.

It will provide a meeting point for the simmering discontent in the constituency parties. Left groups, Socialist Challenge supporters among them, are campaigning for the conference to plan a co-ordinated anti-Tory offensive between rank-and-file party members and trade unionists.

Jim Callaghan, fully aware of the dangers of such a mobilisation, is vigorously opposing the recall decision and has asked the executive to reconsider it. A compromise may be reached, preventing the conference taking votes or resolutions.



Massey Ferguson occupation backed by boycott

By John Kirby

'WE'RE on a winner. This has got to be the turning point for jobs on Merseyside.'

This was the message from Massey Ferguson senior steward Jimmy Forsyth when on 3 April 70 people packed into Kirby Labour Club to hear speakers from the occupation committee at Massey's Knowsley plant.

The audience heard how the company wanted to close Knowsley and move its work to Manchester factories.

A national delegate conference earlier in the week had thrown a spanner into Massey's multi-national works. The conference, representing all the company's workers, pledged to defend Knowsley and boycott all work normally

carried out there. At the Labour Club meeting, representatives of several local factories, Liverpool docks, teachers and council workers pledged their support for the occupation, now in its sixth week.

Dock shop steward Jimmy Nolan offered the help of his members in organising a tour of all ports in the country, to campaign for the boycotting of all Massey products.

A campaign for general strike action on Merseyside on 14 May — with special focus on the struggle in Knowsley — was unanimously agreed at the meeting.

STRIKE NEWS

By Brian Grogan

THE ending of the 13-week national steel strike on Tuesday of last week for a 16 per cent wage rise tied to job loss and productivity increases was a sell-out — but it was not a defeat.

The large-scale redundancies demanded by the Tories, which before the strike seemed certain to go through without any problems, now threaten to become a battle ground.

The steel strike raised the temperature of the class struggle in Britain and brought workers from one of the key basic industries out of hibernation.

The settlement is made up of two parts. Eleven per cent is to be paid on existing rates. On average this will mean a £10 rise. Finance for this, some £180m, has to be found almost entirely from future redundancies.

Another 4.5 per cent on offer is dependent on the negotiation of local productivity deals involving massive changes in working practices and speed ups. This will result in 12,000 lost jobs, on top of the 52,000 already announced by BSC management.

The 4.5 per cent rise will be paid for the first four months on account. But after that it will continue to be paid only if satisfactory local deals are completed.

Lamb

Nonetheless, a 16 per cent deal is a far cry from management's original offer of two per cent. Steelworkers hardly became the sacrificial-lamb the Tories intended them to be, and strong sectors such as the miners will not have been intimidated by the government's tactics.

The situation inside the steel industry has been transformed. There was anger at the settlement. When the findings of the committee of inquiry were accepted, pickets lobbying the ISTC headquarters chased the executive members round the building.

The near unanimous view of the active strikers was to oppose the return to work. But these were only a minority of the total work force, which had by and large remained passive during the strike and subject to the pressure of the capitalist media.

Accordingly, local leaders generally took the view that a united return to work was the best way to preserve fighting capacity. In the face of the executive's decision to settle, which was endorsed by ISTC's delegate-based negotiating committee — the militant areas considered that if they were to stay out they would become isolated and be picked off.

Prestige

Even so in South Yorkshire, a key militant strong-hold, local leaders required all their prestige to win a small majority for a return to work at a mass meeting.

A 13-week strike by the steelworkers — the longest national strike in Britain since the Second World War — was completely unexpected, not least by the Tories. The government's plan, hatched while in opposition by Nicholas Ridley MP, was to pick on and defeat a significant group of workers as an example to the rest of the class.

What the Tories had learnt from the Heath administration was that they could not immediately take on the militant sectors without encouraging the sort of conflagration which Heath had touched off with the miners in 1972 and again in 1974.

Thatcher's policy was therefore to compromise with the core unions in the present wage round. Miners won 21 per cent without any struggle and British Oxygen workers received over 30 per cent. Such wage increases cannot continue if the Tories are to put British capitalism back on an expansionary basis.

A swingeing defeat for the steelworkers was considered to be a necessary preparation to take on the stronger sectors in the next wage round.

ISTC seemed to be well chosen.



Photo: LARRY HERMAN

STRIKERS lobby the ISTC HQ demanding action against private steel scabs



THE scene of mass picketing which at first succeeded in closing

LESSONS OF THE 1980 A SELL OUT NOT

Bill Sirs, its general secretary, was renowned for his 'moderation', and there had been no national steel strike since the General Strike in 1926.

Over the past two years the union leadership had agreed to 40,000 redundancies, and in the last wage round it had accepted eight per cent when everyone else was obtaining 15 per cent. British steel workers are by far the lowest paid in Western Europe.

Spark

The British Steel Corporation's initial offer of two per cent on top of the massive redundancy programme was to spark ISTC into motion. Despite the union's leadership, the strike brought a total walk-out from day one, on 2 January. Even workers from plants such as Shotton, Corby, and Consett which were facing virtual closure came out solidly in support of the strike, even though they appeared to have nothing to gain from it.

Within days the whole of the Steel Corporation was at a standstill. In the following weeks a massive flying picket operation was organised, aimed particularly at steel stockholders, docks, and private steel. Such actions were against the policy and in many cases the explicit instructions of ISTC's national leadership.

It was the local strike leaderships which formulated the strike aim of 20 per cent with no strings, with the South Yorkshire strike committees to the fore in putting forward this demand.

The scope of the flying pickets, the range of their targets, and the number of pickets involved far exceeded the previous highest level of struggle set by the miners in 1972.

The level of rank and file self-organisation in the strike was remarkable. This was coupled with a widespread distrust of the union leadership which led to the popularisation of the demand for Sirs' resignation.

The policy of Bill Sirs was to attempt to find a compromise with management at every turn. With the backing of Len Murray, Sirs proposed the form of the final sell-out formula — eight per cent plus five per cent local productivity — just one week into the strike.

It quickly became obvious that a new strike leadership had to be forged.

The delegate-based national negotiation committee was somewhat responsive to rank-and-file demands. Thus the committee took just 20 minutes to throw out the 2 per cent plus 12 per cent pay-for-jobs deal offered by management and recommended by Sirs in the fifth week of the strike.

But this body did not act as a day-to-day leadership.

With virtually no tradition of struggle, it was militants at local level who took the lead in extending the strike. Their actions were not only independent of the bureaucracy but

against the sabotage of the top officials.

The attempts to pull out the private sector, particularly the mass pickets at places like Hadfields and Sheerness; the extension of the picketing to stockholders and the docks; the attempt to close major steel users such as Metal Box, Fords and British Leyland all came from this layer of local leaders.

It was the South Yorks strike committee which by and large played the role of establishing day-to-day leadership of the strike almost immediately forming themselves into a divisional committee under a coordinated command.

The South Yorkshire leadership decided on national targets and organised and financed the flying pickets. It was also exemplary in developing rank and file and community participation in the strike, organising a series of rallies and demonstrations to keep the mass of strikers informed and involved. The South Yorkshire strike committees were often elected and subject to mass meetings.

Region

But a committee based on a single region did not have the authority to openly seek the leadership of the strike on a national basis. Many things had to be done behind the scenes. This laid the basis for the emergence of the unofficial national strike committee.

Again the initiative came from South Yorkshire. The first meeting was held in the seventh week of the dispute with representatives from most areas. From then on it held regular weekly meetings.

Ford

The objectives of the unofficial committee were to make good nationally the strikers' determination to stop the movement of all steel; to extend the action to major steel users; and to popularise the objective of 20 per cent with no strings.

It was the unofficial national strike committee which decided to try and close Ford Dagenham, the largest plant in Britain, which in the final week of the strike was under serious threat of imminent closure. This body also took the initiative in organising lobbies of the national leadership meetings to try to prevent a sell-out.

The emergence of such a national strike committee based on class struggle militants in the localities has no precedent in disputes in recent years, and it threatened to take the running of the strike out of the hands of the ISTC bureaucracy.

To be sure, it never achieved the credibility to challenge Sirs. For all the initiatives it was able to take, its weakness lay in the lack of firm contacts across the industry, the difficulty of gaining the confidence of key militants, and their lack of tradition and experience. But for this



Photo: CLIVE TURNBULL (Socialist Challenge)

ate steelworks — Hadfields in Sheffield

STEEL STRIKE A DEFEAT

reason it was necessary for all those wanting to strengthen the class struggle leadership to aid the building of the unofficial national strike committee and to support the key militants involved.

Unfortunately, the activities of the Socialist Workers Party only detracted from this. It first launched the *Real Steel News* bulletin, tied openly to the SWP.

In response to the failure of this project, it then launched *Steel Workers Charter*, but this came out of the blue, unconnected to the rank-and-file leadership of the strike.

The formally correct demands of this charter were therefore not fought for as answers to the problems that this layer of militants was attempting to answer and the militants who looked to the SWP were directed away from the key task of building the unofficial national strike committee.

The total lack of influence of the Communist Party among the active strikers meant that the local class struggle leadership did not have the burden of the traditional 'Broad Left' strategy, which attempts to subordinate actions to the wishes of left bureaucrats. But the CP did play a role in the strike — essentially one of sabotage.

Hit

For the strike to succeed, manufacturing industry had to be hit.

It is hypocrisy to say that there wasn't support in the working class for the steelworkers. From the start of the steel strike miners, railworkers, and dockers in militant ports offered solidarity to the steel workers and implemented a boycott.

It was the refusal of the TUC to organise solidarity across the board that limited this. The real situation was seen in the docks. Dockers in the militant ports of Liverpool and Hull responded immediately. But action in other ports was patchy.

When an issue presented itself in the port of Liverpool, 6,000 dockers walked out. The day the steel strike was called off was to have been the start of an all-out national dock strike in solidarity with the steelworkers, decided upon by a national delegate conference.

Such action could have been organised from the beginning, except for the refusal of the national leadership of the Transport and General Workers Union — the main dockers' union.

Lorry

The TGWU leadership was the main problem with another key sector — the lorry drivers. For the first crucial week of the strike, only a clear instruction not to cross so-called 'primary' pickets was given. The decision of whether to cross pickets of stockholders and major users was left up to the 'conscience' of the drivers.

This was interpreted by most local bureaucrats as an invitation to cross picket lines, thus sabotaging effective picketing. It was only in the ninth week that a clearer instruction went out.

The bosses were not so inhibited. They organised a massive operation to share the available stockpiled steel, and aided and abetted by BSC management, they kept imports rolling in through unregistered ports.

The sell-out policies of the union leaderships were all of a piece with their overall strategy. The thrust of the ISTC campaign was to indict the inefficient management of BSC and its lack of an aggressive export drive.

It is true that BSC management is bad. Bureaucratic management in both the public and private sectors will breed inefficiency — only workers' control of production by an informed workforce and within the framework of a workers' plan for the industry as a whole can eliminate waste and inefficiency in large-scale production.

But the waste of resources exhibited by BSC management arises not from incompetence but from wrong planning predictions due to the chaos of the capitalist market. To demand import controls to deal with this is to continue to join with the bosses in trying to resolve their problem at the expense of workers — this time foreign workers.

Root

But the needs of steel workers as revealed in the steel strike was shown to be solidarity with foreign workers.

The new class struggle leadership which is beginning to form out of the experience of the strike must centre its strategy on opposing root and branch the rationalisation strategy of BSC and the Tories. This must centre on the safeguarding of jobs, opposition to any hiving off and the total nationalisation of all steel, including stockholders.

The Tory cash limits have to be smashed, and a subsidy to save jobs forced on the government. The starting point needs to be the safeguarding of the guaranteed 40-hour week. This should be extended to a total policy of worksharing with no loss of pay.

The shop stewards committees which have been established in South Yorkshire must be extended nationally and a national combine committee formed, committed to a class struggle strategy to save jobs.

The fight has to go on inside ISTC. The liaison committee for the reform of the ISTC, which existed before the strike, can now be placed on a higher level, integrating class struggle policies into the fight for democratic control of the union. This is now the task.

Stewards and union officials led by the CP at a meeting of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions held in Sheffield during the sixth week of the strike refused to extend a boycott to all steel products. This was despite an impassioned plea by Bernard Connolly of the South Yorkshire strike committee, backed by Keith Jones, the local ISTC official.

Convenor

Ford is another example. Dan Connors, the leading CP convenor at Dagenham, was party to an agreement to limit picketing — essentially to strip steel — which would have meant Ford could have continued working indefinitely. It was only the determination of the rank-and-file pickets from South Yorkshire which succeeded in changing this. But by that time, the strike was in its twelfth week.

The CP recognised in words — as indeed did Sirs — that the strike was a struggle against the Tory government. But it refused to accept the logic of this.

If a defeat for the steelworkers was a defeat for the whole class, then everything possible had to be done to aid the steelworkers. It was vital to generalise the links which began to develop between the steelworkers, miners and dockers — as well as the pulling in of other sectors — into a general strike to bring down the government.

'The battle is over, the war is not'

Celia Pugh reports on the feelings of South Wales Steelworkers

FRUSTRATION and disgust were evident among Llanwern steelworkers in South Wales last week. On Monday, 31 March, a confident meeting of 300 pickets voted to campaign for their branches to carry on the strike on the jobs issue — whatever the results of the Lever inquiry. But that was before the national leadership of the steel unions instructed their members to return to work.

A recall meeting following these instructions on Wednesday of last week produced a different mood. This was summed up by one picket who explained: 'I voted to stay out on strike on jobs, whatever the inquiry came up with. But I now see that we have been undermined by everybody — BSC, Thatcher, the police, the TUC, and now our own leaders.'

'We have been in the minority while we've been on strike but at least we've been official. We'd be in an even smaller minority if we stay out on unofficial strike. It would be suicide.'

Platform

At the recall meeting picket leaders from the platform tried to counter this mood of demoralisation. Arguing for the strike to continue, Ray Hill, a TASS representative on the Llanwern strike committee, said: 'I'd rather go down fighting than on my hands and knees. Most struggles are started by a minority, and are unofficial to begin with. We have to take a lead, by action. Support will follow when people see that we are committed to fighting for jobs.'

This argument was backed by other pickets. Phil Christensen, a member of the National Union of Blastfurnacemen, pleaded for the meeting to reaffirm the decision to remain on strike. But the feelings of isolation were too great. Reports that South Yorkshire and Port Talbot were returning to work sealed the fate of the 'stay out' resolution. After the vote Phil Christensen explained to Socialist Challenge how he felt:

'We've been out for 13 weeks to save jobs in South Wales. Acceptance of the inquiry offer threatens to put a line right through Gwent. Steel jobs, coal jobs, other jobs in the community will follow this sell out. We should be staying out on strike to fight redundancies. Once we go back it will be very difficult to get people out again. I just feel sickened by what has happened. We are being forced to crawl back with our heads low. At least if we'd taken on the jobs strike we could have gone back with our heads held high.'

Redundancies

But the steelworkers at Llanwern are far from defeated. While they agreed to return to work, the four hundred strikers at the meeting voted: 'Not to accept redundancies at Port Talbot and Llanwern. We commit ourselves to take industrial action against redundancies, if necessary. We should canvas unions nationally and locally to organise the fight against job losses.'

Plans are now being laid to set up a campaign committee to put this resolution into practice. Miners, dockers, and transport workers will be invited to participate.

So steelworkers in Wales may have suffered a set-back in the jobs fight but they have not been hammered into the ground. Roger Tovey from the Caldicot Steelworks offered this conclusion in the Llanwern *Steel Sheet*:

'The momentous 13-week struggle is now at rest. But if the battle is over the war is not. We pickets did not lose. We won new confidence in our own ability, new energy and tenacity. This new-found defiant unity must never again be sacrificed on the altar of divisive leadership; it has cost us too much. Let us go forward with new confidence in our future. Never again leave union business to the bureaucrats. Use your branches and lodges as your platform. We can show again the strength and unity we found on the picket line; but this time for the most important fight of all — the defence of our jobs and those of our children.'

Demoralised

Ray Davies, an ISTC member of the Llanwern strike committee, echoes this feeling in his *Steel Sheet* contribution:

'The feeling on the picket lines is that we were not so much set back by BSC and the government but demoralised by our own union leaders and full-time officials. The people we pay to lead our union have been among our biggest enemies. This is the lesson of the strike. We have to make changes in our own union. Our officials should be subject to election and re-election. This is something we were campaigning for in the Labour Party, and it should be extended to our unions.'

'Steelworkers from picket lines throughout the country feel the same as we do. In Yorkshire, Warrington, Scotland, and Corby they are as fed up as we are with our union leaders and structures. During the strike we made links with members of other strike committees through the unofficial national strike co-ordinating committee. We should now make every effort to keep up these links so that we can get things changed after the strike.'

Thatcher and the trade union leaders are warned. They have not heard the last from South Wales steelworkers.

100 youth set out on South Wales march

'I'm marching to say the Tories have to go'

OVER 100 young people set out on the South Wales Youth March Against Unemployment this Easter Saturday. They marched from Port Talbot, through the Ogmore and Rhondda valleys, to lobby the Wales TUC in Cardiff. Five days on the road singing, chanting, collecting money, explaining why we're fighting for united union action to defend jobs. REDMOND O'NEILL describes the events of the first few days.

Assembly, Saturday morning

SLOWLY the first marchers appeared from Port Talbot's Sandfields' housing estate at the other end of the town. Then punks from Swansea; rude boys and skinheads from Cardiff; headbangers and punks from the valleys all assembled at the Aberfan shopping centre.

Veteran hunger marcher from the '30s, Will Paynter saw us off to chants of: '2 4 6 8 we don't want a Tory state' and 'Maggie, Maggie, Maggie, out, out, out!' There were jangling cans as we collected money from every passer-by. Everyone we talked to supported the march.

A typical comment from a steelworker was:

'If we had 300 of those kids from Bristol down on the picket line we'd have won our strike in no time. Good luck, boys, and don't take No for an answer.'

Lunch at Bryn and our first march meeting

VOLUNTEERS from each town were elected to the march council and then off on the road to Maesteg where the local miners' lodge were putting us up for the night.

After a quick rest marchers fanned out through the town to collect money and advertise our gig at Maesteg town hall that evening.

Knots of local youth, many of them young miners, stood around. They were suspicious at first because of the array of hair colours and fashions but soon got involved in heated discussions.

'Is this a punk only march then? We're not punks round here you know?'

'No, we're fighting for jobs. My brother's been out of work for six months now.'

Saturday evening gig at Maesteg

SLOWLY we get to know each other. The gig's a big hit, despite the clash of fashions. Some trainee miners and unemployed youth said they'd march with us the next day.

Back at the hall a group of young miners were standing around firing questions at us about the march. They were all socialists but sceptical about whether we can push the unions into action. They had a whip round and gave us some money.

As the gig wound up we had our first trouble of the day. Predictably enough it was not the local youth but the police who started it. They'd been hanging around the gig all night looking for an excuse to harass us.

As a bunch of marchers,

merry after the gig, made their way back around midnight one was picked up for swearing at her mate. When he heard her being kicked about in the police van he tried to do something about it and they grabbed him too. The police were keen to provoke the marchers into a punch-up but after a few tense moments we moved off back to the hall.

Later at the police station we found they'd thrown the book at Tina and Jeffrey — four charges including assault on the police. In Tina's case 'connecting her belly with a policeman's boot'. When we arrived to bail her out she was vomiting after the beating.

Our slogan is 'No return to the '30s', and it's clear that the South Wales police intend to play the role of trying to break up marches like ours in the same way they did with the hunger marches in the '30s.

Where Tina and Jeffrey come from in Swansea there's nothing for youth to do except a youth club on one night a week and no jobs. So they've got a string of previous convictions. They might go down if an effective defence campaign isn't organised.

That night we got to sleep around 3am. No one had yet cottoned on to just how many



hills we'd be climbing on Sunday.

Sunday around 8am

AFTER breakfast, and a failed argument attempting to persuade some Cardiff skins to stay with the march, we were off on the road to Betws for lunch.

And then on the Llangeiner where the local mining community had given us their brand new hall for the night.

On Sunday we were more confident about the chanting, slogans and asking for donations. For most people it was their first march and it takes time to get your courage up.

It is a hard march. A lot of people hadn't twigged that the Welsh valleys are valleys precisely because they've got hills all around them.

Rhondda youth were marching with black youth from

the docks in Cardiff, while before the march their only contact had been the odd punch up after a rugby match. At first they seemed amazed to find they were human beings, but the barriers began to break down, and a real march spirit began to emerge as they panted up the hills together. We marched around the estate in Betws knocking on all the doors and getting a warm welcome.

Sunday afternoon in Llangeiner

AT Llangeiner we played football with the local youth who were hanging around the hall hoping to get a glimpse of a few mods or punks.

Then there was a Revolution meeting with 50 or 60 marchers and the anti-racist film 'Divide and Rule Never'.

That evening we listened to Will Paynter speaking about the '30s, received a big clap when he explained that 'unemployment and crises won't disappear unless we do away with the system that creates them'.

The local pub was packed out with marchers and miners for the 'quiz'. The quizmaster had to keep correcting himself, 'Boys', hesitation, then, 'and girls'. There were no women in our part of the pub except those with the march.

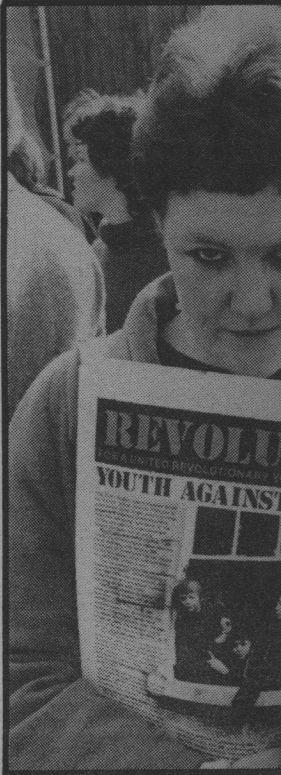
After the quiz the marchers were asked to sing a few songs, so we sang about the right to work and another song about Ireland and the IRA. Everyone joined in.

That night the talking died down earlier. On Monday we'll be going up the Ogmore valley and over the mountain into the Rhondda.

Everyone who was still there was determined to stay with the march all the way to Cardiff. The feeling was that we were all in it together and we were going all the way, despite the blisters. There'll be no more dropping out between here and Cardiff.



Will Paynter (centre), the rally to launch the march



Lunch at Bryn and our first march meeting

WHY WE'RE MARCHING

Neil Rogers is 15 and a school student from South Wales

I'M coming on the march because there's so much unemployment in South Wales. It's really difficult to get a job when you leave school. I don't believe in what this government is doing. We're not getting any better off and things will get worse.

When I leave school I want an apprenticeship but I haven't got much chance. I'll probably end up on the dole. I want to get rid of the Tories for good.



Anthony Blenmen, Bute Town, Cardiff, 15, school student

I CAME on the march because there's no jobs around. Those that work round our way are mostly on the docks. My old man is a merchant seaman but I don't want to do that because I'd have to get my afro cut.

If you are in the merchant navy you have to sign on a pool when you haven't got a ship. You can't claim dole, because if you do they take you off the pool. At the moment there are 300 people on it in Cardiff. My old man was on Texaco oil tankers, but when he came home they sold his ship so he had to leave. Now he's been on the pool without work for two months. Last year he was on it for four months.

We thought it was great them throwing the police out of St Paul's in Bristol. Some people from Bute Town went down there. We got a lot of trouble with the police down at the docks. Everyone I know has been in nick. The majority of us are half-castes. Nobody down there is prejudiced because there are so many mixed families. But there are some places in Cardiff we can't go, because people are racist and they try to beat us up.

But Bute Town is great — it's not dead like the valleys. There's always something going on — music, people dancing and that. There aren't many fights because the women run everything. And the women in Bute Town are very big, and they are very strict. But if anybody starts trouble we can look after ourselves.



Alison is 15 from Cardiff

I'M marching because it's a good way of showing that there is opposition to the Tories' policies. The Tories' cuts are making things worse for unemployed people. So I'm marching to say the Tories have to go.

Paul Ford from Bute Town is 15 and still at school

I'VE come on the march to help kick Maggie out. I hate the Tories and I hate Maggie. Everyone round our way votes Labour and wants the Tories out.

I thought Bristol was great. Standing up for themselves against the police. I hate the police. We just get picked on by them, especially if we go outside Bute Town. They ask us if we're gonna break into this or that lady's house and they shove us back over the bridge to the docks, so I can understand why they took them on after they tried to bust up their club.

Joe is at school in Treorchy

I'M coming on the march because when I leave school all I face is the dole. I've got no job prospects in Treorchy. I think it would have helped if the steelworkers had had more support. They should have got their 20 per cent with no strings. They were sold out.



Michael Davies, unemployed from Treorchy is 18

I'VE been out of work for about a year now. I did do a labouring job for about 6 months with a local builder, but I had to have an operation so I lost the job. Lots of my friends are unemployed in Treorchy. They've closed pits round our way and there's no other work.

We've got a sort of regional aid grant, and they built some factories but most of them are empty. Those that are working are nothing solid or long term — things like biscuit manufacturing, not like the pits. I think the way to end unemployment is to cut hours and share out the work. And I think older people should retire earlier so the youth can get jobs.

Martin Morgan is a school student from Pentre in the Rhondda Valley

I CAME on the march out of interest really. I can't stop unemployment myself but I'll do anything I can to help — like going on demonstrations asking the unions to take action. If I can't get a job, in say 6 months after I leave school, then I'll probably have to join the forces.



Tracy Jones is 15 and a school student from Port Talbot.

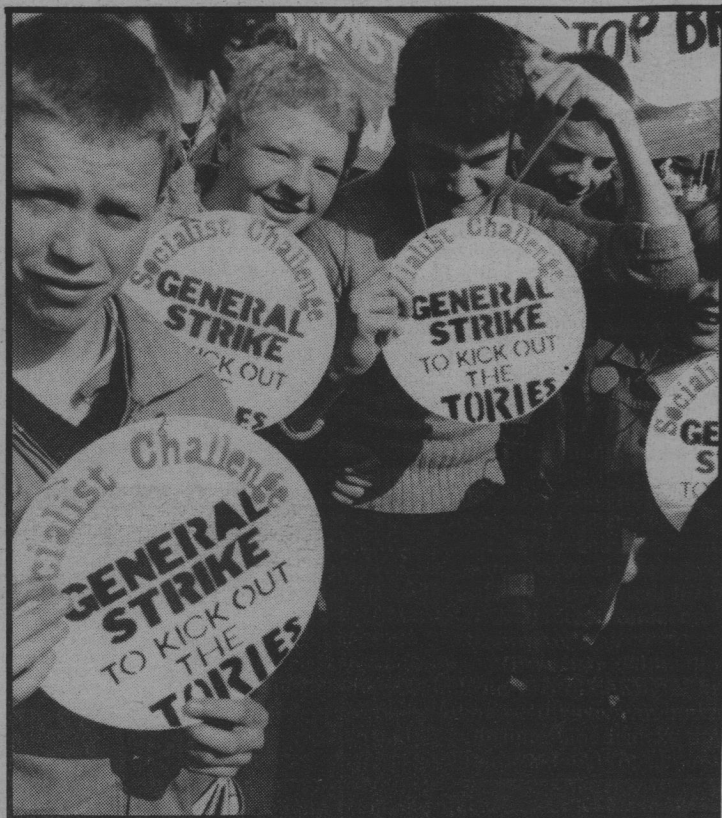
I'M marching because I don't agree with what the Tories are doing. I want to go to Art College when I leave school but I don't think there's much chance of that.

Dawn is a school student in Port Talbot. She's 16.

I'M marching because I'm leaving school and I won't be able to get a job. We've got to demonstrate and build a united front against the Tory cuts in education and in everything else. My father's a miner and he thinks we should have a general strike against the Tories. He says everybody should have been on strike in solidarity with the steel workers. But now the ISTC executive has sold them out. They betrayed the workers.



...an hunger marcher, spoke at the



CP strategy: keep politics out of students unions

By Mick Archer

'STUDENTS unions have got to have the courage to decide what the primary functions of NUS are and conversely what they are not. At the moment NUS does too many things, organises too many conferences, has its fingers in too many pies.'

This statement lies at the centre of the manifesto produced by Dave Aaronovitch for the Presidential elections at the conference of the National Union of Students, in Blackpool on 14-18 April. Aaronovitch, a CP member, is the candidate of the Left Alliance which includes the National Organisations of Labour Students, the Union of Liberal Students, the Communist Party and some independents.

With the Tory government on the offensive greater efficiency and effectiveness in NUS's campaigning activity would not be a bad thing. A move towards greater involvement in the central struggles of the working class, against Thatcher's attacks, would reaffirm the important changes that took place in the student movement in the late '60s and early '70s.

In this period the NUS first began to openly solidarise with the struggles of the working class against Wilson and Heath and with the mounting struggles of the Vietnamese masses and others for national liberation. The Communist Party played a decisive role in the struggle to make NUS a more political union.

But this is no longer the CP's priority — efficiency today means something quite different.

The 'pies' that Dave Aaronovitch and his supporters want the NUS to get out of include all the union's general activity around unemployment, women's oppression, racism, abortion and international solidarity. NUS, they argue, has to concentrate on its '...unique functions...' of national representation and student services.

This is all part and parcel of the Left Alliance's overall strategy. For them the 'democratisation' of



CURRENT NUS President, Trevor Phillips, with megaphone, playing a leading role during an anti-fascist demonstration in 1976. He also played a leading role in drawing up the new policy guidelines that, if approved by NUS conference this month, will ensure that students no longer play a major role in issues of national politics

further and higher education is a precondition for revolutionary change. Campaigning for this necessitates changes in the central concerns of the union, in its structures and in its relationship with college administrations, educational agencies and the state in general.

Far from extending the involvement of students, however, the changes that have been made to date have disarmed the NUS and given the right wing a new lease of life. It has been the government, the Federation of Conservative Students and journals like the *Economist* that have welcomed the new style

NUS. The concept of a mass pressure group, employing the traditional tactics of reformist politics, is a welcome advance from their point of view.

What Dave Aaronovitch ignores is that the Tories are committed to a massive attack on all the gains of the working class, including those within the sphere of education. Under this Tory government especially the defence of education depends on a sharp political fight within the student movement to win it to a socialist perspective and to practical solidarity with working class struggles.

The Left Alliance can see the storm clouds gathering. The government attacks on overseas students, the decline in the real value of the grant, course closures, redundancies, youth unemployment, further restrictions on access to education, particularly for women, blacks and working class youth, cuts, attacks on student union autonomy and the local campaigns for disaffiliation are a clear indication of the major showdowns that are on the agenda.

The Left Alliance believes that it can avoid that polarisation by changing the role of NUS.

It also thinks it can defend education through an ideological offensive around its extension and democratisation.

Such an orientation means turning away from initiatives like the Anti Nazi League and the Campaign Against Corrie, which won tremendous support in the colleges. The IMG believes that it is these campaigns and those in solidarity with the steelworkers and other sections of the working class that are the most significant developments in student politics. Students, like many others, need to recognise that it is only through an alliance with the organised working class against the overall offensive of the Tory government that they can hope to defend their own interests.

In Blackpool this week the first task in fighting for such an orientation will be to defeat the Left Alliance's so called priorities review. Already the NUS National Womens Conference has overwhelmingly voted against it.

From 1922 to the early '60s NUS, under the control of right-wing careerists, concentrated exclusively on social, recreational and welfare issues. A struggle was waged throughout the '60s to bring issues like the Vietnam war into NUS, and a change in the constitution was finally achieved in 1969.

The Left Alliance is on route to take the NUS back to the pre-1969 situation as rapidly as possible. Socialists throughout NUS need to unite around at least the united objective of stopping these changes if a full retreat is to be prevented.

In the context of world economic crisis and this government's offensive the student movement will be increasingly forced to line up either with the ruling class or the working class.

Founding conference of Revolution on 17/18 May Uniting revolutionary youth

THE NUMBER of young people on the No Nukes demonstration in London on the anniversary of the Three Mile Island near-disaster is convincing proof that the youth radicalisation is here to stay.

The recent events in Bristol, the South Wales Youth March against Unemployment, the increasing amount of direct action in schools, the 22-day Black Freedom march planned for this summer, all demonstrate the extent to which the youth are moving into action around central issues in the class struggle.

Revolutionaries have always recognised that youth are the most dynamic section of society. This is still true today.

The reformists do not hold a great deal of attraction for those youth seeking a radical alternative. The young people involved in the Asian youth movements, the No Nukes demos, or fighting for their

basic rights at school are not joining the Labour Party, or its youth organisation, in significant numbers.

Although the youth are naturally attracted to the revolutionary left as an alternative, there are big obstacles preventing us from realising this potential.

The first obstacle is the disunity of the revolutionary left — which seems incomprehensible to the youth. The second lies in the heritage of essentially Stalinist, or bureaucratic, ideas about the need for strict party control over the youth.

The IMG is committed to building an independent revolutionary youth organisation. The launch of *Revolution* as such an independent organisation, at its first national conference in May, will see this commitment realised in practice.

But this will not resolve the broader problem of building a strong revolutionary pole among the youth. To accomplish this task we have to fight for a united revolutionary youth organisation. Such an organisation, independently run by the youth, and committed to the fight to build the revolutionary party, would ensure the

place of the revolutionary left among the youth.

Urgency

The urgency of building such an organisation is brought home by the fact that there is not only a radical movement to the left among the youth, but there has also been a strengthening of the far right among young people. In London the fascist British Movement has been able to win a significant following among white working class youth, who have got away with terrorising bands and smashing up left-wing gigs.

A strong united youth organisation would be in a position to force united action — with the Labour Party and trade unions — to crush this kind of attack. In the meantime it is of course still necessary to fight for such united action.

The youth are not well organised by the existing workers' organisations, while mass unemployment coupled with lack of rights make their situation ever more terrible. This makes the need to build a clear united revolutionary pole among the youth even more pressing.

The youth wings of neither the Labour Party nor the Communist Party are capable of providing a real alternative for youth.

The bankruptcy of the *Militant* tendency which leads the Labour Party Young Socialists presents a barrier to turning that organisation into anything like the campaigning organisation that it has been for certain brief periods in the past.

Cultural

The Young Communist League has tuned in to some of the elements of youth culture, but this cannot disguise a political line that is closer to that of the Young Liberals than any other grouping. The YCL's latest campaign among the youth is to 'democratised the police'.

There is a real vacuum on the left among the youth in Britain today. A united revolutionary youth organisation could fill that gap.

It could shatter the fascist influence on some sections of youth. It could seriously

challenge the LPYS and YCL in national politics. It would aid the fight for a united revolutionary party.

For 18 months the newspaper *Revolution* has been campaigning to unite revolutionary youth in a democratic, independent organisation.

A conference will be held on 17 to 19 May to launch *Revolution* as an independent, democratic youth organisation with a revolutionary

programme. We have not yet managed to win the rest of the revolutionary left to the view that there should be a single united organisation, but the struggle for this will go on after the conference until we achieve our aim.

That's why we urge all youth to come to the *Revolution* conference, to help fight for that unity. The bigger the *Revolution* conference then the more the rest of the left will have to listen to our appeals for unity.

WHAT'S LEFT

RATES 5p per word or £2 per column inch. Deadline: noon Saturday prior to publication.

PEOPLES News Service. A fortnightly news report. Available from: Oxford House, Derbyshire St, London E2. Price 35p.

CENTRAL Scotland Troops Out Movement: 'Smash H-Block': rally and march. Sat 12 April, Stirling. Assemble Raploch Community Centre, 10.30am. March to Albert Halls, Stirling. Speaker: Harry McShane, 'Red Clydesider', republican socialist and others.

CHIX. Southall public meeting in support of the Chix strike now in its sixth month. Mon 14 April, 7.30pm Southall Town Hall, High Street, Southall. Speakers: Chix strikers, Vishnu Sharma, Yolanda Bystron.

PICKET Southall police station. Wed 23 April, 6-8pm. Anniversary of Southall. Remember Blair Peach. Organised by Southall ANL as part of a national evening of action.

DEFEND Tameside Trades Council! Bring the Irish War to Britain! Meeting to discuss the TUC's recent disaffiliation of a trades council which supports the Irish people's war. Wed 16 April, 7pm. Friends House, Euston Rd, London NW1. Euston tube. Organised by the Revolutionary Communist Tendency.

MANCHESTER Committee for the Black Freedom March. Public Meeting, Wed 16 April, 7.45pm. West Indian Sports and Social, Westwood St, Moss Side. **WOMEN'S** rights under attack. A meeting to plan a national festival against all the current attacks on women. Individuals, local women's groups, trade unions, student groups and campaigns all welcome. Monday 14 April, 7pm. 374 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1.

GAYS and the law conference, 12/13 April. Central London Poly, New Cavendish St, London W1. Start 10.30am. Creche.

SC EVENTS

HUDDERSFIELD: SC supporters sell papers every Saturday 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.

LAMBETH: SC now available at kiosk Brixton tube, Oval tube, Serne Hill British Rail and Tetric Books Clapham.

SWINDON: SC on sale 11-1 every Sat., Regent St (Brunel Centre). **TEESSIDE:** SC sales: at Newsfairs shops in Cleveland Centre and on Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and at Greens Bookstall, upstairs in Spencer Market, Stockton High Street.

TOWER HAMLETS: SC supporters sell papers every Friday 5-6pm Watney Mkt, Sat 11-12.30pm Whitechapel tube, Sunday 10.30-12.00 Brick Lane. **NEWHAM:** SC sale every Saturday, 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Market, Upton Park. **FORDS:** SC sale at Gate 25, Body Plant, Dagenham. Weds 9-9.45pm, Thurs. 7-7.45am.

REVOLUTION young workers' conference. Manchester 19/20 April. See *Revolution* No 9 for details.

REVOLUTION No 9 is now out. Articles on South Wales youth march, Black Freedom March, young workers' conference, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Blair Peach and Easter NUS conference. Order from PO Box 50, London N1. 10p per copy.

OLDHAM SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local

activities. Tel. 061-682 5151.

STOCKPORT SC sold every Saturday 1pm Mersey Square. Tel. 061-236 4905 for more information.

OXFORD SC supporters sell every Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.

BRENT SC supporters sell every Sat Morning at the Brent Collective Bookstall in the Trades Hall, Willesden High Rd NW10. **CARDIFF:** SC sales Newport Town Centre outside Woolworths 11-12.30. Cardiff British Home Stores 11-12.30. Also available from 108 Books, Salisbury Road, Cardiff.

ABERDEEN: SC sold Saturdays outside C&As — for more info ring phone Colin, 574068.

BATH: SC on sale at 1985 Books, London Road, and Saturdays 2pm-3pm outside the Roman Baths. Phone 20298 for more details.

BRADFORD: SC available from Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate. **BIRMINGHAM:** SC on sale at The Ramp, Fri 4.30-5.30, Sat. 10-4. For more info phone 643 9209. **BRISTOL:** For more info phone Nick, 605052. **BRISTOL:** SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. For more info contact Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpellier, Bristol 6. **COVENTRY:** SC available from Wedge Bookshop. For more info about local activities phone 461138. **DUNDEE:** SC available from Dundee City Square outside Boots, every Thursday 4-5.30pm, Friday 4-5.30pm, Saturday 11-4pm.



Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

The imperialists step up preparations

THE THREAT OF NUCLEAR WAR

DURING the late '50s and early '60s Britain's nuclear bomb, and the presence of American bases in Britain, were major questions of political debate.

Now the same questions — of Britain's

nuclear role and the preparations for civil defence in the event of nuclear attack — are once more the subject of debate.

PHIL HEARSE looks at the reasons why.

SINCE the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, nuclear war has been considered 'unthinkable'. But suddenly the nuclear armoury is being rattled anew; all the Western powers — especially Britain and the United States — are stepping up defence expenditure; and nuclear war is discussed by 'sane' people.

An all-out war between major capitalist powers has indeed become unthinkable, unlike when the epoch of world imperialism bloodily announced itself in 1914 to 1918. The war preparations of imperialism are now directed towards two objectives — against the outbreak of revolution, particularly in the colonial and semi-colonial world, and against the USSR.

Over the past 20 years the major capitalist countries have had to cope with developments throwing them into chaos.

America's intention of playing policeman to the world founded in South-east Asia at the hands of the workers and peasants of Vietnam. This defeat, and the response of the American working class, made it almost impossible for the US to intervene against revolutionary movements abroad. This was not the case with the Lebanon in 1958, or Santo Domingo in 1965.

Upsurges

The upsurges in Iran and Nicaragua found the US unable to make a military intervention. And more revolutions threaten in the neo-colonial world.

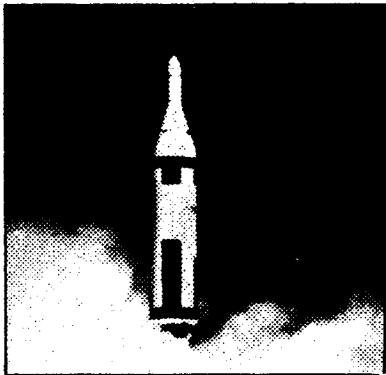
These developments in world politics have combined and interacted with the onset of huge economic recession. The apparent recession without end is already leading to signs of frenzy and panic in the ruling class. For world imperialism there is only one solution — a defeat for the workers' movement on a world scale leading to a boost to profits.

Events like the revolutions in Nicaragua and Iran are a direct threat to American interests, and explain the developing war hysteria inside the US itself, the attempts to perfect the counter-revolutionary policing role of the US forces, and the moves to set up highly mobile counter-revolutionary forces in the US army that can be shuttled to 'trouble-spots' anywhere in the world.

But they do not explain why the US needs to build up its nuclear arsenal. The target of the nuclear armaments programme in the US is beyond dispute — it is the USSR.

The leadership of the USSR is an extremely conservative grouping, seeking peaceful international coexistence, and anxious to avoid hostilities with the US. But the Soviet bureaucracy cannot isolate itself from world imperialism today, anymore than it could under Stalin. The different social system in the USSR inevitably leads it into conflict with American imperialism.

Soviet backing for the Cuban regime, on the US's doorstep, helps ensure the political instability of the whole of Central America. The strength of Cuba also helps to strengthen and deepen the colonial



revolution in certain instances — as in Angola and Nicaragua.

The Soviet Union itself has directly backed forces opposing the US in Africa and in the Middle-East — less in pursuit of world revolution than in defence of the Soviet bureaucracy.

Also, in a period of crisis and recession, the idea of reclaiming certain markets for world capitalism — in Eastern Europe, the Far East and so on — becomes an increasingly attractive way out of the economic crisis. But this immediately poses the possibility of war.

Clashed

The interests of the Soviet Union have recently clashed with those of imperialism in Afghanistan. Inexorably, tension between the US and the USSR has been mounting over the last few years.

In the build up of international tension the military and political ideologues of the bourgeoisie are much more willing to discuss war as a way out of the crisis.

A clear sign of this dynamic is seen in the response to *The Third World War: a future history* by Sir John Hackett. This book was designed to have a major effect on Tory 'defence' thinking. Its basic thesis is that war with the USSR need only involve a limited nuclear exchange, and that war with the USSR, far from being unthinkable is eminently winnable.

The increased war drive is shown in the rapid rearming of the Western powers. The international armament stakes have been raised by four developments:

* **The Cruise missile.** The Boeing AGM86B missile represents a major breakthrough in weapons technology, and a major threat to the USSR. With a range of 5,000 kilometers, it has a self-correcting guidance system which can deliver a nuclear warhead within meters of its target. Because it flies below most conventional radar, hugging the terrain, it is extremely difficult to develop a counter-missile system against it. (Tests show it has a forty per cent failure rate — but the terrain it 'accidentally' ploughs into is unlikely to be in the US as they will all be sited in Western Europe.)

* **The neutron bomb.** This 'dirty' bomb, which Carter announced in July 1977, is designed to kill people without substantial damage to the environment. In other words, it is primarily a weapon for use in capturing towns and then repopulating them under the control of the attackers.

* **The increasing development of 'super-weapons', including long-range laser weapons and nuclear missiles delivered from space.**

* **The MX missile system.** This missile 'shuttle' system, involving thousands of miles of roads and billions of dollars, would make SALT II far less attractive to the USSR — if the US hadn't pulled out already. It involves up to 5,000 silos but only a few warheads which are moved around from silo to silo — so that the USSR never knows where they are. The MX is less of a threat to the USSR with the abandonment of SALT II — there is nothing to stop the Soviet Union having a missile trained on each silo.

The rapid development of new weapons technology does not necessarily mean it will be used. But when it is combined with open speculation that the US could now win a war with the USSR, and with clear preparations for a new cold war, then we have to admit that we are closer to war than at any time since 1962.

And in Britain...

In Britain there have been two ominous developments. First, the revelation in the London magazine *Time Out* of the extent of preparations made by the government for controlling the country in the event of nuclear war. These include a complex set of communications and regional government centres which have been constructed over the past fifteen years. The government is now preparing for a considerable extension of civil defence preparations.

More ominous for the working class in Britain is the deployment of the Cruise missile. The cruise missile, only 21 foot long, has a limited range. Unlike conventional missiles it cannot be launched against the USSR from the United States. Therefore, Western Europe, and Britain in particular, have become the USA's 'aircraft-carrier'.

Devastating

The cruise missiles are being deployed in Lakenheath, Suffolk, Upper Hessford and Sculthorpe. This makes Britain even more of a target for the USSR's nuclear arsenal.

The effects on Britain of a nuclear war would be completely devastating. Apart from the numerous warheads pointed at London, the USSR has undoubtedly reserved at least 100 megatons for the US airforce's British nerve-centre at South Ruislip in Middlesex.

Bomb

A single 100-megaton bomb exploded over London would cause a firestorm stretching from Brighton in the South to Reading in the West. The whole population of London would, undoubtedly, be wiped out. Despite the Tories' inanity that '15 million' could survive a nuclear attack, the reality is that for most of the population there is no defence from nuclear attack — except to stop it happening in the first place.



The campaign we need

IN THE new CND pamphlet, *Protest and Survive*, attacking the government's decision to allow Cruise missiles in Britain, Edward Thompson calls for the launching of a new campaign. Socialists should vigorously support this call.

Our campaign must be centred on the demand that the Labour Party and the trades unions come out against nuclear weapons and American bases in Britain, pledging themselves to withdrawal from NATO. In the late '50s and '60s the Labour left rallied around the demand for nuclear disarmament — this has to happen again.

Today, with the world closer to nuclear war than at any time since 1962, we need to launch a new crusade against NATO and nuclear weapons in Britain. The decision to place hundreds of cruise missiles in Britain was taken by the NATO high command, without even a formal reference to Parliament.

The working class is not defended by nuclear missiles or NATO; on the contrary, it just places the British working class in the front line in defence of the interests of imperialism.

The real defence that the working class needs is precisely against imperialism, and — as Edward Thompson says — that means 'protest and survive'.

IRELAND

Irish Campaign in Labour Party launched

By Mick Sullivan, committee member, Labour Committee on Ireland

A CAMPAIGN to 'break the silence on the question of Ireland inside the Labour Party' and to 'commit the party to a policy of withdrawal from Ireland' was formally launched at a press conference in the House of Commons on Wednesday of last week.

This follows a conference the previous Saturday which established the Labour Committee on Ireland and which attracted over a hundred members of the Labour Party from 44 CLPs.

Opening the LCI conference, Jock Stallard MP explained what he thought was needed:

'We must build mass support inside the Labour Party and trade union movement demanding and insisting that we demolish the bi-partisan approach which has bedevilled the Labour Party for so long.

'Most of us here oppose partition. Our task is to move the party towards that policy.'

Withdrawal

At the press conference Rosemary Sales, the LCI's press officer and a member of Hackney North CLP, explained that the immediate aim of the campaign was to get a resolution calling for British withdrawal from Ireland adopted at the next Labour Party conference.

The model resolution being circulated to Labour Parties throughout the country reads:

'Conference recognises the evidence that the clear popular wish of the Irish people favours a British withdrawal from Ireland, a progress towards a united Ireland.

'Furthermore, we recognise that British involvement in Ireland constitutes a major obstacle to the development towards socialism in that country. Conference therefore:

1) Rejects the current bi-partisan policies of the Parliamentary Labour Party leadership;

2) Repudiates the policies of successive British governments which have effectively guaranteed the right of veto to the Unionist minority in Ireland, thereby ensuring that the present disastrous situation remains unresolved;

3) Feels that effective communication between British and Irish working class organisations is essential and urges that measures be taken to ensure that British trade unionists and Labour Party members are provided with accurate information about the views of their Irish counterparts;

4) Instructs the Labour Party leadership to adopt a policy favouring political and military withdrawal from Ireland;

5) Calls upon the next Labour government to immediately begin the process of this full political and military withdrawal.'

Troops

The main discussion at the LCI conference revolved around whether the demand for the immediate withdrawal of troops should be part of the model resolution.

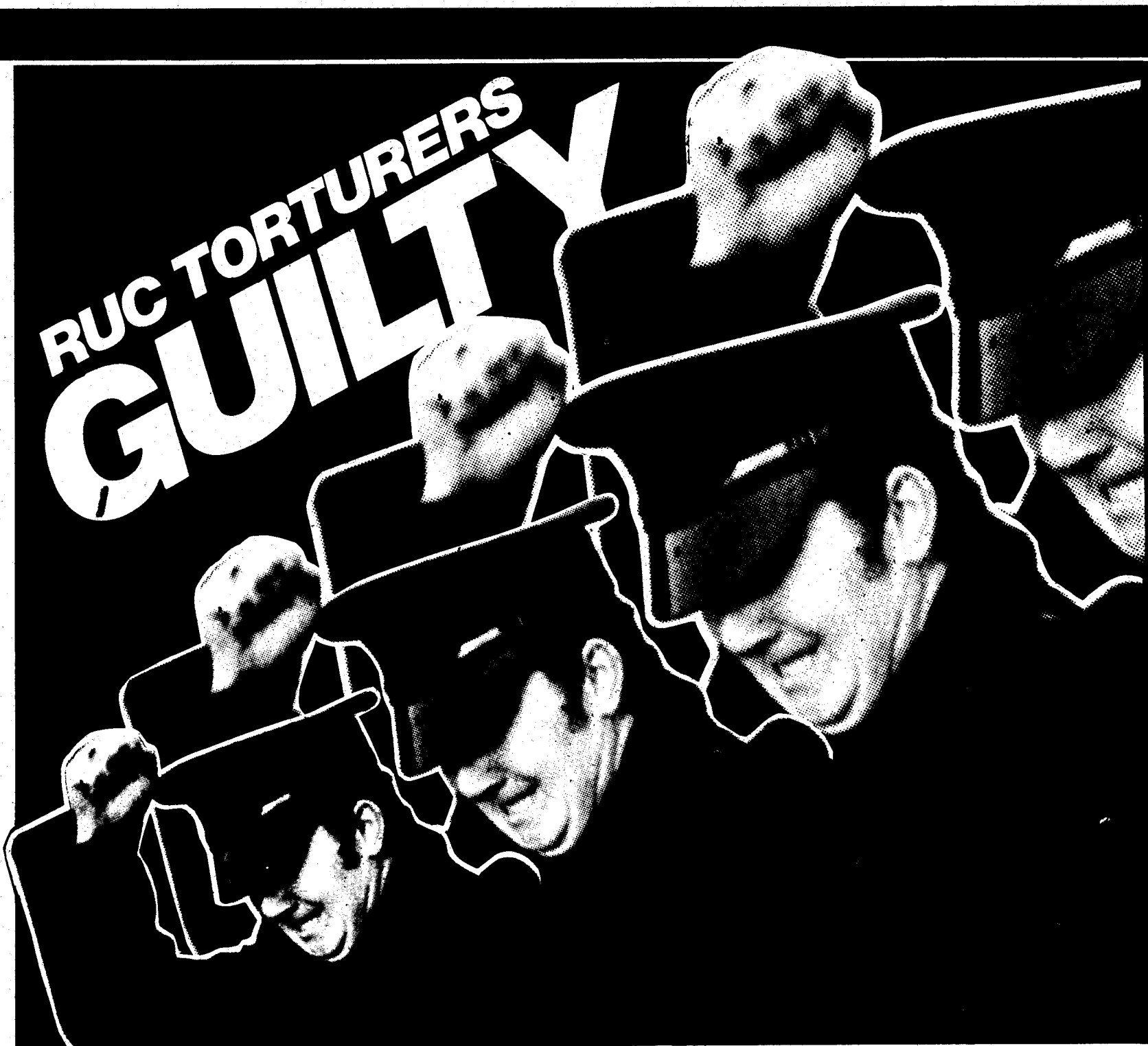
Certainly, most of the Labour Party members at the conference appeared to personally support such a call, but the majority view was that at this stage of the debate in the Labour Party it was important to win as much backing for the general principle of British withdrawal and Irish self-determination.

'Troops out now', it was felt, might hinder this. The view was also expressed that the Labour Party was not in office and that the main demand should be directed at the next Labour government.

On the other hand, the conference did feel that the original proposed resolution, which did not contain the demand that the next Labour government immediately begin the process of British withdrawal, was too vague.

The fifth point of the model resolution, moved as an amendment by Socialist Challenge supporters, consequently won overwhelming support.

Socialist Challenge 10 April 1980 Page 12



La Mon frame-up comes unstuck

By Geoff Bell

A RARE event happened in Belfast last week. A frame-up of an Irish Republican failed.

The case was that of Edward Brophy, charged with the murder of the 12 victims of the La Mon restaurant bombing in February 1978.

The only evidence offered against Brophy was signed statements in which he was alleged to have admitted hijacking a vehicle, keeping bombs in a shed, and handing the vehicle and bombs over to the team who carried out the job.

But Brophy told the court how he had been threatened and tortured into making the statements.

At the end of the 46-day trial Justice Kelly ruled that Brophy's confession was indeed 'inadmissible'.

Said Kelly: 'I cannot say I am satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that the verbal and written statements challenged were not induced by torture or inhuman or degrading treatment.'

Detail

During the course of the trial Brophy described in detail his 'interrogation' at the hands of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. He was:

- *Punched in the testicles;
- *Hit on the back of the neck and face;
- *Punched in the stomach;
- *Forced to do press-ups and stand against a wall;
- *Had urine thrown in his face.

The 'last straw', Brophy told the court, was when the police told him his wife was being 'questioned' and he heard a woman screaming in a nearby room.

In the non-jury, one judge courts of the North, judges usually ignore the type

of charges Brophy made, even when — as in his case — there is medical evidence to corroborate the torture.

But Brophy produced evidence which Justice Kelly found impossible to disregard. He pointed to a number of detectives who were in the courtroom and identified them as playing a part in the beatings.

The detectives denied knowing Brophy, but later evidence proved that they had indeed been in the police station at the exact time Brophy said they had 'interrogated' him.

The judge concluded: 'It is one thing for a suspect in custody to invent ill-treatment and details of it but it is a very different and formidable venture to embark on choosing as the perpetrators, on stated days and times, not one but a number of detectives, who are not on record, and whose whereabouts at the time of the ill-treatment are unlikely to be

known to the suspect.'

So Brophy was acquitted because his torturers were stupid enough to sit in the courtroom during the trial. Hundreds of other Irish Republicans who have been convicted on the sole basis of confessions that were tortured out of them have not been so lucky.

Free

Brophy did not get off scot-free. He was jailed for five years for being a member of the Provisional IRA.

As for his torturers, their case is being 'examined' by the Director of Public Prosecutions. But it is extremely unlikely will face charges.

Despite literally thousands of complaints made against the RUC over their treatment of prisoners, not one police officer has ever been brought to court.

Will Underhill publish?

LORD Underhill, the former national agent of the Labour Party who recently 'exposed' the Militant grouping when he published various documents about the way the tendency operates in the Labour Party, has been given a new job.

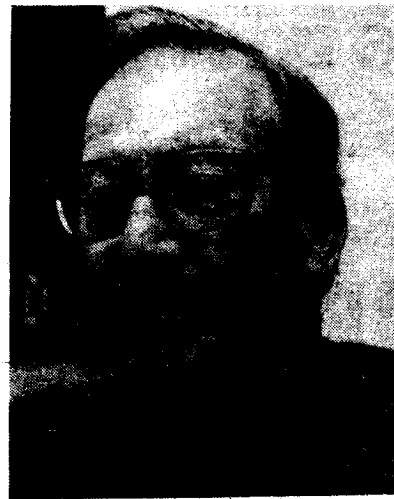
Tory Home Secretary Willie Whitelaw has appointed Underhill 'adviser' on the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

His job will be to hear appeals by individuals who face deportation under the PTA.

Underhill is of course a great upholder of democracy. Referring to the Militant, he said last month: 'How they can be allowed to exist within the democratic structure of the Labour Party I find very difficult to understand.'

The good Lord is also a firm advocate of open government. He complained that Militant 'operated in secret'.

No doubt in his new job Underhill will publish all details of any charges against people held under the PTA.



He may even be bold enough to let those whose appeals he hears know the charges against them — something the PTA makes no provision for.

Or then again, this champion of democracy, of the right to know and of freedom of information, may none of these things.

More support for Tameside

TAMESIDE Trades Council has received more backing in its fight against the TUC.

Two weeks ago Tameside was struck off the list of trades councils recognised by Congress House because it wanted to hold a conference on Ireland at which speakers who did not support the TUC's policy on the issue were invited.

A number of other trades councils have already protested to the TUC and its role as a censor on Ireland. Last week trades councils in Tower Hamlets and Lambeth, both in London, joined the angry critics of the TUC.

The Lambeth resolution was passed with no delegates voting against. It said: 'Lambeth Trades Council being extremely concerned at the news of the TUC's disaffiliation of Tameside Trades Council, calls on the TUC to reverse this decision and to lift all threats and conditions from the work of Tameside Trades Council.

'Lambeth views with concern this attempt to stop British trade unionists discussing what is going on in the North of Ireland and calls on the TUC to actively encourage discussion of the British government's policies in that country in the same way as they have done in relation to countries such as Chile, Vietnam and South Africa.

'This could be achieved by the organisation of a series of regional conferences aimed at discussing the official TUC policy of support for the Better Life for All Campaign, at which other resolutions and opinions could also be discussed.'



Captured T.54 tank supplied to Morocco by Egypt, and taken by Polisario near Labouriat, South Morocco

Photo: GEORGE LEVANTIS

BASQUES DEAL BLOW TO SPANISH STATE

THE first elections to the Basque parliament have resulted in a spectacular defeat for the Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD), the governing party in the Spanish state, which shows that its policy of 'limited autonomy' cannot satisfy the national aspirations of the Basque people.

The run-up to the elections was marked by a new rise of national and social struggle in Euskadi, as the Basque country is known, with strikes against factory closures and the 'social pact' (a version of Britain's social contract) and demonstrations for the release of all political prisoners.

ETA (Military) launched an offensive which ended in an assault on a military convoy and the death of five civil guards. The government responded with an 'anti-terrorist' decree and massive repression against ETA.

The result: UCD lost over half the votes it received in the elections to the Madrid parliament, relegating the party to fifth place, with less than 10 per cent of the votes cast.

The socialists and the Communist Party, which openly supported the government's anti-Basque policy, also lost a significant number of votes. They had furiously attacked the left nationalist parties and the right of self-determination.

Victory

The Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), the party of the industrial bourgeoisie in Euskadi, achieved an impressive victory, allowing it to form a government on its own.

A few weeks earlier it had withdrawn from the Madrid parliament in protest at the UCD-imposed limitations on Basque autonomy.

At the same time, the negative character of ETA (Military)'s armed offensive and the divisions among the left nationalists allowed the PNV to appear as the only 'responsible' nationalist party.

Herri Batasuna (The People United), the second beneficiary in the elections, is a front of various parties linked ideologically to ETA (Military), which announced during the campaign that it wouldn't take up its seats in the Basque parliament.

Yet if Herri Batasuna maintains this boycott, much of the political capital that it has gained will be lost, giving a margin of manoeuvre to the PNV and to the UCD.

LKI, the Euskadi Trotskyists, pointed this out in its election campaign, calling on Herri Batasuna to defend class and national interests in the Basque parliament.

Trapped

Euskadiko Eskerra (Basque Left) is the second left nationalist party, with a broadly Euro-communist position. It is linked to ETA (Politico-military), which has split from ETA (Military). With the aim of obtaining an agreement for Euskadi autonomy, it argued for negotiations with the PNV and UCD.

PNV wants to subordinate working class and social demands to a fight for national liberties under bourgeois leadership, and there is a danger that Euskadiko Eskerra could be trapped into an inter-class 'Basque' front against the UCD.

The Trotskyists' election campaign began with a united front proposal to Herri Batasuna and the far left, that is to everyone who opposed the limited autonomy project and the social pact. It was not accepted because of the pressure of Herri Batasuna's petty bourgeois supporters.

The LKI was able to organise 32 mass meetings, with the participation of Ernest Mandel, Bernadette MacAliskey-Devlin, and leaders from other nationalities in the Spanish state.

Their aim was to fight for socialists to use the Basque parliament as a platform, and against any working class or left nationalist support for the bourgeois government of the PNV.

This was linked to a campaign for democratic national rights and against the social pact.

MOROCCO'S VIETNAM

By George Levantis and Caroline Tisdall

A FEW months ago observers were still referring to the Polisario struggle to liberate Western Sahara as 'the war the world forgot'. Now it has become 'Morocco's Vietnam'.

On the fighting front, the Polisario guerillas have carried the war deep into southern Morocco in an attempt to cut off King Hassan's troops from access to the eastern part of the occupied territories.

At the beginning of March an 11 day operation along a 72-mile front put 2,000 Moroccan troops out of action, according to Polisario figures.

The rout of a 7,000-strong armoured column is a further demoralising blow to an army already shaken by heavy losses since the guerillas stepped up the pressure in December.

As Moroccan prisoners testify, the fighting parallel to Vietnam is that they cannot locate the guerillas: 'How can you fight an enemy you cannot see?'

At the same time United States' aid to King Hassan has been massively increased. Last October, Congress approved a further arms deal to Morocco and for the first time admitted that the weapons would be used in the Western Sahara conflict.

The new assignment includes OV-10 Bronco surveillance planes and Cobra helicopters as used in Vietnam, as well as the installation of a \$200m electronic personnel detector system to be built by Northrop Page Communications.

Silencing

For the past five years the desert war has been King Hassan's nationalist trump card, a way of silencing the opposition within Morocco and indeed within the army which led to attempts on his life in 1970 and 1971.

Now all opposition is discredited as treason and Moroccans are called upon to sacrifice themselves for the restoration of the 'Greater Kingdom of Morocco' as it existed in 16th century pre-colonial days.

After the most recent defeats in southern Moroccan the King again cried wolf, calling on his people to forget inflation and the crippled economy — the war costs £1m a day.

They should, he said, 'serve their flag and honour their oath by sacrificing themselves body and soul to defend the territorial integrity of their country.'

For the United States this is a struggle to defend their stronghold in North Africa. Morocco's strategic position at the western entrance to the Mediterranean is one consideration, both as a port of call for the Sixth Fleet and as a potential refuelling point in a future Middle East conflict.

As long as King Hassan remains on the throne, Western interests in Morocco, including its phosphate reserves, are secure.

As a pro-Western Arab leader,



'Sahrawi women support the Polisario'

Photo: GEORGE LEVANTIS

Hassan has been useful on many occasions, notably as a go-between for Carter, Sadat, and Begin in the preparations for Camp David.

This was why the United States permitted the Moroccan invasion of Western Sahara when the Spanish withdrew in 1975, a move that directly contradicted UN recommendations for independence for the Sahrawi people of Western Sahara.

Recent Moroccan defeats have caused grave concern in Washington, coming as they do after increased American aid and considerable military advice from the United States, France and Israel. With 70,000 Moroccan troops now facing a guerilla force of some 10,000 in Western Sahara, Hassan's position looks shaky.

While the Polisario were inflicting more damages in southern Morocco,

relations with the United States as carefully as does Morocco with the Soviet Union.

So what at most could become an extension of the radical Arab belt through from Algeria to the Atlantic coast of Western Sahara and the phosphate deposits of Bou Craa are being used as yet another 'red scare'.

Moroccan prisoners testify to this. When they are dispatched to the desert war they are told that their adversaries will be Russian or Cuban. It does not take long on the front to realise that this is nonsense.

Only a Sahrawi Polisario can fight on this terrain, and success in desert guerilla warfare depends on intimate knowledge of it. Discussions with Polisario fighters and civilians reveal the same contradiction.

As fairly devout Moslems, they stop far short of Marxism. Their struggle, though socialist by declaration, is still first and foremost nationalist and anti-colonial. It has become anti-imperialist now that the United States has revealed its hand in Morocco.

Backing

As the secretary general of the Polisario Front, Mohammed Abdelaziz, points out: 'We do not need military backing on the ground, and we will never ask for it.'

'By contrast... Morocco, without initially admitting it, internationalised the decolonisation by receiving military aid first from Spain, then France and the USA.'

But as Andrew Young pointed out on a visit to the Polisario in February, it is also the diplomatic success of the Front in the Third World in general and Africa in particular which worries the United States.

Can they again afford to be so patently on the 'wrong' side? Young thought not, and condemned the military aid as a threat to the stability of the region and damaging to US relations with black Africa.

While Hassan's Morocco now stands dangerously isolated in both African and Arab affairs through the King's refusal to attend conference for the past year, Polisario have achieved major political victories.

At the next Organisation of African Unity meeting in Freetown this summer they should gain the necessary majority recognition of the Sahrawi Arab Republic declared four years ago, and this will reinforce UN action.

Already in the UN the vote is in their favour. This past year has brought 16 official recognitions of the Polisario's republic, bringing the total to 36 with Iran the latest signatory.

The Polisario confidently expect that events of the coming year will force Hassan to negotiate peace or risk escalation into a war with Algeria.

Increased American aid was obviously intended to put him in a stronger negotiating position. It looks as if they have backed a loser.

Conrad Coon, Carter's director general of African affairs, called the first-ever meeting of American ambassadors in North Africa.

They met in Madrid to discuss 'the penetration of Communist forces into North Africa'.

It's hard to believe that US foreign policy analysis could be so simplistic.

The Polisario are backed by Algeria. The Sahrawi refugees, organised by the Polisario, are still in the camps in Southern Algeria to which they fled after Morocco invaded their country and encouraged their exodus with napalm bombs in 1976.

The Polisario Front receives arms from Libya, too, though they now claim that 80 per cent of their weapons are captured from the Moroccans. Neither Algeria nor Libya can in any way be called 'Communist' states.

Indeed both of them foster trade

'Helpless anger' over Zimbabwe coverage

YOUR coverage of the wonderful struggle of the Zimbabwean people in overthrowing imperialism has often reduced me to helpless anger over the last few months.

Why must you be so scornful of the black masses that you continually ridicule and criticise their chosen leaders in the Patriotic Front?

During the Lancaster House talks you said that these leaders had 'offered the people nothing but war'. When the people proved you wrong by giving the PF a massive vote of approval in the election you then pour scorn on the people for being stupid enough to vote for them.

Your article 'Mugabe's Cabinet, the masters now?' (20 March) is just the last in a line of articles that have implied that the blacks do not know how to struggle or what to do with victory when they get it.

Maybe you think that victory was given to them by the massive pressure of those outside Zimbabwe, like yourselves?

No, my friends, the people of Zimbabwe have struggled long enough against imperialism in all its forms not to be duped by it in whatever guise.

F BENTY, Edinburgh

Too kind to the Fragments?

HILARY Wainwright's letter (27 March), attempting to justify her line, is quite untenable. She says she rejects Leninist organisations. Indeed, she has never done Lenin the courtesy of even reading his basic works. With consummate arrogance, she considers she can operate in socialist politics without having the ABC of theoretical understanding.

As a result, when one examines the political practice that underlies *Beyond the Fragments*, one just discovers a squalid mess. Her beloved Newcastle Socialist Centre exemplifies this fact.

One of its leaders is Jimmy Murray. He backed the right wing in the AUEW delegation at last year's Labour Party annual conference, sabotaged the struggles against redundancy at Courtauld's Spennymoor and Vickers's Scotswood, and spoke at the Labour regional conference in 1974 in defence of Andy Cunningham and T Dan Smith.

Yet, recently, when Andy Strouthous, the SWP Tyneside organiser, moved a mild resolution proposing Newcastle Socialist Centre should be critical of Murray, Hilary Wainwright

sprang to the defence of this first-class opportunist.

Valerie Coultas is too kind. She accuses Wainwright of 'lending weight to Benn's view'; she should have added 'and to Callaghan's view as well'.

RAY CHALLINOR, Whitley Bay

Sectarian stance to Protestants

WE BEG to differ with the article by Valerie Coultas and Pauline Roe (13 March) on International Women's Day in Belfast.

Their article adopts an extremely sectarian stance and therefore a most dangerous approach to Irish politics. Apart from their reference to 'a few Protestants hanging around' and 'taking the Protestants on single-handed', the most offensive part of the article was the comrades' attitude to socialist feminism.

We would ask the comrades to define 'Protestant socialist feminism'. In our opinion there can be no such thing.

Surely the term socialist feminist would imply that the person had already broken from her religious background. Indeed, any true socialist feminist, regardless of background, would be angered at the presence of an army of occupation on their streets.

It is not Protestantism but Loyalism that is the obstacle to building a united Ireland. The attack by Valerie and Pauline on the Protestant population in the North of Ireland more or less brands Protestants as hopeless reactionaries incapable of developing any progressive ideas.

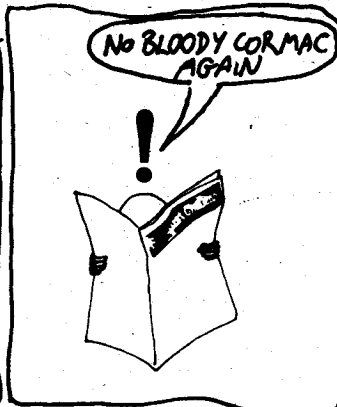
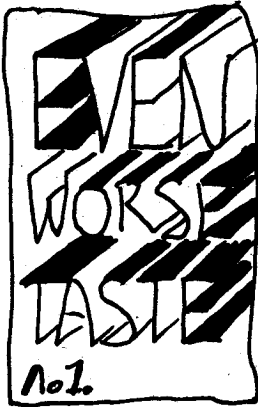
The Protestant working class may, in fact, have materially a little more of nothing than their Catholic neighbours; but they are much more oppressed psychologically by the dominant ideology — fear of being repressed in a 32-County republic.

Valerie and Pauline may think they are lucky not to have to live in Belfast, but in our opinion Northern Ireland, with all the problems of trying to build a broad-based movement involving the Protestant working class, would be better off without them.

EMMA CRAIG and CHARLIE BAIRD, Glasgow

Glasgow ANL silent on Loyalists

MARIAN Koegh in her letter (20 March) quite rightly criticises your article on the Armagh picket for its use of religious denominations to explain the divisions in the working class in the Six Counties. Certainly the division is between those who are oppressed by British imperialism and who fight back (the nationalist population)



and those who have been bought off by relative privileges and support British imperialism (the Loyalists or Unionists).

Where the letter goes wrong, however, is in failing to bring out the importance of this political division — a division which Marian and her comrades in the IMG and the ANL totally covered up for in their opposition to the NF's march in Glasgow.

Of course you don't tell Protestants they cannot support the Republican Movement — but that is not what Marian's and her friends' petition was about. The ANL leaflets and petitions were about keeping 'fascists' out of Glasgow with every effort made not to mention what they were marching about. The ANL has never opposed the regular Orange walks in Glasgow whose very content is about smashing the IRA. The IMG in Glasgow have taken responsibility for this part of the ANL.

The point I'm making is clear in my own 'small story'. When someone got up to speak at an ANL meeting in Glasgow and talked about the need to support the Republican Movement, several people in the audience heckled with anti-Republican shouts. One woman shouted 'Ulster is British' and declared that she was present 'to talk about fascists, not Ireland'.

Not one member of the IMG, ANL or SWP on the platform opposed this point of view. Their entire publicity and standpoint endorsed it, so how could they?

The struggle is not about Catholics and Protestants. It is about whether we are prepared to oppose British imperialism and Loyalism and support the IRA for its glorious role in the fight against British imperialism.

JANE PETRIE, Edinburgh

Expose racist court

IN Socialist Challenge (20 March) you reported the police attack on me. It's not only racist attacks by the police that face black people in Hornsey but also a racist conspiracy between the police and Highbury Corner Magistrates Court.

This court has now refused to grant me legal aid — despite the fact that I earn only £32 a week. As in the case of the Earlington

Family, who were twice refused legal aid for the solicitors they wanted, the Court hopes to prevent a fightback which would expose Hornsey police as a bunch of racists.

The Earlington Family Defence Committee will fight this decision by the court but obviously support for our activities and financial support for fighting the cases are even more important now.

The EFDC is calling for maximum support for two events: 19th April — Demonstration in defence of the Earlington Family and Junior Archer. Assemble Finsbury Park (gate nearest the tube) at 1.30pm.

21st April — Picket of Highbury Corner Magistrates Court, assemble 9.30am. Donations, messages of support and further enquiries to EFDC, 49 Railton Road, London SE24 0LN.

Junior Archer

Appeal for Soviet feminist

THE following appeal, signed by its authors, was received by the French feminist weekly *des femmes en mouvement* 5 March. They published it on 7 March.

On 15 March it was published in *Le Monde*, together with over 2000 sponsors.

Tatiana Mamonova is a talented poet from Leningrad. She is also a painter and editor. Recently her name has become famous, both here and abroad.

'She started the women's movement in Russia. She is director of publication and editor of *Women and Russia*, the first independent women's journal. It is the first journal in Leningrad to really deal with social and political issues.'

The reaction of the KGB was immediate: interrogations; threats; surveillance. In the communal apartment, where she lives with her husband and son, the KGB have done everything to make life intolerable.

Recently the situation got even worse: the denunciations provoked by the KGB allowed the militia to demand that Tatiana's husband give a detailed account

of their finances over the last few years. They are trying to accuse Tatiana and her husband of 'parasitism'.

The authorities claimed that the *Almanac*, on which they both worked, was 'tendentious'.

The family applied to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR for an exit permit, in accord with Article 13 of the Helsinki Agreements. They got no reply.

We understand that it is useless to appeal to our law. It is also useless to demand that the authorities respect the Charter of Human Rights, even though they signed it themselves.

Now we have to turn to world opinion to help Tatiana and her family to emigrate.

T Goritcheva, I Voznesenskaya, N Malakhovskaya, I Levin, T Krouglova, V Frenkel, N Simakov, N Lesnitchanko, V M Smirnov, E Pazoukhin, V Krivoulin, G Grigorieva, A Gordienko, T Zaochnaya, E Nikolaev, N Dioukova, V Dioukov, J Ivina, V Goloubeva, L Pallej, Veretennikov and other signatories.

If you want to add your name to the appeal send your name to: Committee in Defence of Tatiana Mamonova and her family, librairie Des femmes, 68 rue des Saint-Peres, 75005 Paris. Socialist Challenge will be carrying an article on the background to this case in a future issue.

Caricature, distort, smash!

MEMO to a Left male — how to 'win' an argument, traditional style.

Dedicated to Rashid Meer. 1. First, misunderstand your 'opponent's' meaning — quite easy, as most people don't consistently express themselves with complete precision.

2. Next, get very angry. This helps you to forget you actually agree with most of your 'opponent's' views. It also enables you to give your aggression and competitiveness free rein.

3. Caricature, distort and generally misrepresent your 'opponent's' arguments.

4. Quote (better still, misquote) your 'opponent' out of context.

5. Imply your 'opponent' is deficient in basic Marxist concepts.

6. Artificially polarise the debate.

7. Finally, attempt to 'smash' your 'opponent' completely.

8. Subsequently, wonder why women are alienated by 'male' debating tactics.

Taking up some of Rashid Meer's points:

1. Is it divisive to expose capitalism's divisive tactics in relation to black people? If so, it must also be divisive to say sectors of the working-class believe Government-propagated myths about greedy workers and unemployed scroungers; and to show how setting 'coloureds' against 'blacks' helps to assure the South African state's domination. How can capitalism's con-tricks be combatted unless first exposed?

2. My 'personal impressions.' Naturally my impressions are personal; how could they be otherwise? Based on four years working with Asian children, they are admittedly incomplete, but surely have some validity.

3. I didn't say, 'Asians feel loathing and contempt for West Indians'; I actually said, 'Many

African Asian children arrived in Britain with a deep loathing and contempt for black Africans, which was then often transferred to the West Indians' — not quite the same. Rashid Meer can choose to disbelieve this statement, but must then claim that the Ugandan Asian children who have related their experiences in Uganda and Britain to me lied about their feelings. (Naturally, I'm not saying their feelings are never subsequently modified.) Also I refer him to Sabir Bandali's *Small Accidents*, the autobiography of a Ugandan Asian schoolboy.

4. I didn't think it necessary, for SC's readership, to delineate imperialism's super-exploitation of the Indian sub-continent. Incidentally, how are immigrants' subjective motivations any less real than the historical context?

5. While appreciating the enormous importance of the Black Freedom March and the organisations Rashid Meer mentioned, I don't think they comprise a united black movement. This would surely involve the majority of black people, not just that minority now radicalised, but also, for example, groups like the temple-oriented, family-centred orthodox Hindu communities of North-west London.

JENNY FLINTOFT, London

Labour and Namibia: Shoring up South Africa

THE South West Africa People's Organisation wishes to make public the following telegram sent to the leader of the Labour Party, James Callaghan:

SWAPO of Namibia regrets to learn that the shadow Foreign Secretary, Peter Shore, is meeting with South Africa's illegal administrator general for Namibia, Gerrit Viljoen.

We are deeply concerned that Mr Shore is not only willing to defy United Nations resolutions and Labour Party policy on Namibia, but is also willing to jeopardise the Labour Party's relations with SWAPO. We therefore urge you to put a stop to the meeting.

SHAPUA KAUKUNGUA, SWAPO representative for West Europe.

Back Tameside

THE TUC's ban on Tameside Trades Council because of an Irish conference is an affront to all working people.

If they get away with it we won't be able to criticise any policies of the government of the day if the TUC also agrees with them.

As the TUC nearly always backs the government on political issues like Ireland and Afghanistan it means we will be prevented from putting forward our own point of view.

Trade unionists should take up support for Tameside in their union branches and even hold their own conferences on Ireland to defy the TUC chiefs.

JOE TIERNEY, Richmond, Surrey

LETTERS exceeding 400 words will normally be cut to ensure that the maximum number of readers can express their views. Anonymous letters will only be published in exceptional circumstances, but real names will be withheld from publication on request.

WIN A QUARTZ WATCH!

Clear instructions to all Socialist Challenge readers: complete and post the adjoining form, then sit back and smile when the next nagging appeal is printed. Your smile may well turn into a delighted chuckle because all who start or increase their banker's order will be eligible to win one of two stunning digital quartz watches (those who answered the appeal weeks ago are also eligible).

The draw will take place on May Day, so vulgar materialists with an eye on the watch and noble materialists with an eye on the paper's funds get cracking.

Paul Russell London SW7

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE BANKER'S ORDER FORM

Your Bank

Name of Account to be debited

Account Number

Our Bank Socialist Challenge

Lloyd's Bank, Upper St, London N1.

Account No 0179678

Sorting Code 30-94-57

Amount to be paid Monthly

First Payment due And on the same date in the month thereafter.

Signed

Send to: Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP

Getting the facts on nuclear power

'What working people should know about nuclear power' by Fred Halstead. Pathfinder Press, 50p.

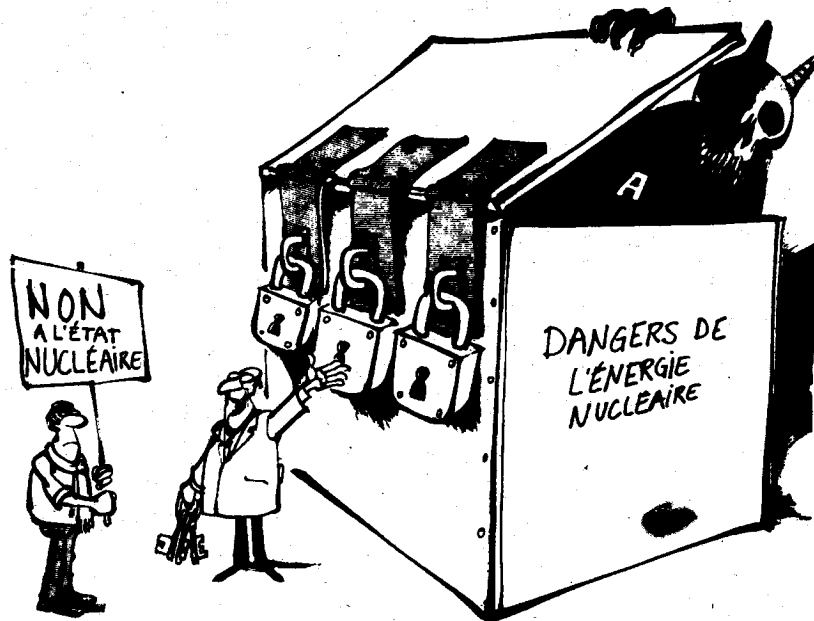
'Workers' Power, Not Nuclear Power' by Mike Simons. Socialists Unlimited for SWP. 50p.

TWO socialist pamphlets on nuclear power have been published recently. One is from the Socialist Workers Party in the United States and the other from the British SWP.

The first is entitled *What working people should know about nuclear power* by Fred Halstead. It is a successful attempt to explain in straightforward language what exactly the dangers of nuclear power are. It starts with a description of the biological effects of radiation, goes on to say how nuclear reactors work, what fuel reprocessing involves, and then says a little about the political background.

The pamphlet deals only with pressurised water reactors (PWRs) — the kind used in the US — and US safety legislation. This is not irrelevant to Britain because the Tory government wants to build them here, but some of the technical facts, stated as generalities, do not apply to British gas-cooled reactors.

The basic differences between fast reactors and thermal reactors could have been explained in just a little more detail. These are not obscure technical points, they are fundamental to the economics and safety of nuclear power and to its connection with nuclear weapons. (A plan drawn up by the 'International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation' set up by President Carter suggests that the advanced capitalist countries should keep fast reactors, and therefore also fuel reprocessing and bombs, to themselves; allowing the developing countries only thermal reactors.)



The political conclusions of the pamphlet are that nuclear power should be opposed and that coal is the short-term answer to energy shortages until renewable sources can be developed.

A final section by Andrew Pulley summarizes tactics for opposing nuclear power. We should encourage trade unions to join with other forces and to put their organizing power and political strength

into the anti-nuclear campaigns. Like the technical information, this is based on the US and would not necessarily apply to Britain in all respects.

The overall conclusion is, however, applicable everywhere:

...the people who have been so callous and deceitful on nuclear power are the very same people who have control over nuclear bombs, which are an even deadlier means of destruction.

'Working people have no interest in either nuclear power or making war. We do have an interest in clean air, job safety, and — if you please — in the continuation of the human race. If we get organized, we have the power to do something about it.'

The British SWP pamphlet, called *Workers' Power, Not Nuclear Power* is written by Mike Simons. Contrary to my expectations, it is one of the best anti-nuclear publications I have read, and is an immeasurable improvement on the previous SWP effort, *Red Alert*.

Longer than the American pamphlet, it not only covers wider ground but also goes into technical descriptions more deeply. It is very easy to read in spite of the density of information, and gives a well-balanced view of all aspects of nuclear power — technical, economic, and political. Radiation dangers are explained clearly and without the unnecessary exaggeration found in some anti-nuclear publications, which confuse the substantial danger with the relatively trivial.

The role of nuclear power in imperialist domination is explained as clearly as the risks from the technology itself. The economic arguments of the so-called 'energy crisis' are exposed and the anti-nuclear movement, world-wide and in Britain, is assessed. Case studies illustrate the general points about work hazards, threats to workers' rights, and how they interact.

A pamphlet that says clearly why socialists should oppose nuclear power, giving all the facts and arguments, was badly needed in Britain. The pamphlet by the (British) SWP is excellent in filling this need, but it refrains from saying exactly how nuclear power should be opposed. But perhaps it gives us enough information to make up our own minds on that.

CAROL RUSSELL

Secretaries: 'an absolutely natural role for women'

'Women for Hire: A study of the Female Office Worker' by Fiona McNally. McMillan 1979 pbk £4.95, hbk £10

I FIND it difficult to generate much of a positive response to this book. As an attempt to fill the gap in industrial sociology left by the absence of a serious study of women office workers, it does perhaps perform a useful function. At the same time, however, it suffers from all the inadequacies of traditional sociology.

McNally is concerned to explode the myths surrounding women in waged work which assume them to be home-centred and passive and to expose them as 'ideological justifications for the exploitative systems of capitalism and patriarchy'. A justifiable aim which Marxist-feminists would agree to.

However, because there is no theoretical and political analysis guiding the book, McNally concludes, in classic reformist style: sociologists must overcome their 'conservative assumptions' that women passively accept the fact of limited occupational alternatives.

The book is also marred by what appears as an obsessive concern with sociological 'scientificness'. McNally lumps together quotations from and references to the most disparate and incompatible sources, skipping from Braverman to the Alfred Marks Bureau, from Marcia Williams to Gerald Nabarro, and from the *Daily Express* to *Spare Rib*, giving them all equal weight in her effort undauntingly to prove her point.

At one point, a 5-page presentation of the causes of secretaries' job dissatisfaction (drawn heavily from secondary sources) ends abruptly with a quote from Bernard Marks, of the Alfred Marks Bureau, which not surprisingly describes the secretary's supportive (read subordinate) role as 'an absolutely natural, classically appropriate, role for women. They want to feel needed (and) wanted...'

Since the statement is offered uncritically, one assumes Ms McNally agrees with Mr Marks — an assumption which is indeed confirmed 9 lines later with 'it is important therefore that one does not overstate the degree of work dissatisfaction which secretaries subjectively experience'.

Later we have an interesting dialogue between Marx and Eric Hurst, chairperson of Brook Street Bureau, over whether temps can be considered part of the reserve army of labour and as such are used to undercut the pay of permanent workers, as was (rightly) claimed by NALGO a few years ago. Mr Hurst allays these fears by assuring us that 'the main role for temps is to supply abnormal and peripheral requirements and not to provide competition with permanent workers'.

Faced with both arguments, Ms McNally rejects Marx in favour of Hurst and concludes that 'it is extremely difficult to resolve the competing claims and it may be that in those cases where the hire of temps wages of permanent staff, this was an unintended consequence of the employers' actions'. (!)

It seems to me that if we are going to think critically about women's employment and not just attempt to redress the sociological balance, then we must locate women's work within a socially critical analysis — a move which McNally explicitly rejects.

And I wish she wouldn't keep referring to women office workers as 'the girls'.

HAZEL DOWNING

Swiss high finance exposed

'Switzerland Exposed' by Jean Ziegler, Allison & Busby, £3.50

A FASCINATING account of some of the darker workings of the Swiss banking system and state, this book has two main flaws — inadequate format, and inadequate theoretical framework.

The most interesting sections are undoubtedly those explaining the way Swiss banks are used to transfer money around the world in secret — particularly when left governments come to power — and the section on how Swiss financiers participated in the overthrow of Allende.

These sections highlight a major problem for the book's editors — that of combining narrative, facts, and figures in standard book format. In my view, the whole thing would have been much clearer in the style of the CIS Reports — A4, soft-covered with the flexibility of a pamphlet. In this framework the different components could be untangled.

A more serious weakness is the lack of theoretical framework within which to situate the fightback against the system described in the book.

Academic

Ziegler is a Social Democratic member of the Swiss parliament. This, together with the fact that he knows personally many of the financial barons named in the book, possibly accounts for the eclectic mixture of Third-Worldism and academic Marxism that characterises the programme he offers.

The two main planks of this programme are anti-imperialism and an unmasking of the capitalists' activities. Nowhere in the programme, or the descriptive part of the book for that matter, does the working class feature.

Ziegler's programme is that of the impotent academic faced with a structure, the dimensions of which he can just about grasp, but who lacks the analytical tools to understand it. As such he can only hope that nameless 'outside' forces will topple it.

However, despite this, the book offers many useful insights into the workings of international finance and multinational companies.

ALAN LENTON



'My Song is My Own, 100 Women's Songs' by Kathy Henderson with Frankie Armstrong and Sandra Kerr, Pluto Press £3.95

'WE HAVE selected material that reflects the experience of ordinary women, throws light on their lives and feelings, and links up the largely invisible tradition of women's resistance.'

So Kathy Henderson describes this enterprise and it is no mean brief. The editors have explored hitherto neglected songs of women in the folk tradition, and have set them side by side with music hall songs and contemporary songs of struggle. The result is an inspired collection which succeeds both in unearthing a lot of interesting music and in combining the diverse material to present a vivid picture of the lives of women through history.

Culled entirely from the British Isles,

Women's songs



There were three drunken maidens come from the Isle of Wight, They

these songs have been organised thematically, into sections on love and courtship, marriage, work, and motherhood. No distinction has been drawn between the old and the new, the traditional and the self-conscious, but somehow they have been integrated into a unique and heartwarming whole.

The songs have been meticulously annotated, so you are given a good deal of information about their history, their propagators, and where they can be heard.

And the result is an extraordinary lively mix of social history and lament; of comments on women's lot and exhortations to change it.

The reader will find not only a wealth of little known, often very moving songs, but also many insights into the lives of their singers. There are facts given alongside the songs about, for example, the lot of prostitutes; lady villains; women's role in harvesting; how women chain makers built their union...

But this book is anything but didactic. It spills over with spirit and vitality — with

humorous songs, bawdy songs, songs of women complaining of their men's lack of gumption, women having fun.

Trico

One section contains songs of recent struggles — the Trico workers, the Idris Strike Songs, songs about equal pay and songs of the picket line. One of the many achievements of the collection is that these contemporary songs fit so naturally into the format — showing a firm continuity between old and new, songs of complaint and songs of triumph.

The book is intended for use, as well as decoration. I don't know how many people will treat it as a song sheet, although the transcriptions are clear enough. But I do commend it as a remarkable, loving, informative and innovative contribution both to the study of women's history and to the history of British traditional music.

SALLY FELDMAN

Socialist Challenge

ASIAN FAMILIES FIRE-BOMBED

NO NAZIS IN OLDHAM

Janet Gardner reports from Oldham:

THERE ARE nearly ten thousand black people in Oldham. Most of them are Asian workers, employed in the textile mills and local factories. It is against them that the Nazis will be directing their racist abuse when they march through Oldham Town Centre on Saturday 12 April.

The new Nazi chief, Andrew Brons, will be the star speaker and a call has gone out to fascists nationally to make this a large mobilisation. Ostensibly the National Front are marching in opposition to Oldham's two 'extreme left-wing' MPs, James Lamond and Michael Meacher.

In reality the NF's fire is directed against black people. Since August 1979, when they were admitted to the Sunday Football League, they have increasingly been able to pose as a credible organisation. Since then there has been a phenomenal increase in the growth of racist graffiti — but not just graffiti.

Violent

Three weeks ago violent attacks on black people began again. The Nazis had clearly decided to prepare their members for the 12 April demonstration.

The Asian community is concentrated largely in the Glodwick and Westwood areas of Oldham. On two consecutive nights a thirty-strong platoon of British Movement hoodlums and NF thugs attacked Bengalis in Westwood with iron bars and bricks. Two Bengalis were taken to hospital and many others seriously injured as the Nazi gang smashed windows and doors.

One of the victims was Mobaswir Khan, President of the Oldham Bangladesh Association. On Wednesday of last week his door was smashed in. Next day he opened his door to find a gang of fifteen youths. He told *Socialist Challenge*:

'Within seconds they attacked me. They were hitting me with sticks and I received five blows. Then they smashed a long iron bar through my window.'

Typical

The reaction of the police was typical. They stated that Bengali claims 'are exaggerated' and Mr Khan said that 'they're not taking it seriously'. The Bangladesh Association has had a different response. A militant meeting of 250 Bengalis agreed on a plan of self-defence against these attacks.

In the Glodwick area, petrol bombs have been thrown into Pakistani houses and the Aslam family's house was set on fire. Fortunately the fire started upstairs and the family were asleep downstairs and were able to leave the house. Mohammed Aslam told us:

'This is the fifth attack in recent

months. My windows have been broken, NF slogans have been painted on my front door and my front gate was burnt two weeks ago. My 84-year-old mother has been chased by racist youths.'

Alongside attacks from the Nazis, the Tory government has stepped up its implementation of racist laws. Munir Ahmed is currently being held in Risley. He entered the country legally three years ago. Immigration authorities now claim he did not tell them he was married — but they did not ask him.

When he made an application for his wife to join him, he was asked by immigration authorities to attend an interview at Manchester Airport. They promptly arrested him and are threatening to deport him for deception!

A mass rally against immigration laws, for self-defence against racist attacks, and against the Nazis, has been called by the Oldham Campaign Against Racist Laws on the same day as the fascist march. Hundreds of Asian workers are preparing to mobilise for this meeting.

Two marches are being prepared

ANTI-NF RALLY

Saturday 12 April

11am, car park
behind the library,
Union Street, Oldham

by Asian organisations from different parts of the town to converge at the town centre. There is immense enthusiasm for the rally and demonstrations from many sections of the labour movement — but not MPs Lamond and Meacher.

The latter, a leading figure in the Labour Coordinating Committee, told OCARL: *'The NF have the right to march if they so wish, it's not up to me to comment on that. Although the police should ban it on the day if it becomes a racist march.'* He went on to explain that events such as Southall would not have happened if anti-fascists had stayed at home. So much for Michael Meacher.

With or without Oldham's 'left' MPs, black and white workers and anti-fascists will be on the streets to stop the NF marching. Join us.



Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

SUBSCRIBE NOW

Britain: 12 months £12.50; 6 months £ 6.50

Abroad: 12 months — Surface Mail £12.50

— Airmail £18.00

Multi-reader institutions: Double the above rate

Name _____

Address _____

I enclose a donation for the Fighting Fund of _____

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

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