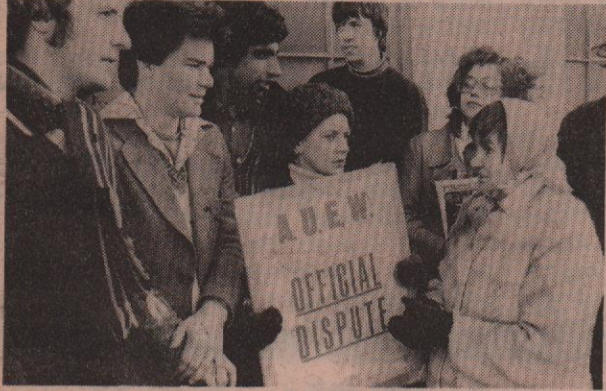


Socialist Challenge



'We support democracy in the Labour Party, just as we do in our unions. Each year I have to stand for re-election as shop steward in my section, and then as convenor by a vote of all the stewards. Why should any Labour MP be worried by such accountability?

'Benn and the other left leaders in the party ought to openly declare their support for the engineers' strike, because we're doing battle on pay and shorter hours which they're supposed to be in favour of.

'And they should also support an all-out strike, because the engineering unions are presently leading this claim with their backsides.'

JOHN BLACKLEY, convenor, Rolls Royce Bristol, and chairperson Rolls Royce National Combine Committee.



Engineers say WE'RE WITH YOU, BENN— ARE YOU WITH US?

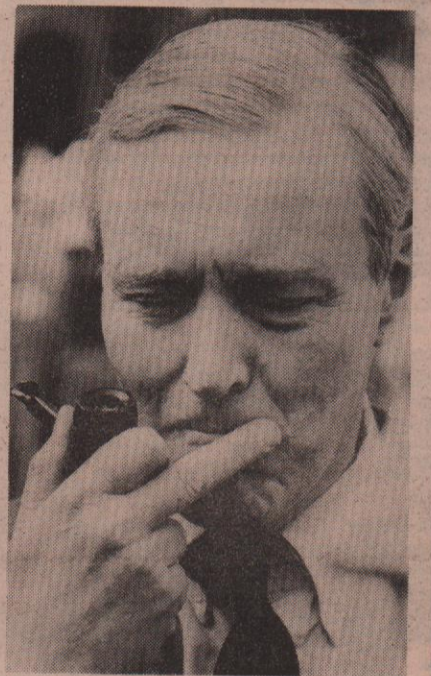


Photo: G.M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

By Geoff Bell in Brighton

TONY BENN has emerged the undisputed leader of Labour's left after this week's proceedings in Brighton.

And that is not all. The votes cast by constituency delegates for the national Executive showed that Benn's popularity is far and away above that of any single member of the Labour Party as far as the rank and file are concerned. He topped the poll, increasing his vote from last year.

In short, Benn has now all the support he needs for a frontal challenge to the Callaghan leadership and its policies. The question is: will he now launch such an assault?

The evidence is not very encouraging. Throughout the Brighton conference Benn stressed that he does not see the issue of the Callaghan leadership as particularly relevant. At a fringe meeting on Tuesday evening, Ernie Roberts MP argued for Benn to replace Callaghan. In reply Benn insisted: 'What I say is not about who leads the Labour Party, that is not the question we are discussing.'

But the urgency of that question was never more evident than during Callaghan's address to the conference on Tuesday. It was fitting that he should end his speech by quoting Hubert

Humphrey in saying: 'That is my idea of socialism'. Hubert Humphrey was Johnson's second-in-command in pursuing the Vietnam war. By Callaghan's idols do we know him. So should Tony Benn.

Speaking on Tuesday, Benn said: 'I am a left talking reformer.' That may explain why Benn in Brighton has largely confined his views of socialism to words. He has not for instance called for a campaign to support the striking engineers. He has not for instance demanded that the Labour conference organise support for the demonstration against the Corrie anti-abortion Bill on 28 October. He stayed silent on the platform as Ron Hayward told conference that no campaign against the cuts would be supported by the Labour Party if it went outside the law!

Tony Benn should be silent no longer. He stands as the left-wing heir apparent to the leadership of the Labour Party. It's time he started organising — not just for the leadership of the party, but for a campaign to bring down the Tory government.

And to do that it's time he started organising not just in the Labour Party but in the entire working class movement.

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 workers. The socialist models of 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)

Address.....

The Callaghanites must go!

Jim Callaghan is right to say that the proposals to increase Labour Party democracy are an attack upon his leadership. They are, and that's exactly what is needed, because Callaghan's policies did not prove capable of fighting unemployment and inflation, of extending democratic rights. They did not prove capable of defeating the Tories in the elections.

That would be reason enough to get rid of him — but there is a more important reason still. Callaghan stands in the way of an effective fight against the Tories. Proclaiming their 'democratic mandate', he expects the labour movement to sit back for five years whilst the Tories walk all over us. Well, Jim, we cannot wait five years — the fightback must start now alongside the engineers.

Nor can we fight the Tories with the rotten policies Callaghan defends. Championing an

incomes policy as an alternative to Thatcher letting unemployment rip will catch no-one's imagination (particularly if the Tories backtrack and impose their own incomes policy). In place of social-democratic (that is, pro-capitalist) policies are needed measures which can be fought for in the daily struggles of working people, and which challenge the capitalists' control over the economy and political life.

Unions

Callaghan is not alone in the labour movement. In the unions the Callaghanites are many. They too have a similar disdain for democracy. They conclude agreements such as the 'twelve month rule' in the TUC General Council after Congress has rejected incomes policy. They refuse to allow a

vote at AUEW conferences on issues where they might lose. They must also be defeated.

The vote at Labour Party conference is no small victory. It shows that the desire for a change in leadership is strong. It shows a refusal to accept a repeat of the last Labour Government. It reflects a desire on the part of the rank and file to regain control of the labour movement.

But it is just the first round in a longer battle. The internal party inquiry will mean that the issues raised this year remain undecided — and they will not be decided in the constituencies alone. The fate of the leadership will be decided in the course of mounting a fightback against the Tories. In the process of that an alternative leadership must be built at every level of the labour movement. That is the task to which Benn and his supporters should be addressing themselves.

Introducing Commander David Mitchell

By Tariq Ali

DAVID MITCHELL has just been appointed Police Commander in Hackney, East London. The appointment has already generated a degree of controversy. The *Hackney Gazette* commented in an editorial:

'Nothing very velvet-gloved about our new police chief. His mailed fist is out in the open for all to see, right from the beginning.'

He had told the *Hackney Gazette* that Sus is 'a very good law' and that 'It is unfortunate that most people who complain about its use are the ones responsible for committing the crimes'... by which he means blacks. Sus enables the cops to pick up blacks at random, and prosecute them.

Mitchell used to be a Chief Superintendent in Islington, where our offices are located.

Restaurant

Over a year ago an Islington restaurant opened a new wing. Among others I was invited to celebrate the event. There were a hundred people present. Among them were David Mitchell and another senior police officer.

On seeing a 'well-known agitator', the two officers were determined to start a conversation. Both were by now well lubricated with alcohol.

The opening conversational gambit from Mitchell was characteristic of the man: 'Why do your lot give us so much trouble?' I asked whether he was talking of blacks in general or the ANL. The Chief Superintendent was not bothered about such fine distinctions.

'The problem,' I said, 'is the phenomenal degree of racism in the police force. You know that a whole layer of police officers are sympathetic to the fascists.'

Outrage

Mitchell's superior officer was outraged by this suggestion. He was of Welsh origin, from good mining stock. I persisted with my charge,



citing chapter and verse.

David Mitchell once again responded in an open and frank fashion: 'Yes, you're right. There is sympathy for the Front.' A silence enveloped the area where we were standing and talking. Everyone was now tense and alert.

Mitchell continued: 'And why not. They're the only party that

speaks up for Britain.' I suggested that the Tory Party might be considered a suitable candidate, but Mitchell brushed aside the claims of Thatcher et al to represent Britain.

The conversation ended. However the entire talk had been 'overheard' by two intrepid journalists from the *London Evening Standard*. The next morning they rang me up. I confirmed

that their notes were accurate.

Chief Superintendent Mitchell denied everything, but was clearly somewhat flustered. Soon after he was transferred to Croydon. Now it's the turn of Hackney, an area where there is a strong NF and a large black population. Given Mitchell's forthrightness there is every likelihood that his presence will soon begin to be felt.

Victory for Zimbabweans in Crown Court

AND NOW for something a bit different. A tale of how a Special Patrol Group attempt to frame Zimbabwean activists was frustrated.

On 29 October last year Bishop Muzorewa visited Britain. The excuse was that he was here to launch his book *Rise Up and Walk*.

Rumour has it that the title derives from an instance where Muzorewa had prostrated himself before Smith and the white settlers' idol had said: 'You don't have to kneel anymore Bish, rise up and walk.' But this rumour has yet to be confirmed.

In any event, nearly two hundred angry Zimbabweans and a few white supporters demonstrated outside the Royal Commonwealth Society where the Bishop was due to speak. A number of arrests were made by

uniformed police officers.

It was only when activities had subsided that Dr David Sanders, who is involved in Zimbabwe solidarity and Anti-Apartheid activities, noticed a young white woman standing next to him. She looked out of place. She examined Sanders' face intently as if trying to match his face to a photograph.

Sanders started to move away, but three plainclothes men rushed forward and grabbed him. He thought they might be NF or Rhodesian Front thugs and began to struggle and appeal for help. He even appealed to the boys in blue, but their response was to promptly clear a path for the assailants.

Sanders was taken to an SPG van. 'Fucking lefty agitator,' an SPG

hoodlum screamed. At Bow Street police station Sanders saw three blacks from the demo who had been arrested. One of them, on hearing Sanders talking, said: 'You sound as if you're from South Africa.'

'Yes,' a policeman responded, 'not everyone there has been smoked.' This was greeted with guffaws of laughter. Sanders was charged with 'threatening behaviour'.

In May the trial of all the four arrested took place. One was acquitted but Sanders and two others were found guilty.

Of the latter, one was a black woman charged with assault. The magistrate said: 'I accept that she didn't intend to assault a police officer.' But he found her guilty of assault nonetheless.

Two SPG men, Wood and Fisher, claimed in court that Sanders had said on the demo: 'They don't understand shouting. We want action. Let's strike them with your banners. Hit them with your sticks...'

Sanders did not play any role during the demo, leave alone shouting an instruction which the SPG scriptwriter wrote.

Sanders' appeal was heard last week at Knightsbridge Crown Court. Justice Goldstone [not a police favourite he] found Sanders not guilty and awarded him £250 costs against the police. The other appellant was also acquitted.

Good news, sure, but for what's going on in Southall read the next page.

6 HACKNEY GAZETTE September 21 1979

VIEWPOINT

THE MAILED FIST

NOTHING was more revealing about the new police chief, Commander David Mitchell, than the fact that he is the son of a well-known right-wing Tory MP. That much was clear when his official portrait was unveiled.

The right-wing Tory MP, David Mitchell, was every bit as much a right-wing Tory as his father, the late Sir David Mitchell, was a Tory MP.

It is not surprising that he is a Tory MP. He is a Tory MP. He is a Tory MP. He is a Tory MP.

Of course, the fact that he is a Tory MP is not surprising. He is a Tory MP. He is a Tory MP. He is a Tory MP.

TOUGH NEW COMMANDER TAKES OVER LOCAL POLICE

A NEW, tough, and well-known agitator has taken over the Hackney police force. The new commander, David Mitchell, is a well-known agitator.

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A BROAD array of black people's and labour movement organisations came together at a meeting in London last weekend to plan a national demonstration against the forthcoming Tory measures to limit immigration and change the nationality law.

The meeting was called by the leaders of the three major Indian Workers Associations in collaboration with the Anti Nazi League. Also present were representatives of the National Council of Bangladeshi Organisations, the Standing Conference of Pakistani Organisations, the West Indian Standing Conference,

All together now —

Scrap the Immigration Act!

the Progressive National Party of Jamaica Youth, the TUC race relations sub-committee, the Labour Party, Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party and International Marxist

Group.

The demonstration is to be held on 2 December, to demand the rejection of Tory proposals on immigration and nationality, the

repeal of the 1971 Immigration Act, and an end to racist measures against overseas students. There will be a mobilising conference open to all organisations supporting these demands on 20 October.

The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants and the Campaign Against Immigration Laws, who were also present at the meeting, welcomed the unity for action achieved there and pledged that their joint fringe meeting at the Labour Party conference would make its major objective winning further sponsorship for the march.

Awards for Southall magistrates

A Police Federation medal, honorary NF membership, and an Iron Cross

By Geoffrey Sheridan

THERE IS a crime known as contempt of court which consists, roughly speaking, of refusing to defer to the legal majesty, impartiality, wisdom, and general next-to-godliness of the folk who sit in judgement on us.

So here is a question: How is it possible to be anything but utterly contemptuous of stipendiary magistrates Cook, Badge, and Canham, who have presided over the Southall show trials?

Ole Hanson of the Legal Action Group, which represents 3,500 lawyers, describes these trials as 'one of the legal scandals of the century'.

Many of the lawyers who are attempting to represent the 342 predominantly Asian workers rounded up by Metropolitan Police Commissioner McNee's thugs on 23 April now despair of being able to mount any effective legal defence.

Whatever the evidence of defendants and witnesses; whatever the cross-examination reveals of police brutality, fabricated evidence, and the dearth of any reliable evidence whatsoever, it makes little difference to the outcome of the show trials, in which 86 cases have so far been dealt with.

Convictions

Stipendiaries Cook, Badge, and Canham, sitting in turn at Barnet court, have so far notched up a conviction rate of 87 per cent — some 35 per cent higher than that achieved by the usual standards of impartial justice in cases arising from demonstrations.

Each of these acolytes of McNee has found a different reason for arriving at the same conclusion, expressed in the timeless phrase: 'I find you guilty.'

The fines so far total some £7,000, and three Asians have been goaled; two for three months and one for one month.

Cook is quite straightforward. 'I've heard the evidence from the prosecution and the defence,' he mutters. 'Obviously there is a contradiction. But I have no reason to doubt the evidence given by the police.'

He's earned his Police Federation medal.

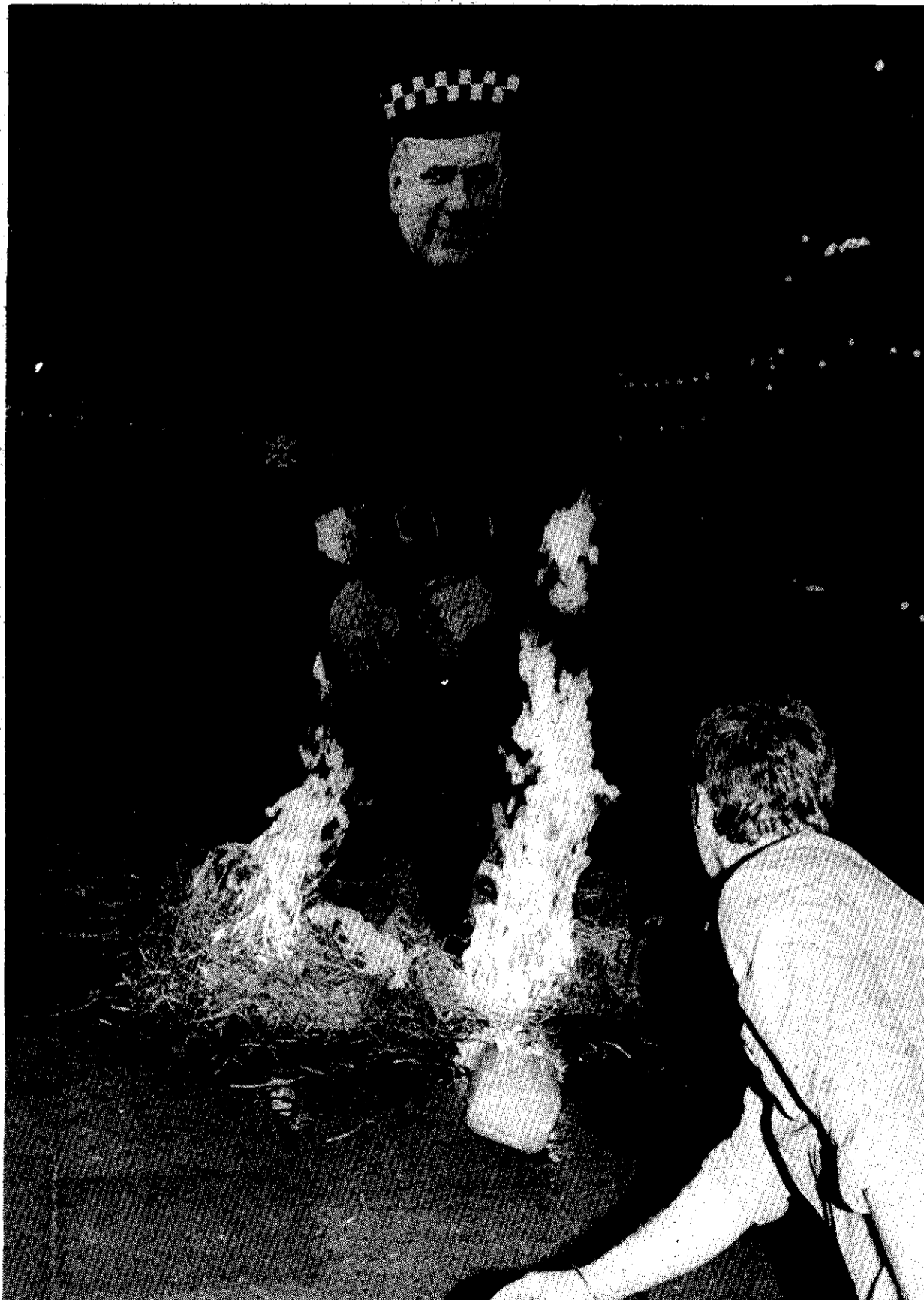
Badge likes to be a little more subtle. When you listen to him handing out convictions for obstruction and threatening behaviour like some kind of confetti, it becomes apparent what crime he is dealing with: that of a black community defending its rights.

To Mr Badge, honorary membership of the National Front.

Heights

Stipendiary Canham, who starred in Barnet for the past fortnight, has leapt to new heights of judicial wisdom. Take the prosecution last Thursday of Raminder Sidhu for supposedly throwing a brick at a police cordon.

Sidhu, who works on the assembly line at Vauxhalls and helps his father run a restaurant, was arrested five



THUG-in-Chief, Sir David McNee, getting the heat treatment after the Blair Peach benefit in July

minutes after a cop said he saw him with a brick in his hand among a large crowd of Asians. The cop, Chief Inspector Purcell, was 25 yards away and acknowledged that he had seen Sidhu for only a couple of seconds.

Sidhu's defence counsel quoted from a legal judgement which made it abundantly clear that an observation in such circumstances could not be considered as sound evidence.

But Canham wasn't to be deterred, reaching for military

analogies to tell the courtroom what wonderfully trained observers the police are. Sidhu was fined £75 with £30 costs.

Canham is responsible for introducing yet another gimmick at the Southall trials — sentencing witnesses. Last week Bhagirath Ramphal and Jargit Samra were bound over to keep the peace for a year on their own surety of £100.

Both had appeared to give evidence for defendants, acknowledg-

ing in doing so that they had taken part in a demonstration. This was too much for Canham, who in sentencing these witnesses was not to be put off by the fact that they had not been charged with anything and therefore were not legally represented.

The proper description for this kind of procedure is intimidating witnesses. To Mr Canham, who is fond of referring to battlefields, the Iron Cross.

All this in addition to the fact that

the trials are deliberately being held in Barnet, 20 miles from the Southall community which might have directly challenged this kangaroo court; that appeals will go to the St Albans Crown Court, notorious for its addiction to sticking to magistrates' decisions; and that the police are obstinately refusing to disclose their case against defendants before the day of their trial.

There's a lot more to come. Most of the defendants dealt with so far have not been political activists — their turn comes shortly.

On 22 October, for instance, there will be a group trial of six Southall Youth Movement members charged with 14 assaults, six cases of threatening behaviour, and a bunch of charges of possessing offensive weapons. On 9 October, Tariq Ali comes up at Barnet before stipendiary McDermott, at the mention of whose name defence lawyers tend to throw up. Jail sentences are anticipated.

Thugs

This then is the British justice that is being dished out to the Southall community — a mopping up operation after thousands of McNee's thugs went in with coshes on 23 April.

A simple lesson is being learnt in that community. Ivan Johnson, a West Indian in Peoples Unite, put it this way in the Southall Defence Campaign's Open Door TV programme: 'We'll die trying to deal with this sort of situation peacefully. We might as well die fighting. Next time we'll be armed.'

The labour movement has still to make even a protest against the show trials. The Anti Nazi League has decided to organise meetings in several cities, in order to start building the broadest possible defence.

The immediate task is the call that has gone out to all ANL branches to organise pickets of police stations on Wednesday, 10 October, the eve of the opening of the Blair Peach inquest at the coroners' court in Hammer-smith, West London.

*Pickets of police stations on 10 October have so far been arranged in the following towns and cities. Make sure you're there.

Nottingham, Liverpool, Cardiff, Swansea, Canterbury, Birmingham, Leicester, Bristol, Newcastle, Wolverhampton, Manchester, Oldham, Brighton, Bradford, Sheffield, Durham, Preston, Colchester, Luton, Swindon, Huddersfield, and South-end.

In London, police stations to be picketed include those in Southall, Dalston, Kilburn, Lewisham, Queens Park, Harlesden, Hornsey, and Holloway.

ENGINEERING STRIKE WEEK 6

Democracy— an excuse for scabbing?

By Ron Thompson, AUEW steward,
Sheffield

THE CURRENT engineering dispute has made the issue of trade union democracy one of the most debated questions in the industry. The capitalist press and the right wing in the union have not been slow to point out that the membership have not voted for the strike. 'No vote — no strike' has been the rallying call of the 'return to work' brigade.

We need not concern ourselves too much with the hypocrisy of the press, whose concern for union democracy only seems to emerge when there is a strike on. (Can anyone remember press outrage when Scanlon ignored the policy of the AUEW delegation to last year's Labour Party conference and refused to cast a vote for the automatic re-selection of MPs?)

Membership

But the fact is that the calling of a national strike without any say in the matter by the membership goes justifiably against the grain with many rank and file members of the union. This is particularly a problem in the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, where there is something of a tradition of union democracy — at least at a formal level.

All full-time officers are elected by the membership for limited periods of time, and the policy-making National Committee consists mainly of rank and file members whose decisions are at least theoretically binding on the Executive Council.

In the current series of strikes the membership have not only been denied a vote, but their involvement in general in the struggle has been very passive. All the decisions concerning the claim and industrial action are taken by full-time officials. All the rank and file do is withdraw their labour on the dates announced.

Embrace

It is not sufficient to denounce as 'reactionary' everyone who complains about the lack of a vote, or simply to quote the rule book as many Communist Party militants seem to be doing. Our answer to the right wing must embrace the question of democracy in general — not just whether there's a vote on the two-day strike.

One of the factors that continues



TERRY DUFFY

to undermine support is the continual watering down of the claim by the officials. What about rank and file control over that? What about the question of dispensations to companies that have 'settled'? What about the alternative to two-day stoppages, such as an all-out strike?

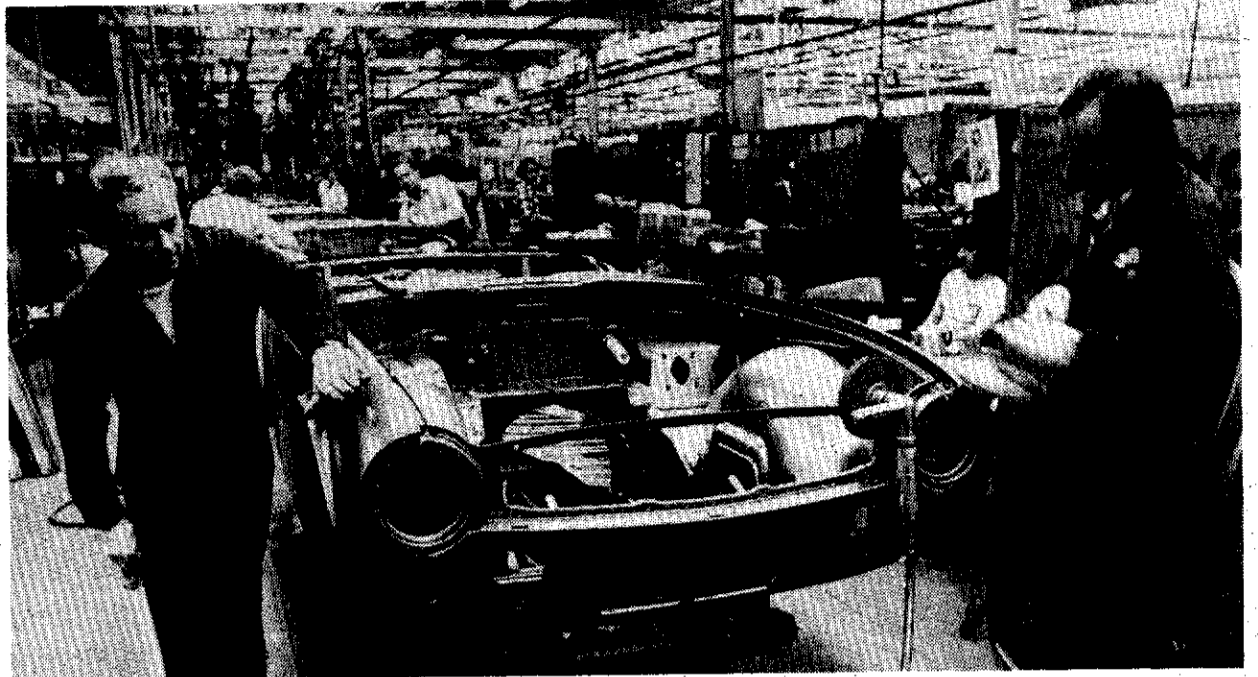
The demand for a vote needs to be put in the context of the demand for rank and file control over all aspects of the struggle. For those who are so conscious about democracy in the union, then let us begin with the question of the 35-hour week.

Settlement

Let us put it to the membership — should we be fighting for a 35-hour week now or should we water it down to 39 hours as Duffy has done? Let all views be canvassed and the membership vote in mass meetings up and down the country.

The Rolls Royce workers have called for all-out action. This call was repeated by our stewards quarterly. If the capitalist press would like the workers to have a vote, let those in favour of ending the action and those who want all-out action speak to mass meetings throughout the country. And before there is any settlement let the membership vote on acceptance or rejection.

Perhaps this is not the sort of democracy Fleet Street have in mind. But this is what militants must campaign for if we are to beat the 'no vote — no strike' brigade.



STRIKE NEWS

Edinburgh

By Ralph De Santes

A TOTAL of 2,500 engineering workers at Edinburgh's Ferranti factory have been on strike for eight weeks for a 25 per cent across-the-board increase.

Despite management manoeuvres, support for the strike is rock solid. If won the strike would give skilled workers £84 (compared with £67 now) and labourers £60 (compared with £48) for a 40-hour week.

Management have tried various tricks to smash the strike. First a smear campaign was launched against shop convenor Dougie Roonie, alleging that he was using the strike to seek high office in the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers.

When the smear fell flat, management changed its tune and said that in fact Roonie was about to be bought off by management. But that slander too had no effect.

As for the claim itself, management's first reaction was to treat it with contempt. Then an attempt was made to divide the strikers by offering different increases to the skilled workers and the labourers — although both offers were small.

The rejection of this offer led to proposals for regrading and a bonus increase. This offer was sent out to every striker accompanied by a letter warning of all sorts of nasty things if the offer wasn't accepted. The workers posted back the letter to management.

The strike has been officially supported, and the workers say that if they win this particular dispute, they will gladly come out again in support of the national claim. There is particular enthusiasm for the campaign for a 35-hour week.

York

By Lewis Emery

RUMOURS circulating in York would have it that the engineering strike will end on 4 December. That is what 'non-union sources' told workers at Vickers.

As the Vickers workers point out, it would not be the first time that management — and indeed everyone else — knew what was going on before the rank and file workers.

A toughening up of the strike is now very much needed if it is not going to fray at the edges. Although the strike at Vickers remains 100 per cent solid, the trend in this isolated and largely non-industrial town is towards local deals.

Last week workers at the smaller of the two Armstrong plants decided to end the action after hearing that the main plant was not taking part in the strike. Adams Hydraulics foundry workers have accepted management's offer of an £80 minimum for skilled workers — without any concession on hours.

Amongst the weaknesses in the action mentioned to me by strikers have been the crossing of picket lines by members of the union's white-collar section, TASS, the lack of strike pay [making all-out action a difficult step], and the inadequate involvement of apprentices.

Another important influence on the strikers has been the failure of 10 weeks of action by German steelworkers to win a 35-hour week. Clearly a Europe-wide fight for 35 hours with no loss in pay is needed.

Vauxhall

By Rob Stoddart

FOR THE last week workers from Vauxhall's Ellesmere Port plant in Merseyside have been sending flying pickets as far away as Essex to win their six-week-old strike.

Their battle with General Motors is over a claim for a 25 per cent increase in pay index-

linked against inflation, an end to the company's new penalty clauses, and a shorter working week of 37½ hours as a first step to 35 hours.

Despite the acceptance of the company's 13 per cent offer by the other Vauxhall plants at Dunstable and Luton, the Ellesmere Port workers remain militant and determined to win.

The pickets are aimed at halting the import of cars and parts from the continent. The main picket of nearly 100 is at Harwich, although the company has tried to use other ports, including Ipswich, Felixstowe, and Sheerness in Kent.

Thanks to the solidarity shown by dockworkers at these ports only token pickets have proved necessary. The AUEW and T&GWU convenors have been checking other ports to make sure they stay one jump ahead.

Last Saturday the Special Supplementary Units (local SPG) appeared on the picket line for the first time, and for the first time there was trouble. The police waded into the pickets as they checked a wagon which was supposedly empty, arresting 10 for obstruction and charging one with assault.

Despite these arrests the strikers remain undaunted, in part because of the support and solidarity they have received so far.

THE USE of the lock-out is by no means a new tactic of the engineering employers. In 1922 the Engineering Employers Federation organised a national lock-out which developed into a major test of strength with the newly formed Amalgamated Engineering Union [AEU]. The half-hearted response of the union leadership then led to a major defeat for the union. It also paved the way for an employers' offensive over productivity — through speed-up and redundancy.

The economic boom after the First World War had allowed the unions to go on the offensive. In 1920 the engineers had won a 15 shilling increase in basic rates, and an agreement which gave the unions considerable control over overtime working.

Increased international competition, however, hit the industry hard. From December 1920 to July 1921 the number of unemployed members of the AEU rose from 19,976 to 114,684. At the same time the bosses were organising.

Lock-outs 1922 style

By 1922 two thousand firms had joined the Engineering Employers Federation. The defeat of the miners in 1921 encouraged them to go on the offensive and demand wage cuts totalling £50 million. After two ballots of their members the unions gave up without a fight.

But the employers were not satisfied. To raise productivity rapidly they needed to break workplace strength and organisation. In particular they had to re-assert 'managerial control' in the workplace — and that meant ending the national agreements covering overtime working. What is more, they knew that the engineers' funds were low, and they could not hold out long if left to fight alone.

So they gave the AEU an ultimatum — accept a new agreement or there will be a

lock-out from 11 March 1922. The union's executive recommended acceptance — but the membership refused. They knew that it was crucial to retain control over overtime working with unemployment rising.

The executive recommendation encouraged the employers to stand firm, but the response of the rest of the labour movement leadership was even more disastrous. The 'National Joint Council of Labour', involving both the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress, offered to 'mediate' instead of organising solidarity actions and fundraising — and came out with proposals for ending the dispute which would have amounted to virtual surrender by the unions.

In May the employers extended the lock-out

to all the engineering unions, not just the AEU. Within a month the rest capitulated to the employers, leaving the AEU on its own again apart from two smaller craft unions. With union funds having dropped from £3,250,000 in 1920 to virtually nothing, the membership voted by two to one to go back to work.

The rest of the labour movement had left the engineers to fight alone, but the AEU leadership had done nothing to break out of this isolation. None of the AEU members in non-federated firms were called out in solidarity, and the leadership refused to allow the unemployed to be involved in the struggle — even though they might have been used by the employers as scabs.

Two years after its formation the union had suffered a major defeat, resulting in 333,123 lost members [a quarter of the total] and speed-up, victimisation and wage cuts in the factories. The employers' organisation, on the other hand, was stronger and more united than ever before.

ENGINEERING STRIKE WEEK 6

The Broad Left put Duffy on the spot, but...

Are they playing with fire?

By Pat Hickey, Deputy Senior Steward, Rover Solihull

ON THE DAY he was elected President of the AUEW, Terry Duffy made it clear what he thought of industrial action. 'The strike is a very delicate weapon. Sometimes a good sharp strike is a good safety valve. But long strikes are of no use to the union or nation. I will strive to reduce them.'

In the last few months Duffy has been singing a different tune. Whilst warning that 'We cannot discount a prolonged dispute', he declared in May that 'Someone, somewhere, has got to take on the employing class on the shorter working week.'

A change of heart? No. Within a month of that statement he was trying to get the June National Committee to reduce the demand for a shorter working week from 35 hours to 39 hours, and the claim for £80 skilled minimum to £70 skilled minimum. Only the Broad Left majority of 27 on a national committee of 52 prevented a complete sell-out.

Duffy has been put on the spot by the Broad Left. He has been forced to lead action involving the whole membership — and with new elections next year, his success or failure will be remembered by the rank and file.

It would be tempting for the left to let him stew in his own juice — on the basis that if he loses the fight over the claim he loses the election also. That would be a fatal mistake.

A defeat in this struggle will weaken not Duffy but the left in the engineering industry — both in elections and in the workplace. A defeat for the union will weaken workplace organisation, weaken the self-confidence and involvement of the rank and file, weaken our calls for further action.



That is why the Broad Left's present position is a betrayal of their responsibility. They have forced the union leadership into leading official action but are not taking the steps necessary to ensure victory. It is all-out action that's needed, and that is what the Broad Left should be fighting to initiate.

The shop stewards conference previously held in Sheffield has now been recalled for 13 October in Birmingham.

Good. An authoritative meeting of the rank and file leadership is just

what is needed. But that must lead the call for national strike action. As yet there is no sign the Broad Left intend to fight for that.

Engineers Charter, which had a meeting of 80 people two weeks ago, should make a national mobilisation

to fight for an all-out call to come from the conference. Socialist Challenge supporters should attempt to get delegated on that basis.

It is essential to make every effort to step up the fight now — we cannot afford a defeat at the hands of the employers.

Cutting their way through our lives

Educational TV to go

By Ross Keith, ETV Action Committee

A MASS meeting of the unions at the Inner London Education Authority's Educational Television Centre last Thursday voted unanimously to fight the authority's proposal to close the centre.

The axing results from the decision of the Labour-led ILEA to implement the government's 5 per cent education cuts in 1980-81.

A joint union action committee at the centre, involving members of ABS, ACTT, GLCSA, NUT and NUPE, will oppose the closure, together with all other education cuts in the Inner London area.

The Education Television Centre has produced multi-cultural material for use in schools, which has been regularly attacked by the National Front. Now it seems that the Labour Party is intent on doing what the NF has failed to achieve.

As well as a fight to save jobs, opposing the closure is also a battle to defend progressive education against the growing voice of reaction.

The action committee has made public a confidential ILEA document proposing £4.4m cuts next year. Although Sir Ashley Bramall, leader of the authority, has said that redundancies of full-time staff will be avoided, the secret proposals tell a different story.

With cuts scheduled in everything from school cleaning, maintenance, and adult education, sackings are

inevitable, particularly among part-time workers, who are mainly women.

A lobby of the ILEA education committee against the cuts will be held at County Hall on 9 October. For speakers against the Educational Television Centre closure, contact the Joint Union Action Committee, ETV Centre, Thackeray Rd, London SW8. Tel 01-622 9966.

Tories can thank the CP

IT SEEMS that the Broad Left in the Inner London Teachers Association, which represents 14,000 NUT members, will stop at nothing to halt effective action against the cuts.

Meetings of the association's council tend to be dominated by discussion of vacuous reports from its sub-committees, prepared by full-time union officers. In order to cut through this bureaucratic fluff, it has been the practice on the ILTA council to allow delegates to put amendments to the resolutions that are presented.

At the last meeting of the council, on 18 September, delegates wanted to propose a united campaign against the cuts involving all the public sector unions. But Vera Woods, ILTA president and a member of the Communist Party, ruled that amendments could not be put, thus disallowing the proposal.

A challenge to the chair's ruling by Bernard Reagan of the East London Teachers Association was defeated by 32 votes to 31 on a show of hands. However, a recorded vote then showed the challenge carried by 37 votes to 34.

This was too much for the Broad Left, backed up by their right-wing friends. Heather McKay, ILTA vice president and a member of the Broad Left, refused to accept the vote, and duly closed the meeting.

Dealing with the Tories' education cuts evidently means getting shot of the Broad Left, too. A number of London NUT associations are now calling for McKay's resignation.

Building for victory

By Tony Young, TGWU building worker, Wandsworth

MASS pickets vital to the defence of direct works throughout the country will take place in Wandsworth, SW London, next Wednesday.

Two sites are to be picketed — the location of Wandsworth council housing contracts, which should have gone to the council's direct works department.

The department is one of the largest and most efficient in the country, yet with the election of a Tory council these and other sites have been handed to private contractors, Croudace and Turriff, both notorious for their use of non-unionised lump labour.

The sites have been shut by union action for some months, in spite of desperate attempts by the council and the contractors to defeat the pickets — building workers and local trades unionists.

The Wandsworth Tories want to entirely scrap direct works, hence the importance of making the pickets on 10 October as big as possible.

The pickets are at 7am at the Croudace site, Upper Tooting Park, near Balham tube, and the Turriff site, Bellamy House, Garratt Lane, London SW17.

Five down below

THE TORIES' cuts do not stop short of fire fighting. In Lancashire 75 jobs in the fire service are to be wiped out, including seven fire prevention officers.

Workers at Attwaters engineering firm in Preston, where two were killed and seven badly injured in a fire last month, are joining with the local trades council and the North-west Association for Health and Safety in opposing these cuts and demanding safe workplaces.

The first step is a lobby of Lancashire county council at County Hall, Fishergate, Preston at 12.45 on 11 October.

Paddington stops

By Peter Grant, Paddington branch, ASLEF

BRITISH Rail wants to get rid of 35,000 workers, and the present battle ground for this 'pruning' operation, linked, of course, to increased work-loads, is Paddington station in London.

When parcel porters at the station refused to work new rosters three weeks ago, management locked them out. The NUR leadership has made the dispute official, calling a one-day strike at the station last Tuesday and the previous Wednesday.

The strikes have been solid, and would have succeeded in shutting the station completely if the NUR had instructed its members at the Old Common Panell signal box to come out.

Homeworkers' conference

By Jane Fox

THE 250,000 homeworkers in Britain — mainly women who carry out manufacturing work in their back room — are so used to appalling wage rates and conditions of employment that having the Tories in power might not seem to make any difference.



But with the Employment Secretary's plans for whittling away existing legislation protecting jobs, homeworkers can be certain of gaining nothing from this government. Hence the importance of trade union and community action to take up the homeworkers' case.

This is the aim of a conference to be held by the National Homeworking Campaign on 13 October. It's from 11am to 5pm at St Pancras Church House, Lancing St, London NW1. Further details from: Simon Crane, Low Pay Unit, 9 Poland St, London W1.

Pope John Paul II hedges his bets

By Geoff Bell

'I KNOW nothing at all of politics', Pope John Paul II was reported as saying to a group of British journalists shortly after he landed in Ireland last weekend. Nevertheless the Pope, especially in his much publicised speech at Drogheda, displayed all the political skills which have made the Catholic Church one of history's great survivors.

Of course he condemned 'terrorism'. The Catholic Church in Ireland condemned the Young Irelanders' rebellion of 1848 the Fenian Rising of 1867, and the Easter Rising of 1916, and it would have been unrealistic to expect John Paul II to abandon this tradition. Equally predictable was the Pope's call to 'all men and women engaged in violence to return to the ways of peace'.

But contrary to the impression given by British media reports, that was not all the Pope had to say. He emphasised the fact that 'I want to speak to politicians with the same intensity with which I have spoken to the men of violence...do not cause or condone or tolerate conditions which give excuse or pretext to men of violence'.

In demanding also the 'victory of justice', John Paul II commented that it was up to the politicians to 'show that there is a peaceful, political way to justice. You must show peace achieves the works of justice and violence does not.'

Echoes

In other words, the Pope was saying that the politicians had singularly failed to show that there was a peaceful road to justice. He went on to condemn the 'political vacuum' in the North of Ireland, adding his criticisms of British do-nothingness to those already made by American politicians.

Finally, in an implied reference to the British administration in the North of Ireland, the Pope said that 'human rights...cannot be set aside...by the state itself, for any cause, not even for security or in the interests of law and order'. He also referred to 'social and religious discrimination'.

Such remarks brought howls of outrage from Ian Paisley, who interpreted the Pope's words



as 'giving comfort to the IRA'. This conclusion says more about Paisley's paranoia than about the Pope's remarks, but it is true that the fact that John Paul II more or less admitted that there was some justice in the cause of the

Catholic minority in the North hardly reflects the usual British evaluation of the IRA as 'gangsters' without a political cause.

This is not to imply that the Pope of Rome is some sort of pacifist Irish Republican intent on

driving the Brits out by appeals to their morality. What it does show is that John Paul II's advisers both in Rome and in Ireland realise the dangers for the Catholic Church of performing like some toy poodle of British imperialism.

The Catholic Church expects to be a force in Ireland long after the last British soldier has left. It would therefore be downright foolish for the Pope not to establish a record now for talking for 'justice in Ireland'.

Dogmas

For what the Pope was up to in Ireland was to look after the interests of the Catholic Church at a time when it is experiencing some difficulty. There is evidence that attendance at mass has dropped in the North of Ireland during the last ten years. At the same time there have even been pickets of the offices and homes of Catholic bishops staged by Northern Catholics in protest at various anti-Republican statements.

In the South of Ireland the growing movement for women's liberation is seriously challenging some of the most cherished Catholic dogmas. In this respect the Pope's remarks in Dublin have an equal importance for the Catholic hierarchy. John Paul II launched a thinly veiled attack on contraception, divorce and abortion, condemning 'false practices concerning freedom, the sacredness of life, the indissolubility of marriage, the true sense of sexuality'.

The Pope's visit will no doubt help to re-establish some of the lost authority of the Catholic Church in Ireland. But in the long term the developing confidence of the women's movement and the determination of Irish Republicans and socialists to drive Britain out is unlikely to be seriously hampered.

And should the Pope continue to stress the 'peaceful road' then it may well be worth reminding him of the bit in the bible which goes on about 'first take the beam out of your own eye'. The Catholic Church, from the crusades right down to the American Cardinal Spellman's support for the Vietnam war, has 'blessed' more weapons and called for more 'just wars' than there are blades of grass in Ireland.

Break the Union says Tom Litterick

By Tom Litterick, former Labour MP for Birmingham Selly Oak

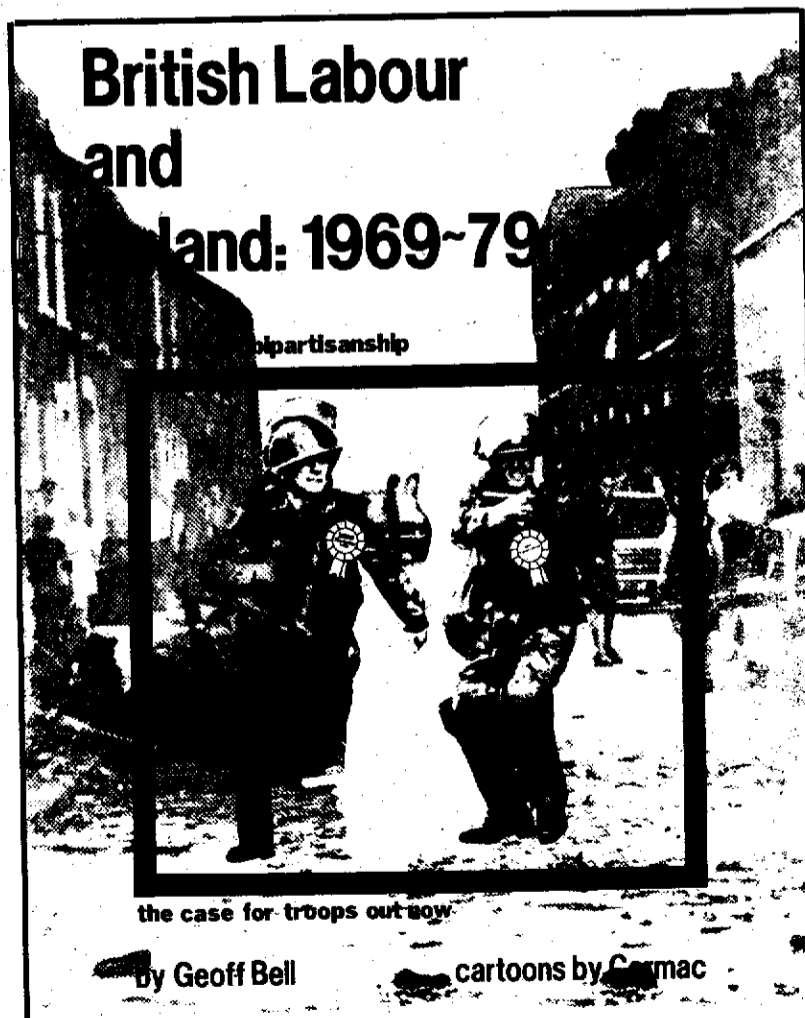
THERE are four resolutions on Northern Ireland on this year's Labour Party conference agenda, all of them calling for a radical reappraisal of Labour's Irish policies. In an amendment to Hemel Hempstead's resolution calling for British withdrawal, Brent East CLP asks for an end to what it calls the 'bipartisan policy' now being followed.

This bipartisan policy is in fact a tripartisan policy shared by the Labour and Tory leaderships with the Ulster Unionists. The development of the tripartite Irish policy is vividly analysed in a new pamphlet, *British Labour and Ireland 1969-79*, by Geoff Bell, an Ulster born journalist. This provides a plentiful supply of ammunition to any delegate wishing to take part in the debate on these resolutions, if a debate is allowed.

Stormont

We all remember that the present conflict was sparked off by the civil rights demand for equal treatment for Catholics, an end to discrimination. In response Britain eventually abolished Stormont, the sectarian 'B' Specials, the multiple vote and the hated Special Powers Act, and disbanded the RUC. We also abolished local government, supposedly to avoid discrimination in housing and other matters.

But the 'B' Specials were re-formed as the Ulster Defence Regiment, as sectarian as before; the RUC, as sectarian as it ever was and responsible for the widespread torture of prisoners, was re-armed; the Special Powers Act was replaced by the Emergency Provisions Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act; internment was replaced with imprisonment without trial, indef-



A new pamphlet by Geoff Bell with cartoons by Cormac, which analyses the costs of bipartisanship over the last ten years. Available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, London N1. Cost 40p plus 10p post. Bulk rates on request.

inite imprisonment 'on remand', and deportation without trial.

And as if all that wasn't enough, we gave the Ulster Unionists extra seats at Westminster; there are now three

times as many people in prison in Ulster as there were in 1969; last year Roy Mason announced his intention of selling off one third of all the council houses in Northern Ireland;

and unemployment is as high in the Catholic areas as it was during the great depression.

Mr Bell is, perhaps understandably, very hard on the Labour Party when he attributes blame, but the fact is that the Labour Party has never been consulted on any of the dramatic policy 'U' turns on Ireland during the last few years. Nor has the Parliamentary Labour Party. All the vital decisions have been made by the Labour parliamentary leadership, who have shown, as Mr Bell rightly points out, more anxiety to get the approval of the Tories and the Ulster Unionists than that of any section of the labour movement.

Troops

The pamphlet sets out to prove the case for pulling the troops out of Ireland now, but with respect to Mr Bell I don't think he has done this. He has given us clear proof, if such proof were needed, that all British policies in Ireland have failed abysmally on their own stated terms, and his argument forces us to the conclusion that the cause lies in the nature of the union of Britain and the Protestant statelet as it was defined in 1921. But that is a case for ending the union, not immediate withdrawal of British forces.

The point is that the withdrawal of British troops would not by itself end the conflict. The root cause of the discrimination and the conflict lies in the guarantee that British sovereignty over Northern Ireland provides for the Protestants that whatever they do to the Catholics will be backed by British military power; that is what 'sovereignty' means. A simple military withdrawal would inevitably result in the further militarisation of the RUC and an extension of the Ulster Defence Regiment, financed by the British tax payer. This would provide a strong reason for the

Provisional IRA to stay in the field, since, once again, all the forces of 'law and order' would be in the hands of the Protestants, with everything that has meant in the past.

Only by ending forever British sovereignty over Northern Ireland can that guarantee be removed and be seen to be removed. Only then will the Orange Order understand that their dream of 'a Protestant state for a Protestant people' was a hideous delusion sustainable only on the basis of British military power, British taxes and British blood.

I hope conference delegates and Labour Party members generally will read Geoff Bell's pamphlet; it is a timely reminder of what Lord Harcourt told Gladstone in 1883: 'We hold Ireland by force and by force alone, as much as in the days of Cromwell... we have never governed and we never shall govern Ireland by the good will of its people.' If we can only govern Northern Ireland by force we should not be governing it at all.

Dundee

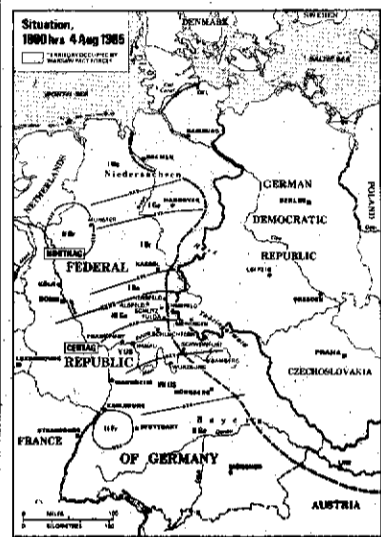
Demonstration
In protest against the training of the Ulster Defence Regiment in Dundee.
Sat 13 October, 11.30am.
Assemble: Toftthill car park, Lochee, Dundee.

THE MEN who wrote *The Third World War: A Future History* are not cranks or harmless speculators. The chief author is Sir John Hackett, once Commander in Chief of the British Army of the Rhine, and Britain's foremost military historian. His collaborators on this vivid and professionally written book include top NATO figures like Air Chief Marshal Sir John Barracough, Brigadier Kenneth Hunt, Vice Admiral Sir Ian McGeogh, and Major General John Strawson. Norman Macrae, deputy editor of the *Economist*, is also one of the authors.

In the 1960s the Americans, aware that the Soviet Union could rival each US advance in nuclear weaponry, adopted a policy of 'flexible response'. The opening of hostilities should not have to trigger an immediate escalation to all-out nuclear war — the 'trip-wire' theory.

Limiting the growth of strategic arms, through the SALT talks, the US is building its conventional armoury, and encouraging its allies to do the same. Hackett's book explains what the 'non-nuclear variant' would look like in practice.

In December 1984, anti-Soviet riots break out in Poland and East Germany. These revolts have been encouraged by the 'human rights'



campaign carried on by President Carter since 1977. Fearing another Hungarian style uprising, the Kremlin sets out to unite East Europe against the common enemy and humiliate the Americans.

To this end, Moscow stages a series of provocations, the most serious of which is a Soviet-inspired coup in Saudi Arabia that tips the balance in OPEC towards the militants and results in an oil embargo on the West.

Stabilise

Although the Soviet and US navies clash in the Gulf, Moscow joins with the USA in a fresh round of detente after managing to stabilise East Europe.

But a few months later, in July 1985, a civil war breaks out in Yugoslavia. The Kremlin supports the pro-Soviet faction. What happens next is as surprising as the 'non-nuclear variant' itself.

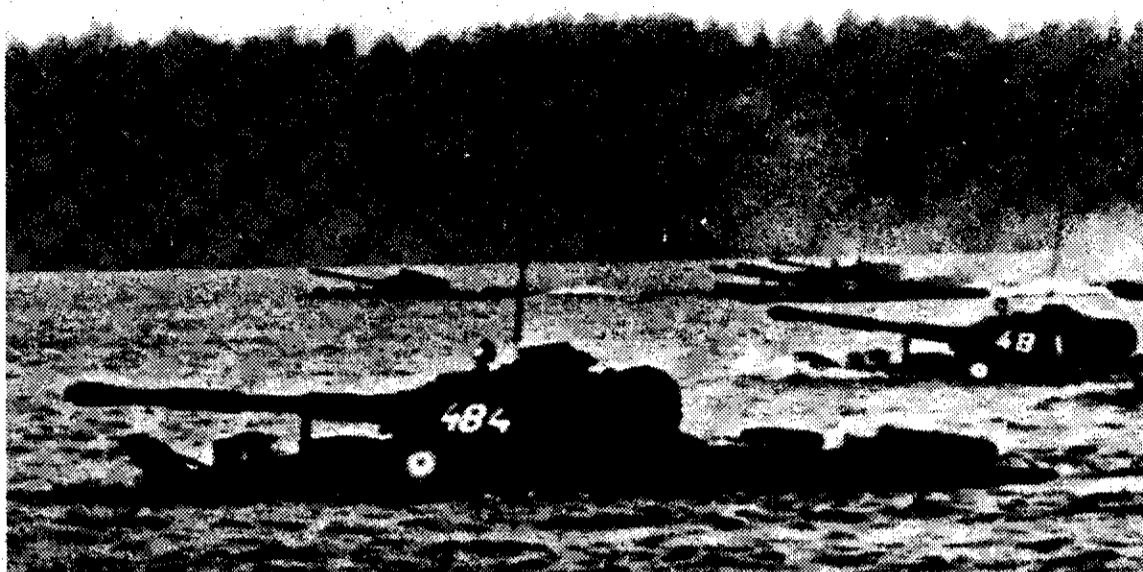
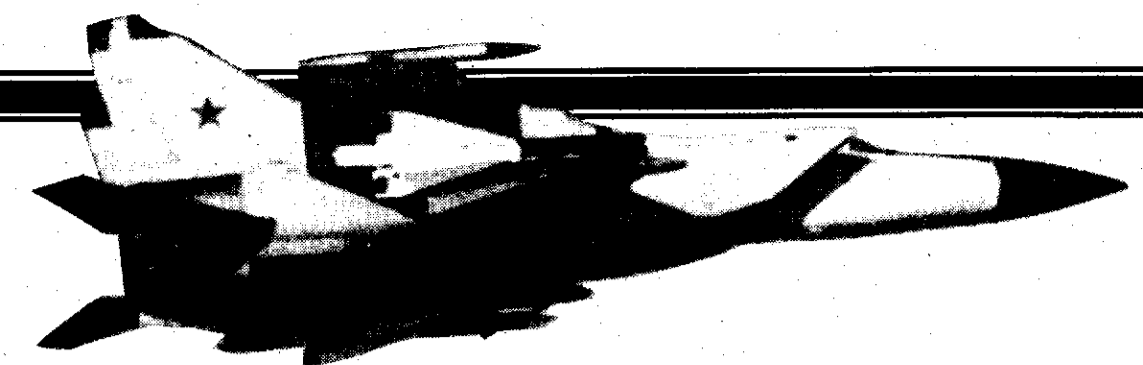
The USA invades Yugoslavia — to defend 'human rights', of course. With that move America has started World War Three.

To remain suitably anti-Soviet, and no doubt to avoid offending his American colleagues, Hackett does not probe the motives behind this US initiative. But an action such as the invasion of Yugoslavia would be bound to lead to World War Three: it leaves the Warsaw Pact no choice but to invade West Germany in an effort to remove the threat of NATO from its borders.

On D-Day, 4 August 1985, the Pact announces its war aims. It will fight its way to the Rhine. There it will halt and demand the disbandment of the NATO alliance. France will not be invaded, and nuclear weapons will not be used, except in retaliation.

Convoys

If Western figures can be trusted, the Warsaw Pact has three times as many soldiers and tanks as NATO and about twice as many aircraft. However, this takes into account only the NATO forces stationed in Europe. The principal member of NATO is the



A THIRD WORLD WAR?

MOST people believe that there can never be another world war. The possession of nuclear weapons by both East and West makes another world war unthinkable, impossible.

A recent book, *The Third World War: A Future History*, undermines this assumption. It describes a future world war, fought largely with conventional weapons, involving NATO, the Warsaw Pact, and their respective allies in Africa and the Middle East.

DAVE BAILEY discusses this bestseller.

United States and in Hackett's war, America quickly flies or convoys across the Atlantic the planes, tanks, and soldiers to make up the shortfall.

After a ferocious land, air, and sea battle lasting almost three weeks, the Pact concedes defeat and withdraws in good order. It's a close run thing, but the Free World is saved.

Hackett insists that this happy outcome depends, among other things, on a change in the moral climate in Britain between now and 1985. Herein lies the message of the book. Britain must cut back on social welfare and raise its defence expenditure from 5 to 9 per cent of the Gross National Product, and the book explains in detail how the money should be spent. The USA must re-introduce the draft in the early 1980s, the book adds.

Retaliation

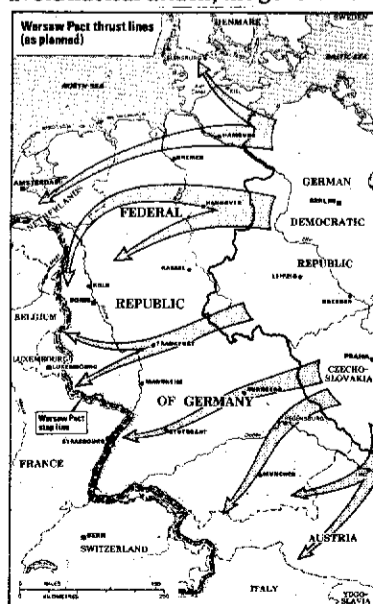
Following the Pact withdrawal, according to the WWII scenario, the West prepares to exploit its military victory.

Hackett would oppose an invasion of East Europe at this point. It is sufficient to let the peoples of East Europe, together with the oppressed nationalities within the Soviet Union itself, see that the Red Army is not invincible. With that, they will revolt.

Moscow accelerates the centrifugal forces by its activities during the closing days of the war. In a last minute bid to persuade the US to recognise the

Soviet sphere of influence in East Europe, the Kremlin launches a single nuclear strike. Birmingham, England, is obliterated.

NATO retaliates by destroying Minsk, a city suitably situated not too far from the Polish border. Angered by Soviet unilateralism and keen to avoid nuclear attack, the governments



of East Europe and those of several Soviet republics (the Ukraine in the West and those bordering on China in the East) now secede. The defeated Soviet troops are forced to leave East

Europe, and the Warsaw Pact is at an end.

Hackett recognises that the workers of East Europe do not reject communism, only Russian domination. The collapse of the Warsaw Pact — together with the rolling back of Soviet influence in Africa and the Middle East — satisfies Sir John, who is writing his history in 1987, just after the event.

In Hackett's world, warfare ceases to be an apocalyptic or irrational act of mutual annihilation. The war is fought according to Clausewitz; that is to say, in order to achieve limited and rational goals.

The outcome of war may alter the course of history, but it has nothing in common with genocidal destruction. In WWII, Moscow fights to save its bureaucratic domination over its satellite states and NATO to achieve its long cherished aim of breaking up the Warsaw Pact.

Predicted

Are the leaders of the West advocating Hackett's scenario? Does the book reveal, for instance, the true meaning of SALT and Carter's human rights agitation?

Marxists have always said that if revolution does not overthrow capitalism in the West, a Third World War is inevitable; though, of course, they have never predicted when it will happen. In the past, capitalism

invariably tried to solve its problems by war. Its growing difficulties today are well-known. Hackett's book, by dispelling the myth of inevitable nuclear exchange, seeks to make people think once again about what has long been unthinkable.

Since Hackett wrote his book, in 1978, two important developments have taken place.

First, the Chinese invasion of Vietnam. This, the first war between workers states, was in part a proxy war between China and the Soviet Union.

US friendship with the Chinese and the sale of arms to China (through Britain) are undoubtedly intended to foment a Sino-Soviet war. In Hackett's book, Moscow has to fight World War Three only on its Western front. Perhaps if he were writing now, he would have it fighting on two fronts.

Secondly, the Iranian revolution has occurred. This is a massive blow to US domination of the Gulf.

Triumphs

Hackett insists that to fight a war in Europe, NATO must secure its supplies of oil and minerals from Africa and the Middle East. Loss of US influence and growing Soviet penetration of these areas threaten



both. Perhaps this is one reason why the Iranian revolution produced a reaction among the hawks in the Pentagon, calling for the USA to knock out the USSR in a nuclear 'first strike'. The advocates of the non-nuclear variant, on the other hand, will want to bring forward the conventional war before things deteriorate further.

Hackett says little about the European working class. One advantage of prodding the Pact to invade West Germany is that NATO can present the war as one of 'national defence'. In August 1914, the European socialist leaders supported the imperialist war with the excuse that each country was defending itself from attack.

But NATO would do well to beware of this historical precedent. Hackett, for example, placing no faith in the anti-Soviet declarations of the Eurocommunists, has the Italian Communist Party inviting the Russians into Italy. That is a move that could only lead to civil war. In France and elsewhere the pro-imperialist position triumphs.

However, the fear of war, especially of nuclear attack, would be so acute that revolutionary disturbances would break out in many parts of West Europe. The working class parties would have a duty to launch an insurrectionary bid for power and pull the armed forces out of NATO. Only revolution can stop war.

Despite reformist leaders, the working class invariably turns to revolution in time of war. The two greatest revolutionary waves of the European working class — between 1917 and 1923, and again between 1941 and 1947 — were brought on by war.

We must make certain that nuclear escalation is not the only danger that the NATO war-mongers have to take into account when making their plans for World War Three.

**The Third World War: A Future History*, August 1985 was first published by Sidgwick & Jackson in 1978, at £7.45. Republished by Sphere Books in September 1979, at £1.75 in paperback.

DEMOCRACY IN THE

By Jude Woodward

SHIRLEY Williams has said that the current fight over Labour Party democracy and the leadership is like the crew of the Titanic having a punch-up in the engine room.

But are questions of democracy irrelevant to the fight to rebuild the Labour Party and bring down the Tories?

Shirley Williams clearly thinks that they are and so does the *Daily Mirror*: 'As we head for new heights in post-war unemployment the mutineers talk only about who's to write the manifesto (which isn't going to be needed for years anyway).'

Callaghan has tried to convince us it's not relevant — 'we shall let the Tories off the hook'. Unfortunately the Tories aren't on a hook, which is mainly due to Callaghan himself, who says they have a democratic mandate.

Some are convinced that the proposals on democracy in the Labour Party are positively dangerous, mainly because the left might actually win.

Power politics

The Campaign for a Labour Victory, which has support from right-wing Labour MPs and union leaders, summed it up like this: the NEC wants us to believe that 'millions of working men and women went out and voted for Margaret Thatcher and the most right-wing and anti-trade union programme put to the nation since the 1930s because Labour's manifesto wasn't left-wing enough'.

They go on to say that what the left is after is not democracy but 'naked power politics'. This alone should convince us that the question of democracy is not a side issue — those who are afraid of it want to pretend that it is.

Roy Hattersley really went to the root of the matter, however, arguing: 'If the NEC does become all-powerful, sweeping aside the established rights of the Parliamentary Party, then the battle to control the NEC will be fierce and continuous. If we create an electoral college, rival groups with different views about the leadership will compete for a majority.'

Hattersley continued: 'If an MP is obliged constantly to contest his (sic) future nomination with nominees of small, unrepresentative groups, factions will be formed both for and against.'

Consensus

Oh, horrors! If the Labour Party was more democratic we might find we don't all agree on everything! We might find that rather than the consensus view of Callaghan and Healey there is the right-wing view of Callaghan and Healey and an alternative left-wing view.

We might find there was a real debate over policy and strategy inside the Labour Party, and if there was, then Roy Hattersley might find himself on the losing side.

As socialists we are quite clear on the issue of democracy in the Labour Party — we are for it, and for as much of it as possible. That is the way we can have a real debate about the way to fight the Tories and about Labour's alternative policies.

Of course, after the debate there has to be some kind of decision so that everyone can act together to take on the Tories. But how to fight and on what policies has to be in the hands of the members of the Labour Party.

Defiance

An article in *Labour Activist*, the bulletin produced by Benn's supporters, put it like this: 'Take for example last year's 5 per cent limit on pay increases. The government was repeatedly warned by trade union leaders — right and left — that a 5 per cent limit would spell disaster...'

'One purpose of making the Labour Party more democratic would be to stop the parliamentary leadership imposing incomes policies in defiance of the movement.'

The article goes on to say that it isn't just a matter of incomes policy. Indeed it is not. Right now it is a question of whether the Parliamentary Labour Party gets away with leaving the fight against the Tories until the next election or whether it tries to lead a fight against them now.

The engineering strikes, the action against the Corrie Bill, and the widespread activities against the cuts reveal a willingness in the labour movement to begin the fightback now. Increased democracy in the Labour Party should ensure that this is reflected in the decisions made by conference and in the



Tony Benn and Eric Heffer have said that this Labour Party conference is the most important since the war.

This is because they believe that their proposals on constitutional change in the party will make it 'more democratic, strengthen its unity and increase its membership'.

The debate is about the whole future of the Labour Party,

its falling membership whether Callaghan and

It's not just a debate about the equivalents of Callaghan's movement in the figure rank and file level.

activities of the left when it is over.

But the Benn proposals do not go far enough. There is a proposal that the leader of the party should be elected by an 'electoral college' consisting of one third MPs, one third constituency party members, and one third trade union delegates. This is clearly more democratic than the present situation where the leader is elected simply by the PLP, so we should be in favour of the change.

However, electing the leader at conference would be the best and most democratic method. The electoral college simply backs up the exaggerated power of the PLP — MPs can attend the conference then they should vote there; they do not make up a third of the Labour Party.

It is also proposed that the final word on the party manifesto should rest with the National Executive Committee rather than with the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Again this proposal is a step in the right direction as the NEC is elected at conference with representatives from trade unions, constituency Labour Parties and MPs.

Guidelines

But the best system would have the manifesto drawn up strictly within guidelines laid down by the conference — an annual conference is sufficient to ensure it is up-to-date with events. Day-to-day decisions have to be left to the party's leaders, but broad statements of policy are the job of conference to debate and decide.

The final democratic proposal going to conference is on the mandatory reselection of MPs. This would be an important step on the road to abolishing power of the parliamentary Labour Party to ride roughshod over conference decisions.

Would all the MPs in the last Labour government have cheerfully accepted Callaghan's view that a further round of pay

restraint was necessary if they knew they would have to explain themselves to their constituency parties?

The reselection proposal was defeated last year by 'Scanlon's mistake', a useful error for the bureaucracy as the engineering union had



Ramsay MacDonald — crossing the House. mandated him to support reselection.

Clearly, many features of conference procedure would have to be improved to ensure that its own functioning is democratic — Scanlon should not have been able to get away with such a gross breach of mandate; delegates should not be bullied into remitting contentious motions; the three-year rule on debates should be abolished, as conference should have the right to discuss whatever it likes whenever it likes; procedure for 'compositing' motions should be improved, and so on.

Some people have suggested that the block votes of the trade unions are an undemocratic feature of the Labour Party conference. This is not the case — they are only undemocratic insofar as the way the mandate is decided is undemocratic.

To a considerable extent, democracy inside the Labour Party is dependent on democracy within the trade union movement. Calling for an end to trade union block votes is just a way of not dealing with the question of democracy within what has to be the major organisational base of the Labour Party.

Closer involvement of the trade unions in the Labour Party at a rank-and-file level — through building workplace branches of the Labour Party — can bring together the fight for democracy in all sections of the labour movement.

Yet all the changes in the internal structure of the Labour Party cannot get round one very fundamental question — the situation of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

One of Callaghan's supporters, David Basnett, general secretary of the General and Municipal Workers Union, said this:

'We have since the early days of Parliamentary representation had a "dual" structure to the party, with the Parliamentary Labour Party autonomous and separate from the structure of the party as such. This may not be the ideal situation. But it is a very serious step to take to alter that structure.'

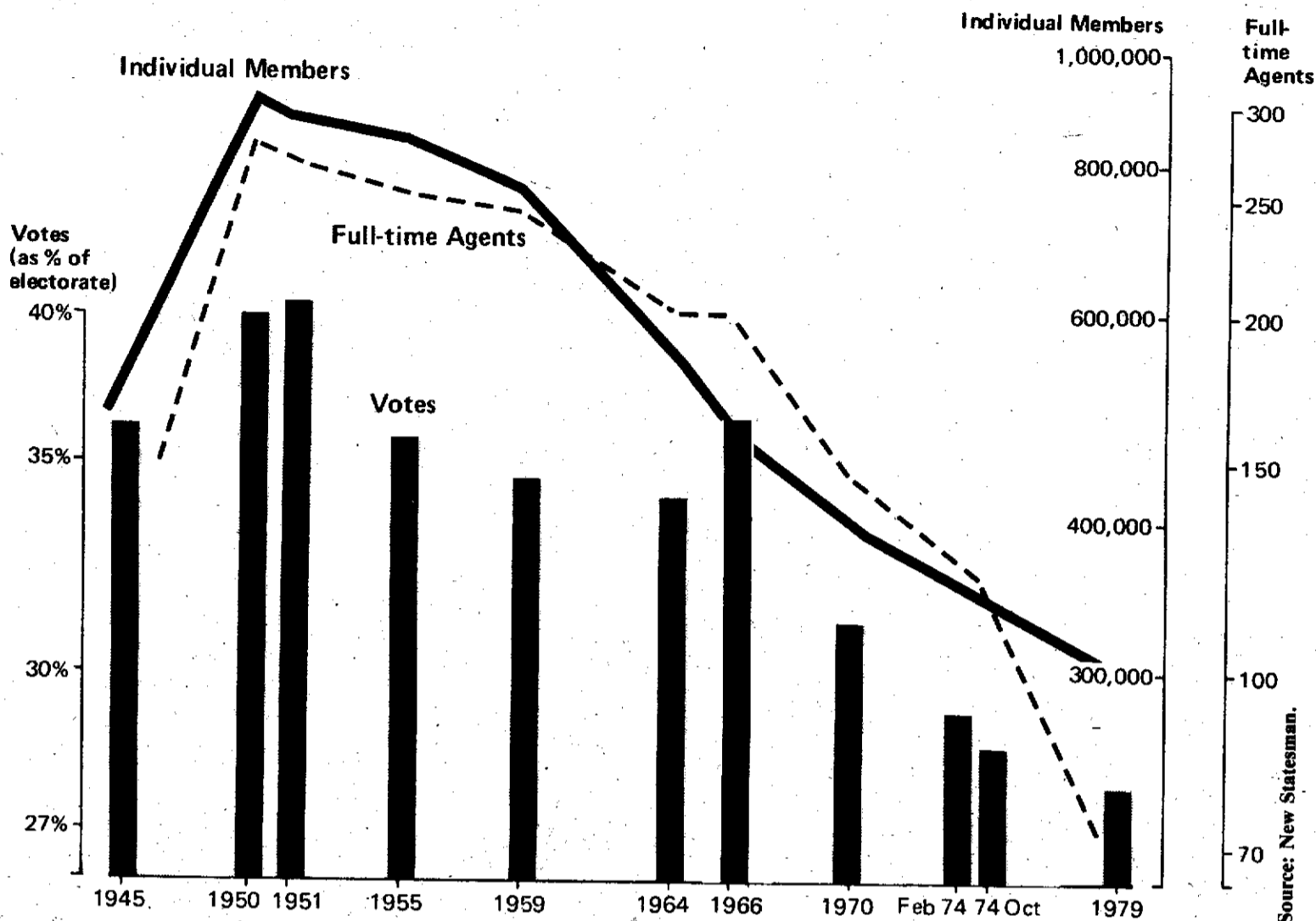
Structures

Basnett hits the nail on the head when he starts with 'the early days of Parliamentary representation' — it is not that the Labour Party decided to have two separate structures, it is that the Parliamentary system of representative democracy does not allow the party to control elected MPs.

A Labour MP is not responsible or accountable to his or her constituency party. If an MP breaks with the party manifesto, even if s/he crosses to the other side of the Commons, there is nothing that the Labour Party can do about it. MPs are supposedly there to personally represent a community, not to argue for and act on a particular point of view. They are not recallable.

The only way that the Labour Party can ever prevent a repetition of the Callaghan/Healey government is by breaking with notions of Parliamentary democracy. Unfortunately hardly anyone in the Labour Party is arguing for that.

THE LABOUR PARTY



Why there's no debate on Ireland and abortion

By Geoff Bell

LABOUR'S national executive, at its pre-conference meeting last Sunday, decided that delegates would not be allowed to debate either Ireland or abortion.

Instead featured debates include 'animal welfare' and 'vagrancy'.

The veto on Ireland was imposed despite four motions and two composite motions on the subject. Eric Heffer MP described the veto as 'outrageous'.

He revealed how the censorship occurred:

'We did have a discussion on the national executive and one or two of us felt there should be time to have a debate on Ireland, for we haven't got a clear cut policy on it. But the overwhelming feeling on the executive was that we should let Jim deal with it in his speech on Tuesday.'

Disaster

Even the star of the Labour right, Shirley Williams, admitted: 'It's true we haven't got a policy on Ireland and it's disastrous.'

Left MP Norman Atkinson described the decision not to debate the subject as 'disgraceful'. He also said that what Labour needed was 'a clear understanding of the need for the reunification of Ireland'.

A similar remark was made by another MP, Alex Lyon. At a fringe meeting on human rights Lyon said that he'd kept silent on Ireland for ten years, but that now he too felt Labour should adopt a policy for a reunification.

Thanks to the NEC's decision such views will not be heard at the conference proper. Two delegates intervened at the conference on Monday to demand that a debate take place.

Fringe

No vote even on whether Ireland should be debated was allowed. There was considerable opposition on the conference floor to this decision.

Conference delegates will also have to rely on fringe meetings to hear their leaders' views on abortion.

Tony Benn stated this on Sunday evening. He explained that he had missed the vote against the Corrie Bill because of 'a technicality', but that he was resolutely opposed to the Bill. However, he dissented from the view that MPs should abide by conference decisions on it.

Accepting the principle of a free vote Benn said: 'we have to accept there is a conscientious problem'. So despite his much heralded demands for democracy in the Labour Party, as far as that party's policy on abortion is concerned Benn has said that it shouldn't matter to MPs.

And as far as the national executive demands for 'accountability' and 'full democratic discussion' go Ireland and abortion need not apply.

and its election failure, and about why are the leaders who are needed. For Labour Party members — the and Healey exist in the trade union Chapple and Duffy, as well as at

On these pages JUDE WOODWARD looks at the constitutional proposals to see just how democratic they really are, while GEOFF BELL, at the conference in Brighton, discovers that Tony Benn may be hot on democracy but not when it means discussing Ireland or abortion.

Benn. making myths not policies

Geoff Bell

LABOUR Party Conference opened on Sunday with talk of revolution in the air. At a pre-conference meeting on Sunday evening left MP Eric Heffer quoted old-time Labour leader George Lansbury:

'Socialism is inscribed on our banners. We capture government not for reformist but for revolution.'

Heffer interrupted this quotation to add his own: 'That wasn't a bloody revolution, maybe he did go a bit too far, but he

'Trimmers, compromisers must quit or we must quit them'. Later on Heffer reiterated his point: 'We have a hell of a lot of support for the socialist revolution.'

'The more mundane aim of getting support for conference resolutions on Labour Party was what many delegates had in mind as the conference assembled. The first steps to the socialist revolution were the three big issues which dominated the run-up to the conference: the election of MPs, new methods of electing the party, and national executive control of the manifesto.'

Party chairperson Frank Allaun, these days at the very heart of the failure of the Labour government. Opening the conference he declared:

'The time last winter was upon us the government had rejected our pleas and the trade union movement for to restore full employment and to reverse the public spending. This is the real issue of all the reforms now before this conference. How do we see that this does not come about by insisting on greater respect for conference decisions by the Parliamentary Party?'

Allaun such constitutional changes

were not a prelude to the Lansbury-Heffer revolution. The move to get the Labour Party leader elected by a more representative body was, stressed Allaun, 'not such a revolutionary step'.

That in a nutshell was the problem the Labour left faced as the conference proceeded. By Monday it seemed likely that the reforms they were after would be won. But the significance of such a victory is largely symbolic. The changes will be up for discussion again next year when the union-sponsored enquiry into every aspect of Labour Party organisation will be submitted.

In the meantime by choosing to focus attention on the internal reforms the Labour Party left leaves other things unsaid. A somewhat subdued Tony Benn at the pre-conference question and answer session reiterated familiar themes — calls for increased industrial democracy, long term economic planning and import controls.

The latter, said Benn, in good, British fashion, would 'protect our workers from foreign competition'. It was all very general, unspecific and rhetorical. Benn made the point 'there is no point in having marvellous aspirations and expecting a down-beaten capitalist system to meet them.'

Norman Atkinson, another left member of the NEC, when asked if he supported a mixed economy replied: 'No, there will have to be a fundamental change in society.' But how this new society would be achieved was not explained.

When the Any Questions session produced an inquiry as to how the NEC would fight the cuts and whether it would bear the struggle of Clay Cross in mind, Labour general secretary Ron Hayward replied: 'We are not prepared to



encourage our people to break or defy the law.'

In most instances those who called for, as Benn put it, 'a radical transformation of society' were left to history. They offered past Labour governments as a myth of great socialist achievement. 'We are only relearning what our forefathers in 1918 learned', said Benn.

'I am thinking of the 1945 manifesto which introduced vast reforms', said Allaun, and referring to the 1945-51 Labour government he emphasised, 'I am not looking so much for new policies, I want the old ones to be carried out'.

How such limited aspirations were related to the issues of constitutional change within the Labour Party was not explained. After all, the same constitution, the same methods of electing the leader applied in 1945 as applied in the Wilson-Callaghan years, which Labour conference is falling over itself to be disassociated from.

But as Shirley Williams put it in somewhat angry tones during her Any Questions pre-conference session: 'I was a member of the Cabinet, as was Tony Benn, which accepted the public spending cuts. Let us be quite clear, if one did not accept the policies of the Cabinet the alternative was to resign.'

Tony Benn and the rest of the Labour left stayed silent on that one. It is much easier to create myths concerning Labour governments of generations ago than it is to defend participation in such governments of more recent vintage.

Still the victories which Benn and the left seem likely to win in Brighton should at least allow attention to be focused on issues that have greater relevance for working people in their fight against this government.

The conference is 'not a debating society', claimed Allaun. We shall see.

The big leap to the West

By Paul Laurens

FOR THREE DAYS ballet was the flashpoint of East-West relations. The defection of Bolshoi Ballet dancer Alexander Godunov set in chain a series of bizarre events which culminated in his wife, the ballerina Ludmila Vlasova, being trapped on her plane for three days.

She was the victim of a double kidnap — by the KGB who had whisked her to the waiting plane, and the CIA who refused to let the plane take off. Eventually Vlasova was allowed to return to a hero's welcome in the USSR — having rejected the decadent West!

Alexander Godunov now joins a string of ballet defectors from the USSR who include Rudolph Nureyev, Natalia Makarova, Valery and Galina Panov, and the great 'Misha' Baryshnikov. All are portrayed by the Kremlin bureaucrats as traitors who have sold out to the West for vast financial rewards.

Big names

But while it is true that fortunes can be made by the big names — Nureyev and Baryshnikov are examples — this is not the main reason why ballet dancers defect. After all, while Alexander Godunov was one of the Bolshoi's three principal dancers, two other less well placed dancers, Leonid and Valentina Kozlov, also defected during their American tour.

Russian ballet dominated the world's thinking on dance during the first three decades of this century — not merely its long history and the 19th century development of the classical ballet, such as Swan Lake and the Sleeping Beauty, but also its experimental aspect. This was taken further under the guidance of the great Diaghilev, who was able to encompass the great dancers such as Vaslav Nijinski and Massine, and work with Folkine and Isadora Duncan.

To the Kremlin today such freedom of expression in the arts is anathema. The creative arts symbolise the struggle for human social and political freedom. Every sign of newness or experimentation thus becomes for the Kremlin a deadly threat to the political order the Stalinists have created.

Status symbol

Part of the consolidation of the bureaucracy was the attempt to freeze Russian society and culture. Thus Russian ballet went from being one of the most experimental and exciting in the world to a situation where today it has only a small repertoire and provides little room for the development of the individual artists.

Instead of being an art form, the ballet has become merely a status symbol for the bureaucratic dictators — somewhere to take foreign dignitaries, a representative of Soviet power abroad.

To Russian dancers, the 'West' appears as a heaven of artistic freedom. They see the continuous development of new ballets by such people as Robbins, Balanchine, Tudor, MacMillan, and Petit; the existence of companies like Martha Graham's; and the diverse repertoires

of all leading 'Western' companies — whether it be the Royal Ballet in London or the New York City Ballet.

The life of a dancer is short, reaching its peak between the ages of 25 and 33, and this adds urgency to Russian dancers who see themselves being by-passed by their art while they remain in the Soviet Union. On the other hand, the 'security' of being looked after for life in the Russian companies contrasts favourably, of course, with the way in which

capitalism will only pay when you're bringing in the money.

This consideration is said to have influenced Ludmila Vlasova's decision to return home; she was older than Godunov and had less to gain on the 'free market'.

There is of course the other side of the 'West'. Undoubtedly every defector of the quality of a Nureyev or a Baryshnikov sees impresarios the world over rubbing their hands in anticipation of the box office receipts. Ballet is big business. Alan LeMond's book *Bravo Baryshnikov!* makes this plain:

Box office

'He was box office. Only a little over a month after his arrival (defection), all his performances were sold out, some even before the flyers were printed. The \$15, \$25, and \$35 seats were gone first. Still available — for a short while — were the \$50, \$100 and \$250 seats, the ones the general public could seldom afford.'

It is a terrible reflection on the nature of the Soviet bureaucracy that it has been unable to create a more dynamic society, culturally and otherwise, than decaying capitalism. The possibilities that exist for mobilising resources mean that Russian arts should stand head and shoulders above those of the 'West'.

Instead the narrow-minded bureaucrats have attempted to cut the life out of the creative arts by tying them to serve only their interests — that is, remaining in power. This is a terrible warning to those socialists who glorify in 'proletarian culture' or 'socialist realism', or making the arts 'serve the people'.

Trapped

In fact only a socialist economic system will make realisable the only principle worth supporting — 'art for art's sake!' Alexander Godunov and Leonid and Valentina Kozlov may well be lionised and become superstars of the Nureyev category, but you have to keep on being 'box office'. The Soviet bureaucratic straitjacket is replaced under capitalism by the insistent tinkle of the cash register.

Both trap the artist, making them turn their performance away from the audience towards their real masters. Neither Stalinism nor capitalism can fulfil the artist or the audience. But until both are overthrown, decaying capitalism will continue to exert a big pull on Soviet artists who see the very real wider degree of artistic freedom that exists outside.

ALIEN...ATION

By Geoff Bell

FROM the moment some bright spark conceived the idea of *Alien* it was bound to be a success. Mix two themes which invariably do well at the box office — space and horror — and for some reason moviegoers will flock to see the result.

And having conceived the idea and secured the necessary actors, technicians and effects, the makers of *Alien* could have sat back and played safe in the security of a sizeable return on their investment.

Surprises

The publicity for the film suggests that such is indeed what happened. 'In space no-one can hear you scream', say the advertising posters, and even before the opening credits slowly form themselves on the screen the audience have almost been scared into silence in apprehension of what they are about to witness. Then the surprises start.

The opening conversations concern the lousy wages the spaceworkers receive. The workers themselves are a scruffy, bored lot, and their spacecraft is an ugly, utilitarian contraption. *Alien* has none of the space romanticism of *Star Wars*, none of the awe and



Sigourney Weaver plays Warrant Officer Ripley wonder which accompanied *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* — there is even none of the gothic horror of the various *Draculas* doing the rounds.

Nevertheless the plot as it unfolds seems fairly routine stuff, of the type much favoured

by *Star Trek*: the spaceworkers unknowingly transport a monster aboard from an apparently long derelict planet and the rest of the film records the battle for control of the craft between the monster and the workers.

Yet that is by no means the whole story. For

instance, it turns out that the monster is a capitalist plot. For instance, the film's hero is one of the two women workers who fulfils the role invariably allocated by Hollywood to a man — the person who thinks best, fights best, and foresees it all.

Subversive

These two examples suggest that there is, after all, more to *Alien* than shock-horror sensationalism. The general atmosphere depicted within the spacecraft reinforces that impression.

The continual complaints about wages and conditions, the starkness of the sets, the havoc that ensues when the computer [called 'mother'] doesn't do what the workers ask, and a scene of violent frustration from the workers when they discover a robot in worker's clothing — all this implies that *Alien* is not really about nasty things happening in space.

Then there is the title. Look up 'Teach Yourself Marxism' and there you will find the word and the concept 'alienation'.

Maybe this is all wishful thinking. Maybe it is over-intellectualising. But if *Alien* is, as seems possible, a parable about capitalism in the future, it is not just a brilliantly made film, but also splendidly subversive.

No return to the kitchen sink!

By Valerie Coultas

THE TORIES are limbering up for a new attack on women's rights. Employment Secretary James Prior, and Patrick Jenkin, who is in charge of Social Services, want to see women give up their jobs and return to the kitchen sink.

Rising crime, industrial disruption, violence, and terrorism are the product of the 'traumatic separation' of children from their mothers during the Second World War, according to Jenkin.

Prior has therefore come up with the legislative goods. Firms with under 20 workers will be allowed to escape from the Employment Protection Act if Prior's proposals go through. Female workers will be denied the automatic right to return to work after having a baby.

Small companies, which number about a million in Britain, will be allowed to sack employees at any time during their first two



years of trading. A worker who has the audacity to bring a case against an employer which is not proven may be faced with a fine.

Schedule 11 of the Act, which urges employers to eliminate pockets of low pay, is to be scrapped. And just in case workers' organisations might upset this field day for the bosses, it is also suggested that the law which

forces employers to recognise trade unions should be relaxed.

Women, concentrated in low paid jobs in shops, laundries, hairdressers and the catering industry, will be clobbered by this legislation if it goes through. It will rob them of the minimal rights that they have won as workers.

Not that these rights offer much protection.

Women have been increasingly pushed into part-time work over the past decade, because of lack of provision for childcare and domestic responsibilities, and many part-time workers are not covered by the Employment Protection Act.

Like John Bowlby's theories of the importance of the biological mother which appeared after the Second World War when women were being asked to hand their jobs back to men, Patrick Jenkin's views on the importance of motherhood are a little bit transparent. They neatly expose the zig-zags of ruling class values.

Needed

When women are needed in the workforce as cheap labour they are allowed the right to work — even to maternity leave and some limited access to birth control. But when a major economic recession occurs, the bosses' government will ruthlessly scrap those 'frills' and urge women to return to the home as domestic slaves.

Thatcher's mob are likely to have their time cut out, however. Women are clinging to their jobs, even if only as part-time workers, because they can't survive without them. And they are also turning to their unions to protect them. Since the late 1960s, the number of women in trade unions has increased by 91 per cent.

Under the Labour government, women began to fight back against the cuts and in defence of their living standards, despite the attempt to divert their struggles into the blind alleys of powerless tribunals. The abortion struggle has begun to change attitudes among rank and file workers to women.

The Tories' new proposals have thrown down the gauntlet not only to women but to the whole labour movement. A defensive strategy is not enough. In addition to the right to work, women have the right to a decent living standard and that means an offensive struggle for positive action to break down job segregation, to give women preferential training, and to ensure childcare provision.

In short, we hope to ensure women a permanent place in the workplace so that they cannot be used again as a 'reserve army' by the bosses in order to depress the level of all workers' wages.

JOURNALISTS Against Corrie has sparked a new trade union initiative in the fight to protect women's abortion rights. Women media workers are attempting to raise awareness in the National Union of Journalists about the grave threat posed by the Corrie Bill.

'All the media's recent abortion horror stories have been discredited by DHSS inquiries. Journalists ought to be concerned with fact not fiction', said Sue Landau of the Hornsey Journal.

The group has produced a special information pack for news editors on all national and morning papers. It explodes myths, spells out the positive effects of the 1967 Abortion Act, and puts the case against restrictions.

To build for the 28 October demo JAC, along with the NUJ Equality Working Party and Fleet St Women's Voice, is holding a public meeting aimed at NUJ and NATSOPA members. The meeting will take place on Wednesday 10 October in St. Brides' Small Hall, Bride Lane, EC4 at 7.30pm. For further info, about JAC contact: Jenny Vaughan, 13 Hillmorton Rd, London N7 [tel. 01-607 2117] or Sue Landau [tel. 01-340 2424].

Students

STUDENTS Against Corrie has also been launched. A wide range of students representing different political tendencies in the National Union of Students have decided to mobilise support by producing an action pack, badges and posters for distribution in the colleges as the new academic year begins.

The 'SAC' badge will carry the slogan 'Free Abortion on Demand' as this has been the policy of the union for a number of years. Any college interested in booking a speaker should write to 'Students Against Corrie', NUS, 3 Endsleigh St, London WC1.

Preston

PRESTON Trades Council has taken advantage of the specially produced

CAMPAIGN NEWS



TUC leaflet to order 5,000 to be distributed to factories in the area where women work in sizeable numbers.

Hackney

HACKNEY NALGO has decided to foot the bill for the CAC group's mailing to local trade unions.

Glasgow

GLASGOW National Abortion Campaign found their public meeting on 20 September interrupted by five male SPUC supporters with the now familiar pictures of dead foetuses. They found themselves roundly condemned by two women new to the campaign, who accused them of caring little about women's lives and demanded to know if their moral qualms about abortion extended to cases of rape. Predictably they got no answer.

Trade union support for the campaign is strong in Scotland — speakers at the meeting include women from Glasgow Trades Council and the Scottish TUC, as well as Dr Elizabeth Wilson from the Glasgow Family Planning Clinic.

Greenwich

'IT IS ALMOST impossible for a woman in the West Midlands to get an abortion on the NHS simply because the most senior consultant in the area happens to be an anti-abortionist',

said Jo Richardson, MP for Barking, speaking to 60 people at a Greenwich Abortion Campaign Against Corrie public meeting on 25 September.

Glenda Jackson has donated £90 to the local campaign and local MPs Guy Barnett and John Cartwright have also expressed their support.

TGWU

RATHER disheartening news from the TGWU conference [the largest trade union in Britain]: the abortion resolution was not taken although the chair did allow 22 speakers on a non-contentious motion about pensions.

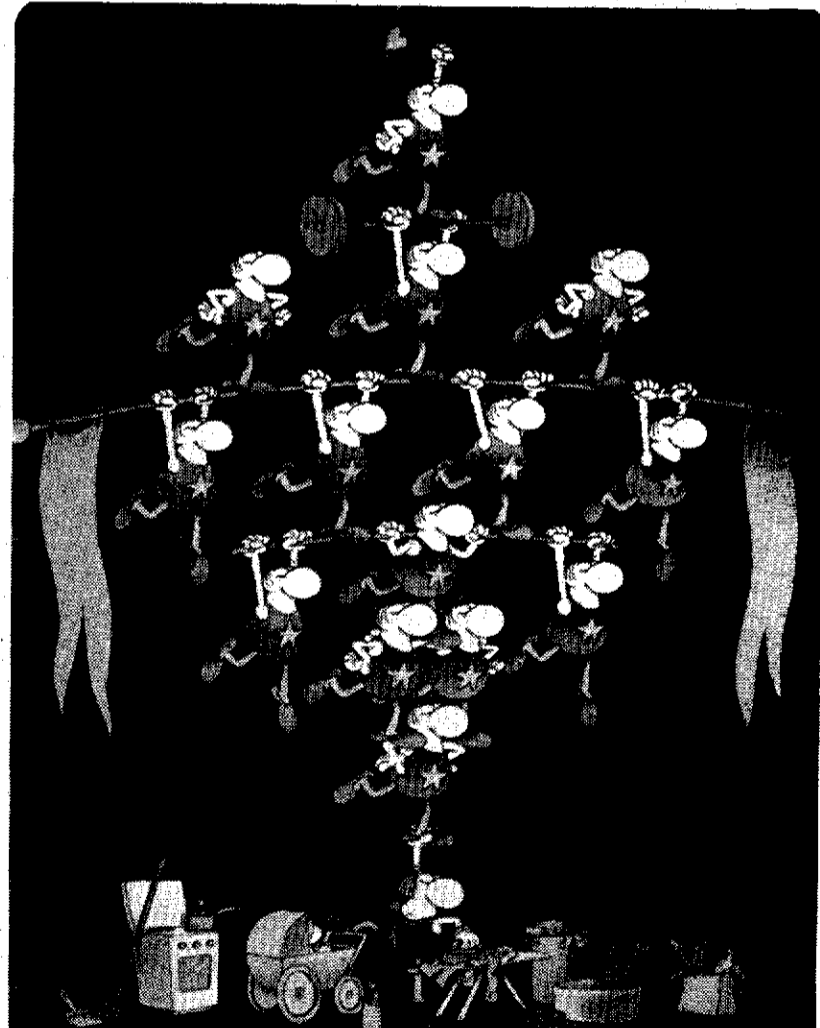
We urge abortion rights supporters in the T & G to get moving and send a letter of protest from their branch, supporting Branch 6/522's motion and forcing the leaders of the TGWU to get in line with the mainstream of the trade union movement in the Campaign Against Corrie.

Next?

WHAT NEXT? Socialist Challenge wants to hear from your trade union, Labour Party, student or women's group and we'd particularly like to find out how you're going out to get signatures for the CAC petition against Corrie. CAC's target is half a million — so you'd better get moving.

After the demo on 28 October (assemble 11.30am Reformers Tree, Hyde Park, for march to rally at Trafalgar Square at 2.45pm) the next big national event will be the mass lobby of the House of Commons on Tuesday 5 February — three days before the third reading.

A mass lobby means beginning the campaign now in your trade union for support for the lobby and strike action on the day. Socialist Challenge supporters in the health unions will be urging their executives to initiate the call for strike action as the struggle for free abortion facilities for women should be seen as part of the fight to stop the rundown of the NHS and its 'hiving off' to private enterprises.



Keep your eyeballs off our bodies

WOMEN workers at a council depot in the Midlands got fed up with the nude pictures that male workers kept plastering on the walls.

They complained to their union, the TGWU, saying that the pictures degraded women and they wanted them taken down. Surprise, surprise, the

union did order them to be taken down.

Spurred on by this victory, the women went on to tackle the bosses by threatening that unless they removed their insulting portraits of women, too, the whole depot would be covered with male nudes!

A SERIES of letters from the Iranian Ministry of National Guidance have been appearing in the Guardian recently. Signed by Majid Rahma, the Director of the Foreign Press Department, the letters address themselves to correcting various aspects of the Guardian's coverage of events in Iran.

For example, they deny that Khomeini has ever threatened the Kurds. 'The Kurds are Moslem and committed to Islam. There is no war between Moslem and Moslem ... Ayatollah Khomeini and the Iranian people have nothing against their Kurdish brothers. They are equal to any other Iranian citizen. And we differentiate between Kurds and members of the Kurdistan Democratic Party.'

No doubt the inhabitants of Garna in west Azerbaijan will be relieved to hear of this 'Moslem brotherhood'. In early September, 46 Kurdish people from the village, including four women and seven children under the age of twelve, were massacred by Islamic militia. Among the dead was Mullah Mahmoud, the village leader of Friday prayers, who was found with a copy of the Koran by his side.

Helicopter

Little differentiation was made between Kurds and KDP members during the air raids by fighter planes and helicopter gunships on the towns of Pavah and Saddeq, or during the summary executions which followed the capture of those towns. And the executions of non-Kurdish medical teams who were tending the Kurdish wounded clearly illustrate what is meant by the 'equality' of Iranian citizens. All who stand in the way of Khomeini's national programme for an Islamic Republic are equal fodder for his goon squads.

The letters to the Guardian faithfully reflect Khomeini's plans for national reconstruction. They deny any material basis to the mass struggles which overthrew the Shah, and so make no provision for overcoming the appalling conditions of poverty in which the majority of Iranians live. 'The struggle was waged for Islam', says the Ayatollah. 'It is inconceivable that anyone would have sacrificed his son for a cheaper melon or house.'

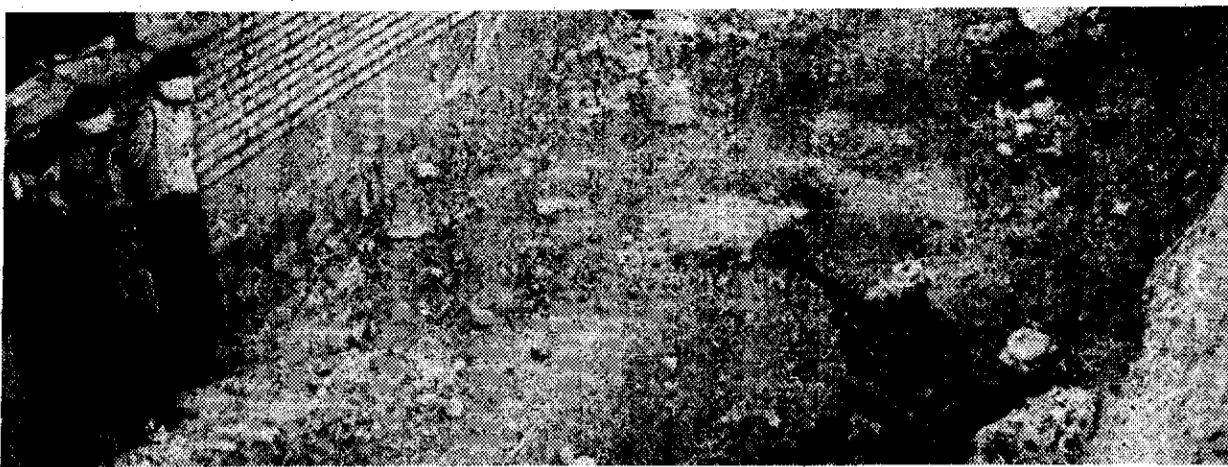
The draft constitution of the Islamic Republic, now nearing the end of its passage through the 'Council of Experts', contains all the basic elements of Khomeini's programme: assertion of the unity of all classes of Moslems against the infidels and their foreign ideologies; sanctity of private property; opposition to democracy or any form of popular control over the fundamental decisions of political life; institutionalised male supremacy and the extreme oppression of women.

Khomeini's assertion of the fundamentally Islamic character of the February uprising, and his insistence on the necessity of defending the unity of the revolution, are a smokescreen designed not only to obscure the class conflicts which have emerged, but also to deny the ethnic and linguistic differences in Iran, which are one of the channels through which the class struggle flows. While the ideological content of his nationalism differs from that of the Shah, the underlying motive is the same.

Language

Iran has been not so much a nation state as a state made up of different nationalities. Although Persian, an Indo-European language, is the most widely used throughout the country, it is the first language of less than half the population. In the western provinces live five million Kurds, who form one part of a distinct nationality which stretches into Turkey, the USSR, Iraq and Syria. In Iran, the Kurds form as much as one sixth of the population.

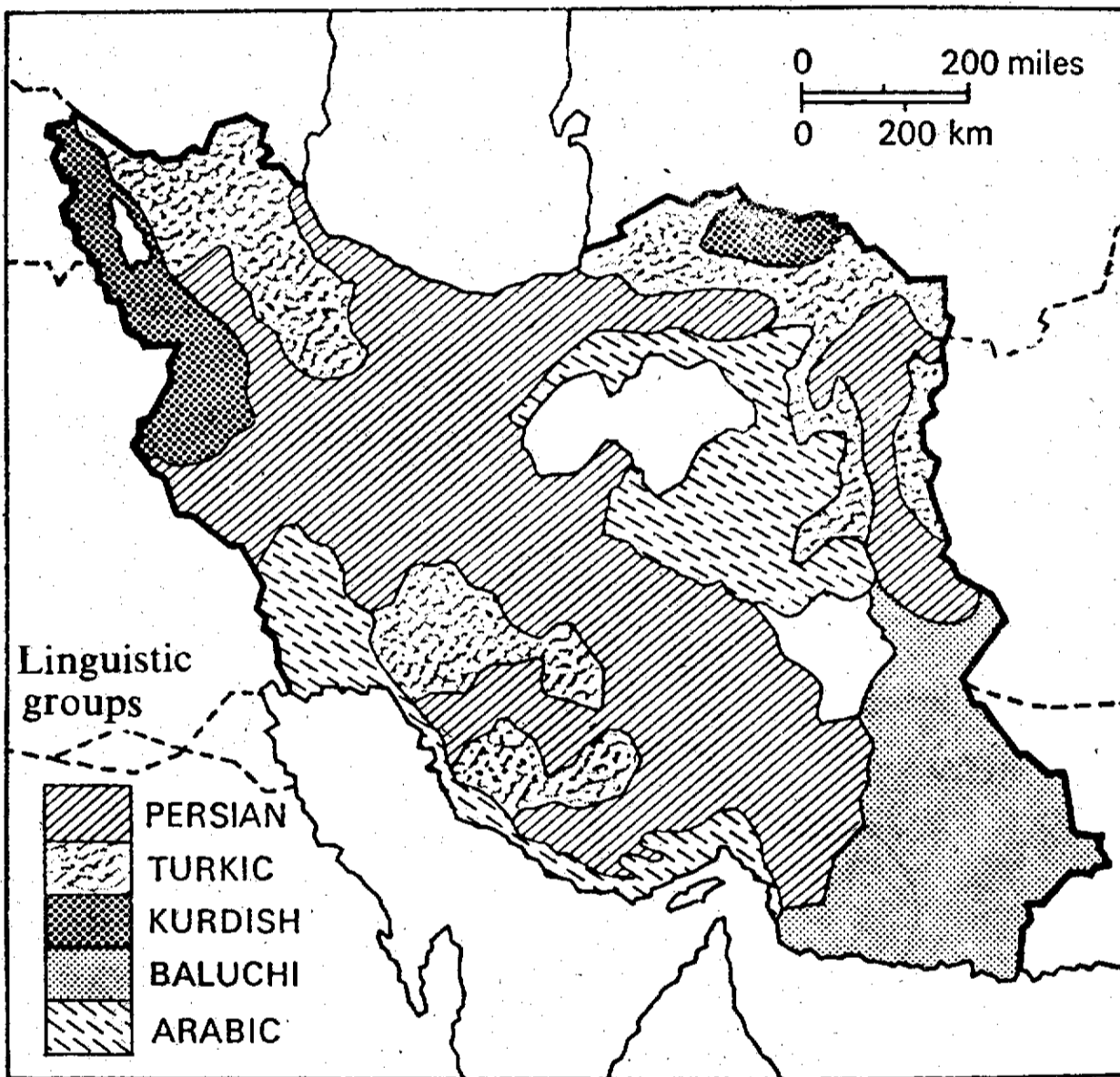
An even larger percentage of the population is made up of those speaking Turkic. Neighbours of the Kurds in the north are the Azeris, of whom about ten million are concentrated in the provinces of Azerbaijan. The Turkomenis, who



Nationalities in Iran

By John Leadbetter

The victims of the 'Moslem brotherhood'



also speak a variety of Turkic, live along the eastern shores of the Caspian sea.

Arabs form a majority in many of the towns and cities of Khuzestan, while almost one million Baluchis in south-east Iran come from the same grouping as the ten million Baluchis of neighbouring Pakistan. The Gilani, in the Gilan mountains near the Caspian, form another large linguistic group, although they cannot be regarded as a separate ethnic stock.

The relationship of these nationalities and linguistic groups to the Pahlavi state was always an uneasy one. The overthrow of the weak Qajar dynasty and its replacement by Reza Khan, first of the Pahlavis, was made possible by the state of disintegration which the country had reached in 1921. The existence of a large regional movement among the Gilani led the British to sponsor Reza Khan's coup.

Similarly, the establishment of the autonomous republics in Kurdistan and Azerbaijan after the Second World War first brought the full weight of American imperialism behind the Pahlavi state.

The sale of oil, the growth of foreign investment, and the

geopolitical location of Iran in Asia meant that internal 'stability' and strong central control was as important for imperialism as it was for the Shah himself. The political and military alliance between Iran and the USA was motivated by the need to keep the lid on Iran's ethnically disparate population as much as by external considerations.

Persian

National unity, however, was not maintained merely by outright repression, even if it rested on the latter in the final analysis. The Pahlavis built up a whole ideological superstructure based on Great Persian chauvinism which permeated every aspect of life in Iran. Top officials of the Pahlavi state were drawn exclusively from the Persian sections of society — only about 17 per cent of top officials spoke a local language other than Persian.

Hand in hand with this went an attempt to purge the Persian language of foreign words — especially Arabic and Turkish ones — and to introduce a 'pure Persian' speech. This was transmitted to the national minorities through the paramilitary Health and Education Corps which went to the

villages as part of the land reforms of 1963 — ostensibly to promote literacy and teach health care, but in reality to replace the landowners as the dominant power in the countryside and to implant the state's ideas in the villages.

The effect of this has been a severe impoverishment of the cultural life of the nationalities. Teaching in the minority languages was banned, and very few non-Persian publications were available inside Iran. With Persian the only language of government, law and education, the possibilities for social advancement for non-Persians were extremely limited.

Colonisation of areas where national minorities live has been another way of maintaining Persian superiority. The province of Khuzestan is one of the clearest examples of this policy. Khuzestan — or Arabestan as it was then known — was almost entirely populated by Arabs until the time of Reza Shah. It was also one of the least urbanised parts of Iran.

The development of the oil industry led to the creation of eight separate new towns. This went hand

in hand with a policy of 'de-Arabisation'. Large numbers of Persians were brought into the area, and Arabs were pushed down into the lowest levels of society. They were forced to adopt Persian names and the use of Arabic was severely curtailed, making educational opportunities for Arabs almost non-existent. Today, more than 50 per cent of Khuzestan but only 5 per cent of university students and only 1 per cent of university teachers are Arabs.

Casual work

Other nationalities have been discriminated against through the conscious underdevelopment of those regions which they occupy. The almost complete absence of industrial development in the province of Baluchistan and Sistan — only 1 per cent of all industrial units in the country are situated there — has driven many Baluchis to find seasonal work or jobs as casual labourers in other parts of Iran.

The overthrow of the Shah has inevitably led to demands for national and cultural rights from all the national groupings. In Khuzestan, the Arabs put forward a programme for positive discrimination to overcome the years of oppression. This included official recognition of Arabic as the first language of the Arab people, representatives in the constituent assembly and on all local, regional and national councils, use of a percentage of oil revenues for development of Arab education and the Khuzestan area, and for the incorporation of these demands into the constitution.

Autonomy

Similar demands came from the Turkomeni people, who also pressed for a single Turkomeni province with its own governor-general. Local autonomy was equally a central demand of the Baluchis, and of the Kurdish people. The main slogan of the Kurdistan Democratic Party is 'Democracy for Iran — Autonomy for the Kurds'.

The recent all-out war against the Kurds is merely the latest in a series of assaults launched against the nationalities. Islamic Guards and naval torpedo boats were sent against the Arabs in Khorramshahr and Abadan. Government troops and Islamic militia were sent to Turkomenistan to safeguard 'the peace'.

While Khomeini claims to support the national liberation struggle of the Palestinians and denounces the racist regime in South Africa, he denies even the existence of grievances among Iran's own oppressed nationalities. They are treated as Moslems first, Iranians second, and Kurds or Arabs last.

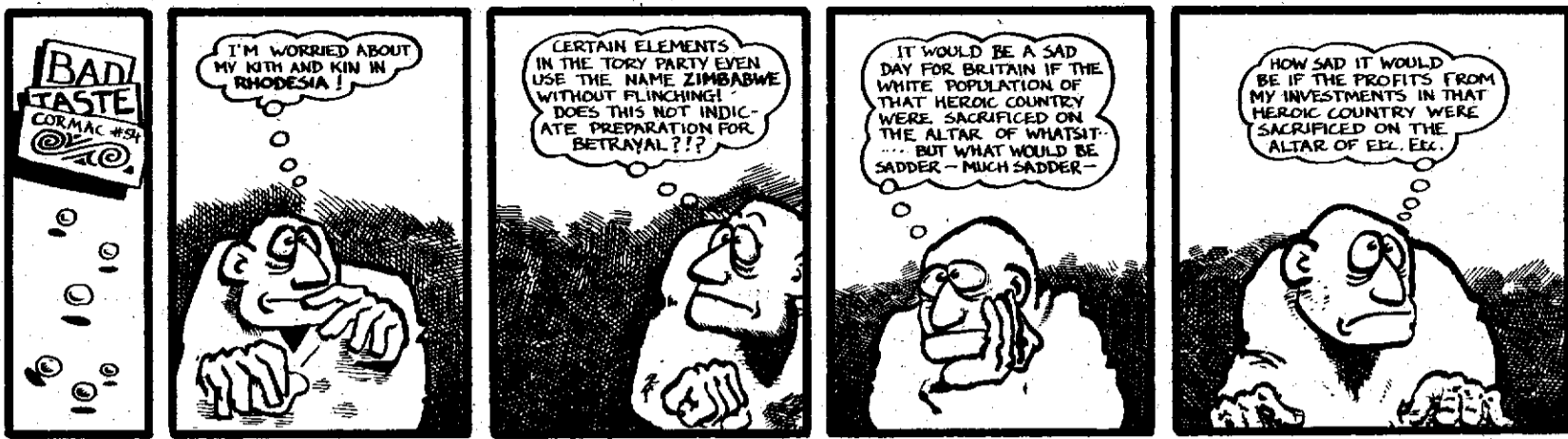
The demands of the nationalities for cultural and national rights and for greater control over the affairs of their own regions are basic democratic demands. But democratic rights and autonomy within a federal republic of Iran will not alone solve the problems facing them.

Secession

Their right to self-determination, even to the point of secession, must unequivocally be defended by all socialists. But the social and economic backwardness of many of the regions they inhabit cannot be overcome within any capitalist framework.

Only a thorough land reform which gives land to those who till it can solve the unemployment crisis in Kurdistan, Baluchistan and Turkomenistan. Only public ownership of the oil industries can ensure that fertilisers and fuel for machinery reach those who need them, and not merely those who can afford to pay for them. Only the abolition of the private ownership of the means of production under workers control and a planned economy can bring employment and a higher standard of living to the destitute, both Persian and non-Persian, of the towns and cities.

The material needs and democratic desires which led all the oppressed peoples of Iran to rise up so successfully against the Shah will only be realised by the socialist revolution.



WHAT'S LEFT

LIVERPOOL Socialist Challenge group has recently obtained premises for SC centre on Merseyside. Donations towards cost of rent, rates, security, etc., gratefully received — send to Socialist Challenge (Box 64), PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

BOOKS for Southern Africa comrades — money is desperately needed for this vital field of international activity. Or send any books you can spare. Books for Southern Africa, Box 102, Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1.

TEESSIDE SC group Autumn Fayre, 10am, Sat 13 Oct, Whinney Banks Community Centre Jumble required — phone 87699.

END THE repression of the Tamil-speaking people of Sri Lanka! Picket Ceylon Tea Centre, Piccadilly Circus, London — Sat 6 Oct, 2-5pm.

'FREE ABORTION on Demand' and 'No means No' badges are again available from **The Week**, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Singly 25p each, bulk 12p each. Make cheques or POs out to 'The Week'.

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

GRAVESEND SOCIALIST CHALLENGE Group meets regularly. Details from Gravesend Tigers, Box 13, Gravesend.

WOMEN AND IRELAND organising conference for women involved in Irish solidarity work or interested in becoming involved, to coordinate and develop activities. 6 Oct, 10am, St Matthews Church Hall, Lancaster Road, London W11. Creche available. Registration: London: waged £1.50 unwaged 75p; outside London: waged £1 unwaged 50p. Cheques, enquiries to: Women and Ireland Group, c/o A Woman's Place, 48 William IV Street, London WC2.

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST Tendency public meeting: Anti-imperialism v war weariness; for effective solidarity with the Irish struggle. Speaker: Kate Marshall, Fri 5 Oct, 7.30pm, Roebuck, Tottenham Court Road, London. Goodge St/Warren St tubes.

RACISM Newham Anti-Nazi League public meetings. Speakers: Vishnu Sharma, IWA Southall; Scrap SUS Campaign; Tariq Ali. Wed 10 Oct, 7.30pm, East Ham Town Hall, High St South, London E6.

'THE SPIRAL' — the definitive film on the events which preceded the coup in Chile. Sat, 6 Oct, at 7pm, 1 Thorpe Close, London W10 (under flyover, Ladbroke Grove). Adm £1. Followed by social. Organised by Paddington/Notting Hill IMG.

IMG TRADE UNION fractions: 21 Oct, Health; 3 Nov, Rail. For details write to Centre or phone 01-359-8371.

SOUTHALL is innocent — Stop the Show Trials! Hornsey ANL public meeting. Speakers: Tariq Ali plus representatives from Southall Campaign Committee and Friends of Blair Peach Committee. 9 Oct, 7.30pm, Muswell Hill Primary School, top of Muswell Hill, London N10.

INTERNATIONAL Women's Forum — who are the anti-abortionists? Speakers: Madeleine Simms (Chairperson, Co-ordinating Committee in Defence of the 1967 Abortion Act); Raelwyn Stone (International Sub-Committee, NAC); Anne Kingsbury (Labour Abortion Rights Campaign). Fri 5 Oct, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.

WORKERS ACTION public meeting, Fri 5 Oct: 'Stop the Cuts Now'. Speakers: John Bloxam (Haringey NATHFE), Bill Bowring (Lambeth Council), Norwood CLP, Ken Livingstone (Camden Council). 8pm, Metropolitan pub, 95 Farringdon Road, London EC1.

IRSP SOCIAL — Seamus Costello Memorial. 6 Oct, Hackney Trades & Labour Club, 96 Dalston Lane, London E8. Irish traditional music & song by Saoirse (from Liverpool). From 8pm. Bar extension. Adm. £1. To commemorate the second anniversary of the assassination of Seamus Costello.

RAR BENEFIT with Oxy & the Morons, Sat 6 Oct, 8pm till late at Middlesex Poly Trent Park site. Adm. £1; non-students £1.50. All proceeds to those arrested at Southall, Leicester, West Brom.

MANCHESTER Hands Off Ireland! rally in support of Irish Prisoners of War. Film 'Patriot Game' and speakers from PSF and HOI. Weds 10 Oct, 7pm, AUEW Hall, 43 The Crescent, Salford.

COUNTER-DEMO to NF anti-IRA, anti-Irish demo — Sat 6 Oct, 1.30pm, Charing Cross station forecourt assembly. Called by ANL.

HACKNEY Socialist Challenge group meeting: 'Solidarity with the revolution in Nicaragua'. Speaker: Clive Turnbull (IMG Political Committee, recently in Nicaragua). Thur 18 Oct, 7.30pm, Britannia pub, Mare St, E8.

OLDHAM Socialist Challenge group meeting: 'Engineering — the lessons of 1972 for today'. Speaker: Mike Smith (ex-convenor, Ferrantus). Thur 11 Oct, 8pm at Sergeant-at-Arms pub, King St (opp Co-op).

FREEDOM FOR ASTRID PROLL

Rio Cinema
[107 Kingsland High Rd, E8]

Sunday 7 October, 3pm

This film and video event remembers the Stammheim murders on 18 October 1977 and marks the beginning of the trial of Astrid Proll in West Germany. **TONY GIFFORD** (Russell Tribunal) will speak on the current situation, and a speaker from the **FRIENDS OF ASTRID PROLL** will talk about her trial.

For details phone Rio, 254 6677. For hire of FAP video contact Liberation films, 01-450 7855.

Front-line states behind new concessions

By Roy Alexander

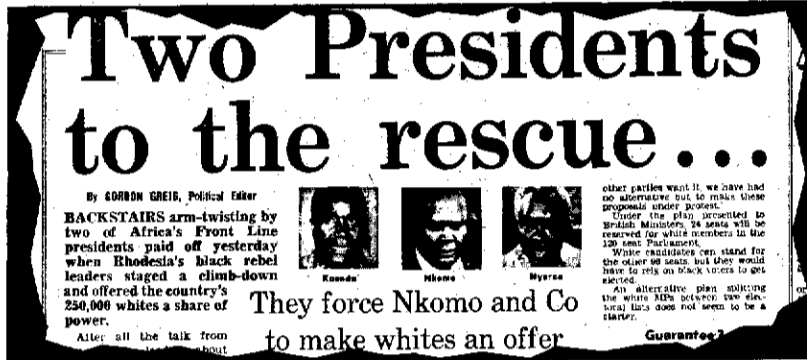
LAST WEEK a senior member of the Zambian government told a visiting delegation of Commonwealth politicians that the people of Zambia were fed up with bearing the costs of the war in Zimbabwe. The Patriotic Front should hurry up and reach a settlement so that the economic situation in southern Africa could get back to normal.

This cynical view shows the sort of pressure that the 'front line states' are putting on the Patriotic Front delegates at the London conference on Zimbabwe.

It was their pressure which forced the Patriotic Front into the lion's den of the constitutional conference in the first place. The whole assumption of such an approach is that it is just a matter of finding the right constitutional formula and all will be well.

Power

In reality, of course, the decisive factor is not what is written down but who holds powers. The same written constitution could lead either to a committed anti-imperialist government or to a right-wing coalition of pro-imperialist black politicians and representatives of the white settlers



(like the Muzorewa government) which does nothing to change the harsh realities of life in Zimbabwe for the majority.

Which will be the outcome will be decided by such things as who controls the army and police, who runs the courts and civil service, and whether or not the economic power of white farmers and businessmen seems to be running out, while this constitution is being implemented.

The Patriotic Front started out with a good understanding of these facts, and won a number of important diplomatic victories at the beginning of the conference. In particular, they forced the British to agree that constitutional questions couldn't be considered sewn up until agreement

over the 'transitional provisions' was reached.

Since then, however, the Patriotic Front have slid backward, conceding on such issues as continued representation of whites in parliament as a special group (rather than the principle of 'one person, one vote') and coming up with a scheme for United Nations policing of the election.

Probably these concessions are being made in an attempt to expose Muzorewa and Smith's stubbornness and demonstrate to the front-line states that the Patriotic Front is being very reasonable, with the expectation that they will not be accepted by the other side. But this is a very risky gamble: having once offered such concessions, the Patriotic Front will

find it difficult to withdraw them.

And what would they mean in practice? Most critical observers of the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia election in April agree that coercion did not take the form of military repression but of the equally powerful arm-twisting that white farmers and industrialists can exert over their employees. To this must now be added the influence that a black neo-colonial government can exert over those who depend on it for a living.

Danger

Those pressures would not work once the whites and their allies were seen to be soundly defeated; but their mere withdrawal to the side-lines while a few boys in blue helmets patrolled the streets would not be sufficient to have that effect. It would be very dangerous game indeed.

It's easy enough in this country to criticise. But we must recognise that the pressures from the front-line states would not be so intense or effective if there was not a real danger that the Tory government could recognise the Muzorewa regime and lift sanctions.

And this threat is so great because the left in Britain has failed to mobilise in a massive way against it. That is the way we must put our money where our mouth is.

Why France got rid of Bokassa

By Richard Carver and Brian Slocock

FOR someone who was so universally reviled, Jean-Bedel Bokassa of the happily defunct Central African Empire had a good many friends.

*Zaire, for example, which provided troops to put down opposition demonstrations.

*South Africa, which offered to build a rail link to the coast and floated the possibility of \$250m worth of trade and investment over the next ten years.

*West Germany, which was already collaborating on a coastal rail link.

*Libya, which had just embarked on a programme of aid to the Empire.

*Even the Soviet Union maintains a large embassy and educates hundreds of Oubanguians each year.

Fortunately for Bokassa it was his closest friend of all, France, which finally removed him. For years the Central African Republic or Empire was kept afloat by French development aid from Paris.

Massacre

Not even the widely reported massacre of schoolchildren earlier this year could dampen French enthusiasm. The equally widely reported decision to cut off military aid meant nothing — for France supplied no military aid to speak of!

What did sway the French, however, was the fear that Bokassa would be toppled by mass opposition. The massacres which began in January were answered by student demonstrations and public service strikes which would have been unthinkable in, say, Amin's Uganda.



New President David Dacko, implicated in Bokassa's worst excesses.

At times the capital of Bangui was in a state of near insurrection. On one occasion 100 Imperial Guards were killed with poisoned arrows as they tried to restore order. Regular troops were confined to barracks during these disturbances, as the Emperor did not trust the army and had disarmed a large proportion of it. The army was reportedly behind an assassination attempt in April.

So the French decided to utilise military discontent to pre-empt the victory of the popular opposition. French troops seem to have played a major part in the coup itself — French aircraft were concealed at the airport before the seizure of power. The timing of the coup to coincide

with Bokassa's absence from the country suggests that the French may even have warned him what was in store. Certainly his old ally Mobutu of Zaire seems to have been in on the plot, meeting the new President, David Dacko, only three weeks earlier.

The French aim — so far successful — was to maintain the political structure of the country unchanged. Behind their concern — as well as recent South African overtures — are important uranium deposits in which the French Atomic Energy Commission (headed by President Giscard d'Estaing's cousin) has a large interest.

Although Dacko was ousted from power by Bokassa in 1966 he was

latterly a counsellor at the imperial court. He is thereby implicated in Bokassa's worst excesses. And as if to prove it, he has maintained Bokassa's government intact and promoted his prime minister to vice-president.

Intercontinental Press combined with IMPRECOR



IRISH: We Are Breaking With Historic Past of Servility Toward Imperialist Policy
IRELAND: PRESSURE MOUNTING FOR HALT TO BRITISH TERROR

CHINESE TROTSKYISTS RELEASED AFTER 27 YEARS

THE latest issue of the weekly Intercontinental Press-Inprecor (Vol 17, No 35) carries further material on Nicaragua (including an interview with Hugo Blanco) as well as featuring developments in El Salvador, Guyana, Ireland, Kampuchea, and elsewhere.

Individual copies cost 30p plus 10p post, but subscriptions work out much cheaper at £11 for a year (48 issues), £6 for six months (24 issues), or £3 for 10 weeks. Cheques or POs should be made out to 'Intercontinental Press' and sent to: IP-1, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

El Salvador next to go after Nicaragua?

ONE OF the last Nicaraguan towns to fall to the Sandinistas was Chinandega, close to the Gulf of Fonseca which divides Nicaragua from El Salvador.

One reason was the presence of several hundred 'volunteers' from the Salvadorean armed forces fighting alongside the National Guard. The same source supplied Somoza with six T-28 assault planes in the final weeks of the war. The ruler of El Salvador, General Carlos Humberto Romero, knew very well that a Sandinista victory could only hasten his own downfall.

Romero heads the seventeenth military government to defend the interests of the 200 ruling families since an armed insurrection led by the Communist Party in 1932 was defeated with the loss of 30,000 lives.

A state of siege has been in force since shortly after Romero's fraudulent election in 1977. Many people have been killed or wounded in the course of a wave of strikes, occupations, kidnappings and peasant mobilisations. At the time of going to press the Labour Ministry was being occupied by 400 militants.

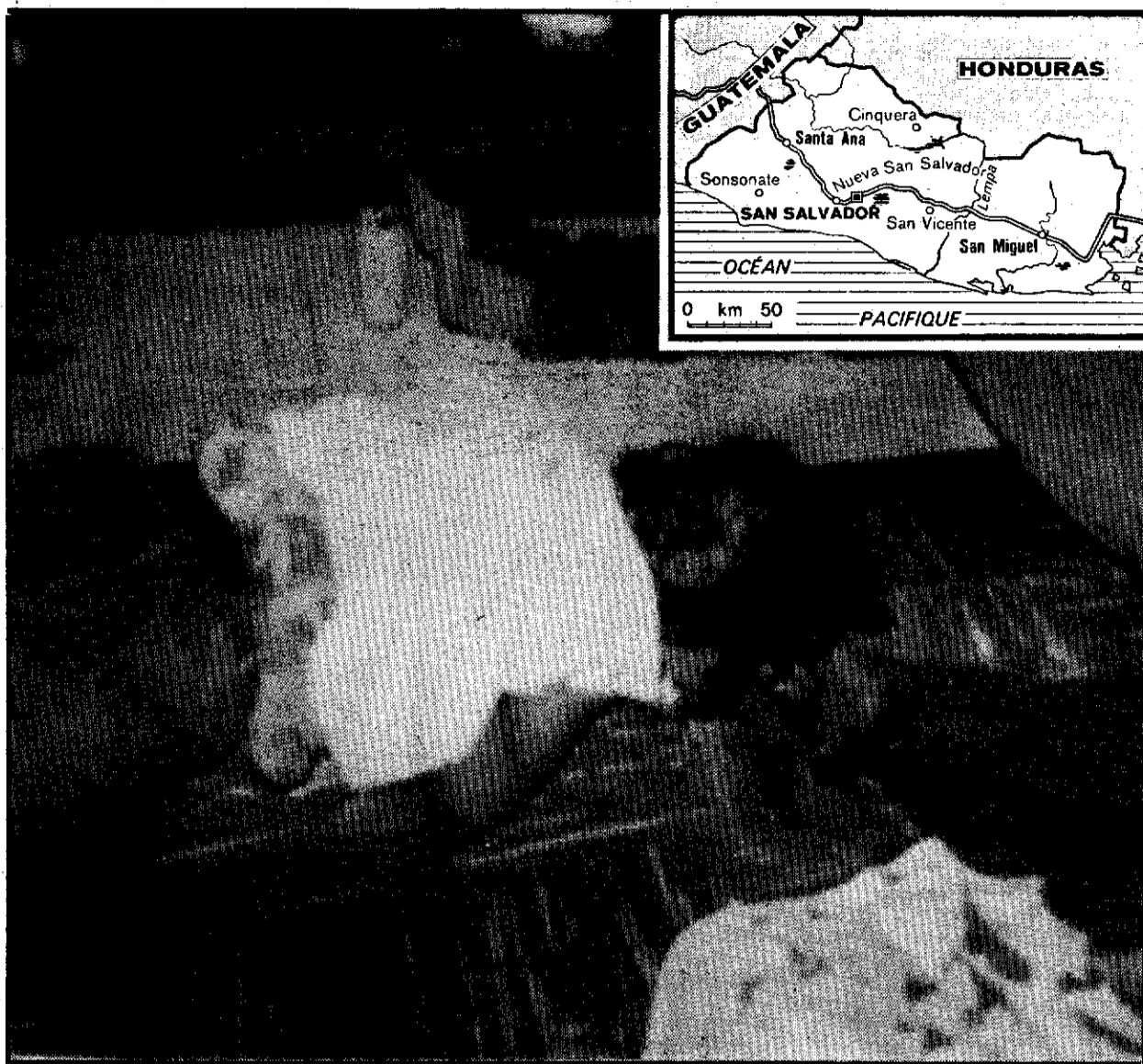
External

Recently two comrades from El Salvador — H, an external representative of the United Peoples Action Front (FAPU), and R, a member of the Committee of Mothers of the disappeared and political prisoners — passed through London to build solidarity with the resistance against the bloody Romero dictatorship. This is what they told Dave Kellaway.

THE Mothers Committee organises to protest about the disappeared, the prisoners and the torture. Women come from all over the country to our centre in the capital, San Salvador. We put out leaflets and mobilise the people. Several times we have helped to occupy cathedrals and embassies to publicise our cause internationally.

The FAPU, like the BPR (Revolutionary Peoples Bloc), was born out of the people's understanding of the bankruptcy of a narrow 'electoralist' road. In both 1972 and 1977 the opposition (largely the Christian Democracy and Communist Party) was denied victory by blatant electoral fraud.

From the earlier election the FAPU began to be formed out of



Romero's torturers' speciality is to tie dynamite next to the victim's head so that the disappeared cannot be identified.

people wanting new forms of struggle outside parliament. We became more homogeneous as a party from 1974. The FAPU is composed of Christians, Socialists, Marxists, workers, peasants, students and independents. We do not define ourselves officially as socialist.

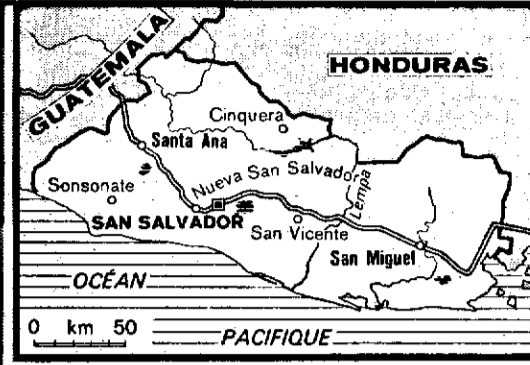
Our aim is a revolutionary popular government. We fight for the strategic alliance of the workers and peasants. At the same time we will make tactical alliances with progressive middle sectors, but always we put the people's interest first.

It is different in some ways from the Nicaraguan experience. Here the

bourgeoisie is much more implicated in the Romero dictatorship.

Our differences with the BPR have to do with their inclusion of trade unions within the party. We think that is a wrong relation between the party and the trade unions. There are also different analyses of the oligarchy.

However, with the rise in the resistance and the lesson of Nicaragua we are all working for a united offensive and we prefer to emphasise externally our growing unity. At this moment we are discussing the unity of all revolutionary and democratic forces for the overthrow of Romero.



30,000 were killed. At present the regime expresses this contradictory combination — asking for a national dialogue while shooting people down in the street.

The process can be accelerated in either direction by a coup d'état. They are very common in our country. We feel the next step could be one intended to speed up imperialism's favoured 'democratic' opening. Romero is unlikely to resign willingly.

Insurrection

The victory of the Nicaraguan revolution was received with great joy. Before it was almost impossible to believe that dictatorships could fall in Central America. Now after the fall of Somoza everything is possible. We have received more support and members in the last few months than in the whole of last year.

However, be careful of simple comparisons. Our five million people live in a much smaller area — we are the most densely populated Latin American state. Also we don't have any mountains. Therefore the struggle is predominantly urban and the situation is much more polarised on class lines.

Imperialism, although learning the lessons of Nicaragua, doesn't have a lot of room for manoeuvre. There is a real possibility of an insurrection in the next six months. Since 1970 the people and popular organisations have been preparing. We have passed onto the offensive.

Liberated zones have been created for several hours at a time to educate the people about the coming offensive. The people have applauded our attacks on barracks and the disarming of certain army units and have enthusiastically taken our propaganda.

Solidarity

People in Britain can help best by building solidarity. Both publicity and economic help is vital. The regime controls all the means of communication. *Cronica Del Pueblo* — the only paper willing to publish opposition material — was burnt out recently.

We need money for the resistance and for the defence of prisoners. The Mothers Committee has a specific project to get help for the thousands of children left abandoned by families who are prisoners or have disappeared.

Gay international on alert

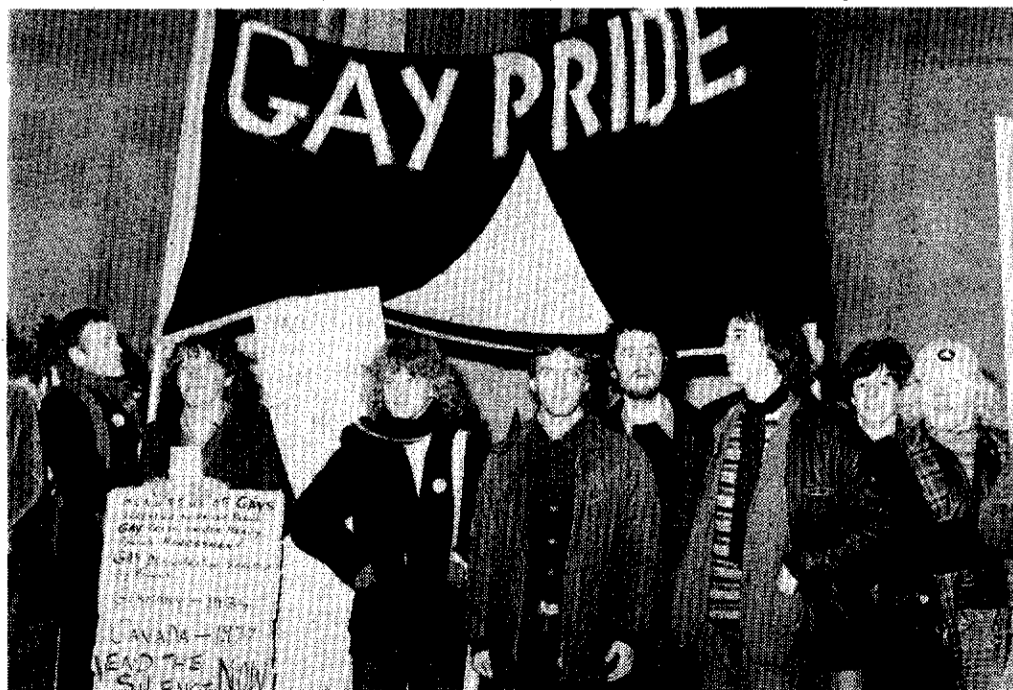
By Barry Prothero

AT THE end of August the International Gay Association held an informal meeting in Brighton to prepare for its second annual conference in Barcelona next year. It was an important meeting because it saw the formation of an autonomous international lesbian grouping within the organisation, and it was the last meeting before the decision of the European Commission of Human Rights on homosexual law reform in Northern Ireland is announced.

The IGA has a membership of 28 organisations from 15 European countries, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Contact has recently been made with gay groups in Africa and Indonesia. Set up only twelve months ago, it has maximised the effectiveness of gay organisations through coordinated international action, most spectacularly in the campaign which successfully prevented the Greek government from going ahead with vicious new anti-gay legislation. It has organised international demonstrations against the persecution of gay people in Russia, against the Briggs proposals in California, and against the executions of gays by the Khomeini regime in Iran.

To date the membership of the IGA has been almost exclusively male — there were only three lesbians at the first conference in Bergen. At Brighton, women from Holland and Denmark met to set up a lesbian grouping, with separate meetings from the men, within the IGA. At the Barcelona conference the IGA will change its name to the International Lesbian and Gay Association.

The women explained the significant



advantages of coordinating activity in many areas, the most obvious example being child custody — organising a general campaign and providing support and assistance to lesbian mothers who have to move abroad to keep their children. They thought that lesbian groups would be strengthened through international association. However, apart from making use of the system of communication and

administration which the IGA has developed, the women also thought that there were some areas, such as education, where it would be to the best advantage for the women and men to work together.

At the present time the women in ILGA are organising for the lesbian meeting at the Barcelona conference next Easter. They are writing to lesbian groups throughout the world

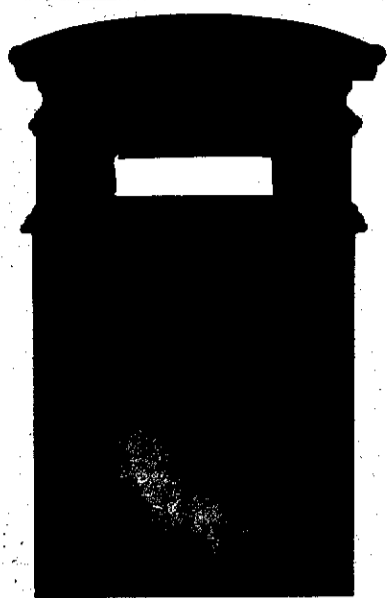
but are concerned that there are undoubtedly many groups for which they don't have an address. Interested lesbian organisations or lesbian groups within women's organisations should write to Sylvia Borren and Truus van Bueren, c/o COC, Frederiksplein 14, 1017 XM Amsterdam.

The Brighton meeting reviewed the progress of projects which the ILGA has undertaken: lifelines for sexual refugees — numbers of whom approach gay groups in several countries; third world gays; and work with international bodies like Amnesty International and various UN and Council of Europe committees.

The next major event coming up for the ILGA is the announcement of the decision in the Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association's case against the British government, which is now before the European Commission of Human Rights. NIGRA argues not only that the amendments adopted by Parliament must be extended to Northern Ireland but that there should be parity between homosexual and heterosexual ages of consent. The case is of major importance to gay groups throughout Europe. The British government's response was prepared before the elections and implements Callaghan's disgusting deal to gain the support of Ulster MPs. It is a document of sheer reaction.

Whichever way the decision goes, the ILGA will be coordinating demonstrations in member countries — either against the decision or calling upon the British government to extend the law immediately. The decision is expected sometime in October and will require a rapid response at short notice. Gay activists, especially in Britain, should be preparing for it now.

Photo: BOB WORKMAN (Gay News)



Women's Voice

MOSS SIDE Women's Voice was set up in July, involving supporters of the International Marxist Group, Socialist Workers Party, Workers' Action and several members of the Labour Party. We were all confident that in an area like Moss Side there was real potential for building a healthy branch. After two organisational meetings and one public meeting, SWP supporters informed the rest of us that we could not join Women's Voice on the basis that we did not support the politics of the SWP.

This was the first we had heard of such a condition for membership, although our political affiliations had been known from the start. In fact the SWP supporters were initially keen to start working with us (it was our initiative to start the branch in the first place), although they soon began to manoeuvre against us when their political domination was threatened.

Astonishing arguments were given for excluding us. Firstly, those of us active in the Labour Party were automatically branded as 'reformists'. They only wanted to work with revolutionary women and maintained that 'It's up to the SWP to decide what's revolutionary and what isn't'. Secondly, they felt that as some of us differed with the SWP over the nature of the Soviet Union and how to build the Rank and File Movement, it would be impossible for them to work with us. Such political differences would, they claimed, turn Women's Voice into a 'talking shop', and democratic rights for tendencies could only aggravate this.

SWP supporters at Moss Side see the function of Women's Voice as that of a periphery organisation for SWP members and sympathisers. We believe that Women's Voice should

include reformist working class women, many of whom could organise militantly around a broad programme of 'fighting for women's rights and socialism', and that revolutionary women should fight for their politics within the organisation. We maintain that unless Women's Voice becomes a genuinely democratic, broad-based organisation it will be unable to take the struggle for a working class women's movement any further.

We have since been informed by the SWP supporters that they could not confirm our exclusion from membership and that this was now a national Women's Voice decision. Although after three weeks this national decision is still not forthcoming they are persisting in excluding us from their activities. It is likely that this whole matter will be debated at the coming Women's Voice conference. We ask women to pass resolutions at their Women's Voice branches calling for such democratic rights as the provision of a regular internal newsletter, guaranteed political rights for tendencies, and for the magazine to express different political viewpoints.

Similar letters have been sent to Workers' Action, Socialist Worker and Women's Voice. For further information contact Anna, 39 Mallowdale Close, Hulme, Manchester 15.

Vicki Anderson [ASTMS, IMG], Rachel Wolstenholme [APEX, Moss Side CLP, Workers' Action supporter], Louise O'Conner [NALGO, Moss Side CLP], Frances O'Grady [Moss Side CLP], Anna Twentymann [NUPE, Moss Side CLP, Workers' Action supporter]

Dylan dead for years

NIGEL Hamilton's little article on Dylan (27 September) was certainly overdue. However, the point is not that anyone expects Dylan to become a socialist, but simply that one at least expects him to produce good music. Socialism and good music are certainly not incompatible, but they don't always go together. The Transitional Programme, for instance, could not be set to music.

Nigel's last paragraph, however, gives the game away. He still nourishes an illusion. He hopes this phase won't last. That this is ludicrous is obvious from his own article, which details Dylan's gradual decline. I think Dylan is finished for good. In fact I am so disgusted that I can't even listen to any of his old records.

Pauline Harbour, East London.



Children in Kampuchea — waiting for aid that doesn't come

Kampuchea — neither fish nor fowl

JOHN Pilger stated in the Daily Mirror that the Pol Pot regime was a product of imperialist savagery. Clive Turnbull argued in Socialist Challenge last week that Pol Pot was the product also of Stalinism. In their different ways both are correct. The question that arises, however, is the attitude of socialists towards this regime, the subsequent invasion by Vietnam, and what exists today.

It is widely accepted within the Trotskyist movement that the class character of a state can be easily ascertained. It is either a capitalist state or a workers state. In general, of course, this is correct. But history can, on occasion, be cruel. Exceptions, albeit of a limited and temporary duration, can exist.

I would maintain that Kampuchea under Pol Pot was neither a capitalist state nor a workers state. It was a historical aberration and its future was always unstable. If the Vietnamese had not overthrown Pol Pot it is very likely that imperialism (utilising the refugees and Thailand) would sooner or later have made a push in that direction.

It is true that Pol Pot was not creating a capitalist state. Everything was taken over by the state (including personal belongings). It is also true that the means of production and the working class were smashed. Stalin's atrocities did have a rationale: heavy industrialisation, i.e. increasing the weight of the working class. Pol Pot destroyed the tiny working class as a social class. All human rights were

taken away. It wasn't a case of substituting politically for the working class as the bureaucracy normally does. It was something completely different, which defies characterisation in terms normally used on the left. It is easy to sit back and say that it would have been infinitely better if Pol Pot had been overthrown by the Kampuchean masses. It would have been. However, there is a danger that Pol Pot would have exterminated what was left of the population before he went down himself.

So we should admit that the Pol Pot regime was neither fish nor fowl. And as such it was characterised by an instability which was reflected in its barbarism. Its overthrow was a tiny step forward for the Kampuchean who are still alive. And one can agree with Clive that pressure should be built up in the labour movement to press for all forms of aid.

TARIQ ALI, North London

Little angels?

IN AN article generally favourable to kids, David Holland's 'Whose Consent?' (20 September) was remarkably weak on paedophilia. To say that 'cross generational sex is a side issue...' (rather a silly euphemism for paedophile sex, aren't sexual relations between a girl/boy of 16 and woman/man of 60 cross generational?) is plainly incorrect. Daughter/father relationships, lesbian/feminist custody cases, and child/mother relationships all in their various ways proclaim the prolific nature of paedophile relationships.

I find it amusing that David

Holland should quote Lewis Carroll or Peter Pan as a 'little angels idyll' in contrast to the 'savage' attacks on children's sexuality taking place outside the playhouse. Both J.M. Barrie and Carroll were paedophiles, and tolerated as such as the medium by which the Victorian middle class came to terms with the existence of, and their cravings for, sexual children. Under age sexuality was recognised and wrapped up in a cloying innocence. Embedded in Peter Pan is the image of the paedophile as an immature adult, 'the person who never grew up', and that image embodies many deep felt — but denied — fantasies that adults have for children.

Paedophiles are adults who love children. The number of adults who love children is immense. But the number of paedophiles...?

Well, just stop for a moment and muse over parent/child relationships. Pretty mundane, you might say. But if I were to turn up on your doorstep dear (adult) reader, and strike up a similar relationship with 'your' child, how long would it be before I was being carted off to the local nick with perhaps ten years (or much more) inside after the court case?

And what if dear 'little x' decided to go to Paris with me for a dirty weekend? Or forever? So much for biological parenthood. (This paragraph constitutes a Conspiracy to Corrupt Public Morals, so please regard it in a hypothetical light... until it happens.)

Show me an adult who is not a paedophile. Then I'll join Mary Whitehouse and believe in immorality. Sex with children is wonderful and can be highly recommended to all SC readers. (Oops! Another Conspiracy to Corrupt.) Children are wonderful and they should not be subjected to any kind of guilt trip or legal shenanigans over their bodies and their sexuality. It is theirs, and nobody else's.

TIM BROWN, London N19

Sanctions

RON Todd's pledge that the Transport and General Workers Union will impose sanctions on the Smith-Muzorewa regime if the Tories lift them (27 September) can only be welcomed. However there is a small problem. In order to impose sanctions the TGWU will have to win the support of its members. And there's the rub.

I wonder how many of the white airport workers who welcomed Smith at Heathrow were members of the TGWU. The fact that racism is so widespread means that the TGWU leaders will face some problems. They should be aware of these before they launch any campaign.

Asha Patel, Ealing

Socialist Challenge — what the changes mean

By Mike Last

FLEET STREET claims that papers like Socialist Challenge incite class hatred and undermine democratic institutions in Britain.

But Maggie Thatcher's new government is doing our job for us. The Tories have incited more class hatred in five months than Socialist Challenge has managed to 'stir up' in two years — by union bashing, lengthening dole queues, driving up prices, carving up the NHS, selling off the parts of public enterprise that do make a profit, cutting taxes for the rich, and viciously attacking black people and women.

Accessible

Under a right-wing Labour government Socialist Challenge saw its main task as fighting for a socialist alternative to Callaghan and Co. We still see this as a major job under the Tories, because we don't want that lot back again. We still think that means not only uniting in the struggle but building a single unified revolutionary organisation in Britain. And our pages and supporters groups remain open to anyone who agrees with us about this.

But this Tory government is seen by

many people as a naked weapon of class rule. Socialist Challenge will be able to reach an even wider audience as more and more people realise that they're going to have to fight — and fight hard — in order to stop these attacks. That means making our paper more accessible to new readers.

Politics

We've no intention of dropping our politics — we'll still have lots of international coverage, debates on strategies for socialism, coverage on racism, sexual politics, analysing what the bosses are up to — but we are making some changes in the format of the paper. We're adding new regular columns and changing what goes in old ones. We're aiming to make every article easy to read. We want the struggle against the Tories to speak out in the paper. We're going to look at our design, and our photos carefully and make sure we're getting the most out of our designers and journalists.

But the rest is up to you — our readers. We want you to write more for us. Send your letters and articles in to us — don't be shy. If you haven't time to write yourself, send in a local newspaper report, or a leaflet you distributed. Take Socialist Challenge down to the engineering strike picket

lines and while you're there find out what the pickets feel about how to win the strike.

The biggest boost you can give to your paper is to take it everywhere you go and sell it. Sell it at work, sell it at bus stops, sell it in shopping centres, go round estates with it, take it to union meetings, Labour Party ward meetings and your women's group.

Our target is to distribute 5,000 papers a week through Socialist Challenge supporters alone. Your group's target is below. Let's hear from you soon telling us that we've underestimated how much people hate the Tories in your area.

Aberdeen	75
Basingstoke	35
Bath	40
Bedford	50
Birmingham	300
Bolsover	30
Bradford	50
Brighton	90
Bristol	65
Canterbury	25
Cardiff	140
Colchester	50
Crawley	30
Dundee	35
Edinburgh	150
Exeter	10
Falkirk	10
Glasgow	140

Guildford	10
Hemel Hempstead	50
Huddersfield	65
Hull	140
Leamington	25
Leeds	100
Leicester	70
Liverpool	100
Manchester	275
Bolton	65
Middlesbrough	40
Newcastle	100
Newport	10
Norwich	25
Nottingham	120
Oxford	220
Portsmouth	35
Preston	60
Reading	40
St Albans	15
Sheffield	65
Southampton	60
Stirling	10
Swansea	60
Swindon	65
Wakefield	10
Wolverhampton	60
Worcester	10
York	45

LONDON	
Brent	75
Camden	150
Hackney	250
Hammersmith	35
Haringey	120

Islington	180
Lambeth	200
Newham	50
Notting Hill	60
Outer West	200
South East	100
Tower Hamlets	140
Wandsworth	120

Why our price has gone up

AS of this issue your copy of Socialist Challenge costs 20p. Another wave in the rising tide of prices. At the same time our subs rates are going up to £12.50 a year in Britain and for surface mail, £18 for airmail.

The image of a wave in the tide is quite apt in describing why we've had to raise our prices. Canute couldn't hold back the tide and neither can we.

Our price has been the same for two inflationary years, while the cost of design, print, paper, telephones, electricity, and the cost of living for our staff has soared.

As regular readers will have seen from our fund appeals, the tide of rising prices has come near to drowning us. We won't be making profits off your extra 5ps, but they might just keep our head above water!

Socialist Challenge

Engineering dispute

Our class against theirs



By Rich Palsar

THE TORIES would have it that they are neutral in the engineering dispute. Industry Secretary Sir Keith Joseph insisted that 'we are not taking sides in any way'. The same thing was repeated by Margaret Thatcher in a speech last week at Milton Keynes.

All of which, of course, is sheer bloody nonsense!

The Tories want to see the employers win. John Nott, their Trade Secretary, as good as said so on BBC radio when he accused the engineering unions of 'leading their members down a cliffside like lemmings to their own destruction'.

Why did 76 engineering firms last year make contributions totalling £120,300 direct to the Tory Party, if not because they could rely on the Tories to back them against the unions?*

Just because the Tories have not (as yet) imposed an incomes policy

does not mean they are doing nothing.

Far from it. Thatcher made Tory intentions quite clear in the other things she said at Milton Keynes, when she said that unless there is higher productivity there will be fewer jobs. But higher productivity in their books means fewer jobs anyway. In other words, unemployment will rocket.

Meanwhile the Engineering Employers' Federation is taking the lead for the bosses in resisting union attempts to defend jobs. Above all, the employers are determined to give no concessions on the engineering unions' demands for a shorter working week without loss in pay.

That is why the biggest and strongest employers' federation is taking the lead in provoking a confrontation — using lock-outs to undermine the tactic of two-day stoppages and force the unions to escalate. And that's why the Confederation of British Industry

has thrown all its weight behind the employers.

Have no illusions, the finance houses and banks will be doing their best to see that companies hardest hit by the strike get enough credit to sit it out. Their side will be exercising their own class solidarity.

There are cracks in their armour. Some smaller firms have already deserted the EEF and settled. Those employers who can keep up production on a three-day week are less keen on lock-outs and lay-offs than Rolls Royce. Most dramatic has been the disclosure that Arnold Weinstock intends to pull GEC out of the federation after the dispute is over — and GEC is the second largest company in the EEF.

Those cracks must be turned into gulfs. Make no mistake about it — this dispute is our class against their class. It may be the engineers doing the fighting, but they need us behind them all the way.

*Facts from Labour Research

Police line up with Barbarians



By Martin Meteyard

THE POLICE are protecting the South African Barbarians rugby team with the same relish as they harass black people in Britain. Which is not surprising, because the Barbarians' multi-racial composition is a cosmetic job designed to win international recognition of South Africa while sport — and society as a whole — continues to be organised along apartheid lines.

Opponents of the tour were banned by police from demonstrating against the Barbarians' arrival at Heathrow. Anti Nazi League organiser Jerry Fitzpatrick was arrested and charged with disorderly behaviour after shouting: 'Racist Barbarians go home. We don't want any racists in Britain.'

In Exeter, where the tourists were playing their first match against Devon on Wednesday, police took the trouble to mount a 24-hour guard on the City Ground with dog patrols for several days beforehand in order to ensure that the game went ahead.

In Scotland this collaboration has gone even further. The Lothian and Borders chief constable, Sir John Orr, is not merely responsible for police arrangements for the Barbarians' match at Hawick on 14 October — he's also president of the team they're playing, the Scottish Co-optimists!

The extent to which the British establishment is working hand-in-glove with apartheid was dramatically shown on Monday when the only black member of the Sports Council, Paul Stephenson, tried to put a motion to withdraw the council's £200,000 annual grant to the Rugby Football Union, which has sponsored the tour.

The other members of the council flatly refused even to discuss the motion. Stephenson, who described the Barbarians as a 'sporting cosmetic' for apartheid and a 'public relations stunt', walked out and will confront Tory sports minister Hector Monro on Friday.

On Friday also there will be a public meeting against the tour at the Polytechnic of Central London (New Cavendish Street, W1) at 7.30pm. The main speaker will be Peter Hain of Stop All Racist Tours (SART). Afterwards, at 10.30pm, a coach will be leaving for the second tour match the following day at Camborne in Cornwall.

In Wales, where the last three matches are being played, South Wales Anti-Apartheid and Cardiff Trades Council have jointly called an emergency conference against the tour on Saturday 13 October in the TGWU Hall, Cardiff.

The National Union of Students is also taking up the campaign making its main focus the Coventry match on 17 October. All Socialist Challenge student supporters in the Home Counties and Midlands should fight for their unions to organise coaches on that day.

The full tour schedule is as follows: 6 October, Camborne; 10 October, Galashiels; 14 October, Hawick; 17 October, Coventry; 20 October, Maesteg; 24 October, Llanelli; 27 October, Newport. For further details ring SART c/o Anti-Apartheid at 01-580 5311.

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