

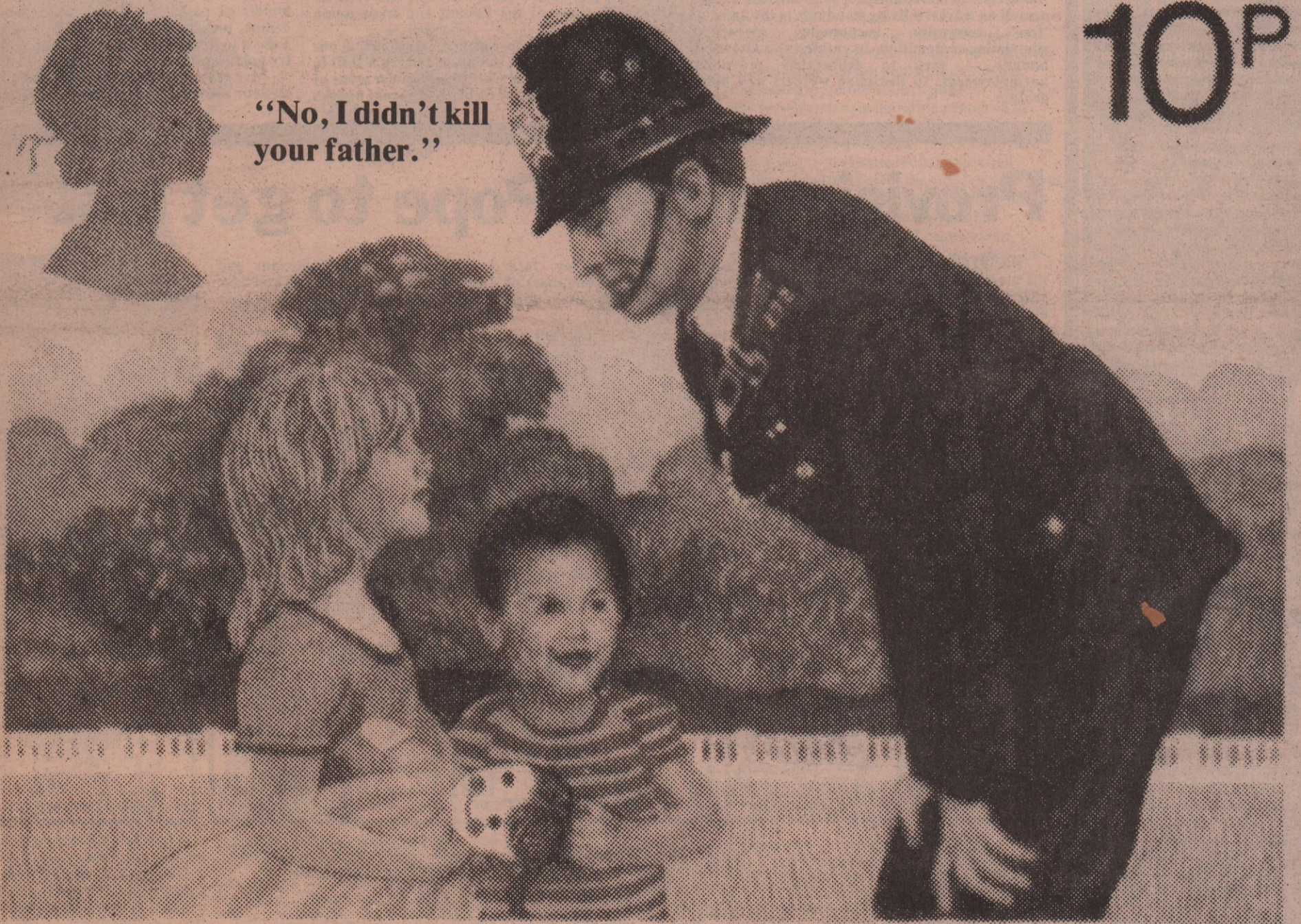
Socialist Challenge

BLAIR PEACH



"No, I didn't kill your father."

10^P



FIGHT THE COVER-UP

Inside:

What now for the Labour left?
Exclusive interviews with Eric Heffer,
Dennis Skinner, Bernard Dix

Plus:

What Benn said at Brighton and what it meant

OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

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

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Address.....

Socialist Challenge

A fresh start to fight the Tories

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE was launched on 9 June 1977. It had a clear aim: to create a new tradition on the British left. It was a newspaper which opened its pages to those in struggle — at Grunwick, at Southall, at Ford's. It decided to take cultural and sexual politics seriously. It reported the news about the ruling class — the Dobson affair, Labour agent Peter Marriner's membership of the British Movement, magistrate Dorothy Oakley's thoughts on the Grunwick defendants before they were tried — and on the 'Surplus Value' page it analysed the role of ruling class institutions in society today.

But above everything else Socialist Challenge stood for a socialist alternative to a Labour government that saw its main job as ensuring the bosses' profits by cutting workers' wages. It was unequivocal about the need for class struggle in the unions as opposed to class collaboration. We knew that many militants were looking for something new under Labour. Socialist Challenge led the fight to force the far left to look beyond their noses and to provide something new — a democratic and unified revolutionary organisation.

But the Tory government we have now is not simply a government that collaborates with the ruling class in this country. It is leading the bosses' assault on workers' living standards in the name of 'free' enterprise, encouraging incentives, stimulating competition. Its ruthlessness knows no bounds — even to deliberately provoking unemployment, to discipline workers and boost profits.

The engineers have already shown that the Tory government is going to have a rough ride pushing through its attacks. Tony Benn's victories at the Labour conference in Brighton reveal a similar feeling at the base of the Labour Party.

Socialist Challenge has to respond to these new developments. As the cuts bite, redundancies are threatened, and wages are attacked, more and more workers will see the need to fight this government and reject the advice of the Callaghans and Murrays to wait five years. Socialist Challenge has already shown its ability to campaign against John Corrie's anti-abortion Bill — particularly with all the local reports we've been receiving. Now let's do it on cuts, wage struggles, debating out a strategy to fight the new technology that is being used as an excuse to throw people out of work. Let Socialist Challenge 'speak out' about your struggle.

Change

We're going to change the format of the paper and add new columns. Our aim is to win a wider audience for the ideas of Socialist Challenge. We'll be having a regular column on the Labour Party, and a new column called 'Arguments For Socialism' that will explain our ideas and contrast them with those of the Labour and trade union leaders.

We're going to keep 'Surplus Value' and all our international coverage, but we're making a shift in 'Under Review' to deal with more popular areas of culture. Our coverage of racism and sexual politics

is going to continue and we're going to have more feature material. Our letters page remains open to all.

One thing that Socialist Challenge is not going to change, however, is its attitude to other revolutionary organisations and individuals. We're absolutely adamant on this point. It may be an uphill struggle to convince revolutionary militants in Britain that if your organisation really is democratic you can contain different views within it, but we think that's the only way a mass revolutionary party will be built in this country. Bringing back 'Battle of Ideas' is the way we intend to continue the fight for a unified revolutionary organisation. We know there are different opinions on the nature of the Soviet Union, the way to build a mass women's movement, what attitude revolutionaries should take to the Labour Party. But we don't think it makes sense for those questions to act as a barrier to united action or to building one rather than 20 different organisations in this country.

So Socialist Challenge is stepping up the fight for united action under the Tories and continuing to campaign for a new tradition on the British left. You, our readers, are central to this fight. Every time you leave home you should ensure you have a bundle of papers with you. Take the paper to demos, pickets, shopping centres, factory gates. Take it to the Family Planning Clinic, your school, try going round the estate with it.

Make sure Socialist Challenge is at the centre of all your activities during this winter of discontent.

Provisionals tell Pope to get lost

DESPITE the acres of space that the press has allocated to the Pope's visit to Ireland not one British newspaper bothered to publish the IRA's statement on the subject.

The press was particularly concerned to praise the Pope's calls for peace when he preached from Knock near the border with the North.

It was widely interpreted as a direct call to the IRA to lay down their arms. The IRA issued a statement in reply to this.

repressive laws, the army forts occupying areas, the proven cases of torture, and of course the situation in the H-blocks.

Whereas we want the British government to cease interfering in our affairs, they are out to exterminate Republicans, and violently repress the claims being made for Irish self-determination.

Furthermore, we believe that our prospects for victory are supported by the examples of other colonial struggles, by our continued existence given the duration of the repression,

Church leaders, politicians and establishments are bankrupt and have also failed to resolve the massive social and economic problems suffered by our people and created by British interference. Indeed, it would be correct to say that many of them haven't even examined possible ways of solving the problem.

They lack the courage to honestly identify the problem. We have, and will continue to deal with it, until the British dimension is withdrawn and a climate for real peace with justice can be created.

The only event that can take the people of the Six Counties a significant step towards peace is the final and decisive withdrawal of British troops and government.

It is also clear that Britain is not going to withdraw unless it is forced to by the militant struggle of the Irish people. So we agree when the statement says: 'We believe that force is by far the only means of removing the evil of the British presence.'

The only quarrel we would have with the IRA is that force is not just a



The Irish Republican Army restates its position in regard to its use of force to bring about political change from the British government.

Firstly, the roots of the present troubles go back into history, but have, in the last decades, their source in the social and economic deprivation suffered by the nationalist people. Responsibility for the poor condition of the people rested in Stormont and with the British government at Westminster.

Attempts to resolve those problems peacefully met with brute force from the state, and people who were exasperated organised and fought back with civil disobedience and the use of force.

Conscience

In all conscience we believe that force is by far the only means of removing the evil of the British presence in Ireland. Their interference has divided the people and caused untold hardship.

One should not talk about 'men of violence' and ignore the 33,000 strong armed forces in the Six Counties, their

and by the widespread support which we know we command and which our operations prove.

We know also that upon victory the Church would have no difficulty in recognising us.

We believe there is considerable truth in this statement. It is certainly absolutely clear that the church and its calls for peace will make no difference to the population of the North of Ireland.

matter of guns — there is also the force that arises out of the mass mobilisations of the population on the streets. It is this latter type of force that will be finally decisive in the North of Ireland.



'AVENGE Mountbatten, kill the Pope' may not have been the slogan taken up by Unionist ultras, but the NF tried to come up with the next best thing last Saturday.

'Smash the IRA' was the main demand of a

200-strong fascist march through Central London, well laced with assorted anti-Irish slogans. Two thousand cops, including the SPG, marched with them, while 300 responded to a call from the Anti-Nazi League to oppose the demo.

REMEMBER BLAIR PEACH



SOUTHALL DEFENCE FUND

- 700 people were arrested on 23rd April; 342, mainly young Asians, were charged.
- 70 are likely to be jailed if the present trends continue.
- In cases heard so far very few defendants have received legal aid.
- Fines, costs and expenses are expected to exceed £100,000.

I enclose £ . . . for the Southall Defence Fund.

Name

Address

Send to: PO Box 151, London WC2.

**SOUTHALL
IS INNOCENT
STOP THE
TRIALS**

Southall Defence Committee



By Oliver New, Southall Campaign Committee

SO the inevitable happened. The Director of Public Prosecutions decided that there would be no prosecution in the Blair Peach murder case. The audacity of the British establishment knows no bounds. Here we have a clear case of an SPG hoodlum using an 'illegal weapon' to cosh Blair Peach to death. And despite all their new equipment and new methods of investigation the combined intelligence of the British police cannot discover the identity of the SPG killer.

Small wonder then that there is growing disquiet within the labour movement on the cover-up. The newly-elected National Executive Committee of the Labour Party has registered its protest in no uncertain terms. It has called for an immediate and full public inquiry. It has demanded the publication of police orders of the day for operations in the Southall area on 23 April.

The lawyers of the Blair Peach family are now going to prosecute the Metropolitan Police, and attention for the next few weeks will shift to the inquest which has been transferred to Fulham Town Hall and starts today. Lawyers for the Anti Nazi League will be demanding access to information which the police have so far refused to impart.

Our tasks in the coming weeks are twofold. We have to build the broadest possible support to expose the cover-up. We have to insist that the police do not get away with blue murder. We have to ensure that they pay a heavy price for what happened in Southall on 23 April.

At the same time the trials at Barnet continue to acquire an ugly significance. There is now some national attention being focussed on the trials. A national picket is being prepared for early November, but all this is not enough. The Campaign Committee is still understaffed and needs all possible help. At the same time we need more money to help pay for the costs and fines being incurred.

'We'll make 2 December the largest anti-racist demo ever'

By David Stevens

PLANS are now under way to prepare locally for the Anti Nazi League's 2 December demo against the Tories' nationality proposals and the 1971 Immigration Act.

In Wolverhampton last Thursday the Anti-Racist Committee (ARC) organised a historic meeting. Two leaders of the most important Indian Workers Associations (IWAs) in the area, Avtar Joul and N S Noor, shared a common platform. Tariq Ali spoke on behalf of the Anti Nazi League Steering Committee.

Noor, in a characteristic display of eloquence, denounced the immigration acts which successive governments had imposed on black people. He described the cynical attitudes of past Labour and Tory ministers. 'It was they', he thundered, 'who bore the responsibility for the present situation.'

Joul explained the origins of racism. 'It is an offshoot of imperialism', he explained. 'And now as the capitalist crisis deteriorates they want the workers to pay for it. Their profits are threatened so they try and divide us on the basis of colour.' White workers should understand that the people who attacked blacks were their enemies as well. He pledged that the 2 December mobilisation would see more black workers on the streets than ever before.

Tariq Ali said that the main argument successive governments had used in defence of immigration controls was that it would make the life of blacks already in Britain much easier. 'And yet is there anyone here who believes that conditions have improved for black people over the last decade? Is it not the case that fascist attacks, police brutality and judicial harassment has increased?'

Ali denounced the decision not to prosecute the SPG murderer who killed Blair Peach and explained what was happening in the Barnet magistrates' court.

The meeting was attended by over a hundred people, predominantly black workers, but with overseas students and white anti-racists also in attendance. The ARC and IWA are organising local co-ordinating committees to build support for 2 December.



THE BUTCHER OF SOUTHALL

THIS man is Deputy Assistant Commissioner David Helm. He was in command of the police operations in Southall on 23 April. The orders he gave that day led to the death of Blair Peach, the near death of Clarence Baker, the brutalisation of dozens of black people and the arrest of 700.

Helm is one of the more sophisticated senior police officers at Scotland Yard. He clearly knew what he was doing in Southall on 23 April. As the pressure for a public enquiry mounts (the National Union of Teachers Executive has demanded that the TUC put on the pressure) the role of David Helm will come into sharp focus.

In reality Helm should be put on trial. He bears the responsibility for the police riot in Southall. He is the butcher of Southall.



Engineers break through on hours

An all-out strike could have won the lot

By Rich Palser

'THE settlement will be a great inspiration for organised workers throughout Britain and throughout Europe.' These are the words of Engineering Union president, Terry Duffy, and for once he is dead right.

The Confederation of British Industry has been leading a campaign to unite employers against any reduction in the working week. By winning a 39 hour week the engineers have cracked that common front.

Other workers will have to prise open that crack to win a 35 hour week.

This dispute demonstrated the depth of support among union members for a reduction in hours. Despite the failure of the union leaderships to call an all-out strike, the action remained solid costing the employers over £2 billion in lost sales.

Dangerous

But Duffy's deal falls far short of what was possible and what was needed. It contains dangerous and unnecessary concessions to the employers.

The settlement covers four years, including a reduction of the working week to 39 hours in 1981, and one week extra holiday. Negotiations on the minimum wage rate will take place as normal every year — but by implication there will be no talks on reducing hours for four years. This is why the Engineering Employers' Federation claim the deal means 'industrial harmony through the difficult period of recession ahead of us.'

Commitment

An additional weakness in the agreement is the inclusion of a commitment by the unions to co-operate in 'increasing produc-

tivity'.

The settlement aims to minimise the cost of reducing hours by maintaining the same levels of productivity, meaning no new jobs are created. The Post Office Engineers made a similar agreement last year with the same result — the objective of creating jobs is not achieved.

Retreat

According to David Basnett of the General and Municipal Workers Union, a 35 hour week would mean 750,000 jobs being created. Deals like the engineers have concluded are a retreat on that principal.

A far greater victory could have been won. There were real signs of the employers beginning to give, with GEC talking of leaving the EEF when the dispute was over, and some more profitable firms agreeing to settlements. But the full strength of the unions was never used — there was no national strike call from the union leaders.

The fighting strength of the engineers was not tapped to the full, so despite the agreement with the employers, the fight for shorter hours will continue in engineering.

Confidence

The membership go back to work full of confidence that their action won a decisive breakthrough on hours. Unemployment is going to shoot to 2 million and higher over the next year. Local negotiations are always used in engineering to improve on the national deal.

All in all, the chances of no struggle in engineering for four years look very slim. Duffy may well be able to claim some credit for winning 39 hours, but his will not be a quiet life.



Labour Party conference lobbyists

STRIKE NEWS

Ferranti still out

By Raphael de Santos

THE DUFFY and Chapple sell-out has been a major blow to the strike at Ferranti's Edinburgh factory, now in its ninth week. But despite this, workers are continuing their action for a 25 per cent increase in pay.

A few weeks ago at a Labour Party anti-cuts rally, Willie Black, of Edinburgh Trades Council and a shop steward at Python Peeble engineering, talked about the need for solidarity within the labour movement on every working class struggle.

His speech was received with rapturous applause.

This type of solidarity is not visible around Ferranti. ASTMS members have voted overwhelmingly to carry out jobs normally done by the strikers — even cleaning toilets.

The electricians' union is not paying strike

benefit, because it isn't a national strike.

Bailey's, a building firm, has been driving through picket lines at one Ferranti factory to build the extension demanded by Ferranti's expansion in micro-processors.

But all the news is not bleak. The white-collar section of the engineering union, TASS, while crossing the picket lines, has shown some support. Management asked five of their members to do work on two American units, which — because of their specification — would normally be done by those on strike.

The TASS members refused to do the job, and were suspended. The remainder of the TASS membership gave support to their colleagues, and management backed down and found other work for them.

Strikers have pledged that if any work is carried out on the unit, they will boycott orders when they return to work. The next mass meeting is on 15 October, when a decision about continuing the strike

will be made.

One thing is certain: if the labour movement had shown solidarity this strike would have been won by now. Certainly, the Ferranti workers are very receptive of support. Last week, 40 copies of socialist challenge were sold on the picket lines.

Lesney -out

By Tessa van Gelderen

THE ROLLS Royce lock-outs may be over, but for 35 members of the electricians' union at Lesney's Hackney plant a lock-out has just begun.

The EETPU members have refused to continue a shift system started last June because management refuse to pay the agreed time and a third for shift working. They started ordinary day working and management locked them out.

The plant has 5,000 AUEW members — largely women — and the engineering union has agreed to boycott all electricians' work in the plant. After the suspension of one foundry

worker for refusing to work 'blacked' machinery, all the AUEW foundry members struck in support.

The production workers have been suspended on full pay, so the stewards are producing a bulletin to explain the union's case. These are also being taken to other Lesney plants around the country by Lesney drivers, who have also agreed not to cross picket lines.

Lesneys make match-box toys, and with Christmas approaching the company does not want to see the dispute spread.

This is an important dispute for extending union organisation in the area, and TGWU members at the nearby British Oxygen Company are refusing to deliver gas in order to strengthen the electricians.

Financial support is needed, and copies of the strike bulletin can be got from Lesney strike committee, c/o J. Cooney, 12 Highworth Point, Trowbridge Estate, Hackney Wick, London E5.

Duffy's deal — a victory for moderation?

THE POPULAR press has been very keen to give Duffy the credit for the engineers break through on hours. With elections taking place again in the AUEW next year their theme is simple — moderation delivers the goods. The truth is far from that.

Moderation wanted to see the demand for a cut in hours dropped early on in negotiations — it was the Broad Left on the AUEW National Committee that forced them to keep the demand for 39 hours. All moderation succeeded in doing was making the employers more confident that the unions had no real stomach for a fight.

Moderation in the form of the electricians union spoke out publicly for a 'quick settlement' to the dispute — threatening to negotiate a separate deal. Instead of insisting the strike remain firm and denouncing splitting statements which strengthen the employers' confidence, Duffy defended their 'right to make public statements'.

Moderation meant there was no call for an all-out strike, despite resolutions to that effect from stewards meetings up and down the country. Instead moderate Duffy went off to secret talks and negotiated a deal which ties the union's hands

over hours for four long years.

The membership won this victory through their disciplined and determined strike action. Duffy led no fight over the claim, he just negotiated the settlement — and by no means the best that could have been reached. This victory was not won because of moderation, but despite moderation.

The Broad Left can take the credit for forcing Duffy to eat his words of last year: 'If there is to be any clash with Mrs Thatcher we won't start it'.

National Committee delegate Ron Halverson, a prominent member of the Broad Left, is dead right to call for the membership to reject the deal and demand a better one. But the Broad Left too must learn a lesson.

Only the escalation of the dispute to all-out action could have ensured complete victory. No such call was coming from Duffy, despite the pressure upon him. It was for an unofficial call that the Broad Left should have been organising.

The Broad Left put Duffy on the spot. But in refusing to take the initiative for all-out action it left the struggle totally in Duffy's hands. If he then sells the members short of what could be won, the Broad Left must share the responsibility.

When will the Labour Party give women a square deal?

By Celia Pugh

'WHY is abortion not on the agenda. Are the backstreets so hard to remember?'

This chant from a hundred lobbyists was finally heard by the Labour Party conference organising committee, and time was found — in the last hour of the conference — to decide to support all campaigns and demonstrations organised to defend the 1967 Act. It also called

on Labour MPs to vote against the Corrie Bill. Liz Roberts from Streatham CLP, who moved the resolution, said:

'I am very pleased that the issue was finally discussed and that there was such overwhelming support for the demonstration. It is quite obvious that the fight has to be waged outside Parliament and that the main force will come from people demonstrating on the streets.'

But a price was paid before the organising committee would agree to a debate on abortion — amendments dealing with a three line whip to end the 'conscience cop-out' and detailing proposals to build the TUC demonstration had to be dropped.

The proposal from Lambeth Central CLP asking conference to 'condemn the 55 Labour MPs who voted for the Corrie Bill' was also dropped when the NEC said it would oppose the abortion resolution as a whole if this was included.

'This decision shows that the NEC are backtracking', Liz Roberts remarked. 'They are not prepared to take on the MPs who voted for Corrie. It is only when they are prepared to take up the issue of the three line whip that women will get a square deal from the Labour Party.'

Ann Weyman, from the Socialist Medical Association, who seconded the resolution, pointed out that Heffer and Benn were some fighters for accountability of MPs when they weren't prepared to extend the principle to abortion. Both of them opposed a three line whip on abortion.

'Their position is a total contradiction'. Said Liz Roberts, 'They can't say accountability on one hand and then leave the important issue of women's right to control their fertility to individual decisions of MPs. They are not in Parliament as individuals but to represent the labour movement.'

One MP who is prepared to be mandated by the labour movement on this issue is Reg Race, MP for Wood Green.

'170 Labour MPs have not voted at all, or voted for the Corrie Bill. If they take the view that it is their own individual conscience to decide the issue, they are wrong. If they have any conscience they should leave the issue for women to decide.'

To ensure that pressure is kept up, delegations which put in resolutions have sent a letter to the NEC, calling for a three line whip at the third reading of the Corrie Bill.

Reg Race explained: 'In this letter we have also asked the NEC to mobilise concrete support for the TUC demonstration and we hope that the NEC will be issuing thousands of leaflets and posters following the conference decision to support the demonstration.'

The wide range of signatures collected for the letter, including from the NUPE and NUR delegations, indicate the significant support for the Campaign Against Corrie in the labour movement.

Reg Race continued: 'I hope the letter will be taken back to CLPs. We have to pressurise the NEC, firstly to mobilise for the 28 October demonstration, and secondly to get the right decision in the House of Commons on the third reading in February.'

'We will have to work very hard on the Parliamentary Labour Party to change their minds on this issue.'

Campaign against the Corrie Bill

HACKNEY Against Corrie is organising a picket of Hackney Hospital on Saturday 13 October from 2 to 3pm to demand the provision of day-care abortion facilities in the area. Only 33 per cent of all abortions are carried out on the NHS in Hackney, and even the meagre facilities which do exist are endangered with the area health authority's threat to close St Leonard's Hospital.

The picket is at Hackney Hospital, Homerton High Street, E9. A fund-raising disco follows later, starting at 8pm at Hackney Trades & Labour Club, 96 Dalston Lane, E8. Food, music, raffle and bar. Tickets 75p waged/50p unwaged. For further information contact Cath Young, 986 6739.

Mass lobby

THE National Abortion Campaign planning meeting on 6 October has come up with some suggestions for action after the demo on 28 October. On 5 February, the Tuesday before the third reading of the Bill, a mass lobby of the House of Commons is proposed to hand in the petition and NAC is calling for widespread strike action. The day of the third reading will be the scene for a mass assembly of women who will make it absolutely clear to this male-dominated Tory Parliament what we think of Corrie's Bill.

NAC hopes that NUPE members

will take the lead in bringing hospital workers out on the day and that the NUT associations that have taken a pro-abortion stance will organise speakers in staffrooms and classrooms. NAC in Scotland is calling on the Scottish TUC to organise a regional conference to fight the Corrie Bill.

The overall aim of NAC's campaign is to get the trade union leaders who say they are opposed to Corrie to mobilise support among their members — male and female — for a pro-abortion stance. Local NAC groups will be aiming for days of action with workplace meetings, trade union branch meetings, and factory and estate leafleting to push locally for commitments to strike action on the day of the mass lobby.

Paris on the march

GREAT news from Paris. More than 20,000 women marched through Paris at the weekend calling on the French government to renew the country's abortion law, which comes up for debate next month. The law, which permits abortion on request during the first ten weeks of pregnancy, was only passed in 1975 for a five-year period after bitter debate.

Manchester moves

THROUGH Manchester area National Union of Students, we organised several meetings in colleges against Corrie last week. They were well attended and many further education students took petitions.

At Salford College in north Manchester over 150 students, mainly in their first year, turned up to see a film. Now they are hoping to set up a young women's group in the college.

Local activities are planned for Manchester on 20 October.



Sheffield discussion

By Liz Lawrence

A PUBLIC meeting against the Corrie Bill on 27 September sponsored by Sheffield Trades Council, was attended by 67 people. Tickets were sold for coaches to the TUC demonstration, and ASTMS in donating £25 towards the cost.

Mel Read, a national executive member of ASTMS, who was the main speaker at the meeting, called for mass labour movement action to defeat the Corrie Bill. She stressed the need to keep raising the question of abortion in the trade unions, even when a union has adopted a policy of support for a woman's right to choose.

Read criticised Labour MPs such as Tony Benn who think that abortion is a matter of private conscience not party policy, and said that 'working class women pay a very high price for MPs' freedom of conscience'.

Jane Bruton, speaking for Sheffield NAC, said that from her own experience as a student nurse she knew that backstreet abortions were still occurring in Sheffield.

Discussion at the meeting covered ways of taking up the abortion issue in the trade unions and the Labour Party; plans for factory gate meetings; the local day-care campaign, and an appeal to support the weekly NAC meetings in Sheffield.

Huddersfield

HUDDERSFIELD NAC has already lobbied one Labour MP, Barry Sheerman, who says he voted for the Corrie Bill at its second reading for 'tactical reasons'.

He said he wanted to get on the Select Committee, but admits that his

tactics may have gone awry, and he will not be voting for it at the next reading.

This is just as well since the Labour Party Young Socialists is submitting a resolution to the next general management committee of the local Labour Party calling for a vote against the Corrie Bill, which is what the Labour Party conference overwhelmingly endorsed.

Two coaches will be coming from Huddersfield to the TUC demonstration. They are organised by NAC, but one is sponsored by the trades council and is receiving additional financial support from NUPE and COHSE.

NAC has also been collecting signatures for the national petition and giving out leaflets in the town centre each Saturday. It is also holding a film benefit.

West London

WEST LONDON NAC is holding a public meeting with speakers Joe Richardson MP, Dr Berry Beaumont, and Antonia Bennett of NATFHE. It will be at the Distillers Arms, 64 Fulham Palace Rd, Hammersmith, on Monday, 15 October, at 7.30pm.

Cleveland

CLEVELAND County Association of Trades Councils is organising a coach to the demonstration in London on 28 October, so there will be transport from Teeside. To book seats, phone Monica on Middlesbrough 87616.

Trade unions are being asked to 'sponsor' seats on the coach. A public meeting is also planned for this month.

OUR SALES DRIVE

Keeping in regular contact with our readers?

By Tony Southall, York IMG

THE KEY to successful sales that are also politically meaningful is absolute regularity. There's no point in selling somewhere, however unsuccessfully at first, if one doesn't continue consistently, so that regular readers can be certain of getting their copy.

In our area we sell on Thursdays and Saturdays for a total of 5½ hours. I realise there are problems where violent opposition can face sellers — we can safely sell one at a time.

Nevertheless, it does seem to me that it ought to be possible, where there are enough people to do a rota,



to sustain a regular public sale for longer than two hours a week.

We have a 'round' of 18 regular sales. These have been established over a long period of time as a result of our comrades approaching people to whom they have sold regularly at work, on the street and so on. We offered to deliver every Thursday at tea-time.

Vicinity

One comrade went around the immediate vicinity at election time knocking on all doors where 'vote Labour' posters were displayed.

A key thing about this sales round is that it is a way of keeping in regular

contact with readers, informing them of local events in which we are involved, and taking the opportunity to get into political discussion with them.

Most of these people we visit are involved in some kind of political activity, so even if they don't come to our meetings it's a way of establishing a relationship with a much wider group of activists.

Next week we'll talk to all of them about the local Zimbabwe meeting organised by the Labour Party, the trades council and Anti-Apartheid. We'll get them to take leaflets for it and encourage them to come. Later in the month we'll do the same thing to help build the local UTOM showing

of the Patriot Game and the 28 October abortion demonstration.

We've taken advantage of SC's new accounting procedure to put out a leaflet with the paper this week and

next advertising a special offer of eight weeks' Socialist Challenge for £1.20. If we maintain our sales of nearly all the papers we receive, we'll be able to finance this out of the profit on our casual sales.

Next week I'll be distributing the five hundred or so back numbers of the past year that have been accumulated — I'll enclose the same special offer leaflet inside. We'll do the same when the university term starts.

National Zimbabwe demo on 11 November

How you can help defeat Rhodesian racists

By Simon Hebditch
Secretary, Zimbabwe Emergency Campaign Committee

IN THE last few weeks Zimbabwe has once again come to dominate the news media. Commentators and pundits who have managed to ignore the developing situation there have suddenly rediscovered it. The Zimbabwe Emergency Campaign Committee (ZECC) was formed in June 1979 to try to bring together a wide range of campaigning groups and parties so as to ensure that the demands and rights of the Zimbabwe people do not go entirely unheard at the present time.

The original impetus for the formation of ZECC was the likelihood that the new Tory government was on the point of breaking UN sanctions and recognising the illegal Muzorewa regime. The committee decided to organise a series of actions over September and October leading up to a mass mobilisation of people for a national demonstration on Sunday 11 November. This remains a major focus of our activities, and 11 November remains a day that should be set aside for solidarity work on Zimbabwe.

Opportunity

The outcome of the Lusaka Commonwealth conference, leading to the current Lancaster House talks, obviously meant that we needed to re-orient our actions to take account of the presence in London of both our friends and enemies. ZECC has organised a series of pickets at Lancaster House and the Carlton Towers Hotel (where both Smith and Muzorewa were staying), and two mass rallies in central London at which the leadership of the Patriotic Front had the opportunity to speak



ZECC — organised picket of the Lancaster House conference

directly to the British people on the negotiations and the political stance of the PF. The first rally was attended by over 600 people and the second by nearly 2,000 — an impressive turn-out of support and solidarity.

But all that is in the past. The future is what is of importance and I make no apology for asking all Socialist Challenge readers to note

the following dates for action.

Saturday 13 October will be a Mass Leafleting Day around the country in as many towns, cities and villages as possible. Keep your eyes open for your own local ZECC groups. If none exist it should be your job to help set them up in your area. Contact the Anti-Apartheid Movement office (tel. 01-580 5311) for details.

Over the last two weeks of October and the beginning of November there will be a Youth and Student Week of Action organised by ZECC and the NUS. Work and meetings in colleges and towns can be combined. We believe that it is essential that local youth are involved, not just the usual constituency of student unions.

Activity

Over the same time, and no doubt combining with the former where this is appropriate, a co-ordinated speaking tour by senior members of the Patriotic Front is being organised. Contact either the AAM office or the London offices of the PF if you want to have speakers for local meetings.

Sunday 11 November is the date of the national mobilisation towards which all this work is being geared, and at which we must have the maximum attendance. After that action ZECC will consider both its own future and further plans for activity on Zimbabwe.

I have deliberately made this article a strictly practical one, although I have strong views about the sort of solidarity work that should be pursued in the future — especially by an increasing concentration on shop floor level work in the trade union field and by finding ways of integrating our work on racism in southern Africa with racism in British society.

However, now is the time for action. The people of Zimbabwe will not thank us for allowing sober debate on the forms of solidarity work to inhibit us from giving practical help to them immediately. That means mobilising people for the activities of ZECC, especially 11 November, and ensuring that a huge segment of public opinion is brought to bear on the current situation.

Heading for a new world slump?

HOW HEALTHY is world capitalism today? And what does this mean for those struggling to overthrow this system and replace it with an internationally planned socialist economy? In the first of a series of monthly articles, ROY ALEXANDER looks at the prospect of a new world recession.

THE LEADERS of the capitalist world have been reluctant to admit it but the American economy is in a recession. Between March and May 1979 it was running downhill at the rate of 2.3 per cent a year, and almost all the other economic indicators — industrial production, consumer spending, productivity — also point downward. At the same time the Carter administration, worried about an inflation rate of over 11 per cent a year, is keeping the screws on. Interest rates are therefore rising again, making it more difficult than ever to raise cash for spending or investment.

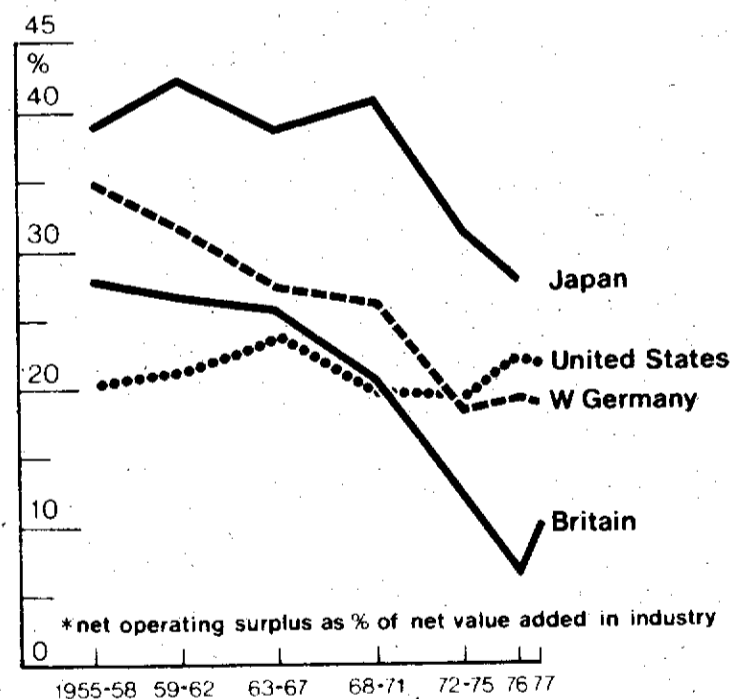
Of course the inevitable has resulted. Unemployment, which for a long time was at a standstill, has jumped up from 5.7 to 6 per cent. Carter's Treasury Secretary now says it could hit 7.5 per cent — more than 7 million American workers out of jobs — before things start to look up.

Synchronised

The big question that remains is this. Will the US slump mean just a partial recession of the world capitalist economy, with the stronger economies weathering the storm? Or will there be another 'synchronised' recession like 1974/5, with all the major economies in slump at the same time? This would make the recession that much deeper and harder to get out of.

Obviously the USA was bound to drag the world economy down with it to some degree, and the British economy was headed for trouble without any prompting. But until recently it looked as if the other capitalist powers might decline to join the club. Prospects in France weren't too bright, but Germany and Japan still seemed to be holding their own, and even Italy was fairly bright.

Profit shares* in manufacturing



But now more and more people are coming around to the gloomy view — including, at the latest count, such bodies as the International Monetary Fund and the Bank of America.

It's not too hard to see why. In France the Barre government, faced with rising unemployment and an economy slipping towards only 2 per cent growth, has just decided to spend \$1 billion to boost the economy. But that will only perk it up by half a percentage point — and won't do anything for inflation, which from 10 per cent is moving upwards towards 13 per cent.

West Germany — supposedly immune to such diseases — is still set to top the government's growth target of 4 per cent this year. But 1980 could see the West German economy in the same league as France. Much the same goes for Italy.

Britain, of course, is already in reverse gear and expected to remain so through 1980 as well.

The only ray of hope for capitalism comes from the east. Certainly the Japanese economy is doing much better than any other. It is

expected to ring up a growth figure of 5½ per cent this year — not so hot for Japan, but enough to make any British government envious even in a good year.

But the slowdown of the world economy means that Japanese exports are having a tougher time than ever before, while Japan's heavy dependence on imported oil for energy means that its costs are rising sharply. It looks as if 1980 will also bring Japan down with a bang — some brave souls even dare to suggest that the Japanese economy might actually join that of Britain and the US in shrinking.

Certainly it looks as if 1980 will be another time of trouble throughout the capitalist world. One common denominator to all this (and the 1974/5 crisis) is the jump in oil prices. This has led a whole series of people — from the IMF to the popular press in this country — to start crying 'oil sheiks' whenever anything goes wrong.

Next month we'll take a closer look at the effects of the 'oil crisis' on world capitalism.

Tackle the Barbarians!

From James Carroll

ABOUT 350 people took part in the first demonstration against the South African Barbarians rugby team in Exeter on 3 October. A march through the city centre was followed by a picket of the rugby ground, and a heartening feature was the presence of a number of trade unionists and numerous unaffiliated youth.

Seven people inside the ground who tried to stage a more dramatic protest were quickly arrested and hauled before a special court, where they were bound over for two years in sums ranging between £500 and £600.

MARTIN METEYARD adds: Flour bombs greeted the Barbarians when they arrived in Edinburgh on Monday. At short notice over 50 anti-racists joined a picket outside the North British Hotel in Princess Street. Daily pickets will be mounted there until the Barbarians leave on Sunday for their match at Hawick. This starts at 3pm and a large demonstration is expected.

The major tour demonstration, however, is planned for the march at Coventry next Wednesday, 17 October. Coaches have already been organised from London, York, Salford, Norwich, Leeds, Loughborough, Nottingham, Leicester, Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Stoke-on-Trent, Sheffield, Hull, Bradford, Manchester, Oxford and Cambridge. The assembly point is Lancaster Poly in Prior Street at 12 noon. For further details phone Anti-Apartheid on 01-580 5311.

IT'S BACK!

Belt 'n' Braces
'Accidental Death of an Anarchist'

'Simply brilliant' — Tariq Ali

From 15 Oct, bookings 01-267 6722
Party and wageless reductions

Revolutionary Communist Tendency

PUBLIC MEETING

'Imperialism in Africa — extend the anti-imperialist struggle to Britain'

Speaker: Frank Richards

Friday 19 October, 7.30pm
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1
(Holborn tube)

INTERNATIONAL

THEORETICAL JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP (BRITISH SECTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL)

DAVE BAILEY
The enigma of workers' control

PERRY ANDERSON
Theses on English class society

LEON TROTSKY
Britain and Russia

HEATHER CAMPBELL, CELIA PUGH, SHEILA ROWBOTTOM, JOAN SMITH
The women's movement and the party

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Bolsheviks and freedom of the press

Vol.5 No.1 Autumn 1979 75p/SL85

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION

'Ten years of the Irish War; five years of the Prevention of Terrorism Act'

Saturday 24 November, assemble 2pm Kennington Park (Oval tube).
March to Brixton Prison.

Troops out now!
Smash the PTA!

POW status for Irish anti-imperialist prisoners!
Self-determination for the Irish people!

Mobilisation meetings: Tuesday 23 October; Monday 12 November. Both 7.30pm, Club Room, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square (Holborn tube).

Organised by Revolutionary Communist Tendency. For further details contact: 24 Nov Mobilisation Committee, BM RCT, London WC1V 6XX.

Exclusive—

The Labour left speaks

AT THE Labour Party conference in Brighton last week two resolutions were passed which some have already interpreted as marking a turning point for the left in Britain.

Others insist that the changes — the mandatory re-selection of MPs, and the national executive of the Labour Party rather than the Parliamentary leader having the final say in the manifesto — are so much hot air and irrelevant.

During the conference, Socialist Challenge

talked to three of the most prominent figures on the Labour left and the party's national executive: Eric Heffer MP, Dennis Skinner MP and Bernard Dix, assistant general secretary of the National Union of Public Employees.

We do not agree with some of the things the three say, but their views do have an important bearing on the issues we will return to in future weeks — the way forward for the left, inside and outside the Labour Party.

Bernard Dix: A leadership which is acceptable

THIS has been one of the most significant party conferences since the war; perhaps since 1952 when the Bevanites swept the board in the elections to the national executive.

But that was a victory which wasn't followed up with the kind of institutional changes within the Labour Party which we managed to achieve at this conference.

The left has now got not just the political base from which to work but the organisational base as well.

Now we have to consolidate the organisational victories. Then, of supreme importance, we have to start building the political victories — hammer out the kind of policies which have been the background to the arguments going on at the conference.

Here I mean the broad sweep of left policies — the kind of policies associated with the broad left, with a small 'b' and a small 'l', which those of us inside the Labour Party have been arguing about for many, many years.

The various tendencies have their own arguments, but the policies I am talking about are those which are widely acceptable to the amorphous left inside the Labour Party.

You have to be careful when you are defining the Labour leadership. During the "winter of discontent" you didn't see the Parliamentary leadership on our side, but you did see many constituency Labour parties supporting our strike.

So there is a difference between the Parliamentary leadership and the leadership outside Parliament. Similarly, last winter a policy sub-committee of the NEC passed a resolution expressing support for us.

There always has been a section of the leadership outside of Parliament which has been willing to express views on these things and which has supported industrial struggles. But that view has not been reflected within the leadership of the Parliamentary party.

I think after this conference comrades in the constituencies will have the right to expect those in Parliament to at least articulate the aspirations of those involved in these kinds of struggles.

The current leadership of the PLP reflects the isolation of the Parliamentary wing from the movement in total. They are insulated; they go into the House of Commons and they see the debates that take place there as the be all and end all.

What we have to do is to ensure that the kind of Parliamentary party we have in the future is different from that we have had in the past.

But I don't believe in a struggle against the leadership in abstract, rather it is a struggle on policies and the leadership have to reflect those policies. That's the way to ensure a leadership which is acceptable

Eric Heffer: 'An important beginning'

How significant do you see the victories achieved at the conference by the left?

Eric Heffer: It is the beginning of the radicalisation of the party. The grass roots feeling in the party is that they want to see a much more speedy move towards socialist policies. Part of that argument, and a very important part of it, is a move towards much greater party democracy.

That is what it is all about. It is not true, as Jim Callaghan suggested, that the constituency parties will be taking decisions out of line with the conference.

It is the constituency representatives who go to the national conference. Once conference decisions are made they expect the policies behind those decisions to be carried out, especially if Labour is in government. That is the basis of the argument — policy translated into action. I would argue we have seen an important beginning of that.

There will be an attempt by some on the right to return to the old positions, but it is my view that a lot of this opposition will melt away.

There may be a hard core around the Campaign for Labour Victory and the Manifesto Group, but fierce declarations are only fierce declarations and when it comes down to it I don't think there will be very much in the way of substance.

Of course, they will try and get support in the trade unions and their executives and we have to be aware of that, for the battle in the unions will be of great importance.

What sort of issues should the left be raising?

We have to get down to conducting some really important campaigns

against Tory policies, such as the cuts in public expenditure and unemployment. This also means developing support for the struggle of workers in industry to maintain their living standards. These are the basics, but they are the key questions.



This means raising the issues not just inside Parliament but outside. The struggle against the Industrial Relations Act was a good example — people like myself leading the struggle in Parliament, working alongside the mass movement outside. This is the key to any victory.

All struggles for social advancement have shown that they have been most successful when there has been a combination of Parliamentary and extra-Parliamentary activity — whether you look at the suffragettes,

the right to strike, the right to vote.

Every progressive measure has won because the campaign around it has been conducted in a mass way.

Do you see the current leadership of the Parliamentary Labour Party as an obstacle to these type of struggles?

The leadership of the Parliamentary party came together to oppose the measures Tony Benn, myself, and others were putting forward on internal structures. If they are prepared to oppose what I regard as quite moderate organisation measures, it is possible they won't be so keen on the broader socialist policies. There may be verbal crossing of swords in the House of Commons, but the struggle against the Tories has to be much more vigorous than that.

When you use the word 'obstacle', what I want to do is to get policies changed and then carried out. If there are people who won't carry out the policies, then obviously they are an obstacle.

One of the criticisms expressed on the left of yourself is that you say conference decisions should be binding on MPs but on abortion rights you have said opposition to restrictions on a woman's right to choose should not be binding.

Conference is on record saying we are opposed to changes in the abortion law. But conference is also on record saying that there should not be a three-line whip in the Commons on the issue. I support both these decisions.

It is not as simple as some people believe. There are many good socialists, and I've got many in my constituency, who are very, very left wing indeed, but who take a different

view than I do.

One has to respect their point of view even if one doesn't agree with it. We have to argue with them and convince them, but I'm not going to put myself in total all-out opposition to very good working class comrades.

But I do agree, it is a woman's right to choose.

On Ireland you said at a meeting during the conference that you support re-unification. Do you think there is any growth of that sentiment in the Labour Party?

To be quite honest, the party has got terribly confused over this matter. When the troops were sent in they were sent in with, I think, the best of intentions and because Gerry Fitt and others urged that they be sent in.

If I remember rightly, there were only two voices raised in the Commons against them going in. Bernadette Devlin was one and I was the other.

I think I've been proven right. But because of my admiration for people like Gerry Fitt I've said little, although my own personal view is for re-unification by peaceful means.

The tragedy is that the working class has become divided. Our job is to concentrate on building the unity of the working class in Northern Ireland and Ireland as a whole. The Labour Party has got into this difficult situation by getting away from the class nature of the Irish situation.

There has always been strong support for these type of views, but because of the violence, people have been diffident about saying much about the issue, because of the feeling rightly or wrongly that this could trigger off further violence.

I think that is the dilemma those of us who support reunification are in.

Dennis Skinner: 'I'm not euphoric'

THE improvements in the constitution are marginal because the majority of the national executive took the view that the committee of inquiry would have the right to look into all these matters.

I argued that the committee shouldn't have been set up in the first place. It was set-up principally by the right wing who want to change the national executive into a right-wing executive from being at present a marginally left one.

Therefore I'm not euphoric about what has happened. I'm going to be on my guard and I want others on the national executive who share my views to be on their guard and to ensure that the victories won on the constitution are upheld.

We have enough on our hands when Labour governments get into power and chuck away conference decisions; we can't have a committee of inquiry doing the same thing.

If our position is held, and if we overturn the decision on the election of the Parliamentary leader then, yes, the decisions at this conference will be significant. But it's only a tiny little step along the way.

What the conference has done is to provide a little bit of enthusiasm for people outside the Labour Party to get involved. The issues on constitutional change may not have been understood in detail but I'm sure that for a lot of young people in particular, the conference has been exhilarating; for what the issues have been about is about having a say or not having a say.

What I'm most concerned about is that in any industrial struggle the Labour Party and its leadership should identify with those struggles as soon as possible.

I always regard my position as being on the side of the workers in any industrial struggle and of asking questions later. The trouble with a lot

of Labour Party leaders is that their first step is to ask questions.

So with the engineers. There may be some concern about the way that strike was being led, but still it's my job to support that strike.

Teach-ins

Similarly with British Leyland, the steel workers, the campaign against the cuts, and so on. The leadership of the Parliamentary party should be involved in all these things. They should be engaged in teach-ins and seminars trying to explain what the education cuts and the health cuts mean — as Shirley Williams has suggested.

The people who are the recipients of these cuts know what they mean; they don't need teach-ins. They need to know whether the Labour and trade union leaders will combine to ensure

that these cuts don't take place.

It shouldn't be left to local councillors to fight the cuts. I want the trade unions, white and blue collar, to get involved.

It was wrong that the issues of Ireland and the Corrie Bill weren't placed on the agenda at the very start. I and others said some provision should have been made to discuss these issues. We tried to get the Callaghan question time at the conference abolished.

It might be okay for some people to raise the Northern Ireland issue at question time, but what was needed was a debate, to get the leadership into defining a policy on Ireland, one that is different from the bi-partisanship policy of the past.

Similarly on the question of women — the Corrie Bill and all the other attacks on women's rights. The Labour Party conference should be about coming to decisions.

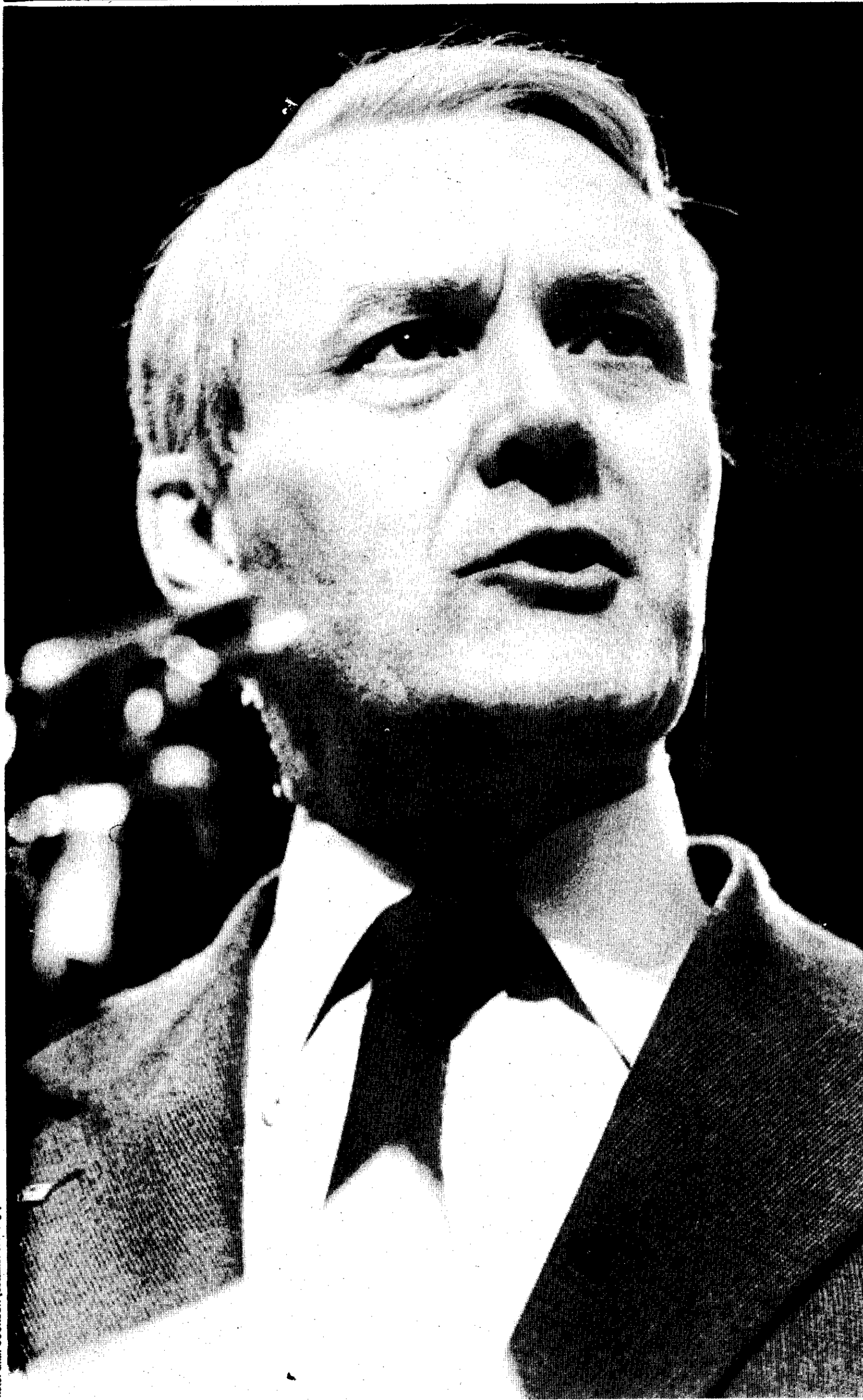


Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

THE AND TONY

By Geoff Bell

THE STORY of Tony Benn's week of triumph at the Labour Party conference can in part be told in his own words. So too can the meaning of his triumph. To begin with, here are a series of stories told by Benn at a number of fringe meetings at last week's conference.

'In 1964 I was elected for Bristol and was appointed Postmaster General. I went to Buckingham Palace and was given a bit of paper called a royal commission which said "to the right trusty and honourable Anthony Benn... make you Postmaster General". It was a nice piece of paper, but it didn't mention the election. I had somehow been blessed and had been appointed Postmaster General.

'Then there was the privy councillor's oath which I pledged myself that if any of my colleagues in the Cabinet were doing anything hostile to the royal interest I was to report them once. Then a man came along with the Official Secret Act and said: "Everything you do is secret. If you blow your nose that's an official secret."

'That was only the beginning, the first three days. And let me say, when I asked "do I have to take the privy councillor's oath?", they said "no, lots of other people would like to be Postmaster General".

Civil servants

'Then you meet your civil servants. Now they are non-political, so I am told. But they give you a brief when you become a minister, a big brief. During elections they write briefs for each side. When we won the second election in 1974 and was re-appointed Minister of Industry I got a brief which was headed "Secretary of State for Industry (if not Mr Benn)". They had prepared three briefs — one for a Tory victory, one for a Labour victory with Mr Benn back again as secretary of state, and one for the secretary of state they hoped would be appointed. And they sent me the wrong brief.

'I'll tell you the deal the civil servants offer Labour ministers. They say: "You do what you want you to and we'll pretend you are doing what you said you would do." My permanent secretary said to me when I was appointed Minister of Industry in 1974: "I take it you're not going ahead with your manifesto, because if you do you'll cross the Rubicon." But I did and ended up in the Department of Energy.

'I sat in the Cabinet — it was an astonishing experience — when in 1976 the IMF sent a man into London under an assumed name. He ran up the government, had a word with Denis Healey, and told us that if we didn't do what he told us and cut public expenditure by £4,000m we'd be finished. And we did what we were told and we cut public expenditure by £4,000m. As you still read in the newspapers that it's the unions who run the country.

Chrysler

'The same with the Chrysler experience. They came to us and said they needed money and if we didn't give them money they would go away. Chrysler? Who created the wealth for Chrysler in this country in the first place? The people who work for Chrysler.

'In March this year the City of London went on strike and said to us that if we didn't raise the minimum lending rate by 1 per cent they wouldn't buy gilt-edged securities for which government funding depends. The Cabinet raised the minimum lending rate by 1 per cent. And what happened the following day? There was a killing in the City of £200m in one day because of the raising of the minimum lending rate.

'That very same week I was negotiating with the miners and what was on the table was £1 million, for a quarter of a million miners, for one year.'

WORDS WAYS OF BENN

Tony Benn told these stories to the delight of his audience. The stories are valuable in themselves because they offer a rare insight into the workings of British parliamentary democracy. They are good, very good socialist propaganda. And it is good that Tony Benn is now telling them.

Pressures

He told them in the course of the battle for democratic reform which dominated last week's Labour conference and with which he and Eric Heffer have been most associated. He sees the struggle for a more accountable parliamentary party and leadership as part of the battle for the reform of society in general. He explains his view of their relationship this way:

'You have Labour ministers but once they get there they face these huge pressures. What we are trying to do is to help them. What Labour ministers need is the mobilisation of the labour movement. Dick Crossman described how he wrestled all night with the permanent secretary at the Department of the Environment. He never seemed to realise that if only he had told the movement outside they would all have been on his side.'

'He thought you could argue it out intellectually with the civil service, just to get the clause in the Bill that you were elected for in the first place. You have to bring the movement outside in to provide countervailing pressures. And that's what it is all about. We have been pushed out of power and the reform movement is to bring us back in again.'

The obvious comment to be made on that quote is that it is all very well to criticise Crossman for not telling the 'movement outside' what was going on, but nor did Tony Benn in office ever follow that advice.

Power

But such a criticism only removes a small layer of the icing on the cake Benn is now presenting to the labour movement. It would be wrong to minimise Benn's estimation of the size of that cake. The question he asks is: **'Why at the 78th annual conference of the Labour Party do we find the structure of power in our society so little changed?'** And the answer he gave on one occasion was: **'The problem isn't Mrs Thatcher. The problem is that capitalism is declining.'**

An obvious retort is to ask whether the 'structures of power' would change if capitalism was expanding. Indeed, it can be observed that the birth of the British Labour Party more or less coincided with the beginnings of the decline of British imperialism. So there is nothing new in observing that the failures of the Labour Party and the failures of capitalism go in tandem.

It is more appropriate to ask why this should change now. What are Tony Benn's solutions? Can it really be that the mandatory re-selection of MPs, and the final say of Labour's national executive in deciding the manifesto, is all they amount to? Tony Benn says no:

'When I hear people saying that the debate in the Labour Party is a constitutional wrangle I ask — were the Chartists a constitutional wrangle? Were votes for women a constitutional wrangle? Are the rights of trade unionists to be represented a constitutional wrangle? No, they were the claims of the disinherited to enter into their rights as citizens. That's what the reform movement within the Labour Party is about.'

Vengeance

A comparison between the struggle of the Chartists and the goings-on at Brighton last week inflates the reforms won at conference out of all proportion. But for many delegates the battle which Benn waged did have a historical and political importance which outsiders cannot

easily grasp.

For years the rank and file members of the Labour Party have been kicked around, spat upon, slandered and ignored by the parliamentary leaders. They have seen conference decisions thrown in the dustbin and replaced by the most right-wing policies any Labour government has ever implemented. Last week in Brighton Benn offered vengeance.

On numerous occasions he said that the battle was about policies and not personalities. In fact his concrete social and economic policies remained largely unspecified. He made references here and there to import controls, he talked vaguely of workers co-operatives, and sensing the mood of many delegates he attacked the Corrie Bill on abortion and called for a woman's right to choose. That was about the limit of the alternative he offered.

Applauded

Yet for many delegates such failings were not important. The motions on internal reform symbolised the chance to humiliate the party leadership in return for the way that the leadership has for years humiliated them. They took that chance with open arms, and they thanked Tony Benn a thousand times over for giving it to them. Wherever he went he was applauded, when he entered a room he was applauded, when he rose to speak he was applauded, when he finished speaking he was applauded, and he was applauded when he left the hall.

It was a bonus for the constituency rank and file that Benn took the occasional side swipe at those on the revolutionary left who have hounded them with some success these last few years. Said Benn at one meeting:

'All right, I'm not going to speak with disrespect of the socialist sects. Socialist Worker, Socialist Challenge, Newline, I read them all. I even read the writings of a certain Mr Posadas, an Argentinian gentleman. I read it because in the world of socialist thought you need different analyses.'

'But the analysis is different from action, and the framework of action is the British Labour Party — as broad as the Church of England, where you can be a Catholic at one end and an atheist at the other. We are a very tolerant party. I don't want to chase anyone out of the Labour Party. I want to bring them in; bring in their knowledge, their analysis, their dedication.'

Dishonest

To portray the Labour Party rather than the revolutionary left as the party of 'action' is gross and dishonest, as Tony Benn knows. Still, suppose the revolutionary left did accept his invitation to throw in their lot with the Labour Party, what does Tony Benn offer, what is his strategy for change?

'And yet still this country is run by the same people who ran it when the Labour Party was set up. Why has it been denied to us, through democratic change, what we were entitled to expect and were organised to achieve, through the ballot box?'

'For don't ever belittle the role of parliamentary democracy, it is not the sole instrument of change but it is an integral part of change.'

Or:

'And when we've won the argument in the party we will take it out to the country, and when we win the argument in the country we will get a government that will really do it, and then we will come up against the IMF and the EEC and we will have to do it all over again with them.'

Such are examples of the limitations of Benn. His formula is almost simplistic. Get a leadership which is accountable, ensure a radical manifesto is adopted, and then, via parliamentary



Meanwhile, outside the conference...

DURING the Wednesday afternoon session at the Labour Party conference a man tried to mount the speaker's rostrum. The microphone was quickly switched off by 'left' chairperson Frank Allaun.

Allaun went on to order that the man be ejected from the conference. As he was being led out he shouted 'Rolls Royce, what about the Rolls Royce workers?'

Allaun replied: 'Not this afternoon. There are a lot of people who are sympathetic but you cannot speak.' So the Rolls Royce workers were left to lobby and chant outside the conference entrance. Others were more fortunate.

When the conference agenda was first issued two crucial questions — Ireland and abortion — were not down for discussion. It seemed that they too would be restricted to lobbying.

But neither the abortion nor Irish campaigners were prepared to accept that. The United Troops Out Movement held a picket on Monday morning demanding that Ireland be discussed, and the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign did the same on Wednesday on

behalf of a woman's right to choose.

Inside the conference itself a petition signed by over 400 conference delegates demanded that Ireland be placed on the agenda, and no less than four fringe meetings were held on the subject.

The best attended was organised by Hemel Hempstead Constituency Labour Party, where speakers argued the case for withdrawal. Members of Hemel CLP were also to the fore in demanding that Ireland be discussed at the conference.

A number of times the demand for an Irish debate was taken to the conference floor, and finally, to the obvious embarrassment of the National Executive, the subject was discussed for half an hour on Friday morning.

Michael Foot was wheeled out to denounce 'terrorism' and the motions critical of British policy in Ireland were lost — thanks in part to the block votes controlled by the trade union bureaucrats.

Nevertheless, that Ireland was forced onto the conference agenda was a victory in itself, and reflected the growing

interest in Ireland within Labour's rank and file.

On abortion a motion attacking the Corrie Bill was finally taken and passed. Whether the national executive now organises for the anti-Corrie demonstration on 28 October remains to be seen.

Perhaps the most heartening moment of the entire conference was on Wednesday, when at the doors of the conference the Rolls Royce and abortion lobbyists chanted in unison: 'Open the gates of Rolls Royce — kick out Corrie with a three line whip'.

As for the worst moment, that was provided by Neil Kinnock, a trendy lefty MP who is more trendy than lefty.

During a fund-raising speech at the Tribune rally on Wednesday night he began with a joke about 'loose women in North Wales'.

When his remarks were drowned in protest he complained: 'When I tell jokes about Jews I'm not called anti-semitic, when I tell jokes about South Africa I'm not barracked for being a racist, but why when I tell jokes about women am I called a sexist?'

Because you are, Mr Kinnock.

democracy, the new Jerusalem will arrive.

To be fair, he does say that the 'movement outside' must be prepared to come to the aid of the parliamentarians if things start to go wrong. But the impression he gives is that this 'movement outside' is subservient to and dependent on the House of Commons and what Labour members do in the House of Commons.

To pick one of the many available holes in his argument, Labour governments have ignored manifestos on numerous occasions. Whether they are written by the NEC or a right-wing party leader is not in that sense particularly relevant.

Just deserts

Mandatory re-selection and the temporarily lost cause of the election of the party leader were also means, Benn suggested, of ensuring that promises and party decisions were not flouted in the future. But then, as speaker after speaker noted during the debates on internal reform, most of these procedures are already common currency in many social-democratic parties. For instance, is West German social democracy and the society it presides over the limit of Tony Benn's socialist dream?

Such questions and criticisms are not meant to belittle the achievement of the Labour left at Brighton last week. They gave Callaghan, Healey

and Foot their just deserts. With some justification they can claim that they are the masters now. With a growing coming together of the Benn/Heffer wing of the parliamentary party and certain left union leaders such as Bernard Dix and Arthur Scargill, an alliance is being formed which cannot simply be dismissed with cries of 'reformists' or 'parliamentarians'. Although Tony Benn is each of these things.

As to what else he is, former MP Tom Litterick commented: 'There's a lot of us who think in the same way, but the broad movement comes to Benn. All the reforms we are fighting for do depend, if you like, on the corporate existence of somebody called Anthony Wedgewood Benn. It is something he argues against and so should we... it trivialises the issues'.

It's true that it is a gross distortion to see what is going on in the Labour Party as a popularity contest between Tony Benn and Jim Callaghan. But Benn is nevertheless now the undisputed and highly popular leader of the Labour left.

One reason he is there is the wretched record of that left over the last few years, which meant that its leadership was not difficult to capture. But from now on Tony Benn needs more than words and dreams to merit that leadership. As he himself said, it is 'action' which politics is all about.

BOOK REVIEWS

Spies, kidnapers and plain old strikebreakers

Bisbee 17 by Robert Houston, Writers and Readers, 1979, Hbk £5.95

Why do they mount this gatling gun
A thousand miles from ocean,
Where hostile fleet could never run
— ain't that a funny notion?
If you don't know the reason why
just strike for better wages,
And then my friends — if you
don't die —
You'll sing this song for ages.

THIS verse from murdered Joe Hill introduces and sets the scene for a remarkable story about events in the border town of Bisbee, Arizona during the jingoist period that swept America in 1917. It covers only a few days in June and July, as America entered the war, but I imagine it was one of the most eventful periods in the history of working class America.

The Industrial Workers of the World (Wobblies) organised the copper miners in Bisbee and then closed the mine with a strike. 2,000 miners and their leaders were arrested. Then most of them were kidnapped, crowded into cattle wagons and taken across the state line.

Bawdy

The author's grandfather was a Wobbly and the book shows us the rough, bawdy company town ('... there would be no town without MY family', says 'Mr Big' Walter Douglass) and the class struggle that climaxed there.

Houston tells the story by introducing each character separately



JOE HILL was the most prolific of the Wobbly songsters and their most famous martyr. He joined the IWW in 1911 and spent the next three years as a migrant worker and IWW organiser.

In 1914 he was framed on a murder charge, sentenced to death and despite a worldwide campaign was shot by firing squad in 1915. On the eve of his execution he wrote to Big Bill Haywood, general secretary of the IWW saying: 'Don't waste time mourning. Organise.'

and attempting to show us events through the thoughts that they might have held. He takes a bit of licence as with the love-making scenes.

The book is a novel — a political western — but it is based on real events that have been well-researched but still told with feeling. And from a working class point of view.

The working class giants, leaders of the period and organised in the IWW, are all there. For example

Elizabeth Gurney Flynn, and Big Bill Haywood come to life again. Others, like John Reed and Jack London are mentioned.

The class enemy show themselves to be a ruthless bunch, as well organised as the state machine that they control.

They are organised inside as well as outside the working class movement. A treacherous spy poses as a working class leader — the secret of this person's identity remains a mystery until the end of the book.

An excellent passage in the book examines the minds of the middle class. The son of a company purchasing agent, a young army officer, is home on leave before being drafted to France to fight in the war. We see him struggling with his conscience and his class loyalties.

Another character, the Sheriff, only needs a little prodding to do the bidding of his masters in the company. He defends the property of the ruling class although, like the working class, he hasn't a hope of sharing it. It's interesting to see how he finishes up.

Logic

Political points are made with good simple logic. 'Wouldn't you fight for the country?', the DA asks an arrested Wobbly. 'Not me boss, I live in the city,' he replies. 'No, fight for your native land, I mean'. 'I don't own no land... the landlords own all the land and the bosses own all the machines. If you own any land, I'll fight you for it.'

And then: 'For every dollar a man gets that he didn't earn, another man earned a dollar he didn't get.'

The strike is broken by the bosses aided and abetted by the usual supporters of the ruling class — the priests, the politicians both high and low, and by the lack of 'official' union support.

The Wobblies fade away into history books having truly earned their place as fearless fighters for their class. But one wonders if things would have gone differently for the Wobblies had their attempts to call a general strike come after the events of the October Revolution in Russia.

It is refreshing to know that even in today's America people are cataloguing events of the class struggle, ensuring that some day the real history of the American workers will be published.

JACK COLLINS, member NUM executive.

Green and pleasant land

Quatermass
By Nigel Kneale, Arrow Books
Pbk 95p

IF YOU are eagerly awaiting the defeat of the ITV bosses so you can tune into the promised new sci-fi serial 'The Quatermass Conclusion', then forget it. Judging by the book of the same, by Nigel Kneale, the conclusion Dr Bernard Quatermass reaches, after thrilling TV audiences on the BBC in the fifties with encounters with assorted aliens, is a decidedly fascist outlook on life in 1990s Britain.

The younger Quatermass, screened in the days of CND, fought the Military for a civilian rocket programme geared to scientific and human needs. OK, so we were all naive then.

Fantasy

But Kneale has written a terminal story for Quatermass which mirrors in fantasy form the political shift to the right of the anti-establishment liberals of Quatermass' youth. It is Paul Johnson's hysterical vision of the future given fictional form.

We find ourselves in a Britain where law and order has collapsed. A National Government looks on helplessly while gangs of youth called Badders mug the elderly Quatermass. Fortunately there are some private enterprise cops on hand — refugee South Africans who have fled the collapse of the white regime but only if you can afford to pay.

Britain is part of the Third World with Professor Quatermass on hand to lament the fact. 'Remember the oil?' says one character. 'What oil?' is the reply.

The actual plot revolves around some mindless alien force knocking off the world's youth, which says more about Kneale-Quatermass' notions of what is wrong with the world than anything else. Quatermass of course sacrifices himself but saves civilisation, including, in a way which is left unexplained, bringing democracy and the Tory way of life back to Russia.

Ireland

The book ends with Quatermass' side-kick Gurov 'reluctant to leave his beloved Republic of Russia, rejoicing in its new-found freedoms, but it gladdened him too to see England, a recovering land with its soft green fields and quiet towns.' Ugh.

But worse is still to come: Kneale has Ireland reunited by 'Colonel Billy Corcoran' and his 'Protestant army, laden with Russian weapons' who march south to conquer Dublin.

I don't know if that's any less depressing than John Boyd's 'Rake hells of Heaven' which has the IRA still fighting in 2160AD. Is there no Intergalactic Red Army to save us from this rubbish?

GEORGE KEREVAN

Arcane mysteries of Einstein

Einstein for Beginners
by Joseph Schwartz and Michael McGuinness
Writers and Readers £1.95

SOMEWHERE in this book I read that nobody understands inertia. I certainly don't, but I suffer from it a lot. Books for beginners should be particularly useful for those like myself who have not been quick off the mark in the past — the perpetual beginner.

Previous books in this series have been useful in trying to explain the revolutionary politics of Marx and Lenin in a clear and entertaining way — characteristics that don't easily spring to mind when thinking about the revolutionary left. Such books can help to make revolutionaries.

But, to reverse Marx's famous thesis for a moment, we also have to try to interpret our world to change it.

Scientific research and its consequences are important for socialists to understand at least in outline.

Not even David Yaffe, I suspect, would insist that everyone must fully understand why $E=Mc^2$ before they can overthrow capitalism but we should be aware of such things. The mandarins of capitalism as well as Poi Pot would like to make obedient yahoos of us all.

It is important that we continually pry into the arcane mysteries that lurk in the physics labs. Even the most abstract theories can eventually lead to technology, sometimes potentially lethal as with nuclear power and the excitement of profits makes the capitalist's hands at best clumsy, at worst genocidal.

Einstein's theories on relativity are so far innocent of such implications but no less worthy of some effort to understand. Schwartz and McGuinness had a very difficult task. Theoretical physics is not what most people discuss on the bus and its language is very hieroglyphic.

Very few people are in a position to appreciate the haiku-like beauty which must be contained in some scientific formulas.

The first half of this book is by far the best. Here the authors set the scene for Einstein's work. They show, perhaps a bit mechanically, how even the abstract world of physics is related to the needs of capitalism, in this particular case the needs of the growing electricity industry, particularly in Germany at the turn of the century.

Gripe

The gripe I would have about the cartoons is that they tend to depict foreigners as quaint eccentrics, the sort who would come up with such weird theories as Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity.

However, the second section I think fails. After doing quite severe damage to my brain I felt cheated. The cartoons are more of a hindrance than the help they should be and there is too much reliance in the text on mathematical equations. Other books have done this better.

Only the Special Theory is dealt with and there is nothing about Einstein's more exciting work — the General Theory of Relativity and his unsuccessful attempt at a unified theory.

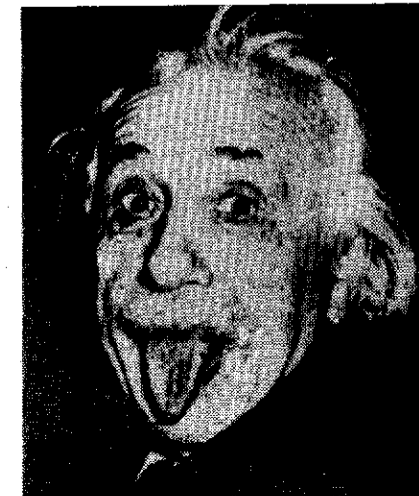
Einstein was a socialist, a very rare bird among practising natural scientists, but it tended to be of a rather passive variety, if only because his life's work was elsewhere. However, when he was called upon to intervene he failed.

Pogo-sticks

Finally, what I now know from this book is that there are no instantaneous reactions and that the speed of light is constant, all of which is very reassuring for inertia sufferers like myself. Einstein also shows how we inertia bound folk can make ourselves more time, except that we have to approach the speed of light to do it.

This is very paradoxical and my head hurts. No wonder Einstein, turned to making comic films towards the end of his life about professors on pogo-sticks. He had a great face for a comic.

COLIN SMITH



The Other Bookshop

328 Upper St, London N1
Current Books:

Trotsky, A Study in the Dynamic of His Thought By Ernest Mandel, New Left Books, pbk £2.95 plus 35p p&p.

Revolutionary Marxism Today by Ernest Mandel, New Left Books, pbk £4.75 plus p&p. Both together for £6 plus 65p p&p.

The Fourth International by Pierre Frank, Inlinks, pbk £3.50 plus 35p p&p.

What Went Wrong by Barrett Brown, Coates and others,

Spokesman, £2.95 plus 45p p&p.

Sell-Out in Zimbabwe, CIS report, 85p plus 25p p&p.

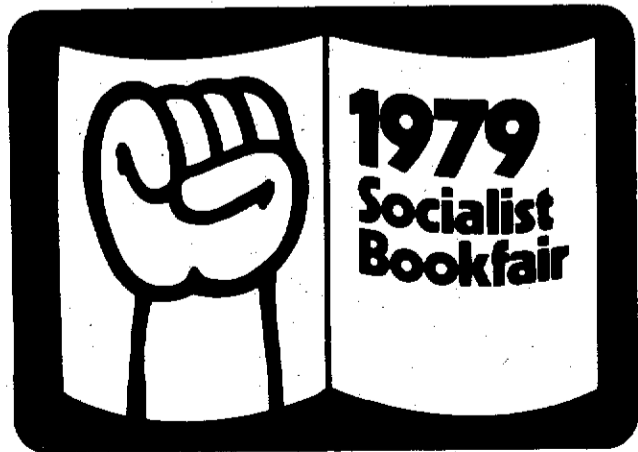
Considerations on Western Marxism by Perry Anderson, Verso, £3.25 plus 30p p&p.

A Pin to See the Peepshow by F Tennyson Jesse, Women's Press, £2.50 plus 40p p&p.

The Lacquer Lady by F Tennyson Jesse, Women's Press, £2.50 plus 40p p&p.

International Vol 5, No 1, 75p plus 25p p&p.

The most comprehensive display of socialist and radical writing from Britain and abroad at present available



Camden Town Hall
Euston Road
London NW1

Friday, 2nd November
12.30 pm to 6.30 pm
Saturday, 3rd November
11.00 am to 5.00 pm

BOOK REVIEWS



Education in ferment

Schooling the Smash St. Kids
By Paul Corrigan
MacMillan, £7.95

Education of the Future
By S Castles and W Wustenberg
Pluto, pbk £3.95, hbk £8.50

THE GUERRILLA resistance of working class boys to the demands of school is the key note of Paul Corrigan's new book. Truancy, mucking about in class, jobs and expectations, and the semi 'liberated zones' of street life, pop music, and football are all realistically dealt with, although the author oddly restricts himself to male school students.

Corrigan aims to uncover the reality of the boy's experience in school, and at the same time to strike a blow towards demystifying sociological research. He says that he started out with liberal social democratic ideas that education was an unqualified good and that the 'problem' lay in factors such as social disadvantage which handicapped the education of working class youth.

But he soon discovered during the year he spent with school students that the great majority would truant if they thought they could get away with it, and that nearly all the students saw school and its demands in terms of the power of others over their lives.

Punishment

The education system, Corrigan says, in its origins and remains today an instrument of class domination, attempting to win the 'hearts and minds' of the oppressed with ideas and blandishments, and failing that with punishment. Inevitably there is continuous resistance to the alien power of teachers in the class room and to the police in the streets.

Lots of people have pointed out things like this before but the crunch comes in the concluding chapter, 'What you gonna do about it?'

Corrigan says that involvement in the struggle for democratic demands will bring working class youth into conflict with the social relations shaping their lives. This sounds quite reasonable, but it is not followed by any

discussion of which demands would be appropriate for such a struggle, or to give examples of where school students have organised with what successes and failures.

The book ends with a call to struggle to transform the consciousness in class society of 'ordinary folk' so that history lessons are no longer about Great Men and Women, but more 'the story of you, me and the Smash St. Kids'. This kind of demagoguery isn't really a substitute for a discussion of what socialist education would actually entail.

Contrast

The Education of the Future, by contrast is short, clear, politically committed and astonishingly rich in developing a discussion on the nature of a socialist strategy for education.

Castles and Wustenberg take as their basis the Marxist theory of polytechnic education, which involves ideas such as the desirability of an attack on the divisions created by capitalism between work and leisure, manual and intellectual labour, and between education and production. The authors explain how ideas of polytechnic education first arose in the dialogue between Owen and Marx, and then examine the attempts to implement ideas of socialist education in Russia, Eastern Europe and China.

They discuss the ferment of ideas in early revolutionary Russia, expressed in arguments and experiments among such figures as Krupskaya, Schatzky and Makarenko, and the endeavours to develop education suited to 'serve the people' in the course of the zig-zags of the cultural revolution and the mass voluntarist campaigns of Maoist China. All this is set within an acute appreciation of the problems besetting those societies and of the bureaucratic degeneration which, despite the real advances made, defeated the polytechnic endeavour.

What is really impressive about this book is how it takes up the central debates on education. It discusses moves such as the demands to relate education to 'the needs of industry' in Western capitalist countries, and how far these have anything to do with the aims of polytechnic education of breaking from blinkered academicism.

The authors correctly identify such

moves as an attempt to integrate young workers ideologically into the projects of technocratic capitalism.

The content of these developments is compared in the similarities between the **Arbeitslehre/Polytechnik** school subject and allied tendencies in education in West Germany, and the ideology of 'the socialist personality' in education in East Germany. In the latter the idea of the 'totally developed individual' capable of creatively transforming society has been twisted into the goal of producing docile wage labourers in remarkable conformity to the goals of the West German system.

The authors go on from these negative assessments to discuss two fascinating European examples of educational moves in the polytechnic direction. The first, an example of an advanced form of the experimental independent school, is that of the Tvind schools in Denmark, which are radical and anti-imperialist, but nevertheless partially state financed. They impose demands of a high order on teachers, including a requirement to work for some years in a factory. Their method is outward going and collaborative, involving travel projects, direct study such as studying farming in Turkey by going in a bus to talk to Turkish peasants, and attempts to relate the experience of particular projects to the local labour movement and community.

Compromised

The Freinet movement in France, on the other hand, is far more compromised by the constraints imposed by the state system. Yet it embodies a set of 'polytechnic' goals and derives its importance from its status as a radical movement organised nationally within the state system — a movement given great impetus by the post '68 radicalisation.

The authors are quite clear that it will take revolutionary social change to effectually transform education, but they are equally clear that the content of education is itself a significant front of struggle which should be linked to others. It's not difficult to imagine the difference it would make in Britain if 'progressive' educational ideas were worked out practically and advocated by a grouping within the teachers' union.

DAVID HOLLAND

Biko—a fluid and receptive mind

Steve Biko: I Write What I Like. A selection of his writings.
London: Heinemann
Pbk 95p

IT IS now two years since Steve Biko was murdered in a South African jail. Although his family have been offered compensation — in itself an admission of guilt by the white authorities — no one has yet been arrested and charged with the crime.

In this, as in other aspects, there is a remarkable parallel with Malcolm X, the great leader of the American Blacks, whose murder also still goes unavenged.

The publication of this selection of Steve Biko's writings makes it very clear why the apartheid regime wanted to get rid of him. For, just as Malcolm X became the authentic voice of Blacks in the US, Steve Biko was voicing the aspirations of the new generation of Blacks in South Africa, the generation which led the Soweto revolt.

Nationalism

Writing 'On the South African Theses' in 1935, Leon Trotsky chastised the drafters of the theses because they regarded the slogan of a 'black republic' as 'equally harmful for the revolutionary cause as is the slogan of a "South Africa for the whites"'. .

The latter, wrote Trotsky 'is the case of supporting complete oppression ... The former is... taking the first steps toward liberation.'

Steve Biko took these 'first steps toward liberation' when, in 1968 he broke with the white-dominated 'liberal' NUSAS (National Union of South African Students) to form SASO (South African Students Organisation), a Black student body.

From 1969-72 he was active in the Black Consciousness Movement of which he is regarded as the 'father'. To anyone who wants to understand this movement, these writings are a must.

Although it is probable that Biko never read these lines of Trotsky's, his definition of Black Consciousness coincides exactly with Trotsky's statement: 'Merely by describing yourself as black you have started on the road towards emancipation, you have committed yourself to fight against all forces that seek to use your blackness as a stamp that marks you out as a subservient being.'

Revolutionary

Biko was no Marxist. He addressed himself to all the black people. This failure to understand the leading role which the black proletariat will play in the South African revolution was his greatest weakness. But Steve Biko was a revolutionary and a born leader.

That he was travelling in this direction can be gauged from the last article in the book 'Our Strategy for Liberation' an interview given to a European journalist in 1977, in which Steve Biko reflects on the new situation created in South Africa by the students uprisings in Soweto and elsewhere in June 1976.

While insisting that he was still committed to 'explore as much as possible non-violent means', he does not rule out that conditions might arise which would call for a military solution. Although he declares himself for an 'egalitarian' socialist society, his definition of this is that of a mixed economy, 'a judicious blending of private enterprise and... state participation...'

Retreat

Steve Biko was in his 31st year when he was murdered; his mind was still fluid and receptive. The course of the struggle would undoubtedly have led him to re-evaluate the means by which the liberation of South Africa from white imperialist domination would be achieved.

NIMROD 'NDABENI

Books recently received

Britain and Latin America, an annual review of British-Latin American relations, 1979, published by the Latin America Bureau, pbk £2.50.

Invaluable almanac for those involved in or interested in Latin America.

Capital and Culture, German cinema 1933-45 by Julian Pelley, British Film Institute 1979, pbk £2.45.

Theatre of the Oppressed by Augusto Boal, Pluto Press 1979, pbk £2.95 hbk £6.00.

A book about 'theatre as a rehearsal for the revolution'.
Cuba: The Second Decade edited by John Griffiths and Peter Griffiths, Readers and Writers 1979, pbk £3.95.

The Maimie Papers edited by Ruth Posen and Sue Davidson, Virago 1979, pbk £3.75.

A correspondence between Fanny Quincy, a distinguished Bostonian and Maimie Pinzer, a Jewish prostitute.

Lukacs and Heidegger by Lucien Goldmann, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1979, pbk £2.50.

Asbestos Killer Dust, BSSRS publication 1979, pbk £1.20.

A worker/community guide: how to fight the hazards of asbestos and its substitutes.
Letters from Prison by Antonio Gramsci, Quartet 1979, pbk £3.95.

Multinational Corporations and the Control of Culture by Armand Mattelart, Harvester Press 1979, hbk £14.95.

A study of the ideological apparatuses of imperialism — translated from French.

Demystifying Social Statistics edited by John Irvine, Ian Miles and Jeff Evans, Pluto Press 1979, pbk £3.95.

Practical textbook for social scientists within a radical framework.

Women for Hire by Fiona McNally, Macmillan 1979, pbk £4.95. A study of the female office worker.

From Marx to Mao and Marchais edited by Dan N Jacobs, Longman 1979, pbk £5.95. Documents on the development of communist variations.

Half the Sky collected by Bristol Women's Studies Group, Virago 1979, pbk £3.95. An introduction to women's studies.

The Novel and the People by Ralph Fox, Lawrence and Wishart 1979, pbk £2.95.

First published in 1937 after Fox had been killed in the Spanish Civil War, it combined an outline history of the European novel with personal response to individual works.

Art and Revolution by John Berger, Writers and Readers 1979, pbk £2.95. First published in 1969.

A study of the Soviet sculptor Ernst Neizvestny which takes up more general questions of politically revolutionary art.

British Socialists by Stanley Pearson, Harvard University Press 1979, hbk £10.50.

Subtitled *The Journey from Fantasy to Politics* it explains how working class interests are best served by Parliamentary politics and by allowing socialist ideals to fade — probably a good book to hate.

The Political Economy of Health by Lesley Doyal with Imogen Pennell, Pluto Press 1979, pbk £4.95.

Rejects both Parsons and Illich in establishing a framework to approach health and medicine in developed countries and the third world.

QUESTIONING THE FRAGMENTS

battle
ideas

Beyond the Fragments has completely sold out of its first edition. The book has become a focus for a 'feminist critique' of Leninism.

Sheila Rowbotham, Hilary Wainwright and Lynn Segal have refined some of their ideas in the debate around the book, which is to be published in a new edition by Merlin at Xmas.

Socialist Challenge put several questions to the three authors.

Is the 'socialist network' you talk of counterposed to building a revolutionary organisation?

HW: You've coined the word 'network' which I think implies a cohesion and organisation which does not exist yet. In discussions of *Beyond the Fragments* we have emphasised the growth of all sorts of socialist initiatives not under the control of any one political party.

Reference is always to unity between the revolutionary groups. There is rarely any thought given to the new ways of organising which can be learnt from socialist activities outside the party tendencies. Perhaps this goes back to a common assumption in the early '70s, particularly held by the Socialist Workers Party Party, that the vacuum which opened up as the Labour leaders moved further and further to the right would be filled by the growth of a new party.

But partly because of the peculiar staying powers of the Labour Party, and partly because no revolutionary organisation had anywhere near the answers to the problems we face in modern capitalism — on new technology, on new forms of sexual and cultural oppression, the double-edged features of the welfare state,

'It is all too often the revolutionary organisations who march by or march in with an assumed superiority'

the new forms of capitalist crisis and stabilisation and so on — as much theoretical and practical advance has been made independently of the revolutionary organisations as from within them.

The result is that there are many sources of socialist initiative, organisation and theory. For example, there are very political trades councils and combine committees; socialist currents within the women's movement, the gay movement, tenants' groups and Labour Party wards; local socialist newspapers resource centres, forums and cultural projects.

Revolutionary groups could and should be vital catalysts to developing greater cohesion and sharper responses from this heterogeneous movement. The obstacle, though, is that all too often it is the revolutionary organisations which do the counterposing through marching by or marching in with an assumed superiority.

It's not just a matter of them fighting for their beliefs, as we all do. It is rather that they puff themselves up pretending that they and they alone are already the socialist organisation and anyone outside is 'separatist' or 'reformist' or 'inactive'. That's the impression you get from the SWP.

Or alternatively they accept that the conditions for a mass socialist party aren't yet ripe, but then they insist that only their internal discussions are sufficiently scientific to create

'The IMG has a strong streak of that programmatic arrogance'

the programme necessary for such a party. The International Marxist Group has a strong streak of that programmatic arrogance.

How then do you think a mass revolutionary party will be built in Britain today?

LS: We know that the revolutionary left has no popular base in Britain today. We are going to have to show the highest level of flexibility and creativity in beginning to build that popular base. Not just the legacy of Stalinism but also the reality of the authoritarianism of the Soviet-type Russian state helps sustain



'A wages offensive is of little use to women unless it fights for more nurseries and a shorter working week so that more housework can be shared.'

bourgeois ideology and convince people that there is no real socialist alternative to bourgeois democracy.

Most feminists reject the idea that no real change is possible under capitalism — that we can only build an organisation to smash it. We feel that the way we choose to live now is an important part of the struggle to build

'...but we reject the idea that this goal of smashing the state dictates all the structures and strategy on the way.'

socialism. Many of us accept that the capitalist state will, finally, only be violently overthrown, but we reject the idea that this goal dictates all the structures and strategy on the way.

We face contradictions in dealing with the capitalist state. The women's movement has been in the forefront of fighting for a new kind of a socialist alternative in the NHS and with battered women's refuges, and so have those workers who have produced plans for useful production.

I do not see a possibility for building a single revolutionary party in Britain today. What I do see are possibilities for creating structures that facilitate the greatest possible revolutionary unity in practice and strive to build the belief in a possible socialist alternative to capitalism.

SR: I feel uneasy in responding to these questions because I disagree fundamentally with the political framework in which they are set. They present an overview which rests on a self-confirming but narrow definition of the scope of socialist politics.

It becomes a block to trying to work out what we should do by sharing our experiences.

They presume that someone can zoom in and make a total analysis and remain apart from the reality they are analysing. Like anyone else, I can attempt to use what I have learned from my own experience and that of others — through history and theory — to help develop this political process.

But this doesn't mean I or anyone else can usefully pop up as an individual feminist Jack or Jill-in-the-box with total solutions.

How do you define the women's liberation movement?

HW: There are, on the one hand, all the local groups, papers, and conferences which are based on explicit support for all the demands of the women's movement and which have basic feminist principles in common. But I would not limit it to that hard core. There are the more specific projects — women's aid centres, equal

'I do not see the possibility of building a single revolutionary party in Britain today'

pay campaigns, NAC groups, rape crisis centres, and women's liberation groups.

There are all the women activists in political parties and the women in Women's Voice, who may not have been in women's groups, but who have been influenced by and contributed to feminist struggles.

What do you think a socialist feminist practice is?

SR: I think this question can only be answered when we have a history of a socialist feminist practice.

I am personally unclear about whether socialist feminism is a kind of political practice apart from the socialist and labour movement and the women's movement, or whether socialist feminism is a developing approach

towards socialist, labour, and feminist politics. I incline towards this last way of seeing it.

'All men benefit from the oppression of women, however exploited they are themselves'

LS: Socialist feminists know that the subordination of women has become an integral part of the capitalist system. All men benefit from the oppression of women, however exploited they are themselves. And at the moment we are seeing an ideological backlash which aims to strengthen the sexist aspects of bourgeois ideology and re-affirm women's place in the home.

A wages offensive is of little use to women unless it fights for more nurseries and a shorter working week so that more housework can be shared. Male domination over women is not only manifested by super-exploitation of women at work, but by the ideology of sexism whereby women come to feel — as well as to be seen — as people who are inferior to men.

The daily occurrence of rape and violence towards women shows us that a socialist feminist practice should not centre solely on women as workers but in the home and in the minds and actions of women and men all the time.

Do you think the main priority for women is organising in the community?

SR: No. A small left group may decide to make a priority of certain areas of struggle because of lack of resources, but the vital feature of the women's movement has been its capacity to draw people together over innumerable resentments and sufferings which were not even seen as political by socialists.

For example, what socialist paper ever devoted much space to the subject of migraines? A recent feminist pamphlet on migraines which came out of a women and health conference has stimulated a tremendous response.

It is in the community that many women are most active today, fighting nursery school and hospital closures. I object to the argument of Lindsay German of the SWP that the women's movement relates to women 'where they are

'...the only way women in unions will get stronger is if they are supported from the outside by a strong and independent women's movement'

weakest, in battered wives' (sic) homes or rape crisis centres, rather than where they are strongest, in unions and tenants' associations. In fact, women are not strong in unions today, and we are not getting any stronger, even if our membership is rising.

I believe that the only way women in unions will get stronger is if they are supported from the outside by a strong and independent women's movement.

How do you see the women's movement developing?

LS: The women I work with agree on the following points — that the movement will develop by remaining autonomous, by strengthening regional co-ordination between different feminist activities and campaigns. By realising the strength of the Tory attack on women and working with the rest of the left and the labour movement to defend women's interests.

By demanding that men change themselves and their relation to children and women now. By realising that the ways in which we as women have learned to care for and nurture others is a better way for all people to relate to each other than the competitive, aggressive, self-centred way in which men behave.

And by trying to strengthen our confidence, creativity, and co-operation as women.

Socialist Challenge welcomes contributions

By Gregor Benton

THE extraordinary news has reached Europe that Zheng Chaolin (Cheng Chao-lin), a leader of the Chinese Trotskyists, was freed on 5 June this year, together with his wife Wu Jingru (Wu Ching-ju), herself an old revolutionary, who voluntarily shared his last seven years of captivity. They were allocated a flat in the city centre by the Shanghai Municipality.

Zheng Chaolin was a founding member both of the Chinese CP and of its relatively influential Trotskyist offshoot. He has spent nearly half his life in jail, first as a 'dangerous revolutionary' under the Kuomintang and then from 1952 as a 'counter-revolutionary' under the CP. Traditionally, August Blanqui, who spent 33 of his 75 years behind bars, has been considered as the 'record-holder' for political prisoner-ship. Now Zheng has beaten that record by one year.

Infamous

Zheng's case was recently taken up by Amnesty International, although at the time of the campaign Amnesty had no firm proof that he was still a prisoner or even that he was still alive. They were also unaware that Zheng's 72-year-old wife, Wu Jingru, had joined her husband in 1972, after he was transferred to a labour-camp in Pudong, on the east bank of the Huangpu River in Shanghai. Earlier Zheng had occupied a cell in the infamous Ward Road Jail, as it used to be known in the days of the Shanghai International Settlement.

In Pudong Zheng's conditions improved somewhat. He enjoyed greater freedom (including his own room) and could even earn a small income from teaching English to fellow camp inmates, although both he and Wu suffered persecution when the Gang of Four was at its peak. Wu's reason for applying to the authorities to join her husband was partly that she was too ill to attend to herself, being blind and paralysed. Her health has recently worsened, and she frequently collapses.

The tragedy of this old couple is all the more appalling when one learns something about their past.

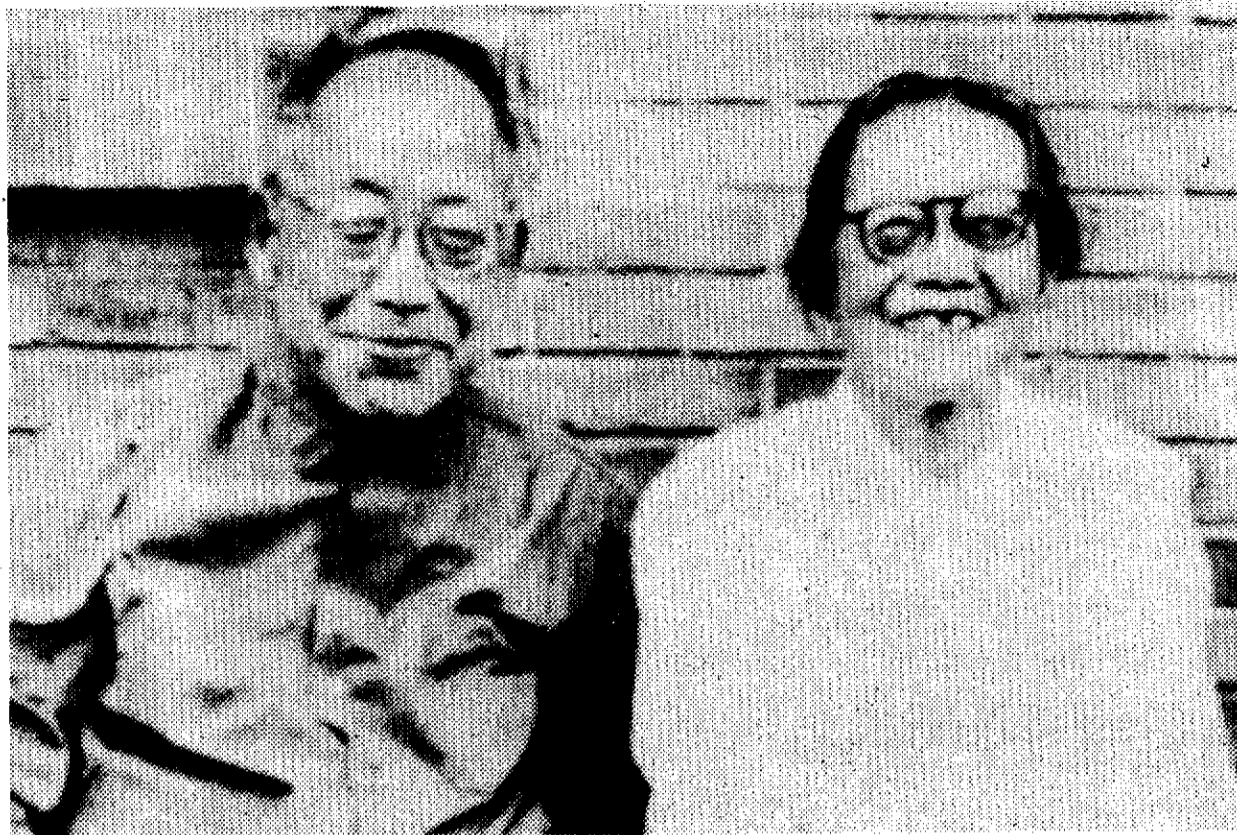
Emigré

Zheng Chaolin entered revolutionary politics in Paris after World War I, when he joined with other young Chinese émigrés to found the famous French section of the Chinese CP. Among Zheng's Paris comrades were Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yi (later foreign minister in Peking) and Li Wei-han (later head of the party's united-front work).

Zheng, who was born in 1901, went to France as a worker-student in 1920, and in 1923 was among the first Chinese to study in Moscow at the University for the Toilers of the East. In 1924 he returned to China to become secretary of the party propaganda department and co-editor of *Guide Weekly*, the main party publication.

During the summer of 1927 Zheng was appointed to the important Hubei Provincial Committee of the CP, which was directly responsible for leading the revolutionary struggles in the Yangtze tri-city of Wuhan during those stormy months. Zheng was also among the fewer than twenty delegates to the CP's August 1927 emergency conference, which represented a decisive turning-point in party affairs.

Among party workers in Wuhan was Wu Jingru. At the age of 19 Wu started work in the party's agitation



Zheng Chaolin and Wu Jingru after their release

Thirty years after the Chinese revolution One of the world's oldest political prisoners released

THIRTY YEARS AGO the partisans led by Mao Tse-tung converged on Peking. They proclaimed the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949. After a protracted struggle spanning two decades, the Chinese Communist Party under the leadership of Mao and Liu Shao-chi and the Chinese armies under the command of Chu Teh, Ho Lung and Lin Piao had achieved their objective.

The new republic destroyed landlordism in one blow. It dismantled and destroyed the decaying bourgeois state of Chiang Kai-shek. A decisive factor in the victory of Mao was the role played by the CCP's guerrilla bands in the war against the Japanese imperialists. It was during the anti-Japanese struggle that the CCP emerged as a national politico-military force. It was during this period that it supplanted Chiang Kai-shek and was seen by the masses as the only force capable of achieving national emancipation and independence.

The new regime had destroyed landlordism and capitalism. But its Stalinist parentage meant that it was congenitally incapable of establishing a regime based on proletarian democracy and soviet power. Furthermore, the Maoists ensured that the working class in Peking, Shanghai and Canton remained immobile during and after the seizure of power. This commandist approach was institutionalised by the Chinese Communist Party.

Grotesque

Thirty years after the revolution, China is today racked by a growing political crisis. It is not possible to discuss the reasons for this here (we shall do so at length in these pages in the near future). On the international front Chinese foreign

and propaganda department and 'married' Zheng (without formal ceremony or registration, as was then the fashion among radical youth in China) sometime in 1927.

The defeat of 1927 led many of the dwindling band of Communists in the Chinese towns to question the strategy of the party and of the Moscow-based Comintern behind it.

policy is dominated by the old themes of 'socialism in one country', which has led to grotesque alliances with Pinochet, Mobutu and numerous other dictators. Its alliance with the United States against the USSR is being modified, but has already led to the virtual collapse of Maoism as a current inside the international labour movement.

Origins

Internally the central thrust of every mass upsurge, regardless of its origins, has been the need for socialist democracy (1956, 1966-69, 1976, 1979). The programme of the Fourth International thus acquires a burning relevance in China today. Many of Trotsky's writings are already being circulated. Some of the more recent articles and books by leaders of the Fourth International (Ernest Mandel, Livio Maitan, F Wong) have also been translated into Chinese and are circulating.

The recent release of Zheng Chaolin and Wu Jingru, discussed below by Gregor Benton, must be seen in the context of the increasing de-Maoisation which is taking place. The political evolution of China is nowhere near ended. All the indications are that the level of political awareness within the masses is higher than anywhere in Eastern Europe or the USSR. A political revolution in China could transform world politics. A victory for the ideas of Lenin and Trotsky would mean a return to internationalist politics and socialist democracy. We should not be too surprised if China sees mass upheavals and soviet power before the USSR.

In Moscow itself a Trotskyist current developed among the Chinese students, claiming the support of about half of them.

Many of these Chinese Trotskyists were arrested and died in Soviet labour camps, but a handful made their way back to China and took with them secret documents outlining the views and proposals of the Left

Opposition. In China they won the support of a large number of party activists, among them Chen Duxiu (Chen Tu-hsiu), the founder of the Chinese Communist movement.

Zheng and Wu enthusiastically declared themselves for the Trotskyist line, and were among the eighty-one signatories of the political platform of the Chen Duxiu group in 1929. After

their expulsion from the official party, they directed their energies towards building an independent Trotskyist tendency.

In May 1931 both Zheng and Wu were arrested by the Kuomintang, along with most other Trotskyist leaders. Wu was released after several months of interrogation and maltreatment, but Zheng was sentenced to fifteen years in prison.

Amnesty

In 1938, after completing seven years of his sentence, Zheng was freed from prison during a general amnesty proclaimed after the outbreak of war with Japan. His condition was extremely weak, and he retired for a while to a village in Anhui.

After Zheng's recuperation, the couple moved back to Shanghai in 1940, where they actively participated in the underground anti-Japanese resistance. Wu headed one of the two workers' schools run by the Trotskyists (under the very noses of the Japanese occupiers) in the workers' district of west Shanghai.

After the war Wu continued her educational activities, while Zheng directed his main effort to editing *The New Banner*, a fortnightly revolutionary journal published in Shanghai.

Talents

In 1949, after a split in the Chinese Trotskyist movement, Zheng became leader of the International Workers Party. Its membership never exceeded a few hundred, and its life was cut short not long after the CP's victory on a national scale in the same year.

Zheng's old friends in the new government, recognising his considerable talents, contacted him through Li Wei-han, who knew Zheng in Paris, and urged him to compromise with them, but he refused.

On the night of 22 December 1952, Chinese Communist security forces arrested between two and three hundred Trotskyists and their sympathisers — among them Zheng and Wu — in a nation-wide raid. After a secret trial, Wu was sentenced to five years in prison.

Paralysed

On her release in 1957 she was paralysed in both legs. Fortunately she was given a room by one of her old neighbours in Shanghai, and existed on small sums of money remitted to her by friends in Hong Kong.

Of the fate of the Trotskyists other than Zheng and Wu, some of whom have been adopted as political prisoners by branches of Amnesty International, nothing is known.

Why did Zheng spend more than a quarter of a century of his life behind bars under the Communists? He stood accused of no crime other than his political beliefs. He had devoted his whole adult life to the service of the revolution. His friends knew him as a gentle man, more a martyr than a hero, motivated solely by an indomitable love for humanity.

Pretensions

One is driven to conclude that Deng Xiaoping waited until his old friend's energies were sapped by age and sickness before intervening to secure his release. This is, of course, a devastating comment on the pretensions of the post-Mao leaders to represent socialist democracy and legality, although Deng's action is to be welcomed as a humanitarian gesture.

WHAT'S LEFT

LEEDS Hands Off Ireland! Rally — Film 'The Patriot Game' and speakers, Thur 18 Oct, 7pm, Leeds Trades Club, Saville Mount, Chapeltown, Leeds.

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

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

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

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

BOOKS for Southern Africa comrades — money is desperately needed for this vital field

of international activity. Or send any books you can spare. Books for Southern Africa, Box 102, Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1.

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

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

GAY RIGHTS at work: TU day schools organised by Scottish Homosexual Rights Group for men and women active in trade union work. Glasgow Trades Union Centre, Sat 27 Oct; Edinburgh Trades Union Centre, Sun 28 Oct. For full details and registration contact Ian Dunn on 031-225 2424 ext 6298 (day), or Bob Deacon —

Livingstone 38394 (day).

BENEFIT FOR SOUTHAL Friday 12 October, with Misty, disco and bar, 7.30pm-midnight, Institute of Education Students Union, Bedford Way, London WC1. Russell Square tube. Adm. £1.25 waged, £1 unwaged.

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION! POW status for Irish Republican Prisoners, Brits Out of Ireland. Oxford, Sat 20 Oct. Assemble 2pm Chapel Street, off Cowley Road. Creche available. Evening social. Organised by Sinn Fein.

HULL UNIVERSITY FI Society and Hull Socialist Challenge supporters present, for the first time in Hull, 'The Patriot Game', in Middleton Hall, Hull University, Cottingham Road, Hull, Fri 19 Oct at 7.45pm. All welcome. Tickets 75p from any seller of Socialist Challenge, Socialist Books, or ring Angie on Hull 441922.

LOOKING for a challenge? Thanks to an Arts Council Writers' Grant, Broadside Mobile

Workers Theatre needs another versatile socialist actress (singing an advantage). We perform shows on women, racism, workers' control for trade unionists, women's groups, schools. Long term commitment desirable. Write with full details of theatrical/political experience or ring 01-470 2581/730 5396, 58 Holbein House, Holbein Place, London SW1.

RADICAL PERSON into collectives. We are a mixed collective running a community cafe and wholefood shop. We need someone who doesn't mind low wages, has lots of energy and possibly some collective experience. The person will be primarily involved with the organisation and running of the shop, but we hope that they will also be prepared to work in the cafe. Further info from UHURU, 35 Cowley Road, Oxford. Phone: Oxford 48249.

SPARTACIST League public meeting. For Workers' Revolution in Iran! Tues 16 Oct, 7.30 at Conway Hall (Holborn tube), London.

PROVISIONAL Sinn Fein/Hands Off Ireland! Public meeting: 'Smash H-Block'. Film: 'The

Patriot Game'. Plus speakers from Provisional Sinn Fein and Hands Off Ireland. 7.30pm, Fri 19 Oct at Devon Room, Anson Hall, Chilwell Road, London NW2 (nearest tube: Willesden Green). Adm. 80p. Victory to the Blanketmen! **SPARTACIST** public meetings: Down with Khomeini! For Workers Revolution in Iran! 1pm, Wed 17 Oct, Committee Room 2, Guild of Students, Birmingham University; 7.30pm, Fri 19 Oct, Room 25, Central Hall, Corporation Street, Birmingham 4 (for any other information ring 021-472 7726).

PADDINGTON & N. Kensington SC group debate on 'Can the Labour Party bring Socialism?' Speakers: Victor Schonfield (treasurer, Campaign for Labour Party Democracy) and Celia Pugh (IMG political committee). Tues 23 Oct, 8pm, in the Meeting Room, 1 Thorpe Close (under Westway flyover). W10.

LEICESTER SC group meeting: 'Build a Class Struggle Left Wing'. Wed 17 Oct, 8pm, Highfields Community Centre.

Carter fears second Cuba

By Martin Meteyard

THE US-manufactured 'crisis' over the presence of Soviet troops in Cuba reached a new stage last week with President Carter's announcement that he is establishing a full-time military task force in the Caribbean.

Carter said that this would allow the US to 'respond rapidly to any attempted military encroachment in the region.' He also announced that Washington would 'expand military manoeuvres in the region. We will conduct these exercises regularly from now on.'

Underlining the hypocrisy of all the US statements about 'foreign troops' and 'military encroachment', one of the first of these exercises will take place on Cuba itself! Two thousand Marines will stage a landing at the US base at Guantanamo Bay backed up by a naval task force that includes assault ships.

Reality

In reality, the reason for this 'crisis' has nothing to do with Soviet troops. It can be spelled out in one word: Nicaragua.

The revolutionary overthrow of Somoza by an armed and organised people scared the pants off Carter and his cronies. It raised the prospect of a new mass upsurge throughout Central America and the Caribbean which could deal savage blows to US strategic interests in the area.

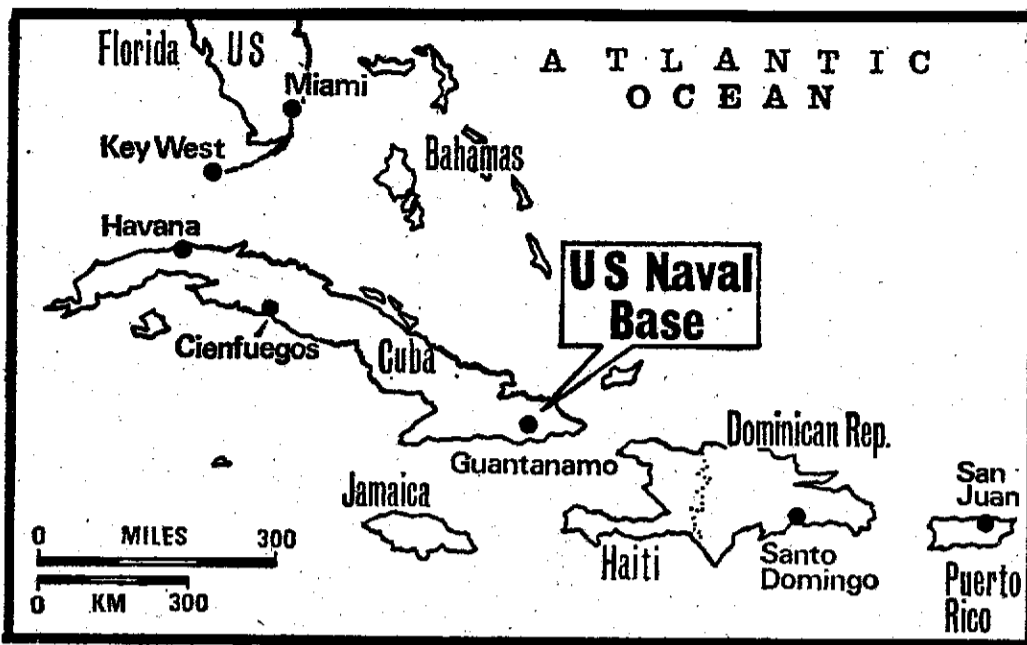
This is why the Cuba 'crisis' has been so closely linked to the question of the SALT treaty with the USSR. Nicaragua is a threat to detente, to the maintenance of the world status quo which ensures imperialism's profits.

As Carter himself said: 'The greatest danger to American security is certainly not the 2,000 or 3,000 Soviet troops in Cuba. The greatest danger to all the nations of the world — including the US and the Soviet Union — is the breakdown of a common effort to preserve peace.'

Kremlin

Carter's aim is to isolate the Nicaraguan revolution by stopping other outside aid and using the promise of US aid to blackmail the Sandinista leadership into reaching an accommodation with imperialism. He rightly calculates that the 'peaceful coexistence' policies of the Kremlin bureaucrats will make them see things in the same light.

But his current moves are above all a sign of weakness — of fear at the solidarity mobilisations which the Nicaraguan revolution can inspire among the downtrodden masses of Latin America and the world. And those mobilisations, if pressed home, can make sure that Carter simply has another debate to add to his lengthy list of failures.



The US naval base at Guantanamo, Cuba

Hugo Blanco's impressions of Nicaragua

HUGO BLANCO, one of the best-known revolutionary leaders in Latin America, visited Nicaragua recently.

'I have come to Nicaragua to learn', Blanco said upon arrival on 29 August. Blanco, who was a deputy in Peru's Constituent Assembly until its dissolution in July, interviewed workers, peasants, and Sandinista leaders while visiting a number of cities in Nicaragua, including Managua, Matagalpa, Masaya, Granada, and Chinandega.

During his visit to Nicaragua, Blanco also gathered information to help Peruvian workers and peasants launch a solidarity campaign with the Sandinista revolution.

Fred Murphy asked him what were his main impressions of the Nicaraguan revolution.

FORTUNATELY, the revolutionary process is moving forward. In Peru, we had feared that it was stagnating, or even slipping backward, because that's how it seemed on the surface, since a provisional government was formed that included some bourgeois figures.

Arms

In addition, the call for turning in arms appeared to be a negative sign. From our experience of other revolutions, it was those who wanted to put a brake on the revolution or turn it back who followed such a policy.

But seen firsthand, it is clear that the situation is much more optimistic. At the moment, real power rests in the hands of the FSLN.

On the question of arms, we learned that counter-revolutionary Somocista bands were still active throughout the country. Naturally, if

just anyone can carry arms, the Somocistas can use those arms to attack people. Therefore, we think it is correct that the people remain armed, but in an organised way — both through the people's army and the militias — in order to disarm the Somocista bands.

These are concrete questions, not abstractions, and that is how they came up in the concrete case of Nicaragua.

Peasants

In the countryside, we were able to see advances in the agrarian reform, initiated by the Nicaraguan Institute for Agrarian Reform (INRA). The peasants have taken over the land of the big landlords. And not simply the Somocista landowners, but also of non-Somocista landlords who had stolen land from the peasants or occupied land that belonged to the state.

The working class has also won gains, such as the two months' pay that the workers had been demanding. The workers wanted to be paid for the two months that they were on strike, the last two months of the war. This measure was taken by the government, which demanded that the bosses pay the workers their lost wages.

Unions

There has been a big wave of unionisation in the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST). This is also progressive. There are many other advances of the working class that could be mentioned. Many of the complaints of the workers are being attended to.

But unfortunately, much of

Nicaragua's industry has been crippled by Somoza's bombing raids. Production is at a standstill. The war was very brutal, and Nicaragua is now in a very difficult economic situation. Imperialism is trying to use this to strengthen the bourgeois sectors.

Government

I believe that the Sandinista government truly wants to move forward. But it faces many problems and the advance of the revolution towards socialism is not yet guaranteed. It is possible that the capitalist sectors will grow stronger.

One big weakness of the Nicaraguan revolution is the lack of organisation of the masses. The Sandinistas are aware of this and are trying to encourage mass organisation in all areas, including the army, workers, peasants, youth, and residents of the poor neighbourhoods. Naturally, it is more difficult to confront the bourgeoisie as long as the people are unorganised.

Sandinistas

The efforts of the Sandinistas to organise the people show that they are interested in moving forward. Even if we may not agree with all the tactics that are used, it is clear that the Sandinistas are genuinely in favour of organising the masses and therefore of pushing the revolution forward, since the organisation of the masses is the best guarantee of progress.

This shows us that the Sandinistas — even if we don't agree with all their tactics — are not trying to halt the revolution, to protect capitalism, but to advance the revolution.

Even in relation to their tactics, it is very difficult to criticise them without knowing the actual situation.

I believe that the progress of the revolution depends to a great extent on the attitude of the rest of the world towards Nicaragua. For that reason, I think that revolutionists throughout the world have a major responsibility. That is to initiate a broadly based Nicaragua solidarity campaign involving not only revolutionists but everyone who agrees that the Nicaraguan people should not starve to death as a result of Somoza's barbarism.

Aid

We must call on all humanity to help save the Nicaraguan people, so that Nicaragua can really become the master of its own fate.

We must also launch a campaign to prevent any military attacks against the Nicaraguan people, who have already suffered so much as a result of Somoza's genocide.

And we must fight against any indirect attack on the Nicaraguan people, such as the miserly way in which aid is being doled out, aid that Nicaragua needs in great quantities. Countries that produce as much food as the United States and Canada should send aid quickly and directly to the Nicaraguan government, something that has not happened yet. Instead they send promises.

Hypocrisy

They sent aid to Somoza — to help him kill the Nicaraguan people — and now they are withholding aid that could help the Nicaraguan people live.

It is necessary to build an international campaign that can force an end to this hypocrisy and provide open and direct aid to the Nicaraguan people.

TGWU and Iran

A COPY of the petition circulated at the TUC Congress calling for the immediate withdrawal of the death sentence against the Iranian Trotskyists and the dropping of the charges against them has been returned by the Transport & General Workers Union with the signature of national organiser Ron Todd and twelve other delegates and officers.

Another boost to the campaign to save the lives of these and other militants in Iran has come with the circulation of an appeal to Labour MPs against Khomeini's programme of executions by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation. This has so far been signed by Tony Benn and 28 other MPs, including eight members of the Labour Party NEC.

Protest telegrams should be sent to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Qom, Iran; and to Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, Tehran, Iran. Copies should be sent to the Tehran daily *Baamdad*, Hafez Avenue, 24 Zartoshtian Alley, Tehran, Iran; to Ettela'at, Khayam Avenue, Tehran, Iran; Kayhan, Ferdowsi Avenue, Tehran, Iran; and to *Socialist Challenge*.

Bahro: Critique conference to be held on 12-13 Oct

CRITIQUE CONFERENCE ON BAHRO, 12-13 OCTOBER

FOLLOWING the success of the 'International Congress For and About Rudolf Bahro' last November in West Berlin, which was attended by 3,000 people, the journal *Critique* is organising an 'International Conference on the Socialist Alternative and in Defence of Rudolf Bahro' in London's Conway Hall on 12-13 October.

In the words of the organisers, this will be 'very much a continuation of the work of the West Berlin conference'. Speakers like Ernest Mandel, Rudi Dutschke, André Gunder Frank, Ernesto Laclau and Michel Raptis guarantee that there will be plenty of interesting debates, but a look at the agenda reveals little that is directly connected with a discussion of Rudolf Bahro and his book, *The Alternative*.

But this should not detract from the importance of the questions that will actually be debated at the conference, and from the fact that it will provide a welcome opportunity to further build the Bahro defence campaign.

A delegation from the conference will, in fact, visit the East German embassy on the first day to deliver an appeal for Rudolf Bahro's release and a general amnesty for political prisoners on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the GDR. One of the conference workshops will also be concerned with the defence campaign. And a new pamphlet on the Bahro case, produced by the Rudolf Bahro Defence Committee, will be on sale for the first time.

Registration starts at 9.30am on Friday, with the opening address by Zhores Medvedev at 10.30am. Saturday's sessions begin at 10am. The conference fee is £2.50 per day (or £3.50 for both days for *Critique* subscribers, students and unemployed).

Intercontinental Press

EXTENSIVE coverage of developments in Nicaragua continues in the latest issue of the weekly *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* (Vol 17, No 36). Individual copies cost 30p plus 10p post, but subscriptions work out much cheaper at £11 for a year (48 issues), £6 for six months (24 issues), or £3 for 10 weeks. Cheques or POs should be made out to 'Intercontinental Press' and sent to: IP/I, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Tories against health There's gold in them thar guts

By Johann Schweik

PARISH churches which need a new steeple tend to go in for events like fêtes, jumble sales, lotteries and straightforward appeals to the faithful. Once upon a time, Britain's hospitals were funded in this way. That time is also now.

It isn't simply for those 'little extras', such as TV sets, that National Health Service hospitals are increasingly turning to charity.

The cash limits on health introduced by the last Labour government and now dear to the hearts of the Snatcherites mean that hospital administrators are going cap in hand for a few extras — such as ambulances, medical equipment, and the routine repair of wards.

In short, the Tories' policy for the NHS closely approximates to: 'Let it bleed'. They have another policy for health: 'Let the cash register tinkle'. The Tories are consistent, for the first leads inexorably to the second — with some tens of millions of casualties littered in between, namely working class people.

The plan is simple enough, as the balance sheets of the British United Provident Association show. This outfit, the largest of the health insurers, had a subscription income last year of £82m. It paid out £50.7m in benefits. Eureka!

Trick

The trick is to mainly insure those age groups and categories least likely to require health treatment. For the over 65s, the chronic sick, and the disabled the premiums are much steeper. The mentally ill and pregnant women can forget it. In other words, those most in need of health care can make do with the NHS, which is falling to pieces. Oh, sorry.

Who gains? The private health insurance companies for a start, and they now cover 2.4m people in Britain, 25 per cent more than in 1971. Then there's the private medical companies, such as American Medical International, which is a multi-national with hospital projects in Britain, Switzerland, and Austria.

And there is also those esteemed members of the medical profession, most particularly a large



number of consultants, who will give an arm and a leg [ours, that is] for a weekend villa in France and a Rolls Royce.

The result is that by March of this year there were 122 private hospitals in Britain dealing with acute cases.

All these doctors of death rubbed their hands when the Snatcherites took over in Westminster, for they, of course, are the merchants of 'free enterprise'. 'We intend to facilitate the wider use of private medical care,' the Tories said in the Queen's speech.

So what are they up to? The Tories want to see more private health schemes, in defiance of the recent Royal Commission on the NHS. They've said they will abolish the Health Services Board, which was set up to phase out the 3,000 pay beds in NHS hospitals.

They will make life richer for the consultants,

by making it easier for them to work both within the NHS and do private work. And small hospitals which are axed from the NHS will be handed over to the private sector.

How do we save the NHS, and our lives? By opposing all the cuts and defending health service jobs. By fighting for the NHS to provide facilities for which many people presently depend on charities or private hospitals, such as day-care abortion units and kidney machines.

By taking direct action to convert pay beds into NHS beds, and preventing the building of any more private hospitals. By demanding an immediate stop to unions such as the electricians' supporting private medical schemes, and that the whole of the private sector be brought into the NHS.

For if we don't, the doctors of death will be waiting for us.

Our external Aunty

By Geoffrey Sheridan

IT SEEMS that all across the globe tears are being shed at the Tories' proposed 10 per cent cut in the budget of BBC External Services — the voice of Britain relayed to foreign parts.

Wrote Chris Hitchens in the *New Statesman*: 'It may seem odd to some people that a government pledged to restore "Britain's standing in the world" should commit such an act of vandalism against a precious national resource.'

And the two unions whose members are threatened by the proposed £4m cut — the NUJ and ABS — have risen to this latter day John Bullism, launching a joint 'Hands off the BBC' campaign in order to defend the 'national interest' as well as jobs.

Empire

The Tories evidently have a better appreciation of the shrunken role of British imperialism than those who claim to have abandoned that particular faith.

Fact one: BBC External Services, which began in 1932 as the Empire Service Broadcasts, is funded from the Foreign Office's 'information vote'. Fact two: BBC management is always at pains to deny that this implies any governmental control over editorial policies. Yet the only example ever wheeled out to support this contention is the reporting of the Suez invasion, which occurred a mere 23 years ago.

With daily broadcasts in 38 languages, few in Britain can claim to know just what is being beamed into distant transistor sets. But the incidents which from time to time shed some light on the goings-on at Bush House suggest that the British state is well served by External Services.

Censorship

The censorship and sacking of Jorge Ribeiro and Antonio Cartaxo when the challenge to capitalism in Portugal was at its height in 1975 showed that it was acceptable to have left-wing broadcasters when a right-wing dictatorship was in power, but not once it was overthrown. (Trade unionists at Bush House, by the way, did absolutely nothing to defend Ribeiro and Cartaxo).

No doubt BBC External Services provides a less biased, or at any rate a differently biased news service than many of the repressive regimes around the world, but that is not the criteria by which the labour movement should be called on to defend jobs.

Monitoring

It was British imperialism which helped to instal and maintain many of those regimes, and it is in the interests of the working class that they are removed.

From this consideration, as well as that of press freedom, the opposition to the cuts in External Services should be based on the demand for full access to be given to national liberation movements. Left-wing East European dissidents should also be provided with access.

During the dying days of the Shah's rule, the BBC allowed the Iranian embassy in London to listen in to External Service broadcasts through a direct link to Bush House. If the BBC can be so courteous to the likes of the Shah, it can do the same for everyone else who wishes to know what the Foreign Office's Aunty is up to. Monitoring facilities should be made readily available.

Cutting up rough

SS 1979 style

A SMALL pointer to life under the Tories. An unemployed reader who went to claim social security benefits in North London was told that in addition to his rent book he would need a letter from his landlord in order for SS to cover his rent.

The reader, surprised by this demand, explained that his landlord wasn't at all forthcoming about providing this kind of evidence. In fact, it was extremely difficult even to get a rent book out of him.

The SS officer was insistent. Finally, the reader suggested that a visitor should be sent to his flat to confirm the facts about his claim. The officer went off for advice, and came back to say: 'Sorry, but the cuts have meant that we're short of visitors.'

All of which suggests that we should oppose the Civil Service cuts, but it would help if the Civil Service unions took up a fight for claimants' rights.

Oxfordshire nurseries

By Annie Pile

OXFORDSHIRE county council is not finding it so easy to carry out its policy of closing all nurseries in the area.

A lobby of the council's education committee last Thursday was joined by teachers, after Oxford city NUT had voted unanimously for a half-day strike in opposition to the planned closures.

In Burford and Witney, the NUT has voted support for the campaign and will have a half-day strike on 13 November, the date of the next full meeting of the county council, when the decision on education cuts will be taken.

The CPSA in Oxford is, also supporting the campaign.

As well as lobbying the meetings mentioned above, the campaign has been petitioning in defence of the nurseries. Oxford Trades Council held a public meeting on the cuts yesterday, and has called a demonstration for next Sunday.

Illogical axe

NUPE members at the Bolingbroke Hospital in SW London staged a one-day strike on Tuesday against the conversion of the general hospital to exclusively treating old people, as part of the area health authority's plan to save £6m.

Ian Scott, a full-time official for NUPE, says: 'Management's proposals are completely illogical. The Bolingbroke has no specialised facilities for geriatrics and it is carrying out important surgical work for the community.'

'The area health authority should keep St Benedict's in Tooting open for geriatrics and stop playing with people's lives in such an irresponsible way.'

Nottingham lobby

By Brian Simister, vice-president, Nottingham Trades Council

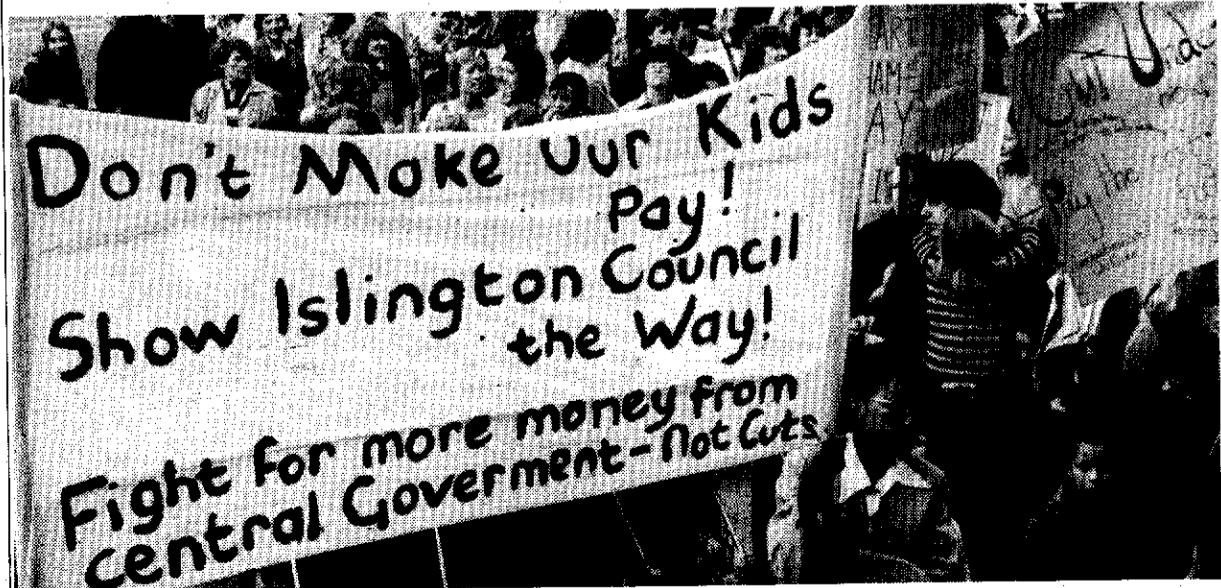
LOCAL authority union officials in Nottingham who went to see the Tory county council about its proposed cuts were not entirely happy with the outcome of the discussions.

The result — a lobby of the county hall on 16 October, from 12.15 to 2.15pm. Virtually every public sector union will be supporting it, calling on the Tories to halt the cuts now. Several thousand are expected on the lobby.

Jump in student fees

MANY overseas students at North London Polytechnic this term have not been able to pay the extortionate and racist increase in tuition fees, which have risen by a third to £1,026, in line with government policy.

They have been enrolled as temporary students, paying fees for a month only. The students' union at the Poly meets in a fortnight to decide what action to take.



TO GO in Islington, North London: playgroups, childminder centres, Mother and Toddler clubs [sic], and more besides, because the Labour council aims to cut 52 per cent of its grant aid to under fives' projects.

Six hundred local people, many of them parents and young children, marched against this axe last Saturday,

The next council meeting is to be lobbied, on 16 October at 6.30pm, Islington Town Hall, Upper St, to be told by Islington's mayor that the cuts were 'the way of the world'.

London N1. Details from Maggie McDonald 01-278 1713 [day], 01-278 2682 [eve].

Socialist Challenge

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Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM (Report)

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Tariq Ali fined

TARIQ Ali, the editor of *Socialist Challenge*, is the latest to be convicted in the Southall show trials arising from the police riot on 23 April. On Tuesday, Ali was fined £150 for obstruction, plus costs. He is appealing the conviction.

Stipendiary magistrate McDermott ignored evidence from a police surgeon that Ali had suffered head injuries 'compatible with a blow



from a truncheon' [he had been forced to run a police gauntlet] and was therefore in no state to obstruct anyone.

On Monday, McDermott handed out a one-month jail sentence for 'threatening behaviour'. For the latest on the Blair Peach murder, see page 3.