

Socialist Challenge

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12p

TAMESIDE

WHAT WE THINK OF THE BAN

Make no mistake about it. The ban on the fascists has been imposed because of Lewisham and because tens of thousands of trade-unionists were preparing to come to Tameside. It has been the threat of 20,000 demonstrators which forced the Tameside Council to ban the march. They did so on the request of Manchester's Chief Constable.

It is typical that he preferred to utilise the Public Order Act and not the Race Relations Act. For his order bans 'all political processions in the area'. We reject this equation of fascist and anti-fascist activity, of fascist thugs and those whom they seek to oppress. We reject the ban on anti-fascists with the contempt that it deserves.

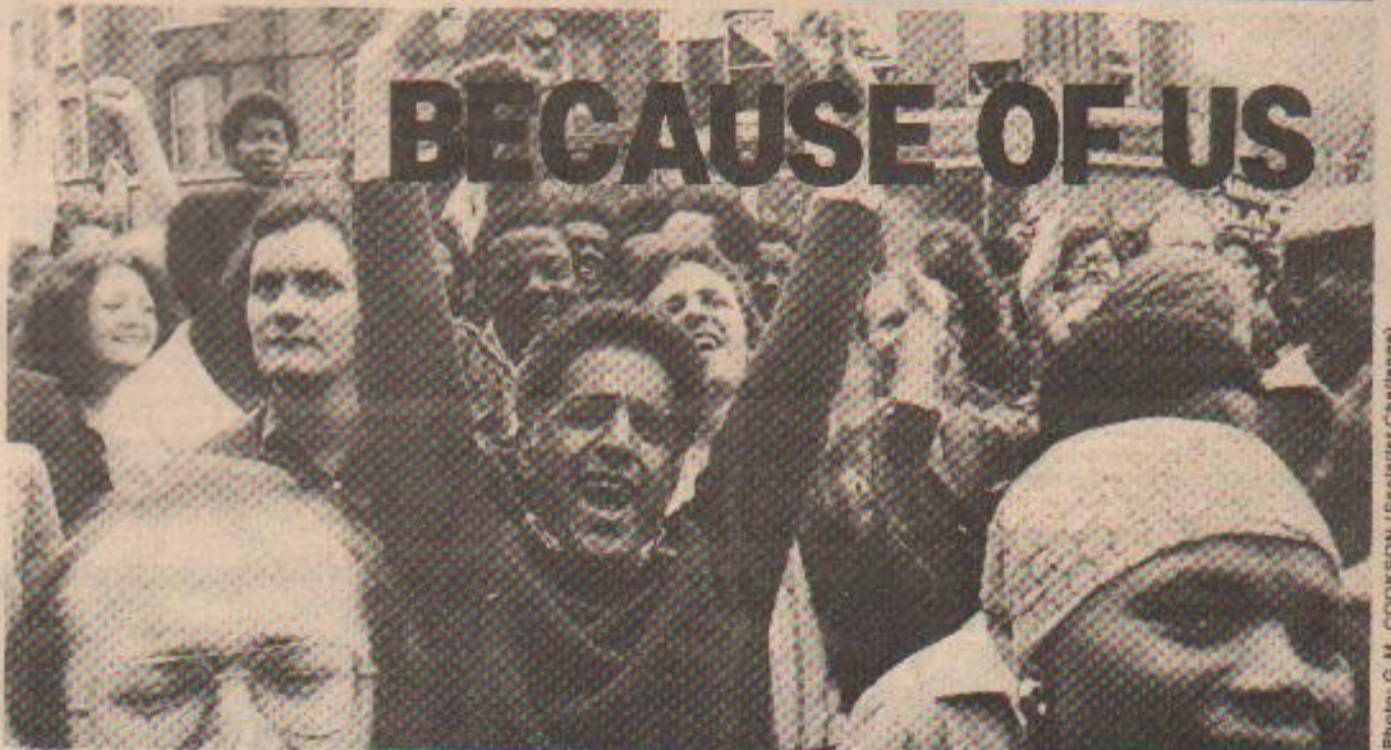
If the fascists are allowed to

assemble or gather anywhere in Manchester on 8 October, we will be out in force. We do not believe that this ban should be allowed to demobilise the anti-fascist forces. We are prepared as are dozens of Labour Parties, hundreds of trades union branches, activists in the women's movement and the black communities themselves.

The fact that the fascists are not being allowed to soil the streets of Tameside is a victory for all those who argue for mass mobilisations against fascism and for denying them a platform. If, however, this ban is used to argue that anti-fascist mobilisations should in the coming period be scaled down, this partial victory could become a defeat. All anti-fascists must therefore remain *ON GUARD!*



THEY WON'T BE MARCHING



BECAUSE OF US

STEVE BIKO: Murdered by Vorster's thugs

STEVE BIKO was murdered in cold blood by Vorster's gestapo. Jimmy Kruger, the government Minister in charge of political murders publicly laughed at Biko's death. South African blacks are determined to wipe the smile off Kruger's racist face. And he is now rapidly backtracking as reactions come in from the world's capitals.

Drake Koko was a close friend of Biko's and a co-founder with

him of the Black People's Convention. He told *Socialist Challenge*: 'There can never be any peaceful, non-violent means of bringing about change in South Africa as long as the minority racist regime is going on with the merciless murder of our people.'

Steve Biko, 30, was a founder member and first president of the South African Students' Organisation in 1968 and a co-founder of the Black Peoples Convention

in 1971. In the following year he was banned along with other BPC leaders, some of whom like Drake Koko were forced into exile.

Biko was widely regarded as the foremost theoretician of the black consciousness movement. Koko describes him as 'a scholar and a philosopher'. Steve Biko was not a pacifist. He pithily summarised the meaning of black consciousness in the fol-

lowing way:

'Not only have they kicked the black but they have also told him to react to the kick. With painful slowness he is now beginning to show signs that it is his right and duty to respond to the kick in the way he sees fit.'

[For reactions to Biko's murder see p.10]

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

Editorial

Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper Street, London N1.
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THE STATE OF THE PARTIES

THERE IS a curious Alice-in-Wonderland atmosphere in British politics at the moment. This is reflected in the odd fact that the two opposition parties are racked by division, while the party of government appears to have quelled the chances of any serious opposition at its Brighton conference in a few weeks time.

The reason for this state of affairs is the virtual political collapse of Tribune politics. There is no organised left social democratic opposition to this Government — the first time that such a situation has existed when a Labour Government has been in power.

If Benn and Foot imagine that avoiding a fight at next month's conference might win them the election, the state of the Labour Party itself should make them pause for reflection — membership is the lowest since 1948.

It was the Liberal Party which maintained Labour in office at a critical period for the Callaghan Government. It did so essentially for reasons of political self-defence. An early election — and the recent by-election results have confirmed this only too clearly — would have drastically reduced their Parliamentary representation. So Steel cobbled together a hasty pact with Callaghan to keep Labour in office. It was and remains a marriage of convenience for both sides, though Liberal MP's and party activists are now beginning to claim that the oppressed party in the marriage was the Liberal Party.

For in reality the Liberals got the worst of both worlds. They were offered no seats in the Cabinet and their influence on the Government's decisions was negligible. At the same time they earned the odium of keeping Labour in office. All these features reveal the dilemma which confronts the Liberal Party. Once an important ruling class party, they are now confined to the margins of Parliamentary politics. They are waiting, they say, for proportional representation and major re-alignment in national politics. The next General Election therefore is in a very literal sense going to be a life or death election for them. Naturally, we would wish them a speedy end.

The Tory Party is now confronting real and difficult choices. The Prior-Joseph debate is not shadow boxing. It reflects tactical differences on how to confront the present political situation. Prior is not for a mindless confrontation with the trade union bureaucracies. Joseph wants a fight, at any rate in the period leading up to the next elections. Others do not want a 'Tories v. the Unions' polarisation as they feel that Labour would benefit from such a campaign since it would pose as the party of moderation.

But Joseph's views command growing support inside the ranks of the Tory Party, and the Conservative conference could well see a concerted campaign to ditch Prior. The crisis within the Tory Party is unlikely to be resolved by Thatcher's TV interview with Brian Walden nor by her performance at the Tory conference. The referendum idea might sound very clever at the moment, but in the context of a class confrontation it might not succeed in averting a general election, which is Thatcher's aim. What is of more interest is that the Tory leader appears to be implicitly backing the Joseph line.

The dilemma which the Tories confront is a cruel one: since 1964, they have held office for only four years. For a ruling class organisation that considers itself a natural party of government this is a severe humiliation. The longer Callaghan clings on to office the more protracted is the Tory crisis likely to become.

The Callaghan administration remains perfectly suited to the needs of British capital. It is extremely hostile to rank-and-file militancy. It has carried through reactionary social policies and it is still attempting — courtesy of Hugh Scanlon (RIP) — to keep the unions under control on the question of wage demands.

What is more to the point is that there is no big debate going on inside the Labour Party between left and right social democracy. Governmental unity has paved the way to taming the Labour Party executive. No resolutions opposing the Government's economic policy will be discussed at the conference as a full-page ad from NUPE, protesting against bureaucratic manipulation, informs us in last week's *Tribune*.

National abortion demo on 29 October

'Sleezy girls' versus 'good people'

LAST WEEKEND saw the sixth annual conference of the anti-abortion group LIFE. The star speaker was Cardinal Hume, Archbishop of Westminster, who explained his presence by saying: 'My role is to encourage good people in their values.'

As with the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child, LIFE is full of individuals who like to consider themselves 'good people'. The 'National Patrons' of LIFE include such worthies as the Duke of Norfolk, the Countess of Lytton, Viscount Monckton of Breanchley, Baroness Masham of Iton, and Lord Clifford of Chudleigh.

All 'good' respectable people, with no doubt an acute understanding of the problems and worries of working class women who need an abortion.

RESTRICTIONS

Or take the example of Professor Hugh McLaren, Birmingham's head gynaecologist, and one of the main people responsible for the notorious restrictions on abortion in Birmingham. McLaren is proud of facts such as that in 1974 one major hospital in Birmingham conducted only two abortions in the entire year.

'I wouldn't sit down to lunch with an abortionist,' McLaren has said, and to minimise the risk of such unpleasantness McLaren has done his best to ensure that the hospitals where he may occasionally work do not employ what he terms 'abortionists'.

In May this year he openly admitted he practised discrimination when it came to making appointments. He boasted: 'If a young man came to us and said "I'd like you to train me, Professor, but I'm a keen abortionist", I'd show him the lift'.

DEMONSTRATION

The 1967 Abortion Act is evaded daily by McLaren and the other 'good people' who are normally so keen to preach obedience to the law. On the other hand for McLaren, 'Morals are very important, not only abortion morals, but with women. We like them to be stable, married and terribly respectable. You can't have sleezy, oily girls — not in our profession.'

The National Abortion Campaign is asking for thousands of 'sleezy' people to demonstrate against such reactionaries as McLaren on Saturday 29 October. That Birmingham has been chosen as the venue for the demonstration is particularly appropriate given the authority McLaren and his disciples have wielded in that city to prevent abortions.

79.4 per cent of all those seeking abortions in Birmingham are forced to go outside the Health Service. This compares with only 11.6 per cent in Newcastle, for example — striking evidence of the power of the McLaren veto. For him the 1967 Abortion Act is 'unnecessary, quite unnecessary'. So he simply ignores it.

Leaving aside the special Bir-

under way, the need for a massive turn-out on 29 October is self-evident. Under the slogans 'No Restrictive Laws', 'Women's Choice, Not Doctors' Choice', 'NHS Abortion — Every Woman's Right' and 'Out

Patient Abortion Clinics Now', NAC's march in Birmingham aims to answer the Lords, Professors and Cardinals of the anti-abortion camp and to demand new measures to guarantee abortion on demand.



Message carried on a National Abortion Campaign demo back in February 1975 — and they're still doing the choosing. NAC's latest four-page news-sheet explains why, together with reports on anti-abortion propaganda in schools, international developments and much else — including why you must join the 29 October demonstration in Birmingham. Price 5p plus postage from: NAC, 30 Camden Road, London NW1.

mingham connection, the 29 October demonstration is timely in the light of information obtained from the latest internal circular sent out by LIFE. Although the group talks of the 'sad demise' of the Benyon Bill, it indicates that fresh moves are afoot to launch a new parliamentary offensive on abortion rights.

The circular suggests there will be a 'new initiative' in the 'next session of Parliament'. In addition LIFE is planning to hold what it calls a 'Day for Life' on 27 October when it will be asking for people to donate 'A day's pay' to the funds of LIFE. West Midlands LIFE is also planning what will probably be a demonstration in Birmingham on 22 October.

So with this new offensive

...and lobby Labour

The Labour Abortion Rights Campaign (LARC) is finalising arrangements for its mass lobby of the Labour Party conference in Brighton on Tuesday 5 October. The lobby is supported by the National Abortion Campaign, the Abortion Law Reform Association, the white collar section of the Engineering Union, and the Co-operative Women's Guild.

Within the Labour Party itself, the depth of feeling on a woman's right to choose is illustrated by the fact that the abortion debate ranks third in terms

of the number of resolutions received.

The resolution supported by LARC includes the demand for 'future Government legislation which would ensure women's right of choice on abortion' and the proposal that the free vote for Labour MPs on abortion be abolished.

The lobby will start at noon and there is a coach leaving Victoria station at 10am for those going from London. Further details can be obtained from: Astrid Lever, 57 Trinity Road, London N2 8JJ.

OUR POLICIES

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

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

- * To build broad-based class struggle tendencies in opposition to class collaborationism in the labour movement. These should be non-exclusive in character grouping together militants holding a wide range of political views.
- * To begin to fight for the creation of a unified and democratic revolutionary socialist organisation which can, through an application of united front tactics, begin to be seen as an alternative by thousands of workers engaged in struggles.

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

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

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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

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

NAME

ADDRESS

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

Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)



Labour's tenants

If the door doesn't fit - forget it

by SUE ASPINALL

BORN IN 1903, Margaret Ryan has had a lifetime of struggle which could fill a book. In fact she is writing one. But although unusual in her fighting spirit, the problems she faces are everyday ones for millions of tenants and pensioners.

The council estate on which she lives in Islington, North London, won its architect a prize. Yet life for the people who actually live there is far from utopian. Countless things which may be regarded as 'trivial details' by prize-winning architects, make everyday living more oppressive for ordinary tenants.

Margaret's kitchen, for example, has no window so that when she is frying chips the fat spits in her face and the room is filled with the grease and the smell. A ventilator is provided, but as it runs on electricity a pensioner like Margaret is afraid of running up huge bills, so she doesn't use it. Margaret also finds the kitchen is cramped — 'designed with economy in mind, not people'.

The view from the living room's only window is of a wall. The back yard is small, and bad drainage means that it is usually covered in sludge. Margaret has to keep a pair of wellingtons handy to go outside.

Further problems arise when she wants to empty her rubbish bins. She has to carry heavy bags of rubbish down a flight of stairs, and then lift them above waist height to push the rubbish bit by bit into a narrow chute. This feat of physical endurance for a pensioner is not made any easier by the pervading stench of urine from the unwashed walls surrounding the rubbish area.

NICE PROFIT

This area underneath the flats is rented out by the council as garage space. A nice profit for the council means petrol fumes and often the noise of cars in the early hours of the morning for the tenants. The smashed windows, debris and graffiti down in the garages make a substantial contribution to the tenants' sense of well-being and security.

Margaret Ryan was one of the first tenants to move into this 'model' estate nearly six years

ago. She noticed immediately that her back door didn't fit the frame properly, letting in the rain and draught. After four years wasted breath complaining to the council every time she went to pay her rent, Margaret found out that you could take the council to court for things like that.

She first went to court last November. The council admitted they were at fault and an order was made compelling them to carry out the repairs within 28 days. The job has still not been done. Margaret has done everything possible to make her way through the complexities and jargon of the legislation, but so far it has come to nothing — except for two letters from the council informing her that she was jeopardising her tenancy by complaining.

A carpenter from the council did come round once, but he had little time and the job was done inadequately. The old door was left to rot in Margaret's back yard, blocking the already problematic drainage system even more. Meanwhile, Margaret's electricity bill is about to soar once again as winter approaches and the cold and the wet begin to seep into her living room.

Her pension and social security benefit come to £27.70 a week, and her rent — at £10.14 — is more than a third of her income. She hasn't eaten meat for four years. The social security tribunal was very understanding about her last electricity bill — they said she should have saved up to pay it. 'You know these tribunals', says Margaret. 'Three people including a lady what not and a trade union representative nodding off to sleep.'

'How do you put two cold prunes and custard made with water "in writing"?' For Margaret, this bureaucratic response is typical of a Labour council which is remote and out of touch with the day-to-day concerns of local tenants and workers. Margaret regards them as 'traitors' to the people they are supposed to represent.

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COLLECTIVE ACTION

Margaret is well aware of the necessity of collective action to tackle such problems. She was one of the Prebibles 14, served with an injunction by the High Court three years ago for picketing a local estate agent which was forcibly driving working class people out of Islington. She set up a tenants' association on her estate but has withdrawn from it because the caretaker of the estate sits in on the meetings. 'This is the way the council governs it. They get this chap, who drinks with the estate manager, to come in on our meetings.' Margaret's view is that the council is keen to support tenants associations in order to keep them under control. 'They don't want independent tenants' associations that are to the left,' she says.

She has no illusions in Islington's Labour council. Last Christmas, when Margaret was ill, the council's meals on wheels service brought her some lunch. Apart from the offensive remarks of the woman who brought the meal in to her — who turned out to be a member of the National Front — the meal was revolting. Margaret decided to take it, there and then, round to the home of her local councillor, Ann Page. The councillor's mother wouldn't let her in and told her to 'put it in writing'.

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Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)



Margaret Ryan at the prize-winning rubbish chute, which requires garbage to be lifted above waist height, and [right] with the door that didn't fit.



'How do you put two cold prunes and custard made with water "in writing"?'

News from nowhere

Uncomradely writs

THE COMMUNIST Party has served a writ on the breakaway New Communist Party, according to reports we have received from correspondents in Leeds and Surrey. The NCP now claims a membership of 650 and its weekly paper *New Worker* (not thought to be a reference to Sid French) was published last week. The CPGB is claiming that it owns the Surrey district headquarters and its lawyers have issued a writ for re-possession. The NCP was served with a notice to quit three weeks ago.

The NCP leaders have served a counter-writ demanding back-payments for three full-timers for three years at £1000 a year. They are stating that unless the money is forthcoming they will claim redundancy benefits for the years in question.

Our correspondents understand that the NCP leaders have had informal discussions with the Vietnamese and Soviet Communist Parties in this country as well as with the Australian Socialist Party (an NCP-type formation in that country).

Socialist Challenge is of the opinion that a court case involving both parties would be an unseemly and messy affair. The matter should be settled amicably. If the two parties so desire we would be prepared to initiate a workers' tribunal to resolve the dispute.

Trouble at Ye Old Morning Star

THE CAMPAIGN against the *Morning Star's* editor, veteran *bore* and *hack* Tony Chater, seems to be reaching its climax. Virtually the entire staff is up in arms and determined to get rid of Chater. The campaign is being spearheaded by one of the newspaper's columnists, Colin Chambers, who has had his copy mauled once too often.

In line for the succession is none other than young Chris Myant — at present assistant editor — who would be politically reliable but might inject some life into the paper. In reality the *Star* tends to be a sectarian paper, indulging in portage which suits the tactical needs of the CP. A lot more needs to be changed than the editor.

No Irish studies, OK?

THE SCOTTISH O-level in modern studies covers a wide range of subjects, including countries where there is 'trouble', Lebanon, South Africa, and black ghettos in the United States are regular features. There is, however, one notable omission. Yes, you're right, it's Ireland.

The director of modern studies in Renfrewshire decided to sort this out when he asked principal modern studies teachers to cover Ireland in their non-certificate classes — these are for those school students who don't sit any exams. They just wait until they're 16 and then join the ranks of the unemployed.

The teachers turned down the suggestion. Many said that while they were sure the students would be interested, they couldn't trust themselves to cover the question impartially. At least they're honest!

Rationalisation: Labour style

LIVERPOOL IS racked by an unemployment level of 11.1 per cent. Not bothered by this fact is the area health authority, which is cheerfully planning to cut the 11,800 hospital staff by 3,300. In a response to local Labour MP Eric Heffer, the Health Minister

Roland Moyle talked about 'plans for much-needed modernisation and rationalisation of services in Liverpool.' The imbecile!

Doesn't he know that the 'modernisation' will mean the closure of five existing hospitals by Xmas 1978 and the reduction of the 680 beds in Sefton General Hospital by a quarter? Colin Barnett, the regional officer of NUPE, stated some time ago that the lightning hospital strikes would continue until the authority guarantees that ancillary workers' take-home pay is not reduced by the scaling down of services.

This might save wage packets but it unlikely to save jobs. This not only will the health workers suffer, but so will the health of other workers.

Haringey's illiterates

HARINGEY'S education chief unleashed a 'Green Paper' some time back. This appalling document called for closing 1 primary and secondary schools by 1986. It was greeted with outrage by local teachers and the Haringey Labour Party.

Figures now revealed by the Greater London Council indicate that Haringey got its sums wrong. The 'Green Paper' forgot to account for as many as five thousand children under the age of 11. Ted Knight, Labour prospective parliamentary candidate, welcomed the GLC revelations and pledged that Labour councillors would not implement the paper. What is needed however, is a full inquiry into Haringey's education department. Surely some classes in adult education are called for to educate the educators.

Confessions of a mercenary butcher



KEN AITKEN served in the British Army from 1938 to 1942. Nothing unusual about that, one could say. But Aitken wasn't satisfied with peace. He became an alcoholic, and got involved in a number of freelance capers — the latest of which was serving as a sergeant-major to the notorious 'Colonel' Callan in Angola.

Somehow or other he managed to get back from Angola in one piece and immediately afterwards joined a gang. He took part in a well-organised burglary where meat worth £4,000 was stolen. Obviously butchery in Angola had attracted him to all sorts of meat. Aitken was arrested and admitted guilt. He was given an 18-month jail sentence, suspended for two years.

Now let us suppose that Aitken had been an unemployed black. He would have been sent down for at least five years with the words of a pontificating, racist magistrate resounding in his ears. Just goes to show....

Last word

THE JUBILEE celebrations in England made a degrading impression: a gaudy exhibition of servility and stupidity. The bourgeoisie at least knows what it is doing: this mediaeval lumber will come in very handy in forthcoming battles as a first barricade against the proletariat. — Trotsky, *Dairy in Exile* 1935, entry for 8 May.

In Brief

Five 'accidents' too many

DURING THE last local elections in Sunderland, the Tyneside Socialist Centre organised mass anti-fascist leafleting on council estates and fly-posted the town centre. Such activity was not without its successes. In the elections the fascists got a very low vote.

Since then the plate glass window of the Centre's bookshop, Cradwell Books, has been smashed five times. Petrol-soaked newspapers were put through the letterbox a fortnight ago. Fascists have been in and threatened comrades working in the shop.

The response of the police to the fifth incident of window-smashing: 'Probably a bolt thrown by a passing vehicle.' And presumably Little Towers died because he was bruised by a lorry-load of potatoes accidentally falling and crushing him.

Victory in Sheffield

ATTEMPTS BY the fascist British National Party (BNP) to organise a rally in Sheffield last Saturday flopped miserably. The Socialist Workers Party had intercepted a BNP internal bulletin announcing the rally well in advance.

They contacted other organisations including the Sheffield Anti-Fascist Committee (AFC) and organised a counter-rally for the same place. As a result of the publicity for the SWP rally, the BNP retreated and called off their rally. The anti-fascist rally went ahead. It was a clear victory.

Ron Thompson, speaking for the AFC, stressed that the best way to respond to the hysterical press campaign against the left was to mobilise superior forces on future occasions, while at the same time attacking the record of the labour movement on questions such as immigration and import controls.

The success of the counter-rally was due to the decision of the SWP to contact other organisations and build the rally in a united and non-sectarian fashion. In sharp contrast the Communist Party called a separate mobilisation across the road. They distributed a sectarian leaflet and drew a crowd of 12 people, most of whom later attended the main counter-rally.

Solidarity, not surrender

THE EXTREME right is mobilising anti-union squads. The first blatant example we saw of this was the intervention of the union bashing 'Self Help' in the Randolph Hotel strike in Oxford earlier this year. It attempted to break the T&GWU picket line. The workers fought back, but by the end of the evening 38 pickets had been arrested and the local anti-fascist committee faces £1000 in costs and fines. In order to cover costs the Oxford comrades have done all trade unions a service. They have produced an excellent pamphlet entitled *Solidarity, Not Surrender* and sub-titled: 'The right to organise v. the organised right'.

The pamphlet deals with the connections of 'Self Help' led by the fascist sympathiser Lady Birdwood and the role of NAFF. Given the role of both groups now in Grunwick, where they are actively aiding Ward, the pamphlet is a timely intervention. It should be ordered by all *Socialist Challenge* supporters and sold in an active way within the labour movement.



Solidarity, Not Surrender, 25p. All orders to Oxford AFC, 44b Princes Street, Oxford.

Trade unions take up the fight

K.A. ANDERSON, Branch Publicity Officer, Town Hall, Dukinfield, Cheshire.

At a General Meeting of the Tameside Branch of NALGO held on Tuesday 6 September 1977, the following motion was passed:

"The Tameside Branch of NALGO deplores the Council's decision to lift the ban on use of public buildings by the National Front.

It fully supports the decision of NUPE and GMWU to instruct their members not to undertake work associated with National Front meetings.

It instructs all NALGO members, likewise, to black work associated with National Front meetings."

NALGO therefore joins the two other Town Hall unions, NUPE and GMWU, in refusing to perform all and any duties associated with the National Front meetings at Hyde Town Hall on 8 October 1977 or with applications on future occasions

by the NF to use public buildings in Tameside.

NALGO members will refuse to work on room bookings; opening of halls; providing information to the police connected with security of Council papers and property; clearing up debris after NF meetings; litigation arising from damage to persons or property occurring at NF meetings.

The Tameside Branch of NALGO has made this policy decision for the following reasons:

i) To protect from violence our members who would be required to work at the location of, and at the time of, a National Front meeting.

ii) To contribute towards attempts to prevent political and racial violence in Tameside on 8 October or at any future date.

iii) To contribute towards the furtherance of NALGO's national policy of vigorously opposing racism in all its manifestations and of exposing and combatting racist organisations such as the National Front.

What's going on in Tameside

By OLIVER NEW

THE NATIONAL FRONT'S decision to hold a demonstration in Tameside is something of a show defiance. The 'representatives of the master race', as they like to think of themselves, have recently met with ever greater opposition whenever they have come out into the open.

Now it looks as though their march will be banned by the law, leaving them with an attempt to hold a rally in Hyde Town Hall, which local council employees are refusing to unlock for them. But the ban, of course, would not be because the Tory council and the police want to oppose fascism. Quite the contrary. It is aimed more at the left than the National Front.

A massive mobilisation of anti-fascists is planned for Tameside. Thousands of blacks, socialists, trade unionists, students, women intend to support Tameside Anti-Fascist Committee in a rally outside the town hall to prevent

the fascists from organising. This is what worries not only the police and the Tories, but also the various reformist leaders who are trying to hide their own unwillingness to organise against fascism by calling for various bans.

It is only now, when we are showing our determination and ability to keep the fascists off the streets of Tameside through a massive display of solidarity with black and Asian people and anti-fascist militants, that they try to ban from the streets not only the National Front but anti-fascists as well! One thing must be clear. If the fascists still try to go ahead with any event in Tameside on 8 October, thousands will be there to stop them. If they back down we should regard it as an important victory.

In every city, coaches for Tameside are being booked by various trade union, socialist, and anti-racist organisations. In the North-west the Tameside Anti-Fascist Committee has been running open air meetings and street leafleting for several weeks. The North-west region of

the TUC has backed the mobilisation, and in the Manchester area as a whole plans are under way for a committee to co-ordinate mobilisation.

A creche is being organised for the duration of the rally, while on the night before a big anti-fascist rally will be held in central Manchester, with a steel band as well as speakers. It is no wonder the local NF members are squirming at the insistence of their national leaders that their provocation go ahead. They can see close to hand the determination of large sections of the labour movement to stop them, while the little featherers in the NF's national directorate know that they cannot afford to back down.

It is only mass working class action which will stop these fascist scum. On 8 October every anti-fascist must be in Hyde as early in the day as possible. Socialist Unity will be there with its banners in support of the determination of the local anti-fascist committee to stop the Front.

ALL OUT ON 8 OCTOBER!

South London cops resume 'Operation Nigger Hunt'

by Sarah Roelofs

THE LEWISHAM cops were obviously furious after the recent demonstration. They controlled their rage for a few weeks and then 'Operation Nigger Hunt' was resumed with all its force.

In the early hours of last Saturday morning a group of policemen under the control of an Inspector entered the home of the Foster family in New Cross, South London. Eda Foster, 45, told us that her teenage daughter, Dawn was flung half-naked down the stairs; another daughter and son were also brutalised and suffered injuries. Chris Foster, 16, is one of the 'Lewisham 24' and his father is the chairperson of the local defence committee. The cops came looking for trouble and succeeded in creating it. They were intent on harassing Chris and alleged that he had broken his 'bail conditions'.

Mrs Foster is going to make serious and detailed accusations against the police inspector who led the raid and name him when she takes out the summons. The actions of the police reflect the widespread racism in the police force. This racism is further strengthened by the wearing of uniforms.

A black comrade arrested at Ladywood in Birmingham explained it to us in this way: 'What really gets you is not that they beat you. One expects that. It is that they treat you like animals. In their eyes you are no longer a human being.'

The New Cross raid and the actions of the police are a further substantiation of this claim. Mrs Foster knows that things are likely to get worse, but she is determined to fight back. We will try and ensure that she and others in a similar situation get all the support they need.



Eda Foster and family at home.

COMMENT

Lewisham lessons and Tameside bans

ANTHONY BARNETT's comments on the Battle of Lewisham (*Socialist Challenge* 13) were a welcome antidote to the subjective euphoria that has swept the revolutionary left in the wake of the National Front's humiliation on 13 August. However, the lessons he drew — that it is revolutionary to tell the truth, and that it is the building of a workers' united front, not violence in itself, which will seal the fate of fascism — were limited. A few more should be added.

In the analysis of the Lewisham events, the defeat inflicted on the National Front and the police action have been treated as two separate events. Yet the police scored a very important propaganda victory which in the short term, if not longer, is a greater threat to the working class than the fascists: the police were able to introduce a paraphernalia of riot control without a murmur of protest from the mass organisations of the working class.

This was followed through at the Notting Hill Carnival by a first demonstration in public state terror: the police systematically drummed their riot shields on the ground and holed before wading in to the carnival — the French CRS would have been proud of them. Yet the 'popular consensus' was that the police were incredibly restrained in their action.

Now the move towards a

strong state, and certainly not fascism, is how the ruling class will attempt to resolve the present crisis in its favour. Margaret Thatcher clearly articulates it, while it is now considered 'normal' for the capitalist press to discuss the question of a third force. Although it is correct to say this drift is inevitable, we should not treat it with indifference: we should fight it all the way so that at a later stage the state is not able to use its new weaponry against the vanguard struggles of the working class with impunity.

I think this means two things. Firstly, in our propaganda we should be very careful to pose the issue of violence in terms of self-defence against the fascists, both by the black community and workers' organisations, and get rid of that awful quote from Adolf Hitler.

Secondly, we should pay more attention to fighting the propaganda war even in the capitalist media. The police carried through just as many provocations before the Lewisham demo as they did before the 23 April anti-NF demo in Wood Green. But whereas hundreds of thousands knew about the provocative police ban on Duckett's Common on the 23rd, how many outside the far left knew that McKnee himself had stepped in from Scotland Yard to ban the All Lewisham Campaign Against Racism and Fascism march from going to Railway Grove after that

route had been agreed by the local police?

McKnee wanted a confrontation at Lewisham. He wanted to try out riot control techniques. The shields and special helmets came out after the National Front march had been dispersed, and the police chased the remaining counter-demonstrators up a main road on which they had sealed all the routes of escape (up side roads, etc.).

The Hitler quote has two more negative aspects. It feeds the 'red fascism' hysteria of the capitalist press — and the 'we stopped the Nazis' mentality of the Socialist Workers Party. Nobody denies the leading role of the SWP at Lewisham, but comrades of the SWP, you shouldn't pose the question of defeating fascism in terms of street warfare between your organisation and the NF.

It's not a question of having a superior level of violence to the fascists, but being able to use a limited level of violence which will be understood and serve as an object lesson to at least a section of the working class. And in this respect the SWP appears not to have learnt the lessons of Wood Green or Lewisham. In both cases it was possible — particularly in the former — to win important sections of the labour movement, especially local Labour Parties, to a no platform position. The importance of this at

this stage is not so much in the numbers mobilised but in the fact that it is the first step towards a class mobilisation against the fascists and prevents the isolation of the revolutionary vanguard.

One need not look further than France to see the dangers inherent in that. With the aid of the Communist Party, the state has been able to draw a line between 'respectable' trade union demonstrations and the demonstrations in which the far left predominate. The latter are regularly attacked by the riot police. A similar pattern could emerge in Britain.

The final point I want to make is on the developing confusion as to whether we should call for a ban on Front marches. Firstly, who calls for a ban? Trade union leaders like Jackson, vicars, the Communist Party, Labour MPs and even sections of the Tory Party. The reformists do so because they sincerely believe the state can fight fascism — more fool them.

The Tories do so because they don't like class violence exploding on the streets and they don't like the state's control of the streets being challenged, which is what happens when the left challenges a Front march. Many Tories would be quite happy to ban a few Front marches if that meant mass pickets outside Grunwicks and left-wing demonstrations could be similarly halted.

Bans on Front marches could have the effect of demobilising the growing support for anti-fascist activities within the labour movement. The anti-fascist vanguard might understand the need to police a ban, but thousands of trade unionists who could be won to stop a provocative march (Tameside here we come) would rely on the state to do the job for them. A ban which is a response to mass mobilisations and is seen as such by the workers movement is, however, a different matter. That is clearly what is happening in Tameside, but even here we should maintain a full alert to enforce the ban from below. Secondly we should make it clear that we will not accept any bans on anti-fascists as we've already demonstrated at Duckett's Common.

In other words, we cannot be opposed to bans against fascists on principle, but we must combat those who would make such bans the central thrust of fighting fascism. This necessitates building the broadest possible united front and the SWP comrades should explain how they justify counterposing the building of a revolutionary party to constructing a united front against fascism.

MICK GOSLING (London Organiser, IMG)

Sabotage at Sandersons Union official throws out strike supporters

THE LONG-RUNNING strike at Sandersons forklift factory in Skegness continues. Like similar disputes the strike suffers from lack of publicity and the cynical apathy of the trade union bureaucracy. MARTIN SHAW of the Hull Socialist Alliance reports on the latest manoeuvres of TGWU officialdom.



The assistant air-traffic controllers' strike continues to bite. 40 per cent of scheduled flights are now cancelled at Heathrow every day. Last week the 25 clerical staff at the Civil Aviation Authority headquarters came out on indefinite strike in support of the assistant controllers. The photograph shows a unanimous vote for continuing the strike at a meeting of 250 assistant controllers at West Drayton, near Heathrow, last Friday.

DAVID CAIRNS, TGWU No. 10 Regional Secretary, last week went one step worse in his attempt to keep the Sanderson's strikers isolated. In front of the strikers' representatives, he threw out one-third of the trade unionists who had come to a meeting in Hull to support the strikers — simply for not being members of the TGWU.

The 43 workers at Sanderson's, Skegness, have been out for union recognition for four and a half months, following the

sacking of their convenor Phil Gillat. The dispute bears all the marks of a 'Northern Grunwick' — ACAS has ruled in favour of the strikers and Sanderson is every bit as vicious and reactionary as George Ward. The main difference is that Skegness is a seaside town miles from any strong centre of trade unionism. The strikers, harassed by Sanderson and abused in the area, are desperately short of money, support on the picket line, and publicity.

Profile of a demagogue

Sanderson's workers are not the first victims of David Cairns since he took over as TGWU boss in Hull three years ago. The man is typical of the union official who talks left and acts right. He brings to it, however, his own special style.

The first experience most workers had of Cairns was during the Imperial Typewriters sit-in in 1975. Cairns was full of talk of 'socialism'. He clearly saw himself in quite a grandiose role, although his favourite phrase was, 'I'm no Jimmy Reid'. If he said it once, he said it a dozen times: so often in fact that most people understood that it was Reid-style charisma

that he wanted to project.

Well, when Jimmy Reid had finished at UCS there were still some jobs left; David Cairns at Imperials ended up with none. Beneath the rhetoric he had two guiding rules: don't do anything which might actually force the Government and the employers to save jobs; and particularly, don't mobilise any active support for the sit-in from other sections of workers. It ended up in negotiations for a workers' cooperative with a financier who even Cairns finally denounced as a charlatan. Cairns claimed he was let down — but not half so badly as the Imperials workers, some of whom are still on the dole.

Some of the main support they have had has been from rank and file TGWU members in Hull, where Region 10 is based. They have organised special meetings of shop stewards in Hull, open to other trade unionists willing to help the strikers' cause. In the case of the latest meeting, prominent TGWU lay members, such as Tony Fee (Secretary of Hull Trades Council), had encouraged all active supporters of the Sandersons workers to attend.

Cairns, who, unlike the rank and file of his union, has not been noticeably energetic in supporting the Sanderson's strikers, clearly came along to damp things down. He treated the militants present to a long-winded, emotional and highly political diatribe, the gist of which was that 'sometimes we have to admit we're beat', and that activity should be strictly limited to raising money for the workers.

Then when a non-TGWU delegate, Keith Russell of Hull Socialist Alliance, who has been very active in support of the strike, criticised Cairns for mak-

ing a 'cynical' speech, Cairns demanded that all non-TGWU members leave. If they didn't, he would — the message being that we could forget about his official backing for the Sandersons workers.

Cairns railroaded his position through, despite the protests of TGWU members like Tony Fee and Bryan Wilson who have organised the Hull support for Sandersons. Several TGWU members also walked out in anger and disgust. What was of the meeting, predictably, produced nothing concrete for the strikers.

Let us ask this question of Cairns: How would you feel after 4½ months on strike, when you urgently needed all the support you could get, if you saw your official chucking out — for reasons of politics and personal pride — a good number of the people who are giving you back-

Sanderson's workers still welcome any money: send to Phil Gillat, 27 Lady Matilda's Drive, Winthorpe, Skegness, Lincs. Tel. 0754 3512.

Cairns next hit the headlines in March 1977 when he led a move for a one-day General Strike in the city to demand development area status for Hull. The Trades Council organised meetings of 500 shop stewards which supported its line of opposition to Government policies on unemployment, cuts, pay, etc., to mobilise for the stoppage.

What happened? Well after Cairns had gone on TV, all hull of himself, to say that '40 to 50,000 people' would be on the streets of Hull, pressure was mounted. The Hull Daily Mail carried story after story for a week, claiming that development area status was on the way; Labour politicians said, don't rock the boat. Officials from other unions were quick to pick up the same line. Within a week Cairns himself was telling his stewards to call it off: aid

was round the corner he said. Development status was finally given — coincidentally just before the local elections, but unemployment continues to rise in Hull.

There are only two possible views of Cairns's action. One, which is most popular on the left, is that he was part of a cynical plot to arouse popular interest in Labour's development area 'achievement', and gain the unions part of the credit. The other is that Cairns had once again allowed his visions of grandeur to get the better of him, but soon stepped back into line with his mates among the officials and Labour politicians.

Cairns is full of the moral language of socialism, but he has no time for fighting socialist policies, and he positively hates socialist activists. The workers of Hull and Eastern England have indeed been warned.

Occupation drama ends

by JIM BRADY

BY THE time you read this the occupation at the University Theatre in Newcastle will be over. Equity's governing council has declared the occupation to be 'in abeyance', secured guarantees from the liquidator, and intends to sign a 13-week lease for the theatre.

The occupation committee, led by the Workers Revolutionary Party, argued consistently that the occupation should not be lifted until such time as written guarantees were obtained for the re-opening of the theatre with a full repertory company and attached theatre in education team.

Last week the committee, with no dissenting voices, reversed its position on this question and agreed to abide by the Equity Council's policy.

From the earliest days of the occupation, which began in July, the committee has capitulated in the face of threats from the right-wing Equity leadership. When the occupying forces re-

opened the theatre, the Equity bureaucrats ordered it to be closed — and it was. The committee was instructed not to make public statements concerning the occupation. This instruction was complied with.

No serious attempt was made to confront the Council. Attempts to raise the question of control over the resources and the content of the work to be produced in the theatre met with hostility from the Council and the occupation committee.

Newcastle Trades Council is said to be seeking discussions with Equity regarding labour movement involvement in the future of the theatre. Many local trade unionists who supported the occupation will not be satisfied with a return to the status quo — a theatre for the privileged few in which many of the productions were anti-working class and re-inforced bourgeois values.

JIM BRADY is a member of the Road Gang Show, based in Newcastle, and one of the occupiers of the University Theatre.

Why all the bosses are sweating

by RONAN BRADY

MERCHANT BANKERS are sweating profusely. The City's reserves of shoe leather are dwindling, and the word 'crisis' is on every millionaire's lips. The reason: Mulliner Park Ward, the body builders for Rolls Royce, has been on strike since 9 September.

The 600 skilled production workers are claiming a 17 per cent increase (within the 12-month rule) against an 8 per cent offer from Rolls Royce. They feel particularly aggrieved as they have followed stages one and two and their sick pay amounts to a derisory £3.75 per week and that

after the first two weeks. Situated in Willesden besides the Cobbold Road Grunwick plant, the workers at MPW have in the past been extremely generous financially on the Grunwick strike front. Now that they are in need of donations, they hope they will receive similar support.

They don't, however, expect any help from Ashraf Pablavi, sister of the Shah of Iran, although she owes her life to her bullet-proof Rolls built at MPW. The wage packets of Rolls Royce workers don't quite have the same protection.

Donations to: Ron Buck, 2 Lucas Avenue, Harrow, Middlesex.



Socialist teachers to plan offensive

The Socialist Teachers' Alliance will be turning its attention to the burning need for united action with other left forces in the National Union of Teachers at its first annual general meeting, to be held on 1 and 2 October.

The fight on cuts, union democracy, wages, the Tyndale campaign — as well as women's rights and the fight against racism — will all be issues under debate.

The STA was formed out of an open conference of left-wing teachers less than a year ago. Since then, it has grown to 225 members, with organised supporters groups in London, Manchester, Bristol, Nottingham, Leeds and Hull. There are individual supporters throughout the country. The alliance is organised on a

democratic basis, with members from different political tendencies and views represented on its National Coordinating Committee.

Where teachers have engaged in struggles, the union's executive has either attacked them outright — as the Little Ilford teachers found out when they were suspended from the union for taking unofficial strike action — or it has refused to defend them. The isolation of the William Tyndale teachers is a case in point.

Where the union leadership has moved in response to rank and file pressure, it has tried to confine the struggle to the locality. The Oxford strike action, for example, was called off when the important guarantee of no redundancies was won from the local authority.

But the original cause of the dispute — the NUT conference

resolution to reduce class sizes — has not been resolved, and teachers are continuing to refuse to cover for teachers who are off on an area by area basis.

With the abject failure of the union leadership, the AGM of the Socialist Teachers' Alliance will be discussing a follow up to the successful campaign run in the Inner London Teachers Association elections earlier this year. The STA has always stressed that it does not constitute the left. That's why the AGM will discuss how to unite in action with the SWP led Rank and File grouping, and other left forces, on specific issues as well as in election campaigns.

STA AGM, NUFFO Hall, Jockeys Field, London WC1. 11am, 1-2 October. Further details from: STA Convenor, 23 Kenilworth Gardens, London SE18.

How the money will be allocated can be decided by the determination of the labour movement in the area. Campaigning and staff working-in at the Hounslow Hospital will be demanding that it is used to keep the hospital open.

The AHA will do all in its power to row divisions in the community and labour movement. The best way to prevent this is to campaign for the immediate restoration of all services and to demand a cash injection in the NHS throughout the area so that proper care can be provided for the whole community.

CAMPAINING BY the labour movement in Hounslow has forced the area health authority to release £500,000 of its reserves to the Hounslow district. Thanks to its overly enthusiastic implementation of the Government's cuts, the authority has 'discovered' that finances do exist, now that the opposition to its cuts has become widespread.

The AHA is on the run. But the real million it has come up with is a drop in the ocean if health services are to be improved and not just maintained.

Just out! The latest issue of Socialist Teacher, journal of the Socialist Teachers Alliance, has articles on discipline, wages, Tyndale, sexism and more. Only 30p plus postage from: Top Flat, 13 Bloomfield Road, London N6.



DAVID ROSS wields some power in the National Union of Journalists. A former father of the chapel at the *Daily Express*, he was recently elected chairperson of the union's Central London branch, embracing practically all Fleet Street journalists. In the wake of the Street of Shame's contribution to the upsurge in racism last year, Ross paid a visit to a meeting of Book branch, in which militants are relatively as numerous as the right-wingers among Ross's own flock.

It was not a courtesy call. On the agenda was a proposed code of conduct complaint against Michael Cummings. His crime: a viciously racist cartoon that had appeared in the *Sunday Express*. Ross (who happens to be a contributor to *Tribune*) did not mince his words:

"Push through this complaint or others like it," he advised the branch, "and the national executive will eventually uphold one or other of them. If the member is fined, he won't pay it, and he will have the full support of his chapel."

"You will tear the union apart," Ross generously warned. The branch voted with two abstentions to support the complaint. The *Express* chapel voted unanimously to defend Cummings. The result of the complaint is pending.

Rumours of an organisational split in the NUJ regularly fill the columns of the newspaper trade press, accompanied by a fanfare of editorial trumpets. In the wings squats the super-professional Institute of Journalists, a bastion of the proprietors' and editors' press freedom, with the distinction of never having called a strike in its 100-year history while routinely scabbing on the NUJ's.

In the union a right-wing group has just been launched, subtly entitled 'Allied Journalists Against Xtremism'. Needless to say, it is not the extremism of the media bosses they have in mind, but primarily the battle for the post-entry closed shop which the ruling class and its acolytes deem (with some reason) to threaten their tyranny of the columns and air waves.

POTENTIAL THREAT

The threat is a potential one. Fleet Street journalists together with those who staff the newsrooms of the national broadcasting networks have long enjoyed the industrial benefits of virtual closed shops, while dutifully delivering the editorial goods.

But the provincial and local press are another matter. Here journalists' pay compares unfavourably with that in other professional jobs and extremely badly with that of the manual and technical workers in the media. A job on a national paper was once the carrot to keep the provincials quiet, but Fleet Street's economic crisis has largely put paid to that. And over the past ten years a steady stream of radicalised graduates has begun to fill the reports' and sub-editors' desks outside the metropolitan press.

The result has been mounting militancy over pay and conditions in the provinces — a militancy which has inevitably meant that journalists have increasingly found themselves rubbing shoulders with the labour movement. That makes it a little less easy to wield the hatchets beloved of Fleet Street's hacks.

Racism, as David Ross appreciated, is proving to be a central issue on which journalists outside the ranks of the far left are starting to break in practice from the dogma of 'neutrality' which pervades the liberal bourgeois media. A growing number are prepared to take sides against racism and fascism, and are determined that this is reflected in the editorial columns.

As the Campaign Against Racism in the Media (CARM) records in its pamphlet *In Black and White: Racist Reporting and How to Fight It*, much of the local press plays a prominent part in reinforcing racist attitudes. Yet over the past few months a string of local papers have produced anti-fascist material that would grace the pages of the socialist press. No 'objective' nonsense about 'fair play' to all sides. No mealy-mouthed liberalism about the 'extremes being as bad as each other'.

DUNG HEAP

We are dealing, of course, with merely the tip of a gigantic dung heap. With only occasional exceptions, the mass media in Britain stoically advance a view of society which snugly fits the interests of those who profit from it, shading their editorial standpoints to address either our rulers themselves or the social democracy which serves to buffer them.

In the main, the media laud the *status quo* and lash out at everything that socialists fight for, whether it be the rights of women, blacks and gays, the Grunwick mass pickets, the rights of the Irish people to self-determination, a workers' solution to the crisis, or the advancement of revolution on a global scale.

While it would be absurd to argue that the mass media only reflect the views of a



A travesty of press freedom

by GEOFFREY SHERIDAN

and the struggle for the real thing



The press barons plead [with some justification] that the National Union of Journalists' battle for the closed shop — now focussed on the Darlington strike [top] — threatens their monopoly of press freedom. What they fear is more of the kind of coverage journalists on the East Ender and other local papers are now producing against racism.

While the union leaders have been doing their best to sell out the Darlington strike against Westminster Press, chapel officers in the National Graphical Association voted last weekend to remain on strike in support of the journalists, and the NUJ Executive voted 10 to 9 to reject mediation on any basis other than the right to a 100 per cent closed shop.

Margaret Thatcher or Jim Callaghan, it is undeniable that on the crucial issues of the day the millions whose views are to the left of centre of the Labour Party rarely find a representative voice in the press, TV or radio. Unlike the French and Italian Communist Parties, British social democracy has not had a daily paper since the *Daily Herald* ceased to exist. Though even the *Herald*, financed by the unions, backed right wing social-democratic policies, which largely explains its precipitate decline.

Mass distribution of information and opinion in Britain is a virtual monopoly of a few capitalist concerns. Three corporations — IPC, part of Reed International; News International; and Beaverbrook, now owned by Trafalgar House — control 64 per cent of total daily newspaper circulation, and a massive 94 per cent of the popular dailies. In the provinces a monopoly exists in all but three towns and cities. For good measure, a handful of wholesale distributors ensure that only approved newspapers and magazines reach the retail outlets.

Advertising welds a direct link between the press barons and their chums in the City. Without the ads, the cover price of the *Financial Times* would have to increase five fold; that of the *Daily Mirror* three fold.

Commercial TV and radio feeds (and,

unlike much of the national press, hand-somely profits) off the same table. Yet the fact that the 'independent' BBC is, if anything, even more right wing than its straight-forwardly capitalist rivals attests to the merits of Special Branch scrutiny of job applicants, the art of self-censorship, and the suffocation of an omniscient bureaucracy.

The labour movement is by no means blind to this travesty of press freedom. Few workers in struggle regard the mass media's coverage of their action with anything but contempt. That the majority then revert to a decidedly less critical frame of reference is another plus for social democracy. But union conferences rarely pass without bricks being chucked at the press gang.

SOCIAL CONTRACT

The labour leaders have their own grievances. While the Government and TUC have had solid support from the mass media for maintaining the Social Contract, the editorial weighting in favour of the Tory Party and the frequent attacks on individual union leaders ensure a general hostility on the part of the labour bureaucracy. The TUC General Council told the Royal Commission on the Press: "The fact that eight men control

90 per cent of Britain's papers means that the concept of "freedom of expression or independence of editorial" is somewhat Orwellian."

The main planks of the TUC's policy, in line with those of the Labour Party, call for: 'A continuous check on the ownership and control (of the media) to prevent any further concentration ... and actively to promote (its) dispersion'; the setting up of a National Finance Corporation, which would deduct a levy from all advertising revenue and lease printing plant to representative interest groups with the capacity to sustain a major publishing venture; a continuous monitoring of all media output, to check distortions, etc., and the capacity 'to redress any lack of balance'.

Although individuals such as Bill Keys, general secretary of the print union SOGAT, have done some quiet campaigning lately for the setting up of a labour movement mass daily, and the local government union NALGO has produced detailed proposals for a media monitoring operation to be carried out by the movement itself, the TUC's programme has remained placidly on paper. The labour leaders — for all their demagogic denunciations of Murdoch & Co — are doubtless aware that they risk disturbing a hornets' nest.

One problem is that too much talk of

press freedom could jeopardise their own private fiefdoms of editorial control. The trade union journals, which do reach masses, are for the most part crude mouthpieces for the bureaucracies, in which such fundamental aspects of workers' democracy as open debate and the right of reply are conspicuously absent. As it happens the NUJ is one of the few unions to regularly elect the editor of its journal, whose first achievement was to secure the right to report executive meetings.

Neither the TUC nor the leaderships of the print unions have any stomach for rank and file action to deal with press lies, distortion, or suppression. Such action by print workers on a dozen occasions in recent years has understandably petrified the press barons, who have demonstrated their love for press freedom by stopping the presses rather than allow a right of reply to reactionary attacks.

Needless to say, print workers are under immense pressure to refrain from editorial intervention, and can be fined by their union for acting in breach of an agreement signed in the aftermath of the General Strike. The strike had been superficially sparked off by the objection of workers in the *Daily Mail's* machine room to a leading article headed 'For King and Country'.

In any mass upsurge, control of the means for mass communication becomes a major battle front. The 'National Association for Freedom' already boasts that it has the means to publish a national daily in the event of a Fleet Street shut-down, and we can be quite certain that military preparations have been made to safeguard BBC studios and installations.

REPUBLICA

But depriving the bourgeoisie — or indeed any part of the workers' movement — of its propaganda machine can only be justified where this is turned to actively promoting violence against the working class. In all other circumstances the objective must be to secure adequate communication facilities for all organisations and tendencies within the workers' movement and among oppressed people. This is a fundamental aspect of socialist democracy, and to falter on this path is to lay the basis for confusion and division among the forces that can be won to the side of revolution, as the experience of *Republica* in Portugal demonstrated.

Even more than the printed media, broadcasting is a crucial weapon in the hands of whichever class has the use of it. It offers, through phone links, a truly mass forum for debate, and can play a critical role in the coordination of struggle — at a fraction of the cost involved in publishing and distributing newspapers. It is no accident that in Italy, where a quirk in the law has allowed numerous left groups to establish radio stations, it was the part played by Radio Alice in mobilising for a street battle in Bologna that led to its immediate seizure by the police.

In Britain, the 'air piracy' laws have so far ensured that the bourgeoisie has a total monopoly of the air waves, short of occasional intrusions by pop 'pirates'. The labour movement here has been slow to appreciate the potential of broadcasting, and entirely conservative in its demands. The use of the fourth TV channel by the labour movement; community radio and TV stations in every town; and the automatic right of reply on existing networks should be our minimum demands.

TECHNOLOGY

Developments in technology are now transforming the production of printed media, with the juicy prospects for their capitalist owners of greatly enhancing their profits by decimating the labour force. While the print workers and journalists have rejected the job sell-out deal cooked up by the bosses and union bureaucracies, they have not advanced any effective alternative. Yet the demand for work-sharing with no loss of pay; and the use of the expanded print capacity by labour movement and community papers would unite the interests of workers in the industry with those who suffer its products.

The fight against the Social Contract and the struggle against racism are the issues on which the workers' movement presently finds itself under the heaviest assault by the media moguls. And it is on these issues in particular that an increasing number of media workers take exception to the products they turn out. This, above all, explains why the press barons are in a frenzy over the journalists' closed shop, while they had nothing to say on the question prior to the Industrial Relations Act when the law provided precisely what NUJ members are now striking for.

GEOFFREY SHERIDAN is on the staff of Socialist Challenge, secretary of the Campaign Against Racism in the Media, and a recent member of the NUJ's Free-lance Industrial Council.

The Terror Act strikes again Irish activists raided in Kent and Dundee

At its founding conference last November, one of the positions which the Student Movement Campaign on Ireland adopted was for the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the ending of police harassment of both the Irish community and of Irish solidarity activists. In the past few weeks some of the Campaign's supporters have gained unwelcome direct experience of what they are fighting. AILEAN O'CALLAGHAN reports.

Among those who have been subjected to raids and constant police surveillance is the Student Movement Campaign's national secretary, Pamela Holmes.

But the full terror of the PTA has been reserved for a local Irish activist and Mineworkers' Union member Ken Driver. He was picked up on 25 August and is being held on remand — possibly for another six months. For a fortnight he was not allowed to see anyone but his Special Branch interrogators.

DEFENCE

The night Ken was arrested, Pamela Holmes' bedroom was broken into by plain clothed and uniformed police at 4am. Documents and private papers were taken without a receipt, and the cops told her that Driver had been picked up.

Pamela and the local student campaign supporters immediately took responsibility for organising Ken's defence. Ringing up the police station to check on his condition, a supporter was told: 'We have ways of dealing with people like you'.

What has emerged since that ominous beginning is that police harassment has been extended to everyone involved and known to associate with the local campaign. Special Branch is known to have photographed people carrying on such subversive ac-

tivities as shopping at the local co-op, and private mail has been consistently intercepted or tampered with.

Some of the students, including Lawrence Cooway, a member of Kent University's student union executive, have been followed around by plain clothed cops, who have not bothered unduly to hide what they are doing. That one of the police officers involved has

just finished a three-year course at Kent University is a 'tribute' to the efficiency of the surveillance operation and the excellent record of Irish solidarity activists at the university.

Reports of similar harassment have been received from Dundee in Scotland. On 8 September Dundee police raided the homes of two local socialists, claiming they were investigating a break-in at a chemist shop. In both cases they departed when they found leaflets advertising a meeting on Ireland scheduled for that evening. Nothing else was taken.

Curiously enough the chemist shop supposedly involved knew nothing of any break-in. One of those raided was a former soldier, discharged after being disciplined for refusing to obey orders.



Labour defies European Rights Court

The Labour Government is doing everything in its power — even breaking its own rules — to sabotage the efforts of Irish political prisoners in this country to bring cases against Britain in the European Commission of Human Rights.

Last week the Irish Times revealed that prison governors have been instructed in a confidential Home Office circular to read all correspondence between solicitors and the thirty Irish prisoners taking cases to the European Court for Human Rights.

This circular is in defiance of a specific prison rule brought into effect five years ago to protect legal correspondence. Prison rule 37A(1) states that letters between prisoners and legal advisers in connection with legal proceedings shall not be stopped and read.

Now the secret Home Office instructions say that governors must open and read all letters between the prisoners and their solicitors concerned with their European cases.

Ironically, by interfering with this correspondence, the Government is blatantly defying the European Court's own rules — thereby presenting the Irish pris-

oners with another case for Strasbourg.

Such attacks on the human rights of Irish people, both in Britain and in the North of Ireland, are being gathered by the organisers of the proposed International Tribunal on British Crimes Against the Irish People. The Tribunal, which is due to take place next year, intends to put Britain in the dock for its Irish war crimes.

The planning committee of the tribunal has already established contact with organisations in the USA, Spain, Norway, Holland, and France in an attempt to win international backing for the trials.

Transport House blocks Party democracy

from the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy

SIXTEEN CONSTITUENCY party delegates to next month's Labour Party Conference have protested to the secretary of its conference arrangements committee, following reported moves to postpone a conference decision on the re-selection of Labour MPs.

75 constituency parties have made the call for automatic re-selection conferences the subject of their annual resolution. Now they understand from Transport House that there will be an official recommendation for conference to take no decision and refer the matter to the party executive.

The angry delegates point out that conference has been prevented from considering re-selection since 1974, while the National Executive Committee has debated it several times. They say conference must be allowed to take an immediate decision on a proposal demanded by one in five resolutions submitted.

If they do not receive satisfaction, they intend to call on the conference to reject the official agenda. This move would be likely to receive strong backing from unions such as the Engineers and Public Employees, whose own resolutions have been ruled out of order by the conference arrangements committee.

Socialist school on Ireland

The International Marxist Group is to hold a weekend school on Ireland on 15-16 October. A number of international speakers will be attending the school, including Bernadette McAliskey (Devlin) and Brendan Kelly from the Movement for a Socialist Republic (Irish section, Fourth International).

The school will be primarily for IMG members, but there is a limited number of places

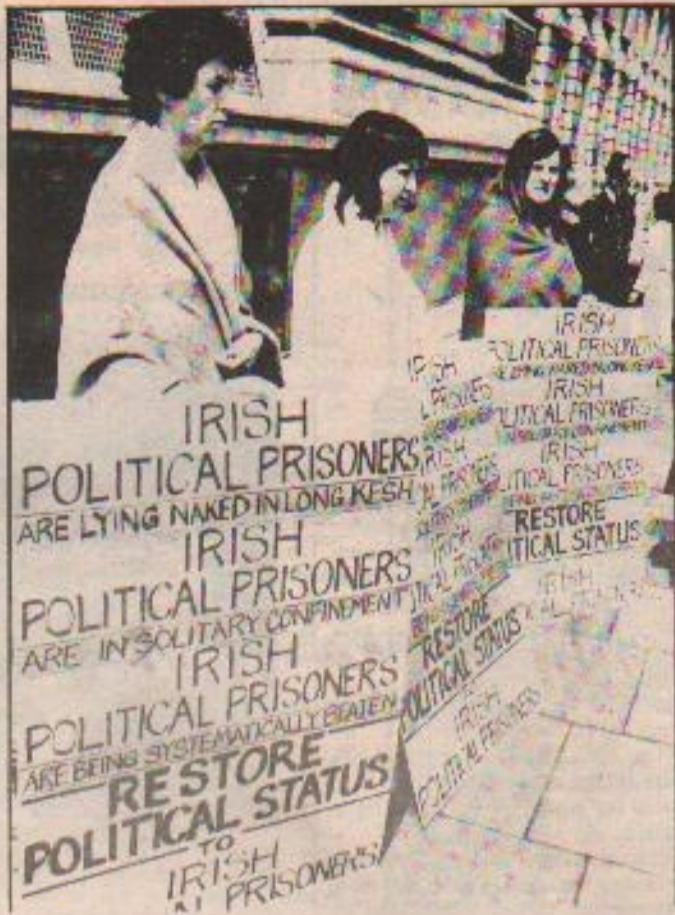
for Socialist Challenge supporters. It will feature sessions on permanent revolution in Ireland, Republicanism, Ireland and the British revolution, and the 'Two nations theory'.

Those wishing to attend the school, which will be held in London, should contact: C Smith, Box 50, Upper Street, London N1. There will be a registration fee of £1.



BREATHLESS END TO JOURNALISTS' SHOOT-OUT

NEARLY 150 journalists from as far away as Abergavenny in the west and Stoke to the north accepted the Army's invitation for a day out on sub machine guns, self-loading rifles, and pistols at a Press shoot on Kingsbury Ranges, near Birmingham.



What's Left

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

MIDLANDS Socialist Feminist Conference: 'Feminism, Sexuality and Abortion' Saturday, 15 October, 10am-8pm, Lanchester Polytechnic, Coventry. Registration £1; students and claimants 75p. Cheques payable to Socialist Feminist Group, c/o Carolyn Pickering, 37 Gavelston Road, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.

MERseyside Workers Action supporters meeting on 'The question of Left Unity'. Guest speaker Sean Malgamna. On Wednesday 26 September at Paddy Doyle's Bar, The Triton, Paradise St., Liverpool 1, commencing 7.45pm.

BETTER for gypsy children. 8,000 have no schooling. Picket DES, York Road, from 4.00 on 22 Sept. to 1.00 on 23 Sept. when there will be a demo.

SWEDISH comrade seeks room in London 27 September-25 October. Please reply with details of tent and location to Birgitte Sandström-Lagerantz, Svarfensgatan 6111, S-116 26 Stockholm, Sweden.

CRITIQUE Conference: 'The 60th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution and the World Crisis'. Speakers: Georges Haupt, Ernest Mandel, Hillet Tukin, Fernando Claudin, and Andre Gunder Frank. Oct. 21-23. Registration £2.50. Further information from The Secretary, Critique, 31 Cleveland Road, Glasgow, G12 0PH. Tel: 041-339-5267; or Critique Office, 8 Polane Street, London W1. Tel: 01-734-3457.

WOMEN in Manual Trades National Meeting. Women working in construction, or as mechanics, gardeners, printers etc., or interested in doing so, contact Women in Manual Trades, c/o Tess McMahon, 16 Sholebrooke Ave, Leeds 7. (Leeds 629427 evgs.)

TO ALL NALGO members in London. Conference to unite against pay restraint and public service cuts. Sat. 24 Sept. 10am, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC2. All NALGO members welcome.

BROADSIDE Mobile Workers' Theatre requires administrator (full-time). Must be socialist, long term commitment. Phone: 01-450 6952/01-730 8396. Write to: 58 Holborn House, Holborn Place, London EC1.

WOMENS FIGHT, paper of the Working Women's Charter Campaign. First issue out now. New issue at end of September. Contact WWC, 1a Camberwell Grove, London SE5.

LONDON accommodation wanted. Socialist moving from Glasgow seeks room in flat or house. Phone Alan Freeman: 041-332 8728 or (work) 041-339 8855 ext. 7120.

MOBILISING material for NAC demo 29 October. Leaflets, posters (2p each), plus new NAC News (5p or 4p for bulk orders). Available from NAC, 30 Camden Road, London NW1, tel. 01 485 4303.

INTERNATIONAL solidarity meetings commemorating the first anniversary of ending of political status — including Besse country, France, USA. London meeting organised by Prisoners Welfare Group: Fri 23 Sept, 7.30pm at Roebuck, Tottenham Court Road. Speakers from: Relatives Action Ctee (Belfast), Prisoners Welfare Group, PAPTA, Tribunal on British War Crimes.

CAMPAIGN for Free Speech on Ireland is now researching a study of media coverage of the Irish question. Please send any information, including personal experiences, to the Campaign at: c/o 84 Claverton Street, London SW1. All information will be treated in strictest confidence and all contributors consulted before publication.

COVENTRY'S Labour movement. History workshop on work, shop stewards and politics. 29-30 October. Details from WEA, 81 Berkeley Rd., Coventry.

NATIONAL conference on 15 October to discuss and coordinate the defence of Gay News and of gays generally against the backlash. To be held at Birmingham Gay Community Centre, 9-10 Bordesley St., Digbeth. Tel 021-643 7885. Starts 11am.

WEDGE readers' meeting. Other Cinema, Tottenham St. W1. Sat 24 Sept 2.00-8.00. All readers, potential helpers and contributors welcome to discuss the first issue and the direction of the magazine.

LOBBY LABOUR conference to demand abortion rights. Assembly: Conference Centre, Kings Road (between piers) 5 October, 12 noon, Brighton. London departure point: coaches leaving Hudson Place, Victoria at 10.00. Price: £1.50. For further details and booking contact: Astrid Lever, 57 Trinity Rd., London N2 8JL.

HACKNEY Socialist Teachers Alliance meeting: increasing state intervention in the control of our schools. Speaker: Ian Hextall, Goldsmith College of Education, contributor to Society, State and Schooling. Tues 27 Sept, 5.30, Dalston Library, 24 Dalston Lane E8.

Support this rank and file conference

Seven thousand Merseyside dockers decided at their mass meeting last Sunday to accept a 5 per cent increase under Phase 2 of the Social Contract, and at the same time rejected a productivity scheme which the management claimed would give them 48 per cent increases. Dennis Kelly, chairperson of the Merseyside docks stewards committee, said that this was because they had to fall in line with other ports in the country.

'Had there been an unofficial strike I am sure that Liverpool would have supported it,' he said.

That sentiment sums up the feeling in the rank and file today. The union leaders are taking advantage of the lack of any national lead and focus for workers wishing to fight to restore their living standards.

The Engineering Union Executive rejected a call to bring the National Committee meeting forward, and it will now not be meeting until 14 November. Gormley is trying to manoeuvre the miners into negotiating on a productivity deal to divert them from their claim for a £135 basic wage. Jack Jones has been busily insisting that despite the Transport workers' vote against the 12-month rule at the TUC, his union would 'not be going on the rampage' to restore living standards.

The Communist Party's industrial organiser, Bert Ramelson, correctly summed up the problem in the *Morning Star* last Monday. He said that the extent to which the trade union movement would fight to defend the interests of its members would depend on the extent to which the initiative was taken by the rank and file.

However Ramelson's calls for rank and file action are not enough. It is necessary to begin to organise the rank and file, to centralise its activity, and allow its full strength to be felt and exercised in united action. Ramelson and the Communist — still reeling with shock after their life-long ally, Scanlon, definitively put his name down in the history of the TUC as Scanlon — remains paralysed and offer no initiative to do this.

A call which can go a long way towards this has come, however, from the Rank and File Organising Committee. They have called for a conference on 26 November around the slogan 'No to the 12-month rule.' *Socialist Challenge* calls on all its supporters to build this conference, to fight for labour movement bodies to send delegates, and have meetings to discuss resolutions which can plan united action to defend living standards.

Furthermore this must be turned into a democratic conference of all the rank and file — and for that reason the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions should jointly sponsor the conference to promote the maximum united action around:

- ...Rejection of the 12 month rule and 10 per cent norm
- ...Against the cash limits system and productivity dealing
- ...Support for all workers in struggle, particularly the Grunwick strikers
- ...For shop stewards conferences locally to prepare the fight around wage claims

WEST MIDLANDS

REGIONAL PUBLIC SECTOR SHOP STEWARDS CONFERENCE

SATURDAY 15 OCTOBER

10am Digbeth Civic Hall, Digbeth, Birmingham.

First National Rank and File

BUILDING WORKER CONFERENCE

Saturday, 1 October, Noon—5pm

National Union of Railwaymen's Hall, Euston Road, London NW1.

For credentials, copies of *Building Worker* No 8, policy statement, accommodation, write to: Building Worker, 19 Red Post Hill, London SE24. Tel: 01-733 8443.

'We need conferences like this everywhere'

by
PATRICK SIKORSKI



THE FLOODGATES will be opened for massive redundancies in the public sector when the Labour Government announces its January round of public spending cuts. Through the system of cash limits, which takes no account of the effects of inflation on public spending, Callaghan will seek to honour his pledge to Britain's bosses to 'hold the line' against wage claims submitted by the lowest paid section of organised workers in Britain — manual workers in the public sector.

The TUC in Blackpool, while voting against a £50 minimum wage, did decide to support these workers and others who in the course of their wage claims run into the cash limit trap. The claims decided on by these workers at their summer union conferences threaten to do just that. That's why the trade union leaders are now backing down.

PATRICK SIKORSKI, a hospital shop steward in Birmingham, exposes their backpedalling and tells how local ancillary workers are fighting back.

Our pay negotiations are an annual farce conducted every November at a safe distance from the rank and file. The first act was played out last week, when union leaders met to consider their joint claim to the employers.

Wage negotiations for manual

workers, as with millions of other low paid workers, are carried out through Whitley councils. These councils, comprised of employers and trade union leaders, were set up by Winston Churchill in the 1920's to 'protect' the weakly organised.

As with other aspects of the great man's work, their effect is just the opposite. Union leaders on the 'staff' side of the Ancillary Whitley Council first of all agree among themselves on the lowest possible claim from each of their union conferences. Then they negotiate away most of that when they meet the Government. The rest of the Whitley councils then follow suite, finishing up with the nurses and midwives in April of the following year.

But times are changing. The steady growth of a shop stewards movement among ancillary workers means that for the first time the rank and file can begin to organise to have their say.

In Birmingham, stewards representing porters on the national Union of Public Employees, the Transport and General Workers Union, and the Confederation of Health Service Employees met at the beginning of September to work out a pay claim to unite all ancillary workers.

This was what they came up with:

- *£55 per week minimum wage.
- *Full consolidation of Phase 1 and Phase 2 payments into the basic rate.
- *Threshold payments to compensate for inflation.
- *35-hour week.
- *5 weeks annual leave.

Though the meeting was initially called for porters only, this sort of claim was felt to be able to unite all ancillary workers. So a conference will be called in Birmingham next month with the aim of broadening support for the policy across the public sector in the West Midlands by calling a Regional Public Sector Shop Stewards Conference.

The NUPE Pay Action Group in Birmingham has already swung its weight behind the conference. The group, backed by NUPE social services, health service, and water authority branches will be putting out 15,000 copies of a broad sheet backing the conference.

Moves will be made at the conference to establish a West Midlands Public Sector Pay Committee.

We know that we will not be alone in the fight for organisation behind the pay claim. While union officials seem to welcome such organisation at the rank and file level, their intention is to confine it to a show a force to strengthen the arm of the negotiators. But it is becoming obvious that a fight for pay will be a fight against the cash limits system.

The Government will not budge an inch as the result of negotiations. Holding the line in the public sector is part of the united front they have made with the private sector employers.

It's up to public sector workers to show that our claim is a blow for the low paid, an attack on the cuts, and the beginning of a fight to break up the CBI-Labour Government pact.

flashpoints

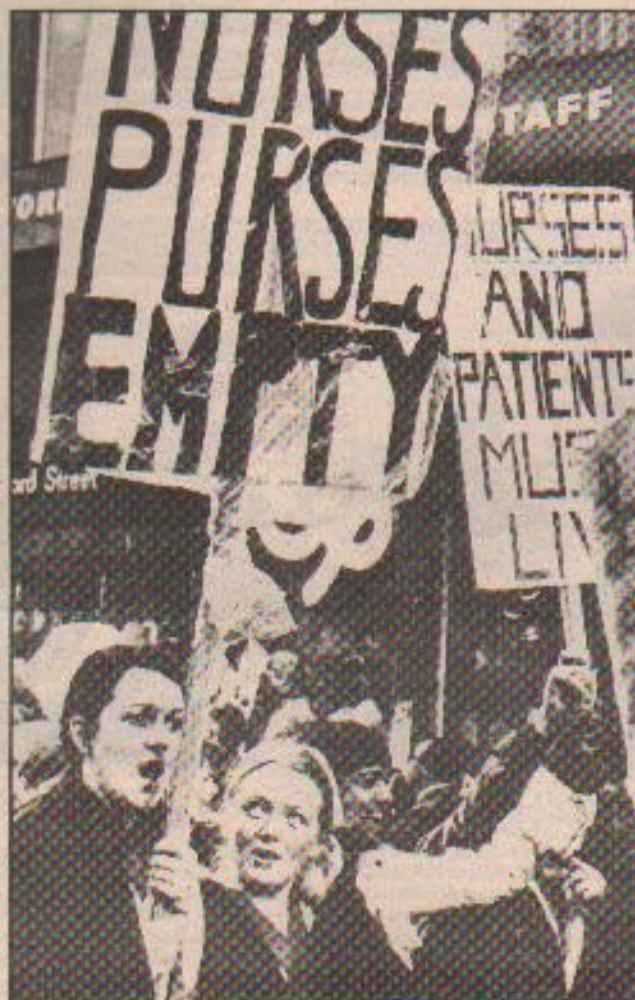
Cash Limits

CASH LIMITS are the corner stone on which the whole of Callaghan's incomes policy rests. These limits are the amount of cash any council, nationalised industry, or government department, is allocated — irrespective of any increased need in services or increased costs. That's how Labour has imposed £3,500m of cuts this year alone.

The CBI has demanded that no increase over 10 per cent be paid to public sector workers. The Liberals have announced that they will vote to bring down the Government if any settlements are made over that figure.

If a claim even near the target of a £60 minimum wage that was voted for by the NUPE conference is submitted by local authority workers, the Government will say there is no money. It will say that if the claim is met thousands will have to be sacked and services cut back even further. The system is designed to isolate and defeat the seven million workers in the public sector.

That's why the TUC decision to oppose the cash limits system must be implemented. This system is a threat to jobs, services, and the unity of the working class. Replace them with the right for a £50 minimum wage and automatic increases in public expenditure to compensate for the effects of inflation.



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No productivity dealing here!

With complete disregard for union democracy the NUM national negotiating committee decided, at a meeting on Monday, by 8 votes to 4 to continue negotiating a productivity scheme.

Only last July the NUM conference rejected productivity dealing and instead called for the union to seek a £135 basic wage by November 1977.

Also on Monday the negotiating committee decided to 'examine for interpretation' their mandate on the £135 claim, so putting off any fight for the claim until negotiations on the incentive scheme are complete.

Gormley said after the meeting 'inevitably' a good incentive scheme (by which he means one

that will put a little money in the miners pockets every week) would lead to a rethink on the basic wage claim.

Amongst other items on the table were calls from right wing pits to have a ballot of the membership to overturn conference decisions — something Mondays meeting did not take up, preferring to wait until after they have a better offer from the NCB for an incentive scheme.

In an effort to bolster this, the press is full of rumours of an

average £20 increase for miners if they accept locally negotiated productivity deals. Emyln Williams, President of the South Wales NUM, told *Socialist Challenge* why he opposed a ballot on productivity dealing.

'As far as we are concerned it's a return to piecework, and a means of contracting out of the obligation of the union to fight for the £135 basic wage. Britain's coalfields always had piece-work up until 1966, when as a result of the rank and file pressure they introduced the National Power Loading Agreement, which meant that every miner had the same rate for the job.

'An incentive bonus payment now would destroy the structure that was established by our forefathers. And it means, of course, that the Coal Board and the Government will be prepared to spend millions in order to destroy the unity of the NUM by introducing incentive bonuses that would vary from area to area or from pit to pit. We would lose our unity then.

'There's been a lot of press talk about £20. I'm opposed to the principle — if it were £50 I'd still oppose it.

Williams argues that a fight for the £135 basic wage is the alternative way forward for miners. 'I think it's the only positive way that trade unionists can fight, he says, for basic wages and not incentive bonuses.'

However much money the Coal Board dangles as a carrot to get the miners to go for an incentive scheme, two things are certain. Any locally negotiated productivity deal would destroy the unity of the miners around national bargaining. And any productivity deal will mean an increased workload, fewer jobs and a boost to accident rates in the mines.

Earlier last week Arthur Scargill also advised the miners to press ahead with the £135 claim regardless of the TUC decisions. It is now up to the more militant areas of the NUM to lead the way in rejecting any discussion over incentive schemes, and instead launching a fight around the pay claim.

flashpoints

Productivity dealing

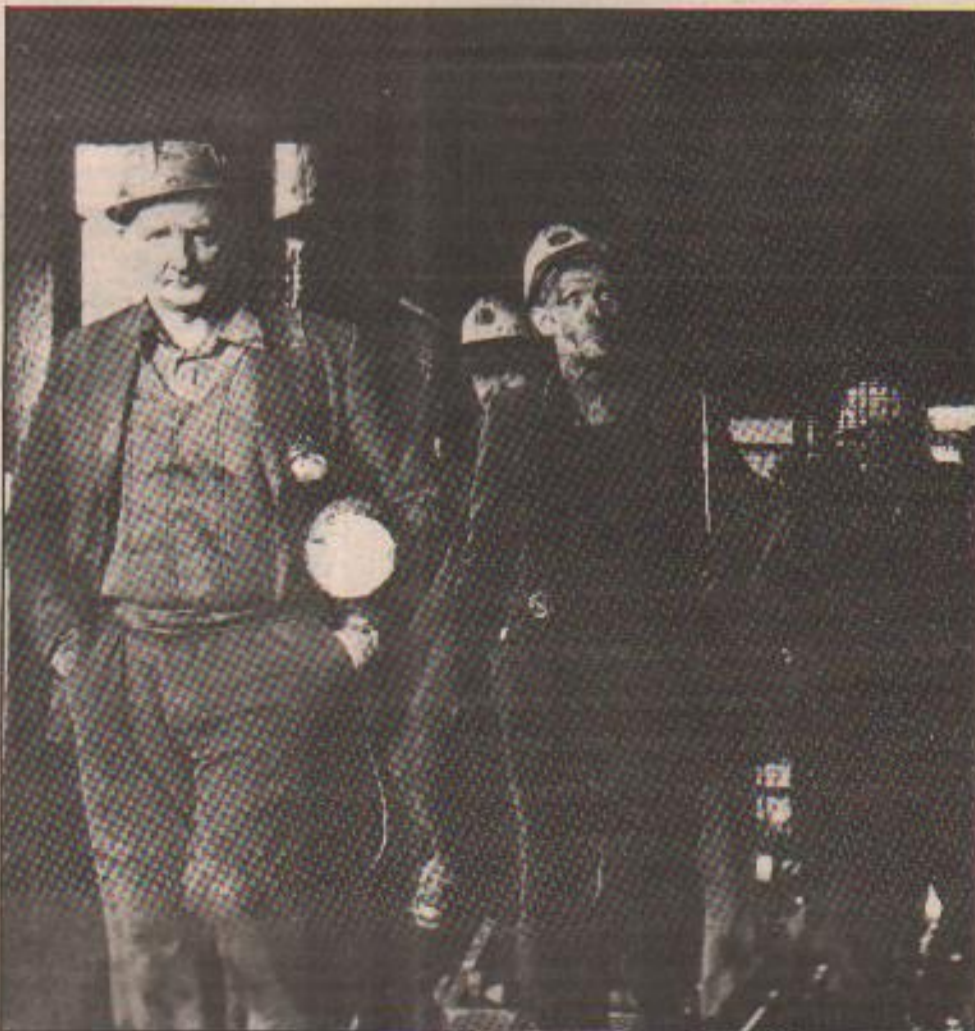
THE GOVERNMENT's only concession on its 10 per cent pay norm is to swap increases in wages for increased productivity. Once again every trade unionist will be confronted with this old weapon in the employers' armoury.

It was the 1966 Labour Government under Harold Wilson which first made productivity dealing a central part of its wages offensive. The target was the shop stewards movement which had won major wage gains in the 1950s.

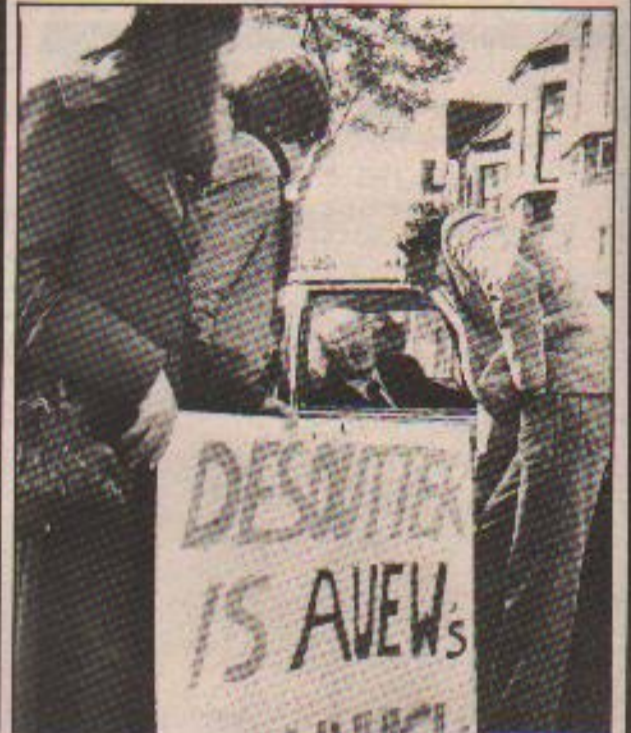
Though devices like measured day work in the car industry, management with Government support attempted to jack up production with little increase in labour costs. The unity of the shop floor was threatened by attempts to increase mobility of labour on the shop floor, continually shifting around militant stewards and sections.

Today these aspects of productivity dealing remain as dangerous as ever. But the effect on production is different. The depth of the economic crisis in Britain means that bosses are unwilling to produce more at the going rate of profit. So increased productivity means sacking.

The whole labour movement is committed to oppose unemployment. That's why it has to throw out productivity deals as well. The alternative is the fight for a 35-hour week as the first step to work-sharing with no loss of pay.



Desoutters mass picket called 13 October



STRIKERS at the Dessouter factory in North London lobbied the AUEW executive last Thursday in an attempt to get the union to step up support for their 20 week strike for union recognition. However the executive refused to back the strike committee's call for the rest of the union to boycott Dessouter supplies and products. The strikers are going ahead and planning action of their own by calling a mass picket outside the plant on 13 October.

Lucas workers not defeated

by JOHN GRAHAM

ANGRY toolmakers stewards from the Lucas plants in Birmingham have demanded to meet Hugh Scanlon and Terry Duffy after the full details of the deal which ended their 10-week strike were disclosed last week.

Management claimed that Duffy, the right-wing candidate for the AUEW presidency, agreed that the £3 bonus rise, which was narrowly accepted by a 5-4 majority, will be the last such bonus payment for six years. In addition, the £3 will be met from a self-financing productivity scheme which includes the non-replacement of labour, covering more than one job at once and other speed-up methods.

Another part of the deal was a lump payment of £150. Far from the lay-offs resulting from the strike damping down militancy among production workers in Lucas, they have now lodged their own claim for £150 compensation. An immediate work-to rule in pursuit of the claim was imposed in the Shaftmoor Lance and Cannock factories before they met Lucas management on Monday.

The work to rule has seized up the flow of the majority of supplies which Leyland needs so urgently.

The background to this militancy is the fact that 10,000 Lucas production workers have still not concluded a Phase 2 settlement which is now four months overdue.

flashpoints

The blacklist and the 10pc norm

GOVERNMENT expenditure is also being used to police the private sector through the vast buying power that the State possesses in industry. The plan is to threaten workers who win increases over the limit with withdrawal of contracts. The employers, hiding a smile, will turn to the workers with hands outstretched asking: 'What can I do?' The answer should come loud and clear: 'Pay us what you owe us!'

To bow to the Government's blackmail, or keep it secret, as some shop stewards have done, is a recipe for isolation and defeat. The alternative is to launch a campaign in the trade union movement against Government intimidation and Healey's 'blacklist'. All order books of companies should be opened to the workforce so that they know in advance the type of pressure which the Government will exert on the workforce if the claim is won.

A joint fight for wage claims which make up for loss of earnings under the last two years of incomes policy is the best way of tackling Healey's 'toe the line or face the sack' threat. After all, the Government can't cancel all its orders from industry!

'For a black man to enter jail is almost like entering a grave'

by CHRIS O'BRIEN

'FOR A black man to enter jail is almost like entering a grave.' Chief Gatshu Buthelezi's reaction to the death of Steve Biko, the black consciousness leader, sums up the response of the tens of thousands of blacks who have come out in protest at the murder.

'We don't really concentrate on the particular individual,' Thandisizwe Mazibuko, secretary general of the Black People's Convention said. 'We are not taking Steve's death as an isolated incident. It is just part of what is happening throughout South Africa.' It didn't escape anyone's attention that Biko is the twentieth black to have died in detention since March last year.

Donald Woods, a friend of Biko's, poured scorn on the official story that he had starved himself to death. He revealed that Biko had said that if he was reported to have starved Woods would know it was a lie.

Reaction from the imperialist capitals showed that even there it was felt that South Africa had overstepped the mark. The British Government was 'profoundly distressed' and Andrew Young, Cyrus Vance and Dick Clark, of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, all pre-

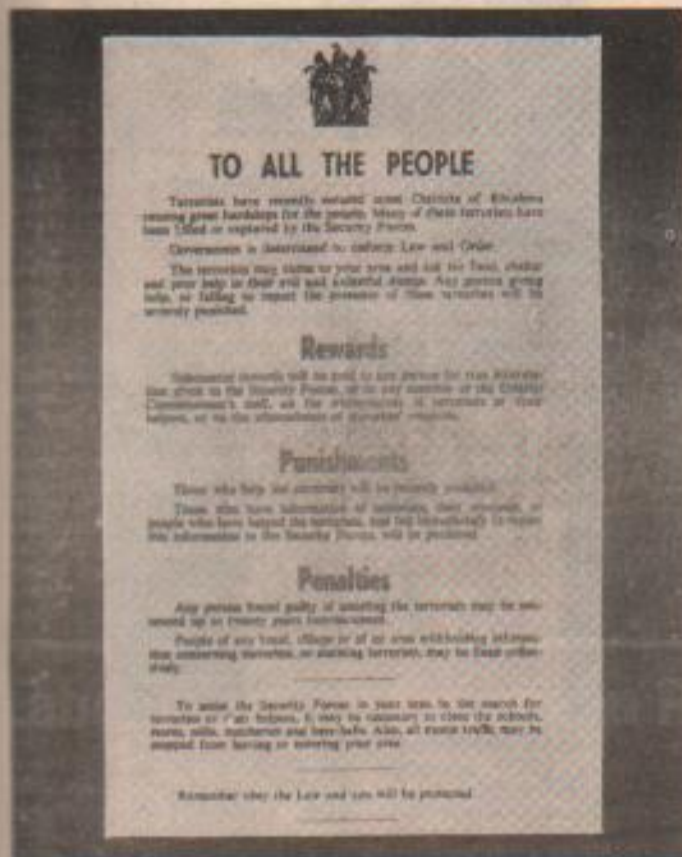
sent glowing eulogies to Biko.

The hypocrisy from the governments who keep the apartheid regime in power was sickening, and Young's comparison of Biko to John F. Kennedy is particularly insulting, but it was still rather revealing of imperialist policy in southern Africa.

More than 600 Soweto deaths didn't cause these 'human rights' campaigners to lose a moment's sleep. But things have changed in the past year. The project of a neo-colonial southern Africa (with the apartheid bunker left untouched) means that the neo-colonial leaders — and potential leaders — in the region have to be convinced of imperialism's concern for black interests.

Perhaps most interesting is the swift about-turn by the obnoxious James Kruger, South African Minister of 'Justice'. The immediate response was the routine one: 1200 protestors were arrested and Kruger backed up the police account of Biko's death, specifically denying the need for an inquiry.

Now his tone has changed. He suddenly declares his complete innocence, calls for an inquiry and threatens that 'heads may roll'. Probably Kruger knew what was happening all along and no doubt any inquiry will be a whitewash. But it is a rare crack in the stony facade of the South African state.



Who will police the Owen-Young plan? Ian Smith's torturers

If the Owen-Young plan for Zimbabwe were implemented, much of the responsibility for policing the 'transition' would lie with the present Rhodesian security forces, which makes this an opportune moment to look at how those forces work in practice.

The author of this article, BRIDGET PARSONS, did not go to Rhodesia as a supporter of the nationalist guerillas. She was sent by the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to a school near the Mozambique border. She was later pinpointed by the security forces as a guerilla supporter, denied further work and forced to leave the country earlier this year.

IT IS WELL known that a guerilla campaign cannot succeed without the support of the majority of the people and it was with this in mind that the Rhodesian Government launched its campaign of 'winning the hearts and minds' of the African population.

In the words of a member of the psychological action unit (Psyac): 'our aim is to create such a feeling of terror that people will not dare support the terrorists.' The speaker clearly did not realise that his own words condemned him as the terrorist.

Since it is from the schools that most liberation army recruits volunteers, Psyac has concentrated its efforts here. Groups tour the schools giving 'anti-terr' talks and offering rewards to children

who report on the activities of their village.

Essay competitions are held on such topics as 'What I would do if my father fed a terrorist'. On one such occasion a seven-year-old boy was tortured by being burnt with cigarettes to force him to disclose more of his father's night time activities. The child subsequently fled to Mozambique.

Mutilated bodies are dragged into the school ground behind a vehicle and then pulled around the compound by a piece of rope or by the hair. The students are told 'this is what will happen to you if you join the terrorists'.

A girl told me of a case in her school when they propped up the body outside the dining hall and forced the whole school to

file past. Their faces were pushed right into the face of the dead youth — and then they had to go in and eat their dinner. The body was that of an ex-member of the school and so known to many of the students. The girl who recounted this to me was still suffering severely from such a horrifying experience.

Another method is the showing of brutally violent films — both at schools and in villages where the whole community is forced to view them, including very young children. A typical film includes the tracking of a group of freedom fighters by security forces using a hyena. The hyena is let loose on the wounded body of one man and is seen ripping the body apart and then eating it.

Whether such things actually occur or whether they are for propaganda purposes only is irrelevant. One can imagine the effect they have on a dark night on people who are not used to seeing violence on television or film.

IN CASE YOU NEED THEM

After a 'kill' the dead bodies are not treated with even the minimal respect. They are wrapped in plastic and then dangled from helicopters which fly low over the villages.

In March I was told of seven 11-year-old children who were shot on their way home from school. The soldiers said they were taking food to the terrorists. The bodies were flown, hanging from a helicopter, to a nearby town. Seven times the helicopters passed over the children's homes. The parents were then told to come and collect their bodies. I saw no report of this in the press; presumably it was covered by the usual phrase: 'killed running with terrorists'.

The tactics used by Psyac are crude and based on the assumption that the people support the guerillas out of fear. They seem to believe that by creating a greater fear they can force people to support the security forces. Since this assumption is wrong

they are meeting with little success.

The people readily identify with the freedom fighters — not hard since they are often local boys returned home — and see them as the only way independence can be won. The truth is that people dread meeting a Rhodesian soldier whereas guerillas are referred to in affectionate terms as 'the boys'.

The first freedom fighters who move into an area get to know the people, living with them and finding out about their problems. They soon know who is not to be trusted, which Europeans have a bad reputation, which shops overcharge and so on. They help the people to identify the ills of their society and to begin to think about the society they would like to build.

It is at this point that some people begin to talk about 'communist terrorists' imposing an alien culture on the people. Yet the freedom fighters are welcomed home as long lost relatives. Because of their time outside the country they are able to articulate the grievances of the community and to inspire a new hope of freedom.

When a 'contact' is made between Rhodesian forces and a group of guerillas the troops radio for reinforcements and surround the area. Helicopters are flown in and shoot at anything that moves. The obvious reaction of women and children working on the fields is to run when half a dozen choppers fly over. So they are killed. One minister estimated that over a hundred of his congregation had been killed in this manner.

After such a contact no prisoners are taken unless they are wanted for questioning. The same minister described the way he saw one prisoner treated. The man had both kneecaps shot off to prevent him from escaping. He was covered from head to foot in sacking and then hung with heavy chains. He was beaten with a club. Two days later when the minister went back the prisoner was still there, having received no medical attention.

Another instance of the treat-

ment of prisoners is as follows: the prisoners were laid on the ground with their legs up over the log and their testicles secured to the ground with bayonets so they could not escape.

The brutality and murder of the security forces can be large scale or it can be carried to the level of petty spite, as in the following case. Africans travelling into the Tribal Trust Lands are not allowed to carry anything edible, since it may be food for terrorists. Buses are stopped and searched, and all food has to be eaten there and then.

Whenever any action is taken by the guerillas the local community is immediately suspected. For instance the store near our school was burnt. The next day the soldiers took away six of the men from the village.

Those who came back told of how they were tortured: kept in deep pits in the ground with inadequate food or clothing; beaten; electric shocks applied to the genitals and other parts of

the body. They tortured one young boy so much that he told them what they wanted to know — that his father had fed the guerillas. On this admission the father was sentenced to eight years in prison.

The charge was false, and the boy, distressed at having to give false evidence, fled to Mozambique with a number of other children from the village.

The methods of the security forces may deter some people from helping the boys but they certainly do not win any positive support for Smith. It is for this reason that I think that talk of the 'man in the middle' can be misleading, since it implies that the ordinary person is caught between two equally unpleasant forces.

The fact is that the long-silent masses have now spoken. They have voted by their actions for the freedom fighters. Western diplomats should take note when they continue to talk of so-called 'peaceful settlements'.

TUC and South Africa

THE TUC passed the following motion at Congress:

'This Congress deplores the harassment, intimidation and imprisonment of trade unionists in South Africa.

'Recognising that the winning of trade union rights in South Africa is an important part of the fight against apartheid, Congress calls upon the General Council and affiliated unions to bring pressure to bear on British parent companies to persuade them to insist that their South African subsidiaries give full trade union

rights of recognition and negotiation to all workers.

'Congress reaffirms its policy on South Africa and welcomes the decisions of the Second International Trade Union Conference for Action Against Apartheid (Geneva June 1977) in particular the call for active participation in an international week of solidarity with the people of Southern Africa.

'Congress urges the General Council to work closely with the South African Congress of Trade Unions to win full trade union rights in South Africa.'

the Leveller

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The Schleyer affair Fleet Street cover-up

If you thought our accusations of a Fleet Street conspiracy of silence on the history of Hans Martin Schleyer were fanciful, the events of the last week have proved you wrong. RICHARD CARVER reports the Fleet Street reaction (or lack of it) to our front page story last week.

Our revelations of the prominent role played by the kidnapped businessman in Nazifying the universities of Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, his leading position in the Association of Industries in Prague and his personal friendship with Goebbels were circulated to all the national papers and the London evening papers.

With one exception no-one mentioned a word about our story. For example, we contacted an individual member of the editorial staff of *The Guardian*, who expressed interest in the story. But nothing ever got into print.

'BLACK FILES'

The exception was the London *Evening Standard*, which report-

ed that we had run the Schleyer story, but without mentioning any of the details. It then implied that we were 'blessed with inspired links from the black files of the East Germans' and claimed that 'the only British institution which documents the pasts of German figures, the Wiener Library, has nothing damning on Schleyer.'

Yet, when I contacted the Wiener Library they confirmed three very important parts of our story: that Schleyer was head of the *Reichsstudienwerk* in Innsbruck; that from 1941-45 he was a prominent member of the Association for Industries in Prague; and that he was a member of the SS. We happen to know that the Wiener Library gave the same information to the *Standard*. So why did they lie?



MIR: 'Unity of all popular forces'

On 15 August 1977 the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left) of Chile celebrated its 12th anniversary. Some members of the MIR in Britain explain the history of their organisation.

The MIR was born in 1965 amidst a growing economic crisis, an accelerated deterioration of the living standards of the working class, the bankruptcy of the populist policies of the Christian Democratic Frei regime and the incapacity of the traditional left to generate a clear alternative for power.

The MIR sought to form the nucleus of a revolutionary alternative for Chile. It was influenced by the new developments of the socialist camp, the intensification of ideological struggle in the international socialist movement and the example of the victorious Cuban Revolution.

Inspired by the advance of the revolutionary struggle in other continents, the MIR sought creatively to reintroduce a revolutionary policy which has been progressively forgotten through bureaucratic and reformist practices.

Involved at the beginning in internal tasks of organisation and elaboration of its political line, the MIR was soon forced to go into clandestinity because of the repressive measures adopted by Eduardo Frei's Government in 1968/69. From clandestinity it started to take its first steps towards insertion in the mass movement, simultaneously initiating an intensive and productive ideological struggle with the other sectors of the Chilean left.

It was during the pre-revolutionary period of the Popular Unity, after regaining its legality, that the MIR consolidated its position, which already was substantial among the Chilean working class. From outside the Popular Unity the MIR sought to strengthen the independent organisation of the working class and develop Popular Power as an alternative to the weakness of the reformist policies.

It constantly argued the necessity of an offensive against those who were preparing a coup and

denounced those who blindly refused to see that the only way out of this situation was to place confidence in the people and not in fragile alliances which were only confusing and betraying their struggle. The only way to have avoided the bloody outcome was to have united the left and the people, strengthen their organisations and create dual power.

Since 11 September 1973, the Chilean working class and people have heroically resisted Pinochet's military dictatorship; hundreds and thousands have been massacred, tortured and imprisoned. Despite the savage defeat, decades of struggle have taught the workers of Chile the capacity for prolonged resistance.

Celebrating its 12th Anniversary under the conditions imposed by the counter revolution in Chile, the MIR renews its commitment to support and organise the popular movement, pushing forward the resistance and calling for the unity of all the popular and anti-dictatorial forces in the Political Front of the Resistance.

Only in this way can the Chilean people create more favourable conditions for the achievement of their final objective — a free and socialist Chile.

On the fourth anniversary of the military coup, we remember and render homage to those who have given their lives in the struggle against the dictatorship, to those who are in the torture centres, concentration camps and to the disappeared prisoners.

In 12 years of political life, which have seen the continual intensification of the class struggle, culminating in today's conditions imposed by the counter-revolution, the history of the MIR has been one of permanent maturation, growth and untiring commitment to the cause of the Chilean people and the Continental Revolution.

Shah's sister escapes death The thin, frail heroin smuggler

THE SHAH of Iran's twin sister, Ashraf Pahlavi, narrowly escaped death last week in the South of France.

She was returning to her villa in Juan-les-Pins from a casino in Cannes at 4am when her Rolls Royce was forced off the road and attacked by three armed men. Another woman in the car was killed and Ashraf's gigolo,

Amir Eremadian, was injured, but she escaped unharmed.

Ashraf is one of the richest and most powerful individuals in Iran. Probably her most important mission as Shah's envoy took place in 1953 when she met CIA chiefs in St Moritz and planned the military coup which overthrew the nationalist Prime

Minister Mossadegh and resulted in the murder, execution and imprisonment of thousands of communists, nationalists and trade unionists.

The press referred to her as a 'thin, frail lady', but no mention was made of the fact that this same 'thin frail lady' once had a newspaper publisher burnt alive in front of her because he had criticised her decadent lifestyle in his paper.

Her role in the UN Human Rights Commission was a big point in Fleet Street's eulogies last week. But it says a lot more about the irrelevance of this body than her concern about human rights. The press didn't mention that she represents a regime with one of the worst records on human rights in the world.

As for their description of her as a 'feminist campaigner', this is a massive insult to the international women's movement. Among the assorted heads of state who responded to her appeal during International Women's Year were such impeccable feminists as General Pinochet of Chile, and her appearance at the UN conference on women last year provoked a walk-out by a number of delegations.

SUITCASES

The press was keen to mention her 'concern' for social welfare in Iran, but not a word was said about one of her other major interests — international drug trafficking. On at least two occasions in Geneva and Paris, Ashraf has been caught by customs officials with suitcases full of heroin. On both occasions diplomatic pressure has saved her from prosecution. Meanwhile hundreds of people have been shot in Iran over the last few years for alleged possession of heroin and other narcotics.

The attack is likely to lead to a wave of indiscriminate repression against Iranian oppositionists living in France and possibly elsewhere in Europe. After the attempted killing of a SAVAK agent in Paris last year, the French authorities deported a number of Iranian oppositionists and charged two others who are still awaiting trial, without a scrap of evidence against them.

If such repression does start again the strongest possible international solidarity must be built up to prevent further victimisation of Iranians in France.



In Brief

ITALY: The Communist Party is abandoning any strict reference to Marxism and Leninism in its constitution. Lucio Lombardo-Radice, a leading party member, explained: 'Article 5 of our constitution which requires members to adhere to Marxist-Leninist principles, is like a dead branch, it is necessary to cut it off to avoid misunderstandings.' Asked if the party could still be considered Marxist, he added: 'I understand the objection. But it is preferable to say this is a party that grew out of Marx.'

COLOMBIA: Last week's one-day general strike left 40 dead and many injured after the intervention of the security forces. A dusk-to-dawn curfew was imposed on the capital and army patrols searched cars and pedestrians.

SPAIN: The editor of *El País*, a liberal daily, is to be prosecuted for publishing an article on contraception which had originally appeared in the *Sunday Times*. It is the first such prosecution since 1966. The editor, Juan Luis Cebrian, could face a two-month jail sentence.

ETHIOPIA: The ruling military junta, the Derg, has moved against the Meison, a left-wing group which had been a political and ideological mainstay of the military regime. The Derg accused the Meison of responsibility for initiating the bloody purges against oppositionists. Meison leaders have been forced to go underground to avoid arrest and death.

SAHARA: Moroccan and Mauritanian prisoners displayed to journalists by the Polisario, the Saharan liberation organisation, said that their armies were militarily incapable of continuing their occupation of the Western Sahara. They gave details of heavy casualties in personnel and equipment suffered by the occupying armies.

AUSTRALIA: The Australian Council of Trade Unions biennial congress has called for a 12 month moratorium and referendum on uranium mining and sales. ACTU president Bob Hawke said: 'I wish the bloody stuff had never been found'. There is speculation that the Government may seek a December election on the twin issues of uranium and union militancy.

LEBANON: Walid Jumblatt, the leftist leader, last week joined forces with the Baath party to form a 'national front'. The agreement was carried out under the auspices of the Syrian Baath party.



USSR: Oskar Rabin, the leading unofficial painter, was last week jailed for one and a half days for vagrancy. He has been responsible for organising unofficial exhibitions and recently had his work exhibited in London.

EAST GERMANY: The Minister of Security has echoed the charge of the head of the Soviet KGB that dissidents are agents of Western imperialism. This follows the attempt by the *Evening Standard* to brand us as East German agents (see separate article). Sometimes you just can't win.

French Common Programme bust-up

DisUnion of the Left

Last week's talks on the renewal of the Common Programme of the French Union of the Left broke down in confusion. We spoke to ALAIN KRIVINE, a central leader of the LCR (French section of the Fourth International) and editor of its daily paper, *Rouge*.

FRENCH political gastronomes have had plenty to whet their appetite this summer. Starting with Communist Party leader Georges Marchais' return from holiday in late July a furious dialogue of the deaf was launched in the Paris dailies *Le Monde* and *Le Matin*.

The subject was the renewal of the Common Programme. The protagonists were the major partners — the Socialist and Communist Parties.

But the break-up of last week's meeting was a coup by the faceless Robert Fabre, leader of the Left Radicals, and distinctly junior partner in the electoral bloc. This has launched a new debate between the Left Radicals and the Communist Party (PCF). Socialist Party leader François Mitterrand is proclaiming himself above these 'petty disputes' and refusing to debate either side.

We asked Alain Krivine what lies behind this public rift. 'It is a rift, yes. But we should not regard it as a rupture. The Left Radicals' coup has been provoked for one main reason. From the inception of the Union of the Left, the political role of the Left Radicals has been zero.

They did not sign the Common Programme when it was first published. They added their signatures later with a small appendix stating they still believed in private property. Since then they have played no role in the Union, dominated as it is by the Socialist Party (PS) and the PCF.

Why did they choose this particular moment to strike? 'Because elections are near. First they want to tell the ruling class: "Don't ignore us. We're fighting for capitalism within the Union."

'Secondly they want to pressurise the PS to give them some seats. Under French law you need 30 MPs to be recognised as a parliamentary group. The Left Radicals are desperate to get this recognition, so they are making a big public fuss.

'There is an additional reason. Fabre is in a minority on the national leadership of his organisation. The majority constantly taunts him for his failure to gain anything and claim that they will be politically obliterated. However, that would happen if they walked out of the Union as well, since the Gaullist currents would smash them. So they'll reach a compromise.'

they have moved to the left. They have added many things to the Common Programme. They have included three more nationalisations: steel, Peugeot-Citroen and petrol. They have raised the minimum wage from 2,200 francs to 2,400; they have called for a reduction in salaries. In this fashion the PCF tells the workers that they, and they alone, are the authentic workers party in France.

Their two slogans of the day are "We refuse austerity today and we

refuse left-austerity tomorrow" and "we refuse to give a blank cheque to Mitterrand and the PS" — this incidentally was Lutte Ouvrière's demand on them! So there is a very clear differentiation from the Italian Communist Party (PCI), which both calls for austerity and gives a blank cheque to the *Christian Democrats*, but what will this mean in practice?

'It means that the PCF realised that its relationship with the working class was weakening and that



ALAIN KRIVINE

This coup is a bid to snatch attention from the major debate between the two large parties. The most bizarre development has been the unveiling of the PCF's new nuclear line. The party has come out in favour of the French nuclear deterrent — a novel way of settling differences with Moscow!

The PS maintains its call for a referendum on the issue and has the backing of a cluster of ecologist groups. While apparently out of line with the rest of its policies, the PCF's defence position has the virtue of distinguishing it from the PS. And this, Krivine explains, is what is uppermost in their minds.

'Well, the PCF has been losing electorally to the PS. Its working class support was beginning to be denied. The PCF leaders realised that it was tactically better to outflank the PS from the left than from the right, for the PCF's central project is to win over the PS's working class supporters.

On the level of propaganda

they had to distinguish themselves programmatically from the PS. Their propaganda, unlike the PCI's, is directed towards the working class. For the time being the middle layers and middle class have disappeared from their vocabulary.

'What they really want is guarantees in advance from the PS in relation to Government ministries and implantation within the state apparatus. Once they get these they will make concessions during the negotiations.'

But have the public divergences seriously threatened the possibility of a Union of the Left victory in next year's elections? 'It's a complex question, though it seems simple. The Left Radicals' coup is good for all three parties individually but bad for the Union of the Left.

'It's good for the Left Radicals because they can say they're fighting the reds.

'It's good for the PCF because it is used by them to strengthen their links with the working class. When it does capitulate it will be in the interests of a broader unity, but it, and it alone, will defend the working class within that unity.'

BONAPARTE

'It's good for the PS because it enables Mitterrand to pose as a Bonaparte, an arbiter between the right and the left, an upholder of responsible government.

'It's bad for the Union because it weakens it politically. The LCR has stated in the last elections that it would not vote for the Left Radicals in the Union of the Left slate. We were right, even if the centrists said we were indulging in nit-picking.

'We now demand as before that the Left Radicals be booted out of the Union and the PS and PCF take the offensive.'



MITTERRAND: posing as a Bonaparte.

Spanish Far Left

OIC: top of the second division

The Organisation of the Communist Left [OIC] is top of the second division of the Spanish far left. Substantially smaller than the three organisations we have discussed in previous weeks and the Trotskyist LCR, it is nevertheless a real force within the workers movement.

RICHARD CARVER looks at the organisation which has fraternal links with the Socialist Workers Party in Britain.



TOMAS ECHAVE: 'The OIC puts forward a councilist policy as the application of Leninist principles to the present development of the productive forces.'

Politics in Spain is a far more geographical business than in Britain. By which I mean that it is possible for quite a large organisation to be almost entirely regionally based, with very little national presence.

The OIC is a perfect example. Years of patient work have established a thorough working class implantation in several towns — Vitoria, Valladolid, Valencia — for an organisation which has hardly any national political impact. But the OIC is worthy of discussion, if only because it is the largest revolutionary group in Spain outside the Fourth International.

It is also one of the youngest of the far left parties. Only formally established in 1974, the OIC grew out of a series of 'councilist' groups, the Anti-Capitalist Platforms, and their political counterpart, the Communist Worker's Nuclei.

Tomas Echave, an OIC leader, explains how the OIC still retains its councilist orientation: 'We are

Marxist-Leninists of a councilist character. I'll explain. The OIC puts forward a councilist policy as the application of Leninist principles to the present development of the productive forces, that is, the proletariat of the Spanish state.'

The original 'council communists' were the ultra-leftists of the early Communist International, who were vigorously criticised by Lenin. For the OIC councilism means the formation of revolutionary groupings within the working class which form the basis for all day-to-day activity. Theoretically, they substitute for trade unions, as well as for the need for united action with the reformist parties and their supporters.

Leninists see workers councils, the nucleus of the new workers state, as things which develop in pre-revolutionary and revolutionary crises as the culmination of the united action of the working class, not tied to any particular party or revolutionary



The OIC's conception of councils tied to a revolutionary position is only an extreme development of the past positions of Avanguardia Operaia in Italy.

And it mirrors exactly the line of the PRP (BR) in Portugal who set up 'councils' tied to the party. This led to a disastrous mis-estimation of the strength of the working class that has now passed into history with the defeat of 25 November 1975.

But the OIC is more flexible than its Portuguese counterparts and less sectarian than its Italian and British co-thinkers. In practice it has found it impossible to avoid working in the trade unions.

Instead of simply raising the slogan of 'A United Working Class Union' it has been forced to fight for it inside the Workers Commissions. The day-to-day problems faced by its many worker militants, and possibly

the good influence of the SWP, have contributed to this rethink, though the OIC has yet to make the necessary theoretical adjustments.

During the election campaign the OIC was prepared to run a joint slate with the Trotskyists of the LCR, though the balance sheet of that experience was far from positive. It was agreed that what was needed was not a 'movement of Popular Unity' of the type proposed by the Communist Movement (MC), but a propaganda campaign around an action programme of demands for the struggle of the working class in the coming months.

There were problems agreeing on such a programme. The OIC disagreed with the LCR's call for Constituent Assemblies in the nationalities. Instead they argued for a 'Soviet Constituent Assembly'. This was a refusal to admit the possibility of the working class winning further democratic rights under capitalism. It denies that there is any specific oppression of the nations of the Spanish state, by postponing any resolution of their problems to such a time as soviets are permanently structured among the working class.

WOMEN

Their position on women's oppression was similar. From the correct assumption that sexual oppression flows out of class society they draw the conclusion that there is no need for any women's movement autonomous of the labour movement itself. And of course there were big differences on the question of trade union work.

Finally the OIC was prepared to endorse the LCR's position on women and the national question, but no agreement could be reached on the trade unions. So the Front for Workers Unity (FUT) went into the elections with no positions on that question. This was to prove a fatal weakness.

Other problems arose too. The OIC was overtaken with the bizarre electoral pretensions which had engulfed most of the rest of the far left. They anticipated at least four deputies from their party alone, and their rallying cry in Vitoria became 'Echave to Madrid!'

Then, at the end of the campaign, came the final irony. The OIC announced its intention of turning the FUT into a 'movement of popular anti-capitalist unity'. So, sure enough,

the OIC left the FUT and went off for talks with the MC.

Now the OIC is further away from the LCR than it has been for a long time, but it is unlikely that it will be sucked down the same reformist drain as the MC. Although the Fourth International has many differences with the OIC — differences which will have to be resolved in practice — it is unlikely that any regroupment of Spanish revolutionaries will take place without it.

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A Painter of our Time

JOHN BERGER'S first novel, *A Painter of Our Time*, first published in 1958, was reissued last year by the Writers and Readers Cooperative (hardback, £2.95, paper 85p). In part because it was suppressed soon after it first appeared, *A Painter* has not yet received the recognition it deserves.

A Painter of Our Time tells the story of Janos Lavin, artist, communist, emigre, and Hungarian. Berger tells us that after the overthrow of the Hungarian Soviet of 1919, Lavin was forced to leave Hungary for Prague. Then in his early twenties, he began painting seriously for the first time. In 1938, the Nazis compelled him to flee from Berlin. He left his work behind. After crossing the Channel—the 'rubicon for a European refugee'—he married Diana, an English woman, settled in London, and continued working as a painter.

The novel opens with Lavin's disappearance soon after the private view of his first commercially-successful exhibition at the influential Malvern Gallery, in October, 1956. His friend and protagonist, a socialist art critic called John, visits the abandoned studio where he finds a diary which Lavin had kept, intermittently, since 1952. The rest of the novel is presented as this 'found' text, interspersed with the narrator's commentary.

The diary reveals that as the Hungarian crisis of 1956 approached, he was asking himself a series of searching questions about his own relationship to history—as both an artist, and as a revolutionary socialist. 'As artists—and this is the curse that is upon us—we must each visualise our own city, ourself as its centre. It is bitter for me to admit this, I who, as a man, believe in the collective, in the revolutionary class not the revolutionary individual.'

Lavin had transcended the abstract constructivism of his youth and rejected the abstract formalism which he found in Britain during the fifties. Equally however, he could not accept social 'realism' as a solution. 'Do not demand a Socialist Art,' he wrote. 'Demand Socialist propaganda when it is needed and encourage art. Then artists will suddenly realize that they have created Socialist works, whilst only thinking about the truth.'

Lavin's journal often returns to commitment to visual truth as the only way through for the painter: 'The modern artist fights to contribute to human happiness, truth or justice. He works to improve the world... For the artist the improvement is largely a matter of great accuracy in telling the truth as he sees it...'

For Lavin, this dedication to visual truthfulness is the only justification he can find, as a communist, for remaining a painter in the historical moment in which he is living. But is it a good enough reason? That, at one level, is the theme of the book.

TRUE ART

What is this 'truth' of which Lavin writes? He was an emigre, and a painter of his time: Berger has drawn him accurately, with many of the contradictions and much of the language of such a man. But his truth is not the florid humanism of some of his contemporaries; nor is it purely subjective or 'meaningless'. It posits itself in relation to history; it is the truth



Peter Fuller reviews John Berger's first novel, which was initially suppressed but has recently been republished.

of which Gramsci wrote when he said, 'The truth is revolutionary.' Once, the bourgeoisie believed that its pictorial conventions expressed timeless and absolute 'truths' about the appearance of the world. But—as Lavin notes—'Capitalism has finally destroyed the traditions of art it once inherited or created.'

And in the wake of that destruction comes the assertion that no concept of visual truth is valid for painting. But the alternative, if one wishes to continue painting, is commitment to revolutionary truth—which involves taking one's standards from the future, and thereby risking falling victim to one's own contradictions.

But Lavin encounters a persistent problem. However much the painter commits himself to truth, and however remorselessly he battles with his own contradictions, there is no way in which he can stop his images from being swallowed up by the art world.

If, in the novel, Hungary represents History, to which Lavin is always struggling to relate his work, Sir Gerald Banks represents the apparently benign bourgeoisie, always endeavouring to obstruct this process by assimilation of the artist and his works. Early in 1952, John and Lavin visit Bank's country house to view his art collection. 'True art', he tells John and Lavin, 'is only born of risk—the risk of yielding to extreme irresponsibility in the midst of a life compelling us to accept one more responsibility after another.' He implies that the collector, too, participates in that risk. 'We're all of us, all of us who are connected with art, slaves to a divine trollop.'

Lavin is understandably angered by these remarks. He asks Banks why he commissions nothing. When Banks claims that he believes, 'the artist works better if he has complete free-

dom,' Lavin replies, 'You do not commission him because you have no subjects. The artist is unemployable—that is why he is free. No one really knows what he should be used for.... Once the patron was like a man with a hawk on his wrist to hunt the truth for him. Now he is like an old lady who keeps canaries.' (Lavin does not specify the falconers, but he is surely referring to patrons belonging to that historical era when the bourgeoisie was, itself, a revolutionary class.) Later on, however, when Lavin has his exhibition at the Malvern, Banks buys several of his paintings, including his masterpiece, a 20 x 30 foot painting, *The Games*, to adorn a medieval hall he is having done up in his grounds for 'little concert dances and so on.'

HUNGARY

Lavin complains that London fog makes him 'feel most a foreigner.' He says, 'I rage against it—like it was an injustice, like something that's been done to my eyes by the English.' And it is the metaphorical fog of Britain's insular bourgeois ideology which is always swirling round his paintings—from the inside creating internal contradictions obstructing his commitment to truth, from the outside mediating the image when he has completed it. 'You can't work for anything under the cover of art. I can't even work for Socialism under the cover of my art. Art does not cover—it reveals,' he writes. But reveals what, for whom, when? What chance is there for revolutionary truth at Sir Gerald's 'little concert dances'?

Lavin's journal shows that he believes that, in order to be a painter, one must stand back from direct engagement in the

great struggles of our time. But, as a socialist, he does not make this his excuse for always remaining a painter. His thoughts are focusing on Laszlo, a youthful comrade and 'professional revolutionary' who, he learns, has 'confessed', been tried, and executed. As he thinks about the Hungarian situation, he comes to realise that, for him, in 1956, his capabilities can be put to greater 'social good' than through painting. At the end of October, after Banks has bought his paintings from the Malvern, he disappears. On his way back to participate in the struggle in Hungary, he writes to John, 'I will not be much use. I am old. And I chose my direction long past. Those who are not like I was will choose the same as I did. I go now to tell my mistake to those who are like I was.' The novel's ending is, of course, ambiguous. We do not know what Lavin did when he reached Hungary. All we are told are the guesses which some of the other characters in the novel made about what he might have done.

What are we to make of this open-endedness? At one level, *A Painter* is a book about what it meant to be an emigre from Hungary, living in Britain in the mid-1950s. Lavin is partially based on the sculptor, Peter Petri, and the brilliant Marxist art historian, Frederick Antal—both Hungarian emigres whom Berger knew personally. Lavin is not just an abstraction for 'The Artist'; he is drawn as a full-blooded human being, rooted firmly in his time and place, on the basis of a specific biography. He is also subject to the contradictions of his time.

He did not just face the dilemma of the artist who is also a revolutionary socialist; indeed, that dilemma is given its particular character because of the

greater one which subtends it—the dilemma which all revolutionary socialists faced in the era of Stalinism. Such were the confusions of the Hungarian situation that when Lavin had taken his decision to abandon the British art world in favour of history, it was by no means certain on which side he, as a socialist, would fight. Of course, we now know that the Hungarian events of 1956 were a spontaneous uprising of the masses, and retrospectively there can be no doubt about what a revolutionary should have done; but it is the fact that such doubt is genuinely possible for Lavin which gives the ambiguous ending its dramatic strength.

Elsewhere, Berger has quoted from the writer and revolutionary Victor Serge, 'The only meaning of life is conscious participation in the making of history.' If Hungary, in one sense, represents history in *A Painter*, is Lavin's decision intended to imply that such participation is simply impossible for the artist, as artists, in contemporary Britain? This, I think, is one of the questions Berger wished to raise through the book, without claiming to have found a definitive answer.

BERGER AND GOEBBELS

To do this in the 1950s was even harder than it is now. *A Painter* was first published by Secker & Warburg's in 1958. Reviewing *A Painter* in *The Observer*, Stephen Spender compared the book with Goebbels' *Michael* (9 November 1958).

A Painter was attacked in *Encounter* too, which at that time was also published by Secker's. Some time later it emerged that during this period, *Encounter* was subsidised by the CIA. Soon after the magazine's strident attack, Secker's withdrew the

book and suppressed it. A spokesman for the company denied this; he then suggested that Berger had made the whole thing up because his book did not sell. The fog which Lavin hated so much has not thinned.

But the relevance of *A Painter* in 1977 derives from the fact that, although it engaged with concrete, historical issues of the fifties, it also transcends its time.

Berger's writing, at this time, should be contrasted with that of his literary contemporaries. In 1957, Kingsley Amis wrote a pamphlet for the Fabian Society, *Socialism and the Intellectuals*; Amis was considered a 'radical' writer. 'I sometimes think that the whole middle stratum of Britain, not just the intelligentsia, chooses its politics by temperament alone... I am writing just three weeks after the Russian assault on Hungary and the Anglo-Franco-Israeli assault on Egypt—we have a couple of first class political issues confronting us... If the crisis settle down quickly, as at the moment they show signs of doing, they will soon slip the minds of most people, intellectuals and non-intellectuals alike.' This did not bother Amis at all, 'Anyway by his station in society the member of the intelligentsia has no political interests to defend.'

The following year, 1958, Robert Conquest published 'Commitment and the Writer' in the *Literary Annual*. He praised Amis's positions and argued that whereas it might be all very well for Hungarian writers to take up political positions in support of 'basic human principles,' that sort of thing just was not necessary for the English.

'ANGRY YOUNG MEN'

The truth was, of course, that all the writers considered 'worth bothering about' reflected the central tenet of the prevailing ideology—namely that capitalism was the only conceivable possible future. Disaffection was confined to the shallow criticism, or shrill indignation, of 'The Angry Young Men.' But read through novels like Wain's *Hurry on Down* (1953), Amis's *Lucky Jim* (1954), Braine's *Room at the Top* (1957), McInnes's *Absolute Beginners* (1959), or Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960), today. They are nothing but dusty, literary museum pieces, locked within the now discredited ideology of the fifties.

Because *A Painter* raised the possibility of a socialist future, it was suppressed in its own time. Indeed, the reception of the book was such that Berger realised that, intellectually, he was an exile, and soon after left Britain to become one, in fact. Today, however, the situation has changed: some artists, writers, and intellectuals are seeking to relate their work to the struggle for a socialist future. The contradictions and difficulties which Lavin encountered remain.

In *A Painter*, Lavin writes, 'There is nothing that the painter need be forbidden to do. Nothing at all. But when he has finished, what he has done must be judged in relation to the always different and always present struggle of men to realise their potentiality more fully.' This is also true of the writer, and *A Painter* itself—alone among fifties novels—survives such a judgement.

A longer version of this article appears in *Art Monthly*.

How much of a challenge?

Socialist Challenge EVENTS

Socialist Challenge Groups should send in details of events to arrive not later than first post Saturday, or by phone no later than midday Saturday.

EAST ANGLIA

NORWICH: For details of Socialist Challenge support group contact: C. Scott, 7 Clarendon Road, Norwich.

SCOTLAND

For information on Socialist Challenge contact Scottish Socialist/Socialist Challenge bookshop, 64 Queen Street, Glasgow (Tel: 041-221 7481). Open weekdays 10-4. Late closing Thursday 5.00pm. Wide range of FI publications.

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

SOUTH/WEST

PORTSMOUTH Socialist Challenge readers group, every Monday, 7.30pm at Wiltshire pub (upstairs), Hampshire Terrace. Next meeting 26 September. 'Problems of building a revolutionary party and international.'

SOUTHAMPTON Socialist Challenge group public meeting, 29 September — 'The fight against racism', at the Anchor pub, East Street, 8pm.

YORKSHIRE

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

YORK Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Sundays, 2 October. 'The Middle East — A new war brewing?' Lowther pub, Kings Staith, York, 8pm.

NORTH WEST

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

Open Tuesday 6-8pm, Thursday 6-8pm, Saturday 10-12pm. Room available for meetings. Duplicating services.

LIVERPOOL Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Wednesdays at Stanley House, Upper Parliament Street, 5 October 7.30pm 'Racism and Fascism. Stop the NF in Manchester'.

BURY Socialist Challenge group meets at the Royal Hotel, Silver Street every Tuesday at 8pm.

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

LONDON

SOUTHALL. Supporters group meets fortnightly. For details phone 01-573 5095.

BRENT Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Mondays at Willesden Junction Hotel, Station Road NW10. 7.30pm. Next meeting on 'Racism — How to combat it', Monday 3 October. All welcome.

HOME COUNTIES

BASINGSTOKE readers' meeting every Tuesday at Chute House, Church Street, 8pm.

READING Readers meeting. Every Thursday evening, 7.30pm, 80 Amit, Road, Reading.

MIDLANDS

For details of activities of local supporters contact Socialist Challenge Centre, 75b Digbeth High Street, Birmingham. (021-643 9205).

THIS LETTER is an attempt to start a discussion amongst supporters of *Socialist Challenge* on the nature and direction of the paper. This is a crucial task if we want to make it into an effective weapon of revolutionary intervention.

We would argue that there is a developing contradiction between the two stated aims of the paper: 'Build a Socialist Opposition (SO)' and 'For a Unified Revolutionary Organisation'.

We have a paper that is both the result of and a contribution towards conceptions of a unified revolutionary socialist opposition. There are two separate, but interconnected initiatives on this: one from Big Flame, the other from the IMG. We see both enterprises as riddled with opportunist dangers.

We feel that Big Flame present the biggest dangers in this direction for the following reasons. They begin with an analysis which sees the increasing state regulation of the capital/labour conflict as bringing about a fundamental change in the nature of class composition and class struggle. Whilst this leads them to a correct rejection of a narrow emphasis on 'point-of-production' politics, it has also led them to an incorrect revision of the relationship between party and class. Their practice constantly devalues the crucial role of an 'outside' injection of a scientific marxist understanding of the struggle as a whole. As a result, their advanced workers lack an ability to break down the barriers of sectional struggles and generalise the class conflict.

As a consequence, *Socialist Challenge* is wrong to give uncritical coverage to a wide variety of 'concrete proposals' for 'unity in action'. Contrary to some expectations, we do not feel that our differences will be overcome by this kind of activism. Rather, the whole approach is, to our eyes, indicative of an incorrect political method which sees the two aims of the paper as requiring different strategies.

Whilst it is possible to work with reformists within a socialist opposition, it is necessary to

have a clear perspective as to how this relates to the building of a revolutionary organisation. The rank-and-file theory states that the building of an independent r&f organisation is an essential task for revolutionaries. Not, we stress, as a party-building exercise. R&f organisations should not be the industrial wing of the party. But a class-wide r&f organisation breaks down sectional interests and creates the most favourable conditions for revolutionary organisations to grow.

The danger of separating the two aims of the paper will lead to either a concentration on the building of a nebulous socialist opposition culminating in a line of least resistance, or building an organisation exclusively out of the existing revolutionary left, which could lead to substitutionism.

We believe that the IMG's inadequacies and the effect of these on the paper is due to their lack of a base in major areas of working class struggle. In truth, the legacies of Stalinism have played their part, but also —

dare we say it — a certain lack of centralism in their organisation has meant that both nationally and locally the IMG has consistently failed to intervene in a distinctive fashion in struggles as they occur. This, then, has allowed the possibility of emphasising one tendency of the paper at the moment: a *Red Weekly* without the politics.

This also helps to explain the paper's over-orientation to the existing revolutionary left. Big Flame at least do see unity as part and parcel of a process of creating and becoming implanted in a wider mass movement, and conduct their activities to that end. On the other hand it would not be a gross distortion to say that, in practice the IMG's conception of regroupment involves looking little further than the already committed revolutionary left.

In 'Our Policies' and in the coverage of particular issues, such as Grunwick and the crisis in the CP, these faults and the resulting dangers of opportunism materialism in print.

The birth of *Socialist Challenge* also witnessed the birth of its political rationale. A new concept saw the light of day; the 'Broad-based class struggle tendency' — a vague concept which formed the basis for a vaguer set of policies which were slotted into the first edition without one word of explanation.

These policies are the clearest examples of the dangers of a political method which separates the aims as boldly declared on the masthead of our paper. We are constantly told of the need for certain things and never told how we can achieve them. One paragraph talks of the need for 'New organs of power'. Similarly, the references to democracy are not very clear, phrases such as 'more democratic', as though it were a question of quantity, bear the traits of bourgeois thinking.

Indeed the theme of democracy has been the overriding consideration in *Socialist Challenge's* analysis of the CP

and in the absence in 'Our Policies' of any other way of demarcating ourselves from the CP, this is bound to be the case. For example, much more space should have been given over to an analysis of what politically unites the different strands of the CP and use what increased democracy there was as the space in which to do it.

Again, in the absence of other political criteria and ideas of how we build it, the notion of 'broad-based class struggle tendency' has led in the coverage of Grunwick to a wholly uncritical attitude towards Arthur Scargill and his limitations, and a lack of an analysis of the ruptures between the rank and file and the leaderships of the UPW and APEX and their wider significance. In these ways and many others imprecise political aims have led to an apolitical context.

Obviously, however, we do not think that this tendency is irreversible and by uncovering its roots we hope to create a more effective weapon, but in the absence of a serious commitment to correcting these errors the accommodation to social democracy that is present in 'Our Policies' and some of the coverage will continue. Simple defence to 'class struggle left-wing' will lead to the politics of 'least line of resistance', i.e. opportunism. We repeat that the twin tasks of building a socialist opposition and a unified revolutionary organisation are inseparable.

Keith Hessel, Mark Hoskisson, Kevin Barber, Robert De Asha (Sheffield Socialist Challenge Supporters Group).

We do not accept a number of criticisms voiced by the comrades. We think they tend towards sectarianism. We will be publishing a 'Battle of Ideas' supplement in the near future offering our balance-sheet of the paper and inviting further comments — Ed.

The symposium



Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

I WOULD LIKE to make a brief comment about the Marxist Symposium held in London on the weekend of 9 September.

The structure of the conference was an obstacle to its success. It is very difficult to have a constructive discussion in such large numbers.

For future occasions I would suggest the following format:

- a) Several people to read contrasting papers on a particular topic, followed by;
- b) workshop sessions on the different aspects of the theme.
- c) general session with discussion reports and speakers' replies.

Although this structure would entail fewer subjects being discussed, more people would have a chance to participate in the conference.

HELEN SLYOMOVICS (Cardiff)

The Irish Protestants

IN HIS REPORT on the partial return of 'the Irish dimension' to Northern Irish politics (9 September), Tom Marlowe ascribes the SDLP's rediscovery of the principle of a United Ireland to their refusal to believe any longer that the British Government has 'the slightest intention of "reforming" the North of Ireland'. He illustrates this by quoting Hugh Logue's disgusted comment on Callaghan's approach to the Ulster Unionist MPs.

Contrary to Marlowe's suggestion, these parliamentary manoeuvres do not show — any more than the fact of Army repression shows — that the British

Government has no intention of reforming Northern Ireland. What they reflect are the enormous contradictions that Westminster's successive reforming projects have encountered.

The withdrawal of British troops will not remove the only, or even the principal, obstacle to a United Ireland. There remains the massive and determined resistance of the Ulster Protestant population, and there is no guarantee that the republican forces will win in the struggle that will ensue. Marlowe's startling omission of any but a passing and dismissive reference to the Protestants, and his assumption that British

Army withdrawal will lead straightforwardly to the creation of a 32-county Irish Republic, graphically illustrate the failure of the Left to undertake a serious analysis of the character of the Protestant resistance to republicanism.

According to the editors of *Socialist Challenge*, Tom Marlowe's report 'shows the increasing opportunities for building a movement to support the removal of British troops from Ireland'. If this assessment is accurate, the necessity of such an analysis is all the more dramatically urgent.

CLARA MULHERN London

Football on the dole?

I WAS GLAD to see that *Socialist Challenge* has extended its definition of 'culture' to include sport. But I found Geoff Bell's article last week disappointing. True, he did a good job in showing how money rules football: Revie most certainly didn't walk alone. But why leave it there?

Isn't it relevant, for instance, that there's a big battle going on right this minute over players' freedom of contract? The players have even been threatening a strike if the Midland clubs refuse to accept the concessions forced out of the Football League by the Professional Footballers Association.

OK, it may be difficult to think of footballers as workers. But don't forget that the bulk of players are not the wealthy First Division superstars constantly spotlighted in the press. Most have to fight hard to earn their

living lower down the League or in the reserves. And all of them are on the scrap-heap by their mid-thirties, with only a few having earned enough to set up in business themselves. The most common prospect is likely to be an unskilled job or even the dole.

So we should welcome it when footballers begin to confront the club bosses collectively over wages and conditions, as they did at Newcastle over the summer. (They also succeeded earlier in imposing their own choice of manager on the directors — another step in the right direction.) And we should be in favour of the PFA joining the trade union movement. Indeed, its Scottish equivalent is already affiliated to the General & Municipal Workers Union.

Such moves could actually begin to change the situation so

tellingly outlined by Geoff. And with support from outside (notably from the hundreds of thousands of trade unionists who watch the game live or on telly), there would then be a basis for going on to expropriate the owners completely and place 'the peoples' game' under real community control.

One final point. Don't you think it's worth commenting on when the police tactics at Lewisham are immediately followed by a campaign for the use of riot shields and so on against youngsters at football matches? The violent attacks on fans by French police when Manchester United visited St Etienne (a Communist-controlled city) could soon be repeated over here. That's the State's solution for 'cleaning up' football. What's ours?

MARTIN METEYARD (London NE)

The Ballad of Gerry Ford

(to the tune of 'Black Velvet Band')

In a garage not far from the White House
You'll find a third-hand clapped-out Ford
With its big end gone out and its steel turned to rust,
Not an agent on its running board.

It was smudged up by bold Jimmy Carter
Who chats both to Playboy and God,
Who's been driving a fast car to nowhere at all
And it's due over my poor soul.

(Chorus)

Well his legs they crumpled like paper
But his skull it was thick as a board
Yes we trusted old Nixon to sell us
A rusty third-hand clapped-out Ford.

It's the end of the road for our Gerry
Re-ans loves you now mate but your mum,
We'll no longer be seeing you collapsing
At every third step on your bum.

We heard of the fire in your library
Both your books they were burnt, what a sin,
One of them you hadn't got round to read
The other you were colouring in.

We'll miss all that dazzling syntax
Those rapier-like bars of the brain,
And we'll miss the cute way that you can't figure out
Ohio from Texas from Maine.

We'll miss all that cutting black warfare
That booted the crippled and lame
But you leave us with one consolation —
Jimmy Carter will do just the same.

Well his legs they crumpled like paper
But his skull it was thick as a board,
Yes we trusted old Nixon to sell us
A rusty third-hand clapped-out Ford.

Terry Eagleton

Kerry Packer's cricket A balance sheet for all seasons

The 1977 cricket season has just drawn to a close. Followers of the game will remember Geoff Boycott returning to the England team and scoring his hundredth century in a test match in Leeds, his home ground. The more chauvinist will not forget that the Australians were well and truly beaten by an England side — an infrequent occurrence!

However nobody can have missed the arrival of Kerry Packer, the Australian TV tycoon. His decision to buy up the world's top professional players and set up a rival series of international matches in Australia this winter has rocked the foundations of Lords, the 'home' of cricket.

The ruling cricket establishment, ex-public school to the core, responded by banning all the Packer players. The two sides now stand locked in legal battles, as the 18-stone Packer, with his 6ft 7ins right-hand man, Tony Greig, prepare for the winter spectaculars.

Packer's interest in cricket is financial. Having failed to obtain cricket broadcasting rights for Channel 9, his TV network, Packer decided to set up his own international matches. For the first year alone this cricket circus is costing \$1.6m. His players, for 55 days work, will receive £15,000 — £24,000.

It came as no great surprise that the top players were keen to sign up. Of professional sportspeople they are the poorest. Alan Knott, for example — generally regarded as the best wicketkeeper in the world — was paid a salary of only £2,900 by his club, Kent,

by RIC SISSONS

and made up his income of £8,500 through sponsorship.

The plight of the ordinary professional cricketers is even worse. Their average income is less than £3,000. In winter many join the dole queue and in summer spend their time travelling the country. Cricket's ruling cliques have done nothing to change this position. They live in the past. Empty grounds (as the bulk of professional matches are played during the week) and bankruptcy forced them to introduce one-day cricket and seek massive sponsorship.

Now every championship has its backer. Gillette, John Player, Benson & Hedges, Schweppes all give generously in exchange for plenty of free advertising. The BBC pays £150,000 for TV rights. During 1976, the Test and County Cricket Board made a profit of £1 m. Without this capitalist sponsorship professional cricket would collapse. Big business is slowly tightening its stranglehold on the game.

Packer has simply taken all this to its logical conclusion. Cut out cricket's rulers and completely commercialise the matches.



KERRY PACKER (larger than life) with former England captain Tony Greig: preparing for the winter spectaculars.

Packer is now avidly selling off the advertising time during his TV broadcasts. The response of the TCCB has been to outbid Packer by accepting the Cornhill insurance company offer of £1.25m in new sponsorship.

It is ironic that as Cornhill were offering millions to cricket they refused to offer their own workers more than a 5 per cent pay rise! Cricket, that male preserve (the women's role being to make the sandwiches), is now following in the path of every other sport and being completely integrated into modern capitalism.

The super stars, the hero wor-

ship, the mass spectacle, the TV and advertising funds show more clearly than ever that sport within capitalism has — and always will be — part and parcel of that same system.

Lords, Cornhill, and Packer will not improve the lot of the professional cricketer, nor the game itself. Professional sport itself is the problem. Under capitalism sport is separated increasingly from everyday life as the masses look on passively at their heroes, and the occasional heroine. Only the complete abolition of professional sport can solve this problem.

Dropping 1000 lbs of ideological debris

by MALCOLM IMRIE

Films about Israelis versus Arab 'terrorists' are proving to be good money-spinners right now. But as the subject becomes successful, audiences become more demanding. There's a limit to the number of variants you can get out of the theme of gallant Israelis shooting up Ugandans at an airport — 'Emmanuelle At Entebbe'?



People are fed up with all those dreary old aircraft hi-jacks. Even the Munich Olympics is a bit static. So Paramount and director John Frankenheimer scratched their heads for a new formula. Something with more action, more killing and more sexism was needed.

Throwing in a balloon for good measure, they came up with *Black Sunday* — 143 minutes of

fast-moving neurosis in glorious Panavision, currently making a fortune for Paramount and EMI at ABCs throughout the country.

The plot is ingenious. Members of 'Black September' decide to remind the United States that their government has something to do with the oppression of millions of Arabs. They sneak 1000 lbs of high explosive into the USA, get it to Miami (where else?), and invent a little device

that propels millions of steel darts in every direction.

The plan is to attach the device to a blimp used for ariel TV filming which they hi-jack, fly this over the annual super bowl game in Miami on New Year's day when the president and 100,000 Americans are sitting in the stadium, blow it up and kill the whole goddam lot. Simple. Now of course they don't get away with it, thanks to the heroism of a Zionist secret agent. Only about 90 actually get killed throughout the film.

Bizarre though the narrative may seem, it works. The film is very exciting — full of chases, shoot-outs, narrow escapes. You're glued to your seat. The price always paid for excitement, though, is the ideological debris that comes with it. A *Time Out* reviewer argued that we should perhaps welcome the film because at least it 'gives the Arab case an airing'. What he means is that the film is given a 'realistic' gloss by occasional references to the causes of the 'terrorists' actions — at one point a character even says they are a problem 'created by the Israelis'.

But this is merely a backdrop, and it is more than outweighed by the ideologies invested in the three main characters. For the Israelis we have Kabakov, a secret agent working on the margins of the law in the best Clint Eastwood tradition. He hates his job and is tired of killing. Yet, brave and decent, he saves the day. On the other side there's Dahlin, who is the standard model 'ruthless and sensual' woman terrorist (quote from the publicity blurb). Maybe

she's had a hard time as a kid at the hands of the Israelis, but this doesn't excuse the fact that she's a dominant woman, cold and efficient, of part-Arab, part-German origin and a political fanatic.

She has her co-terrorist sexually under her thumb. He's American, a victim of commie brainwashing in Vietnam which made him impotent and anti-American. He wants to give the USA something to remember him by. Faced with that ideological barrage, historical explanations are pretty irrelevant. No one's going to identify with those two.

It would be stupid to dismiss the film as just another piece of pro-Zionist propaganda. That is a part of its effect, but almost an incidental one. There was no 'plot' by Paramount to get the audience distracted and then slip them some imperialist ideology. That ideology was simply the framework that the makers and the audience were working in.

The important thing is the way Paramount is forced to escalate violence, sexism, and racism to sell its films. The need for more escapist excitement and the neurotic forms it takes when it can be only escapist requires understanding. When it takes the spectacle of a hundred thousand people about to be wiped out to keep our attention, it's another sign of a real explosion that's sooner or later going to occur.

Darcus Howe, from the Notting Hill Carnival Committee, said recently and correctly that our task 'is to advance that struggle, advance that explosion, so it explodes in their faces and not ours.'

SPEAKOUT

NUJ Equality Working Party

Wanted: the real image of women

by AIDIN NI CHAOIMH, Vice-Chairwoman, EWP

TELEVISION production assistants go on strike. The popular press continually refers to them as 'girls' or 'Girl Fridays'. Air traffic control assistants take industrial action. They are referred to as 'men'.

Both groups of people are doing demanding technical work. Both are in much the same age-group. Both are being paid at much the same level. Yet the TV workers are down-graded to the level of 'girls', that is, pretty, leggy blonde, emphy-headed young females.

These are not isolated incidents. Each day's media can offer countless examples. But the great mass of people seem to do nothing or care. It's time something was done on a broad level, and not just left to the handful who are active among the ranks of working journalists.

It seems regrettably inevitable that we will have Page Three dummies with us for some time to come. Market research has shown the press that these actually sell papers and unless there is a call from millions of readers to

have this type of female degradation removed they won't be eliminated. But discriminatory references to women in the media can and must be removed.

A start has been made in this campaign but it urgently needs support, evidence and action. The National Union of Journalists' Equality Working Party has published a second edition of *Images of Women**, a booklet which outlines, with many examples, the types of discriminatory references to women which are blatantly insulting.

It is not enough to note discriminatory references and to frown on them. They must be brought to the notice of the editor/writer and a response sought from him/her (women, themselves, are very often the worst offenders).

Until the attitudes of writers — inbred but often unintentional — are changed, this campaign must go on with as broad a base as is possible throughout the country.

Please send examples or a note of any action and the response to it to: NUJ Equality Working Party, Acorn House, 314 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP. * *Images of Women*, price 30p (including p&p) from the NUJ at the same address.



BOOKMARX CLUB

- Book Club for Socialists
- Selections for 4th quarter 1977 (starts Oct)
- List A: We Shall be At
- Lucy Pflanz
- Vindicta in a worker's state
- Miklos Havel
- John S. Clarke
- Ray Chalkley
- List B: How capitalism works
- Piero Glebe
- Forbarns
- Ignazio Silone
- The Suffragette
- Sylvia Parkhurst

List A plus either List B or List C for £4.50 (terms preference). Details: Bookmarx Club 285 Seven Sisters Road London N4 2DE Tel 01-832 6145

THE OTHER CINEMA

25 Tottenham Street, London W1. Tel: 637 9308

THE OTHER FRANCISCO (El Otro Francisco). 'Francisco' was a 19th century Cuban progressive bourgeois novel that attacked slavery. This contemporary Cuban film develops another 'Francisco': an attack on slavery from the standpoint of the black masses; and demonstrates the growing economic advantages for the plantation owners of abolitionism. Fri. 23 Sept and Mon. 26 to Thurs 29. At 8.30pm.

PIERROT LE FOU. A revival of Godard's most accessible film. Made in 1965 in colour, and starring Jean-Paul Belmondo and Anna Karina. Pierrot is the dazzling tale of the 'last romantic couple'. Fri. 23 Sept to Thurs 29 at 4.30 and 8.45.

JON JOST. Special London visit by leading American independent film-maker Jon Jost to show his *Speaking Directly* (8.30, Sun 25 Sept), and *Angel City* (8.30 Sat 24 Sept). 'He is not a traitor to the movies, unlike almost all American directors. He makes them move'. (Jean-Luc Godard).

Socialist Challenge

WHY GRUNWICK MUST BE NATIONALISED

Alone among the left press, Socialist Challenge has called for the nationalisation of Grunwick under workers' control. GEOFF BELL examines the importance of this demand.

George Ward moved an electricity generator into his Grunwick factory last week. His willingness to take action is in marked contrast to the attitude of the leaders of the TUC, whose discussions over the past few days have produced nothing concrete for the Grunwick strikers.

More talks are to be held this week by the TUC committee established to implement the motion passed at the Congress calling for increased practical and financial support for the strikers. But the installation of the generator threatens to render less effective any move to cut off supplies and services.

and the right wing of the Tory Party, Ward himself will certainly not be found on the dole queue after performing such a service.

It is now obvious to everyone that Ward and his backers are using valuable productive resources solely for political purposes and sabotage. They must be taken out of George Ward's hands.

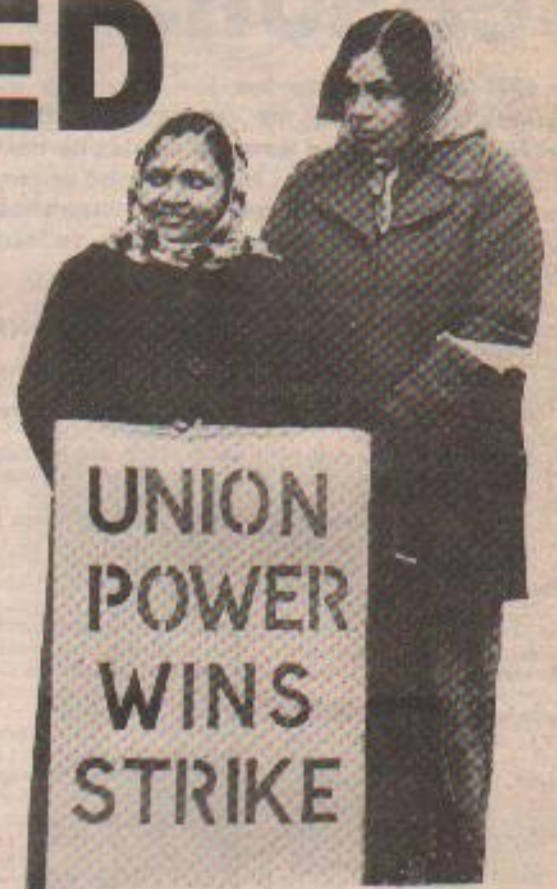
This would give the Grunwick strikers the unqualified victory they so richly deserve. It would also be a service to the whole working class.

During the TUC debate on Grunwick, APEX leader Roy Grantham approached the prospect of Ward liquidating Grunwick with the dismissive comment: 'So be it'.

Others to the left of Grantham argue that the closure of Grunwick could serve as a warning to any employer who attempts a repeat of George Ward's antics.

If Ward closes down, the strikers would be unemployed, however temporary that may be. The NW London area in which Ward's factory is situated already suffers heavy unemployment. The simple closure of Grunwick may discourage future George Wards, but it could also discourage others from attempting what the strikers have done.

Specifically it could discourage immigrant and women workers — who make up the bulk of the



Grunwick strikers — from staging another Grunwick. These are already the most unorganised, vulnerable and exploited sections of the working class, and the prospect of a closed factory after more than one year's strike action is hardly an incentive to struggle.

Nationalising Grunwick would deal decisively with Ward, save jobs, and encourage other workers to follow the Grunwick example. It would also establish an important principle — the nationalisation of firms threatening wholesale redundancies or closure.

An obvious question arises: Is such a solution possible? Given the right-wing nature of the Labour Government it seems unlikely.

But similarly a few months ago the prospect of the Government intervening directly in Grunwick, or a judge coming out in favour of the strikers also seemed highly unlikely. So, too, was the prospect of the TUC even talking about cutting off supplies and services to George Ward.

All this has been achieved — essentially by the mass pickets that the strike committee has led, and as long as the demand for

nationalisation is linked to this same type of pressure it can provide a real recipe for total victory.

If the 'left-wing' of the Labour Party's national executive were serious about their previous support for the Grunwick strikers, they too would demand nationalisation, for the truth is that the Grunwick strike has long since ceased being a simple trade union issue.

It is a major political issue now — as is even shown by the split in the Tories. Accordingly trade union tactics are by themselves not enough. A political solution and a political strategy are necessary. A campaign of mass action — picketing and the cutting off of services and supplies to force nationalisation — provides such a solution and offers such a strategy.

ON SATURDAY, 1 October two films on Grunwick will be shown at The Other Cinema, Tottenham Street, London W1, beginning at 8.30pm. They have been produced by the Newsreal Collective and the Poster Collective. Proceeds will go to the strike committee and floats are £1.50 each. They are available from the strike headquarters, 375, High Road, Willesden, London NW10, or at the door.

Create two, three, many Thursos

Socialist Challenge has reached the furthestmost parts of Britain. We now have regular sellers in Thurso. Our supporters there suggest that any other readers or subscribers living in either Caithness or Orkney should contact Thurso via the Scottish Socialist League national office in Glasgow.

We would remind our readers that we are only too happy to provide bulk order copies post free. So if you want to follow the example of our Thurso supporters then start selling Socialist Challenge to your friends at work, college, or in your area.

The fund drive received a welcome boost last week from the proceeds from the film benefit performance at The Other Cinema held during the Marxist Symposium. The cinema covered their costs and collected a further £40 for their fight for survival.

Socialist Challenge collected £168.33 from the benefit. Our weekly needs of £130 from the fund drive were topped. This excess will pull us nearer the final target of £1800 by the end of September.

The cumulative total now stands at £1407.43. This leaves just under £400 to be raised in 10 days. The new target to finish off the dragon is £40 a day. So let's get cracking.

PAGE SIXTEEN

In a statement last Friday, the strike committee renewed their call for such action and threatened that if it did not come soon they would make fresh attempts to stage a mass picket.

Both mass picketing and, as the strike committee put it, 'co-ordinated action on supplies and essential services' remain necessary if the strike is to have an chance of victory. But even if the unlikely happens and the TUC agrees to cut off supplies and services, Ward is quite likely either to find a way of keeping the factory running or he may carry out his threat to close the company down for good, taking his money with him.

Ward's rejection of Scarman has made it clear that he is interested, above everything else, in smashing trade unionism. He is quite prepared to shut the factory altogether if it will serve the political purposes of NAFF

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