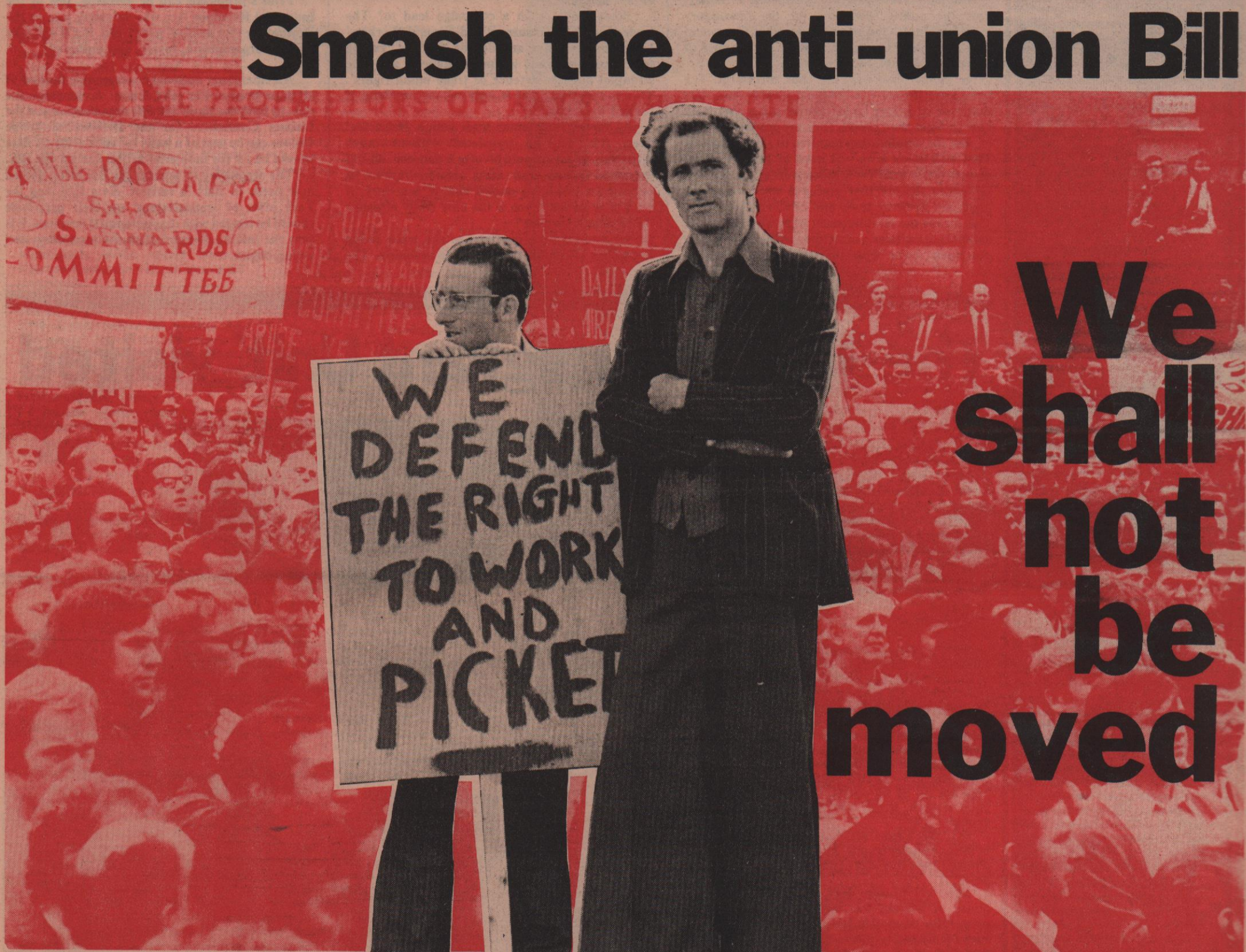


Socialist Challenge

Smash the anti-union Bill



**We
shall
not
be
moved**

James Prior and the rest of the Tory cabinet have declared war on every trade unionist and every picket line.

That is what lies behind their proposals on trade union 'reform'.

Peel off the polite language in which the Tories' intentions are couched; take away the phoney offer of 'consultation', and just what do the proposals amount to.

They mean, among other things:

Out go flying pickets, a tactic used since the start of this century by trade unionists, and exemplified by the miners' strike of 1972.

Out goes the 'blacking' of goods, a tactic used since the birth

of the modern trade union movement.

Out goes solidarity picketing, again a tactic which has been used for generations by working people, and most recently deployed during the Grunwick strike.

If the Tory proposals become law, any worker or trade union which used these tactics will be open to claims for massive damages from the bosses concerned.

James Prior wraps up this attack on the traditional rights of trade unions with cosy phrases like 'democracy', 'answerable to the law', 'protecting the right of

the individual', and so on.

That is as much dung as is the substance which comes out from the rear end of the cows on Prior's farm.

The issue is about the democratic rights of working people.

The right of every worker to picket at a factory or depot gate, in any way connected with her or his strike.

The right of every worker to join the picket line of a fellow worker in solidarity with the strike being waged.

The right of every worker to refuse to handle goods produced or delivered by scab labour.

These are rights which working people have fought for generations to win.

They were not won by cosy chats in Downing Street, by polite 'consultations' with Tory governments, or by taking out applications in the High Court.

They were won by mass action, mass mobilisations, 'illegal' strikes and display after display of working class solidarity.

They were won that way and that is the way they should be preserved.

Let the biggest picket line this country has ever seen be organised to defeat the Tory proposals. And let it stand together, and proclaim together, 'we shall not be moved'.

Remember Saltley, remember Pentonville

AT THE HEART of the Tory proposals on the trade unions is the plan to drastically curb the right and effect of picketing. No more Saltleys, no more Grunwicks, that is the declaration from Thatcher and Prior. Picketing will be limited to those involved in a dispute and to the site where that dispute is taking place.

But let us remember what happened at Saltley, how the police tried to stop the 'secondary picketing' there, and what happened at Grunwick, how the police attempted to limit the number of pickets outside the factory gates.

In neither case were the cops successful. The reason was the mass forms those pickets took. It is that type of action which provides the lesson on how to fight the present Tory proposals.

But the mobilisation required to smash the new Tory anti-union laws will need to be of a much greater order than even those seen at Saltley and Grunwick. In the first place, it will have to be organised in every town and city in the country. This means the establishment of local trade union defence committees, called by an authoritative labour movement body with the aim of organising a

campaign against the Bill and for the maximum defence of trade union rights.

Such committees would have three key jobs: to involve the maximum number of rank and file trade unionists to fight against Prior's Bill; to establish an organisation capable of resisting the Tory threats; and to build up the maximum pressure for all-out action.

What should such a campaign lead to? The leadership of the Transport and General Workers' Union has tabled a motion for the TUC calling for 'maximum trade union resistance', and 'the strongest possible defence of trade union rights'. This sounds fine, but it only means anything if backed by action.

As far as 'maximum trade union resistance' goes, this can be translated without much difficulty. What it would involve is national, all-out industrial action and mass demonstrations to prevent the Bill being passed and, if necessary, if the Bill is passed. Such is the only really effective 'maximum resistance'.

It should not be confined to the trade union movement and rank and file trade unionists. The

Labour Party would also do well to call for industrial action. Callaghan has already voiced his disapproval of any such call, but Tony Benn and the Labour left should come out clearly in favour. Needed, too, is an immediate pledge that any future Labour government would repeal the proposals and establish the right to picket.

Prior's proposals can be defeated, just as the Industrial Relations Act was defeated; just as the Pentonville Five dockers were freed. But it will take massive organisation, locally and nationally.

An emergency national conference is needed of all those prepared to take action. A campaign for this, by both the Rank and File organisation and the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions can be part of a basis for such unity. A date should be set for industrial action against the Bill.

The organising to prevent the Bill being passed now needs to start in earnest. As a first step the Tory offer of 'consultation' on their proposals should be treated with the contempt it deserves. It is time the talking stopped; time the organising and action began.

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:

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

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

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

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

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, 328/9 Upper St, London N1.

The 'Illegal Immigrant Unit' visited

By Davy Jones

SCENE: A police station. It could be in any Midlands town or London. A group of police officers are sitting round the table. They look tired, but elated.

In front of them are files. On the wall behind is a list of their names followed by empty squares. They are empty because it is Monday, the first day of the new week. The police officers are all members of the 'Illegal Immigrant Unit', referred to jocularly by the unit as 'Hunt the Nigger'.

P.C. A: (looking at the triumphant sergeant next to him): 'Okay, Sarge, okay. None of us can beat your record. But then let's face it, you've been at this sort of thing for years. It's only my second year.'

Sgt. X: 'Not to worry, son, you'll learn. Better watch it though or you'll be transferred. Your deportation rate is far too low. In two years you've only got rid of six coons. Six is not good enough, sonny boy. Not good enough.'

P.C. B: 'Leave off, Sarge. None of us equals your record. You excelled yourself the other day. How did you do it?'

Sgt. X: 'I went into this Paki house. A woman was there on her own. Fifty years old. Not a word of fucking English. Smell of curry all over the place. We searched and searched, but no sign of them. Then I noticed the outdoor toilet.'

'We rushed in and there they were. All three of them crouching in a corner like frightened little monkeys. We lifted them into the van. The old bag wept and shouted abuse in Paki-language.'

'The prisoners were weeping. And then Charlie here slapped the eldest and said: "You keep your two sisters quiet or I'll ... I'll smash your face in".'

There is loud laughter and cheers. The heroism of Charlie is deeply appreciated.

P.C. A: 'How old did you say they were, Sarge?'

Sgt. X: 'The boy was six or seven, the older girl was five and the kid was about two.'

P.C. B: 'We'd have had them out on the next bleeding plane to Pakiland if that fucking MP hadn't stuck his oar in.'

Sgt. X: 'I had a quick word with Harry in the Specials. He told me that our nigger-loving MP was a red. He talks on the phone to members of the SWP. Enough talk, lads, chalk them up then.'

There is a rush to the blackboard, giggles, etc. They fill the squares with crosses. Three have nothing to cross and look crestfallen. The sergeant is



'SCRAP the immigration laws!' — part of the picket of the Heathrow detention centre held on Saturday by the Campaign Against Immigration Laws.

the easy winner. He fills three squares.

There are admiring whistles and shouts of 'He's won again'.

Sgt. X: 'Let's go to the pub and I'll tell you how I forced a 4-year-old coon in Bradford last year to tell me where his uncle was hiding.'

P.C. B: 'Yeah. Remember how we tied up his hands, and ...'

EXIT

IS THIS fiction or reality? The daily reports in the local and national press make it clear that there is a nation-wide offensive against black people.

The first small step to publicise the plight of people being deported took place last Saturday when CAIL held a picket outside the main remand centres. In Harmondsworth in

London, Risley near Warrington, and elsewhere pickets were mounted.

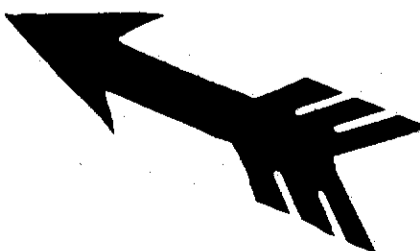
Activity

At the Anti Nazi League conference this Saturday the ANL will recommend to its local branches to make the struggle against the immigration laws an important activity.

ANTI NAZI LEAGUE CONFERENCE

SATURDAY, July 14 at 10am in the Central London Poly, New Cavendish Street, London W1

Information from ANL, PO Box 151, London WC2. 01 - 240 1714.



The butchery of back-street abortions

'That woman could so easily have been me'

FOR MANY women in Britain today, the horrors of back-street abortions remain as a vivid memory. It is 12 years since the Abortion Act was passed and there are few illegal abortions now. But if Tory MP John Corrie's parliamentary Bill is passed, thousands will be turning once again to the back streets.

By further restricting the already inadequate legislation, increasing numbers of women will fail to secure a legal abortion.

One of the main clauses in Corrie's Bill, to make abortions illegal after 20 weeks' pregnancy, will particularly affect young women, who can least cope with an unwanted pregnancy.

When she was 19, Jeanne Saint had an illegal abortion. That was in 1966, a year before the present Act was passed. It was the experience of that 'operation' which led her into the National Abortion Campaign, for which she is now a voluntary worker in the campaign's office.

Jeanne Saint told Geoffrey Sheridan about her abortion.

I knew I was pregnant two days after my period was late, and I told my mother.

We decided to try various things until my next period was due and then if nothing happened I'd tell my father.

I tried hot baths, gin, douches, running up and down stairs, but my period didn't come. My father's



Photo: TOM MARLOWE

JEANNE SAINT: 'I'd walk three steps then double up'

immediate reaction was: "Poor little bugger. What can we do to help her?" I was bloody lucky with both my parents.

My father had a chemist friend who got me some pills, which didn't work. Then he got the address of an

abortionist, a retired nurse in Durham, and arranged for her to come to London.

My abortion was front street rather than back street. My father booked a suite in the Strand Palace Hotel. I went with him and his secretary, who came along to keep me company. I was scared shitless.

I lay down on the floor in the bathroom. This woman had a bowl of what looked like soapy water, and she inserted a tube into my womb, then pumped the stuff into me.

Then I got up and nearly passed out. After that for a while nothing much happened. We spent the night at the hotel and I bled a little. The next day the woman rang and asked: "Has the package arrived?" It was a code we'd agreed on.

I said it was a very small package, and she told me not to worry, but do lots of exercises. That was the last I saw of her. I think she was paid £70.

I went home and did some violent gardening. My father took me for a walk on the common, and it was then that the contractions started. It was absolute agony. I've never had such pain in my life.

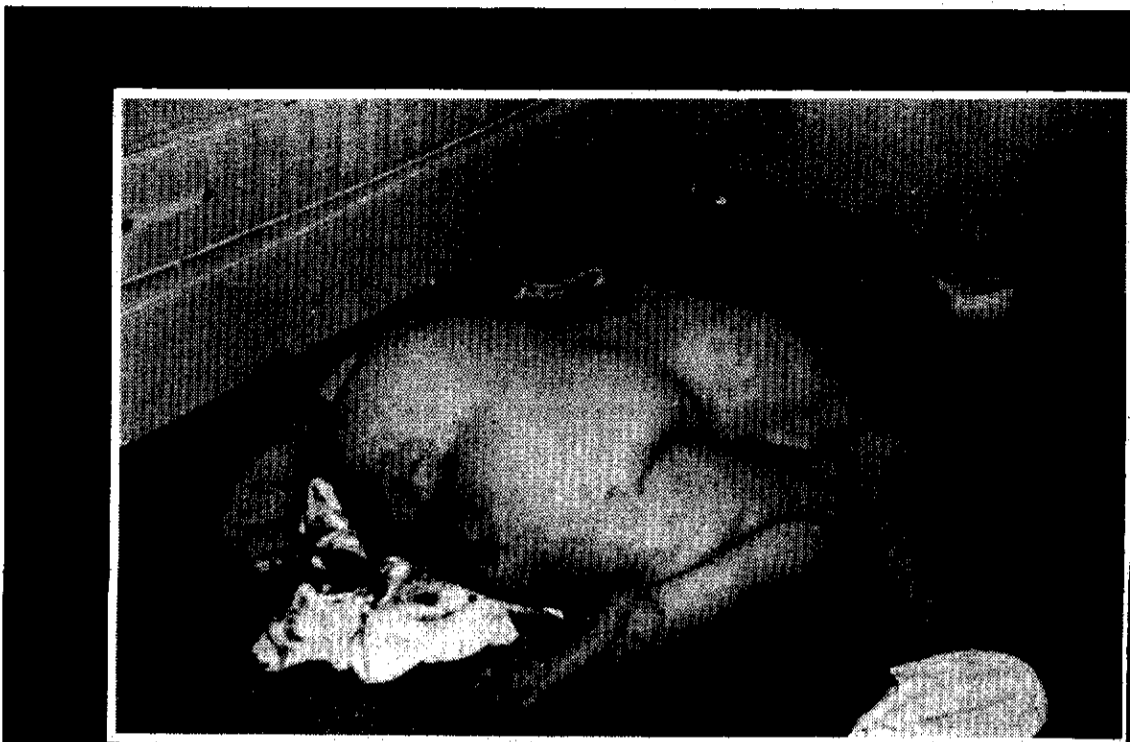
I'd walk three steps then double up. It took ages to get home. I'd sit on the lavatory, losing a bit of blood, then when that stopped I'd walk round and round my mother's bedroom, till I'd get another cramp and go back on the loo. I did that for two days without any sleep.

It was awful. I thought I was going to die. Finally, after about two days, it was more or less over. For a month after that I bled heavily and lost big lumps of congealed blood.

I was so desperate that I would have done anything not to have a baby. I went to see the film *Alfie*, which has a nasty back-street abortion scene in it, while I was pregnant, and it just seemed to me like a part of life. That it was something that happened to women, and it was going to happen to me.

Seeing that film I thought that was the way it was and how it had to be. It never occurred to me that there could be an alternative. Like so many young women, I knew absolutely nothing about anything, and I don't think it's all that different today.

I discovered last year, for example, that my sister who was then 18 had been sleeping with a guy for three weeks and through sheer ignorance used no protection at all.



THIS woman died from an air embolism during an illegal abortion. The photograph, from the files of Dr Milton Helpert, a medical examiner in New York, was published in a leaflet issued by the National Abortion Rights Action League — the pro-abortion campaign in the United States.

We considered very carefully various arguments that might be presented against our publishing it. NARAL printed this picture because it was fed up with the anti-abortionist shock-horror propaganda of enlarged foetuses and wanted to counter it with pictures showing the alternative.

The danger is that this concedes the ground to the anti-abortionists by implying we support legal abortion as a lesser evil compared to back-street abortion.

In fact, we say that quite simply it is a woman's right to choose. Legal abortion, especially if it is early, is straightforward and not shocking at all.

But this photograph shows the reality of what so many women fear — the butchery of back-street abortions. It does show the hypocrisy of the 'sanctity of life' arguments of SPUC and Life.

The horror of back-street abortion is not the reason we support legal abortion, but it is part of the reason. The photograph illustrates a reality we may have forgotten in the 12 years since the Abortion Act.

It still exists for some women, and we don't want it back again. We believe this reality should not be hidden.

She doesn't have the same relationship with my mother as I do, so if she got pregnant she wouldn't have known what to do or where to go. It could easily have become a late abortion.

My mother spent the morning of her wedding day helping her best friend have an abortion. I remember her telling me she had to empty away three bucketfuls of blood. The woman was haemorrhaging so badly that my mother rang her friend's doctor, a woman. She just didn't want to know.

My mother told the doctor that if

she didn't come she'd stand outside her house shouting "You killed my best friend". The doctor came.

I was only two months pregnant and if it had been now and if I lived in the right catchment area, such as Tower Hamlets, I could go along to an outpatient clinic and with the suction method it would take just six minutes and I'd go home the same day feeling none the worse. That's if I knew about such things.

I was reading about various types of illegal abortion methods recently and there was a description of the

method I'd had.

The book said that if there is the slightest slip, and if liquid had got into my bloodstream — if I'd had an erosion in my womb or vagina, or if the tube had cut me — it would have killed me.

"Immediately fatal" were the words in the book. The woman in that picture could so easily have been me.

I would do anything to avoid any other woman going through what I went through. It's abhorrent to me. That's why I'm in the National Abortion Campaign. **JJ**

News from nowhere

Gestapo time

FAROOQ Chaudry, who has worked as a porter at Churchill Hospital, Oxford, for four years, was seized there by two police officers on Tuesday of last week and taken to the detention centre at Heathrow.

This arrest came without warning, and without the knowledge of either Farooq's employers or his union, NUPE, which learned of it from a fellow worker who saw the arrest take place.

Farooq came to Britain in 1972, a fact which the family in Bradford with whom he then stayed has testified, so he qualifies under the amnesty for 'illegal' immigrants who

entered before January '73. But the Home Office claims he entered Britain in '73.

Farooq has no documentary evidence to show he was here before then, which means he is now due for deportation. The Home Office does not have to prove that he does not qualify under the amnesty — the onus of proof is on Farooq.

His case has been taken up by NUPE, Oxford Trades Council, Oxford CRC, and the local ANL branch. On Saturday a delegation from Oxford travelled to Heathrow to join the CAIL picket (see page 2), and next Saturday a rally is being held at the CRC, Cowley Road, Oxford at 2pm.

The detention centres, under M. Thatcher's patronage, are now looking forward to a boom. Latest development: the government has begun to implement its promise to further tighten immigration controls by giving extra powers to the police in dealing with 'overstayers'.

The new arrangement, planned under J. Callaghan's regime, means

that black people whose permit has expired and who then apply to the Home Office for an extension will be immediately visited and removed by the police.

Technical hitch

A SIGN of the times. Harry, a recently-qualified teacher and reader of Socialist Challenge, was among three applicants from an original 76 who were selected for interview for a post as lecturer grade one in the general studies department of Tottenham technical college, North London.

The three became irritated as they were kept waiting for hour after hour last Wednesday morning. A secretary apologised for the delay and said it was because a departmental meeting was taking place.

This indeed was the case. Shortly after lunch the short-listed applicants were informed that the college principal had just been told to make an immediate expenditure cut of £20,000. The three could collect their travel expenses, but there was no

more job.

Our reader was not wholly dismayed. He considered that he stood a good chance for a similar vacancy at Edmonton college of further education. But that afternoon he learned that the college was not troubling to short list applicants. The full-time post, which involved a maximum of 20 teaching hours a week, had been converted to a part-time one, with 16 teaching hours, and significantly less pay and other job benefits.

The case of the forgetful magistrate

JOHN Turner is the chairperson at Tottenham magistrates court in North London. On 5 May last year he remanded two black women in custody for three weeks pending reports. One of them, a Mauritian named Breen Dohan, was breast-feeding a child.

She informed the court inspector that she could not spend three weeks in Holloway without her child. The prosecuting barrister, realising that

an injustice had been done, went to the duty solicitor at the court and asked him to go back to Turner and ask him to reconsider.

The duty solicitor, Christopher Carstairs, did as requested. He told Turner that there was no room in the Holloway prison's 'mother and baby unit' and to remand her in custody would mean separating her from her child who was being breastfed.

The magistrate summoned the court inspector, who confirmed what Carstairs had said. Turner replied: "I have no doubt that other arrangements will be made." Carstairs was shocked. He appealed to a judge in chambers who said: "I agree that Dohan is unlikely to reoffend and accordingly I grant bail."

The reason why this matter has cropped up again is because a controversy has broken out in the pages of the Tottenham Weekly Herald. Turner wrote a letter denying that he was informed that the mother and child would be separated. Carstairs virtually calls him a liar. The debate goes on...

Meanwhile, for more information on magistrates and how they operate, turn to page 10.

Miners' conference

Who does Joe Gormley speak for now?

By Tom Marlowe

AT THE conference of the National Union of Mineworkers last Wednesday the election result for the union's overseas delegation was announced. NUM president and leader of the right wing in the union, Joe Gormley, polled 58 votes. John Weaver, the newly-elected Yorkshire member of the national executive, received 129 votes.

John Weaver is hardly a household name. He does not, like Gormley, write for the *Daily Express*.

So it is fair to speculate that the miners at the conference voted, not so much in favour of Weaver but against Gormley and the repeated calls for moderation he has made since the Tory election victory.

Other elections at the NUM conference went the same way.

Yorkshire president Arthur Scargill topped the poll for a place on the TUC General Council, while Scottish area president Mick McGahey came a narrow third. But McGahey increased the share of his vote in the vice-presidential stakes, polling 160 votes against the 87 for the right's candidate, Sid Vincent.

Success for the left was also reflected in the conference resolutions. The right did not even put up a wages resolution, and in the end the vote for £80 basic for surface workers and £140 for face workers was carried unanimously.

Moving the resolution, Scargill insisted that the claim was not just a demand but an 'instruction' which the executive had to pursue in full.

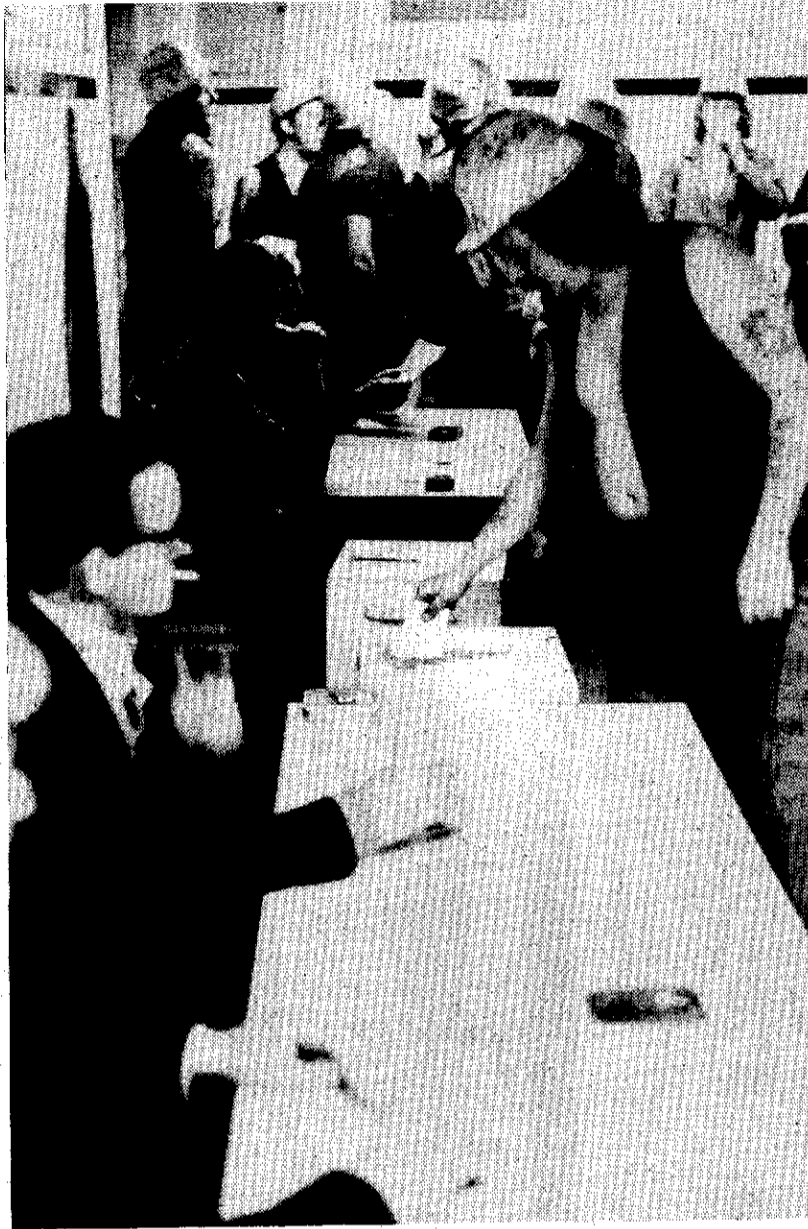
Significantly, the conference also voted to bring forward the settlement date from next March to this November, a decision which could mean a most unhappy Christmas for the Thatcher government and the National Coal Board.

The last day of the union's Jersey conference offered a further declaration of militancy on the issue of pit closures. Since last year the coal board has shut down nine pits. Six years ago 281 were open; today the number is 222.

Pledged

But delegates insisted that should the NCB press ahead with its plan to close the Deep Duffryn pit in South Wales, national strike action would follow. Scargill, on behalf of the Yorkshire miners, and McGahey, on behalf of those in Scotland, both pledged all-out action in defence of Deep Duffryn.

In the face of all this, Gormley appeared powerless. He was left to plead with the NCB that it should 'think again' over the Deep Duffryn



closure, and he admitted that with the demands for strike action to save the jobs, 'I can't stop it spilling over'.

Such humility was rather far removed from the statements which came from Gormley before the NUM conference.

Writing in the *Express* on 19 June he had promised: 'As long as I am president, the miners will never use their strength for political battles'. If Gormley thinks that strikes over pit closures and defending miners' living standards are not 'political' then he is even further removed from the real world than are the other columnists in the *Daily Express*.

If the conference resolution on Deep Duffryn is abided by, and if the Coal Board refuses to back down, the miners will be out on strike by 18 August.

But it is still too early to start stockpiling candles. Gormley and other leaders of the NUM's right have rarely won at the union's conference. They prefer to reserve their manoeuvres for the union's executive on which the largest and most left-wing areas such as Yorkshire are under-represented.

The left in the union will need to be on their guard and to organise against any attempt of the right to ignore or override the conference decisions on pay and closures.

But at least one thing is fairly certain. When Gormley finally does retire and take his inevitable seat in the House of Lords, he is unlikely to choose the title Lord Gormley of Deep Duffryn.

The lessons of the cuts

By Brian Connelly
NUT, Newham

EDUCATION cuts, introduced by the Labour government and now extended by the Tories, affect more than the educational standards in our schools. A less publicised effect of these measures is a serious deterioration in schools' health and safety standards.

At Little Ilford School, in Newham, East London, this deterioration has become so marked that teachers fear for the pupils' health and lives.

The hazards include filthy toilets, perpetually-broken windows, engineering machines without guards, and deficient heating — so bad in some classrooms that teachers refuse to use them during the winter.

Most serious is the school's inadequate fire safeguards, which 'appalled' a London Fire Brigade

officer invited by the teachers to inspect the school. The officer's report especially criticised the faulty fire alarm system which, to prevent false alarms, senior staff had rendered inoperative.

Although complaints have been made over several years to the Newham education authority, the teachers have received only a token response. Faced with this and the recent unofficial information that the authority cannot afford to make any improvements, Little Ilford School's National Union of Teachers has formed a health and safety action committee.

Local papers have been contacted, the Newham Teachers' Association [NUT] asked for its support, and a meeting for concerned parents has been arranged. Reports from colleagues in other Newham schools indicate that the situation at Little Ilford is not an isolated one.

Photo: CHRISTINE LEAH HOBBEYDAR



Keep Piers out of jail!

THE CAMPAIGN to keep Piers Corbyn, housing militant and member of the International Marxist Group, out of jail is gathering steam.

Leading rank and file members of the labour movement are being asked to put their name to the call for Piers' prison sentence to be dropped. He was convicted of breaking the trespass law at the Huntley Street eviction last summer.

Latest signatories include Arthur Latham, chairperson of the London Labour Party, and Richard Balfe, member of the European Parliament.

Piers was sentenced on 13 June to 28 days in prison for 'resisting the Sheriff' at the mass eviction of Huntley Street squatters last August. He is now on bail pending appeal.

Meanwhile the trial of Jim Paton, the last of the 14 arrested for 'resistance' at Huntley St., reaches its final stages on 2 August. Jim was not even present at the eviction, so his case — like the prison sentence for Piers Corbyn — has grave implications for trade unionists, students, or community groups involved in occupations.

The cases are the first in which the 'Criminal Trespass Law' (Part 2, Criminal Law Act 1977) has been used on a mass occupation, and the first in which the offence of 'resisting eviction' has been contested in court. Never before has a prison sentence been imposed under any section of this legislation.

Even before receiving reports on Corbyn, Marylebone magistrate Roderick Romain had declared: 'I consider there is only one correct sentence for someone who not only breaks the law but encourages others to do so.'

But the reality of the struggle of the Huntley St. squatters was explained by Piers in court. 'The intention of myself and my friends was to seek housing for all the occupants,' he said. 'We had no malicious intent, nor did we set out to break the law.'

Despite this, and despite character references from Arthur Latham and a former employer, Piers was jailed. It seems obvious there was more to the sentence than the eccentricities of a particular magistrate, and that what was being established at the court was a precedent for similar cases in the future.

This explains the importance of the defence campaigns for Piers and Jim Paton. Corbyn's appeal will be heard some time in September, but mobilisations are requested for Paton's trial at Marylebone magistrates court, Marylebone Road, London NW1, on 2 August.

Further details from the Huntley St Defence Campaign, c/o 55 Innis House, East St, London SE17 2JN. Tel 01-701 5691.

Tories don't like



By Hilary Hanks

THE HILLINGDON Tories in West London are not unique in their dislike of battered women. But their vindictiveness would have grave consequences if repeated elsewhere. Hillingdon's social services committee has just decided to withdraw funds from Women's Aid, a charitable organisation which helps battered women.

Over the past year, 60 women and 90 children have lived in the local refuge, and many more have called for advice and support. The two Tory councillors who visited the refuge revealed their priorities in no uncertain fashion. Councillor Paine was upset by the coffee stains and broken biscuits. Councillor Double (a local headmistress) was horrified at finding an 18-month-old child without a nappy.

Despite the recommendations of the director of social services, the Tory council has withdrawn its support. That women are battered, harassed, and subjected to unwelcome sexual attention are facts that the Tories prefer to ignore. They run counter to the traditional belief in the virtues of the family and the Church.

Hillingdon Women's Aid needs your help. For further details ring Pat Cammell on 01-579-4291.



ANOTHER institution the Tories don't like are law centres, writes Hugh Richards. Somewhat odd for people who believe in law 'n order. No, not at all. The law centres, you see, tend to help the victims of Tory (or Labour) law 'n order. They provide badly-needed facilities for the local community.

The South London Tories are preparing to axe three such centres, at Balham, Battersea and Garrat Lane (Earlsfield). They plan to replace them with a body under council control.

In six weeks, 26,000 signatures were collected against the closures, but to no avail. Apart from the rights of the community, dozens of legal workers will be made redundant. A campaign is under way to help the centres survive. Further information from Mike Reid on 01-223 9666.

Chrysler management provokes strike

By Alan Turner

THE FIRST real test of strength between Chrysler car workers and their ten-month-old Peugeot management is now under way.

Last Thursday a seven-hour meeting under the auspices of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service failed to break the deadlock over current pay negotiations.

Laughable

About 2,000 workers at Chrysler's Ryton assembly plant in Coventry have been on strike for more than a week over a five and a half per cent pay offer described as 'laughable' by union officials.

A further 3,000 workers at Chrysler's engine plant, also at Coventry, were due to join the strike as Socialist Challenge went to press.

Peugeot-Chrysler's reaction is a familiar one for a company which in France has used strong-armed methods to smash strikes — they have called in the law. Management is now seeking a High Court injunction to get pickets removed from inside the Ryton gates.

The pickets are using a small building just inside one of the main

gates to make tea and go to the toilet. Chrysler-Peugeot is demanding the cops throw them out. Although this would have little effect on the success of the strike, it is an indication of the tough stance being taken by Chrysler-Peugeot management.

Indeed, it seems the pay offer was in itself provocative. It is, says management, part of a package to ensure parity throughout the Chrysler-Peugeot UK combine. Because of past regional differences, this means that some will get less than others, and the Coventry workers will be hit hardest.

In fact the offer amounts to a 'levelling down' — a cut in the real wages of the higher-paid workers bringing them down to the level of the lowest paid — rather than a 'levelling up' for the worst paid. Thus, even those who benefit most from the offer, workers at the Linwood plant in Scotland, would get just 13 per cent.

Management now complains that the strike would stop a multi-million pound order from Iran which is 'vital' to the company's survival, but there are suspicions that the company may be simply looking for an excuse to announce wholesale redundancies.

These doubts stem from an announcement last month from the

French parent company that Peugeot is to open five new component plants in France; a move which could mean a run down of Chrysler UK, especially in engine and gearbox production.

Promise

It was only last August that Peugeot took over Chrysler in a move which made the company the largest car manufacturer in Europe, and which was accompanied with the promise to 'maintain and develop Chrysler activities in the UK'.

Even then the past history of the French car giant suggested bad times ahead for Chrysler workers. A survey published just before the takeover was announced revealed that of the top eight nationalised and private companies in France, Peugeot had the longest working week, paid the lowest minimum monthly wage, had the second worst accident record, and that only 10 per cent of its workers were unionised.

It now seems clear that the management in Britain is out to impose the same sort of régime here. A determined stand by all Chrysler workers — whether in Scotland or Coventry — will be necessary if the familiar duo of redundancies and wage cuts is to be avoided.

Civil servant strikers threatened with troops

By a Civil Servant

THE MINISTRY of Defence has threatened to bring in troops to smash the selective strike action currently being taken by the Institute of Professional Civil Servants.

As the IPCS stepped up their action at the beginning of the week, the Defence Ministry warned: 'If it gets to the stage where it affected health and safety or essential operational requirements, we would have to take action which would involve bringing in servicemen.'

The IPCS represents highly skilled governmental workers, such as inspectors of factories, mines and nuclear installations; explosives and fingerprint officers; and vets and architects.

Within the Ministry of Defence, the institute represents every conceivable occupation from officers on ocean tugs, to radio operators, to security officers.

A mass meeting last week was told by the institute's general secretary that the reason they hadn't heard much about the strike action in the mass media is that a D-notice had been imposed, because of information about Britain's lack of military preparedness that would otherwise be passed to the 'enemy'.

The background to the dispute is the anger felt by the 60,000 technologists involved over the way they have fallen behind in the pay stakes.

Since 1975, pay and prices

generally have risen by 70 per cent. Government technologists have had increases of between only 17 and 25 per cent.

Independent pay comparability shows that their pay is over 40 per cent behind that of their counterparts in industry. Against this background the government has offered increases of 15-22 per cent. The IPCS is claiming a rise of between 22 and 36 per cent.

The recent annual conference of the institute showed considerable dissatisfaction with the national executive's negotiating methods.

At a mass consultative meeting in London a few weeks ago, the executive's motion for a day of protest was amended to a day's strike. The difficulty is that there is no structured opposition to the leadership of the IPCS.

Nevertheless even the action taken so far has got the government worried. On Monday, 30 supervisors at the Dounreay Nuclear Power Station walked out; technicians responsible for electronic equipment used in North Sea Oil Rigs went on strike; and 21 technicians at an Admiralty establishment in London also joined the protest.

Power supplies to ordnance factories and dockyards, communications with NATO fleets and Polaris submarines, and the usual functioning of other Whitehall departments could all be affected. Yet while the strikes remain selective the government can afford to sit back and hope the action will peter out.

School students confer



Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

By Redmond O'Neill

THE COMING school year will be one of militant action by students to win their rights at school and participate in the struggles against the Tory government. That was the message from the National Union of School Students' annual conference last weekend.

The conference reflected the dissatisfaction of school students around the country with the inactivity of their union over the past couple of

years. Delegates spoke of strikes, walk-outs, and demos organised locally but with no national back-up.

Motions passed by the conference called for a new direction in NUSS, for mass action to win students' rights, and nationally co-ordinated campaigns against the cane, sexism, and army and police recruitment in schools.

The conference was disrupted when the outgoing president of NUSS, a member of the Young Communist League, led a walk-out

following the rejection by the YCL's caucus of his proposal to set up a new union. This led to a successful motion of no-confidence in the out-going president.

The elections to the union's national council and for its full-time officer posts reflected the mood of delegates, the majority of places going to supporters of Rebel and Socialist Alternative. Socialist Alternative is a grouping of Revolution supporters and non-aligned socialists arguing for a new left wing in NUSS.

Game, set, and match to Arrowsmith

PAT Arrowsmith was last week acquitted of three charges arising out of her general election Independent Socialist campaign in Cardiff South-east. Two weeks earlier she had been cleared of two other charges.

This time Pat was charged with obstructing the highway, obstructing a police officer in the execution of his duty, and using insulting words and behaviour. The charges arose out of a street meeting held by Arrowsmith during her election campaign.

On the obstruction charges, defence photographic evidence easily disproved the police accusation that Pat's meeting had led to the blocking off of a road.

As evidence for the 'insulting words', the police produced quotes from Pat saying: 'The blame for the bombing lies with Britain'; 'All you

have to do is walk down the street and the Army will stop you and search you bag'.

Her other insulting words were: 'Some say there will be a blood bath if the troops are pulled out, I say there is a blood bath now'; 'The police and Army are responsible for tortures, killings, assassination'; and 'I am a member of Amnesty International and we have irrefutable evidence of torture by Britain'.

The magistrate found it impossible to convict on this evidence and insisted that Pat, 'as a candidate was entitled to find a place to put forth her views'.

However, Pat was not awarded costs and her defence campaign needs money to pay off a number of debts. Donations to: Pat Arrowsmith Defence Campaign, c/o 108 Books, Salisbury Rd., Cathays, Cardiff.

NALGO a correction

SOME of the views on the NALGO conference as expressed in the article (SC 101) under the name of Dave Burn are not a correct or full version of Dave's own views.

A Socialist Challenge reporter covered the conference and a

combination of editorial confusion and misunderstanding of Dave's evaluation of the conference resulted in this mistake.

Socialist Challenge apologises for this error. Dave will be writing an article in a future issue of Socialist Challenge.



Photo: Pete Child

OVER five thousand people attended a rally in Trafalgar Square on Sunday in support of the Save the Whale campaign, organised in collaboration with Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, and the Ecology Party, writes Steve Walker.

The rally was timed to coincide with a meeting of the International Whaling Commission, which sets quotas for countries engaged in whaling and generally bows to the commercial pressures of the industry.

Seventeen countries have sent delegates to the meeting, including Japan and Russia which between them account for 84 per cent of the annual whale catch.

In 1972, the United Nations' Stockholm conference on the human environment called for a 10-year ban on the killing of whales. Yet over 25,000 whales were killed last year, and over two million have been killed during the past 50 years.

Several species face extinction, which — as the rally put it — 'is forever', yet alternatives are available for the various products obtained from whales.

Socialist Unity Conference
Saturday, 21 July, noon
UMIST, Manchester
Balance sheet of Socialist Unity
Tasks under the Tories

IS LENINISM

As the British Communist Party debates the of socialist feminists challenge the very basis

By Clive Turnbull

'THE LARGE number of resolutions on inner-party democracy placed on the agenda of the 35th Congress by branches and districts, the submissions we received, and our examination of the party's procedures and structure confirm that there are substantial problems in the operation of democracy within the Party which must be overcome.'

So says the 'Report of Commission on Inner Party Democracy', to be presented to the 36th Congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain in November.

The report, however, has no substantial solutions to these 'substantial problems'. It recommends a series of cosmetic changes, but there is no guarantee that even these will be passed. The CP's executive committee proposes to make amendments before the Congress.

Even if Congress does adopt the proposals the report itself remarks on the 1957 commission on inner party democracy: 'Some of its recommendations had not been carried out, or only partially carried out.'

Alternative

Six of the 16 members of the present commission, including national organiser Dave Cook, have produced 'Alternative Proposals on Four Sections'. In their view, 'the lesson to be drawn from this discussion of the 1957 report's recommendation is that it is vital to identify those features of the party's present practice which provide obstacles to urgently needed change.'

What emerges from the report, but is never spelt out, is that the obstacle lies in King Street, the Party HQ. We are told that:

* Since 1954 the overwhelming majority of EC (executive) members have been on a recommended list proposed by the retiring EC, on the initiative of the political committee.

* 'Although there are a number of non-full time PC (political committee) members, in fact at many meetings they are not present since in practice it is impossible for most of them to attend regularly on a Thursday which is when the PC meets.'

* 'PC members have copies of the main reports in advance, but other members of the EC do not, which places them at a disadvantage.'

* 'EC members do not receive minutes of PC meetings.'

* 'There can be very little change to what the PC proposes in the EC because normally all that is presented is a long verbal report not susceptible to detailed amendment.'

* The industrial advisory committees and industrial department have never made reports to the EC. Nor do the editors of the *Morning Star*.

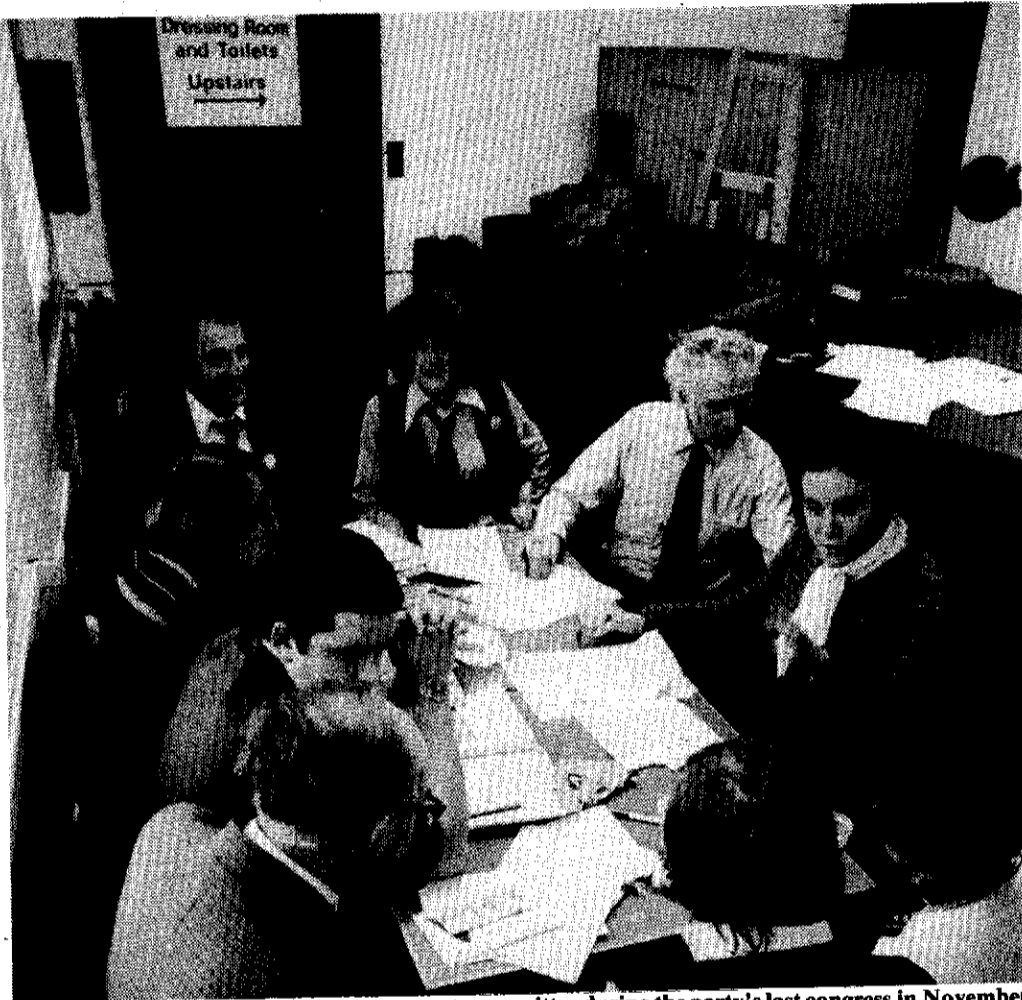
* The central Communist Party officials are accountable to no one but themselves.

One of the alternative proposals from the minority of the commission contains a bombshell as far as many Communist parties are concerned:

Circulate

'To enable comrades sharing similar experiences and/or holding similar views to develop their positions and present them to the party in their strongest form, the comrades concerned must be able to meet and discuss together at times when the whole party is discussing its policy.'

'We therefore propose that during the period of pre-Congress discussion individual comrades, groups of comrades and party organisations (branches and burgh, town, city, area, and district committees) should have the right to circulate material to comrades and to



A meeting of the CP's congress arrangements committee during the party's last congress in November 1977.

The Communist Party and democracy

party organisations and to hold meetings to discuss common experiences, interests and political positions.'

The right of tendency and faction in Communist parties has been denied for more than fifty years. The alternative proposals do not present a clear idea of tendencies, and reject the notion of factions. But they do show that some CP members at least are beginning to re-examine the norms of democratic centralism of the pre-Stalinist period.

Although opposing factions, the main report unwittingly provides a definition of the King St. gerontocracy in its description of factions:

'Generally speaking a faction can be described as a group which has drawn up a platform and campaigns for it through one or more of the following forms: meetings, conferences, journals, pamphlets, the circulation of documents and making contact across the normal structures of the party.'

'Debate and argument between factions, which are self-appointed bodies answerable only to themselves, is not a democratic way of deciding policy. A group of individuals with sufficient financial and other resources to publish a journal and pay fares for comrades to attend meetings would enjoy an advantage over others whose views might be of greater relevance to the party and interest to its members.'

But what about the political committee? It draws up a platform, campaigns for it in

meetings, conferences, journals, etc. It is self-appointed and, since 1954 at least, answerable only to itself. And it certainly enjoys an advantage over the rest of the membership.

In a revolutionary organisation the right of tendency and faction ensures that the membership is able to discuss different positions in their clearest form. Apologists for the King St. regime argue that any political line opposing the leadership must be 'alien to Marxism', or 'liberalism', or 'petit-bourgeois'.

This is a Stalinist notion; the monolithic party with its infallible leadership (and leader?). What is Marxism, unless it is a living and developing science, addressing itself to new problems and phenomena? It is perfectly natural to expect that there can be differences between Marxists.

The idea that Marxist 'purity' can be maintained by administrative means is nonsense. The only guarantee of a party consistently defending Marxist positions is the fullest education, discussion, and debate among its members. The hundreds of thousands of Polish workers who flocked to see the Pope on his recent visit are a tragic testimony to the bankruptcy of bureaucratic methods.

Reading through the dry text of the 60-page report, it becomes clear that the Communist Party leadership has no conception of the need to develop a politically conscious membership who can become leaders in their workplaces,

unions, communities, or of their own party.

In the leading bodies of the CP, individuals 'emerge' as full timers rather like leaders of the Tory Party in the past. There is no accountability whatsoever. There is no recognition in the report of the need to train a leadership, and to have the means by which members are encouraged to take on new responsibilities and develop initiative.

No wonder 'the number of comrades coming forward as candidates for the EC who were political leaders, based in their workplaces, as distinct from full-time trade union officials, was relatively low.'

Internal

Internal democracy has a further function which isn't based on an abstract right of the membership to discuss policy. It is only through the fullest internal debate that the tactics, strategy, and programme of a party can be developed. An EC with 42 members can be no substitute for drawing on all the experiences of a party's intervention in the class struggle.

A revolutionary party needs to be able to draw on the maximum experience of working class struggle, in every sector, and of oppressed layers in society. In this way the fight for the party's programme can be most clearly tested, the results evaluated, and hence the party's intervention advanced. Such democratic practices are no luxury, but a vital necessity, particularly in small organisations.

The alternative proposals argue that members of leading CP committees should 'have the right to explain in the party organisations to which they report, and in the party press, their reasons for disagreeing with any decision of the leading committee to which they belong if they have been in a minority.'

The Special Branch used to have more information on debates in the CP leadership than party members, through the 'bug' that was found in the EC meeting room a couple of years ago.

The method of 'closed' leadership and Cabinet-style responsibility has had its most extreme consequences where Communist parties are in power — in the Soviet Union, for example, with the rise and fall of Khrushchev. Political differences remained hidden from the mass of Soviet people, let alone party members.

Jeopardise

The authors of the alternative proposals correctly point out: 'One of the major concerns of others on the left is what they regard as the undemocratic character of our internal life.'

But it is not just the CP's internal life that is undemocratic; so is its practice in the labour movement. The manipulation of fronts, such as the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, repels many militants. In the Engineering Union the CP has allowed right-wingers like Boyd and Duffy to appear as the champions of democracy in the fight over amalgamation, because the CP has opposed the election of all full-time officials in TASS on the grounds that it would jeopardise the careers of these officials!

The report on inner party democracy and the 'alternative proposals' which accompany it are destined to follow the course of the report on the *Morning Star*. The more things change, the more they remain the same. It's now two years since the congress that adopted the new British Road to Socialism, and meanwhile the decline in both party membership and the *Morning Star's* circulation continue apace.

'Report of Commission on Inner-party Democracy', with alternative proposals, price 60p, from CPGB, 16 King St, London WC2.

OBSOLETE?

forms of inner-party functioning, a group of Leninism. We review both developments.

By Valerie Coultas

'BEYOND the Fragments' represents the first attempt by socialist feminists to develop a comprehensive critique of Leninism. As such it is an extremely stimulating and thought-provoking collection of essays.

Despite the book's contradictions and ambiguities, it is written in a style and form with which many women will identify on a personal level. It highlights many crucial areas of feminist practice and criticisms of the left. It is a collection which no serious Marxist can afford to ignore.

The three authors are Hilary Wainwright, a former member of the International Marxist Group; Sheila Rowbotham, who belonged to the Socialist Workers Party; and Lynne Segal, a member of Big Flame.

Hilary bemoans the non-appearance of a socialist alternative to the Labour Party over the past decade. Her remedy lies in concentrated local activities — beyond the fragments of the left, as an attempt to create the basis for the emergence of a socialist alternative to Labour on a national level.

Sheila stresses the creative spirit of '68 and the New Left, and argues that this is absent in the main groups, especially the SWP. For her, the traditions of '68 are to be found within the feminist movement.

Lynne is the most concrete in her approach. She explains her involvement in her local community — Islington, in North London — and tells us how her interrelated feminist and libertarian Marxist concepts led her to enter the portals of Big Flame.

Personal

All three stress local, direct, everyday experiences. Personal feelings mingle with political struggles. Movements of women, gays, and trade unionists have developed a 'critical consciousness'. For all three, a combination of early British socialism, different forms of libertarian Marxism, and a Marx undistorted by Lenin represents the basis for a new and popular socialist movement to 'help us meet person to person'.

It is impossible to do justice to all the issues raised in one review. Hopefully, as the authors wished, a wide debate among all sections of the left will take place about *Beyond the Fragments*. The question I wish to confront is the central conclusion of Sheila's article, that Leninism and feminism are incompatible.

Sheila considers, moreover, that Leninism acts as a block on the creativity of the class struggle. 'I think the assumptions of what it means to be a socialist carried within Leninism and Trotskyism and which prevail on the left now block our energy and self-activity and make it harder to communicate to most people...'

Sheila argues that Trotskyism and neo-Trotskyism, the latter as represented by the SWP, have taken over the manipulative approach of the Stalinist Communist parties.

Perceptive

Where the book is particularly perceptive is in its exposition of the feminist critique. Because of the subordination of women we had to change ourselves both before we could organise and while we were organising. As Sheila explains, women with children can't get up and speak, write a leaflet, or confront the police on a picket line without some kind of personal struggle against their lived identity.

What happens in 'private' — in the kitchen, in the bedroom — has to be an arena of struggle for us. Women cannot choose to make the personal political — it has to be. Thus the women's movement developed independently of men.

'We had to learn to love ourselves and other



Beyond the fragments?

women so we could trust one another without falling back on men. We inclined towards small groups, circles rather than rows, centres as information and research services, open newsletters...

This movement articulated our oppression as a sex. It showed that sex-gender relationships had been neglected by socialists. It showed that it was possible to organise informally and make an impact on society. It challenged the male left's monopoly of political knowledge.

What does Marxism and Leninism actually say about self-activity? Sheila gives us this picture:

'For Lenin the lessons of consciousness through struggle remain generally subordinate to the leadership of the party' and later ... 'organisational forms workers create only have a revolutionary validity when they are under the authority of the party.'

This is a grotesque caricature of Lenin. Let's have a look at a couple of the 'lessons of experience through struggle' that Lenin drew. Rosa Luxemburg understood the reactionary nature of German social democracy long before Lenin did. He only began to realise it was necessary to form a separate party after these leaders had voted for support for the First World War.

Lenin changed his mind over whether or not there should be a socialist revolution in Russia in 1917, not because of Trotsky's brilliant arguments, but because it was clear that the majority of peasants, soldiers and workers were not going to get what they wanted out of Kerensky.

Do Leninists argue that the actions of the Iranian and Portuguese masses were any less revolutionary because there was no revolutionary party in that country? Of course we do not.

It is the masses in motion who make the revolution. The party cannot make the revolution 'on behalf of the oppressed'.

What about the relationship between women and the party? Sheila herself rejects the argument that the WLM is self-sufficient. A revolution cannot be made by one half of humanity. But Sheila does point out that women in producing their own analysis of their oppression have developed a critical consciousness independently of the party.

In fact, the women's movement has highlighted areas of struggle — personal, psychological, sexual — that have been completely ignored by the theoreticians of the left. She points out that gays, blacks and some workers have understood the complexity of society without any help from intellectuals. Sheila implies that she means they have developed revolutionary consciousness independently of the party, but she does not baldly state this.

She points out that it is absurd to apply the concepts of 'trade union' consciousness developed by Lenin in *What is to be done* to the experience of women in the women's movement. Consciousness that develops from lived experiences of oppression (not always in trade unions) stresses the personal and spiritual meaning of being a socialist. Sheila quotes E.P. Thompson, who talks of the development of a moral consciousness.

This is in direct confrontation with the Leninist idea of the party as a 'red zone' which sallies forth with superior knowledge to 'insert, inject, imbue' others with superior knowledge untouched by human frailties, says Sheila.

Maps

'Are left politics the preserve of professionals who hold the crucial interconnecting points? Have the rest of us merely to file under, like in the game of oranges and lemons?'

A revolutionary is not someone who has a first class honours degree in Marxism. Many women have come to the realisation that we need to have an understanding of all forms of oppression in our society, not just our own, if we are to have a strategy for achieving our aims and forging the alliances we need.

A revolutionary analysis attempts to develop a global as opposed to a partial analysis of oppression: of all the class relationships, at every level of society, particularly at the level of the state. If our analysis stops at the point of production, in the home, or simply in our local community then we find ourselves trapped in reformism.

Every woman in the women's movement does not agree with the idea of overthrowing capitalism. There is a differentiation of consciousness in all these movements. Where does revolutionary theory come from? Initially, as Lenin points out, it came from outside the factories. He wrote:

'The theory of socialism grew out of the philosophic, historical, and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, by intellectuals. By their social status the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia.'

The oppressed need knowledge to guide them against the oppressors who have the most detailed and well drawn maps. Lenin did not argue that workers took no part in creating this ideology. 'They take part, not as workers, but as socialist theoreticians, as Proudhons and Weitlings.'

But he maintained that without this revolutionary theory there could be no revolutionary movement. The ruling class is always willing to influence the oppressed.

Gramsci developed Lenin's idea of the worker as a socialist theoretician. The superior knowledge at which Sheila sneers is Marxism. Yet feminist theory has been developed very much by women who were academics and intellectuals often used Marxism. She does not turn her nose up at this.

Patriarchy

Have Marxism and Leninism really been a straitjacket on women's consciousness, their self-activity? Look at the debates on domestic labour, reproduction, patriarchy, even psychoanalysis. They have often drawn on Marxism.

In fact, Marxists and feminists in the women's movement have added totally new spheres to the revolutionary analysis of society. They have striven to make socialism much more scientific in its approach to oppression in general, by pointing out that personality is socially constructed, sexual behaviour is ordered by the society in which we live, and that domestic work and reproduction are vital terrains of struggle for Marxism.

No, left politics is not the preserve of professionals. No, it is not possible to dismiss the WLM as a cultural movement.

Yes, it is true that the Marxists' programme is not fully developed on these questions. We do have to look more carefully at the terms Lenin used to characterise the 'trade union consciousness' of workers. We do have to understand that the radicalisation of women and blacks touches on wide areas of oppression — the home, the school, the family, the state. But this is not the same as implying that people come to revolutionary conclusions about capitalism 'spontaneously', without recourse to revolutionary theory, Marxism.

The women's liberation movement in Britain has many Marxist women among its ranks, precisely because it has used Marxism as Marx meant it to be used — to develop theory, not to practise dogma. The party does not have a monopoly on the knowledge of Marxism.

Polemic

The women's movement has added totally new spheres to the politics we as revolutionaries have to confront. It has shown Leninists that self-discipline and collectivity are often more effective as an approach to efficient organisation than militarism.

It has argued for consensus, self-help, and a stress on the way we live our lives, as opposed to polemic, the separation of the 'private and public' spheres of our life that Leninism traditionally stood for. It has challenged the idea that the 'party' has a monopoly of knowledge in developing a strategy for political change.

But it has not found a new route to socialism. Socialism will not be built on visions alone but through winning the ideological battles among the mass of ordinary people, to convince them that the revolutionary overthrow of this society is not only necessary but possible.

To win that debate you need to be organised nationally (and internationally), you need to have a paper to argue for your Marxist ideas and to lend guidance to the day-to-day struggles. You need to be able to build a popular socialist party, not a movement, that can challenge the hold of reformism in every area of struggle against oppression in our society.

It's a crying shame that revolutionary women like Sheila, Hilary and Lynne are not yet willing to do that.

'Beyond the Fragments' is published by the Newcastle Socialist Centre and Islington Community Press at £1.25. Available from the Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St., London N1. Add 10% p & p if ordering by mail.

As trial looms

77 Labour MPs back Charter 77

LAST WEEK the Czechoslovak political police completed their preparations for what will be the biggest trial of anti-Stalinist oppositionists in Eastern Europe since the 1950s. The trial could now take place at any moment.

The ten defendants, who are all members of the Committee to Defend Unjustly Prosecuted Persons (VONS) as well as Charter 77, now face charges involving jail sentences of three to ten years. Such savage indictments indicate that the coming

trial may be linked to an entire change of policy on the part of the Stalinist bureaucracies towards opposition in Eastern Europe.

The one question not yet decided is the sentences that will be passed at the trial. These will be decided very soon by the Party Presidium. Then the trial can be staged.

It is thus urgent to redouble labour movement protests against the crackdown. The international appeal for the release of the arrested Chartists has already been signed by more than 77 Labour MPs, including eleven members of the NEC — amongst them Tony Benn, party chairperson Frank Allaun, the chairperson of the party's international committee, Joan Lester, and Eric Heffer. The Charter 77 Defence Committee is now aiming for a further 77 signatures of Labour MPs.

The Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign, which is participating in the solidarity drive, has sent the appeal to every single Constituency Labour Party in the country and is hoping for quick endorsements from 77 CLPs. The solidarity movement is

also hoping for signatures from trade union leaders and from 77 prominent socialists in each main city throughout the country. The Communist Party leadership is being approached to support the appeal officially.

Labour MPs Phillip Whitehead and Reg Race have decided to establish a 'Charter 77 Defence Fund' to gain material help for the families of jailed Chartists from the labour movement. Donations to the fund should be sent to Reg Race, the Fund's Hon. Treasurer, c/o the House of Commons.

The civil rights movement inside Czechoslovakia has responded vigorously to the crackdown. On 3 July 320 people sent a protest letter to President Husak calling for the release of the jailed Chartists. VONS has already made up for the arrest of the ten by gaining twelve new members.

A new issue of the Charter Information Bulletin, formerly edited by Petr Uhl, has already appeared; and the journal *Quadrangle*, formerly

edited by Jiri Dienstbier, is going to continue to appear. Charter 77 has also gained two new spokespersons, Jiri Hajek and Ladislav Hejdanek, who fill the gap left by the arrests of Dienstbier and Vaclav Benda.

These and other actions demonstrate that even before the trial opens its purpose, to crush VONS and decisively weaken Charter 77, has been thwarted. Further massive repression will still be necessary for the Stalinist bureaucracy to defeat the movement.

This means that efforts must be made in the West to build more permanent labour movement defence organisations out of the present protest movement, locally as well as nationally, on behalf of the civil rights movement in Czechoslovakia.

Those ready to help in these efforts should write to: the Charter 77 Defence Committee, 14 Elgin Court, Montpellier Road, London W5. Protest telegrams should be sent to: Czechoslovak Embassy, 25 Kensington Palace Gardens, London W8.



Photo: PALACH PRESS

Ghana - looted by imperialism

By Roy Alexander

CONCERN for the fate of the top army brass in Ghana has been expressed by one-time left Dame Judith Hart. But a rather different perspective on recent events was offered last week at a meeting organised by the Polytechnic of Central London Afro-Caribbean Society.

A Ghanaian socialist militant on a short visit to Britain outlined the background and results of the recent coup. He stressed that the present situation was one of economic and social crisis 'in which the great majority of the people are experiencing a deterioration of living standards and shortages of food with no prospect for relief in the near future'.

The reason for this? 'Two decades after independence, imperialism still dominates our economic, social and political life. The very same multinationals which exploit British workers dominate our economy.'

This situation had been made unbearable by the 'looting of the national wealth' which a succession of military regimes carried out. This reached its height under General Acheampong, overthrown by Judith Hart's hero, General Akuffo.

But Akuffo's concern was only to curb the worst excesses of the military, which were threatening to bring it into total discredit. Shortly after he took power a team of International Monetary Fund experts descended on the country with their usual demand that everyone should tighten their belts to enable Ghana to 'pay its way in the world'.

However, neither they nor Akuffo had anything to say about the immense wealth which the top brass had accumulated — like the colonel who was found after the coup to be the proud owner of five homes, three farms, a cattle ranch, four luxury

cars, and no less than nine bank accounts (including one in London).

Popular unrest grew, and met with the usual response: repression. The killing of a worker and a student in two separate incidents provided a focus for widespread opposition to the military.

It was in this situation that an obscure junior air force officer — Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings — was arrested and charged with planning a coup. His fiery denunciation of corruption in the military won him widespread support both in the ranks of the army and outside it. In the midst of his trial the army ranks rose in revolt. Rawlings was freed by his guards and the top brass were swept aside.

The new regime has taken a number of popular measures: 'Rawlings did something which previous coups had not — he acted to control hoarding and prices. His popular support is born out of this fact. If you go to Ghanaian cities today you will see people out in great numbers buying basic necessities.'

'People's courts' have been set up, involving students and workers alongside ordinary soldiers, to deal with those most involved in the corruption. It is from these quarters that the demand for further executions and tough measures has come, as long-standing grievances against the country's exploiters are evened up.

The recent elections pose a big question mark — politicians of all shades have, at one time or another, been heavily involved in the plunder of Ghana's resources. Will the present popular movement quietly allow them to get on with the job?

Or will it start to tackle what the speaker correctly identified as the central problem — 'the system which produces profiteering, which is based upon the domination of the economy by imperialism and capitalism'?



WHAT'S LEFT

EDINBURGH UTOM: Bus to 12 August demo leaves Waverly Bridge, 10pm, Sat 11 Aug. Phone 229 1861 for details.

SHEFFIELD Revolutionary Communist Group public meeting: 'Racism, Imperialism and the Working Class'. Thur 19 July, 7.30pm, Phoenix Building, Pond St.

LONDON Revolutionary Communist Group public meeting: 'The Irish war and the British working class'. Speakers: Terry Marlowe and Paul Bullock. Mon 16 July at 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., WC1 (Holborn tube).

FILM 'The Patriot Game', 7.30pm, Thur 26 July at the West Indian Centre, Carmoor Rd (off Hathersage Rd), Manchester 13. 60p (40p unwaged). Organised by Manchester UTOM.

BIG FLAME Summer School 28 July — 4 August. Theme: 'The Socialist Alternative'. Speakers on Alternative Health/the Media/Alternative Technology with workshops, films, socials. Cost £30 adults, £15 under-16. Details: BF Summer School, 122 Vassal Road, London SW9.

EDINBURGH Revolutionary Communist Group public meeting: 'Racism, Imperialism and the Working Class'. Wed 18 July at 7.30pm, Trades Council, Picardy Place.

ROYAL COURT Theatre, Sloane Square, SW1. Sunday 15 July, 7.30pm. Who Killed Blair Peach? — A Political Answer. Benefit organised by Blair Peach Memorial Fund. Proceeds to be shared with the Southall Defence Fund. Contributors will include Edward Bond, Trevor Griffiths, John Hurt, Alex Glasgow, Misty, Paul Foot. Tickets: £2 from Blair Peach Memorial Fund, c/o Phoenix School, Bow Road, London E3.

BIG FLAME, the IMG and the ISA are holding a joint school for women on 'The Women's Movement and the Left'. 14 July, 11am-5pm. YWCA, Great Russell St, London WC1. Creche facilities. If you are interested in being invited write c/o Women's School, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Organised under the auspices of the London World Affairs Group.

WOMEN In Eastern Europe Newsletter, Issue No 3 is now available. Includes abortion petition in Hungary; interview with Russian dissident and more. In bookshops or send 44p to B. Holland, CREES, University of Birmingham.

WORKING class strategies and the transition to socialism is the theme of the Annual Conference of the CSE (Conference of Socialist Economists) at Leeds University, 13-16 July. Send for details to Hugo Radice, School of Economics, University, Leeds LS2 9JT.

BOOKS for Southern African comrades — money desperately needed for this vital field of internationalist activity. Or send any books you can spare. Books for Southern Africa, Box No 102, c/o Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1.

REVOLUTIONARY Communist Tendency Public Meeting. 'No to all state attacks on the working class! No Nationality Act! Smash Immigration Laws!' Speaker Mike Freeman. Friday 13 July, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC2. Holborn tube.

Who are the Sandinistas?



Leading Sandinista Doria Maria Tellez in liberated Leon

By Dave Kellaway

WE HAVE always argued for the importance of unconditional solidarity with the Sandinista Liberation Front (FSLN) in the struggle of the Nicaraguan people to overthrow Somoza. The masses have put their confidence in this political force as a basis for radically changing their living conditions.

For this reason we have repeated the call of the Trotskyists inside Nicaragua and elsewhere for the FSLN to take power without the bourgeoisie and to base their government on the development of the popular committees and militias. At the moment the FSLN supports a provisional government in which the bourgeois opposition has a voice out of all proportion to its real social base in the fighting; the five-person junta includes only one leader of the FSLN.

This government makes statements reassuring its Latin American 'progressive' allies and the European social-democrats that it will not be another Cuba, and that capital will be secure in any new Nicaragua. Yet on Radio Sandino the FSLN calls on the masses to develop their own power, and in towns like Leon a completely alternative power to the present regime has been established. So how do we understand or define the FSLN?

Ambushed

Auguste Cesar Sandino was a liberal leader influenced by syndicalism and Mexican nationalism who led a guerrilla struggle against the US-backed government after the other liberal leaders had sold out the 1926 uprising. In 1930 the National Guard was formed to deal with Sandino. Somoza's father was its first chief. After attending a dinner as part of peace negotiations with the government, Sandino was ambushed by Somoza's men and murdered.

The Sandinistas re-emerged in the 1960s under the influence of the Cuban revolution and the example of Guevara. Their perspective was the development of rural 'focos' — political and military bases of operation which could protect the guerrilla, allow attacks on the army, and from which support could gradually

SANDINISTA leader Daniel Rodriguez was asked by the Trotskyist paper *Combate* late last year what he thought of the demand for a government of the FSLN and the workers' and popular organisations. He replied:

'I believe it is unreal, completely unrealistic. It is also out of context, because it will isolate the Front and it will put us in the trap that the imperialists are making — to reduce our political base, reduce our military base, isolate us and then annihilate us.'

'The force of the Sandinistas lay in that we were flexible enough to see the necessity of unifying the opposition and through this to fortify itself... we have an alliance that isn't merely a paper one but a real tactical one that will be used for a determinant stage with all the sectors opposed to the dictatorship...'

'One of the representatives of the provisional government will be from the Group of Twelve [a pro-FSLN group of capitalists]... this man Robelo Callejas is a new type of boss, different from the classical ones who have enriched themselves through links to the regime... they want a profound change in the institutions of the state.'

be built up until the countryside could throttle the cities with a mass popular army.

In 1974 this prolonged popular war orientation, with its downplaying of work among the urban masses, was questioned. A split followed. Now there were two fronts: Prolonged Popular War (GPP), led by Henry Ruiz, Tamas Borge and Modesto; and the Proletarian Front, led by Jaime Wheelock.

On 13 October 1977 units of the FSLN attacked a barracks at Massaya. A dozen militants were killed, but out of this a new front evolved called the Terceristas. This tendency was distinguished by its openness towards working strategically with the bourgeois opposition to Somoza. But it also favoured a more militarist, insurrectionist approach — hence it is sometimes known as the insurrectionist tendency.

It was the Terceristas, led by commander Zero, who organised the dramatically successful occupation of the National Palace

last summer, when Somoza's son was held hostage and all the political prisoners were released. But they were responsible too for pushing prematurely for the insurrection in September 1978, which was defeated, leaving 10,000 dead.

Today, although the FSLN has a unified council of the three fronts, it is the Terceristas who have the most weight in terms of national politics. It is their leader, Ortega, who is the only FSLN representative in the provisional junta.

Youth

The Terceristas have grown much more quickly than the other tendencies, partly because their lack of political definition has helped them to get effective support (including arms) from 'progressive' Latin American regimes like Panama, and partly because their dramatic military exploits make them a pole of attraction for the youth. Several social-democratic governments in Europe have good links with the Terceristas — hoping to pick up the investment projects in any new regime.

The older GPP front's base is particularly strong in the north of the country, where it had 'focos' for many years. It is reported that towns presently occupied by its militants show a high degree of social organisation. However, its localised and clandestine tradition limits its ability to take a lead nationally.

More Marxist in its formulations is the Proletarian Front, which is supported by many students. It publicly criticised the adventurism of the September '78 insurrection. It also openly attacked the negotiations between the FAO (Broad Opposition Front) and Somoza after September, whereas the Terceristas were more reticent.

It was in response to such manoeuvres, and out of a concern to develop more of a mass base, that the GPP and the Proletarian Front — together with the pro-Moscow CP and the Brinceno sector of the Socialist Party — formed the United Popular Movement (MPU). The latter's programme did not put forward a working class socialist perspective, but included a whole list of popular and democratic

demands (land reform, expropriation of Somoza, transformation of the Guard, etc.).

But despite its opposition to the FAO's concessions, it allowed its member organisations to maintain affiliation to both fronts — thereby expressing a strategic unity with the 'patriotic' bourgeoisie. Now the MPU is part of the National Patriotic Front, which includes the old FAO sectors.

All tendencies of the FSLN thus accept in one way or another the notion of a government of national reconstruction with the bourgeoisie. Omar Jota Lazo, a leader of the FSLN, posed it in this way to the Colombian paper *El Socialista* (13 June):

'The FSLN and the MPU will be the majority government. The representatives of the bourgeois opposition will be a definite minority... This minority will be submitted to the programme of the MPU.'

'The workers movement in Nicaragua will never be deceived by the bourgeoisie. The FAO wanted to do it and the people originally followed them but then they became class conscious. They found out that their struggle was not just against the regime but against capital.'

Tactical

Two weeks later the provisional government had been formed, with the inclusion of an FAO leader — Robeldo. Besides that, the MPU programme is not incompatible with a social-democratic regime — though whether a government led by the bourgeoisie could carry out that programme is another question. For example, could Violeta Chammarro, a wealthy landowner and provisional government leader, actually lead a radical land reform as favoured by the FSLN?

Many Sandinistas argue that the alliance with the bourgeoisie in this government is realistic and merely tactical (see statement by Rodriguez printed here). They suggest that it will be the Sandinista-led popular committees and militias who will hold the whip hand over the bourgeoisie.

The problem is that unless you say frankly to the masses now that the bosses won't be able to satisfy workers' demands, how will you later be able to convince the people that now you must break with these honest patriots? In fact, once the bourgeoisie have had time to remodel the state institutions it will be easier for them to portray any sudden turn against them by the FSLN as a 'splitting', anti-nationalist move.

On one side the independent involvement of the masses and changes in the orientation of the FSLN as a result of internal debate are factors encouraging a radical outcome of the situation. On the other hand, there are strong factors inhibiting such a tendency.

Refugees

First, the present prevention of a total military victory by the Sandinistas gives the US more room to create an 'interim government' which could achieve a ceasefire and form a new regime, perhaps backed with the carrot of massive aid, which could marginalise the FSLN (or at least its more hardline sectors).

Secondly, the devastating social dislocation of the war and social structure of Nicaragua (with the working class forming only about 20 per cent of the population) makes the consolidation of self-organisation more difficult. Finally, the political tradition of the FSLN and its relatively small number of political cadres mean that it could be disarmed totally in accepting a democratic stage.

Present information makes it difficult to gauge exactly the level of self-organisation of the masses, and the sort of political debates taking place inside the FSLN and within the occupied towns. But what is clear is that there will be no possibility whatsoever of developing a working class solution without the overthrow of Somoza.

Therefore we need to maintain solidarity, particularly in relation to the demand for emergency aid to the refugees (who don't seem to merit the sort of media coverage given to the boat people) and to prevent open US intervention. These solidarity demands should be raised within the Labour Party and the TUC with the aim of forcing them to translate their formal denunciations of Somoza into practical aid.

For films, speakers, leaflets etc. contact Central American Human Rights Committee, 59a Church Street, Old Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 6BE.

Stop racist show trial

By Oliver New and Asha Patel

IN SOUTHALL and Leicester the magistrates are having a whale of a time. The prisoners taken by the SPG crack units during anti-NF mobilisations as well as those arrested by 'coppers on the beat' are receiving stiff sentences.

Most of them are blacks, but in Leicester a miner from Doncaster, Martin Hughes, has been sentenced to prison for four months for alleged assault. Three other demonstrators have been sentenced to prison.

In Southall, a young engineering worker, Balbir Birk, has been sent to prison for three months, also for alleged assault. Fines had risen to £600 last week. The Southall Defence Committee estimates that on the present showing at least 80 people will be imprisoned when the show trials are over.

McNee

What is instructive about the show trials in Barnet magistrates court, where the majority of the Southall cases are being dealt with, is that even defendants on relatively trivial charges have been bound over 'to keep the peace' for a year, with a heavy penalty attached. The reason is simple: it is to deprive them of their democratic rights and give a green light to the police to harass and question them in the hope of finding some irregularity somewhere.

Take the case of M. Sihra. He was charged with obstruction, found guilty, fined and bound over for two years, with a month's imprisonment if he is convicted on any pretext.

In every case except one or two where the prosecution evidence conflicted with defence witnesses' accounts of what happened, the stipendiary magistrate, a Mr Cook, stated: 'There is a contradiction between the evidence given by the prosecution and the defence and I have no reason to disbelieve the versions given by the police constables.'

End of argument.

The purpose of these trials is to teach young blacks and anti-racists a lesson. London's police boss McNee said as much when he defended the SPG a few weeks ago.

But these trials force one to reflect on the character of the magistrates courts and the fashion in which magistrates are selected in this country.

Accountable

Who appoints the stipendiary magistrates who sit full-time on the bench? The Lord Chancellor's Office. Who appoints the JPs, supposedly representative of the community? The Lord Chancellor's Office, but on the recommendation of advisory committees. Who sits on these advisory committees? You aren't allowed to know because it is a secret.

Most justices of the peace are people with spare time or in jobs from which they can easily take time off. No marks for guessing from which part of the community they come in their majority: 58 per cent of magistrates vote Tory, 38 per cent Labour, and the rest... well, some definitely vote NF.

The blatantly undemocratic character of the magistrates courts is obvious to all, but few wish to observe. There has been no serious coverage of the present show-trials in any Fleet Street paper.

The Lord Chancellor appoints magistrates. They are on the best of terms with the police. The press ignores their outrages. The circle imprisoning their victims turns full wheel.

It is not sufficient for socialists simply to expose. A campaign for the election of magistrates and judges is long overdue. It will not resolve too much, but it will make them accountable to someone.

British justice strikes again SAS killers freed

By Geoff Bell

AT Belfast's Crown Court last week, Sergeant Alan Bohan and Corporal Ronald Temerley were acquitted of the murder of 16-year-old John Boyle in a County Antrim graveyard last year.

If the freeing of the killers — members of the British Army's assassination SAS squad — was predictable, it was somewhat breathtaking even by the warped standards of British justice in the North of Ireland. For the conspiracy to free the killers was so blatant and detectable that even the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland, Sir Robert Lowry, who sat as judge and jury, had difficulty in explaining why the men had been freed.

John Boyle was shot dead in July 1978. He was killed by the SAS squad as he was bending over a cache of arms hidden in a graveyard.

Lie

The first Army statement alleged that Boyle was shot as one of a group of men armed and carrying bombs. This was a lie, and the second Army statement admitted as much.

The new story was that Boyle was a 'terrorist' who was pointing a gun at the soldiers when he was shot. This too was a lie, and later the Army admitted that Boyle was not a 'terrorist'; indeed, a few days earlier he had found the arms cache and told his father, who had reported it to the police.

Subsequently the SAS mounted an ambush at the graveyard. Boyle was killed when he came back to check if the arms were still there.

It was then that the conspiracy to excuse the SAS killers began in earnest. The first move was to ensure that no more would be heard about the incident. Papers relating to the killing were sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions, who then sent them to the Labour government's Attorney General, Sam Silkin. The papers were shelved and no charges were brought.

Concoct

But then two journalists obtained a secret copy of the state pathologist's report on Boyle's death which showed that he had been shot from behind. Public disclosure forced the authorities' hands, and Temerley and Bohan were put on trial.

The next problem the British authorities faced was to concoct some plausible excuse for the shooting of Boyle. This was achieved, rather crudely, the day before the trial began, when the RUC issued a photofit picture of a 19-year-old County Tyrone man, Eugene O'Neill.

Working

The RUC said that O'Neill was wanted for questioning in connection with serious offences in South Derry. 'Do not approach', said the statement, 'this man is extremely dangerous'.

O'Neill's mother responded to the poster by saying that her son was peacefully working in the South of Ireland and that her house had never even been raided. But the RUC's claim was not without purpose, for during the course of the SAS trial the defence claimed that the killers had mistaken Boyle for the 'suspected terrorist, Eugene O'Neill, (who) was

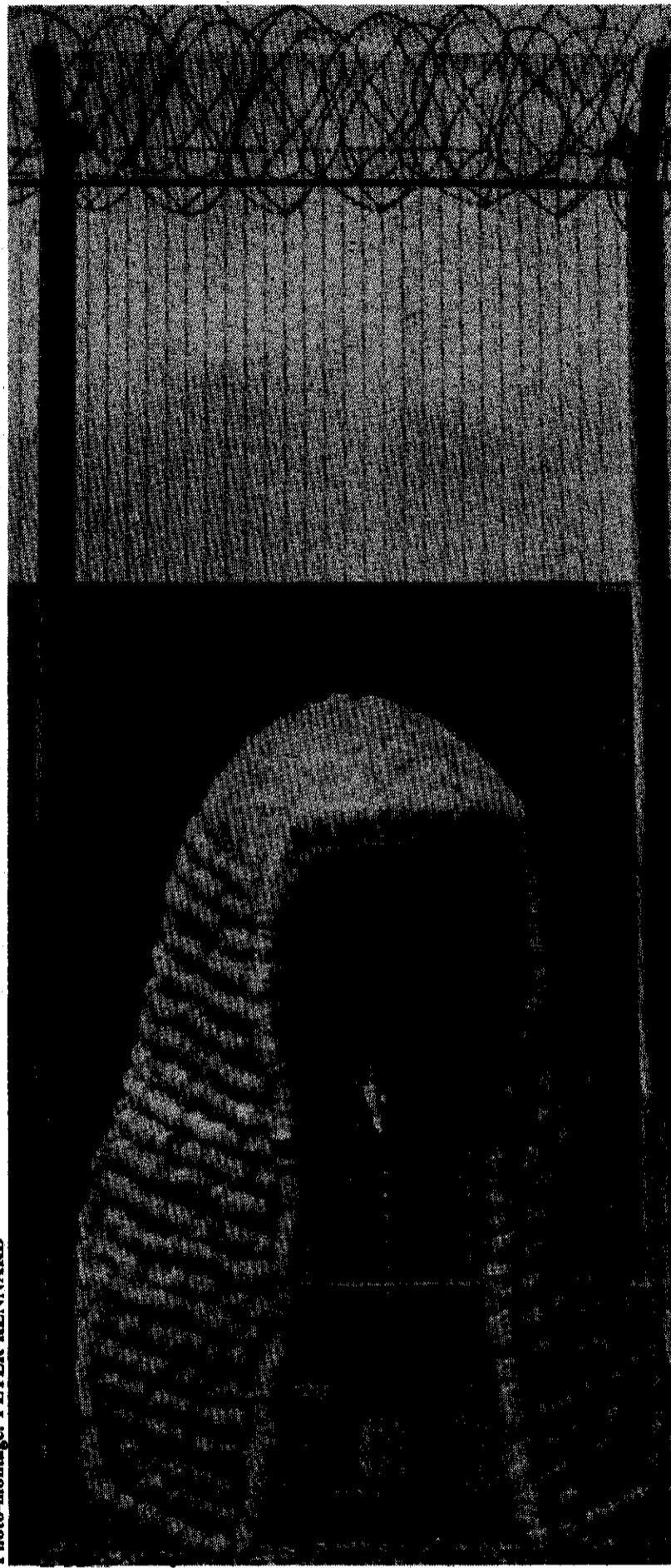


Photo-montage: PETER KENNARD

'Brits out' motion for Labour conference

HEMEL Hempstead constituency Labour Party has passed a motion to go to the Labour Party's annual conference in October demanding that the British presence in the North of Ireland be 'speedily terminated'.

The motion was agreed at the CLP's general management committee on 29 June. The full text of the resolution reads:

'This conference recognises that the British presence in Ireland, as expressed in political, judicial and military terms, is a matter requiring urgent consideration; particularly since it calls into question basic tenets of socialism.

'Conference urges the government to recognise the right of all the people of Ireland to self-determination; to realise that the continuing occupation of Northern Ireland conflicts with that right and therefore demands that:

1. an orderly withdrawal of British armed forces takes place;
2. British involvement in Northern Ireland is speedily thereby establishing the pre-conditions for a united Ireland.'

the man likely to pick up the cache'.

When Sergeant Bohan took to the witness stand — a procedure Corporal Temerley didn't bother to go through — he claimed that Boyle looked like O'Neill, 'whose picture I had seen previously'.

The rest of Bohan's evidence was, to say the least, unimpressive. He admitted that, contrary to the rules set out in the British Army's 'Yellow Card', he had not challenged Boyle before shooting him; and he agreed in court that in the briefing before the killing it could have been mentioned that a 'killing' was preferable to a capture.

Vague

In any normal trial Bohan would have convicted himself from his own mouth, and even Chief Justice Lowry agreed that the killer had proved an 'untrustworthy witness' whose evidence was 'vague and unsatisfactory'.

The only excuse which the defence did offer was that Boyle had lifted one of the guns in the cache and had been pointing it in the soldiers' direction when they fired. Yet there was no conclusive fingerprint evidence that Boyle had handled the weapon. Indeed, it was agreed by the defence that two of the three bullets which killed Boyle had hit him the back.

But there was conflicting medical evidence about the third bullet, and it was this which provided the excuse to acquit the killers. Because the third bullet might have hit Boyle when he was facing his assassins, and because forensic evidence suggested that Boyle might have handled one of the arms, this allowed Lowry to conclude that the case was 'not proven'.

Throughout the run-up to the trial the Army assumed that they were above the normal standards of good old British law and order. When the killers first appeared in court they were accompanied by four others and refused to identify themselves.

When they were first questioned they were accompanied by an Army legal expert, although Republican suspects do not have the privilege of legal advice when they are questioned. And when the detectives arrived to interview Bohan and Temerley, they were presented with a signed statement and told that the soldiers would answer no further questions.

Consolation

This assumption that the SAS are above the law has now proved correct. In a statement reeking of the blackest of black humour, the British Army Command commented after the trial that, 'The Army will continue to carry out their task to defeat terrorism in the province in support of the civil power willingly, cheerfully and with good nature and tolerance'.

If there is one consolation from the latest example of British justice in the North of Ireland, it is that there is not likely to be a repeat of the type of farcical trial which ended last week. The Northern Ireland Director of Public Prosecutions recently announced that the DPP was not bringing charges against the SAS killers of James Taylor.

Taylor was another innocent civilian who, according to an autopsy report, was also shot in the back, this time while out deer-hunting last September. But after all, Taylor was obviously up to no good. He was Irish.

SC conference

I DISAGREE with the National Policy Committee's proposal (14 June) for a 'working' Socialist Challenge conference. We in the North-West sometimes feel that we are the poor relations of the London comrades when it comes to coverage of disputes and struggles in the area. In my opinion it would be better to have a series of regional conferences prior to the national conference.

A working conference will not allow the much needed debate on the paper to develop fully. It is only through having the widest possible debate that Socialist Challenge will survive under the Tories.

Will the points made by the Coventry and Leamington supporters (24 May) be adequately raised at a working conference? How will they feel when, because of the framework of the agenda, the points they make — such as the need for a theoretical journal, better coverage in the provinces, and a balance sheet on the regroupment project — are not fully debated? Also, I think their letter deserved a response from the Editorial Board.

There is absolutely no point in the Coventry and Leamington supporters holding a regional conference as they've already had one — as we in the North-West did in April 1978 prior to the last conference. They should be given all the support they need in building a Socialist Challenge conference after having shown a willingness to set it up.

STEVE ROSE (Preston)

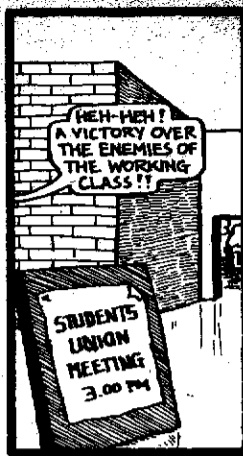
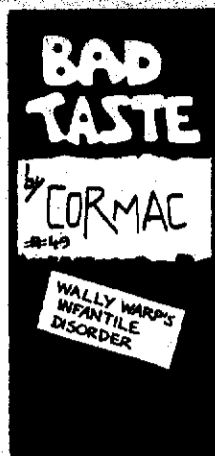
Boat people (1)

'THE British labour movement has to accept its responsibility for failing to oppose imperialism', so we should not oppose the entry of Vietnamese refugees to Britain. This is the sole conclusion of your article on the 'boat people' (14 June). The only action suggested is mobilising against the NF's campaign to keep the boat people out.

It's incredible! After explaining in considerable detail the responsibility of imperialism for the plight of these people, the article completely fails to draw the obvious conclusion: that the labour movement should take the offensive on this question and make the imperialists pay for the shambles they've made of Indochina.

We should demand full war reparations without strings and an end to all trade restrictions. Further, the US should open its doors to all refugees who want to go there, and pay for the settlement of refugees who want to stay in the US neo-colonies like Thailand and Malaysia. The British government, which contributed over £14 million (1974 value) to the puppet dictatorships, should also be forced to pay its share.

It's true that the problems are exacerbated by the Stalinist heritage. But that shouldn't stop us from



pinning the blame for the problems themselves where it belongs. And a campaign of practical solidarity along these lines is the best aid we can give to the cause of socialist democracy and proletarian internationalism in Indochina.

KEN MATHESON, JOE HEATLEY (Hayes)

Boat people (2)

GEOFFREY Sheridan's article (14 June) fails to grasp the full significance of the South-East Asian refugee problem. Large numbers of Vietnamese people are fleeing in ramshackle boats. They are prepared to face the dangers of drowning, being eaten by sharks or captured by pirates. Even if they survive these hazards, the lucky ones only succeed in reaching an internment camp.

Currently, a quarter of a million people, many of them injured and starving, rot in these camps. By this time next year, the figure is expected to more than double.

Surely Geoffrey Sheridan understands that these Vietnamese people are, to use Lenin's phrase, 'voting with their feet'. They would prefer to die rather than remain in Vietnam. The reactionary regimes of Hong Kong, Malaya and Thailand appear as almost heavenly havens when compared with the hell of what Sheridan picturesquely terms — wait for it! — a workers' state!

I would have thought that the essence of a workers' state is that it is a force for liberation; by destroying class exploitation it provides the conditions under which human potential, in all its many facets, can flower. But we find none of this in Vietnam or Cambodia. Indeed, in the 1930s, at the height of Stalin's terror, there was no similar mass exodus from Russia. Yet the hazards and obstacles to escaping were then very much less than from Vietnam now.

RAY CHALLINOR (Whitley Bay)

More on NALGO

We welcome the article by Dave Burn (21 June) as a new approach by Socialist Challenge supporters to organising opposition in NALGO.

The article recognises that the NALGO Action Group are alone in organising a consistent national opposition to NALGO's leadership, and showed the failures of attempts at Broad Left organisation in the union, which at conference collapsed into the hands of the leadership's rhetorical calls for 'unity' — not action — against the Tories.

The Broad Left, in fact, only appears to exist at the level of conference and district council; and in accordance with this their emphasis is on gaining positions and passing woolly motions, while having no active base amongst the membership. Their collapse was not only at conference, but was also evident during the social workers' strike and the other disputes which NALGO has been involved in this year.

The NAG has set itself the more difficult task, if less rewarding immediately, of organising at a rank and file level, so that positions gained and motions passed mean something in terms of concrete activity. It will not be sufficient, as Dave Burn suggests, for NAG to put forward alternative resolutions in all the key economic debates at next year's conference.

It will be more important for NAG to continue building in the branches, to create a rank and file leadership which can actively challenge the existing leadership, by agitating on day-to-day issues and organising support for those sections of the membership who are prepared to take up the fight against cuts and over pay. It is in these fights that the leadership will be exposed and not in conference debates or backroom conversations with NEC members.

We hope that this new and more positive response to NAG will be taken up by Socialist Challenge supporters in Liverpool NALGO who have worked locally with NAG around the 'End Low Pay Campaign', the social workers' strike, maternity leave, etc., but who seem unwilling to put their energies into building a much needed national rank and file organisation in NALGO.

TERESA BERGIN, JOHN HOLLIDAY, STEVE ANDERSON, KAREN ADAMS, MARIA SHUTTLEWORTH (Liverpool NAG)

*The position of Socialist Challenge supporters in Liverpool NALGO was explained in a letter in last week's issue.

Fighting anti-semitism

MIKE Barr (21 June) is correct to point out that opposition to Zionism must be based on an understanding of its colonialist and therefore repressive and reactionary nature — but from then on he totally misses the political implications of taking up the question on a day-to-day basis.

Israel is a reflection of the Jewish question, and as such is seen by the vast majority of world Jewry as 'the solution'. One of our jobs as revolutionaries is to break British Jewry from their support for Zionism, and this must be done not only by arguing for socialism as a general solution, but also specifically (and this is not appeasement) by tackling the question of anti-semitism.

This position is not divorced from the practical realities of Palestinian solidarity work. There are large numbers of people who can be won to support of the Palestinian cause on humanitarian and thence anti-imperialist grounds who are seriously concerned about being seen as anti-semitic. Indeed, Zionists deliberately smear anti-Zionists as anti-semites in order to isolate revolutionaries from our potential audience.

My experience of practical solidarity work in the student movement has convinced me, and my

comrades, that specifically linking the questions of Zionism and anti-semitism not only confuses and potentially splits the Zionist activists but makes it much easier to win mass support for the rights of the Palestinian people. No, Mike, the two issues, if taken separately, are infinitely weaker, and both our anti-Nazi and anti-Zionist work must inevitably suffer.

DAVID GLANZ (Salford SWP)

EEC election

WITH Socialist Challenge in such a precarious financial position and yet a vital means of propaganda, surely there is a small question mark over the value of the IMG spending £600 on putting Tariq Ali on the European election slate in West London.

Obviously the advantages gained by standing cannot be put in purely financial terms, but in terms of useful propaganda Socialist Challenge must be a priority. In the next few years hopefully Socialist Challenge will be fighting for a United-Socialist Europe and attacking the chauvinism of the left and right. It would be a crucial loss to the left if Socialist Challenge folded.

CHRIS NASH, SUE CHUBB, CHRIS LUDLAM, CAROL MILLS (members of Bristol Poly Socialist Society)

• In fact Tariq Ali's campaign was financed not by the IMG but from funds raised throughout Western Europe by the Fourth International for the specific purpose of ensuring an international revolutionary presence in these elections.

DEMONSTRATION

Smash All Immigration Controls!

March to Harmondsworth Detention Centre

Saturday 21 July Assemble: Hounslow West tube 2pm
Final planning meeting: Monday 16 July, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square (Holborn tube).

Organised by
REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST TENDENCY
Supported by: Bengali Youth Front, Newham Defence Committee, Indian Workers Progressive Forum, plus other black, trade union and anti-racist bodies.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE EVENTS

NORTH WEST

MOSS SIDE Socialist Challenge supporters sell the paper at Moss Side Centre, Saturday, 11-1.
MANCHESTER SC Centre has been closed because of fire damage, but will be reopening shortly. All mail/enquiries should meanwhile be sent via the paper's national office in London.
OLDHAM SC group meetings: Thur 12 July, 'Culture and capitalist society'; Thur 26 July, 'The struggle in textiles'. Both 8pm, The Gardeners Arms, Middleton Road, Westwood. SC on sale every Sat, 11-1 outside Yorkshire Bank, High St. Further details: tel 652 7851.

NORTH EAST

MIDDLESBROUGH paper sales, Saturday lunchtime at Cleveland Centre, near lottery stand opposite Woolworths. Also available from Newsfare in Linthorpe Road and inside Cleveland Centre.
STOCKTON-ON-TEES readers can buy Socialist Challenge and Revolution from Green Books stall upstairs in Spencer Hall indoor market, Stockton High St.
DURHAM SC benefit with live group 'City Hearts' plus disco. Fowlers Yard, Durham. Fri 13 July, 8pm to midnight. Bar till 11pm. Adm 50p.

SCOTLAND

For information about the paper or its supporters' activities throughout Scotland please contact Socialist Challenge Books, 64 Queen St, Glasgow. Open Wed, Thurs, Fri and Sat afternoons. Phone for alternative arrangement (221 7481). Wide range of Fourth International publications.

HAMILTON supporters sell Socialist Challenge every Saturday in the Hamilton shopping centre, 1-5pm. For details of local activities contact John Ford, 553 Elliot Crescent, Hamilton.

EDINBURGH Socialist Challenge supporters group meets regularly. Phone George at 031-346 0466 for details.

DUNDEE Information about Socialist Challenge activities from 64 Queen St, Glasgow. Join in SC sales outside Boots (corner of Reform St) each Saturday 11am-2pm.

MIDLANDS

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

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

NOTTINGHAM readers can buy Socialist Challenge regularly at Mushroom Books, Leatcote St.

LEAMINGTON Socialist Challenge group meets every other Sunday. Contact 311772.

YORKSHIRE

HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Thursdays at the Friendly & Trades Club, Northumberland St.

DEWSBURY Socialist Challenge sales regularly on Saturday mornings in Westgate at the Nat. Westminster Bank. 12.30-2.00pm.

LEEDS Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday at City Centre Precinct, 11am-1.30pm. And at **SHEFFIELD** SC sale every Sat, Fargate, 12-1pm.

Elland Rd — when Leeds Utd are playing at home!

HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge sales regularly Saturdays 11am-1pm in the Piazza.

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

SOUTH WEST

FOR INFORMATION on activities in the South-West, write to Box 002, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Bristol 6.

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

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

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

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

SWINDON supporters sell Socialist Challenge 11am-1pm Saturdays, Regent St (Brunel Centre).

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

SOUTH EAST

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

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

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

LONDON

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

PADDINGTON/N KENSINGTON supporters sell the paper every Saturday at noon at junction Portobello Rd/Westbourne Park Rd, W11.

BRENT supporters sell every Saturday, 2.30pm, at Kilburn Sq, Kilburn High Rd, London NW6.

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

PADDINGTON-N.KENSINGTON SC group meeting: 'Ireland — 800 years of struggle for liberation', with speaker Geoff Bell. Wed 18 July, 8pm at Meeting Room, 1 Thorpe Close, W10 (Ladbroke Grove tube).

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

LEYTON readers can buy Socialist Challenge from Patel's Newsagents, 326 Lea Bridge Road, E10.

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

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

HARROW Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly, details from Box 50, London N1 2XP.

HARINGEY paper sales at Finsbury Park and Seven Sisters tubes, Thurs evening; Muswell Hill and Crouch End Broadways, Saturday morning. Also available at Muswell Hill Bookshop, Muswell Hill Broadway; Vares newsagent, Middle Lane, N8; and Bookmarks, Finsbury Park.

SOUTH LONDON paper sales at Brixton tube, 12-2 every Saturday. Also available at Oval tube and Herne Hill BR kiosks.

S.E.LONDON SC group meeting: 'Stop Attacks on Abortion Rights'. Thur 12 July, 7.30pm, at the Amersham Arms, New Cross. Also meet Saturdays 11am outside Midland Bank, Deptford High St. for paper sale in market.

HACKNEY SC group meeting: 'Defend Charter 77', with speaker from 'Labour Focus on Eastern Europe'. Thur 26 July, 7.30pm, Britannia pub, Mare Street, E8.

