

Socialist Challenge

BUILD A SOCIALIST OPPOSITION FOR A UNIFIED REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION

12p

23 JUNE 1977 no.3

GRUNWICK: FIGHT THEIR FLOOD OF LIES

' Here is the 6 o'clock news read today by John Gouriet of the National Association for Freedom.

' Outside Grunwicks groups of Asian hooligans, left-wing gangsters and trade-unionist riff-raff once again attacked peaceful policemen trying to do their duty...

' In Soweto disciplined teams of white volunteers helped freedom-loving policemen to maintain law and order. Only two blacks were killed and a couple of hundred wounded.

' In Rhodesia the democratically elected Smith government repelled a black invasion force from Marxist Mozambique by crossing the border and burning several border villages...

' The 9 o'clock news will be read by Mr. George Ward, the proprietor of Grunwicks.'



Rees is a liar !

Merlyn Rees told the House of Commons last Monday: 'Some people are using the picket as an excuse for violence against the police... The police are maintaining the right of picketers as well as the right of those being picketed.'

We say that the Labour Home Secretary is a liar! The press, TV and courts have encouraged a campaign of hate against the Grunwick strikers. And now Rees adds his voice. Without police interference the strike could have been won. With increasing trade union support it will be won. That is our reply to Mr. Rees.

On pages 8 & 9 we nail Rees's lies. We explain how the police really behave. We show how the Grunwick strike can be won.

...and at Ford

AS with Grunwick the press have totally misrepresented the Fords dispute, which has led to the occupation of the plant at Dagenham.

The principle at stake is that workers should be paid for being laid off through disputes which they are not involved in. This is a long-standing claim of

Ford workers, supported officially by the unions.

But the unions have not supported the current round of strikes and occupations. Sensing weakness Ford management have extended the dispute by locking out Ford workers at other plants.

The attempts of Fords to

punish one set of Ford workers for the strike action of others is just one more variant of the old 'divide and rule' tactic.

At Fords itself this tactic can be countered by more occupations and strikes being run by a democratically-elected committee, unanswerable to mass meetings.

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Editorial

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Callaghan the last days

THE STORM CLOUDS are clearly in sight. The Tories are baying for a General Election. The Liberals are threatening to withdraw their parliamentary support.

A significant section of the Labour Party is refusing to support direct elections to a European parliament. The likelihood of the union leaderships being able to keep the rank-and-file under control for a third phase of wage control seems remote.

In these circumstances there are clear signs which indicate that the ruling class feels that the Labour Government has outlived its usefulness. The Times was quite frank on this question in its editorial on 15 June:

'The chances of a worthwhile Phase Three seem more remote now, and the public expectation that the present Government will be able to continue to moderate wage inflation by their own efforts is much less. By the autumn that reason for maintaining the Government will in all probability have gone as well.'

Whether the elections are held next autumn or winter or whether Callaghan can soldier on till spring '78 is not the decisive issue for socialists. What is obvious is that because of its present policies Labour is heading for a severe defeat. The consequences of this could be far reaching and totally different from previous situations at the end of Labour governments.

The social and economic crisis has affected all the traditional institutions of the ruling class as well as the working class. The fact that in Scotland the threat to Labour comes not from its traditional class enemy — the Tories — but from the Scottish National Party is an indication of the changes taking place. A savage defeat for Labour will bring into office a reactionary Tory Party hell-bent on taking the Labour Government's policies to their logical conclusion.

The main responsibility for this rests on the shoulders of the trade union and left Labour leaders, who have failed to organise any effective fight-back. Foot, Benn, Jones and Scanlon — the Tribune Gang of Four — have defended the Social Contract and argued for workers to back the central policies of the Government.

They will pay the price at the polls. Attempts to pin the blame exclusively on Callaghan and Co. cannot be accepted as a satisfactory explanation. In reality the total surrender of the Gang of Four to pro-capitalist policies has in large part contributed to the crisis and confusion that exists in the labour movement at the present time.

In the event of a Labour defeat, a return to trade union struggle of the 1972-73 variety by itself will not be enough. A socialist opposition which goes beyond left Labour platitudes will be absolutely vital. That is why Socialist Challenge believes that far-left united action during the General Election will be an important step towards building a socialist opposition in the labour movement as a whole.

A united far-left slate organised around opposition to the Social Contract, opposition to racism, against the oppression of women, for immediate troop withdrawal from Ireland, and other socialist policies would organise forces which would have an impact within the labour movement. It would also make possible a united struggle against the termites of the right — in particular the National Front. Such activity would create the best possible basis for the development of a socialist opposition after the election.

The conference called by Big Flame and the International Marxist Group in October to discuss revolutionary united action in the election is a real, even if small, step forward. It deserves the support of all socialists who favour a united fight-back.

Fight Benyon on 25 June

LABOUR LEADERS must be responsible to those they claim to represent. That was the effect of a decision taken overwhelmingly by Labour Party women at their annual conference in Harrogate last week.

The conference called for a three-line whip on MPs to oppose Benyon's restrictive abortion Bill. It also instructed the national executive committee to educate MPs and the party's membership on the need for free abortion on demand.

With the stepped-up campaign of the anti-abortionists well underway, the fight to implement this resolution at every level of the labour movement must now be waged. The National Abortion Campaign has set aside one day — 25 June — where such nationally co-ordinated action can be launched.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED.

Motorcades through shopping areas, public meetings, lobbies at MP's surgeries, and pickets at hospitals under the threat of closure are only a few of the activities local groups have im-



William Benyon, MP.

planned. But in three London areas, police have stamped on these plans.

South London NAC is one such case. The group planned a motorcade through Brixton, stopping off at three hospitals in the area: the Weir Maternity Hospital, presently under occu-

Action day for abortion rights

patation; the South London Hospital, now under threat of closure, and the St James' Hospital in Balham, which carries out no abortions whatsoever.

Brixton police confirmed these plans on 15 June. Twenty-four hours later the chief inspector rang back. The motorcade was

not on, after all. 'Traffic would be slowed down too much', Sarah Hart was told. Camden and North Camden NAC — both with motorcade plans — heard the same message from their local police.

FUNDS NEEDED.

Whoever is behind this co-ordinated effort to deny the pro-choice movement the right to demonstrate, it has not dampened the determination of the campaign's supporters.

Rose Shapiro, full-timer for NAC, told Socialist Challenge that the response to appeals for funds has been heartening. 'We received a £300 anonymous donation a few weeks ago and Post Office workers sent us another £40 this week', Rose said.

'But with a counter-demonstration called by the London Student Organisation against SPUC's mobilisation on 29 June — as well as our already scheduled activity — we hope the funds keep coming in.'

Donations to: NAC, 30 Camden Road, London NW1.

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

SPEAK OUT

Gay Pride Committee



As homosexual women and men, we are facing increasing hostility.

Bradford police have boasted that they have enough evidence to bring charges against a thousand gay people. A recent police purge of gay men in Cornwall has resulted in a number of prosecutions.

The Royal Ulster Constabulary have seized over a thousand documents, including personal letters and diaries, in a recent wave of anti-gay activity all the more sinister when one considers that under the laws prevailing in Northern Ireland and Scotland, homosexuality remains totally illegal and carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

The law provides no safeguards from this reaction against us. Even the liberalisation of the conspiracy laws does not extend to homosexuals. We are still liable to prosecution for 'conspiracy to corrupt public morals'.

Lesbian mothers find the prejudice of judges an added obstacle in child access and custody cases. 'Administrative charges' which remove the right to trial by jury on importuning charges threaten to limit what little protection we have against such laws.

GAY PRIDE WEEK EVENTS

Friday 24 June
 8-12pm: Disco & Rock Band, Fulham Town Hall; 8-12pm: Icebreakers Disco, Prince Albert; 8-1am: Disco (Bexley, Dartford and Bromley CHE) The Black Prince Ballroom, A2 road, Bexley.

Saturday 25 June
 1pm: GAY PRIDE MARCH and picnic, Temple Place WC2; 8pm-1am: Liberties Disco, The Hanover Grand, Hanover Street W1; 8pm-12: Gay Pride Rock Disco, Hampstead Town Hall, NW3; 8pm-12.30am: Sappho Disco (Women Only) Sole Arms, Hampstead Road, NW1.

Sunday 26 June
 2pm: Picnic on Wimbledon Common (WAGGS) Alexandra Pub, Wimbledon Tube, 2pm: Picnic in Greenwich Park, (Lewisham CHE) meet at General Wolfe's statue.

Monday 27 June
 Clapham Common Camp Supper (Southwark and Lambeth CHE); 8pm: Workshop: Gays and Fascism, University of London, Malet Street WC1.

Tuesday 28 June
 8pm: Workshop: 'Gays and Trades Unions', University of London Union, Malet Street, WC1.

Wednesday 29 June
 12 noon: Lunchtime picnic (Lambeth CHE) Centre of Waterloo round-

about, 8pm-12: ULU Gaysoc Disco, Sole Arms, Hampstead Road, NW1, 8pm, 8pm: Workshop: Gay Teachers Group, University of London Union, Malet Street WC1; 7.30pm: Public Meeting (Women Only) 'Who Holds the Baby?', Women's Centre, 138 Drummond Street, NW1. Creche available.

Thursday 30 June
 8pm-12.15am: Disco (August Trust) Sole Arms, Hampstead Road NW1; Workshop: 'Gay Action and Gay Lifestyles', and 'Homosexuals in the Revolutionary Party', University of London Union, Malet Street WC1.

Friday 1 July
 8pm-12pm: Gay Pride Disco: Bradford Gay Theatre Group Against the Witch-hunt of Lesbians and Homosexual Men. Live Music and Disco, Lambeth Town Hall.

Saturday 2 July
 11am-5pm: Gay Left Conference, NUFTO Hall, Jockey's Field, London WC1; 8pm-12pm: Gay Pride Disco, Prince Albert, Kings Cross, 40p.

All work at the national Arts Centre: Gay Swastikshop.
 Up to date information available from Gay Switchboard. Phone 01-8377324.

GAY PRIDE ALL THE YEAR ROUND

Gay identity has, however, continued to grow, as has a sense of community. Gay switchboards and community centres function throughout the country. A number of 'come-out' homosexuals

have maintained and strengthened their position at work, sometimes with trade union involvement.

The NUJ, NALGO and local branches of some unions such as

Homosexuals Come Out



Assemble 1p.m.
 Temple Place
 Victoria Embankment
 March to Hyde Park
 for Picnic at 3p.m.

ASLEF, CPSA, have adopted clauses against discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation.

Parallel to this union activity are the beginnings of gay rights campaigns in the Communist and Liberal Parties, and groups working within the Labour and Conservative Parties, the International Marxist Group and the Socialist Workers Party.

Recent direct action has made it clear to gays that our rights will not somehow be delivered from on high, but must be fought for. For example, in June 1976, hundreds of people at the Coleridge pub in Earl's Court successfully resisted police attempts to intimidate them.

With all this in mind, the Gay Pride March on 25 June begins a week of meetings and celebrations intended to give our movement renewed strength and impetus for another year of positive growth and action.

Gay Pride Committee
 5 Caledonian Road,
 London N1.

Gay Switchboard
 01-837 7324

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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

I am interested in more information about activities in my area.

I would like additional literature and enclose 50p to cover costs.

[Delete if not applicable]

NAME

ADDRESS

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

OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

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

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

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



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

Fighting for workers power!

by HILARY WAINWRIGHT

'There's no future, no future for you', sing the Sex Pistols, 'no future in England's dreaming'.

It expresses exactly what the apprentices at C.A. Parsons must have been feeling about their own futures when they heard two weeks ago that the Government had put their futures in the hands of Chopper Weinstock. But they do not feel the same despair as the punk rockers. They are fighting back — a fight which has already involved the two biggest demonstrations that Newcastle has seen since the Thirties.

TERRY RODGERS, chairperson of the AUEW-TASS office committee at Parsons and a member of the Socialist Workers Party talked to *Socialist Challenge* on the main features of the struggle. The internal situation in Parsons is simple: a feature of modern capitalist rationalisation is that small bosses lose out. They therefore put up an initial opposition and appear to be at one with the workforce. At Parsons both bosses and workers want Drax B and both oppose Weinstock, even though differences are beginning to appear.

DIVISIONS

As a result the management have given union many facilities. At the same time they have encouraged divisions in the workforce especially between the office and the shop floor, which has weakened workers' organisation in the plant. Rodgers told me:

'At the frequent mass meetings we have always said that we are being granted facilities for lobbying because it is in the interests of the management at the moment, but we have stressed we are moving to a situation where the division of interests will become obvious.

'Any attempt to declare redundancies in August when the 90 days are up will be one of these situations. In Babcocks there was a similar situation, a joint committee with management on it. When it came to a question of sackings they went through very smoothly...'

'We're making approaches to the GEC Combine Committee because we sense there is a lot of confusion in their ranks. Weinstock's stated intention to sack 40 per cent of the workforce in the turbo-generating industry is bound to hit GEC workers. He has said that he would close more than one factory and GEC stewards are already saying he would close Rugby.

'So they're beginning to have second thoughts and we are meeting them formally within the next week. The TASS people at Trafford Park have been in sympathy with the Combine Committee's position and the people at Larne are not happy with it either.'

The 'streamlining' of British industry to compete profitably has hit the North East pretty hard. Unemployment is 2.3 per cent higher than the national average. The multinational invasion has meant a ruthless chopping and a united workers' response is the only way the drift can be reversed. Rodgers explained how workers at Parsons emphasise this:

PAROCHIAL

'We have always taken the view that if we try to fight redundancies on a purely parochial basis then we're fighting from a weak position. We have always projected to the membership within the plant the wider implications for families, the effect on young people and the effect which the closure of Parsons, Reyrolles, and Clarke Chapmans would have on the quality of life



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

TERRY RODGERS, Chairperson of the AUEW/TASS shop stewards committee at Parsons: 'We should be utilising every skilled worker who has a contribution to make on energy to find alternative sources.'

in the area. You've got to fight redundancies on wider issues. Following our successful demos I think we'll get a good response to the meeting of shop stewards and workplace representatives which is called for 30 June and we hope something will develop out of this meeting.'

The struggle against multinational and Government plans for industry increasingly raises the question of alternative plans. Such plans are not blue-prints. Rather they give a practical meaning to the objective of nationalisation under workers control. A group of TASS workers and socialist economists have produced a pamphlet* showing how the problems now facing the power industry could be solved without loss of jobs. Terry Rodgers says they found the pamphlet very useful: 'Our people are discussing it. Everyone recognises a limit to

natural resources — coal, gas, oil, etc. People are saying that we have no alternative but to go to nuclear energy, even though this will be harmful. They say there's no other choice. It may destroy society but... Now this is nonsense. We should be utilising every scientist, every engineer, every skilled worker, who has a contribution to make on energy to find alternative sources. So this pamphlet is very, very good.'

The workers at Parsons face tremendous obstacles, but the basis for overcoming these has been laid. The only solution lies in imposing a workers' answer to the problems of the power industry.

*WORKERS POWER: A Socialist Report on the power plant and energy industries. 40p [in post]. From Red Books, 182 Pentonville Road.



Medvedev censored again

THE COMMUNIST University of London (CUL) claims to be an independent body. No-one denies that it is sympathetic to the Communist Party, but it aims to encourage critical debate. In that spirit the organisers extended an invitation to the well-known Soviet scientist and dissident, Zhores Medvedev to speak at the University.

In many ways Zhores was a good choice. He is both a socialist and a dissident. His brother, Roy, is a distinguished dissident historian whose book *Let History Judge* contains extremely valuable information on the crimes of Stalin. Roy is also a socialist.

However, those attending the CUL this summer will not be able to hear Zhores Medvedev. The Executive Committee of the CP decided unanimously that he should not be allowed to speak, and the CUL rescinded the invitation.

Live Theatre

THE LAST NIGHT of Destiny, the anti-fascist play by Dave Edgar, was packed out. The large audience left the Aldwych theatre with Edgar's exhortation to smash fascism still resounding in their ears. As they left the theatre they were met by a line of National Party newspaper sellers who threw pepper and petrol into people's faces.

Rarely could a play have been vindicated in such a startling fashion. The militants in the audience stayed and chanted at the fascists till they were compelled to leave. The regular theatregoers, however, found the whole affair 'somewhat distasteful' and left hurriedly, equating anti-fascists with the fascists.

In addition, the kindly theatre manager refused to allow one of those attacked by the fascists back into the theatre to wash the pepper out of his eyes. Do these people even see the plays that are being performed?

The Backs to the Wall Game

A COPY of a circular letter sent to the old boys of Malvern College, the Worcestershire public school, has come into our hands. Headmaster Martin Rogers tells the Old Malvernians: 'Despite the very difficult economic situation the school today is in an extremely strong position.'

That's more than can be said for schools in Govan or Battersea — but then Malvern is something special. 'After the turmoil of the late sixties and early seventies,' Rogers continues, 'it is encouraging to see a return to common sense and reasonable values among young people. I believe that schools like Malvern have a very important role in society today.'

'They can show that the traditional values of sensible discipline in a friendly community, hard work and a balanced education, can produce excellent results. In due course this example will influence all schools and perhaps help to rescue the country's educational system from the sorry state in which it now finds itself.'

'Some of the qualities for which our schools were so well known in the past, for the development of the individual's character and for the ability to accept responsibility (and, dare one say it, to lead) are surely desperately needed today.'

Mr Rogers no doubt hopes that some forthcoming battle of Moss-side is now being won on the playing fields of Malvern. But it seems that there is a fly in the ointment: 'Independent schools are under attack and if we are to overcome the problems and difficulties of the next decade we will need your support. I do not mean

your financial support (perish the thought) ... but your moral support.

'With this support I believe that Malvern and other schools of similar quality and calibre can continue to make an important contribution to the welfare of the whole country.' Now there's class consciousness for you.

Racist of the Day

DEREK McALLISTER is employed as editor of the day on BBC-TV news. He is a typical employee of the corporation. He is a solid, upright citizen who determines what you see on your TV screen when it's news time. When asked if he was sending a reporter to cover the launching of the new Commission on Racial Equality, McAllister replied: 'No, it's just another coon-show getting on the road.'

Enter Walden stage right

PETER JAY's job as the anchor-person on *Weekend World* has gone to Brian Walden, the Labour MP from Ladywood, Birmingham. Walden's final departure from active Labour politics indicates that he has given up all hopes of achieving success in that sphere.

There is little doubt that Walden is an extremely intelligent right-wing politician. His failure to climb the political ladder is due to Wilson's unrelenting vendetta against him for some patronising remarks that Walden made about the Leader on TV after the 1964 Labour victory. The jobs Walden was offered were always junior posts and calculated to insult.

He became a bookie's consultant some years ago and was paid a fairly hefty salary. He will now be on the breadline on an estimated £45,000. At school Walden was known as 'Cobra' because of his 'snake in the grass attitudes'. Lefties of all sorts should beware before they step into the *Weekend World* studios. Jay at least read what Marxists wrote before giving his views. Walden is likely to dispense with such niceties.

Crazy Censors

THE FILM censors have imposed an X-certificate on a government-backed sex education commercial, preventing it being shown in cinemas to anyone under 18.

The declared aim of the film is to cut down the 200,000 unwanted pregnancies a year. As a fair proportion of these involve school students, the film censors are obviously attempting to sabotage the project.

Hatchet time

IN THE MAY district council elections the Labour Party in Glasgow lost 24 seats and with them control of the city.

Needless to say, a great furore has erupted in Labour circles. So much so that former council leaders Pat Lally and Dick Dynes have been taken off the local panel of candidates.

One of the main causes of Labour's defeat was its disastrous record on local housing. Shortly before the election, Labour councillor Catherine Cantley was caught out helping her son to queue-jump the council waiting list.

Lally and Dynes had meanwhile been engaged in a public row over the proposed selling off of council houses. They became linked in the public mind with the kind of sordid dealings in which Ms Cantley's was only the latest example.

However the news that the hatchet is out for Lally and Dynes shouldn't give cause for hope that Glasgow Labour Party is about to turn left. The objection to them by party bosses is simply that they choose to wash their dirty linen in public.

Islington 18 confront editor over racist report

AT AN ANGRY meeting last week, an editor who ran a racist report of the Islington 18 trial was confronted by protestors, including parents of three defendants and his own journalists.

On 27 May, Tony Alcock, editor of the *Islington Gazette*, ran a long verbatim report of the prosecution's allegations against the Islington 18 who are threatened with utterly vague conspiracy to rob charges.

Just for good measure the article was headed 'Carnival Kids Trail of Terror' and referred to 'the pattern for "mass muggings" and thefts' at last summer's Notting Hill Carnival.

For many local blacks, long disgusted with the paper's handling of race issues, the story was the last straw. The Islington 18 Defence Committee — including parents and teachers of the black youths on trial — immediately contacted the *Gazette* chapel of the National Union of Journal-

ists. And it was after discussions with the journalists and with their full backing that the defence committee mounted a 30-strong picket outside the newspaper offices on 14 June and demanded to see the editor.

NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Phil Marfleet of the defence committee accused Alcock of ignoring months of local action around the Islington 18 case and then suddenly splashing the court allegations across the front page. 'It's not only a vitally important local issue — it's of national significance as well', he stressed. He and other picketers then spelled out the main facts of the

by
KATHY
LOWE

case in which 18 youths aged between 14 and 19 were arrested — over two months after the carnival!

'I don't disbelieve you', Alcock replied, after the three mothers described the constant police harassment and brutality suffered by blacks in Islington. 'But we can't print comments on the case itself while it is still going on'.

The paper, he insisted, was not racist. 'We are neutral. All we did was to report what went on in court.' Asked why he had not covered a large public meeting on the Islington 18 in March and a 400-strong demonstration through the area the following month, he answered lamely: 'You mustn't have sent me an invitation'.



Picket of Islington Gazette office in North London condemns racist reports.

Photo: ANDREW WILKINSON (Report)

When Clive Steele, father of the chapel, told his editor that the journalists wanted to cover more stories on the discrimination and problems suffered by blacks, Alcock agreed to consider any articles sent in by the defence committee.

And would he also, asked Clive Steele, demonstrate the paper's good intentions by running a report on the picket? 'What! Print accusations that the paper is racist?' exclaimed the neutral Mr. Alcock. 'We can't to that!'

Kathy Lowe is a reporter on the *Hornsey Journal*, a member of the NUJ's North London branch, which has taken excellent initiatives on race coverage, and a member of the Campaign Against Racism in the Media.

March for Lewisham 24

TWO HUNDRED people meeting in Goldsmiths College last week took up the call for a march in South London on 2 July in defence of the Lewisham 24. The case of the 24 young black people — whose homes were raided by police at dawn on 30 May and who were then beaten and arrested — has rapidly become the focus of a determined fightback against police harassment in South London.

The arrests have all the hallmarks of a stepped up campaign of police intimidation. It follows in the wake of the charges against the Islington 18. Distorted reports and bogus 'statistics' throughout

the press on 'mugging and black crime' have laid the groundwork for the use of 'sus' laws and now conspiracy charges.

The defence of these youths is the best way to tackle the physical danger black people confront daily on the streets from both racists and police. Every working class organisation must be pressed to take up the demand of the Defence Committee for the immediate release of the Lewisham 24 and for an end to vicious police harassment.

March to defend the Lewisham 24: 2pm, 2 July, Clifton Rise, New Cross, London SE14.

Workers' enquiry into 23 April demonstration

by MICK GOSLING

THE ENQUIRY initiated by Haringey Trades Council into the National Front march and police action on 23 April got underway this month when representatives from Barnet, Enfield and Edmonton, Hackney, Haringey, Isling-

ton, and Waltham Forest trades councils attended a planning meeting.

The inquiry will be examining why and how the Front was allowed to go ahead with their provocative march; who was responsible for attempting to ban the anti-racist rally on Duckett's Common; why the police employed 'snatch-squad' tactics, and the many incidents of fascist violence.

The aim of the inquiry is to draw out the political implications for trade unionists of the events of 23 April. Witnesses who can contribute on any of the above aspects are asked to send initial statements to Harry Lister, Haringey Trades

Council, c/o Tottenham Trades Hall, 8 Bruce Grove, London N17. Socialist Challenge appeals to any readers who witnessed the events of the day to write in promptly.

At the trades council planning meeting, delegates made the point that many of the police on duty on 23 April were among those responsible for the attack on the Right to Work march in Hendon in March of last year, for harassing the Grunwick picket, and a number of frame-ups of black youth.

In general it was felt that trade unionists should be playing a much bigger role in the fight against racism and fascism, including inside their own unions,

and Hackney Trades Council agreed to organise joint transport to the TUC rally against racism in Manchester on Saturday 9 July.



A Lewisham 18 Defence Committee supporter hangs grimly on to the railings as he is attacked by National Front thugs who broke up a street meeting in Lewisham last Sunday. The vermin had demanded that a black comrade stop speaking, and then set about the meeting with fists flailing.

TUC takes a noble stand

by IVOREVANS

NO-ONE CAN say the TUC does not claim to fight against racism. What it does in practice is another story. The TUC has called a national demonstration in Manchester on 9 July on the theme United Against Racism. The trouble is it isn't uniting many people — practically no one has even heard of the demo!

The event is hardly likely to strike fear into the hearts of the National Front, let alone force the Labour Government to change any of its racist policies; for example, by implementing last year's Labour Party conference decisions on racism.

With their left hand the TUC bureaucrats call an ineffectual, badly-built and watery protest against racist ideas. With their right hand they demand restrictions on work permits for overseas workers in the hotel and catering industry.

Anti-racists on the demonstration should lobby trade unionists to campaign against the increasing immigration restrictions, the deportation of immigrants, and the Labour Government's nationality proposals.

The demonstration assembles at 1pm in Ducie Street Car Park, near Strangeways Prison, and will march through Manchester to Whitworth Park for a rally at 3.30pm.

Zionists lose support

YORK STUDENTS' Union withdrew its recognition and funds from the campus Jewish Society on 15 June. This decision followed an earlier resolution from the society in which it declared itself to be Zionist.

In explaining the Union's decision to stop funding the Jewish Society, Union President Richard Burden characterised Zion-

ism as a form of racialism.

Burden made it clear that Union policy was not anti-Jewish, but was in opposition to groups whose aim is to support Israel, 'and thus contribute to the further subjugation of the Palestinian people'.

Next week's *Surplus Value: Fred Halliday on whether Zionists should be allowed free speech.*

THE LOCAL PRESS RACISM, AND THE FRONT

A working conference sponsored by the Campaign Against Racism in the Media

Speakers: David Edgar (author of *Destiny*), Colin Prescott (Race and Class), Peter Hounam, (Vice-chairperson, NUJ North London Branch).

Saturday 9 July 10am-6pm
Central London Poly, Marylebone Road, London NW1
Further details: CARM, 13 Cleve Road, London NW6

Fascists barred from Leicester meeting

'IF THEY are black, send 'em back. If they are red, shoot 'em dead'. This was the message chanted by fascists outside a Socialist Workers Party meeting in Leicester last week. The trouble began once the few National Front members — who had sneaked into the hall early — were escorted out.

Their cohorts outside demanded to be let in, as a body, to the meeting, and militants from all political tendencies on the left formed a barrier across the entrance. Police arrived, and after further confusion the meet-

ing began — behind locked doors.

But all was not quiet. Halfway through the evening, the police asked to bring in a woman who claimed she had been assaulted. This was refused. It was considered that no one should be able to enter with the sole purpose of picking out at random a member of the audience.

As militants left the meeting in groups for protection, it was clear that the 'respectable' image cultivated by the fascists during the recent county elections had all but disappeared.

Racist of the week

THIS WEEK'S racist comes from the town of Leicester. A former chairperson of the Young Conservatives, he is now a solicitor and does not find too much of a contradiction between his legal practice and his position as organiser of the Leicester National Front.

His name is Anthony Reed-Herbert. He was brought on to the NF Directorate by fascist leaders Tyndall and Webster, whom he then stabbed in the back by voting for their expulsion — something which they have not forgotten.

He could well be purged in the coming weeks as a scapegoat for the NF's poor performance in the local elections. Reed-Herbert's activities are well-publicised by the *Leicester Mercury* (CARM please note), the local right-wing rag.

DETERMINATION

Commenting on Martin Walker's book on the NF, Reed-Herbert told the *Mercury*: 'For what he (Walker) fails to see is that the destruction of the white nations of the world means the end of human civilisation. What is happening on the African continent should be proof enough of that.' (1 June, 1977)

And on repatriation: 'As far as the degree of compulsion is concerned this will obviously depend on the response of the immigrants... If we are talking about a breach of the law we will either have a government prepared to meet violence for the good of the British people or we won't.' (29 April, 1977)

Reed Herbert is the most dangerous of fascists. He wears lounge-suits, sips sherry, and has a 'respectable' front behind which lurk the strong-arm thugs who break up anti-fascist meetings and attack black people.

He aims to avoid being ditched by Webster and Tyndall by scoring a few successes, such as winning local Tories sympathetic to fascism over to the NF and becoming a councillor himself. Local anti-fascists are watching all developments on this front.

Socialist Students

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Union conferences NALGO: Left needs a total rethink

The Scarborough Conference of the National and Local Government Officers Association ended last week leaving members of the largest white-collar union exposed to a further year of job cuts and assaults on living standards.

The left is not organised to meet the future crisis. Its failure to win more than third-rate victories, the separatism displayed by different tendencies at the Conference and the collapse of militants before the Broad Left's manoeuvre to divert the opposition to the Social Contract's Third Phase into radical but polite welfare Keynesianism, means that NALGO risks a period of demoralisation unless there is a drastic reappraisal on the left.

On Tuesday the General Secretary, Geoffrey Drain, visited London for a meeting of the TUC Economic Committee. The next day the National Executive Council put up their second line speakers against the opposition from the floor to win itself a free hand by 138,789 to 448,258 votes for Phase Three.

The leadership has declared itself bound by policies which criticise the state of the economy, seek to get government promises to protect the low paid, resolve anomalies by pay code flexibility, strengthen price controls,

reduce unemployment, restore public spending cuts and stimulate the economy directly. This programme was proposed by the NEC a year ago, with an entirely unsurprising lack of success.

On Friday the Secretary of State for the Environment, Peter Shore, repeated the Government's economic policy to the conference, and made it clear that the cuts would continue — with both limits on public sector spending and a continuing reduction in local government jobs.

Against the NEC and Shore, the left seemed to present no arguments of substance. This was in sharp contrast to last year's Conference when the delegates at least preferred to hear the anti-Social Contract speeches, although eventually mandated TUC delegates voted for Phase Two.

This is not surprising. Industrial action against the cuts has been set severely back, with an overwhelming decision to call off the national overtime ban. The membership had disobeyed the



By JOHN WHITFIELD [Delegate from Essex County Branch and member of NALGO's Eastern District Council, in a personal capacity].

decision of the January Special Conference to impose the ban in droves.

Sabotaged by the national leadership and by branch officers who incited their branches to

disobedience, the ban was ended with a handful of votes against.

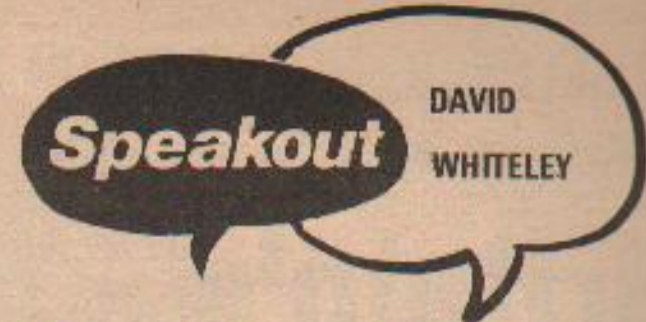
As the Financial Times said last week, the action against the cuts has been unsuccessful because the same battle has been fought in branch after branch separately, against the employers individually rather than against the Government by the whole union.

The NEC now has a free hand to accept the continued rundown of the public service. Individual branches do have the authority to fight individually, but after the fiasco of the overtime ban, militants are isolated.

The NALGO Action Group, once the focus of the left in NALGO, appears now an SWP rump following the decision of the CP to split earlier this year. NAG was noticeably less well organised and represented this year than in previous years.

Without a clear debate on the future of NALGO and the left's strategy for the next year or so, the left will continue to fragment and drift. Only the members will suffer from this — victims of this self-indulgence.

Work put into transforming the base of NALGO will be wasted if the collapse at Scarborough is not recognised.



Tasks of teachers' Open Conference

DAVE WHITELEY, General Secretary of the Wandsworth Teachers Association and a delegate to the national conference of the teachers' union, explains why so many militants who attended it feel even more determined to mount a real fight against the cuts and the Social Contract.

The call for a teachers' Open Conference received the support of many delegates at the NUT Annual Conference. They were horrified at the stage management conducted by the Executive.

They blocked every attempt by the membership to mount a real fight against the cuts and the Social Contract. Perhaps we can gain some confidence from the fact that it is because of the groundswell of opposition in the union that the Executive have to behave like the Mafia.

The motion which was given top priority at the NUT conference called for a national campaign of action against the cuts. That is the basis for the Open Conference.

But to strengthen a call for anti-cuts action there are other areas that need to be tackled; in particular the fight to bind the Executive on class size policy and the rules which prevent local NUT Associations from taking strike action. A Birmingham amendment at the National Conference called for action to impose a maximum class size of 30 students. This was only narrowly defeated. Another amendment opposing further restrictive rules on local Associations received 94,000 votes.

CAMPAIGN

The inclusion of these policies, as well as salaries, into the basis of the Open Conference means that we can tackle the crucial issues that were side-stepped by the NUT leadership.

Another important thing that can come out of the Open Conference will be a well-coordinated national campaign which can take pains to build at a grass roots level and not fall into

the trap of taking short cuts or overestimating its progress at any one given time.

The campaign will naturally involve participation in the NUT leadership elections which come up this year. It is no use attacking present incumbents if we do not take our opposition to them seriously. We will look a laughing stock if left candidates stand against each other as happened in London during the last elections.

PLATFORM

It will be vitally important to attract members from such areas as Oxford, Surrey, Stockport, Tameside and Oldham to the conference. These are the so-called 'bad' areas where the NUT leadership is making some sort of militant posture. What we have to do is build up communications between these areas and the rest of the country. We must ensure that these militants are given a public platform from which they can help in the launching of a national campaign.

Finally, there is the William Tyndale affair. In some respects the ideological battle is just beginning. What has passed for progressive education in many areas has been nothing of the kind. It has been nothing more than trendy gimmickry which has enabled many careerists to 'better' themselves at the expense of other teachers, children and the real areas of progressive education.

The Open Conference can be used to launch a national counter attack against the Black Paperites and to give further exposure to the 'dirty tricks' campaign against the Tyndale teachers. All this makes a pretty tall order — but when one considers the Union's neglect — it is not so surprising.

COHSE: Left starts to organise

ALBERT SPANSWICK will travel back to his office in Banstead with a sense of relief after his week's work at the Confederation of Health Service Employees conference. COLIN SMITH reports

On the two major issues facing the union, a third phase of the Social Contract and the cuts in the health service, general secretary Spanswick managed to manoeuvre the majority of the delegates into accepting the executive's policies.

But the conference was not without its scares and defeats for the COHSE leadership. The executive's emergency motion in favour of another round of the Social Contract, submitted at the last minute, was too much even for the silent majority of the COHSE delegates to swallow.

However, the executive had another string to its bow in the form of a bureaucratic composite of all the motions that supported another dose of pay restraint. This called for 'the orderly return

to free collective bargaining', together with a shopping list of half-measures.

Although the majority of delegates who spoke were against this proposal, Spanswick was able to play on delegates' fears of losing out in what he called 'the jungle of free collective bargaining'.

A similar scenario was played out on cuts in health spending. The platform successfully supported a composite which called for opposition to the cuts by seeking to reduce unemployment among qualified nursing staff at the expense of non-qualified workers such as nursing auxiliaries.

It also advocated 'natural wastage', and accepted cuts if there were some increase in spending on community services,



General Secretary Albert Spanswick: infuriated over calling of left opposition meeting.

which is exactly what the Department of Health says!

However, the bureaucracy was defeated on two important motions which indicate a growing willingness of the rank and file to

begin a fight back against the isolationism of the COHSE leaders and their pitiful bowing and scraping. A call for full support to be given to joint shop stewards committees was overwhelmingly passed, in spite of Spanswick's sectarian ravings against the other health service unions.

Delegates also voted to support the demands of the Working Women's Charter and affiliate to the Charter Campaign, while rejecting an anti-Benyon Bill motion.

What particularly upset the bureaucracy throughout the week in Blackpool was the first signs of an organised opposition to their sell-outs and manoeuvres. Over 20 delegates from branches opposed to the Social Contract and in favour of real action against the cuts attended a fringe meeting, refusing to be intimidated by Brother Spanswick's angry denunciation of the meeting. They now plan to co-ordinate the opposition.

Union flash points

AUEW Broad Left

STEPS are underway to produce a 'new' Broad Left newspaper called *Engineering Gazette*. In a circular to all Broad Left groups, Ken Brett, one of the current assistant general secretaries of the AUEW Engineering Section, urges local groups to organise meetings to discuss this project and the forthcoming election for the Presidency of the AUEW.

Strike too late

'All out for ten days'. That was the overwhelming verdict of Oxfordshire teachers when they voted to step up their fight against education cuts. A hundred and fifty teachers face the sack when the council cuts 334 jobs in September.

For them this action is too little and too late. It comes right at the end of the school year, and reinforces the refusal of teachers

to supervise dinners or cover for over-sized classes.

Union leaders are dragging their heels all the way. They decided to back the strike after 12 hours behind locked doors, trying to reach a compromise with the council.

NUPE officials have gone further. They have refused to support the action, charging teachers with using pupils for their own ends.

Parson's pleasure

A NEW ATTACK on union democracy — in the name of 'democracy' of course — has been launched by Reg Parsons, right-wing convener of the Cowley assembly plant, and David Buckle, Oxford District Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union.

Their target is the 5/293 assembly plant branch, the main source of opposition to their

class collaborationist policies in Leyland's Cowley complex and in the Oxford area. They want to split the branch in two and set up a new assembly plant branch. Full report next week.

Lavender Hill

LAVENDER HILL girls' school has been given a year's grace before the threat of closure looms large once again, reports Betty Hunter, the school's NUT representative.

Margaret Morgan, Labour Chairperson of the Development Sub-Committee of the Inner London Education Authority, gave this news to the press two weeks before the Sub-Committee convened its meeting scheduled to discuss the future of the school.

The explanation of this rushed announcement isn't hard to find. Margaret Morgan was undoubtedly worried about the

determination of the Lavender Hill teachers and parents to put the case at a lobby of ILEA offices on Monday.

Bury Cuts

THE VICIOUS CUTS policy of the Bury Tory Council — and the willingness of the leadership of the local government workers' unions to accommodate to Tory plans — was dealt a sound blow by NALGO's special general meeting on 10 June. A behind-the-door deal by union officers — involving the shelving of £4,000 planned cuts but the acceptance of a full £200,000 — was firmly rejected by 300 votes to 7. This decision reflected the initial steps taken by the left in Bury's NALGO. A further meeting of the left is scheduled to discuss how to continue a united left fightback against the cuts and the betrayals of the leadership.

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Irish elections give breathing space for Irish militants as Britain's collaborators get the boot

By TOM MARLOWE

CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN, former Labour minister for Post and Telegraphs in the Fine Gael/Labour Party Coalition Government, began his election campaign in the Irish election with an interview on BBC Radio's World at One. He followed that up with a long interview in the Times.

That is O'Brien's style. During his political career there is nothing he has loved more than to run to anyone who will listen to him in the British ruling class and drone on at great length about how he despises and fears Irish republicanism.

He made the same point over and over again in the run-up to the latest election. His main target was Charlie Haughey, Fianna Fail front bench spokesperson who was involved in the Provisionals gun-running scandal.

O'Brien didn't mince his words: 'Many people believe that before very long Mr. Lynch will retire from the leadership of Fianna Fail and that Mr. Haughey will succeed him. Are the people of this country prepared to entrust their security into the hands of a Government which might turn out to be led by a person with the record of Charles Haughey?'

RESOUNDING

The Irish electorate answered that question last week with a loud resounding 'Yes' at the polls last week.

Despite all the predictions, despite the Coalition's attempt to gerrymander the constituencies, Fianna Fail was returned with a record 84 seats, against a joint 60 seats for the coalition parties.

As for O'Brien, whose support for British imperialism was supposed to be a vote-getter, he failed to win re-election. His vote

dropped by over 3,000 to 3,588; while Haughey received over 11,000 votes, topping the poll in a smaller constituency.

SIGNIFICANT

There were a number of other significant results. Noel Browne, who was rejected as an official Labour candidate, stood as an independent on a left social democratic platform and got elected.

Neil Blaney, an independent Fianna Fail, with traditional republican views on the national question, was easily elected in Donegal, with over 10,000 first preferences.

Two other independents, one similar to Blaney and the other similar to Browne, were also elected.

Jo Harrington, rank and file paper *Bottom Dog* candidate, and member of the Movement for a Socialist Republic (Irish Section of the Fourth International) received 122 votes in a constituency crammed with independent candidates.

More significantly the *Bottom Dog* campaign attracted the support of most sections of the revolutionary left in Ireland. That type of unity is in itself a big step forward.

As to the wider implications of the election results, they do at least promise some breathing space for Irish working class militants and republicans.

The O'Brien result, the Haughey result, and the complete

rejection of the strong 'law and order' line of Fine Gael and the Labour Party, nail the lie that the population of the 26-counties would run a mile from any Southern involvement in the national question.

If Fianna Fail's leader Jack Lynch fulfills his promise to repeal the Emergency Powers Act, which contravenes the European Declaration of Human Rights and which was brought in after the assassination of British ambassador Ewart-Biggs, then at least some of the more blatant acts of repression should cease.

Lynch has also promised to 're-examine' the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act, by which Northern political prisoners can be tried in the South.

The other main plank of Fianna Fail's Northern policy — demanding that Britain 'names a date' for withdrawal — is the least likely aspect of its programme to be taken up. Lynch himself has a long record of repression of republicans, although the overwhelming rejection of the Coalition's 'law and order' may at least make Fianna Fail think twice before following the same road.

PROMISE

Lynch also faces the problem of delivering all the other ballot box promises: cutting unemployment, reducing the size of school classes, and giving a £1,000 grant to first-time house-buyers.

These, like election promises everywhere, will probably be forgotten by Fianna Fail now they are in office. But the ignominious defeat of O'Brien and the rest of the Coalition's British collaborators should linger for a long time in the memories of Irish militants.



Defeated Prime Minister Liam Cosgrave — the gun was cocked, but never went off.

Troops out Conf. called Army arrests strikers in Belfast

THE CONNECTION between the class struggle in this country and Britain's war in Ireland was graphically illustrated last week. As London police assaulted pickets outside Grunwicks, peaceful pickets in Belfast were arrested by British soldiers.

The pickets in question were strikers from Eastwoods scrap

'questioning'. Belfast Sinn Fein commenting on the arrests said: 'It is now clear that British repressive laws are being used not just against Republican activists but against all political activists.'

These arrests give one more reason why socialists should attend the Troops Out Open Conference to be held in London on 2 and 3 July.

The conference aims at rebuilding the movement in this country for self-determination for the Irish people and the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland.

It is being supported by 11 branches of the Troops Out Movement as well as numerous political organisations, including Sinn Fein (Home Counties), the International Marxist Group, and Big Flame.

The agenda for the conference features a speaker from the Irish Front on the current situation in the North, as well as discussion on future activities.

All *Socialist Challenge* readers are urged to make every effort to attend.

Troops Out Conference: 2 and 3 July, 10.30am-6pm, White House Hotel, Church Road, London NW 10. A social is being held in the evening. Contact Box 10, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

metal plant in the Catholic Andersonstown area of Belfast.

They have been on strike since 2 June, when management refused to recognise their union.

They were arrested by soldiers of the Royal Military Police while standing peacefully on picket duty on 18 June and later released after

Women & the Unions



GMWU backtracks

THE GENERAL and Municipal Workers' Union was one of the first unions to appoint a national women's officer. But at its recent annual conference it decided to abolish the union's special department for women.

The GMWU national executive is now considering putting a resolution to the Labour Party Conference calling for the abolition of the special five seats reserved for women on the party's national executive.

Featuring women

THE ENGINEERING Union has decided to devote one out of every six copies of its monthly journal to problems facing women workers. The June issue of the *AUEW Journal* is written solely by women.

Features in the issue include a

report on the TUC Women's Conference by Betty Crawford, Equal opportunities, Equal pay, Women in industry, Legislation, Unemployment among women, and *Spare Rib*. The *AUEW Journal* can be ordered from: AUEW, 110 Peckham Road, London SE15 5EL.

Barbaric wages

THE LOW PAY Unit's recent report shows part-time women's wages reach as low as 40-54p an hour in non-unionised jobs. Unionised workers get 'as much as' £1.11 on average. The report focusses on the plight of women office and factory cleaners.

It shows how contractors who claim to pay £1 an hour — when they send their bills to clients — are more likely to pocket up to 40p for themselves and hand over only 60p to the cleaners.

Working Womens Charter Programme set for renewed campaign

by ANNE CESEK

ETHEL CHIPCHASE thinks campaigns like the Working Women's Charter will go away if more women would only join the unions. At least that's what she told Labour women when she spoke at their conference last weekend.

Ms. Chipchase, secretary of the TUC women's advisory committee, said the rationale of campaigns for women's rights was that so many women remain unorganised. But her arguments don't match up to her facts.

One million women joined trade unions between 1970 and 1975, according to her figures. And this is the same period in which a plethora of campaigns sprang up. The fact of the matter is that these campaigns will continue to be vital even if women joined unions at double their present rate!

The Working Women's Charter Campaign is one of the campaigns which Ethel Chipchase believes is 'outside the

labour movement'. If by that she means that it is not tied to the coat-tails of the union bureaucracy, then she is spot on!

The Charter Campaign showed at its second national conference in London last month that it is unwilling to reduce the struggle to one of 'changing social attitudes', as many union leaders would have it.

A number of important questions which have dogged the campaign over the past year were resolved at the conference. A national conference against the Government's attacks on women is scheduled for the new year. A stepped-up campaign to meet the attacks on women's right to abortion is also on the cards.

Finally, it was agreed to launch a campaign to establish the Charter's newspaper, with the aim of producing an eight-page issue on a monthly basis.

One of the most hotly contested debates at the conference was the decision to refrain from amending the Charter. The majority of delegates felt that keeping the Charter as it is — as a tool to stimulate action rather than a perfect programme — would lay the best basis for unity with sections of the labour movement around women's struggles.

DETERMINATION

Certain problems remain, but with a clear perspective for action and a determination to discuss the orientation of the campaign, especially amongst socialist feminists, these can be overcome.

A stronger national campaign can take on a more active role in relation to women in struggle. The response to the appeal by the Charter conference for a mass picket at Grunwicks on 13 June shows that there is every reason to be optimistic about the implementation of conference decisions.

Socialist Challenge EVENTS

NORTH WEST

For details of activities in the NW write or ring the Manchester Socialist Challenge Centre, Third Floor, 14 Piccadilly, Manchester 1. 061-236 2352.

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

BURY. Supporters meeting, Thursday 23 June, 8pm. The Royal Hotel, Silver Street, Bury.

LIVERPOOL. Supporters meeting, 'Social — after the elections', Thursday 23 June, 8pm. Stanley House, Upper Parliamentary Street, Liverpool.

WIGAN. Supporters meeting, Thursday 23 June, 8pm. Swan and Railway Inn, Wigan.

WARRINGTON. Supporters meet every Tuesday in Bowling Green Pub, Liverpool Road, Wigan.

PRESTON. Supporters meeting, Thursday 30 June, 7.30pm. Windsor Castle Pub, Preston.

BIRKENHEAD. Meeting on 'Eurocommunism', Ring Chris, 061-662 8879 for details.

MIDLANDS

For details of activities of local supporters contact Socialist Challenge Centre, 76a Digbeth, High Street, Birmingham. (021-643 8200)

WOLVERHAMPTON. Discussion group, 'What is the Dictatorship of the Proletariat?' Tuesday 28 June, 7.30pm. Vines Hotel, Broad Street, Wolverhampton and every other Tuesday afterwards.

LEICESTER Public Forum, 'The Tasks of Socialist Challenge'. Speaker Bob Pennington (IMG). 8pm, Wednesday 29 June, AUEW Hall, Leicester.

HOME COUNTIES

READING. Readers group. First meeting Thursday 23 June, 7.30pm. 'The Crisis in the CP', 89 Armitage Road, Reading.

BRIGHTON Forum, 'Fighting the Transport Cuts' Thursday 23 June, 8pm Springfield Pub, Brighton, and every Thursday afterwards.

CAMBRIDGE Public Meeting, 'What is Socialist Challenge?' Speaker: Dodie Weppier (Socialist Challenge). Wednesday 22 June, 8pm. For details ring Linsey at 0223 89437.

WEST & WALES

CARDIFF. Public Forum, 'Welsh Nationalism and Socialism'. Speakers from the IMG and Plaid Cymru. Friday 24 June, 7.30pm. Rymney Hotel (opposite the prison), Cardiff.

BRISTOL Socialist Challenge Benefit, Friday 1 July, 8 till late. Bamboo Club, Portland Square, St Pauls. Disco, Late Bar, Socialist and anti-racist bands including 'All taste. No talent'. 60p on door.

BRISTOL supporters meeting, 'Trotskyism and Trade Unions' Friday 24 June, 7.30pm. The Swan, Stokes Croft, Bristol.

BRISTOL supporters meeting, 'Trotskyism and the Labour Party' Friday 8 July, 7.30pm. The Swan, Stokes Croft, Bristol.

LONDON

For details of activities ring 01-263 3861, 10-5pm.

SOUTH WEST London Socialist Challenge Rally, Thursday 30 June, 7.30pm. Clapham Manor Baths, Clapham Manor St, SW4. Speakers to include Dodie Weppier (Socialist Challenge), Brian Hidge (President, Lambeth Trades Council, in a personal capacity), Big Flame, Simon White, Chairperson ALARM (personal capacity), and speakers from Lavender Hill School. All welcome.

SOUTH EAST London Forum, 'Tasks for Socialist Challenge', Thursday 30 June, 7.30pm. Lee Centre, Lewisham. All welcome.

EAST London Public Forum, Tuesday 28 June, Britannia Pub, Mare Street, Hackney.

SCOTLAND

For information on Socialist Challenge write c/o Scottish Socialist League, 64 Queen Street, Glasgow. 041-221 7481.

ABERDEEN Public Meeting, 'Build a Socialist Opposition and a Unified Revolutionary Organisation'. Speakers Rich Palmer (IMG) and a representative of the Scottish Socialist League plus local labour movement speakers. Thursday 23 June, 8pm. Music Hall, Union Street, Aberdeen. **FALKIRK** Public Meeting, 'The Tasks of Socialist Challenge'. Speakers Rich Palmer (IMG), SSL and local labour movement representatives. Friday 24 June, 7pm. Sipping Room, The Temperance Cafe, Lint Riggs.

YORKSHIRE

SHEFFIELD. Supporters meeting, Thursday 30 June, 7.30pm. The White Lion Hotel, Sheffield. 'The Crisis in the CP'. Meetings fortnightly on Thursday. More information, ring 0742 385983.

Talking about far left unity

by Duncan Hallas



SOME COMRADES have asked if we should reconsider our attitude towards an electoral pact with other organisations of the revolutionary left. In practice this is raised only in connection with the International Marxist Group, since the other organisations which have run candidates in the past, the Workers Revolutionary Party etc., are not interested.

The IMG on the other hand is making the issue a central feature of its propaganda and is directing 90 per cent of this propaganda at Socialist Workers Party members and sympathisers. At Stechford, IMG members distributed leaflets at Paul Foot's meetings which deplored competition between Paul Foot and Brian Heron (IMG candidate) and concluded:

'The IMG repeats its call to the SWP to discuss with us the possibility of united far-left slates in the coming elections and especially in the General Election. All socialists will pay a price for needless disunity in the future.' They had previously called for a joint candidate in Stechford, a joint slate in the GLC elections, and so on.

Well, why not? We are certainly in favour of joint action with everyone in the working class movement, whether Labour Party members, Communist Party members, independents or whatever to fight the fascists, to fight hospital closures, to fight the Social Contract and so on and so forth — always providing that it is action. We do not, however, form blocs to make propaganda. We put forward our own ideas in our own paper. The distinction is obvious enough.

Unity in action with everyone who can be pulled in to support the particular action, irrespective of their views on other matters. Independent expression of our own ideas at all times. We don't stay out of any genuine working class struggle and we don't make our participation conditional on others agreeing with us. At the same time, we don't hide or dilute our politics or pretend to be other than we are.

'The Socialist Teachers Alliance is an unstable alliance held together by dislike of unofficial industrial action and hostility to the SWP.'

How does this apply to parliamentary elections? Revolutionary intervention in parliamentary elections at present is essentially a propaganda operation; a means of contacting people and involving them in some of our activities and of recruiting. We judge our success (or failure) in a contest by members recruited, contacts made. *Socialist Worker* readers gained and so on and not mainly by voters gained.

Of course, it is very pleasing if we get a better than expected vote, a little disappointing if we get a lower than expected vote. But it is not the main thing. We are not parliamentary readers.

Even in circumstances where there is a serious prospect of winning a particular contest, this remains true. It would be very useful for propaganda and, indeed, for agitational purposes to have a revolutionary MP, even better to have

An important question confronting socialists in Britain is that of revolutionary unity. The International Marxist Group and Big Flame have approached the Socialist Workers Party for an agreement on participation in the next election. No reply has been received to this letter or previous communications on the subject from the IMG.

What has appeared is an article by Duncan Hallas in the SWP's internal bulletin stating his views on our proposals. Given the lack of response, we informed the SWP comrades that we would print the Hallas article unless they wanted to submit a different text or alter the existing one.

No reply has been received. We are therefore printing the Hallas article from the internal bulletin (not a normal procedure) in order to make available these views to our readers.

several. But this will always be secondary to building the party in the workplaces, to fighting for leadership in the day-to-day struggle of working people and inside the unions. Our aim in contesting parliamentary elections is to build the SWP.

We do not put the emphasis on getting the biggest possible vote for the 'far left'. Protest votes, and that is what is being spoken of, are not without significance; but they are incomparably less important than building the party. Where does this leave us with respect to the IMG? Since many of our members do not come into contact with this organisation, it may be useful to say a little about it.

The IMG regards itself as a Trotskyist organisation and is affiliated to the biggest of the various bodies claiming to be the 'Fourth International'. It claims to have 680 members. The IMG differs from us politically on a number of matters; for example, it regards Russia, China, etc., as workers' states, although degenerated or deformed, and it is keen on slogans like 'the sliding scale of wages', 'open the books' and so on.

But the most important difference, I believe, is not these disagreements but the approach to building the revolutionary party. The IMG puts the emphasis on building blocs, fronts, alliances, etc., with other organisations, and what it calls 'the broad vanguard' (i.e. unaffiliated left wingers) and within these blocs etc., it hopes to establish its own 'hegemony' — meaning dominance. It hopes to dominate a sort of left coalition which will develop, it hopes, into a party.

The IMG regards the SWP as the biggest obstacle in its path — rightly so in view of the relationship of forces — and tries hard to use other (non-IMG) people to put pressure on us. For unless the growth of the SWP can be checked, their strategy can't work. Thus it has set up a Socialist Teachers Alliance in opposition to Rank and File (from which the IMG teachers split).

The STA includes a fair number of non-IMG people, mostly to the right of the IMG and having come out of a split, denounced R&F people as 'sectarians' and 'splitters'. 'The time has come,' says a writer in a recent issue of the IMG's paper, 'for the SWP/R&F to break out of its sectarian politics, acknowledge the STA as a force with equal, if not greater influence both in London and nationally, and unite to win a massive vote...' etc.

But we were united in R&F until they split. In fact the STA is an unstable alliance held together by dislike of unofficial industrial action and hostility to the SWP. Its leaders regard R&F as tending to 'adventurism' — as in the 'no cover' campaign — and put nearly all

their emphasis on work in the union machine. It runs candidates against R&F candidates in union elections.

After the recent National Union of Teachers conference, the IMG paper claimed that the STA had definitely replaced R&F as 'the main tendency' on the left and had 50 delegates (15 recruited at conference). The real significance of the conference was the decisive victory of the right on all important issues. The STA is, to some degree, an adaptation to right-wing dominance; a soft option for soft lefts.

Similarly, a Socialist Students Alliance has been set up (on much the same basis) as a rival to the National Organisation of International Socialist Students and the IMG paper tells us 'the SSA has now replaced NOISS as the major force after the Broad Left', a claim as hollow as those made for many other 'fronts' the IMG has sponsored over the years. The SSA ran its own slate against NOISS (as well as the Broad Left and the Tories) at the recent National Union of Students conference.

There is no Socialist Engineers Alliance or Socialist Electricians Alliance but that is only because the IMG has few people in industry (although they do support the 'independent Broad Left' paper *Engineering Voice* against *Engineers Charter*). In the recent Transport and General Workers Union general secretary's election, the IMG called for a vote for Thorne, not Riley. Where the IMG has no possibility of setting up a rival organisation, it often 'supports' SWP efforts. The Right to Work Campaign is a good example.

And it is not unfair to say that IMG 'support' for the Right to Work marches last year was of the sort that Lenin called 'support as the rope supports the man being hanged'. For weeks on end, the IMG paper carried attacks from all and sundry on the 'bureaucratic', 'sectarian', and of course, politically hopeless RTW leadership, complete with atrocity stories. *Red Weekly* sees this sort of thing as important. Nearly every issue contains attacks on the SWP (three per issue is the norm) alongside calls for 'unity'!

Compare the absence of attacks on the IMG in *Socialist Worker*. In spite of our forbearance, they continually denounce the SWP as sectarian. Now we learn that the IMG is going to launch a new paper called *Socialist Challenge*, which will also serve its various front organisations — these include a Scottish Socialist League and an Asian Socialist League (in Birmingham) as well as the various Alliances. It will, so *Red Weekly* tells us, 'be a non-sectarian polemical paper'. There are no prizes for guessing who most of the polemics will be aimed at!

Some of our comrades understandably get indignant about this kind of thing, but we should not take it too seriously. It does us little damage but to reply in kind would

do us much more damage. Hiding your politics, sailing under false colours, never builds in the long run. The 'electoral unity' proposals have to be seen against this background.

What the IMG has in mind is not a practical arrangement that seeks to avoid, or at any rate minimise, the Stechford-type situation of two far left candidates. What they are after is, as they admit, a 'joint slate', a common platform, and a united campaign — not not only an electoral one.

An article in *Red Weekly* on the French municipal election agreement between the far left groups puts the line very clearly: 'While Lucie Ouvrière initially saw the agreement as requiring only joint electoral work, the LCR (the French IMG) correctly insisted on the need for a national joint platform... Our comrades also argued for joint activity to extend beyond the electoral arena, to build the implantation of the revolutionary organisations.'

'They [the IMG] believe that the way forward is argument... about policies between people who regard themselves as revolutionaries. We left that kind of thing behind years ago.'

Now this is nonsense. Either there is basic agreement about building the party — in which case the organisations ought to unite in a single party — or there is not, in which case they cannot 'build the implantation'. How can we build jointly with the IMG when, wherever they have strength, they build blocs against us, with forces to the right of us? To repeat, we are out to build the revolutionary party, not to maximise the vote by alliances which hinder building.

Is actual unity feasible? The differences on Russia etc. are, in principle, containable within a single democratic-centralist organisation provided that there is an agreed approach to building the party in the working class.

In the past, the IMG has put the emphasis on work everywhere except in the working class, but in the last few years it has changed its line and says it agrees with us on this. Unfortunately it has moved well to the right at the same time and thinks in terms of blocs with 'independents' who have official positions, rather than building real rank and file movements.

Another problem is that the IMG is a coalition of permanent factions (they call them tendencies), a state of affairs they regard as positively desirable, and are not likely to accept democratic centralism as we understand it. And, of course, they want to stay affiliated to their 'Fourth International'.

But the basic difficulty, I believe, is that most of them do not want unity at all but only 'unity manoeuvres' to try and strengthen themselves at our expense. Their problem is that we would have a huge majority in a united organisation. If we accept, as we must, that they seriously believe in their own political conceptions, then their attitude is understandable.

Understanding, however, is not the same thing as weakness and it would be both weak and extremely foolish to give countenance to these 'unity manoeuvres'. The IMG has developed a theory to justify its particular tactics. This theory says that it is 'sectarian' to put the

emphasis on building the revolutionary party.

'Unfortunately the present sectarian course of the SWP placed the needs of their organisation above the best interests of the working class,' says *Red Weekly*. This goes down well with people who like to be on the left but don't want to commit themselves to an organisation. It is not so new either.

Years ago Trotsky wrote of the SAP, a left breakaway from the German Social Democrats, that when they 'criticise the "party egoism" of the Social Democracy and of the CP; when Seydewitz (a SAP leader) assures us that so far as he is concerned "the interests of the class come before the interests of the party", they only fall into political sentimentalism or, what is worse, behind this sentimental phraseology they screen the interests of their own party. This method is no good... The interests of the class cannot be formulated otherwise than in the shape of a programme; the programme cannot be defended otherwise than by creating a party.'

That is our position and it used to be the position of the IMG too. 'We start from a profound conviction that the problem of carrying out a social transformation in Britain requires above all the building of a mass revolutionary party', wrote Pat Jordan, then National Secretary of the IMG, in 1969. 'We regard the present fragmentation of the left as arising from the lack of such a party. Once the process of building the revolutionary party proceeds beyond its embryonic stage — that is when a given tendency clearly establishes its hegemony in theory and practice — regroupment will commence.'

This was written, in part, to defend the IMG's rejection of the proposal to unite the two organisations into a single party which was our policy in 1968 and 1969. In those days, they believed they could build their organisation faster and better than ours could be built. Then we would unite when they had the majority. In the event, we built and they did not — they are little stronger now than they were then. One reason is that we turned our backs on sectarian bickering and they did not.

Jordan also dealt, in this article on 'Unity and Sectarianism', with the sort of approach the IMG now has, the method of blocs and alliances: 'Such a project is fraught with dangers. It is one thing to organise a campaign on a single issue such as Vietnam, where for revolutionaries the issue is clear cut, but another thing once one attempts to cover a whole series of questions, each of which can give rise to political and tactical differences.'

This was directed against various 'independents' and 'New lefts' who wanted a bloc rather than a party. The IMG has changed its line because of our growth, its marked inferiority to the SWP and its unwillingness to go for real unity. An electoral bloc of the sort they propose is not on. Submerging the SWP in some 'front' is out of the question. We fight under our own colours.

There is a fundamental issue involved. We know that the revolutionary party can only be built by involvement in workers' struggles, by drawing in workers through those struggles. In these terms the IMG is irrelevant in most cases.

They believe that the way forward is argument — polemic is the word they use — about policies between people who regard themselves as revolutionaries. We left that kind of thing behind years ago.

Socialist Challenge will be replying to Duncan Hallas's article next week.

GRUNWICK - a strike

The Company Cops

THE POLICE VIOLENCE at the Grunwick picket line has sent a massive shock wave through the trade union movement. The arbitrary arrests, the beatings, the kicking, the hair pulling, have brought angry protests from lawyers, trade union officials and pickets. Home Secretary Merlyn Rees has even promised an inquiry into the police brutality.

But it is unlikely that the inquiry will look at the real facts behind the 'law and order' merchants who have trodden on the rights of trade unionists at Grunwick as viciously as they have stamped on the pickets themselves. Who is responsible?

In the front line are the police who operate from Harlesden station, the main body of police on anti-picket duty. In the last few years that particular police force has established a reputation for racism and thuggery in the Brent area where they operate.

For instance on 24 June last year six young black women were arrested and later beaten up by the Harlesden mob. One of the women

was knocked unconscious, another received swollen lips and bruising on her chest and back. A third was treated for a swollen jaw, and bruising on her abdomen and back.

According to the women their arrest was accompanied with such racist abuse as 'black whore' and 'black bitch'.

Despite two independent witnesses who confirmed that it was the police who started the trouble the women were still found guilty of 'assault'.

FOUND GUILTY

Police officer PC Taylor explained one woman's injuries by saying that she had 'collided' with him. That the women were found guilty is not surprising considering the nature of the Brent judiciary.

Earlier this year another of the local magistrates' convictions of black people for assault on police was quashed on appeal.

Urian Smith and Wayne Phillips had been convicted after they and a community relations officer had been beaten up in a police van — again by Harlesden mob.

Smith had been told by one policeman to 'get your head down you black sooty'.

This time the frame-up didn't work and Smith and Phillips are now suing the police for assault. The incident made Brent's senior community relations officer sever all formal links with the Harlesden police.

As one Grunwick picket quipped last Wednesday seeing the long line of police outside the factory, 'Black kids can walk the streets of North London in safety today'.

Accompanying the Harlesden police on their anti-picket duty are the Willesden Green force. They too have a history of racism and thuggery stretching back ten years. They also have much more formal links with the Grunwick management as Willesden's former Chief Inspector now works for Grunwick on their 'security staff'.

POLICE

The Special Patrol Group made their appearance last week. The record of this wing of the Metropolitan police includes the police riot in protection of the National Front in Red Lion Square three years ago which resulted in the death of student Kevin Gately.

Sitting on top of this pile is the new Commissioner for the Metropolitan Police, David McNee.

McNee recently took over from Sir Robert Mark. Mark now associates with Grunwick management's biggest backers, the National Association for Freedom. He



Photo: G. M. COCKBURN (Socialist Challenge)

sits on the board of Phoenix Assurance, whose chairperson, Lord De L'Isle is also the chairperson of NAFF.

COMPETITION

McNee has established similar close ties with the ruling class. When he was head of Glasgow police he advised all his officers to take courses with the British Institute of Management — indeed a couple of years ago three of his officers shared first prize in a BIM competition for 'young businessmen'.

The other side of McNee's brand of 'law and order' was shown in May 1975, shortly after he became head of Glasgow police. His police rioted outside the city's Kingston Hall in defence of the National Front meeting being held there.

They attacked a peaceful picket of anti-fascists and arrested scores, including David Bolton, vice-president of the Scottish miners and Jimmy Milne, general secretary of the Scottish Trade Union Congress said afterwards:

'This was Gestapo-style tactics... they just waded in, punching, grabbing and kicking anyone they could'.

But McNee is not at the very top of the ladder. His appointment was rather a surprise and it emerged later that Prime Minister Callaghan insisted that he got the job.

And it is with Callaghan and the Labour Government, where, ultimately, the 'buck' rests for the police violence at Grunwick.

A few words from Callaghan or Rees could stop the attacks, or better still remove the police from the picket altogether. They refuse to act and the daily scene of police entering Grunwick factory for their tea break will continue. A fitting symbol of the happy family the Grunwick management and the force of law and order make up.

A family which on the 'law and order' side stretches from the lowest racist in Harlesden station through the National Front protector McNee, to the ex-advisor of the Police Federation, James Callaghan.

GEOFF BELL



Glasgow police attack anti-fascists in May 1975, shortly after McNee — now Commissioner for the Metropolitan Police — took over the Glasgow 'law and order' guard.

Remember the battle of Saltley gates

THE WORKING CLASS has its own history, and the Grunwick strike has brought to the mind of many trade unionists the glorious closure of the Saltley coke depot during the January 1972 miners' strike.

Then a mass picket closed the coke depot, preventing the transportation of scab fuel designed to smash the strike.

The picket was especially important for the solidarity it illustrated, with thousands of Midlands workers joining the miners at the Saltley gates. This is the type of action which is starting to get underway at Grunwick. In saying 'Remember Saltley', *Socialist Challenge* reprints the following extract of an interview with Yorkshire miners' leader Arthur Scargill, first published in *Red Mole* just after the miners' victory.

No two disputes are the same. What is at stake politically may be different but the relevance of these words to Grunwick 1977 is obvious.

'The events of today will go down in the history of the British working class movement as a



historic day when not just individual unions but British trade unionists decided that they had had enough of police brutality. They had had enough of intimidation by the police in obtaining

passage through the picket lines for scab labour, and they decided to do something about it.

'We had a lesson in workers' control. For the first time in many years the workers of this land

decided that the nation would be defied: that the state system would be defied, and the gates of Saltley depot would be closed. At 10.45 those gates were indeed closed.

'If it is a situation like this, I

suppose, in the future, which will bring about the kind of unity in the trade union movement that is necessary to combine the whole forces of the labour movement to bring about a socialist revolution.'



A Special Branch agent who driven out. Roy Grantham

ONLY A FOOL, or Home Secretary c-strikers have bent o these last 44 weeks.

The union agree 'negotiate' last we the anti-union John for talks with the De to limit the number

The

You will have riding class pre time to find w wick strike is actu

Here, in the early bulletin Committee, is case.

"In the Monday 200 work of the Chapter Road factories of Processing On J strike was declare union.

Scott

SPEAKERS from the wick Strike Committee s to attend a Scottish conf on Wage Control and L Movement Democracy June.

The conference, wh organised by the Campa

Force that has to win



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

ated the picket line is discovered and reported that two 'pickets' who threw

bottles at the scabs' coach were questioned by stewards. Upon which one disappeared and the other jumped into a police car!

spaper owner, or a Labour deny that the Grunwick backwards to be reasonable

All this has been thrown back in their faces with contempt. Socialist Challenge says:

go to ACAS, agreed to under the chairpersonship of Gouret, agreed to meet Ward ment of Employment, agreed pickets.

- *No more concessions to Grunwick racist bosses;
- *No more concession to law courts and police;
- *Unlimited mass picketing every day until the strike is won;
- *Demand the TUC organise sympathetic action;
- *Demand the police are removed from the picket

Strikers' case

scan the or a long the Grun- about.

ds of an the Strike strikers'

beginning August, over walked out and Cobbold Grunwick Film member the facial by our

What Are We Fighting Against

1. £25 for a 35 hour week for office workers.
2. £28 for a 40 hour week for process workers.
3. Compulsory overtime.
4. We have only had a wage increase of between £2 and £3 a week in the past two years.

In short an employer who pays poverty line wages and forces us to work in feudal like conditions — an employer more suited to the 19th century.

What Are We Fighting For?

1. The right to belong to a Union.
2. The right to have our union, APEX, recognised.
3. The re-instatement of those who were sacked for joining the union and those who came out on

strike in their defence.

4. A decent living wage, proper working conditions and an end to the abusive and tyrannical attitudes of our management.

Our wage levels are between £15 and £25 per week less than the industrial agreement negotiated by one of our sister unions with the Association of Film Laboratory Employers.

Since then the company has:

- * Refused to cooperate in an inquiry conducted by the Arbitrary, Conciliation and Advisory Service.

- * Refused to accept the recommendation of ACAS that the company recognise APEX.

- * Refused throughout to negotiate with either the union or the strikers.

trade union and picketing rights until Grunwick's racist bosses and Brent Police are smashed.

Further details of the conference can be obtained from S. McLennan, 18 Carrington Street, Glasgow.

has promised:

'We aim to take the Grunwick strikers to every town represented at the conference; to make sure that public meetings are organised to hear their case, contribute to their funds, and join their fight for

Democracy in the Labour Movement, plans to give pride of place to the Grunwick speakers. Arnold Portarella of the Glasgow Foods Branch of APEX, which is one of the sponsors of the conference,

Fleet Street — The battle for minds

WEEK AFTER WEEK, month after month, the Fleet Street press have ignored the Grunwick strike. The assaults on pickets by members of management and police, the strikers' demonstrations and the conditions they came out against have all been virtually ignored.

So the massive coverage given to the Grunwick struggle last week may have come as a surprise. But the way the ruling class press handled the struggle was not. Throughout the week, the popular press, the serious press and television acted out their traditional role — a propaganda weapon for the ruling class.

The main offensive started on Wednesday 15 June. It was the 'Picket Line Pay Off' story, as the *Mirror* put it. This was the absurd allegation that the union had offered to pay £50 a week to any scab who joined the strike, that the local Labour council had similarly offered a council house and that various scabs had been intimidated at their homes the previous night.

Every paper gave wide coverage to these stories, repeating the allegations of management, and George Ward, Grunwick manager, in particular.

ALLEGATIONS

The *Mirror* devoted 40 lines to reporting the claims, and only four to a denial of the council house bribe story from a Brent councillor.

The *Express* also reported the allegations at length and gave one whole sentence to a denial, 'Mr Grantham, general secretary of APEX denied the allegations'.

The *Sun* gave 49 lines to the claims, 3 to a denial from APEX.

The *Mail* even reported on the claims as fact, when it stated:

'On Monday several (of the scabs) were visited by pickets at their homes. Some had their front doors daubed with white paint, again with the inevitable "scab".'

Not one paper offered any proof of these allegations.

This type of 'objective' reporting was further illustrated in the *Telegraph* feature on the strike which reported 'Mr Ward ordered a ballot in February... which revealed only two out of 260 employees wanted to be represented by APEX'.

What the *Telegraph* did not report was that the strikers were not allowed to take part in the ballot, or that the company had refused to cooperate with the ACAS ballot.

The big story on 17 June was the rigged meeting between the scabs and Grantham in the factory. This meeting had been previewed in the previous day's *Guardian*:

'Mr John Gouret of the National Association for Freedom said he would try to arrange a meeting between Mr Ward and Mr Ray Grantham. "I have certain proposals that could settle the dispute. It depends on how much they are prepared to compromise", he said.'

In fact the meeting turned out nothing like a usual negotiation, but a stage managed confrontation between some workers and Grantham. Of course the papers didn't report the false pretences on which Gouret had got APEX into the factory.

Only the fixed meeting was reported, and that in the usual 'objective' way. The *Express* for example headlined the farce ' "We don't want you" union leader told'.

COLLAPSE

The *Sun* returned to the subject of John Gouret and said 'the collapse was a bitter blow for John Gouret, director of the National Association for Freedom, who set up the talks'.

A late news item in the same

paper informed its readers that NAFF had made a statement saying, 'In view of the way the Grunwick workers have made their views known to Mr Grantham... we hope he will call off the pickets.'

The impression from this article is that Gouret was acting as some neutral negotiator, and after studying the case had come down on the side of management. The *Sun* did not mention that NAFF had been the closest advisor for Grunwick management for several months.

London's *Evening Standard* of 17 June devoted a whole page to the strike, with three separate stories. So you would think the strikers' view would have got in somewhere. But no.

DISTORTIONS

One story was made up of quotes from scabs and their 'terrifying ordeal' in crossing the picket line, another was on the 'show of force' on the picket and the third was headlined, 'Pickets who've never been in a Darkroom'.

It went on, 'there are people on the picket line who have never seen the inside of a photographic dark room. They would not know a developer from a hypo'.

Although Fleet Street continued spewing out lies and distortions, that message did not impress the thousands who turned up outside Grunwick last week. Among them, it needs to be said that some were members of the National Union of Journalists.

An official circular from the NUJ urged its members to support the strike, and among those who were on the picket were NUJ vice-president Denis McShane, National Treasurer Charles Harkness and National Executive members Jonathan Hammond and Roger Protz.

Their presence went some small way to compensating for the filth and fairy stories which have come from the mouths of the ruling class media last week.

Mass picket boosts journalists' strike

DAVE CARTER reports

'THE FIRST six months are the easiest,' reads a telegram of support from Kettering journalists to the NUJ strike headquarters in Darlington. The Darlington journalists do not intend to let their dispute last 22 weeks, as the Kettering strike did.

They are attempting to obtain a closed shop agreement from North of England newspapers, part of the giant Westminster press group, and the dispute is seen as a test case by journalists throughout the country.

NUJ members from Kettering, Glasgow, Sheffield and Tyneside — together with local trade unionists — answered a call for a mass picket at the Darlington offices last Friday night.

Their first success was in per-

sending NATSOPA members not to drive vans through the picket lines to collect copies of the *Northern Echo* and *Stockton and Darlington Times*.

In desperation, management tried to break their way through the pickets. The personnel manager was arrested for throwing a punch at the picket. So too was a Kettering journalist — for alleged intimidating behaviour.

Eventually police allowed newsagents to collect their bundles. Only 20,000 copies of the *Northern Echo's* normal print run of 118,000 left the building.

The success of the mass pickets in the coming week can be decisive in winning the strike. In provoking the

dispute, Westminster Press management intend to smash the power of the NUJ within the publishing industry, in the supposed name of 'editorial freedom'.

They are being aided by the scab Institute of Journalists, which has recruited the Darlington sub-editor who refused to join the NUJ. Institute members include such celebrities as Dennis Healey and Robin Day. Victory for the Darlington journalists would be a real blow for the power of the magnates of the newspaper industry. They deserve the support of all socialists.

Obtain picket details and send messages of support to: NUJ Strike Committee, 9 Victoria Road, Darlington Road. Phone: 0325-30282.

Mass support for strikers

Speedy Gonzalez: just where he wants to be

RICHARD CARVER

Felipe Gonzalez is a very clever young man. Readers who have followed the Spanish elections in the British press [or the Spanish for that matter] will be sick and tired of being told it — but it is true.

With a little help from his friends — just over a quarter of the Spanish electorate — he has got himself just where he wanted. His international friends have rushed to justify the failure of the Socialist Party (PSOE) to win more votes. Jenny Little of the Labour Party international department explained that, as Adolfo Suarez' Centre is only a coalition, the PSOE is now the largest party. Gonzalez doesn't need to do any explaining. If his party had won more than 30 per cent there would be a danger of him having to form a Government. Communist Party (PCE) leader Santiago Carrillo has fallen over himself to push Gonzalez into a coalition with Suarez but Felipe himself is more circumspect.

REPUBLICAN FLAG

Carrillo explains the low vote for his party by the fact that moderate people who were just coming to socialism felt that the PSOE was a safer bet. That might convince the party faithful but it holds little water when you consider that the PSOE campaign has been consistently to the left of the PCE's.

While Carrillo has embraced the monarchy, called for an end to the Basque general strike — anything to demonstrate his respectability — Gonzalez has wrapped himself in a Republican flag and set tight. He is banking on the same tactic now.

By making implementation of PSOE economic policy a precondition for entering the Government, he retains his position as leader of the opposition in the sure knowledge that Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez will be able to form a new Government.

PREMATURE

So any comparison with Mario Soares in Portugal would be premature. It isn't that their policies are so dissimilar. No-one is scared by the PSOE's verbal

commitment to Marxism. The point is that the PSOE has won support as part of an upsurge of the Spanish workers movement, whereas in Portugal the Socialist Party was a direct instrument of counter-revolution.

DANGEROUS

Of course the PSOE will play the same role if it is necessary — and it will be necessary — but at the moment is trying very hard to keep its nose clean. And that could make it all the more dangerous.

The general voting trend was towards the centre. A large vote for Suarez was expected. He is seen by many as the man who brought democracy to Spain — an illusion which has been assiduously cultivated by the reformist workers parties who have sat down to negotiate with him.

It was no surprise that the Popular Alliance, advocating a qualified return to the good old days of Franco, got a pitiful result. A little more of an upset was the fact that the Christian Democrats only won two seats.

Carrillo, who, after his own poor showing, has set himself up as a sort of Delphic oracle, had something to say on that as well. Apparently the failure was because Carrillo's old friend Ruiz-Gimenez (the former Franco Minister) had been eased out and rightist elements had gained control. The Christian Democrats, who were not available for comment, will probably prefer to do without Santiago's advice.

ORACLE

The relative failure of the PCE is easily explained. It was not, as the Delphic oracle would have it, because it 'appeared to the country as extreme'. Quite the contrary. The PCE is, and will continue to be, a far stronger force within the workers movement than its poll might suggest.

Unfortunately the party's enthusiasm for dropping every

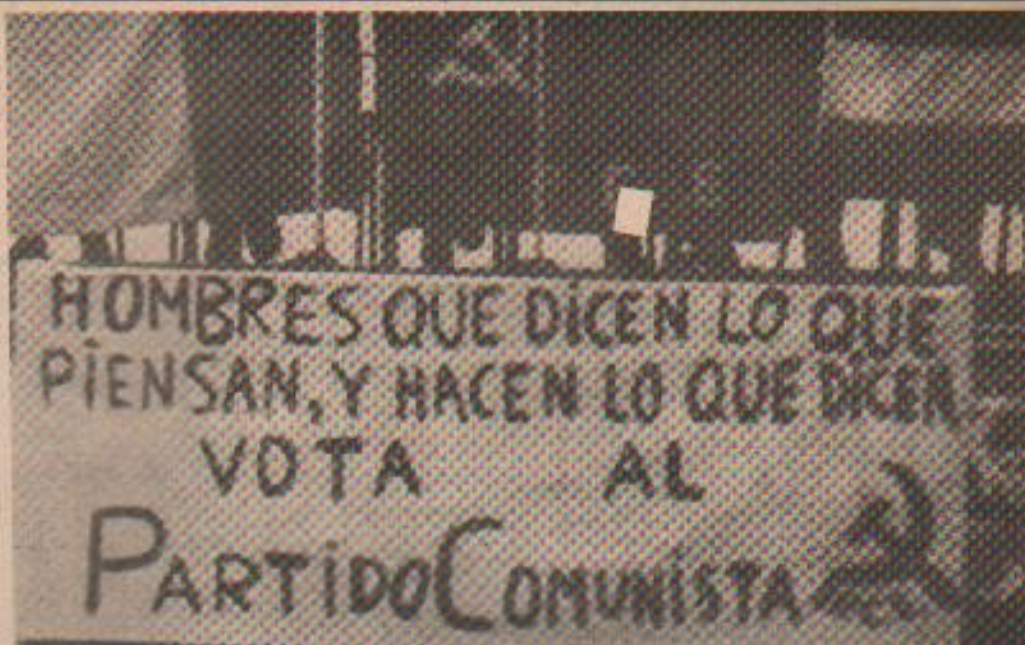


Speedy Gonzalez arrives for a whistle-stop meeting in his private jet.

distinctive part of its programme along the 'parliamentary road to socialism' drove many militant workers towards the PSOE, which has a fine republican tradition to draw on, or the far left parties which have led the struggles the PCE have ignored.

But Carrillo gives another reason which is absolutely correct; the party was only legalised two months before the elections. What he failed to mention was that there are still a considerable number of workers parties illegal and that their vote has been considerably affected by having to run a semi-clandestine campaign.

Carrillo, like Gonzalez, has never bothered to suggest other than that the elections were free and democratic. No mention of the remaining political prisoners. No mention of the gerrymandering. No mention of the continued activities of the repressive forces. No mention of the exclusion of young people under 21 from the vote. No mention of the fact that, however radical the new parliament, the king still has the power to overturn its decisions!



'Men [sic] who say what they think, and do what they say, vote for the Communist Party'.

Basque workers shun CP

It was a dead cert that the nationalist parties in the Basque country, Catalonia and Galicia would sweep the board. We predicted as much on this page last week. Well, betting on elections is a good way of losing money — only in Catalonia did the nationalist vote approach the opinion poll predictions.

But even there the Socialist Party won a clear majority of seats. Galicia tended to follow the national trend and the Basque country... the Basque country was something else.

The obvious feature was that the Communist Party (PCE) did not win a single seat in one of the biggest working class concentrations in the country! Unfair electoral boundaries had nothing to do with that.

The Basque workers are still smarting from the PCE's scabbing on their general strike last month. The party refused to call solidarity action — and were openly defied by 30,000 Madrid workers — and Marcelino Camacho, the Workers Commissions leader, said they were 'creating the pretext for a Pinochet to intervene'.

DIRECT ATTACK

The whole PCE campaign was marked by Pinochet-spotting. The PSOE, on the other hand, was the only major party to launch a direct attack on Suarez — and it payed off. The PSOE's Basque campaign was hardly distinguished — Redondo's remark about abolishing the class struggle was fairly typical — but they had been smart enough not to scab openly on the recent strike. Their paper position of support for the self-determination of the oppressed nationalities must have won them a good few votes from the nationalists.

The PNV, the bourgeois nat-

ionalist party, was the most successful of all the Christian Democrats, beating Suarez' Centre coalition into third place. That isn't surprising either. After the Civil Guard had gunned their way through the Basque country in May, the workers were less inclined to see Suarez as the great democratizer. Although the PNV's record leaves everything to be desired, a fair proportion of the radical nationalist vote must have come their way.

But most striking was the election of a deputy from the Euzkadiko Ezkerra, a far left slate launched by the Maoist MCE and

supported by a number of the radical nationalist groups. He was elected in Guipuzcoa, the heart of last month's strike, but his platform was far from adequate:

'We are Basques. It was here that we were born or came from. We love our country, Euskadi, because it is ours or what we have adopted. We want the Basque country and all that distinguishes it to be respected: its language, its culture, its customs and traditions, its national rights...', and so on in a similar vein for some length.

* The full far left results will only be known when the final figures are published — the day after we go to press. Next week we will carry a full analysis of their campaigns and votes.

Arithmetically progressive

'LEFT gets over half the votes in Spain' announced the front page of the Morning Star, the British Communist Party daily. Unfortunately the article never explains how they arrived at that conclusion.

It was made when 70 per cent of the vote was counted, at which point the combined vote of the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, Socialist Unity and the far left was something less than 40 per cent.

I spent a long time with pencil and paper trying to conjure up the extra ten per cent. The easiest method is subtraction. Take away the Centre and Popular Alliance vote and you have 57.5 per cent — a clear

majority for the left, consisting of the aforementioned parties plus the fascists and all the bourgeois nationalists.

If you're feeling charitable towards the King Street statisticians you could leave out the fascists, but to get a majority the bourgeois nationalists must stay. If, on the other hand, you prefer not to count the Basque Nationalist Party [The interests of America are those of Humanity] among the left there is an alternative.

Strike out the nationalists [and the far left if you like] and include Suarez' party on the left side of the balance. That gives you a clear majority.

Alternatively you could....

Democracy Juan Carlos style

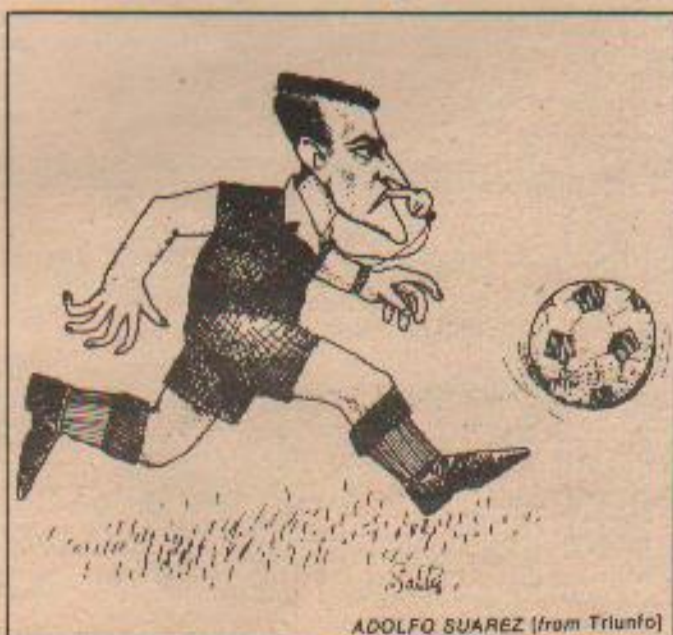
THE gerrymanderers did their job well. In the event the left parties did less well than expected, not least because of the over-weighting given to the conservative rural areas.

But it was a weighting which favoured large parties, rather than simply right-wing ones. But you might also remember that four of the left slates, which might have expected a few seats, campaigned in illegality.

But whatever the composition of the lower house the Senate will still be able to exercise a veto — and the gerrymanderers have given the right a clear majority in the upper house.

Add to that the fact that Juan Carlos appointed 41 senators. No prizes for guessing their political complexion, but some examples will illustrate this point:

Luis Diez-Alegria: former head of the armed forces who served in Franco's Nazi Blue Division.
Rodolfo Martin Villa and Marcelino Oreja: ministers in the Suarez Government.
Alfonso Osorio: former minister, member of the National Catholic Association of Propagandists and vice-president of Esso.
Angel Salas: Francoist air-force chief in Civil War and a member of the Blue Division.
Marquess of Isasi: Cambridge-educated director of a number of



ADOLFO SUAREZ (from Triunfo)

companies, including Standard Electric (ITT), who gave such an admirable service to democracy in Chile.

Miguel Primo de Rivera: great-nephew of the 1920s dictator and nephew of the founder of Spanish fascism; Councillor of the Realm; married to the daughter

of GRAPO kidnap victim Antonio Maria Oriol.

For once Felipe Gonzalez hit the nail on the head: the right 'had more senators appointed by the king than elected by a consensus vote of the Spanish people'.

From right to left

* 'The country needs positive Government and we are going to provide it.' Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo (second on Centre slate in Madrid)

* 'For the Popular Alliance, Spain is the only important thing.' Manuel Fraga Iribarne (head of Popular Alliance slate in Madrid)

* 'We intend to overcome the class struggle.' Nicolas Redondo (head of PSOE slate in Vizcaya)

* 'In reality we have won the elections.' Alfonso Guerra (second on PSOE slate in Madrid)

* 'The truth is that we look with satisfaction on the global results of the elections.' Ramon Ormazabal (head of PCE slate in Vizcaya where they did not win a seat)

* 'There only remains... the solution of a Centre-PSOE Government. If its programme is acceptable, and its deeds match up to its words, the PCE will play the role of a constructive opposition.' Santiago Carrillo (head of PCE slate in Madrid)



INAKI SARASKETA

* 'Yesterday as a prisoner, today as an exile, and always as a comrade, I ask that you maintain and defend all the interests of the workers and the popular masses and do not allow anyone to appropriate through negotiations demands which have cost the workers so much in lives and tears... When

the working class says "Amnesty, bread and freedom", it must be understood as amnesty, bread and freedom, not exile, unemployment and forgiveness for the crimes of the repressive apparatus.' Inaki Sarasketa (former LCR political prisoner now in exile in Norway)



LEONID BREZHNEV: now Soviet President as well as party boss. With the number of medals he has given himself it's a wonder he can still stand up.

New Soviet Constitution More of the same

On 16 June, Leonid Brezhnev became President of the Soviet Union. Needless to say, the vote in the Supreme Soviet was unanimous. Having brushed aside Podgorny, the previous President, Brezhnev combines this post with that of First Secretary of the Communist Party.

For reasons of 'protocol' the Soviet Union has now fallen in line with most of the other East European states in making the party leader head of state. PETE SMITH reports.

Fifteen years after Khrushchev called for the writing of a new constitution the Soviet leadership has produced a 'New Draft'. It will be passed unanimously by the Supreme Soviet in the autumn.

SIGNIFICANT

The text differs very little from the Stalin Constitution of 1936: both solemnly guarantee the Soviet people the right to freedom of speech, press, assembly, meetings and demonstrations. The new draft even has a new point, declaring that 'persecution for criticisms shall be prohibited'.

Yet, as any honest observer of the Soviet scene knows, members of groups monitoring the Helsinki human rights agreement have been imprisoned. Last week's *Socialist Challenge* published Grigorenko's appeal to the Western CPs on behalf of some of these prisoners. 1,200 documents produced by the groups have been confiscated. Many political prisoners are being held in 'penal psychiatric prisons' — Victor Fainberg, a Leningrad fitter, spent 5 years in one of these for protesting, along with the same lines as the British Communist Party, against the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

The constitution guarantees 'the privacy of correspondence, telephone conversations and telegraphic messages', yet hundreds of registered letters from the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, containing clippings from the *Morning Star*, are being blocked by the KGB.

None of these practices will end with the passing of this new draft. The only significant political change linked to the appearance of the new draft is the 'promotion' of Brezhnev to the Presidency, and the inclusion of a new clause allowing a deputy president to operate.

UNDERPINNINGS

But the real value of the Constitution from the point of view of the Soviet bureaucracy is that it codifies the basic ideological underpinnings of the Stalinist regime. Khrushchev wanted a version that would stress his distinctive ideological positions as against the Stalinism of 1936. This was blocked by his opponents in the leadership. Agreement on the new draft is a sign of the ascendancy which Brezhnev has managed to achieve over the various currents within the Soviet leadership.

The most significant fact about the new draft is its failure to change one basic component of past constitutions: the view of national minorities. Under Brezhnev's rule there has been an increasing drive for centralisation of power in the hands of the All-Union authorities, combined with a massive effort to 'Russify' the oppressed nationalities within the USSR.

LIQUIDATION

Some ideologists were arguing for the liquidation of the national republics and the removal of all talk about the right to secession. The fact that such changes have not taken place is a sign of the caution of the bureaucracy over risking such an important ideological change in the constitution. Otherwise the new draft's significance lies largely in the greater authority it gives to the Party as a monopolistic power within the Soviet state. Article 6 states: 'The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is the leading and guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system, of all state and public organisations. No other parties are permitted.'

As for those Soviet citizens wishing to campaign for genuine workers' democracy in the USSR, the new draft gives them an unmistakable warning not to take the phrases about political liberties too seriously. Article 39 declares that citizens 'must not injure the interests of Society and the state'.

And if that is not clear enough, Article 62 spells out: 'The citizen of the USSR shall be obliged to safeguard the interests of the Soviet state, to contribute to the strengthening of its might and prestige.'

German Socialists ban YS leader

From ALAIN BROSSAT

THE GERMAN Socialist Party is being shaken by a crisis which could lead to the fall of its governmental coalition with the liberal Free Democrats. One of the main issues has been the refusal of credentials to the elected chairperson of the Young Socialists (Jusos), Klaus Uwe Benneter.

There is more than an echo of the Andy Bevan affair, since Benneter came from the left of the Jusos and was thrown out by the party machine because he advocated joint work with the Communist Party. The crisis has spread throughout the party.

The Jusos of Hamburg, a town where social democracy has been traditionally strong, have asked for the measures against Benneter to be reversed. In a text published last week they assured their former chairperson of their 'full and complete solidarity'.

The only reply was for the secretary of the Hamburg federation of the party (SPD) to demand that the 62 signatories withdraw their names or they would be expelled.

Kurt Wand, one of the Hamburg Jusos leaders, said

that: 'if we are no longer able to defend the position that our society is a class society this means that in future the work of the SPD will be pointless.' And he added: 'There are many on the right of the party who want to prepare the ground for a grand coalition with the CDU/CSU (the German Tories) because there is no other way they can resolve the crisis of the capitalist system.'

Wand's comments show how far the unity of the SPD has become little more than a formality. Last week five social democratic deputies announced that they would not vote on the Government's project for fiscal reform. They stressed that they would not approve a package which raised VAT and cut wealth tax.

Unfortunately this great display of socialist principle evaporated almost as soon as it had appeared. In a routine which is also reminiscent of the Labour Party, all but two of the rebels faithfully trooped into the Government lobbies. Nevertheless, the very fact that the rebels could have brought down the coalition has shown just how fragile the Government now is.



BERUFSVERBOT: the word refers to the banning of left-wingers from state employment. The same Government which implements it is now gagging its own party members.

Cold split in the French Socialists

From a correspondent

THE FRENCH Socialist Party congress in Nantes has failed to resolve the cold split between the majority and the left. It ratified the decision of the last congress, at Pau in 1975, to exclude representatives of the left-wing CERES group from the leadership.

STATUTES

The majority, led by Francois Mitterrand, presented the Nantes congress as a debate about statutes rather than policies. In this way he hoped to smooth over

STOP POLICE MURDERS, SOLIDARITY WITH POLISH WORKERS AND STUDENTS. Rally organised by the Polish Workers Defence Campaign in Britain. Speakers: Oliver MacDonald (editor, *Labour Focus* on Eastern Europe), Andy Durgan (NUS Executive, in a personal capacity), Billy Williams (Sec. Cardiff EETPU and rank and file candidate for EETPU presidency).

Friday 24 June, 8pm, Room 94, Polytechnic of Central London, Regent Street, London W1 (nearest tube Oxford Circus).

the differences in preparation for the expected left electoral victory next year. The manoeuvre failed.

Jean-Pierre Chevènement, the CERES leader, explained that reconciliation could only come through political debate. CERES, which is supported by about a quarter of the party, has differences with Mitterrand over the extent of nationalisations, the Common Market and relations with the Communist Party.

But the fear of 'creeping social democratisation' did not stop the CERES leaders from making massive concessions to gain unity. For example they gave up their independent offices and finance, while the Mitterrand leadership sat tight. The rank and file majority delegates chanted 'Unity, Unity!', but their leaders were clear that unity would only be on their terms.

PRESSURE GROUP

Mitterrand may have been disappointed with the outcome of the congress, but the attitude of the CERES leaders ensured that they will remain a pressure group rather than an organised opposition — and a weaker one at that!

IN BRIEF

ERITREA: Troops of the Derg military dictatorship have driven back the forces of the right wing Ethiopian Democratic Union in the north of the country. At the same time guerrillas of the Ethiopian People's Liberation Front have entered Asmara, the capital of Eritrea.

ETHIOPIA: About forty Ethiopian students demonstrated at the Paucice Lumuunba University in Moscow against the Soviet regime's backing for the Derg. The Ethiopian Students Union in Europe has organised a picket of the Soviet embassy in London on Friday 24 June at 4.30pm. The embassy is at 18 Kensington Palace Gardens W8.

SENEGAL: The Dakar student strike (reported last week) has been followed by a general strike of rail workers, with the dockers coming out in solidarity. The Government's attempts to use the trade union leadership to stop the strike have so far failed.

THAILAND: The trial of Sutham Saengprathum, the general secretary of the national student union, started in Bangkok last week. The military regime's anti-communist laws remove any legal guarantees from defendants charged under them.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Two former Government Ministers are among the 750 signatories of the Charter 77 human rights manifesto. They are Vilibald Bzdicek, Education Minister in 1969, and Ludmila Jankovcova, the former Food Minister.

CHILE: The Chile-Scotland football match went ahead last week, but the Chilean people showed what they thought of it. Only 17,600 turned up to the 85,000 capacity stadium.

EAST GERMANY: The Chilean Government has just exchanged Communist Party member Jorge Montes for 11 East German political prisoners. Which is strange because they keep assuring us they haven't got any!

DENMARK: The five month strike on two leading newspapers ended last week when print workers were forced to accept redundancies as part of management's new 'working routine'. Something of a misnomer!

INDONESIA: Government parachutists have been sent to quell a separatist revolt in Irian Jaya, the western part of Papua-New Guinea. At the same time the Indonesian regime denies that the movement has any support.

MOROCCO: 'We hope that the Moroccan action under the OAU charter has alerted Africa to the dangers facing our continent from external interference' — the Moroccan Foreign Minister, commenting on his army's external interference in Zaïre.

CHINA: It is well known that Teng Hsiao-ping is well on the way to being rehabilitated. But so is the great Marxist teacher Joseph Stalin. He never had the distinction of being labelled a 'capitalist roader' but he did get left out of the 1975 collection of writings on the dictatorship of the proletariat — a rather strange omission. Referring to Comrade Stalin's famous techniques for persuading peasants of the virtues of collectivisation, a recent issue of the *Peoples Daily* praises the way in which he 'led the peasants of the Soviet Union so that they followed the socialist road'.

Left win in Bengal

NAIREN BOSE

THE Communist Party of India (Marxist) — CPM — scored an important victory in the state elections in West Bengal.

A five-party alliance dominated by the CPM won an overall majority, ensuring that West Bengal will once again have a CPM-dominated government, with the CPM having an overall majority in its own right. This means that it can govern on its own without depending on other parties in case of rifts.

Jyoti Basu, the CPM leader, has indicated that he expects no conflicts with business interests or the central government. However the problem he is going to face is that the masses, and especially the urban workers of Calcutta, might not accept this view.

For over half a decade they have been at the receiving end of state repression backed by local big business interests. They could well decide to embark on a series of anticipatory struggles both to celebrate the CPM's victory and to anticipate some reforms. If they are disappointed the situation could become precarious for the CPM on the extra-parliamentary front.

It should be recalled that it was after the CPM's victory in 1967 that the Naxalites split the party and launched 'agrarian armed struggle'. This was a failure from which lessons have been learnt. An organised mass struggle could prove to be a different affair altogether, especially as this time the CPM will not be able to use the excuse of not having an overall majority.

Soweto first anniversary

Police shoot demonstrator Callaghan optimistic

There was overwhelming support for the Soweto Students Representative Council call for a stayaway strike on 16 June. The centre of Johannesburg was almost completely deserted and the townships filled with black-clad marchers. It was a show of strength the police could not ignore. CHRIS O'BRIEN reports.

'The police held back as long as they could', said Soweto police chief Brigadier Jan Visser, 'but when their lives were in danger they had to protect themselves.' Nine blacks were wounded in Soweto by the evening of 16 June, among them two young children. None of them was armed.

Eleven people had died by Sunday after police repression had spread to the Eastern Cape. Police at Kabahn township near Port Elizabeth arrested more than 100 black youths, whom a summary court sentenced to caning. Like last year the activity by black students has quickly spread outside the Soweto townships, but the police have also used the last year to build up their weaponry.

RUBBER BULLETS

'Sneeze machines' are the latest — a vicious new way of serving up tear-gas — and police Minister Jimmy Kruger proudly announced that the Soweto police are now using rubber bullets. But, judging by last week's events, they still have a preference for the real variety.

But we can still draw solace from the South African police's occasional inefficiency. One of the eleven dead was a policeman, accidentally shot by one of his

colleagues, and another policeman managed to wound himself in the stomach, chest and shoulder.

FAKE INDEPENDENCE

Prime Minister James Callaghan chose the same day to make a 'statesmanlike' speech on southern Africa. On Namibia, where the South African Government is pushing ahead with its fake independence plans against the wishes of the majority of the people, he was optimistic for a negotiated settlement.

He was also rather disparaging about the need for the 'arms struggle' (as he insists on calling it) in Zimbabwe. Against all the evidence he seems to think that 'we will continue to find another way'. Unfortunately he was not questioned on whether the large stake which British Petroleum (with a majority Government holding) has in the racist regime was in any way connected with this.

Nor did he bother to mention Rio Tinto Zinc's massive share in the Namibian uranium industry or the Government export licence recently granted to Marconi to supply the South African Government with a military communications system.

It probably just slipped his memory that the South African



SOWETO tear gas victim. 'When police lives were in danger they had to protect themselves', said the Soweto police chief.

police drive around in Land Rovers built by British Leyland (nationalised) or that the tear gas (see picture) is manufactured by a company in which ICI has a 40 per cent share.

He also apparently forgot which Government, in which war, in which occupied territory not a million miles from the Irish Sea,

first developed the rubber bullets which Jimmy Kruger is so proud of.

But to point all that out at the very moment when police were gunning down young blacks on the streets of Soweto would be a little tactless. And, when it comes to the white regimes of southern Africa, Jim is nothing if not tactful.

What's Left

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

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

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

SOCIALIST TEACHERS Alliance. Public Meeting, Sussex University, 5.30pm Thursday 23 June. (Room C133). 'Education and the Working Class'. Speakers: Ken Jones and Clara Mulhern (William Tyndale Defence Committee).

IS THIS 'The British Road to Socialism'? Open Forum on the Communist Party's current draft programme. An ex-CP member will lead off an open discussion on the 'difficulties'. All Labour, Communist and Republican supporters welcome. 8pm at Daisson Library Hall, London E8. Organised by Hackney Chartists Group. Details ring 01-836 7179.

OUT NOW. 'Revolutionary Road or Deviation?' A pamphlet containing Charlie Doyle's critique of 'British Road'. These on Bourgeois Democracy and Proletarian Democracy (Lenin), passed by the 1st Congress of the 3rd International. Commentary by former CP member of British Road debate. Available from Glasgow SSL, c/o 64 Queens Street, Glasgow (Tel 041-221 7481).

HARPENDEN. Help organise a PUBLIC FORUM if you aim to defend public expenditure, the NHS, free comprehensive state education, the right to work and a decent standard of living for all, equal opportunity in education and jobs, civil rights, political and trade union rights for all, including youth, women and citizens of Asian, African, West Indian origin and any other ethnic minorities and the right of all women to control their own fertility. Contact Linda Harpenden (05827 64418).



BUY THIS BADGE. 15p each plus postage. Orders of 10 or more 10p each plus postage. Cash with order only to J. East, 85 Whitehall Road, Bristol 5.

FEMINISM AND IRELAND. A work shop will be held on Sunday 26 June, 10.30am-5pm at Camden Women's Centre, Rosslyn Lodge, Lyndhurst Rd, NW3. This workshop is part of the series on 'What is a Socialist-Feminist Practice?' Papers can be obtained by sending a SAE with a 20p stamp to 50, Upper Tooting Park, London N4.

CARIBBEAN Socialist Group. Summer School 9-10 July Caxton House, St. John's Way, Holloway, London N19. Topics include development of Caribbean working class, imperialism and Stalinism, 'Women in the Caribbean'. For details phone Sheila 01-359 8371.

'THE LOCAL PRESS. Racism, and the Front', a working conference sponsored by the Campaign Against Racism in the Media, to be held on Saturday, 9 July, 10am to 6pm at Central London Poly, Marylebone Road, London NW1 (Baker St tube). 50p. Speakers: author David Edgar, Colin Pressod (Race and Class), Peter Hounam, vice-chairperson NUJ North London Branch. Details from: CARM, 13 Cleave Road, London NW6.

BENEFIT for Rising Free and Bread and Roses with Lee Kosmin Band and Dine Tribe. Disco, Food, Books. Bar extension, 8-12pm. 50p claimants/students. £1.00 others. Ladbroke House, Highbury Grove, N5, 1 July.

TYNDALE DEFENCE Committee meets every Thursday, 7.30pm. Prince Albert pub, Wharfedale Rd, London N11. **SOCIALIST TEACHER** Journal No 2 just out. Contains articles on Tyndale, Class size, Democracy in schools debate, Black Papers. Price 30p. Bulk orders — sale or return — from: Tony Grahm, 13 Bloomfield Rd, London N8. Also **Socialist Teacher Broad-sheet**: 5p — Special for the Open Conference. Sale or return.

TWO NEW PAMPHLETS from Big Flame: **The Revolution Unfinished — A Critique of Trotskyism**, 50p; and **Crisis in Education**, 30p. Add 10p postage. From: Big Flame publications, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1. Trade orders from Publications Distribution Cooperative.

HULL SOCIALIST TEACHERS Conference: Saturday 16 July, noon. Venue: Students Union, Hull University. Speakers: Terry Ellis and Brian Haddow (Tyndale), Dave Picton (STA). Conference fee: £1. Contact: G. Daniel, 41 Severy St, Hull. Tel: 0482-799184.

FIGHT BACK. March for George Ince. Sunday 3 July. Assemble Tower Hill, 2pm. For more information: Free George Ince Campaign, 40 Thornfield House, Rosefield Gardens, London E14. Tel: 01-987 6542.

NATIONAL ABORTION Campaign Benefit Concert, Sunday 26 June at Dingwalls, Camden Lock, London NW1. Joanne Kelly, Carol Grimes and Quintessence II. Doors open 7.30. Licensed till 1.50am.

GAY PRIDE WEEK: 25 June until 2 July. Begins with march through London 25 June. Donations for the week's events plus future activity to: Gay Pride Committee, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1.

THE LEVELLER No. 8 out now. British torturer speaks: Women in history; Nuclear safety; Left regroupment; Dave Edgar interview; Labour in decay — Pt. 2; Letters; agitprop and more. 35p or £5 sub from: 156a Drummond St, London NW1. Tel: 01-387 0176.

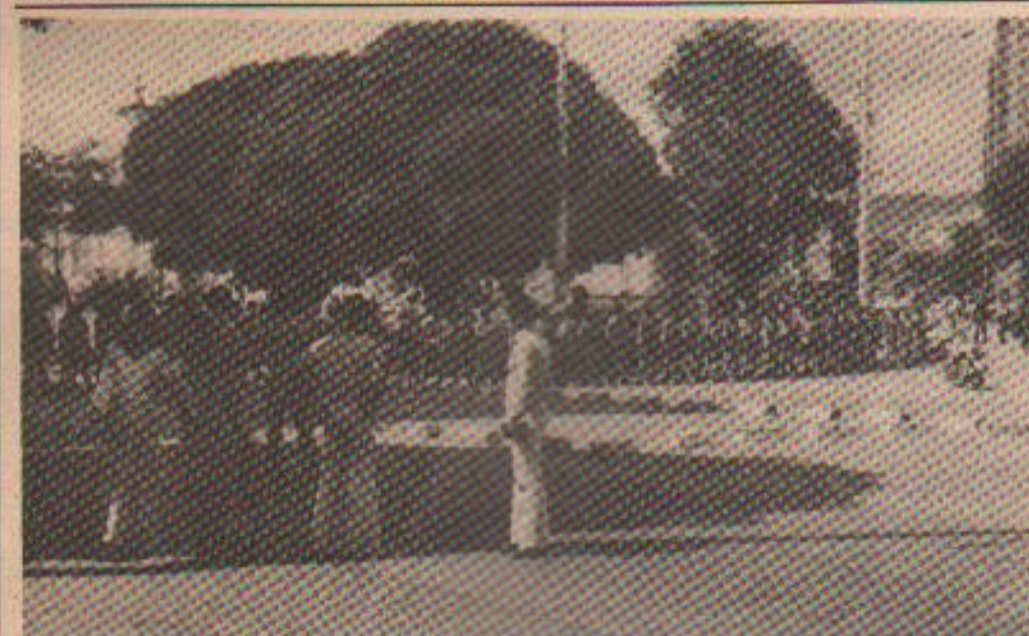
WEDGE: New revolutionary journal of cultural practice and theory. First issue includes: grant aid and the crisis in political theatre groups; debate on the mass media; critique of the CP's cultural practice; work of Chile Cultural Committee and more. Cost: 75p. Subscriptions: £3.00 for 4 issues, from 56a Shirland Road London W9. Editorial address: 30 Hornsey Park Road, London N8. Tel: 01-868 1181.

HOUNSLOW HOSPITAL Grand Dance in aid of the work-in. Organised by Heathrow T&G/WU. Disco, Band, Late Licence, Buffet. 8-12pm, Friday 24 June. Central Control Tower, Heathrow. Tickets available at £1.50 from Cath Cooney/Cynth Scott at Hounslow Hospital, Staines Road, Hounslow. Tel: 01-570 4448.

CARI Public Meeting. Organised by the Campaign Against Repression in Iran. Saturday 25 June, 12.30, Australian Bar (Devenport), Hurst St, Birmingham. Speakers Roger Klein and from CARI.

PUBLIC DEBATE. Tom Bell (Young Communist League) v's Rob Sewell (MIRA). 'The Struggle for Socialism in Britain' at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Friday 1 July, 7.30pm. 25p.

MARXISM and the Mass Media. If you attended the successful Forums organised around this subject this year, you may be interested in contributing to **Wedge**, a new unaligned Marxist journal, or **Socialist Challenge**. Also to be discussed a seminar/conference on the issue of the media. Meeting, 7.00pm Wed 29 June, Kings Head, Swinton Street, WC1.



EXCLUSIVE PICTURE from Brazil shows riot troops moving to crush student demonstrations.

Brazilian dictator arrests 500

FIVE HUNDRED students have been arrested and an opposition leader thrown out of Parliament in the Brazilian dictatorship's latest crackdown.

The students were delegates at an assembly of college faculties from all over the country to demand the restoration of democratic rights. The Geisel Government is trying, so far without success, to revive the state-sponsored National Union of Students.

It is a last-ditch bid to stop the

From a correspondent

revival of the student opposition which already threatens to spread into the workers movement. Of the eight oppositionists arrested at the end of April — including members of the Workers League, the Brazilian supporters of the Fourth International — a number were rank and file leaders in the workers movement.

But repression on its own has not

worked. The eight have become the focus of a mass campaign which even the latest arrests have done little to stop.

Geisel has also clamped down on the only legal opposition, the Democratic Brazilian Movement (MDB). MDB leader Marco Stito has been removed from his seat in the mock-Parliament after making a speech which the Government claims was a paraphrase of a recent communiqué by the illegal Communist Party.

Chileans occupy UN

From a correspondent

THIRTY Chileans have occupied the United Nations building in Santiago and started an indefinite hunger strike until they are told what has happened to relatives who have disappeared.

After the open repression of its early days, the military junta has resorted to secret arrests and the detention of political prisoners on criminal charges as a way of covering up its suppression of human rights.

Among the hundreds of Chileans who have disappeared in this way are Edgardo Enriquez, a leader of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), Jorge Fuentes, a former student leader — both of whom disappeared outside the country — and the eight young Santiago workers whose case was publicised in *Red Weekly* earlier this year.

Messages of support can be sent directly to the hunger strikers, care of Manuel Balboa, Edificio Naciones Unidas, Vitacura, Santiago, Chile. The Chile Solidarity Campaign is also asking supporters to send telegrams to Kurt Waldheim, UN general secretary, UN Plaza, New York, 1001, calling for an investigation into the cases of the disappeared prisoners.

For bourgeois society, there is something particularly shocking about Marxism's claim to speak on the subject of art. Marxists may be grudgingly tolerated when they speak of history, politics, economics — for that, after all, is their patch. But the sacred shrine of art mustn't be defiled by the grubby hands of materialists.

For isn't art the expression of all that is uniquely 'individual', the finest flowering of the 'human spirit', of the 'eternal essence' of humanity? Doesn't it float sublimely above the sordid everyday concerns, speaking of what is 'universal' and 'spiritual'? Art is the last spiritual refuge of a bourgeoisie on the run; and if even that can be analysed in a materialist way, then surely nothing is sacred.

Karl Marx once wrote of capitalism's deep hostility to artistic production. And indeed the philistinism of capitalist society contrasts sharply with that intense concern for art and culture which the Marxist tradition has always shown. It is, ironically, the materialists who have taken art seriously, as a real social force, a dynamic for transforming social consciousness; and it's the idealists, the 'cultivated' elite, who have trivialised art by reducing it to a ritual or a pastime, a cultivation of the private soul for the weary capitalist on holiday from the office.

CULTURAL CONTROVERSY

Marx and Engels were themselves formidably cultured people who seem to have read just about every important work of literature in most European languages. The Bolshevik revolution witnessed a massive explosion of artistic innovation and cultural controversy, much of it centred on the figure of Leon Trotsky. And since then there has been a rich heritage of revolutionary debate and experiment in the cultural field.

What is the relationship of art to ideology, its role in maintaining the power of class-society? To what extent can art effect a revolutionary transformation of consciousness? Should revolutionaries devote themselves to building a 'proletarian culture'? Can there be a 'scientific' analysis of art along materialist lines? What should be Marxism's attitude to the 'great' art of class-society, produced as it was out of exploitation and elitism?

These are some of the questions which the Marxist cultural tradition has raised, and they obviously can't all be dealt with here. But two main issues can be separated out: the relation of art to ideology, and the material basis of artistic production.

It's clear that art has a close relation to ideology, and so plays its part in preserving the cultural and political dominance of a ruling class. But the Marxist cultural tradition has on the whole protested, rightly, against reducing art to ideology.

POWERFUL

Art belongs to the 'superstructure' of society, and only becomes fully possible at a certain stage in the division of labour; but its relation to the class-struggle is usually by no means a direct one. Indeed art is so ideologically powerful precisely because it isn't just propaganda. By creating 'fictions', imaginary worlds which engage our sensuous and emotional responses, art can carry the values of a ruling ideology into the very bloodstream and nervous system of those subject to that ideology.

Art transforms ideological values, brings them to dramatic life, casts and re-casts them into continually fresh and surprising shapes. In doing so, it plays its part in 'resolving' certain contradictions within ideology; by re-ordering experience at an imaginary level, it produces certain potent myths which embody — and thus help to confirm — the way people live out

'Art in itself won't bring about revolutionary change. But it can become part of that process of "cultural revolution" in which women and men experience their social conditions in new forms, and thus are impelled to change their real social relations...'

TERRY EAGLETON writes on

Art and Revolution



their relations to their social conditions.

For a revolutionary, this means two things. It means that art quite often provides us with an insight into the way ideologies actually work which is available to us in no other form. This is what Engels meant when he remarked that Balzac's novels had given him a deeper understanding of French history than all the historians, economists and political theorists put together.

It isn't that the role of art is exactly

to give us a 'knowledge of historical conditions': the artist is quite free to 'falsify' history, invent things that never happened, give full rein to fantasy. But in doing so — since the artist is always rooted in certain historical conditions — the work of art will give us the 'feel' or 'experience' of life at that particular historical point, and thus contribute to a scientific analysis of the workings of ideology.

No work of art, of course, will give us a 'complete' picture of the historical conditions from which it was pro-

duced. Every art-work is related to history at a particular angle, grasps (and distorts) it from a particular ideological perspective, which may or may not correspond to the dominant ideology of the time. The way art 'reflects' ideology isn't just a matter of the artist's conscious political views. It's also a matter of what is possible within the laws of the art-form itself. For every art-form has its own laws, its own methods of procedure, which aren't reducible to the 'laws of ideology', much less to the 'laws of the mode of production'.

If I decide to write a love-sonnet, then the conventions of that particular art-form already in part determine, shape and limit what I want to say. If, on the other hand, I decide that the love-sonnet is a clapped-out artistic form, then historical materialism will want to know why: why is it that, at a certain point in history and the class-struggle, this art-form no longer seems to correspond to the way people ideologically experience their social conditions.

CULTURAL REVOLUTION

If art transforms rather than merely 'expresses' ideology, then it's possible to use it to transform ideology in a revolutionary direction. Of course, art in itself won't bring about revolutionary change; but it can become part of that process of 'cultural revolution' in which women and men experience their social conditions in new forms, and thus are impelled to change their real social relations.

It's at this point, however, that we are led on to the second issue: that of the material basis of artistic production in a particular society. I may well write a 'revolutionary' novel next week; but the obvious retort that springs to mind is — so what? Who will publish it, read it, study it? My novel will become a commodity to be sold on the market like any other; it will reach a mere handful of mainly middle-class readers; if it's successful, it may be bought up by the capitalist communications media, or made part of a university literature course to help educate the ruling class of the future.

The conclusion is that we can't change consciousness through art without simultaneously trying to change the social relations of artistic production. We don't just need new messages; we also need new media, which will break out of ruling-class cultural institutions — the art-gallery, concert-hall, elitist theatre — and transform the relations between artists and audiences.

NEW TECHNIQUES

This, indeed, was the major insight of the greatest revolutionary artist of all, Bertolt Brecht. Brecht didn't just write 'revolutionary' plays; he actually transformed the shape of the theatre and the nature of acting. Mayakovsky, the great Bolshevik poet, didn't just write Marxist poems; he developed new techniques by which to recite his poetry to mass proletarian audiences.

This isn't to argue that what we need is a 'proletarian culture'. For it's in the nature of capitalist oppression that the proletariat is culturally deprived; and thus no genuinely revolutionary culture can be merely an 'expression' of working-class experience. It needs rather to be an *intervention* into working-class experience, transforming it in a revolutionary direction by the use of new techniques which strip 'high art' of its sacred privilege and create new cultural relations between women and men.

Only by the overthrow of the capitalist state can this process be properly developed; but it's one which can be begun in the present. It's to this task above all that revolutionaries working in the cultural field must address themselves.

Open Letter to South London Feminist Group

THIS IS an open letter to the South London Socialist Feminist Group from socialist feminists on the revolutionary left. It has also been sent to *Spare Rib* and *Women's Liberation Newsletter*.

The last year has seen the emergence, in organised forms, of a current of women active in the women's liberation movement who are consciously identifying themselves as both feminists and socialists, and more importantly as women who see that the struggle for both women's liberation and the struggle for socialism are integrally connected.

As socialist feminists, we do not attempt to put either our struggle for our liberation or the class struggle in a secondary position — rather, we see both as primary. By choosing to organise separately from men, we are conscious of the revolutionary necessity for self-organisation, and we see women's self-organisation in two lights.

We have found through our own struggles that we can only begin to build ourselves and our strength by working as women together, and we also see that the very fact of our self-organisation has a revolutionary dynamic which takes forward the struggle for socialism among many sectors of society.

Yet recently a confusion has arisen as to how our autonomous organisation as socialist feminists can best be carried out, and this has found its

expression in the decision of the South London Socialist Feminist Group to refuse the right of participation to women who are members of groups on the revolutionary left.

Arguments were brought forward which attempted to equate the WLM's decision to organise separately from men with this decision to organise separately from socialist feminists on the revolutionary left. We think that this argument is a distortion of our reasons for self-organisation.

We believe that as socialist feminists it is necessary to have serious discussions together as to how best to take forward our common struggle. We neither believe that our revolutionary organisations have all the answers as to how to carry our struggle forward, nor do we believe that participation in a mixed organisation will necessarily preclude honest and open debate inside the socialist feminist forms of organisation.

As socialist feminists we counterpose ourselves to radical feminists, who see the sexual division as the main source of our oppression as women. Rather, we see the necessity to make links with all those forces who are seeking revolutionary change.

To exclude from socialist feminist organisations women from the far left is not only to leave those women who are struggling against sexism in their mixed organisations even

more isolated in their struggles, but also to exclude the possibility of making links with groups who are also attempting to help create the conditions for revolutionary change.

We are distressed also at the criteria being used in this exclusion policy. Does the decision to exclude women from left groups include also women who are organised in reformist organisations such as the Labour Party and the Communist Party? How can we determine whether membership in a democratic centralist organisation will have a worse effect than participation in organisations like the Labour Party, whose Government is in the process of attacking the very rights we are fighting for? We think that all women who are willing to take up the fight, both theoretically and practically, should be able to join with other socialist feminists.

We think, sisters, that it is time to have an open discussion on these questions, and if we cannot do so within the context of the socialist feminist group in South London, let us at least do so on the pages of this periodical. We would hope that as women with common goals we will all be able to unite in struggle together.

ANNIE JANOWITZ
MINNIE JANSEN
JUDITH ARKWRIGHT
(South London)

Stop these little attacks

UNFORTUNATELY the first two issues of *Socialist Challenge* have been marred by unnecessary attacks on the *Socialist Workers Party*. In the first issue the comment of John Strauther was at least a letter, so its printing was a bit unfortunate in the first issue but defensible.

The second issue, however, has a quite gratuitous attack on the SWP and Spain. Certainly the Spanish LCR is actually bigger than the British SWP, but it is quite false to say it is the largest and strongest group in Spain — as the SWP is in Britain. Although the LCR is growing very rapidly and is the largest Trotskyist group, three extreme left organisations in Spain are numerically larger. In politics, knowing the real strength of forces, and not engaging in exaggeration, is vital. The comments on Spain therefore help to spread confusion and not clarity.

Finally, what on earth is supposed to be achieved by including a four-inch attack on the SWP? There are real debates to be had with that organisation — issues which should be debated out in the columns of *Socialist Challenge*. Serious polemics have a place. But little slide attacks only divert from the really big issues. These little

attacks could be the half-pennyworth of tar that spoils the ship. They should be stopped.

JOHN ROSS (North London)

CAN *Socialist Challenge* rise to the new aims its first editorial set it? Many on the left will be expecting it to prove itself nothing more than the old *Red Weekly* in a new package at a new price. Their suspicions will be confirmed if the vitriolic and often ill-informed attacks on other groups that sometimes appeared in *Red Weekly* reappear in the new paper.

The absence of any editorially-sanctioned material of this nature from the first *Socialist Challenge* is an encouraging sign. But if *Socialist Challenge* is to invite articles from all and sundry, it will have to adopt some policy as to what is and what is not worthy of inclusion, and what, if included, should have editorial disclaimers or criticisms appended. A case in point is the letter 'On the SWP in the first *Socialist Challenge*'.

The 400-word straitjacket is considerably kinder to those seeking to promote slanders and distortions than to those who try to refute them. Suffice to say that the letter contains wide-ranging and general attacks —

'right-wing course in the Labour Party', 'combined syndicalism with opportunism', 'fought against socialist policies', 'uncritically tail-ending the Communist Party', 'sectarianism and bureaucratic centralism', 'bureaucratic expulsions', 'Menshevism' (!) — which it does not substantiate in the slightest.

On top of this there are all the old slanders — support for the USA in Korea, support for the troops in Ireland ('of course'), only reluctant support for the NLF in Vietnam, and so on — worthy of Healy on a field day. And then the writer compares the SWP to the WRP! And wonders at the hostility of some SWP members!

I remember the old *Red Weekly* expressing the hope that *Socialist Challenge* would become a forum for non-sectarian debate on the left. Given this, the editorial board has an obligation to take a firm position on the sort of articles the paper carries. If it is to flourish, *Socialist Challenge* must either refuse to carry unconstructive sectarianism, or must be seen to be the first to criticise such material. If it is to provide an uncritical platform for this sort of rubbish, it is heading for a speedy and deserved demise.

G.W. CHAPMAN (Oxford)

Having a good time in Tameside

TAMESIDE UNITED Revolutionary Front held their first meeting, one against the Social Contract, on this recent wet and wintry Saturday. The first half, held on Ashton Market Ground, faced an audience which consisted briefly of one or two workers, several stallholders, the odd pensioner, a middle class religious nut, and of course the crank who rushed past shouting 'Communists, communists'.

After an hour speaking to what seemed a vast empty space, we moved to the shopping precinct and started all over again. Strangely enough a good time was had by all. Two of the speakers had never spoken in public before, and the speakers ranged from Labour Party, Big Flame, and Tameside IS (ex-SWP).

We sold 16 copies of 'The Case Against the Social Contract' and many of *Tameside Chopper's* cuts bulletin. We didn't have a sale of *Socialist Challenge* because the IMG section of the front had overslept after a party the night before.

The united front didn't appear out of the blue. For a year or so we have been working together in the various rank and file action groups in Tameside. We on our part in Tameside had adopted the French slogan 'No Enemies on the Left'. The calibre of comrades from the other tendencies and parties made this an easy task. Although we constantly argued our different positions, we all took for granted that the others were also revolutionary with similar aims to ourselves.

Six weeks ago Tameside IS (ex-SWP) took the

initiative in calling a meeting of the various tendencies with the objective of forming a Revolutionary Federation. We drew up a federation agreement which was agreeable to all the tendencies and individuals. Six weeks and four meetings later the tendencies represented are as follows: Anarchist, Big Flame, Communist Party, Labour Party, Tameside IS, and some without party affiliation.

We all realise that it is early days yet, and although I write in a personal capacity I feel that I speak for us all in saying that we feel that we have taken a few steps in the right direction.

The advantages we enjoy are as follows. Firstly, we present a united face to the working class in Tameside. Secondly, we are able to carry out revolutionary political activity on a united basis, instead of formerly only rank and file activity.

Thirdly, we can discuss and debate a wider range of political generalisations than was possible before, and so test and clarify our own ideas. Our latest indoor meeting, for instance, was on the issue of Anarcho-Syndicalism, something many of us were only aware of vaguely, and yet a tendency some of whose positions have become that of the present revolutionary groups in Britain today.

We send our best wishes to *Socialist Challenge*, with the hope that both it and we maintain and achieve our present aims and objectives.

DAVE HALLSWORTH
Tameside International Socialists (ex-SWP)

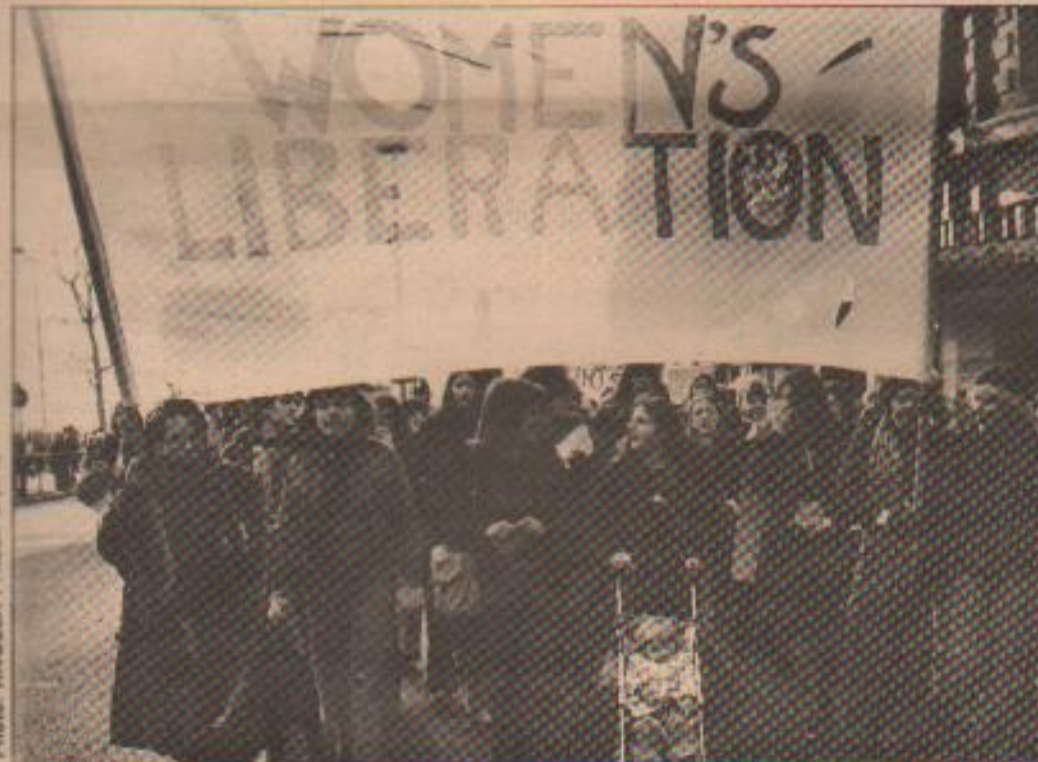


Photo: ANGELA PHILLIPS (IP/L)

The CP connection

THE DICOTOMY inside the Communist Party as presented in *Socialist Challenge* (9 June) as, on the one hand, opponents of 'a left social democratic programme' who back 'the bureaucratic regimes in Eastern Europe', and on the other, left social democrats 'with correct, though very partial, criticisms of bureaucratic crimes against the working people of Eastern Europe', is clearly overschematic by itself.

But what is worse is *Socialist Challenge's* idea of selecting elements from both sides. What this obscures is the essential connection between the various elements of political practice. It is not fortuitous that many of those who uncritically idolise the existing socialist regimes also have a view of sexual politics that can only be labelled reactionary; nor that their attitude to errors in

the workers' states colours their view of politics in Britain with a crude dogmatism. One of the threads running through much of Lenin's work (theoretical-practical) is the necessary connection of such elements.

The attempt to separate off a 'revolutionary Marxist strategy in Britain' from international positions thus leads to problems with the nature of socialist opposition, for the views of those whose right of expression is defended from a liberal standpoint in *Socialist Challenge* are the very ones which cannot countenance a socialist opposition in the workers' states. The contradiction is glaring when Oliver MacDonald notes that 'the Frenchites, though denied elementary minority rights, don't challenge the rules'.

PETE MASON (SW London)

Expropriation?

PERHAPS I'M being pedantic, but I was surprised to see that your four points in 'Our Policies' did not include the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the setting up of a planned economy.

Won't readers of *Socialist Challenge* remain a little confused if this point is not made absolutely explicit?

VALERIE COULTAS (Brighton)

Banner boring

CONGRATULATIONS on the new paper, about which I am very enthusiastic.

Just one comment. I find the way 'Socialist Challenge' is printed on the paper's banner boring. When you printed some pictures of Continental papers some weeks ago, the banners were imaginative and more vigorous.

What about a competition with a prize (say £25) for a new banner?
PAT MAGILL (Manchester)

JUBILEE RACISM

In order to show its sensitivity to the racism and chauvinism so prevalent here, the local Jubilee organisers put on a spectacular show. The re-enactment of Rorke's Drift, with the British 'thin red line' gunning down hundreds of savage Zulus — complete with locals in boot polish as the savages.

This brutal act of expanding British imperialism was supposed to be fun for the local people. I am sure that Leicester's Asian and West Indian population really enjoyed it.

Not political? Ask the National Front. They counter-picketed a local anti-racist demonstration against this insult. Local Front members claimed that the left are 're-writing history'. Generous coverage in the *Leicester Mercury* in the special Jubilee issue ('keep it forever') showed the young Britons amusing themselves as the blacks hit the ground.

Imperialist ideology is very strong, and we see here how the Front is fuelled by the local burghers' nostalgia for the good old days of colonialism. All I can say is Soweto to the lot of you!

PAUL ULMSTON (Exec. Member, Leicester South Labour Party).

MARXIST SYMPOSIUM

THE EUROPEAN REVOLUTION

sessions on
'eurocommunism'
gramsci **spain**
poulantzas
women's struggles
eastern europe
revolutionary strategy

speakers include
ernest mandel
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Socialist Challenge



Little light on the journey from Jarrow

FROM SOCIALIST theatre groups we have come to expect well produced, well thought out political plays. Our expectations are not met by Pirate Jenny's latest production, Alex Glasgow's *Whistling at Milestones*.

The play attempts to give a detailed account of the 'progress' of the Jarrow march to London in 1936, initiated when the town's steel works and shipyards closed. This is effected through quasi-documentary episodes, linked by a dialogue between an old Jarrow marcher and his 1970s unemployed grandson.

Unfortunately the play is full of stereotypes, and fails in its attempts to expose the Labour Party and suggest any coherent alternative. Ellen Wilkinson was the local Labour MP who led the march and attempted throughout to keep it

by HILDA KEANE

apolitical in order to encourage wide support from the Tories and the Church on the grounds that Jarrow was a special case. In *Whistling* she is portrayed first and foremost as a tyrannical and hysterical woman.

She bosses the marchers about, telling them to avoid politics; plays the prima donna at the Labour Party conference, with the accompanying feminine tears, and when finally the Prime Minister informs her that Jarrow will die, she again bursts into tears and exits rapid stage left.

The other woman, the Jarrow marcher's wife, Lizzie, and the

doctor are the familiar stereotypes of stoical Geordie women. Lizzie accepts the cut in dole and the betrayal of the marchers as if such things were natural.

The marchers themselves come off no better. No clear alternative to the betrayal of the Labour Party is put forward. The marchers are seen as thick, smelly workers with charming Geordie accents who look up to their superiors; who don't understand what politics are, and who wonder, in idiot fashion, why the MP won't let communists on the march.

SCEPTICAL

Added to this, there is a scene where a self-educated worker, who has used his years on the dole to educate himself through avid reading at the local library, says he is sceptical about the MP's motives. However, he mispronounces the word 'sceptical'. And when he says he's read Marx and shows sympathy with communism, this comes across as a humorous and condescending interlude.

In their efforts to be both 'Brechtian' and popular, Pirate

Jenny have gone astray. Not only do we not empathise with the marchers, but we are encouraged to see them as moronic pawns in a political game they could never understand. In the playwright's desire for a non-emotive truth, the workers themselves are deprived of a point of view that can interpret their struggles, and the march is presented as episodic and purely narrative.

The end of the play illustrates their lack of strategy. The grandson says, quite correctly, that the march was a defeat since they didn't get jobs and he — thirty years later — is unemployed. 'If there was a march today I'd see it wasn't like that', he adds. 'In which case', replies Grandpa, 'you've learnt something from the march'.

Curtains. No mention of any political marches today, like the Right to Work marches; no mention of occupations against redundancies, and none of the successful struggles against the trades union bureaucracy. It's all very well for the bourgeoisie to jump on the 'when the boat comes in' bandwagon. From socialist theatre we want and deserve a lot better.

Immortalising a battle for power

BOMBED to extinction during the last war, Hamburg has heaved itself out of its ruins to proclaim the miracles of the West German economy. The heroic attempt by Hamburg workers in 1923 to take power during the economic chaos following France's seizure of the Ruhr has nowhere been more brilliantly described than by Larissa Reissner in *Hamburg at the Barricades*.

Her death from typhus at the age of 31 was mourned by friends and workers whose battles, according to Radek, she had recorded in a way that 'could only be described by one in whom the soul of a great poet was joined with the soul of a great warrior'.

Born in 1895 of a German father and Polish mother, Larissa grew up in Germany and France. Her lawyer father began to hide frayed cuffs under the table as he found his sympathies

with the socialists, and warm family friends were made with the Liebknechts and their working-class neighbours.

In 1905 the Reissners moved to Petrograd. Larissa's adolescence was spent in the aftermath of the first revolution, and for a while she pawned in her politics for poetry, refining a restless intensity which came closest in style to the Acmeist school.

But February 1917 found her active in workers' clubs, writing

by Cathy Porter

for Gorky's paper, tersely attacking Kerensky and all alliances with the bourgeoisie, and giving voice to the creative struggle of the working people. Immediately after October she was cataloguing the art treasures of the old regime, that they might be passed intact to the victorious workers' state.

But as the waves of counter-revolution threatened the very existence of that state, she left for the Czech front to serve in the Red Army and the Volga fleet. In *The Front*, one of the most remarkable accounts of the Civil War, she entirely writes herself



out of the events she described.

Her return to Moscow in 1923 filled her with apprehension, for the poison of capitalist morality was spreading and the international revolution was failing to mature. It was with joy that she left for Dresden in October as a correspondent. There she heard of the events in Hamburg, and temporarily frustrated in her attempts to get there, she wrote her sketches on the stark misery of working life in Berlin.

DEEP SCHOLARSHIP

Finally reaching Hamburg, she was able in her own unique language to convey the revolutionary hopes and feelings of the workers at the barricades, on the streets and in their homes. *Hamburg at the Barricades* is the result of deep scholarship, for her reading programme through these weeks was vast. It is also an immortalisation of the workers' own 'great, simple and tragic experiences'.

Hamburg at the Barricades, and Other Writings from Weimar Germany, by Larissa Reissner, translated from Russian by Richard Chappell. Published by Pluto at £4.80.

COMMENT

The making of a poet

I WAS DEEPLY disappointed that in your first issue you chose to publish a review of a book of poems by Steve Cohen that was in no sense at all responsible to the serious questions involved in formulating a materialist poetics.

I have not seen the book itself, but the review showed no understanding at all of the practice of writing. Instead it juxtaposed in a very banal way the contents of a life (militant, Jewish, troubled) with the contents of a poem. No person, least of all someone who writes, is merely a collection of attributes (gay, Jewish, socialist). It is the worst kind of 'essentialism' to present someone in that way, and a completely undialectical form of argument.

You cannot read off the nature of someone's artistic production in such a deterministic fashion. There is always a discrepancy between what one apparently is and what one does. On this question, see Trotsky's discussion of Proletarian Art (its possibility or otherwise) and his — measured — defence of those poets who had been Futurists:

'It is not surprising, then, that this contemplative intelligentsia is able to give, and does give, a better artistic reproduction of the revolution than the proletariat which has made the revolution, though the re-creations of the intelligentsia are somewhat off line...'

'But if we should eliminate Pilyak with his The Naked Year... if we should eliminate Mayakovsky and Esenin, is there anything that will remain for us but a few unpaid promissory notes of a future proletarian literature?' (On Literature and Art, p.55)

In the review it was apparently

assumed that the writer's political lapses could be traced back directly in terms of a one-to-one correspondence between poem and membership (held or lapsed) of a particular revolutionary group. There is a confusion here. Do we become poets when we join political groups, as if by magic?

Admittedly, the extracts from the book showed little awareness of language as a delicate material to be worked. Instead it seemed that it was the jocular 12-bar blues school of writing that was followed. This school of would-be political writing has nothing to do with the possible measures of English writing.

It is a sentimental device that also, incidentally, tends to violate cadences of the blues itself, since tension between voice and instrument is lost. As for its politics, it tends to drift off into a facile populism (as in Adrian Mitchell's hands) that mirrors the banality of the poetic form.

I'd make two suggestions. Either present us with a serious discussion of issues in poetics — for instance, the cultural struggles in the USSR between 1915 and 1928. Or present us with a serious analysis of poets writing in English today (or indeed, in any other language) who are working with a real awareness of the problems of the relationship between social life and its representation in language. It is quite possible that such people do not at present belong to political groups — that has to be accepted.

RUSSELL BOYDE (Leeds)

The Jews and the Gentiles, by Steve Cohen, is published by Moss Side Press at 30p, and is available from Grass Roots Bookshop, Oxford Road, Manchester.

COMMENT

Brass bonded

IT IS TRUE that brass bands offer a magnificent spectacle of colour and power, as Peter Burton wrote in last week's *Socialist Challenge*. But it isn't true that the media ignore them — although, as on Radio 3, they're treated as a minority taste. Or that they don't appear on demonstrations — they're always there on May Day.

Above all, it isn't true that brass bands constitute 'probably the only music in Britain that's of the people, by the people, and for the people'.

Brass bands, like choral societies, were introduced into mill and mining country in the first half of the last century by Methodists, mill-owners, and all manner of bourgeois moralists, because they believed that the discipline in co-operation and training in harmony which mass musical performance required was able to wean the people from vicious indulgences (Minutes of the Committee of the Council on Education, 1840-41).

And, if properly directed, it has a tendency to incline the heart to kindly feelings, and just and generous emotions (Central Society of Education, First Publication, 1837). Clearly, therefore, the brass band movement originated and grew up as a tool of bourgeois ideology.

Moreover, the contests which Peter Burton admires so much were not a natural activity of the working class. They were organised for them, often on a national scale, by do-gooders who persuaded railway companies to offer cheap fares because they saw this kind of music-making as 'an abiding pastime', and, in the later part of the century, as a way of improving the relations between capital and labour.

Further, the promotion of brass bands involved considerable commercial advantages. First it required the invention and manufacture of instruments that were easier to play by

workers with 'hands horned and often malformed by their daily toil' (Enderby Jackson, 'Origin and Promotion of Brass Band Concerts', *Musical Opinion*, 1 March 1896).

Secondly, it was one of the means supported and exploited by music publishers in the face of the development of a mass market for commercial popular music.

I am afraid that Comrade Burton's attachment to brass bands is a sentimental relic that cannot be sustained in the face of real historical evidence. I'm not saying that brass band music isn't often very good music. But Burton's uncritical attitude testifies to the success of the very same process of bourgeois moral education which not only explains the development of the brass band movement itself, but is also responsible for having robbed the working class of so much of its own cultural initiative.

We cannot develop the recovery of this initiative — and its integration with political struggle — merely by trying to salvage things like brass bands. Certainly not without a clear understanding that they must also undergo a radical transformation.

MICHAEL CHANAN (North London)

BOOKMARX CLUB

Selections for third quarter 1977:
 29p per July
 List A: Southern Africa after Soweto
 Callinicos and Rogers
 Daughter of Earth
 Agnes Smedley
 ? one other title
 List B: Biography of James Connolly
 Samuel Lewinson
 List C: Destiny
 David Edgar
 Poems and Ballads
 Wolf Bierman
 List A plus either List B or List C (please state preference) for £4.50.
 Details: Bookmarx Club, Bookmarks, 265 Seven Sisters Road London N4 2DE Tel 01-832 6145.

Workers act to ensure film premiere

by SOL ABRAMOVITCH

WHILE MANY people understandably get annoyed that so much attention is given to films which are never seen outside London, UCS shop stewards have just acted to ensure that *Cinema Action's* new film from the Clyde will be premiered in Glasgow in spite of a refusal to show it by the city's Lyceum cinema.

The shop stewards went to see the proprietor of the Lyceum after he had accepted a booking for the film, but then became nervous and laid down conditions which included a demand for a guarantee of £200 per showing. The result of the meeting was that he cancelled the film altogether. So the stewards

themselves hired the City Hall, where the film will now be premiered at 7pm on 24 June.

It is just the kind of initiative which can begin to break the stranglehold over film distribution exercised by the commercial cinema, as a result of which so many films are never shown outside the capital.

Film from the Clyde — which will also be shown at the Other Cinema in London at 6.45pm during the week beginning 24 June — deals with the mass mobilisation of Clyde workers against closures and unemployment, and with the factory occupation at Fakenham in Norfolk by women

shoe workers.

The film was financed and produced by the Clyde shipyard workers, the UCS Fighting Fund, Clydebank Town Council, Danish shipyard and dock workers, and by *Cinema Action*. It was thus filmed from inside the struggle and is part of that struggle. So it also represents a demand for an increasing working class share in determining the structure and processes of contemporary media such as film.

Cinema Action make a practice of accompanying their films so as to participate in discussion after the showing. The film can be hired from them, at 35a Winchester Road, London NW3.

Socialist Challenge

Soweto: Freedom Fighters Must Win!



Photo: D. M. COOKSON

SOME 2,500 people marched through London last Saturday to mark the anniversary of the Soweto uprising in South Africa.

This number represented a considerable success, considering the failure of the demonstration's organisers, the National Union of Students, to seriously build it, and the positive harm they did to the cause of solidarity in the preceding weeks with their sectarian decision to exclude Tsietzi Mashinini, the former Soweto students' president, from their platform.

At least half the demonstration was made up of the united contingent organised by the Socialist Students Alliance and the National Organisation of International Socialist Societies, reflecting the leading role of the far left in building solidarity with the South African struggle in the student field.

An even larger and broader proportion of the demonstration shared the SSA and NOISS criticism of the NUS Executive

majority's splitting tactics and backed their call for an alternative platform to the official one, on open and democratic principles. At the end of the demonstration 600 — a quarter of the demonstration — gathered around the official platform. A big majority gathered instead to hear the alternative viewpoint.

The ludicrousness of the NUS Executive majority's position was highlighted by the fact that on this day they had no-one on their platform who had been involved in the Soweto struggle.

From the alternate platform, former secretary of the Soweto

SRC, Barney Mokgalle — who had flown in especially from Africa for the occasion — brought greetings from Tsietzi Mashinini and other leading Soweto militants. He spoke out against sectarianism in the liberation and solidarity struggles and urged everyone there to continue the fight for solidarity with the liberation struggle. The supporters of the alternate platform responded by filling the whole square with resounding chants of 'No slanders — no exclusions — solidarity' and 'Victory to the Freedom Fighters'.

Socialist unity in Ladywood

The constituency of Ladywood in Birmingham has become vacant. The sitting Labour MP, Brian Walden, has moved elsewhere.

The Planning Meeting called by the International Marxist Group and Big Flame in Birmingham on 2 July to discuss a national appeal for 'Socialist Unity' candidates at the next general election therefore takes on a more immediate significance.

The meeting will take up the question of the Ladywood constituency and the

necessity of having a Socialist Unity candidate to avoid the mistakes of Stechford. An invitation is being sent to all socialist groups inviting them to participate.

Planning meeting on 2 July at 'Golden Eagle', Hill Street near New Street station, Birmingham starting at noon.

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



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

Anti-racist lobby call

LABOUR PARTY conference last year voted for resolutions on racism calling for the repeal of the racist immigration laws. Needless to say none of this has been implemented by the Labour Government. Since then the Labour Party has organised one demonstration against racism. Nothing else.

In the meantime the right wing are on the move both on the extreme right and in the Tory Party.

Socialist Challenge is in favour of a Day of Action On Racism outside (and also inside) the Labour Party conference in Brighton this autumn. We are organising an initial meeting of organisations which would support laying siege to the Labour Party conference in October. For further information write to: *Socialist Challenge* (Day of Action), 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.

A fiver for Socialist Challenge

'THOSE who pay the piper call the tune'. It's true about the capitalist press and it has never been shown so clearly as in the last week with the reporting of Grunwicks.

So we must get our support from those who we want to call the tune — our supporters throughout Britain.

We know how much it will cost to keep our paper thriving — £600 per month. That is why we are asking readers to make a big political commitment to the success of our new paper, by pledging a fiver towards the total we need by September — £1,800.

We are confident that we can do it. The first two issues have been sold out. The response from the more responsible sections of the far left has been fraternal, if wary. Most of all, you, our readers, are getting organised.

The speaking tour which launched *Socialist Challenge* went to areas which revolu-

tionaries had not reached.

Like Hebden Bridge in Yorkshire, like Worcester, where out of the 32 people attending the meeting 15 pledged themselves to forming a *Socialist Challenge* readers' group. And in a whole number of other smaller towns like Wigan and Warrington in the North West.

It is the mushrooming activity around the new paper which makes us confident that a fiver is not too much to ask that the new and vital project of the left can succeed.

We know that this is a substantial sum. But then it's a very substantial project.

Start sending them to us now! More importantly organise in your supporters' group to go out and about to collect them. And when you've done that, send them in to:

Fight for Socialist Challenge, 328/329 Upper Street, London N1.

Socialist Challenge

WIELD A SOCIALIST OPPOSITION — FOR A UNITED REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRACY

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

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