

Socialist Challenge

10,000 more steel jobs to be axed

CHOP JOSEPH NOT JOBS

IAN MacGregor, the new boss of British Steel, is calling for the axeing of at least 10,000 more jobs in the steel industry.

That is the stark message from MacGregor and his Tory mentor Keith Joseph.

MacGregor only started work on Tuesday but already he is planning to close one steel-making plant in Llanwern, another in Scunthorpe, and a third at Port Talbot.

This comes on top of the 50,000 jobs which are already being sacrificed in the steel industry on behalf of the 'unemployment is necessary' politics of the Tory government.

In reply to criticism of these and other closures, Joseph had the nerve to blame working people. If trade unions demanded less money, he said at the weekend, there would be more jobs to go around.

The crazy logic of Joseph has rarely been laid so bare. The facts are that the highest unemployment regions — like the North of Ireland, — have also the lowest wage rates. The truth is that British steelworkers are already among the lowest paid in West Europe.

The losses the British Steel industry is facing are not the fault of those who work there. Throughout the capitalist world the steel industry is in a

mess. That unemployment is growing at an accelerating rate in this country is not the fault of the trade unions — because unemployment is also growing throughout the Western world.

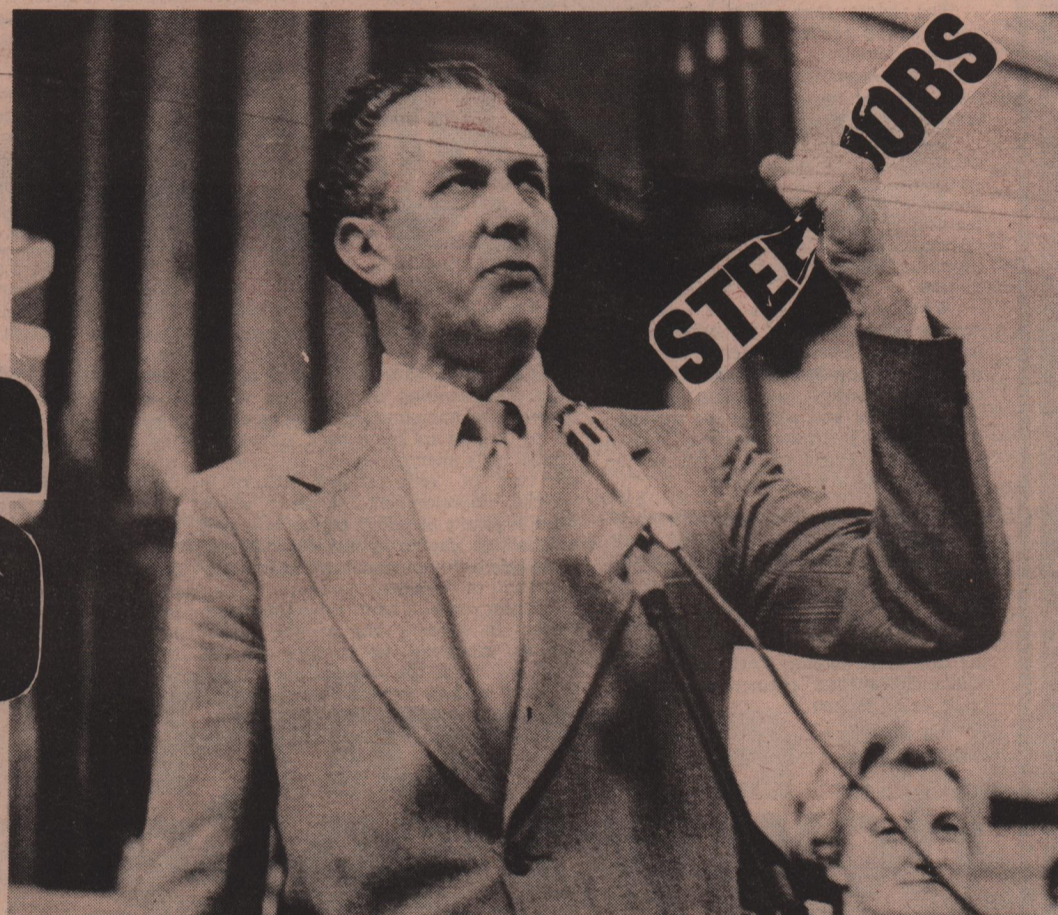
Which means the recession facing British industry — including the steel industry — is not the fault of working people. Therefore working people should not be made to pay the price of a declining economy, over which they have no control in the first place.

The answer to Joseph, MacGregor, and to those who think like them is to fight every closure and defend every job.

Wherever there is a shortage of work, that work should be shared out — but not at the expense of the living standards of those who do the sharing.

In the steel industry steelworkers have the chance to give Ian MacGregor a baptism of fire by saying:

**No closures!
No redundancies!
No loss of pay!
Share the work!**



Warrington, Consett lead fightback

By Pat Kane

THIS week steel boss MacGregor is due to meet the unions for the first time. On the agenda will be the closure of the main Warrington steel plant at Bewsey Road.

Steel Corporation management is running down stocks at Warrington and has been turning away orders in preparation for the 19 July closing date.

But the Warrington workers have also been preparing. They have been contacting other mills that can handle their orders, and making sure that their work is boycotted.

Already workers at Rotherham, Skingrove, and Scunthorpe have decided not to handle their orders.

ISTC Warrington convenor Colin Herd told Socialist Challenge: 'If we can ensure that no other steelworkers handle our work, then we stand a chance of saving our jobs.

'Some might argue that this means less jobs for other areas, but MacGregor intends to cut thousands of jobs. We are in the front line of this fight, but it will be them tomorrow. Consett is the next to go in September, and others will follow.'

Warrington stewards have been told informally that there is the possibility of part of the plant being sold off to private enterprise. Private industry may want to buy part of the plant — but the experience at Shotton shows that they certainly don't want to save jobs.

At Consett the fight against redundancy is beginning in earnest with a lobby of parliament next week. A thousand of the 4,000 Consett workers will be there, and every other BSC plants should be represented.

John Lee, secretary of Consett works committee, said last week: 'Forget your internal differences and get together. If you don't it could be your turn next. We should all be joining forces

on a national basis.'

If the closure of Consett goes ahead unemployment in the town will rise to a staggering 40 per cent.

The Tories are continuing their attacks on the nationalised industries — next in line is coal. As Arthur Scargill put it: 'The spectre of pit closure is once again over our industry'. He warned that the Coal Board plans to close around 50 pits. Most of these will be in steel areas like South Wales.

MacGregor and the Tories are challenging the steelworkers, this time over jobs. The same response as in the steel strike is necessary — solidarity.

Support for Warrington and Consett is the best way of starting the fight against all steel closures. The Llanwern Action Committee has produced a charter of demands as a way forward against closures. Its demands against all closures and for work sharing with no loss of pay should be taken up in every plant.

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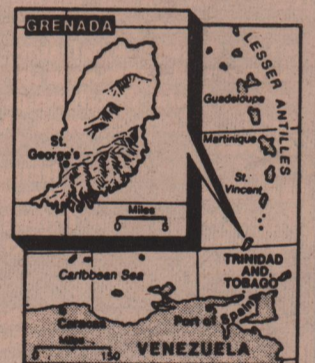
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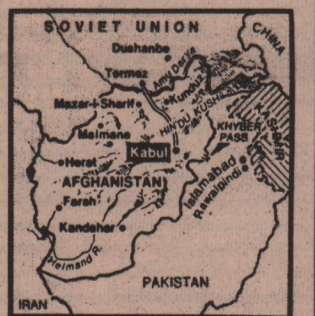
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LOBBY THE TUC FOR JOBS

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)

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HOMENEWS

Lobby for jobs

The savage twists of the economic slump

By Patrick Sikorski

IF there is anything which savagely indicts this Tory government it is last week's announcement of a 10 per cent increase in unemployment in just one month, bringing the figure to 1,659,676 — the worst since the war.

The latest forecast by the highly authoritative ITEM Club (Independent Treasury Economic Model Club) published in the *Guardian* a week last Monday predicted that the figure will double, to reach three million by 1983.

Slumps are the regular and inevitable price we pay for living under the capitalist system of competition for profits. But these slumps are made worse by a second feature of this outdated 200-year old system: permanent inflation. Every capitalist economy is afflicted with this disease.

When Thatcher says she wants to squeeze inflation out of the system she is backing the bosses' determination to reduce inflation levels so that they can compete for orders. In a period of boom, this would be bad enough for workers. But during an international slump, it gives a series of savage extra twists to the downward spiral of the slump.

However, it is misleading to speak of 'de-industrialisation' as do many trade union leaders today. It's true that South Wales stands to lose three quarters of its present steelmaking industry and all its mines. And Clydeside and the Tyne have already lost most of their heavy engineering and shipbuilding. Furthermore, the Midlands car and engineering industry could be decimated.

But what lies behind his notion of 'de-industrialisation'? Nothing other than the

rotten old social contract arguments: 'We are the true patriots, the only ones with the interests of Britain at heart'. Len Murray echoed these familiar sentiments at the mass TUC demonstrations on 9 May.

We've got to get straight right from the start that Britain's economic crisis is a classical crisis of capitalist over-production. Just look at the acres of unsold cars in the car depots of the major firms here and in other capitalist countries. These stocks have led to massive cash-flow problems for the bosses — as the collapse of Chrysler and the coming disaster in Fords attest to.

A massive 'cut our losses' operation is response. And this leads to short-time working, layoffs, and wholesale closures of small factories in the supply industries.



Only the big firms with enormous reserves in the banks can survive. They convert this money into gold or silver and invest in petro-currencies to help them ride out the storm.

If successful, they re-start their operations concentrating on countries where the workers' movement has been smashed up by failing to fight back effectively against mass unemployment. This is when the type of 're-investment' occurs in 'special development areas' where massive grants of public money is sought to establish 'capital intensive' industries, using new technology and employing only a handful of workers.

Import controls can't solve these problems. In today's era of the multinational company, no country can cut itself off from the international crisis. Workers need to organise internationally more than ever today to prevent the multinationals from playing us off against each other.

The best basis for a fightback in defence of jobs is one that recognises that workers, who have no control over decision-making in the economy, bear no responsibility for the crisis. Far from having a duty to tighten their belts, workers have one fundamental responsibility to themselves and their class: to protect living standards and jobs.

A fightback involves strong independent organisations, free from the entangling web of participation that is at the root of all the many setbacks suffered by British Leyland workers. And it involves an active campaign against all attempts to interfere with workers' rights through company or government funded ballots; to restrict the closed shop; or to curtail pickets.

This calls for a different type of shop stewards movement: a more political one. Traditionally, shop stewards have gained their real strength from being able to bargain for the piece rate. When measured day working came in, power over conditions on the job remained possible — for instance, over the speed of the track. It is this degree of strength which is being eroded as managements capitalise on the Leyland defeat and impose new work practices, backed up by the threat of the dole queue.

A stewards movement capable of fighting back against job losses needs a set of alternative policies to solve the crisis of lay-offs and closures of individual factories. But it also needs answers at the level of government policy. The framework of that set of demands must be to start the fight with the aim of kicking out the Tories.

The Llanwern Action Committee has recognised the need for alternative

policies and its draft charter, published in Socialist Challenge last week, is a step in the right direction.

A growing fight for these kind of policies, which involve occupations and demands for nationalisation of firms under workers' control, would immediately precipitate a massive government crisis. That is why Len Murray ruthlessly sold-out the developing general strike in Wales during the steel strike. This growing movement would have focused on steel and pit closures and it would have spread.

So workers involved in the actions which are vital today should be clear that success will be nearer if there is agreement that they are organising in defence of their jobs; they are fighting to kick out the Tories; and they are calling on the next Labour government to nationalise all the major industries and financial institutions and to initiate a crash programme of public works that will create jobs.

Within this overall anti-Tory framework, Socialist Challenge fully supports the Right to Work lobbies of the TUC and Tory Party conference. In South Wales, both the International Marxist Group and Revolution Youth will be supporting the efforts to build these lobbies.

Of the two targets for the Right to Work march, however, Socialist Challenge will make the overwhelming priority the TUC lobby. It is the leaders of the unions that must be forced to start taking effective action now against job losses. Furthermore, we will be concentrating on mobilising trade unionists to not only support, but to attend the lobby.

While it is vital to channel the anger of the unemployed in a socialist direction — especially the youth who are otherwise easy prey for the fascists — it is among the presently employed, and therefore organised, workers that the battle against mass unemployment will be won or lost.

Those who attend the lobby of the TUC organised by the Mobilising Committee Against Unemployment will be telling the TUC this September that if it doesn't start organising then the lobbies will be organising — to get them out, to replace them with leaders who will.

How to stop Cruise missiles

By Redmond O'Neil

THE reaction by the right wing of the Labour Party to the 22 June demonstration against nuclear arms was swift. A week before the event William Rodgers, Shadow Minister of Defence, was given massive coverage in the Fleet Street press for his denunciations of the demonstration and its political basis.

Rodgers was taking a leaf from the book of Hugh Gaitskill, who centred his offensive against the Labour left in the late fifties and early sixties around the question of disarmament.

The importance attached by the right-wing to the issue reflects its importance to the British ruling class. For Britain to renounce the stationing of Cruise missiles on its soil would create a massive crisis within imperialism's chief military alliance, NATO.

Unilateral disarmament would provoke a head-on collision with the allies of Thatcher in Washington. It would upset the whole system of military alliances established by imperialism since World War Two.

For that reason the British ruling class, and their backers in the right wing of the labour movement, will resist any campaign against nuclear re-armament with the utmost ferocity.

At no time has this been more true than now. The USA is not about to go to war with the Soviet Union. But Carter's government is preparing for massive intervention to attempt to hold back the wave of anti-imperialist struggles which are sweeping the old bastions of American power in the semi-colonial countries — from Iran to South Korea, from South Africa to the Caribbean, from Brazil to

Nicaragua.

But the US government can't afford another Vietnam. It has to convince American workers of the 'Soviet threat' if it is to get away with new military adventures against the colonial revolution.

Healey.

Unfortunately the left has shown no such clear-sightedness. The most striking thing about the Labour Party speakers at the 22 June demonstration was their timidity.



The placing of Cruise missiles in West Europe takes place in the context of imperialist re-armament. The aim is to whip the US ruling class's European allies into line behind the war-drive.

Any movement against the stationing of Cruise missiles in Europe therefore runs slap bang up against the US war-drive and the British government's part in it. This is recognised by the British ruling class and by the right wing of the labour movement from Rodgers to

Michael Foot went no further than calling for 'no increase' in nuclear weaponry. As for most of the other speakers, you would have thought NATO did not exist!

Mary Calder, speaking as a member of the 'Campaign for a Nuclear-free Europe — from Poland to Portugal', tied withdrawal from NATO to the break-up of the Warsaw Pact.

Any campaign which ties British nuclear disarmament to that of the War-

saw Pact will itself be disarmed in the face of the inevitable ruling class counter-offensive, which will centre on 'our commitments to our NATO allies against the Soviet Union'.

The only response to this type of argument is the demand for unilateral disarmament and withdrawal from NATO. The British government must disarm now without any preconditions. This demand is necessary if we are not to fall into the traps set by the ruling class's propagandists.

Today there are tens of thousands of workers and youth prepared to march against Cruise missiles. We don't demand of these activists that they agree with us before they march. But equally it would be a disaster for the CND, END or the Labour left to make their own slogans for 'neutrality' in Europe a precondition for united mass action.

What is necessary today is the broadest possible campaign of mass action around the demands 'No Cruise Missiles', 'No Replacement for Polaris', 'Scrap nuclear weapons'.

So whatever differences exist on other questions the campaign to stop Cruise missiles must be organised nationally and locally as a movement based on open united front bodies.

We urge Socialist Challenge readers to begin establishing such campaigning bodies right away. Nationally the momentum of the 15,000-strong turn out on the 22 June demonstration must be built upon by setting a date for further national action in the autumn.

Revolutionary socialists will fight to take this kind of mass action campaign into the labour movement and within it argue the case for Britain to withdraw from NATO now — before it's too late.

Building such a movement is the best contribution that socialists in this country can make to stopping the imperialist-war-drive on a world scale.

'Left unity-key to democracy'

By Jon Lansman

THE struggle for democracy in the Labour Party has been a long one. It is unlikely to be totally resolved this year. But with the Commission of Inquiry and mass press coverage (albeit in the personalised form of a leadership struggle), it was bound to reach something of a climax this year.

The Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy has the task of ensuring that the influence of the rank and file on the party's policy determination is not put in jeopardy by the rearguard action now being waged by the parliamentary leadership and certain trade union bureaucracies. It is therefore fortunate that the committee represents an unprecedented degree of left unity inside the Labour Party.

The inclusion of Militant and the Labour Party Young Socialists sees the burying of the sectarian hatchets which have divided the campaign for party democracy in the past.

Defence

The strength of the support behind the mobilising committee's aims was recognised by the six members of the commission who made such a firm stand in defence of the rank and file (Allaun, Atkinson, Benn, Heffer, Lestor and Richardson). It can only be regarded as remarkable that the remaining members managed to ignore so completely the wishes of the rank and file as expressed in the various evidence to the inquiry.

Ninety per cent of submissions were in favour of mandatory reselection, and yet six members were against it. Eighty-six per cent of submissions were in favour of giving the final say on the party manifesto to the National Ex-

Labour Party rank and file speakout

ecutive Committee, but the commission majority decision was to give ultimate control to an entirely new tier in the Labour Party structure, which until then had been suggested by no one.

To some extent we should welcome the commission's recognition of the need for expanding the electorate of the leader of the party with the implication that the leader should be accountable to the whole party. However, the proposed structure of the electoral college is fundamentally different from that of the electoral college advocated by the mobilising committee.

Its size and composition (50 per cent MPs, 25 per cent trade unions, 20 per cent constituency parties and 5 per cent socialist societies — and only about 100 people in all) render it barely accountable to anyone and in effect enshrines the parliamentary veto.

Its members could be only indirectly elected (before the candidates are announced and unmandateable) so that the participation of the rank and file would be minimised; most organisations would be effectively disenfranchised.

Usurp

Since it would be totally separate from the existing structures in the party, it would usurp many of the functions and powers of conference. Since all 50 MPs in the college would be from the majority (i.e. right-wing 'manifesto') group, and it would need only one more vote (that of Terry Duffy) to be a majority, it would actually increase the powers of the parliamentary party to make policy.



MOBILISE FOR LABOUR DEMOCRACY

- 1 Defend mandatory reselection
- 2 DEFEND THE NEC
- 3 NEC must decide the manifesto
- 4 The Party must elect the Leader
- 5 MAKE THE PLP ACCOUNTABLE

Rank & File Mobilising Committee

Launched by:

- Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Clause IV, Independent Labour Publications, Institute for Workers' Control, Labour Coordinating Committee, National Organisation of Labour Students, Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory.

Contributors include:

- Tony Benn, Vladimir Dzerzh, Richard Lever, Ken Livingstone, Frances Marshall, Rosemary Brian Sedgemoor, Audrey Wise, Bob Wright

20p

The difference is enormous but confusing — which highlights the danger of the electoral college. The commission majority realised that a defence of the status quo was politically untenable.

However, it now appears that the majority who advocated it are divided among themselves: Duffy says he will cast the AUEW's 900,000 votes against it, and Callaghan/Foot probably only supported it on the assumption that it would fall at conference and leave the status quo — which it almost certainly would if it was actually put to conference.

The disarray of the right is so severe that there might not even be a majority report, which would strengthen the left and the mobilising committee. The majority proposal on the control of the manifesto is therefore perhaps even more of a threat to the rank and file.

If their proposed electoral college had control, that would be considerably worse than the present system, since, with half the college, the parliamentary party would be in absolute control. Whatever the composition of the college, to give it any powers other than the election of the leaders would be to subvert the supremacy of conference.

Whatever happens at conference this year the struggle will continue; but there is an opportunity this year to make fundamental changes in the nature of the Labour Party. So no opportunity should be lost to put pressure on the Labour Party NEC, trade union executives and conference delegations.

John Lansman is the secretary of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee.

Offers to help to organise rallies, or to distribute our broadsheet 'Mobilise for Labour Democracy', to Jon Lansman at 10 Park Drive, London NW11 (01-458 1501).

The mobilising committee college, on the other hand, is simply conference in a different form. The leadership election would take place as part of normal conference procedures, but the votes would be counted differently. Half the votes would go to the industrial wing of the movement — the trade unions — and the other half to the political wing, through MPs or candidates and constituency parties.

All constituencies, all trade unions and all MPs or candidates would have a vote.



Duffy: 'I will withhold funds' threat

TERRY Duffy, president of the Engineering Union, has been outspoken against the Labour Party national executive's attempts to democratise the party. Last week, having been defeated on the Commission of Inquiry, Duffy threatened to withdraw his union's £300,000-a-year contribution to the party if democratisation goes ahead.

It's about time that right-wing union leaders like Duffy were brought to heel by their own rank and file. What right has Duffy to threaten to disaffiliate from the Labour Party without even bothering to consult his members?

'Prior's a liar' says Skinner

By Valerie Coultas

Labour MPs are usually very well-behaved in the House of Commons. But last week Dennis Skinner, the left Labour MP for Bolsover in Derbyshire, caused an enormous row.

Cool

The announcement on 24 June that 1,659,676 people were out of work in Britain — the highest number since the 1930s — caused Skinner to lose his cool. He ended up getting ordered out of the House for bad behaviour.

Socialist Challenge found out exactly what happened.

'Prior, Minister for "Unemployment"', was trying to give the impression that the Tories were concerned about the unemployment figures,' Dennis Skinner explained. 'I've never heard such a pack of lies — crying crocodile tears for the unemployed.'

'A Tory government hell bent on creating mass unemployment, as bad as in the thirties and shifting the balance of power against workers having any rights with the Employment Bill concerned about unemployment! It's a load of tripe.'

'So I told Prior the truth — that he was a liar.'

Dennis Skinner, an examiner, was unapologetic. He has little time for the traditions of the House of Commons, including the Sergeant at Arms, dressed in knee breeches and a sword, who escorted him out. 'What him? He is going to take me out?' Skinner scoffed when approached by the Sergeant at Arms.

Skinner called the House of Commons 'a quaint old British club'. A club with 16 public houses inside.

'It's filled with bars,' he explained. 'I was breaking the silly rules of the club so I was black balled. It's common practice in the House to insult working people, the miners, the steelworkers, the teachers but when you speak the truth about another MP you're thrown out.'

Fuss

Asked what he thought the Labour Party should be doing about unemployment Dennis replied that many Labour Party members were involved in fighting cuts and unemployment up and down the country and that a distinction had to be drawn between the failures of the 'opposition' in Parliament and the activities of rank and file Labour Party members.

He also pointed out that contrary to James Prior's assertion that he had not made so much fuss when the Labour government was in power, he

had opposed the Labour leadership's cuts in public expenditure and its incomes policy.

'My record for dissent on many issues is unequalled,' he said, revealing that on one occasion he'd been the only member to vote against a Bill and had been unable to divide the House because you need more than one person against to do this.

Shady

On the accountability of other Labour MPs, Dennis was reluctant to comment but he did point out that he was in favour of the executive's proposals to elect the leader at the party conference and that he supported moves to ensure the re-selection of MPs by local constituencies.

He admitted that some right-wing trade union leaders seemed to be trying to swing the block vote against accountability, towards a shady compromise with the Parliamentary Labour Party.

'I don't support Duffy and I don't support Boyd and I didn't support the miners when they voted for incomes policy under the Labour government,' explained Dennis. But he was not prepared to go further than this in explaining how the left could fight the right in the trade unions in the battle to make Labour MPs in Parliament more accountable.



Backing up the pay front

By Pat Sikorski

THE Tories are making a desperate attempt to solve their public spending problems by squashing public sector pay deals — 'Tarzan' Heseltine is proving much less effective at controlling public spending than he is at making dramatic speeches at Tory Party conferences.

The Tories' requirement is that public sector workers should take home a lot less in their pay packets in real terms. That's why the 'pay round', which is supposed to finish around the end of April and re-open in September, has in fact gone on continuously since the end of the steel strike.

The Scottish teachers, local government workers, and various health workers have all come into conflict with the government. The Tories have more or less imposed an unofficial statutory level of pay settlements of 14 per cent for all publicly employed workers — that is 8 per cent below the level of inflation.

Unless this sort of settlement, and lower, becomes the norm, say the Tories, British industry will not be sufficiently profitable for the employers to maintain production and guarantee jobs.

It is worth remembering what one of the Corby steelworkers had to say about this argument: 'In the two years or so before the sack-

ing, production records were surpassed in a frantic attempt to become "a more viable proposition".'

'All we heard was: "We can't afford to pay you more, but become viable and you can keep your jobs." Well at the end of two years they told us: "Too bad, you didn't work hard enough!"'

'They presented us with figures about the lack of viability that a four year old could have seen through...The whole quest for viability had been a gigantic hoax at our expense.

'The BSC plans had never changed. We had been fed this thread of hope in a cruel attempt to keep us quiet until they were ready to give us the chop.'

In a fight against the government no single group of workers is strong enough to win alone. Right from the start, whether it's steelworkers, nurses, Post Office workers or miners, every active trade unionist and socialist has to build for practical solidarity with workers in struggle.

Wherever possible workers should bring forward their claims in order to go into the fight together.

Where this is not possible, support must be given locally and nationally by boycotting goods and services related to the dispute, respecting picket lines, building mass pickets, demonstrations and meetings called by the workers involved, and building local and na-

tional labour movement-based support committees.

This is even more important for workers in the public services like the NHS because they don't have the industrial muscle of, for example, the miners.

The Scottish nurses have shown the way by setting up nurses action committees to surmount the differences between the different unions, between the unions and the Royal College of Nurses, and the lack of links between hospitals because of the absence of a shop stewards system.

Using this base the nurses have been able to build links with NALGO and CPSA workers and speak at the Scottish miners' gala.

But to be successful these developments have to be national in order to force the national union leaders into joint action to win the claims. This can only be done by uniting public sector workers around common demands.

This means re-starting the fight for a national minimum wage — which should now be £80 automatically protected against the effects of inflation. This would be part of the plan to revitalise the public services by restoring all cuts made over the last decade, cancelling all debt and interest payments, and launching a major hospital, school, and housing programme.

But more powerful sections of the public

sector workers as well as those in private industry have to campaign in the same way. The days of effective section by section, and factory by factory bargaining are long gone.

The introduction of measured day work inevitably made wage bargaining a national question in every industry and gave the national full-time officials a free hand unless there was a strong nationally co-ordinated left wing in the union, armed with the political arguments to enable the stewards to mobilise the rank and file despite the propaganda of the government, whether Labour or Tory.

It was the absence of such effective political left-wings organised around campaigns that enabled the national trade union officials to so effectively police the social contract for four years.

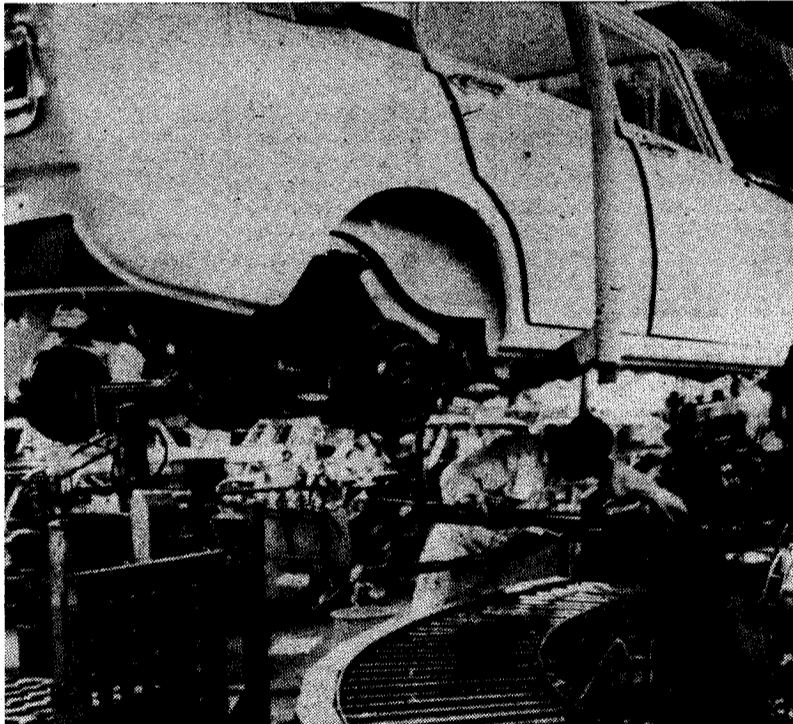
The Broad Left in the Post Office Engineering Union, however, did fight for the 35-hour week against the Labour government, and has successfully imposed on the union leadership a national claim for 37 per cent. This will be a most vital struggle for the whole movement.

Every body of the labour movement nationally and locally must declare support for the telecoms workers, send messages of support, donations to the strike fund etc. A defeat for the Post Office on this question would be a decisive defeat for Thatcher and the right wing in the trade union movement.

Do Britain's dole queues begin in Japan?

IN the face of the decline of the market share of British Leyland to 15 per cent this month, Terry Duffy, president of the Engineers' Union, has called for controls on Japanese imports to save British Leyland and to save jobs. 'Japanese sales in this country are catastrophic for both Leyland and Britain,' said Duffy.

Socialist Challenge spoke to Steve Griffiths, shop steward and AUEW convenor at British Leyland Rover SD1 plant at Solihull.



What do you think of this approach to the problems of BL workers?

If Duffy was serious about jobs, he would be aiming his fire at Edwardes and the Tories, not diverting attention to Japanese workers. We have already seen Duffy's commitment to saving jobs. He backed Edwardes' plan that resulted in the loss of 45,000 Leyland jobs in the last year.

His proposals for import controls has nothing to do with his supposed concern for saving our jobs. It is just a cover for his cowardice in confronting the bosses.

But don't you think you should be in favour of saving British Leyland from the Japanese?

I start from my members' interests. For Duffy 'Saving BL' is identical with the objectives of Edwardes: that is to make BL more profitable. This means increasing productivity, speed ups, continuity of production, attacks on traditional union rights and everything else that is in the 'Slaves Charter'.

Duffy backed this knowing full well what the consequences were. He lined up with the bosses against the interests of his members.

His calls for import controls are a continuation of this approach, not an alternative. It rests on the idea that bosses and workers should collaborate together to make 'our' industry fit for the capitalist market.

This has only one meaning: workers have to make the sacrifices and jobs have to go. There is no other way of running an industry in an anarchic capitalist system based on production for profit rather than need.

But surely, if Japanese imports were stopped, then this would mean BL would sell more cars and there would be more jobs?

Not at all. The Japanese only account for 10 per cent of the market taking the first six months of the year together. But the onset of the recession has meant a drop in new car registrations from 1.71m in 1979 to a forecast of 1.45m in 1980.

That is a drop of nearly 15 per cent. And the situation will get worse in 1980. So without importing one more Japanese car, jobs would still be axed!

But in a declining market stopping imports can only help matters.

What happens in a recession? Competition dramatically increases. There is only one way to survive the law of this jungle. Speed-ups, productivity and job loss. This is what we have to fight. If we agree to imports we are saying the enemy is somewhere else.

So calling for an end to Japanese imports will not only fail to protect my members from attacks on their livelihood and rights, it will make things easier for the bosses.

In addition, if implemented such policies will simply allow BL to jack up the prices of their cars and restrict choice. How can this help my members, let alone other workers?

Finally, such a policy will merely invite retaliation. That's why the Tories oppose the idea just now. But the opposition of the Tories can't be our reason for supporting these policies.

As the crisis gets worse this might be the option the bosses go for. But this will be just a further signal for a

Engineers' Charter in conference

TWO hundred delegates attended the Engineering Charter conference held in London last Saturday. The conference had been called with the expressed aim of 'stopping the rot — kick out the right'.

But the conference failed to equip militants with the tools needed in this fight. Setting out the framework, conference chairperson and North London AUEW District Committee member, Roger Cox spoke of the state of the industry.

'Shopfloor organisation has been undermined,' he told delegates. Shop stewards have become isolated from their members through participation schemes. 'It's a very bleak picture. We must face up to reality' he said. And this reality was the need to rebuild shopfloor organisation from the bottom upwards. Speaker after speaker told

stories of how they were setting about 'rebuilding shopfloor organisation'. Delegates were told to make sure that regular shop and section meetings were called and, in particular, to organise support for workers involved in strikes against the bosses' offensive.

'If we can rebuild a fighting organisation then we can meet the challenge of redundancies' said *Engineers Charter* editor, Jack Robertson. 'It is possible to win strikes; what matters are the small things like the GEC workers who came here and will go away with 10 names and addresses. These sort of things can lead to victory.'

But, unfortunately the advice given to these and other delegates from Roger Cox and Jack Robertson about how to wage the struggle in the face of the right-wing misleadership of Boyd and Duffy will prove ineffective. Because it's not the supposed weakness of shop floor organisation that's decisive, but the need for policies for the fightback.

massive stepping up of their attacks on us, as they did in the 1930s.

Duffy uses the opposition of the Tories to argue against taking action now in his members' interests. He wants us to accept the idea that we should wait for the election of a Labour government in 1984, and meanwhile turn the other cheek to the wage cuts and job loss.

So what is your alternative?

We have to start from saving jobs. We should begin with the reduction of the working week to 35-hours with no loss of pay. Overtime should be made unnecessary through ensuring a decent wage. If wage rises were tied automatically to the rise in the cost of living this would be an important step.

It is a sign of the rottenness of the system that as unemployment approaches 2 million, more overtime is being worked. So we should fight to have the work shared among the available workforce. New, especially young, workers should be provided with jobs.

This of course will mean nationalising the whole industry including components. They have all shown their inability to safeguard jobs. A plan could then be for-

mulated based on need.

More cars would be sold if the working class as a whole wasn't suffering from wage cuts. It is not that everyone who wants a car has got one. This is even more true in countries like Cuba or Nicaragua. We could produce for these places by taking on the unemployed in the existing plants.

Things would have to be under workers' control so that any increases in productivity or automation would benefit the workforce and not just boost profits.

But won't this result in a massive clash with the bosses, particularly the big monopolies?

Of course it will. But we either break their back or they break ours. This is why a strategy based on collaboration with the bosses, like import controls, is not serious as a socialist alternative.

In the battle we need a government with socialist policies that draw strength from the organisations of the working class and defend our interests against capitalism. Such a government would not be able to rely on parliament or parliamentary methods. This is the only serious workers' alternative.

As the Secretary of the Action Committee at Osborne Steel in Bradford explained, strong combine organisation exists in the plant. Yet the workers are in dispute fighting closure of the special steels division.

As Roger Cooper, convenor of Smith's MA 1 in Cricklewood pointed out, 'We've got to fight for alternative policies to the right-wing leaders: like the 35-hour week, the need to share the work and so on.'

This was a lonely cry. A number of resolutions which took up the question of the way forward, including the fight for militant policies to meet the crisis, were not allowed to be moved or voted upon.

The perspective chosen by the conference organisers was quite different. 'We've got to fight the right-wing struggle-head over the union,' said Mike Bughman. 'It gets worse every day.'

That meant giving full backing to Bob Wright's election campaign. 'We've got political differences with Bob

Wright, of course. But having those differences out is a luxury we can't afford. We've got to unite with the Broad Left to get the biggest backing for the Wright campaign.'

Nobody spoke out to say that Bob Wright's policies and record are the main obstacle to him defeating Duffy in the election. In fact the need for unity with the Broad Left became an excuse for not criticising them.

Jack Robertson said: 'We're all supporting Bob Wright. But whereas we organised this meeting 90 per cent around workers in struggle and 10 per cent around who to vote for, the Broad Left does the reverse.'

This is 100 per cent correct, but unless we want to lead the workers who are struggling against the Tories and the Duffy/Boyd leadership back into the arms of Bob Wright, we have to organise them through the Charter for a fight for the right policies at the same time as joining with everyone in actions like the elections fight against the right wing.

Uhl release call to Labour Parties

VLADIMIR Derer, secretary of the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Party, has put out a call for local Labour Parties to bombard the Czechoslovak Embassy with protests over the prison treatment of Petr Uhl and other Charter 77 activists in jail.

In his capacity as convenor of the Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign, Derer has sent a letter to CLPs informing them of the Husak regime's attempt to destroy the health of the prisoners and asking them to act in defence of the Chartists.

He told Socialist Challenge: 'The labour movement here must understand that Petr Uhl, Vaclav Havel, and the other Chartists are not dissidents, not a small group out of step with society. They have spoken out for aims that the overwhelming majority of people in Czechoslovakia agree with.

'And that's why the regime wants to break them. It wants to teach Czech workers the lesson that it can destroy even the most determined fighters for democratic rights.

'The British labour movement has denounced the imprisonment of the Charter 77 leaders last October,' he added.

'We must follow this up with remorseless pressure on the embassy here, first to stop the savage prison treatment, then to force the early release of Petr Uhl and all the other political prisoners.'

'A book of Petr Uhl's writings has been published in France. Two hundred pounds has so far been raised towards the £500 needed to publish an English edition.

Donations are urgently needed, payable to 'Alternatives in Eastern Europe', PO Box 50, London N1.

Tribunal backs bosses who sack gays



THE 3,000-strong gay pride march on Saturday erupted into a forceful protest against police harassment. After the cops arbitrarily arrested seven people on the march, half the demonstrators marched to Bow Street police station instead of dispersing. They secured the speedy release of those arrested.

By Barry Prothero

'INFORMATION was received that you indulge in homosexuality. At a camp accommodating large numbers of school children and teenagers it is totally unsuitable to employ a person with such tendencies.'

That was how, late last year, the Scottish National Camps Association explained to John Saunders why it was sacking him.

The association had not received any complaints about his work nor about his conduct; it had simply heard that John was homosexual, and he did not deny it. An industrial tribunal and subsequently an employment appeal tribunal upheld this finding.

The latter accepted evidence from a psychiatrist that John was not at all sexually attracted to young people, and that heterosexuals are as likely as homosexuals to be sexually attracted to young people. Nevertheless the appeal tribunal held that the contrary view exists and may be held by a 'reasonable' employer, even though it may have no scientific basis.

The unstated assumption behind this argument was that such attraction must be dangerous. The tribunals were impressed by management's claim that it thought parents would be afraid for their children.

Discrimination

In other words the tribunal has decided that since gay women and men are discriminated against, and there is a strong common prejudice against us, 'reasonable' employers may dismiss us fairly because such employers may be bigotted and prejudiced.

For gay people this is a devastating decision. In earlier decisions involving gay people, tribunals have been at pains to show that homosexuality is not the reason for finding a sacking to be fair, although it has been obvious that their judgements have been based on prejudice against gays.

The John Saunders case is the first time that an employment appeal tribunal has said that homosexuality is, by itself, a sufficient reason to sack somebody. The decision is binding on industrial tribunals and is a precedent which endangers all gays who work with young people.

BUILD THE FUND DRIVE

By Tony Young
TGWU 1/734 Construction & Civil
Engineering Branch

BUILDING workers have been the hardest hit by the Tories' savage cuts in public expenditure. Over 70 per cent of all construction and civil engineering contracts are financed by the government — for schools, roads, bridges, hospitals, and so on.

Unemployment in the building industry is 25-30 per cent. Building workers are being made redundant not only on building sites, but in the shipyards, steelworks, the mines —

everywhere the Tories' policies are hitting.

Now more than ever we need a revolutionary socialist newspaper with a wide circulation, putting forward the policies needed to get rid of the Thatcher government.

I believe Socialist Challenge is the only paper on the left putting forward these policies at the present time, which is why I urge all building workers, trades unionists, and socialists to donate as much as possible to the International Marxist Group's fund drive.

Send to: IMG Fund Drive, PO Box 50, London N1. Payable to 'The Week'.

Offensive

The Saunders case is part of the general offensive against employment rights. The decisions of the tribunals, in particular, have increasingly tended to favour management. John Saunders' case is a significant development in this trend.

If the decision stands, employers will be able to sack gays simply on the basis of their own bigotry.

John Saunders was not a member of a trade union. The only gay cases that have been won before tribunals, and there are pitifully few, have been those where the person involved has had the strong support of co-workers and their union.

NUPE, NALGO, and the GMWU have forcefully condemned the Saunders decision. Ron Keating, NUPE's assistant general secretary, said that the union would support any member sacked in similar circumstances, and that the case points to the need to extend employment protection legislation to prevent discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Protection

At its recent conference, NUPE overwhelmingly voted to include protection from anti-gay discrimination in its own guidelines for negotiations. NALGO has made repeated demands to the TUC to include sexual orientation within its model equal opportunities clause.

Yet in many unions it is still argued that a worker's sexuality is a private matter and therefore has nothing to do with the union. The John Saunders case makes it clear that a gay person's sexuality is an industrial issue.

This case has stirred interest in gay rights in the Labour Party, for the first time in more than a decade. Several constituency parties have passed motions condemning the decision.

Many left Labour MPs are now interested in a law to ban discrimination against gay people in employment. CLPs should be bombarding the party executive with resolutions on this case and on gay rights in general, to make the Labour Party finally take a position on this issue.

For speakers, information, and petitions, and to contact the gay group in your union, write to: Gay Rights at Work, 7 Fickwick Court, London SE9 4SA.

By Steve Cohen

OVER the past two years there has been a growing awareness of how the Immigration Act is used to prevent black people coming to Britain and to deport them once they do come here.

This has come about mainly through the resistance of black people themselves.

Less well known is how the welfare agencies of the state are increasingly being used as tools in the process of immigration control.

There have been several recent cases where people have been prevented from entering Britain on health grounds, and cases where people were admitted on condition that they had private treatment.

Custody

Mohammed Butt came here to get married, but was put in custody on his arrival because the immigration service doctor claimed he had infectious tuberculosis. He was released on condition that he had private treatment — and this showed that he did not have infectious TB.

The campaign to defend him was successful, and he has just married.

However in Oldham, Mohammed Aftab has so far been forced to spend several hundred pounds because it is claimed that he has TB. This is in line with the Tories' proposal to rewrite the National Health Act and deny the right of

Welfare agencies behind deportations

treatment to non-UK citizens.

In addition to these cases is that of Shukkar Mohammed, who has lived here for many years. He contracted Parkinson's disease, and paid several visits to Pakistan to take advantage of the climate. On returning to Britain — his home — Mohammed was told he had lost his right of residency and could only stay for six months.

He is now under threat of deportation.

It has recently come to light that the Home Office has issued secret instructions to doctors to report all 'foreigners' to the Home Office.

The Tories have announced that they intend to alter the child tax allowance system so that it will be impossible to claim for children living abroad — and there will be no compensation in the form of child benefit.

For a number of people who have children abroad, this could well be a form of forced repatriation. The Labour government made similar proposals but was forced to back down after a long campaign.

Then there is housing. Said Bibi, who is 80 years old, applied to join her son here. The Home Office claimed that his house was overcrowded. An appeal was lodged on the grounds that under the Housing

Act it was not overcrowded.

The appeal tribunal agreed with this, but said that by 'our standards' the house was overcrowded and Said could not enter.

One of the new immigration rules is that entry to Britain should only be allowed if the person can show they can 'support themselves without recourse to public funds'; that is, that they won't claim any state benefits or services.

The Supplementary Benefit Bill will make it a criminal offence to guarantee to support someone entering the country and then not do so. Already the secret instructions to Department of Health and Social Security clerks (the A-code) demand that they report to the Home Office any 'foreigner' who claims supplementary benefit.

Nasreen Achter claimed benefit after her husband deserted her. Now the Home Office is trying to deport her. Nasira Begum was also deserted by her husband and

her fight against deportation has gained a lot of publicity. Less well known is the fact that Nasira wanted to work but the Department of Employment refused to let her sign on!

Students from overseas cannot come here unless they guarantee to pay their own fees, and these are far higher than home students' fees. Many overseas students have to report to the police regularly. The Home Office sets attendance requirements for overseas students, but not for others. Every overseas student is treated as a potential 'overstayer'.

However grisly the details, the course of action that the state is taking is quite logical given its real function — to protect the capitalist social order. Workers have won limited benefits, but these are strictly within the structure of capitalism.

The British state was built on the wealth extracted from Africa, the West Indies and the Indian sub-continent. This wealth, once stolen, is once again being denied to the people who created it.

The response of socialists must be to organise against the racism of the state, to prevent divisions in the working class, opposing all immigration controls.

Defend Nasira Begum

Support all those threatened by immigration laws

Demonstration
Saturday, 19 July, 12.30pm
Whitworth Park, Manchester

Miners,
steelworkers,
BOC —
altogether
now...

Len Murray picketed on jobs

By Helen Slymovics

THE connection between British Oxygen workers at the company's Hackney depot and the Llanwern Action Committee was strengthened at a meeting in the heart of the South Wales valleys sponsored by Socialist Challenge.

Micky Boulter, deputy convenor at BOC, and Ray Davies, branch secretary in the steelworkers' union ISTC, were the speakers at the meeting, held in the mining community of Trehafod last Friday.

With the nearby Ty-mawr pit facing closure, discussion centred on the need for the labour leadership to fight over jobs in steel and coal.

Ray Davies reported the lobby of the TUC held by the Llanwern Action Committee on 25 June, and the meeting was unanimous in demanding that Len Murray and George Wright, of the Wales TUC, stop selling jobs.

Micky Boulter told us that the BOC depots in Cardiff and Bristol were refusing any work resulting from redundancies in Hackney, and emphasised the need for a national fightback over jobs.

A conference on unemployment is to be held on 20 July in Hopkinstown, where a meeting was held during the recent youth march against unemployment in Wales.

THREATS by steelworkers and miners of a sit-in at Congress House caused a stir among TUC officials on Wednesday of last week.

A delegation from the Llanwern Action Group had arrived to demand a meeting with Len Murray. Joined by two representatives from the South Wales NUM, they wanted to hear what action the TUC plans to fight the closure of South Wales steelworks and pits.

Their anger reached boiling point when Brian Tiler, who described himself as 'merely a bureaucrat for the TUC Steel Committee', told the delegation that the TUC had problems in South Wales 'because the troops aren't with us'.

'Hundreds and thousands of people always want to see Len Murray. He can't find time for them all,' Tiler added.

'We are some of the troops from the rank and file and we have come to demand action,' an AUEW member from Llanwern replied. How can we possibly convince people that the trade unions are worth supporting when there is no positive lead?

Others pointed out that Llanwern and Port Talbot workers, without a strong lead, were agreeing to the closures out of fear. Don Hayward from the NUM said: 'Action will be too late if we wait any longer. We can't fight this thing from the dole queues.'

It was then that the delegation announced it would sit-in until Len Murray came to see them.

Fearing disruption of a press conference planned to follow that morning's General Council meeting, Murray suddenly found a space in his diary.

He repeated that his hands were tied because the 'membership aren't with us', and



MORE than 500 musicians, including a band floating on the Thames, lobbied Parliament on 27 June against threatened sackings by the BBC. The Corporation intends to cut five orchestras, involving the loss of 170 jobs. The BBC musicians have been on strike since 1 June, disrupting the preparation of this year's Proms.

anyway the lead had to come from the individual unions and not the TUC. He forgot to mention action on jobs at the press conference.

The steelworkers told the press: 'We are horrified by what we experienced today. We know already that we cannot rely on our own union leaders like Sirs and Duffy. It's just disgusting that the so-called leader of our

movement is not prepared to act either.

'The only way we can stop the Tories is through national industrial action. It's about time the TUC did something about organising it.'

The Action Group refuses to be put off. It is now stepping up its efforts to build the lobby of the TUC in September to make sure Murray's troops demand action on jobs.



ORDER from Hackney Socialist Education Group, c/o PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. 20p plus 10p p&p in advance. Good bulk order discounts.

Enfield against missiles

By Jamie Gough, Secretary, Enfield Ad Hoc Cttee Against Cruise Missiles

The campaign against Cruise missiles has taken off in the London borough of Enfield.

A hefty contingent marched on the demonstration called by the Labour Party on 22 June, mobilised by Enfield's newly-formed Ad Hoc Committee Against Cruise Missiles.

The committee was set up a few weeks before the demonstration, with support from Labour Party and Communist Party members, the International Marxist Group and independent militants.

We held an extremely successful public meeting which attracted over 100 people, collecting over £100 for the campaign.

All labour movement bodies in the area have been mailed and we're getting requests for speakers and financial contributors. We have been active at the gates of the major factories in the area, selling badges and distributing 5,000 leaflets.

We've also won support from young people. The local LPYS, NUSS and Revolution branches are backing the committee and have helped in petitioning in the town centre, as well as bringing people from their workplaces, schools and so on.

We're hoping for united action with the Enfield Peace Campaign, which was established at a public meeting of 50 people after the demonstration, an initiative of the local CP and Labour Party.

The meeting passed a resolution moved by the Ad Hoc Committee to make mobilising mass action against the Cruise missiles its first priority.

Inquiry demanded over police raid

By Steve Keen, Enfield Trades Council

ENFIELD Trades Council is calling for a public inquiry into the raid by police and immigration officials on black workers at the Main Gas factory in Edmonton, North London.

Among the 26 workers arrested under the 1971 Immigration Act — after 51 were questioned — was a seven-month pregnant woman. Two of those picked up during the raid, on 20 June, have already been deported.

Several comparisons can be made with the operation of South Africa's pass laws: the fact that the raid was undertaken without any evidence of 'offences'; the number questioned compared to those charged; the fact that they had to prove their innocence, rather than the police their 'guilt'; and allegations of police intimidation.

The workforce at the factory faces redundancies, and there have been suggestions of collaboration between the police and the factory management over the raid. It is vital, therefore, that the union does not allow any divisions among the workers.

Enfield and Haringey trades councils are holding a public meeting about the raid, to be held on Thursday 10 July, 7.30pm, at Park Lane Community Centre, Park Lane, Tottenham.

Opposition to rate rises in Lambeth

THE Labour Party in Lambeth, South London, has a hard line against rate increases. A meeting of 70 people last Friday expressed its total opposition to rate rises.

Mike Tichelar, from Lambeth NALGO, pointed out that the decision of Lambeth's Labour council to advocate massive rate increases would meet with furious opposition and eventually it would be forced to back down and start sacking council workers.

Councillor Pauline Moore, from Southwark, thought that rate increases would be a major test for Labour councils.

Poplar Council had stood firm and refused to levy higher rates in the early '20s, calling on community support. Labour Councils should do the same today.

Ad-west strikers take the offensive

By Danny Broderick TGWU convenor and chairperson of Ad-west strike committee

THE Ad-west struggle began as a defensive battle against victimisation.

Taking up the struggle of their class against the workers, the employers sacked Martin Kausman in order to force through a poverty pay deal which meant an effective 10 per cent reduction in earnings, with reduced rights and conditions.

They drove a wedge through the workforce with a campaign of lies and harassment, supported by the AUEW convenor who overturned democratic decisions and backed the bosses.

The local AUEW official has done nothing about this and the TGWU officials have turned on us.

Despite ending up in a minority, although an important one — the full TGWU shop stewards committee and convenor, three AUEW shop stewards, and most of the leading militants — we are determined to win.

Social Security has denied us benefits; the local jobs centre has campaigned with the bosses to sell our jobs; the

police have intimidated and attacked pickets, clearly showing that these state bodies represent only the employers.

But we can turn the tide and go on the offensive against the boss, his class, and his state.

We are fighting for reinstatement with compensation, a new pay deal, and for democratic rights in the factory so that this situation can never happen again. If we win, we will make serious inroads into the class dictatorship in the Ad-west factory.

The struggle must be taken up in factories everywhere. Support the mass picket, 14 July, Ad-west Engineering, Woodley Aerodrome, Woodley, near Reading. Details of transport: Tel Reading 594470.

Rush donations urgently to: Danny Broderick, 46 Berkeley Avenue, Reading, Berkshire. Urge union officials to make this dispute official.

'The politics of rate increases and the fight against the cuts'. New pamphlet which is essential reading for all socialists. From Hackney Socialist Education Group, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. 10p per copy, plus 10p postage. Bulk rates on request.

Scottish teachers in defiant mood

By Des Tierney

FOR the past two months Scottish teachers have been taking action against the government's offer of a 14 per cent pay offer, involving a series of half-day, one-day and three-day strikes. They have also held rallies, lobbied local authorities and picketed negotiations.

Such an exhausting programme of activity might well have been predicted to sap the teachers' resolve. That is certainly what was in the minds of the union executive when it decided to ballot the members on whether or not to go to arbitration.

The questions for voting were cleverly designed to sow discord. The results took everyone by surprise — despite the lack of leadership, despite the exhaustion of the previous months' action,

despite the bait of arbitration, and despite the approach of the summer holidays, the teachers voted overwhelmingly to continue their action.

The executive of the EIS (the main Scottish teaching union) have shown through the ballot that they have no way forward for this strike. The battle for a public sector alliance against the 14 per cent pay norm will be continued in the EIS as the best way of using the fighting capacity shown by the teachers in their dispute.

London Labour Local Government Conference Resist Heseltine!

A discussion conference to prepare resistance to the Heseltine Local Government Bill and to organise for a socialist Labour Greater London Council. Open to all Labour Party and trade union delegates.

Saturday 5 July, 10am to 5pm.

Hampstead Town Hall, Haverstock Hill NW3. Sponsored by London Labour Briefing and over 70 London Labour Councillors.

Adm £1. Details From: London Labour Briefing, 155 Green Lanes, London N16.

Friends of Richard Campbell organise demonstration

By John Jones

RICHARD Campbell, a 19 year old Rastafarian youth, died mysteriously in custody at Ashwood Remand Home on 31 March. He was arrested on 1 March for attempted burglary, but his parents were not informed that he was in police custody until after his death.

A preliminary post mortem report said that Richard had died from dehydration caused by 'clinical schizophrenia'. The director of the remand home claimed that Richard had 'been on hunger strike', but this claim was apparently later withdrawn.

The Friends of Richard Campbell have organised a campaign for a public enquiry into his death and are organising a demonstration next Saturday. The demand for a public enquiry has been supported by Wandsworth Trades Council, Lambeth

NUT, and a number of other trade union branches.

Kim Gordon speaking for the campaign said: 'The whole circumstances surrounding Richard's death are suspicious. It is extraordinary that someone can be held in custody for a month without anyone knowing about it. It seems extraordinary that someone should be allowed to die from dehydration in the hospital wing of a remand centre — people won't die from schizophrenia!'

The demonstration starts from Balham tube station at 1pm on 5 July.

Troops out conference back 8 November demonstration

By Geoff Bell

THE Troops Out Movement emerged from its half-yearly conference, held in Edinburgh on Saturday, more united and with more determination to push the 'troops out now' case than at any previous time in its history.

It was fitting that the conference coincided with the publication of *No British Solution**, the first national TOM pamphlet for five years, and an effective answer to the Tory proposals for the North of Ireland.

Opposition to these proposals will be the focus of a demonstration on 8 November in London, which the conference overwhelmingly agreed to support. This initiative has been called by the Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland, which is pushing the demands for an ending of partition, British withdrawal and Irish unity.

The TOM conference agreed to organise a specific 'Troops Out Now' contingent on the demonstration.

Other initiatives agreed at the conference included:

- * A series of local actions on 11 July around the release from Armagh prison of Liz Lagrue. Liz is one of the 'Armagh 11' arrested for demonstrating in support of women political prisoners in Armagh;

- * A TOM demonstration in Glasgow on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday, next January;

- * Support for the Labour Committee on Ireland fringe meeting at the forthcoming Labour Party conference in Blackpool;

- * A possible delegation to visit Long Kesh prison later in the year.

The conference also gave its full support to Charter 80, the campaign recently established in support of the five demands of the political prisoners in Armagh and Long Kesh.

Although there was dissension on a number of these questions, and differences of emphasis on others, the overwhelming mood of the conference was to unify TOM around its two demands — Troops out now, and self determination for the Irish people — and to organise the movement so that it is capable of taking the opportunities which are now present to raise the Irish issue in British politics.

In this context the conference agreed to appoint a full-time workers, a step which should sort out many of the organisational problems

TOM has faced in the past. A new national office is also to be set up.

It was also encouraging that this was the first TOM conference which saw a substantial attendance from the Socialist Workers Party. The SWP, while active in some TOM branches, has in the past been wary of throwing its weight behind TOM.

The evidence at the conference was that this attitude has now changed, and this can only help the growth of TOM. The SWP and the International Marxist Group, which had 35 members present, consulted before and throughout the conference. Although there were minor differences on one or two points, substantial agreement was achieved.

The conference also benefitted from being held in Edinburgh. This possibly restricted the number attending, about 130 in all, but it did give TOM members in London a broader view of the movement than might otherwise have been achieved.

Thus when a small minority at the conference sought to raise various internal, nit-picking complaints, citing squabbles that had taken place in this or that committee or branch in London, those from outside London made it plain that they were not interested in such wrangles.

The conference also rejected an attempt to restrict the basis of TOM to those who, in addition to the other two demands, supported the call for political status for Republican prisoners. While TOM does back this demand the feeling of the meeting was that it would be wrong to make this a condition of TOM membership.

The consequences of these decisions should firmly establish TOM as a well-organised movement with a national presence, similar in this respect to the National Abortion Campaign.

What is now required is a commitment from all those involved for realising this potential. Most specifically this means building a massive 'troops out now' contingent on the 8 November demonstration and ensuring that this demonstration will be the largest protest against British presence in Ireland that this country has seen for years.

* *'No British Solution'* costs 50p and will soon be available from left-wing bookshops. It can be ordered directly from TOM, 2a St Paul's Rd, London N1. Add 25p p&p.



MIRIAM DALY

By Peter Gowan

THE bestial murder of Miriam Daly in Belfast last Thursday is not only a terrible loss for the people of Belfast struggling for their rights, it is a great loss for the Marxist movement in Britain.

Miriam was a history lecturer at Southampton University in the 1960s and was a decisive influence in bringing myself and other students to look at the world from a Marxist standpoint. Most of my class became involved in socialist politics and the trade unions when we left university, in great part through her influence and example.

She taught us to think for ourselves and to try to make sense of historical processes, always stressing the need for theoretical coherence in trying to explain events. Her honesty, complete lack of dogmatism, and her openness to the ideas of her students were in striking contrast to the general run of teaching.

She was doing research at that time on a crucial period of Irish history, the years between 1780 and 1820. It was the time of the destruction of indigenous Irish industry — except for linen and engineering in the North — by the British bourgeoisie; a time

of the national resistance to this drive by the United Irishmen, of their defeat and of the fostering of the Orange Order as a counter-revolutionary instrument by the British.

She was cutting through the myths of both the British Ascendancy historians and the Catholic nationalists to uncover the real course of the intense class struggle in the towns and countryside in Ireland at that time.

Until the news of her death, I hadn't realised what a central role she had been playing in the struggle in the North during the 1970s. But it is now clear why she made such an impact on us students in the mid-1960s. The passionate intensity of her search for historical truth and theoretical clarity at that time was a preparation for her struggle in Belfast during the 1970s.

In her historical research, Miriam Daly tried to build on the brilliant historical essays of James Connolly. And like him she died in the struggle against British imperialism.

All who knew Miriam Daly in Britain in the 1960s, whatever their political outlook, could not forget her qualities as a human being, her modesty and integrity and devotion to her work and her students. Her foul murder should make them face what the British are doing in Northern Ireland.

Striking against apartheid

By Tom Marlow

SOUTH African police used tear gas, truncheons and dogs to break up a demonstration of a thousand black strikers in Uitenhage near Port Elizabeth last Thursday.

The strikers work at the US-owned Goodyear tyre and rubber company and are among tens of thousands of workers who have been taking industrial action in South Africa recently.

Unrest

The strike wave, coinciding as it does with the schools boycott campaign, the street demonstrations, and the increasing tempo of the guerilla activity, adds another worry to the increasingly frightened racists who run the apartheid system.

Industrial unrest in South Africa is now higher than at any time since 1973.

Strike

Most of the companies affected are multi-nationals. Within the last couple of weeks there have been strikes at plants owned by Volkswagen, Ford, and General Motors. Nor are the strikes confined to the motor and related industries.

Black workers at South Africa's major meat processing



plant have now been on strike for over a month.

The Goodyear strike is a good example of what the workers are demanding. They are asking for an increase of R1.15 to R3 (a rand is currently worth 55p).

A wage rate of just over £1.50 an hour is hardly likely to drive Goodyear to bankruptcy, but a recent ruling from a government industrial court ruled that the claim was 'excessive'.

The apartheid regime does not just use its industrial courts

to back up the multi-nationals. Under South African law, workers cease to be employees of the company concerned once they go on strike.

This allowed Volkswagen to sack all the strikers at its Uitenhage plant last week.

In another move against the unions the government recently used its Fund-Raising Act to ban the Federation of South African Trade Unions from collecting funds, either inside the country or externally.

FOSATU, which has 13

affiliated unions and a signed-up membership of 50,000, recently called for a minimum wage of just over £1 an hour.

In light of all this, the recent strike wave has taken the apartheid regime by surprise, particularly since there is a high unemployment rate among blacks which is meant to act as a 'disincentive' to industrial action. In the township of Soweto, for instance, unemployment is over 20 per cent.

Shoot

But despite this, and despite the 'shoot to kill' demonstrators policy recently announced by police commissioner General Geldenhuys, black workers like black students will not be easily cowed.

A statement from the African National Congress, read last week at a rally in London, graphically summed up the situation:

Clergy

'South Africa is witnessing throughout the country an upsurge of boycott, involving thousands of black students, at schools, colleges and universities; the super-exploited black workers in many parts of the country are engaged in strikes for higher wages; there are demonstrations and marches by clergy against the iniquities of the apartheid system.'

'The writing is on the wall, and the South African racists can clearly read it.'

A CONVERSATION

By Tariq Ali

CLR James is now, by any standards, an old man. He appears somewhat frail but this impression evaporates when he begins to talk. It is almost as if one is being transported back to the polemical debates and arguments of the Thirties.

James was born in the West Indies some 80 years ago. He came to Britain in the Thirties and soon developed a reputation as a sports writer and historian.

I had last heard him speak at the 'Dialectics of Liberation' conference in the Roundhouse in 1967. On that occasion he had clashed fiercely with the black American leader Stokely Carmichael. 'Race is decisive', Carmichael had thundered, 'No,' James had replied with quiet dignity, 'it is class.'

The same year James spoke at an International Marxist Group meeting in Birmingham, held to pay tribute to Malcolm X.

CLR James was a Trotskyist and a member of the Fourth International for 17 years. His conversations with Trotsky were published under the pseudonym of Johnstone. He left because of differences on the class character of the Soviet Union.

He is presently in London for the publication of a number of his writings by Allison and Busby, including a revised edition of his classic *The Black Jacobins*. I met him last week in his hotel room. He stipulated one condition for the interview. It must end as the Second Test Match began, as he did not want to miss a single minute of cricket.

TA: What were the main literary influences on you in your youth? What were the first books you read and how much impact did these make on you?

CLR: The greatest literary influence on me before I left the Caribbean was William Makepeace Thackeray. I first read *Vanity Fair* when I was nine years old. Subsequently I read it on nine other occasions. I didn't know it was a literary classic.

My mother had a Shakespeare, *Vanity Fair*, and another book called *John Halifax, Gentleman*. These were on the shelf and I was living in the Caribbean countryside with nothing to do, so I read.

Thackeray and his constant attacks upon the aristocracy had more part in shaping my attitude towards the establishment than Marx.

TA: Would you say your views have altered over the last decades at all, or are you still as intransigent as ever on the themes close to your heart?

CLR: My views haven't altered. I left the Trotskyist movement in 1951, but I have remained an independent Marxist ever since.

I do not subordinate myself to any state. I have never been to Moscow, though I have much more sympathy with the Chinese developments. I am attached to no political organisation whatsoever.

TA: But how would you view world politics today? The situation has altered in many ways since the Thirties.

CLR: My view of world politics is based firmly on what Lenin said in 1919. He told us that this was going to be an epoch of wars: imperialist wars, nationalist wars, civil wars. And of course, an epoch of revolution.

I see the old societies falling apart, in severe crisis and I don't think there is any way out except through building a new, socialist society. In that sense I have not changed since 1934, when I first joined the Fourth International.

It was Marx who first stated that the choice confronting humanity was socialism or barbarism. I believe that. I believe that in the last half century we have seen many examples of barbarism. Can I say something to you. I don't wish to start any controversy or polemic, but have you read Solzhenitsyn?

TA: Yes

CLR: Well, how can you still say that the USSR is a workers' state, eh?

TA: But what Solzhenitsyn is writing about is things which surely Trotsky and his supporters knew about in the Thirties?

The Old Man used to often reflect on the fact that the purges and the trials were just the tip of the iceberg. You didn't appreciate the crimes carried out against a mass of the population during the collectivisation?

CLR: Of course, all that I knew and thought and wrote about, but the concreteness and the detail supplied by Solzhenitsyn is still a surprise. How can we see in that any element of socialism?

TA: How would you view China today?

CLR: Now that is difficult for me to say, but I know that up till Mao's death I was always very sympathetic to the Cultural Revolution. Mao said that the two things which mattered most to him were the defeat of Chiang Kai-shek and of Japanese imperialism and the Great Proletarian

Cultural Revolution.

It was, in my view, an attempt to get the proletariat to govern the country. Mao was genuinely interested in that process. He was trying to get the masses to play a greater role in governing the state and building a socialist society.

Since his death they have turned backwards, but I don't believe they can succeed.

TA: But how can you square all this — with which I disagree but let's leave that aside — with Mao's view of Stalin and the fact that the Stalin cult was promoted in China after the limited de-Stalinisation measures of Khrushchev in 1956-7?

CLR: These are details, but nevertheless Mao held a view of Stalin with which I disagree entirely, but despite this he avoided the pitfalls of Stalin's Russia.

THE slaves received the whip with more certainty and regularity than they received their food. It was the incentive to work and the guardian of discipline.

But there was no ingenuity that fear or a depraved imagination could devise which was not employed to break their spirit and satisfy the lusts and resentment of their owners and guardians — irons on the hands and feet, blocks of wood that the slaves had to drag behind them wherever they went, the tin-plate mask designed to prevent the slaves eating the sugar-cane, the iron collar.

Whipping was interrupted in order to pass a piece of hot wood on the buttocks of the victim; salt, pepper, citron, cinders, aloes, and hot ashes were poured on the bleeding wounds. Mutilations were common, limbs, ears, and sometimes the private parts, to deprive them of the pleasures which they could indulge in without expense.

Their masters poured burning wax on their arms and hands and shoulders, emptied the boiling cane sugar over their heads, burned them alive, roasted them on slow fires, filled them with gunpowder and blew them up with a match; buried them up to the neck and smeared their heads with sugar that the flies might devour them; fastened them near to nests of ants or wasps; made them eat their excrement, drink their urine, and lick the saliva of other slaves.

One colonist was known in moments of anger to throw himself on his slaves and stick his teeth into their flesh.

From 'The Black Jacobins'

TA: But there was no socialist democracy in China under Mao, no rights for the masses unless they happened to agree with Mao.

CLR: I accept that, but they were doing their best to prevent the decline into barbarism that took place in Stalin's Russia. But what has China got to do with the question I asked you about Russia?

TA: Quite a lot. For me there no qualitative difference (there never was) between the mode of production in China and in the Soviet Union, regardless of whether it was under Lenin and Trotsky, Stalin or Brezhnev.



WITH CLR JAMES



Despite many other differences the mode of production in both countries is the same. You would not call Mao's China a capitalist or state-capitalist society. That is why I asked you about China.

CLR: For me the cultural revolution was important. I don't know how I would characterise China. It's difficult for me. But China is not Russia. So when I ask you about Russia you shouldn't ask me about China.

TA: Well my views are not so important...

CLR: No. Your views are important because they are the views of an organisation to which I have 17 years of my life.

TA: On a related subject, could I ask you what is your attitude to Fidel and the Cuban Revolution. In the revised edition of 'The Black Jacobins' you make what I think is a rather attractive comparison between Fidel Castro and Toussaint L'Ouverture.

Would you care to expand on that?

CLR: There was a great revolution in the Caribbean in the heat and the excitement following the French Revolution and in the wake of the crisis of the imperialist world today there emerged in the Caribbean another great revolution, the Cuban Revolution.

You ask me about Fidel. There are two things which come to mind. He made the revolution first and then the Russians helped him. They were not for the revolution before it was an accomplished fact.

But secondly there are things about Fidel which I read which I'm not too happy about. But I know another thing which for me is very important.

If it were not for Fidel's army, Angola would now be under the control of the South African whites. The Cuban intervention in Angola was a tremendous event in the history of the world. I think Fidel is doing the best under the circumstances.

TA: 'The Black Jacobins' has been regarded by the revolutionary left as a classic for a long time, but it must have been galling for you that because of your politics it did not receive a wider recognition.

Today it is being acclaimed in much wider circles. To me it has been obvious since I first read the book that it was tailor-made for an epic film. Not a Hollywood epic, but a Peoples' Epic. Why has that never happened?

CLR: Many people have talked about it, but where is the money to come from? A lot of people say that, and an American film-maker is studying the possibility today.

I am prepared to write a film script provided we can find a capable film-maker and the finance. But most of them are not too happy about the idea of making a revolutionary film.

TA: What about the Cubans? They have a collection of very talented and very radical film-makers. Don't you think they might be prepared to collaborate on a film?

CLR: There was talk at one stage of translating the book into Spanish by the Cubans. But the book has a few sharp attacks on the Russian regime and when they reached those pages they

stopped the translation.

They were saying before they reached those two pages that the book would be out in one or two months. But they stopped.

TA: When I heard you talk many years ago in London, you polemicised sharply against Stokely Carmichael. Are your views on race and class the same or have you altered them in some way? At that time you were extremely emphatic that class was the ultimate arbiter.

CLR: I still believe that. I have not shifted, but it would be a great mistake to ignore the race question or the racial dimension.

I am on the side of all those who are using their racial subordination as a means of getting together because in that way they can make as powerful an impact as possible. But for me the class question is still the dominant and crucial one.

TA: These days there is a lot of talk about the 'crisis of Marxism'. Have you ever seriously questioned your Marxism or doubted its use as a method of investigation?

CLR: Never, never! In 1932 I came to this country for the first time. I looked around. I was very well read in history and literature. I had musical interests: Bach, Beethoven and Mozart were known to me. But my thought had no order about it.

It was after reading Marx and Lenin and studying Trotsky's polemics against Stalin that I began to develop a coherent view of the world. In 1933 came Hitler and 'socialism or barbarism' appeared the only alternatives.

In the 1914-18 war capitalism killed 8 million men, then it went to pieces in 1929 with the depression and as the economic recovery took place fascism was triumphant in Germany, Italy, and, a few years on, in Spain, and then came the Second World War. Today they don't go to war because it would be suicide given the power of nuclear weapons.

But I have no confidence in capitalism. None whatsoever. I have never entertained any serious doubts about Marxism over the last five decades of my life. Capitalism offers nothing that I want.

But I want to come back on the Soviet Union. You lot still stand by the 'workers' state' thesis. I see that Mandel still keeps on writing about it.

TA: Well, I'll give you my views on the matter, which may or may not be orthodox. I don't regard the Soviet Union as a socialist state..

CLR: But a workers' state?

TA: Yes, but a workers' state which is utterly degenerated and deformed, has to be overthrown and totally re-organised from top to bottom. My basis for that is the objective role of the USSR in world politics.

There is an objective tension between the USA and the USSR, which is based on the fact that capital is not allowed to circulate in the USSR as a commodity. Neither foreign capital nor any other form of capital.

Simply in order to prevent that happening the Soviet bureaucracy has to be on its guard and when accommodation fails or where it sees a possibility of scoring points at the expense of imperialism, it moves.

You have said yourself that the Cuban intervention in Angola was a 'tremendous event'. But without Russian weapons and Russian transport planes, that intervention would have been impossible. I repeat, impossible.

CLR: But I understand that when Fidel accepted the MPLA's invitation to Angola he did so without the knowledge of the Russians. That is what I heard.

'BROTHERS and friends. I am Toussaint L'Ouverture, my name is perhaps known to you. I have undertaken vengeance. I want Liberty and Equality to reign in San Domingo. I work to bring them into existence. Unite yourselves to us, brothers, and fight with us for the same cause, etc.
'Your very humble and very obedient servant
(Signed) Toussaint L. Ouverture,
'General of the Armies of the King, for the Public Good.'
From 'The Black Jacobins'

TA: That is possible, but I find it difficult to believe that he could have sent the troops without lengthy consultations with the Russians. Their motives were probably very different, but I don't believe that the Russians were not involved.

It is also the case that in the months preceding

the fall of Saigon the supply of Soviet weapons (especially the rocket launchers) was not an insignificant event.

CLR: But the Chinese gave weapons too...

TA: Sure, in the early stages in particular. But the FI called for a united front of Moscow and Peking to defend the Vietnamese revolution. It is when one sees the Soviet Union in a global context that one cannot but be forced to the conclusion that there are some fundamental differences between the USA and the USSR.

CLR: That I can accept, but can we ask people to sacrifice themselves for Russia as one did in the day of Lenin? If you are supporting them then you have to defend them.

CLAIRVEAUX, the Mulatto, was in command, and with him was Capois Death, a negro officer, so called on account of his bravery. From early morning the national army attacked. In the afternoon under a crossfire of musketry and artillery Capois led the assault on the blockhouses of Bréda and Champlin, shouting 'Forward, forward!'

The French were strongly entrenched and drove off the blacks again and again only to see them return to the attack with undiminished ardour. A bullet knocked over Capois' horse. Boiling with rage he scrambled up and, making a gesture of contempt with his sword, he continued to advance. 'Forward, forward!'

The French, who had fought on so many fields, had never seen fighting like this. From all sides came a storm of shouts. 'Bravo! Bravo!'. There was a roll of drums. The French ceased fire. A French horseman rode out and advanced to the bridge. He brought a message from Rochambeau. 'The Captain-General sends his admiring compliments to the officer who has just covered himself with so much glory.'

Without a shot fired from the blacks, the horseman turned and rode back to the blockhouse and the battle began again. The struggle had been such a nightmare that by now all in San Domingo were a little mad, both white and black.

From 'The Black Jacobins'

TA: But defend whom against what? In any confrontation between the masses and the bureaucracy we are with the masses. It is only when there is a confrontation with imperialism that we refuse to remain neutral.

In my opinion the sovereignty of the Cuban Revolution was guaranteed by the existence and the military strength of the USSR. The withdrawal of the missiles by Khrushchev also guaranteed that there would be no military attempt to overthrow Fidel.

Of course, his enormous popularity was the major factor, but Cuba is only a small island. Anyway let us agree to differ on this old, old debate.

Leaving politics aside for the moment, could we discuss your other passion, cricket. Could I ask two initial questions: why is it that cricket in the Caribbean and India-Pakistan is a mass sport like football in Britain, and secondly why did it not catch on in some of the other colonies such as Canada?

CLR: In Britain there is a very wide range of things that the people can be interested in, but the impact of cricket in India and the Caribbean was different. The overwhelming majority of the masses were illiterate. They saw cricket, which is a marvellous game altogether, as an art form.

It was the easiest and most accessible part of Western civilisation that they could identify with and it was also participatory.

In my book *Beyond the Boundary* I develop this theme in greater detail. Western literature, music, painting was only for the élite, but cricket the masses could adopt and take over. Instinctively they appreciated the artistic quality of the game.

The great critics of the fine arts have yet to realise the fact that when 100,000 people go to see a football or a cricket match it is, even if they do not articulate it, an artistic event.

TA: Could it not also be said that in some ways sport is the new opium of the masses?

CLR: Trotsky used to say that the working class was far too interested in sport. He said that far too much of their energy and interests were devoted to sport rather than in the organisation

of their own class. But I disagreed. I don't think so.

I played cricket and football till I left the Caribbean and cricket has always meant a great deal to me. It has never interfered with my Marxist view.

As to why it never caught on in Canada, I think the answer is simple: climate. You can't have a season in Canada. That's the chief reason.

TA: Whom would you regard as the most attractive cricketer today?

CLR: Viv Richards. The way he plays is something new. I used to think that George Headley was the greatest, better than Sobers or the three W's, but this boy Richards is a marvel.

His batting is something we haven't known before. He is an extraordinary batsman altogether. The way they drop the ball on the off-stump or just outside and he keeps on hitting it through the on-side fieldsmen to the on boundary. The precision of the shot is such that he could be playing billiards. I've never seen anything like it.

TA: Do you regret any part of your life. Is there anything you would have done differently?

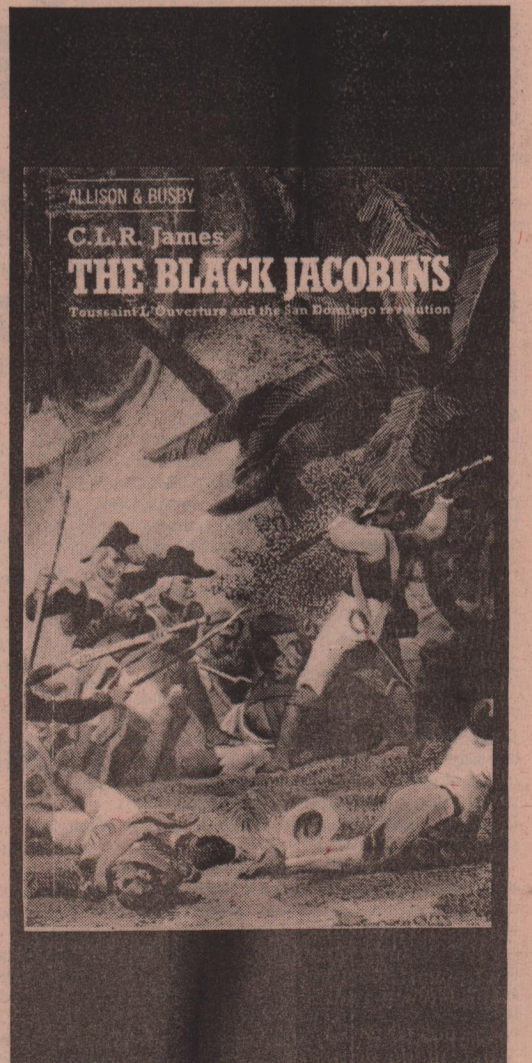
CLR: No. I have enjoyed reading books, which is what made me a Marxist.

TA: And what lies ahead? What are your plans now?

CLR: I am writing my autobiography in Trinidad and I will go back and finish that. After that I would like to go to Florence and spend two or three weeks there.

I am fond of that city. Michaelangelo, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci... It is a beautiful city. I'm a little bit scared as it's now controlled by the Italian CP (laughs), but I doubt they'll do anything to me now.

As the Test match started the interview ended, with CLR grumbling about the inclusion of Boycott in the English side. If he were an English selector: 'I would get rid of Boycott. He just demoralises the rest of the team. Pick two new openers and let them play in all five tests. They'll ruin one or two, but they'll be good at the end.'



'The Black Jacobins' by CLR James is published by Alison & Busby at £4.95 pbk.

It is available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, London N1. Add 10% if ordering by mail.

OVER the past year or so the Caribbean has increasingly become a focus of world politics. On 13 March last year the New Jewel Movement in Grenada overthrew the dictatorial régime of Eric Gairy. Four months later the successful revolution in Nicaragua dealt a severe blow to the interests of American imperialism in the whole region.

At the same time the régime of Fidel Castro in Cuba has managed to establish diplomatic and trade links with an increasing number of Caribbean countries, thus breaking from the political isolation imposed by the United States in 1960.

Since Gairy's overthrow in Grenada, the New Jewel Movement (NJM) led by Maurice Bishop has carried out a number of radical and democratic measures. The regular army has been swept away and in its place a People's Revolutionary Army and a popular militia have been set up.

The price of three basic commodities — rice, sugar and cement — have been reduced with the establishment of a National Importing Board. Secondary school fees have been reduced by a third. A youth programme — the Youth Forces for Reconstruction — has been set up, and it has successfully mobilised thousands of people for voluntary community building projects and road construction.

The new People's Revolutionary Government has cut the number of government ministers, and reduced their salaries and allowances by about a third.

Repealed

The Newspaper Publications Act, which required a sum of some EC \$10,000 to be deposited with the government before a paper was allowed to be published, has been repealed.

So, too, has the Public Order Act, which prohibited the use of loudspeakers at public meetings without the consent of the police commissioner, and gave the latter such sweeping powers that the commissioner could ban any kind of public meeting or gathering.

The Bishop régime has undoubtedly given a tremendous impetus to the self-organisation of the masses. It has introduced the Trade Union Recognition Act which compels employers to recognise any union that can demonstrate support from at least half the workforce in an enterprise.

NJM-led unions, such as the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union and the Bank and General Workers' Union, have grown considerably since the revolution and a new union, the Agricultural and General Workers', has eclipsed Gairy's Grenada Manual and Metal Workers' Union in the countryside.

According to Selwyn Strachan, the Minister of Labour, Works and Communication, the level of unionisation has risen from 30 per cent of the employed urban workforce under Gairy to around 90 per cent today.

Institutions

The Grenadian bourgeoisie has by no means disappeared, although its institutions have been smashed. It has no army and no political party worth the name. In this situation, where the bourgeoisie exists but lacks any instrument through which it could defend its interests, the present orientation of the New Jewel Movement has presented it with an opportunity to try and influence certain currents within the movement.

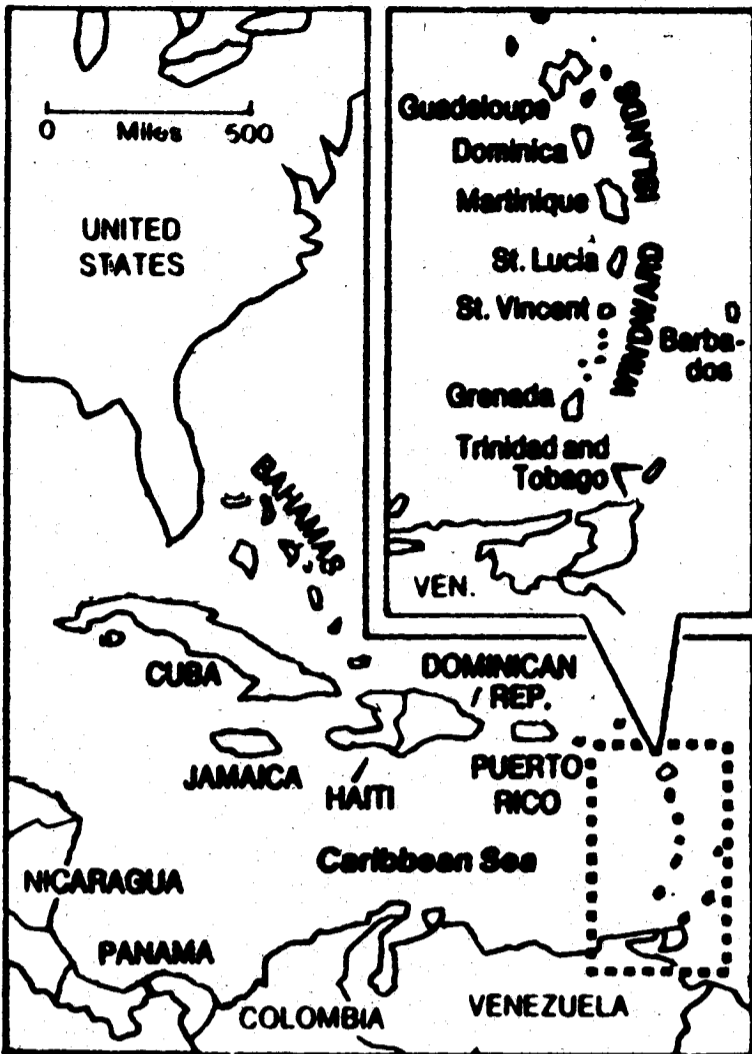
The bourgeoisie still maintains an effective economic presence and is tied to imperialist interests in London and New York. Undoubtedly it will attempt to use these links to divide and destroy the NJM.

An attempt by the Grenada National Party — the most important bourgeois party — to hold a public meeting in September had to be abandoned because of spontaneous protest action by the local population. Out of a total population in Grenada of 100,000, the NJM is able to stage rallies of around 20,000 people.

It is still too early to give a definitive evaluation of the trajectory of the Grenadian revolution. The volatile political situation throughout the region, and the close ties and sympathy which the NJM has for the Castro régime in Cuba and the FSLN in Nicaragua could be factors leading to an overturn of capitalist property relations on the island.

This is despite the fact that the Cuban leadership does not outline the path necessary for such a socialist transformation.

The reverberations of the Grenadian revolution have set off a wave of panic throughout the English-speaking Caribbean. The capitalist media in Trinidad and Tobago in particular have waged a virulent propaganda campaign against the revolution. The government of Eric Williams has refused to discuss with representatives of the PRG and has accus-



MAURICE BISHOP

Ferment in the Caribbean US imperialism threatens Jamaica, Grenada

THE bomb attack on Grenada's Prime Minister Maurice Bishop two weeks ago comes in the wake of his visit to Cuba where he spoke at a mass rally with Fidel Castro and leaders of the Nicaraguan revolution. Political upheaval is in evidence all round the Caribbean.

While the 'New Jewel' island of Grenada is under threat from the United States, Jamaica's PNP régime led by Michael Manley is under attack from the right wing.

FITZROY AMBURSLEY unravels the revolutionary developments which are rocking the once quiet Caribbean.

ed the Bishop régime of allowing the Cubans to train guerillas in Grenada for direct attacks on the Trinidad and Tobago government.

The brutal response of the Trinidadian police to the disturbances at the St Augustine campus of the University of the West Indies in April is directly related to the government's smear campaign against the Grenadian revolution.

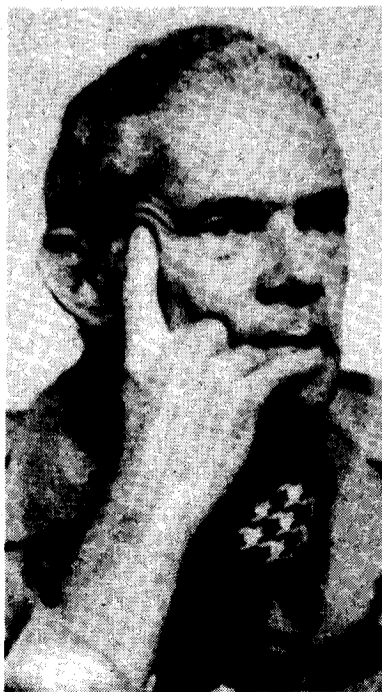
Ambrose Phillips, president of the students' guild and a leader of the student unrest, was singled out by the police and beaten unconscious because he is Grenadian and a long-time NJM activist.

Expulsions

Similarly the expulsion of Rose Douglas and other leftists from the government of Oliver Seraphine in Dominica, and the action taken by the government of Tom Adams in Barbados in withdrawing the work permit of Ralph Gonsalves — a Marxist lecturer at the Cave Hill campus of the University of the West Indies and a leader of the leftist Youlimou organisation in St Vincent — is part of the right-wing backlash to the upsurge of the Caribbean masses initiated by the 13 March revolution.

The response of the US and Canadian owned bauxite companies to Manley's imposition of a bauxite levy in Jamaica in 1974 and his anti-imperialist pronouncements was classic. They simply cut back on production until his attitude towards them mollified.

An article in *Caribbean Contact* last September showed that while the US aluminium companies doubled their bauxite imports from African sources in Guinea in 1975, they reduced their imports



MICHAEL MANLEY

from Jamaica by 30 per cent. The net reduction in US bauxite imports was 20 per cent.

Tourism, Jamaica's second most important industry after bauxite, has also been the target of imperialist pressure. At the time of the general elections in 1976, the American press waged a propaganda offensive against the alleged 'communism' of the Manley government. The opposi-

tion Jamaica Labour Party, led by Edward Seaga, openly supported this campaign, which resulted in a sharp reduction in the number of tourists visiting the island.

During this period a massive flight of capital abroad took place, obliging Manley's People's National Party government to seek financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund. Added to this has been the damaging effect on the Jamaican economy of the oil price rises, particularly since the bauxite industry requires enormous amounts of the fuel — accounting for some 51 per cent of total oil imports.

The net effect of these developments has been to throw Manley's reform programme off course and plunge the country into its worst economic and social crisis since 1937. Basic items of working class consumption, such as rice, salt-fish, soap and kerosene oil are being rationed.

The announcement that a general election will be held later this year has already led to a revival of the deep animosities between the PNP and the JLP, and political violence has become the order of the day. According to police figures, political violence claimed 50 lives between January and the end of April.

Opinion polls consistently show a decline in support for Manley's government, and a shift towards the JLP. The main basis of the JLP's platform is anti-communism, and in September of last year the party organised demonstrations and vigilante groups to harass the Cuban doctors and technicians who are assisting the Jamaican government.

Despite the severity of the economic crisis on the island, Seaga is now calling on

foreign governments and international lending institutions not to provide aid, because such assistance could be interpreted as support for the ruling PNP. He has threatened to dishonour any agreement entered into by the Manley régime should his party be elected.

This is undoubtedly part of the reason why the government's attempt, since it broke off discussions with the IMF in February, to refinance its debts of US \$650 million to commercial banks is meeting with little success. According to Chauncey Bailey, in a series of articles in the Harlem, New York based *Amsterdam News*, Carter's National Security Council is supporting Seaga's campaign and helping to destabilise the Manley government.

The absence of any credible socialist alternative to the PNP helps to explain the growing shift to the right in Jamaica. The main political organisation to the left of the PNP is the pro-Moscow Workers' Party of Jamaica, headed by Trevor Munro.

It has adopted a policy of 'alliance and struggle' with the PNP government which has meant, to quote an article in the *Morning Star* on 4 June, that 'The WPJ and the PNP share, at least programmatically, a common view of the major problems facing the country'.

In practice this has led to the WPJ refusing to mount an effective challenge to Manley's policies since, in its analysis, this would play into the hands of the right. In the 'gas demonstrations' of January 1979 the party physically broke up a spontaneous movement of discontent and allowed the JLP to exploit the situation for its own ends.

The period ahead will see a heightening of political tension and mass upheavals throughout the English-speaking Caribbean.

British socialists and the black communities here have an important responsibility to build a movement of solidarity with the masses of the Caribbean and Central America; to oppose US destabilisation of the Jamaican government, and to defend the revolutions in Nicaragua and Grenada.

Intercontinental Press combined with IMPRECOR

Intercontinental Press/Imprecor this week continues its coverage of Central American politics with an assessment of developments in El Salvador, a major article by Livio Maitan on Nicaragua and a report on the attempted assassination of Maurice Bishop in Grenada.

Also featured is coverage on Iran, an appreciation of Walter Rodney, and a review of a recently published interview with Andrei Sakharov, the Soviet dissident.

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By Dodie Wepler

IF recent Fleet Street press reports are taken at face value the Soviet Union would be on the point of defeat at the hands of the right-wing rebels in Afghanistan.

Since the beginning of June, British newspapers have been flooded with reports of an imminent show-down in Kabul between the rebel forces and the Afghan and Soviet troops.

It started with a report in the *Daily Telegraph* of 10 June. Five to twenty thousand rebel forces, it claimed, were rallying in the mountains near Kabul. (With a 15,000 margin of error, surely some concern must exist in government circles about the accuracy of Western intelligence!)

The next day, the same number of forces had infiltrated the outskirts of Kabul. And on 12 June, *The Times* predicted a big clash in Kabul. Three days later, in an article headlined 'Russians "besieged" in the Afghan stronghold', *The Sunday Times* reported that a major attack by rebel forces was under way.

The Sunday Telegraph left us in no doubt as to which side would win. Over 1000 Soviet troops had been killed in May alone, it claimed, and 250,000 — well over double the highest Western estimates of troop levels today — would be needed 'to bring the country to heel'.

Readers of the press couldn't help but think that Kabul was under siege and about to fall to the reactionary rebel forces who are fighting in Afghan's civil war.

Then, silence. It was ten days before the *Financial Times* bucked up courage to ask the embarrassing question: 'What happened to the battle of Kabul?'

The truth was that the show-down had been manufactured, probably by US government diplomats in Kabul who, as the *Financial Times* pointed out, 'are forbidden to stray beyond the city limits'.

Although the British press argued for some time that the Soviet military position is being seriously challenged, recent assessments have begun to alter. The *Financial Times* (27 June), for instance, noted that British judgements about the situation 'on the ground in Afghanistan' do not tally with those of the US.

Pointer

British sources say that pro-government troops are becoming more experienced in dealing with the rebels and that current training will further increase their efficiency.

Furthermore, recent changes in the attitude of the imperialist powers may be a significant pointer to the state of the war in Afghanistan.

A fortnight ago the Soviets announced that one division of troops and 108 tanks were being withdrawn. Western leaders, meeting in Venice, responded with a common statement calling for a total and permanent withdrawal of Soviet troops.

Since the Venice Summit, however, these leaders have adopted divergent views. Lord Carrington dismissed the troop reduction as nothing more than a 'stunt'. Thatcher claimed the Soviet announcement was made only to encourage a few more wavering athletes to attend the Moscow Olympics. But French President Giscard greeted the announcement as a 'meaningful step that deserves to be followed through', one which justified his decision last month to meet with Brezhnev in Warsaw in defiance of President Carter.

NATO governments meeting in Ankara a few days later decided against formal aid to the rebel forces, pending the outcome of the Soviet moves.

Carter and his adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski say that the level of Soviet withdrawal falls short of

Imperialism and the civil war in Afghanistan

Soviet claims, yet they are beginning to join the Austrian Prime Minister in talk about Afghanistan being 'in the Soviet sphere of influence'. Brzezinski said that the US would allow Soviet troops to withdraw 'without any loss of face'.

Military confidence on the part of the Soviet Union is not the only factor which led to the announcement that its troop level would be reduced.

The USSR is also motivated by its search for a deal with imperialism. The best solution for the Soviet bureaucrats would therefore be a negotiated settlement, but clearly one that is not based on the victory of rebel forces, with the threat to the Soviet regime this would represent. This search for a deal with the West may serve the Soviet bureaucracy's needs but it is absolutely opposed to the interests of the people of Afghanistan.

As early as 22 February, Brezhnev proposed talks between the Afghan government and Iran and Pakistan at a regional level with a view to resolving the Afghan issue. The Karmal Government again called for these bi-lateral talks on 14 May, adding that any resulting agreements should be backed by the Soviet Union and the United States.

The Afghan plan called for a 'zone of peace' in the area, with the removal of the considerable numbers of military bases used by the US in the region.

Of course Western powers want a different solution. From the beginning, they have backed the rebel forces who have fought to resist the radical reforms introduced when the People's Democratic Party came to office in April 1978. While it is probably true that the isolated gangs of reactionaries with whom British journalists have travelled are not equipped with sophisticated weaponry, it is not at all the case that the rebel forces are being ignored by the West.

The Daily Telegraph commented on 22 June that although earlier in the year the guerrilla forces were desperately short of arms, today 'vital supplies of western arms along with millions of pounds of Arab money are now reaching the guerrillas...Western diplomatic sources have disclosed that British automatic rifles, landmines and grenades are being channelled to the guerrilla strongholds on the Pakistan frontier.'

'Generous stocks' of US arms have arrived covertly recently and an estimated \$25m has reached the rebel forces from the Saudi Arabian regime. 'A substantial fund', as *The Economist* described it, has also been contributed by the United Arab Emirates.

Furthermore, the imperialist powers have aided the rebel forces in other important ways. Pakistan has been backed to the hilt as a launching pad for the reactionary gangs. *The Times* reported on 30 April the \$200m arms sales credit offered to Pakistan and by 16 June a full £100m of aid had been spent. The World Bank agreed at the beginning of June to give a further £50m to Pakistan for refugee relief.

The military aid has probably not been

distributed efficiently but nevertheless undoubtedly has caused difficulties for Soviet and Afghan forces. However, despite strenuous efforts no political alternative to the Kabul regime has emerged from the reactionary camp.

Islam has been able to provide a banner for getting the rebel gangs to meet. But it is the underlying politics of these Islamic groups which is fundamental. The only serious basis on which these gangs can oppose the Russian troops is opposition to the reforms initiated after April 1978. This means a giant step backwards for the Afghan masses and a crushing of their newly won rights. Little wonder that these groups cannot get agreement amongst themselves, let alone rally broad forces from the Afghan people, despite all the blandishments of imperialism and their clients.

A recent step towards trying to assemble such a political alternative based on the reactionary rebels came in May in Islamabad with the 39-state Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers. The Iranian government allowed representatives of some of the rebel forces to attend this meeting as part of its delegation. Although a three-member committee was established, chaired by Habib Chatti, the Tunisian chairperson of the Islamic Foreign Ministers conference, *The Economist* argued that its 'innocuous plans' for a United Nations conference and for talks with the Kabul government would be 'a waste of time', as they were based on a total withdrawal of Russian troops.

The war in Afghanistan was not even mentioned in the final communiqué which came from the meeting! Six of the 39 countries who are members of the conference refused to back the proposals including Syria, Libya, North and South Yemen and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation.

This three-member committee meeting in Geneva with some of the rebel groups last week was marked by continual squabbling. Although the pro-Western 'Islamic Alliance for the Liberation of Afghanistan' attended — formed from five rebel groups who met in Peshawar, Pakistan in May — alongside the fundamentalist Islamic Party of Afghanistan, the Geneva meeting was boycotted by two further Iranian based rebel groups.

The Islamic Party of Afghanistan claims two thirds of the rebel forces but has consistently refused to recognise or cooperate with the Alliance because of its 'long-term differences over the future of Afghanistan'.

Unless these groups start from social programme rather than the vague idea of Islam, they will never unite. Until then, the project of Habib Chatti to promote a PLO-type united front is doomed to failure.

It is this reality which has prompted some further thinking on the political alternative to the Kabul regime in the Fleet Street press. On 10 June, a *Guardian* editorial backing the efforts of the Islamic conference argued that '...the seizure of Kabul has been portrayed as a straight issue of freedom against totalitarianism. That was always rubbish; it is double

rubbish today...Even if the forces of rebellion were to precipitate a Soviet withdrawal, the tiny Afghan intelligentsia who remained — the students, the serving army officers, the guerrilla leaders — would still be Marxists dedicated to social advance — schools, hospitals, efficient agriculture — rather than to the collected writings of Ronald Reagan.'

This same approach was reiterated in a *Guardian* editorial last week. The Islamic efforts pointed to a solution for imperialism, but the assessment of political reality today was clear: '...at the moment there is no alternative neutral (sic) government in waiting, only merely feuding bands...Take away Mr Karmal, look for a coalition, and you are still substantially dealing with Communists.'

Despite the fact that the trend of events is far from a united opposition, the barrier to a rapid victory over the rebel gangs is not only aid from imperialism but also the stance and orientation of the PDP government and the Soviet authorities. They are opposed to extending what authority they have today through the development of the self-organisation and the independent mass mobilisation of the Afghan people. Instead, they promote bureaucratic, administrative and undemocratic methods towards the masses.

Peasants

Conditions for the self-organisation of the masses are more favourable today than if the reactionary forces were victorious. Under pressure, new peasant formations have been set up called Democratic Peasant Unions. Trade unions have also been extended and exist in Kabul, Helmand, Kandahar and in the Nagahar province.

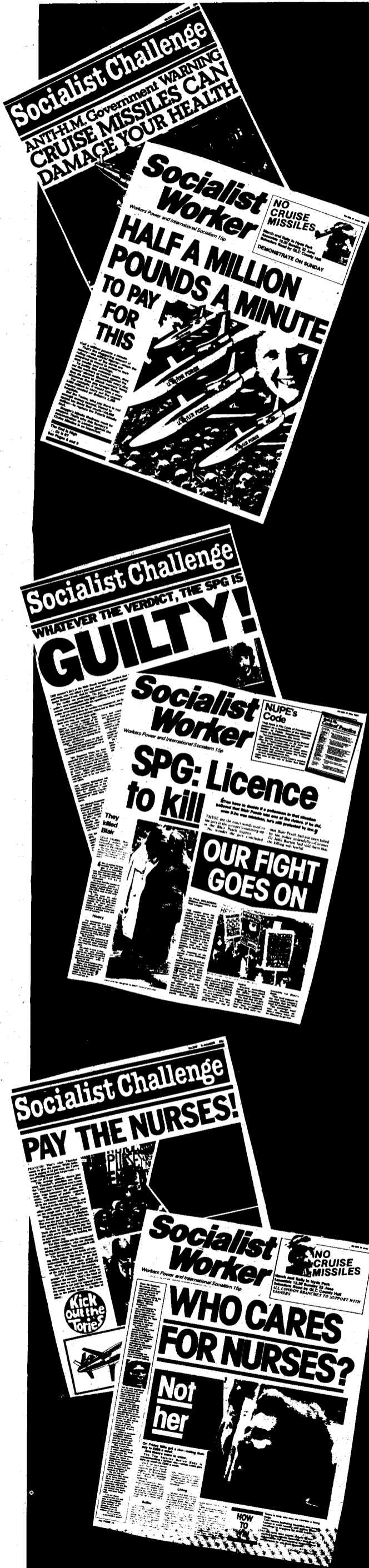
It has even been reported in the Kabul press that the workers in the Afghan textile mills in Gulbahar have set up a 'resistance group'. This, together with promises of the inauguration of the 'second phase' of the land reform, are aspects of a programme which the PDPA government should base itself on. This is, unfortunately, not the preferred course and it is also undoubtedly a cause of the prolongation of the civil war and inability of the Karmal Government to maintain or extend its basis of support.

One further consequence of these methods is the lack of a democratic way of resolving differences within the PDPA. So internal rifts in the PDPA between the Parcham and Khalq factions, which were temporarily healed when the PDPA came to office in 1978, appear to have heightened considerably. The announcement in the Soviet press of the execution of about a dozen former members of the Khalq faction, including ex-President Amin's brother and nephew, represents a continuation of methods which can only play into the hands of the pro-imperialist forces and are alien to resolving differences in the workers' movement.

But despite our criticisms of the Soviet forces and the PDPA government, and the barrier their methods make to a speedy defeat of the rebels, we have to get out the truth on Afghanistan in the face of a concerted imperialist propaganda offensive. While socialists need to criticise Soviet methods, our main line of fire must be on the imperialists' manoeuvres and their rebel gangs. We must oppose the demand of the imperialists for the full withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. The intent behind these calls is to secure the victory of the right-wing forces in Afghanistan. A victory against the rightist forces will create the best conditions to extend the struggle in the interests of the Afghan people.

This has to be the stance which informs socialists and serious militants in the unions. For let us make no mistake, a victory for the rebel forces will have enormous international consequences and will condemn the people of Afghanistan to untold misery and suffering, under a regime prepared to ruthlessly stamp out any voice of opposition, reminiscent of the shah's Iran.

IMG debates SWP End the Scandal



SOCIALIST Challenge, launched by the International Marxist Group in 1977, has consistently fought for unity among revolutionaries in Britain.

That unity is vital not only to fighting the attacks of the Tories but presenting a credible alternative to all those militants who reject the possibility of a gradual, reformist path to socialism in Britain today.

The unity of the two largest far left groups, the Socialist Workers

Party and the IMG, would give revolutionary socialism in Britain a massive boost.

It would put pressure on militants in the Communist Party, on the left-wing of the Labour Party, in the trade unions, and the women's liberation movement to unite in action with revolutionaries.

It would force smaller groupings to re-assess the sectarianism which has consistently held back the growth of revolutionary Marxist ideas in this country.

Here we publish the correspond-

ence between the IMG and the SWP about fusion. The SWP's response is a negative one but Socialist Challenge feels sure that this will not end the debate on this question.

We hope that the dialogue between the two organisations will continue both in joint action and through the pages of Socialist Worker and Socialist Challenge. To this end we explain the positions adopted by the last IMG conference on the basis for membership of the revolutionary party.

Never mind the unity, build the SWP

Dear Comrades

I have been asked by our central committee to reply to your letter suggesting that our two organisations establish 'the framework of a fight to build a joint organisation'.

You state that at your conference you agreed 'to withdraw the resolution sent to the SWP in July 1978' which, as you will recall, declared that we were a 'syndicalist break with Marxism'. This you suggest enables our two organisations to engage in joint work and discussion with an ultimate view to fusion.

As we wrote in our reply to your letter of 1978, if our two organisations were agreed over our analysis of the present situation and what had to be done it would be very wrong of us indeed not to unite our forces. However your attitude at the time made it absolutely clear that we were far from such agreement.

Given your view of us you had to see it as your duty — whether or not we were formally in the same framework or the same organisation — to wage a struggle to smash our leadership and our traditions, since they were likely to lead us 'to cross the class lines' if it came to any large scale convulsion. We concluded that for you any talk of 'unity' could only be a manoeuvre designed to make that easier for you to do.

Have things changed as a result of the resolution that was passed at your last conference? Not if the only change to your basic perspective and orientation has been terminological, without any real shift in your analyses and practice. For, without a shift such as this, you would be forced in any joint activity or in a fused organisation to try and counter our method of work, to undermine our influence and to substitute your own.

Centrist

You quite rightly remark on your latest conference resolution on 'unity', 'we are opposed to a fusion where one side calls the other "centrists"'. Such 'unity' can only mean a permanent slanging match between 'government and opposition' inside a formally united organisation. Yet two years ago when you waged an offensive over the question of unity, you did regard us as centrist. We cannot help suspecting that your basic analysis of our tradition remains the same despite your willingness to jettison the word itself.

The resolutions and speeches at your conference and the article in Socialist Challenge since have reinforced these suspicions. At your conference speakers supporting the resolution in favour of a unity approach accused their opponents (nearly half the conference) of effectively seeing us as centrist; and certainly within the opposition there was a grouping, small but closely linked to leading elements in the Fourth International, who openly call us centrist.

Yet you want us to 'fight for a united organisation' including all these elements. If the unitarians in your organisation were serious about the terms of their own resolution, they would have to break with those people who believe that we are centrists and then approach us for unity with only those who do not believe that we are centrists. Otherwise they are asking us to accept precisely the kind of unity they say is undesirable!

Approach

But that is perhaps not the most important point. More significant is the fact that nothing in the analysis of your conference or of Socialist Challenge leads us to suppose that you have shifted your positions fundamentally on the way you judge our basic approach to the class struggle. Your conference's grudging admission that we are a 'revolutionary' and not a 'centrist' organisation was accompanied by sniping references by speakers for all tendencies to our 'rank and file'.

Even the resolution on unity insisted that our 'rank and file approach starts from a false choice. Do we base ourselves on the activity of the rank and file or do we also include the reformist leaders? Their rank and file teachers group fetishes school based actions and unofficial strikes...'. The tone has been maintained since in Socialist Challenge.

Take for instance the article by Valerie Coultas on

the Great Debate in Central Hall. For Valerie, Paul Foot's argument against Benn could be summed up in the most hostile terms: 'Paul Foot echoed Hilary Wainwright's semi-syndicalist theme of going where power lies' on the shop floor.

Yet Valerie claims to be a supporter of unity. With supporters like that who needs splitters? We can only wonder whether being 'semi-syndicalist' we are still in Valerie's eyes a 'syndicalist break with Marxism'.

The same hostility was shown in the major article in Socialist Challenge on the lessons of the steel strike by Brian Grogan. Apparently, in that strike the activities of the SWP only detracted from what is presented as the major task of the strike, 'the building of the unofficial national strike committee', and support for the key militants involved.

Tactics

Note the word *only*. Nothing we did in the strike had any beneficial effect. The hundreds of thousands of leaflets, the many national and local bulletins, the fortnightly meetings of up to 40 militants from different parts of the country to discuss tactics, the work around picket lines and flying pickets, even the call for a national strike committee when it seemed a realistic prospect — it all 'only' deflected the attention from the key task. For comrade Grogan, as for those who would designate us as 'centrists', we are 'only' an obstacle in the class struggle to be got rid of as soon as possible.

But that is not all. Apparently our comrades in steel failed to hide their identity as revolutionary socialists. Instead, week after week, in most major steel areas they made the 'mistake' of producing SWP bulletins called *Real Steel News* analysing what needed to be done from a revolutionary socialist standpoint.

The result, Grogan claimed in a letter in Socialist Challenge a fortnight later, was the isolation of the SWP comrades from the real developments of the rank and file movement. By issuing *Real Steel News* as well as taking part in the strike committee, pickets etc, we were trying to impose a party bulletin on the fight inside the structure of the union, most notably the strike committees. This could only undermine the development of the rank and file leadership.

For revolutionaries to be open about the lead they offer to non-revolutionary activists (Grogan lists councillors, JPs) stops the development of rank and file leadership! One begins to wonder who are the real syndicalists.

Front

Now the IMG are entitled to their own opinion of what needs to be done and of where we go wrong. But such a fundamentally divergent view from us in a key strike as to lead you to say we only deflected people away from the major task hardly lays the basis for real unity of our organisations.

If the articles of comrades Grogan and Coultas were isolated occurrences may be we could just let them pass. But they were not. As we have seen, they followed on from the terms of the unity resolution itself. And their points have been repeated almost word for word in articles since, for instance in an article by another 'supporter of unity' Stephen Potter in Socialist Challenge of 22 May. Like Grogan he objects to revolutionaries being open about where they stand: 'It was clearly a mistake in the steel strike to build a party front in opposition to building a national strike committee'.

The hostile tone is contained in his comments on an article by Tony Cliff calling for united front action against the Tories. We are told that Cliff's call for a united front approach against the Tories contradicted some positions adopted by the last conference of the SWP.

The lie that the SWP was opposed to united front (because we refused to hide our politics inside them) was common currency from the IMG when you still described us as 'centrist' (despite the fact that year after year our conference passed resolutions on the united front — two at the last conference and we have

taken numerous attitudes on these). The fact that you can continue to repeat the lie again indicates that the attitude of many of your leaders to us remains unchanged.

There is another element of hostility in your attitude to our organisation to which we unfortunately have to refer. This is the way you continually repeat the lie (for instance in your unity resolution) that the SWP does not have a democratic internal regime.

This must amaze the thousands of our members who, for instance, argued our differing analyses of the class struggle, the organisation of blacks and women, the structure of our organisation, before our conference last year; or who argued just as vigorously over the sort of paper we needed the year before.

Your justification for your lies is tortuous in the extreme: Steve Jeffreys supported minority positions, the movers of the majority positions oppose him being elected to the national committee, and the 'rank and file' delegates overturned that opposition.

The fact that the conference delegates vote down the recommendations of the leadership shows that the organisation is undemocratic! The fundamental point is not, however, your dishonest and illogical argument. It is the hostile tone to the traditions of our organisation that underlies it. It is a tone that makes us suspect that 'a fight for unity between organisations' could only mean continual factional strife and sectarian sniping, with any attempt by ourselves to curtail this in the interest of implementation of the democratically agreed majority position being denounced as 'undemocratic'.

Action

You virtually admit in your unity resolution that what you foresee is not in reality united action from a single organisation, but endless arguments between our two organisations even if formally united:

'In fighting for unity with the SWP we would not dissolve the key political differences between us...' (ie your contention that we are 'semi-syndicalist')

'A polemic on our positions on the united front, the independent women's movement and so on will be conducted before, during and after fusion...'

So the 'fight for unity' will involve you arguing in a tone we've already heard from cdes Coultas, Grogan and Potter — and us presumably replying in kind. This really the way forward to building an organisation that can overshadow the CP and appeal to the workers looking to the Labour left at present? Isn't it really a guarantee of reproducing on a large and more disastrous scale the sectarian inward lookingness that characterises groups such as the Spartacists, the WSL, RCG and RCT?

You go on to say 'Public discussion on all the points that divide us would be valuable'. We wonder whether you can really believe this. All the points that divide us would go right back to 1947.

No doubt in some of us too there lurks a little sectarian demon that would like to recall the about turn of the Fourth International in 1948 in sudden discovery that workers' states had been created three years before without the working class, or you claim in the mid-'60s that there were 'workers' and peasants governments' in Algeria, etc, etc, etc, etc.

But is that really the recipe for building a party rooted in the workplace?

The very fact that you can even suggest that such a discussion is 'valuable' indicates to us that a good chunk of your leadership want not a united interventionist organisation, but a permanent debate in a framework which would lead us right away from the problems of the working class today. What we would end up with would be a slanging match (the tone of your articles already prove that) which would hinder the modest work that we have been doing to build revolutionary presence in the class.

We regard it as our revolutionary duty to avoid such a slanging match like the plague. Since that's what you mean by 'fighting for unity' we have to say that we can have none of it.

We say it regretfully because we know that within the IMG there are many revolutionaries who have

al of Disunity!

begun to break out of the sectarian style of politics and who have begun to seriously appreciate what we are trying to build. Indeed on the basis of discussion with individuals, some of us began to feel in the run up to your conference that a reorientation on your part might open prospects for organic unity.

The tone of the contributions at your conference and in your paper since have dashed any such hopes. It is clear that those elements who are genuinely moving towards our positions only got a majority of your conference by compromising with those whose positions remain in essentials what they always were.

At the same time the essential political differences between our organisations have if anything grown since your conference. This is shown not merely by your sectarian snipes around our work round the steel strike but also by the way in which you described one of the most significant developments in the women's movement (the taking of direct action against the Corrie Bill in Parliament Square in February as being counterproductive) and also by the way in which you have slid into pro-Russian apologetics over the question of Afghanistan.

What is the common thread that underlies these differences?

We base ourselves squarely on the insistence that the 'emancipation of the working class is the act of the working class itself'.

We regard it as substitutionist nonsense to talk of workers' states where the working class has no control over the state power, to see students, third world guerilla leaders or 'left' trade union officials as able to act in place of the working class, to identify the armed forces of the Russian state as the 'Red Army' being as the agent of Socialism or to love up to left

MPs in the abortion campaign.

The same starting point underlines our attitude to Afghanistan, over the steel strike, and over the abortion campaign. You denounce our approach on all these issues as 'rank and filism' or 'semi-syndicalism'.

It is this which explains your repeated insistence against all the evidence that we oppose the united front because you cannot understand that for us the precondition for any united front activity, with MPs, union leaders, is our real ability to propagate notions of independent, revolutionary class action.

Nothing in your conference or your letter leads us to believe that these differences have diminished since your last letter of two years ago. This is unfortunate, since although we are six times your size, for us to be able to unify with others forces around a common appreciation of our tasks would make the job of revolutionaries a little easier.

But that common appreciation does not exist yet and without it we will merely get continual sectarian wrangles. Under such circumstances your invitation for discussions of a 'fight for unity' is a waste of time.

We do however repeat our call of two years ago to those of your members who are beginning to appreciate what we are about: break with the sectarians who still see us as centrists: break with those who talk in the tones normally applied towards centrists: break with those who still see defence of the actions of the 'Red Army' as the lodestone for their world politics and join with us in building a party — a party to lead the working class self activity in the struggle for socialism.

Yours Fraternally, CHRIS HARMAN

We think you're irresponsible

Dear Comrades,

An overwhelming majority of revolutionary socialists will respond with disappointment and disbelief to your irresponsible decision to evade our clear offer of discussions on unity and joint work.

This rejection becomes even more absurd when we consider that your organisation has taken the initiative in proposing discussions with the French, Spanish, and Swedish sections of the Fourth International to discuss collaboration. One such meeting between yourselves and the FI (represented by the French, Spanish, and British sections) has already taken place. Your attitude thus appears both bizarre and inexplicable.

What is most depressing is not the pitiful cocktail of sophistry and trivial gossip to which you resort in order to defend your sectarian positions. It is that your views on the basis of unity effectively rule out the possibility of building a revolutionary organisation unless there is a monolithic acceptance of the current tactical line of the SWP leadership.

Your refusal to discuss our specific proposals for joint work must place a big question mark over what you really meant when you made your recent appeal for united action against the Tories.

Faced with the plain fact that your previous excuses for ignoring our proposals for joint work and unity have lost any foundation with the well-publicised decisions of our last conference, you are reduced to scurrying through the files of Socialist Challenge in order to compile a 'sensational' dossier of atrocities. Leaving aside the merits or otherwise of specific letters or articles which have been published in Socialist Challenge, it is undoubtedly the case that there are differences between us.

Labour Party

You say that we 'lie' about your positions on the united front. We insist that there remains a Jekyll and Hyde dichotomy in your practice. Is the infantrism of the 'steer left' period and the launching of the Anti Nazi League part and parcel of the same approach? We reject the former unequivocally. The ANL was a tremendous success and, as you are fully aware, Socialist Challenge editorially ('Hats Off to the SWP') paid tribute to the SWP. But you have so far not followed a similar approach in the trades unions.

For it is here that we need fighting fronts (rather than SWP fronts) which unite all those who are prepared to struggle against class-collaborationist politics. The weaknesses of the Communist Party make such an approach objectively as well as subjectively necessary today. So disagreements with your tactics on the steel strike are not designed to score petty points, but to chart a course that could unite all steel workers prepared to struggle.

In our opinion your attitude to the Labour Party also suffers from certain defects. Your main reply to those who are groping for socialist politics in the Labour Party is to pose the SWP as an organisational alternative, something which is not only untrue but appears surrealistic given the divisions on the far-left.

Furthermore to regard the Labour Party as a corpse is clearly wrong. It would be foolish in the extreme to exclude for all time to come a tactic which would imply sending all our forces into the Labour Party in order to win workers to full-blooded socialist politics.

Monolithism

While on the subject of Afghanistan, it is worth pointing out that there are differences inside the Fourth International. Socialist Challenge has not attempted to conceal these divisions. We do not believe that differences on vital national or international questions should be hidden from readers of our paper.

We believe that our conception accords with the theory and practice of classical marxism. Comrade Harman would do well to remember that monolithism and theoretical absolutism were Stalinist impositions on the international workers movement. It is undoubtedly the case, and hardly surprising, that this garbage has left its impact on even the most verbally intransigent anti-Stalinist currents. It is best, however, to be aware of the origins of certain party-building practices. Practices which, in

reality, have very little to do with genuine democratic centralism in conditions of bourgeois democracy.

Many on the left will see all this as confirming their view that revolutionary Marxist organisations are inescapably given to irresponsible splittism. Much of the history of our movement may seem to confirm this. But we base ourselves on another aspect of our history — the process of regroupment which produced the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1922.

No serious observer could claim that the present differences between the IMG and the SWP bear any comparison with the differences between the British Socialist Party, the Socialist Labour Party, the Independent Labour Party Left and the revolutionary syndicalist shop stewards who came together to form the early CPGB.

And whatever the accusations we might have thrown at each other in the past, they pale into insignificance compared with the epithets these comrades had put on paper about each other. But they were able to realise their greater common loyalty to the interests of the working class.

True, that was in a different situation. But was it a good thing that the inbuilt traditions of sectarianism were so deep that it took a world war and the Russian revolution to break them? Must we wait for a united organisation of revolutionaries until a revolution occurs somewhere else? We certainly cannot afford to wait until another world war!

We do not disguise our view that the present regime of the SWP is an obstacle — not just to uniting with the IMG, but to the building of any truly mass party. This is not out of opposition to the 'traditions' of your organisation.

On the contrary. In the early 1970s, when the SWP recruited workers more rapidly than at any time since, it accepted the concept that minorities were entitled to representation in branch and district delegations to conference, and to their fair proportion of seats on the leading bodies, consistent with the majority position at conference having a working majority. These positions are accepted by the IMG today, without our becoming as you claim, a 'federation of factions'. And they were the position of the Bolsheviks too.

Any other position means that differences even over secondary questions threaten to turn into splits, and no discussion is possible without slander, accusations against comrades' loyalty or integrity, and a poisonous atmosphere, fuelled by suspicions that the leading cadre will change the rules if ever they look like losing.

The mass party we need to build will contain differences far wider than those between us. By attempting to miseducate his comrades on this question, comrade Harman creates obstacles, not only against the IMG, but against the SWP ever developing into anything but the largest fish in the pond of fringe politics.

But while what comrade Harman does say is bad enough, the most irresponsible part of his letter lies in what he does not say. To our concrete proposals for discussions on joint activity around a recalled Defend Our Unions Conference, around unemployment, and for united action in the unions and among youth, he makes no reference at all. He hopes, no doubt, that those of his own members who did not see our original letter will not notice that he is trampling on the 'united action against the Tories' line laid out by Tony Cliff in the article to which he refers.

Of course that proposal was aimed mainly at the CP and the Labour Party — and quite rightly too. But if the SWP is to escape the accusations of only proposing united action to those organisations it knows in advance will refuse, it cannot continue to refuse to discuss united action with the only organisation in the labour movement that has responded to its proposals.

Derek Robinson was asked at a recent CP meeting by some SWP comrades for his views on the SWP's position on united action. 'Why should we unite with the Trots,' he asked, 'when they cannot agree among themselves'. We can truly say that if Chris Harman did not exist, Derek Robinson and the Communist Party would have to invent him!

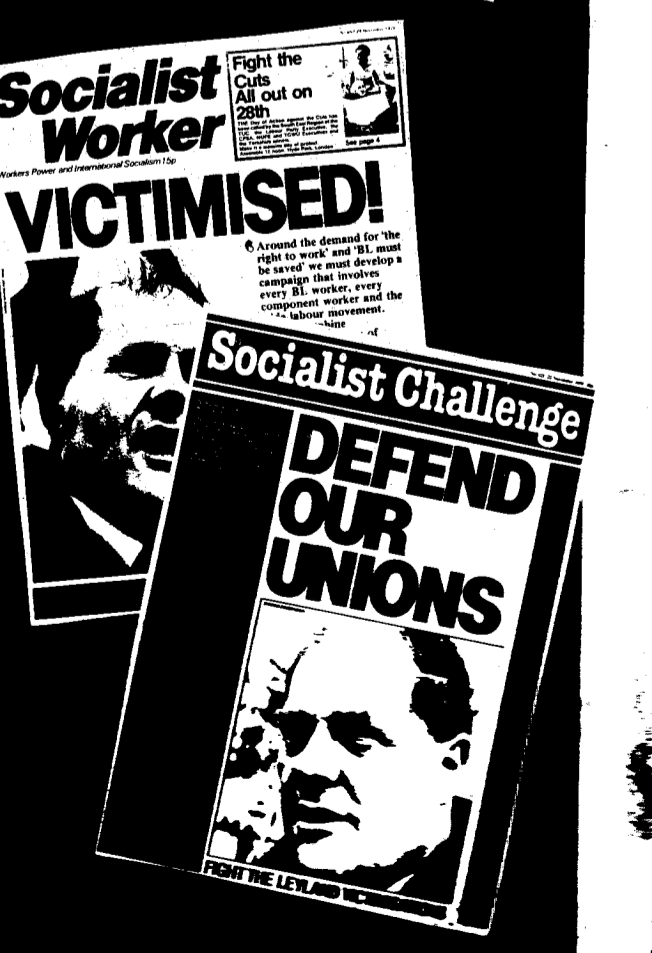
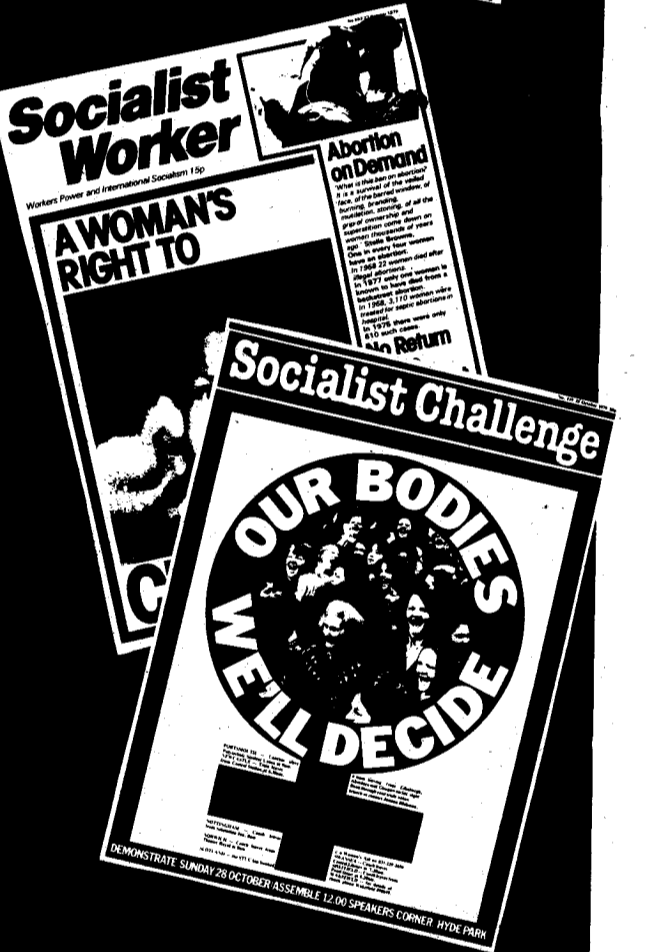
If you continue to refuse to accept the idea of a united revolutionary organisation — for that is the meaning of your position on the need for unanimity on tactics — we cannot do more for the moment than continue patiently to explain our position.

But on the question of united action we refuse to accept that your present disunitary position is the last word. We know that many comrades at all levels of the SWP realise that for us to discuss ways of working together could only strengthen the movement against the Tories and increase our ability to provide a pole of attraction to the left of the CP, in those areas where we were able to reach agreement.

By clarifying why we could not in other areas, it might lessen the scandal of revolutionary disunity in the eyes of wider layers of the movement.

We hope that you will reconsider your position. Your letter does your own membership a disservice. Written in a style and tone designed to provide your members with 'ammunition' against the IMG, it will backfire and have negative effects inside your own organisation.

As such it will be a setback for the task we face in common: building a revolutionary workers party in Britain and internationally. Once again we urge an immediate meeting of our two leaderships to discuss joint work and to map out a united approach in order to give battle to the Tories.



AT the centre of Chris Harman's reply to the IMG there lies an important statement about the basis for building a united revolutionary party: '...if our two our organisations were agreed over our analysis of the present situation and what had to be done it would be very wrong of us indeed not to unite our forces'

'In the absence of such agreement', the letter goes on, 'any talk of unity could only be a manoeuvre'.

Finally the letter concedes that 'to be able to unify with other forces around a common appreciation of our tasks would make the job of revolutionaries a little easier', but until this common appreciation does exist we will merely get continual sectarian wrangles.

Chris Harman is making a point about the basis for the unity of a revolutionary party in a general sense — that the basis on which we come together to build a party is 'our analysis of the present situation and what has to be done'

In other words, revolutionaries come together to build parties on the basis of prior agreement on the precise tactical tasks of the period.

Many conclusions flow from this, not least that since there is supposed to be this predetermined agreement, then disagreements that develop within a party have to be described as sectarian wrangling.

Serious

Indeed the logic of this view, that unity of revolutionaries requires this level of agreement, makes any internal discussion and debate on tasks exceedingly dangerous. If any disagreement is allowed to develop on questions of tasks or tactics, then a split is potentially threatened.

The essential thrust of this argument is saying that unity between the IMG and the SWP is impossible without agreement on our tactical approach in the class struggle today. But this is a polemical point on Chris Harman's part, rather than a statement about the actual practice of the SWP.

For example, at the last SWP conference a substantial minority led by Steve Jeffries were in considerable disagreement with the majority over the analysis of the present situation, and also over what has to be done. Did Chris Harman move the expulsion of this minority from the SWP, as perhaps he should have on the logic of his own view?

Of course not. In fact he had a sense of proportion on the degree of seriousness of the disagreements that were developing inside the organisation and saw that the minority view nonetheless expressed itself within a common framework.

The SWP, being a serious revolutionary organisation, does not treat disagreements inside its ranks in a lightminded way. Debates are serious and taken seriously. Minorities which disagree over any number of questions both great and small are not usually hounded out of the organisation.

When new comrades join the SWP they don't promise to agree with every new line or analysis that the leadership produces. Chris Harman knows the class struggle is not set in aspic; that arriving at an analysis of the present position and what has to be done requires a constant discussion, reassessment, and reappraisal of new factors.

Disgust

So if we are to reject Chris Harman's sketch of the basis for unity of revolutionaries we have to put something else in its place.

Following the First World War and the victory of the Russian Revolution, revolutionaries everywhere founded new parties — Communist Parties. At that time these new parties represented the revolutionary elements inside the working class who were disgusted with the attitude of the social democratic parties to both the war and to the revolution in Russia.

In Britain the Communist Party was founded in 1920 through a fusion of a number of smaller revolutionary groups. In the period preceding the fusion obstacles were raised because of differences between these groups on the question of whether it was right to take part in elections to Parliament, and on the correct attitude to the Labour Party.

Writing to Sylvia Pankhurst in 1919 Lenin expressed his view of the overriding issue in this debate:

'I am personally convinced that to renounce participation in the Parliamentary elections is a mistake for the revolutionary workers of England, but better to make that mistake than to delay the formation of a big workers' communist party in England out of the tendencies and elements, united by you, with sympathies with Bolshevism and stand sincerely for the Soviet republic.'

Programme not tactics

What basis for unity?



THE revolutionary party seeks to politically unify the working class.

'If, for example, among the British Socialist Party (the major element in the future CP) there are sincere Bolsheviks who refuse, because of differences over participation in Parliament, to merge at once in a communist party with the tendencies 4, 6, and 7 (three other groupings which later helped to form the CP) then these Bolsheviks, in my opinion, would be making a mistake a thousand times greater than the mistaken refusal to participate in elections to the bourgeois English Parliament.' (Letter to Sylvia Pankhurst, 28 August 1919.)

So in 1919 Lenin was quite clear that the unity of revolutionaries, in one big Communist Party, was of an importance that far outweighed differences over questions as far-reaching as the correct attitude to bourgeois parliaments.

Why did Lenin put so much weight on this question of unity of revolutionaries in one big party?

First of all we have to dismiss any im-

plication that from Lenin's point of view it was one big manoeuvre. Consistently through the history of the Bolshevik faction in Russia up to its final split with the Mensheviks with the outbreak of the First World War, we can trace the same consistent attitude on Lenin's part.

Lenin's attitude to disagreements in the Bolshevik faction after 1905 presents a similar example to illustrate this point.

After the 1905 revolution in Russia there was a big debate within the ranks of the Bolshevik faction on whether they should boycott or take part on the elections to the newly established Duma. Factions were formed on either side, and there was a fierce debate, but both Bogdanov and Lenin, who led the fight on either side, were agreed on one thing — neither felt this disagreement justified a split and the formation of separate parties.

Chris Harman refers to our different tactics in the steel strike as a major indica-

tion of the impossibility of unity between our two organisations. The difference of approach embodied by *Real Steel News* and the *Steel Sheet* are important. But since we no doubt agreed on the central issues — that the workers should not subordinate their interests to the viability of the industry; that the present leadership of the steel unions would in no way lead the fight to win; and that a new leadership is needed based on militants at the base of the unions — can differences on other questions really be used to argue against unity.

What would Lenin have thought of these excuses from our lack of unity — he did not demur from being in the same organisation with revolutionaries who took a completely different attitude on the fundamental issue of the correct approach to institutions of the bourgeois state.

So what were the principles that Lenin

looked to which allowed him to take such a consistent attitude to the unity of revolutionaries?

The revolutionary party exists for a very specific purpose — to lead and unify the working class in achieving its historic interests, the overthrow of capitalism and social revolution. This is no easy task.

First, it is no easy task because the imperialist bourgeoisie is very strong. Especially in the advanced industrial countries like Britain, it is clear that capitalism will only be overthrown by bringing huge social forces into play. The whole working class — or nearly all — will have to be united in its tasks in order to bring about the social revolution that marks the end of capitalism.

Revolutionaries in building a party are creating an instrument to maximise the unity of the working class towards this goal in the field of politics.

But this brings us slap up against another big problem. The working class today is not united; it doesn't have a sense of its destiny as a whole. It is divided by nation, race, sex, skill, age, occupation, political and cultural levels, between productive and unproductive workers and in many other ways. Even among revolutionaries these differences and divisions express themselves, so that discovering the best route to achieving the interests of the working class as a whole is again no easy task.

This explains the whole history of the revolutionary movement. It explains that among revolutionaries, who are seeking to realise the historic interests of the working class as a whole, there has to be the liveliest of debates and continual discussion.

It is this process of debate and discussion, of approaching problems from one angle and then another, of following through differences and fighting for them by forming tendencies and factions when necessary, that is the only way to begin to approach the interests of the working class as a whole.

Coupled with this full debate within the ranks of revolutionaries there has to be the utmost unity in action around a set of tactical prescriptions agreed by the majority.

This is the way that revolutionaries who are serious about the tasks confronting them have to behave. There is no shortcut to ensuring that the ideas of revolutionaries are right except to debate, discuss and then to act, assess, and debate again. This is not the 'sectarian wrangling' (a favourite CP phrase) feared by Chris Harman, but the liveliest and best tradition of the working class movement.

Lenin considered that the need for unity of revolutionaries was an overriding question because the main role of the revolutionary party is to unify the working class against the capitalist class. How can a revolutionary party hope to succeed in unifying the class in the field of politics if it cannot even unite with others it sees as revolutionary because of differences over secondary questions?

Unify

Once we understand that the main task of the revolutionary party is to unify the working class it becomes immediately clear that it is the height of irresponsibility to allow divisions to continue among revolutionaries on secondary questions. If we think those who were revolutionaries have moved into the camp of the bourgeoisie then we may well have to split from them.

The IMG believes that the SWP is an organisation of serious revolutionaries in the camp of the working class. We do think our differences with the SWP are a serious matter, which we should continuously debate and discuss.

We consider that the SWP's analysis of the Soviet Union is not only wrong but potentially dangerous. It could lead the SWP out of the camp of the working class, in our opinion. We make no secret of this. But if we can agree on a campaign to stop Cruise missiles being stationed in this country; if we can share a position in favour of unilateral disarmament and of Britain out of NATO, then we should work together and carry on the debate on the Soviet Union.

This is not a manoeuvre, nor is it sectarian wrangling. It is a matter of having a sense of proportion in facing up to the huge tasks of building a revolutionary party that overcomes the divisions inside the class we are based on.

Parties, as opposed to sects, are based on the historic interests of whole classes. For revolutionaries this means the working class.

In our view the SWP is a revolutionary organisation. It does seek to pursue the interests of the working class. Unless it is the view of the SWP that the IMG is not a revolutionary organisation — that it has crossed into the camp of the bourgeoisie — then there is no basis for arguing that we should not unite in one organisation. That is the best way to pursue the interests of the working class.

There is certainly no basis for arguing against discussing our differences and engaging in joint work where we can agree. To fail to do that would be careless of the massive tasks that confront us.

Socialist Challenge

IRELAND - NO TORY SOLUTION NO BRITISH SOLUTION

AFTER months of speculation and delay the Tory Government has finally announced its plans for the North of Ireland.

And although Secretary of State Humphrey Atkins says he is still considering a couple of options, the overall principle behind the plan is clear — to hand over authority to the Loyalists.

Some limitations may be placed on this power but the Tories have once again decided to play the Orange card. The people of the North of Ireland can now look forward to the establishment of a 'devolved' regime with the Rev Ian Paisley at its head.

The Tories argue that this is a 'democratic' solution, that the rule of the North of Ireland majority must prevail. It is a peculiar sort of democracy which needs the protection of 15,000 British soldiers and the same number again of locally recruited soldiers and cops to survive.

And it is a strange concept of justice and equality before the law which this week allowed a former member of the Royal Ulster Constabulary to be let off with a suspended two-year prison sentence for kidnapping a Catholic priest.

Truth

The truth is that such a 'democracy' is a sham. It is based on a North of Ireland state established in 1921 against the wishes of the people of Ireland as a whole and without even the support of the majority in the nine-county province of Ulster. The only way the state could be born, the only way it has survived since is through the presence of the armed might of the British state.

The truth is this simple and this obvious: the war in the North of Ireland is being fought, the thousands of British troops are there because the majority of the people of Ireland are opposed to the partition of Ireland.

The Tories, as the Labour Government before them, are still determined to enforce the division of Ireland at the point of a gun. The proposals announced by Atkins would not see the light of day if British troops were not in occupation of the North of Ireland.

The majority of the Irish people will offer no welcome to the Tory plans, and that rejection should be taken up in this country.

It is an encouraging sign that for the first time in ten years the national executive of the Labour Party has broken from the traditional 'bipartisan' approach. This is the meaning of the statement agreed last week by the NEC criticising the torture in the



infamous Long Kesh and Armagh prisons where Irish political prisoners are held and brutalised daily.

It was only to be expected that the

leaders of the Parliamentary Labour Party would show their contempt for Labour Party democracy and savagely attack the NEC's mild statement

criticising the prison conditions. After all, those conditions were created by the last Labour government.

Socialist policies for the crisis

SOCIALIST Challenge sold 70 copies in the Warrington steel plant last week. The reason? Steelworkers want to read a paper that takes up their fight against steel closures, a paper that tells them about other struggles against redundancy as the employment figures rise.

But to take a stand against voluntary redundancies in the workplace today requires clear answers. Socialist Challenge provides the only answers, the *socialist* answers — for the right to work, against the profit system, for a planned economy — that militants are finding they need more and more to fight the Tories effectively.

To continue doing this the paper

needs cash. In the autumn we intend to relaunch Socialist Challenge in a big way. The staff will be touring the country to discuss improvements we can make.

We know that large numbers of people will be fighting the Tories' vicious policies next winter and we want a new, improved Socialist Challenge to be there fighting with them. We appeal to our regular readers to dig into their pockets and give us some cash before they hit the beaches, or the floods.

Our thanks this week to:

J Carroll £1.00
M Tupper 15.00
Cumulative total: £865.32

Unfortunately some of the 'left' in the NEC have already back-tracked on the statement they voted for. The reverse should happen. The only socialist solution for Ireland is to allow the Irish people to decide their own future, and that is what the left in the Labour Party should be saying about the Atkins' proposals. A determined struggle needs to be taken up within the Labour Party to break once and for all with bipartisanship.

Struggle

With or without such a struggle, the fight against the Tory 'solution' and all British 'solutions' for Ireland needs to be stepped up. Three weeks ago the Committee for Withdrawal from Ireland called for a demonstration based on opposition to the Tory plans, and called instead for British withdrawal. This initiative was taken up at the Troops Out Movement conference last Sunday.

The date for that demonstration is 8 November. That may seem a long time away. But it gives all those in this country committed to ending British presence in Ireland an opportunity to build the demonstration into a massive display of opposition to Britain's pursuit of the Irish war.

The easiest way to end that war is for Britain to get out now. That is why Socialist Challenge is supporting a troops out now contingent on the demonstration.

Atkins and the Labour leaders who support him need to be told unequivocally that they have nothing to offer the Irish people. Let them and the troops they control leave Ireland to find its own peace and its own solution. Let the call on 8 November be for them to do that without delay.

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