

Socialist Challenge

Nine years after internment and its still BRITISH BELFAST STREETS TERROR ON

A COUPLE of weeks ago Anne Marie McMullen was asked by the socialist youth newspaper *Revolution*: 'Do you think Britain should leave Ireland?'

She replied: 'Yes, it's the only way there'll be any peace. I think they should leave today. They have no right in our country.'

Today, 15-year-old Anne lies in a Belfast hospital on the edge of death. She may indeed be dead by the time you read this newspaper. She was shot by a plastic bullet in Belfast at the weekend. The bullet was fired by a British soldier.

Michael Donnelly is already dead. He was killed in the early hours of Saturday morning, near Falls Road in West Belfast. He too was hit by a plastic bullet, a weapon described officially as 'non-lethal'; that too was fired by a British soldier.

Michael was murdered and Anne Marie was gravely injured during a weekend of protests and demonstrations in Belfast and elsewhere in the North of Ireland which marked the ninth anniversary of the introduction of internment without trial.

In 1971 internment was the ultimate proof that the British Army in the North of Ireland was, first and foremost, a force of repression to be used against the Catholic population in the North of Ireland.

The events last weekend show that nothing has changed.

Internment might have officially gone but now there are the H Blocks and the women's prison in Armagh. There the victims of British rule are sent by a juryless



Michael Donnelly

court in which the judge is also the jury and sentencer.

Anne Marie told *Revolution* that in her area 'Everyone supports the prisoners. Many of us have brothers, sisters, or relatives in H Blocks or Amargh.

'When Kieran Nugent (the first H Block prisoner) was released we organised a demonstration in about 20 local schools against the conditions. At lunch-time we all started to tear up books and throw food everywhere. They had to bring in 12 Brits (soldiers) to stop us and kick us out of school.'

Ann Marie is a militant. She would make no apology for that. The situation in Ireland breeds militants. The presence of the British army breeds militants.

In Britain the campaign is growing to get the troops out of Ireland without further delay. The *Daily Mirror* repeated its call last Tuesday.

Approximately 150 members of the country-wide Troops Out Movement went over to Ireland to join the protests at the weekend. At least one of the TOM members, Piers Marston, was arrested by the British Army.

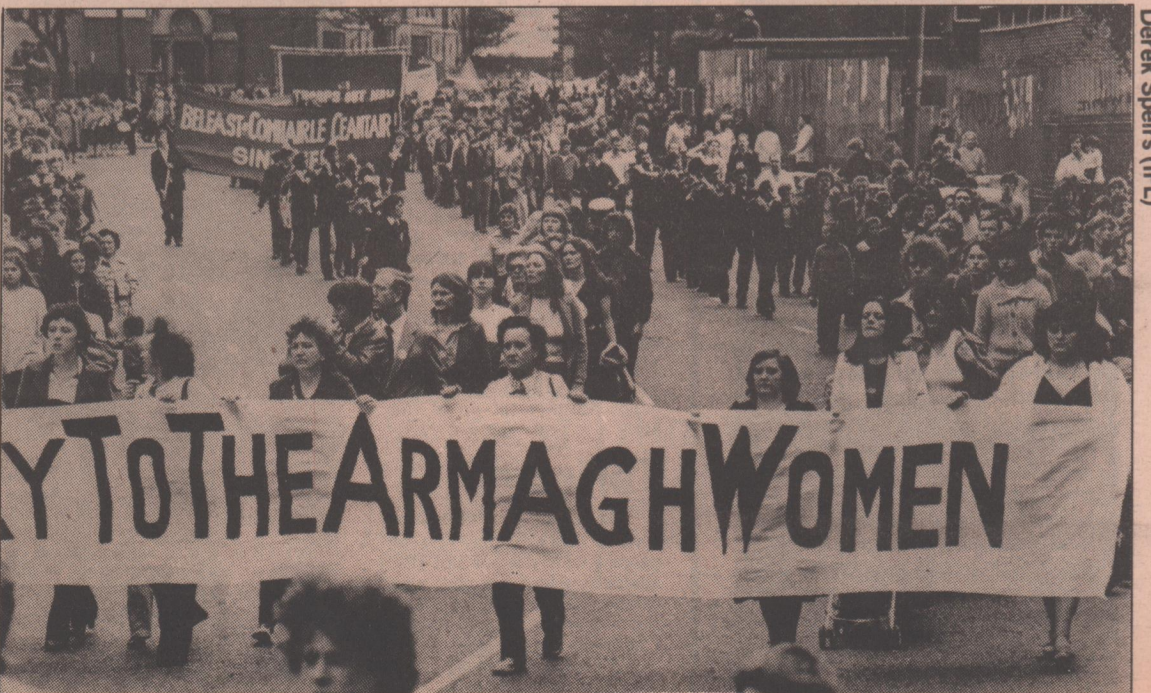
Two other campaigners on Ireland were also arrested in Glasgow on Saturday. The two, Kristine Crosbie and Mike Duffield, were selling the magazine *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* and 'Hands off Ireland' badges.

For this they were charged on Monday under the Prevention of Terrorism Act that they 'did solicit and invite financial support for a proscribed organisation'.

It is the first time the PTA has been used in this way against Irish solidarity activists. The two have been remanded in custody for a week. Their, and others, right to speak out on Ireland should be defended by all socialists in this country.

The demands of the Troops Out Movement — troops out now, self-determination for the Irish people — had a tragic relevance for Michael Donnelly and Anne Marie McMullen in Belfast last weekend.

To repeat Anne's words, British troops 'should leave today'. Any other solution would be to prolong the agony. The Irish agony has gone on long enough.



Troops Out demo in Belfast on anniversary of Internment last Saturday

Derek Speirs (IFI)

OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

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

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Name

Address

.....Tel no

1 September — your date with the TUC

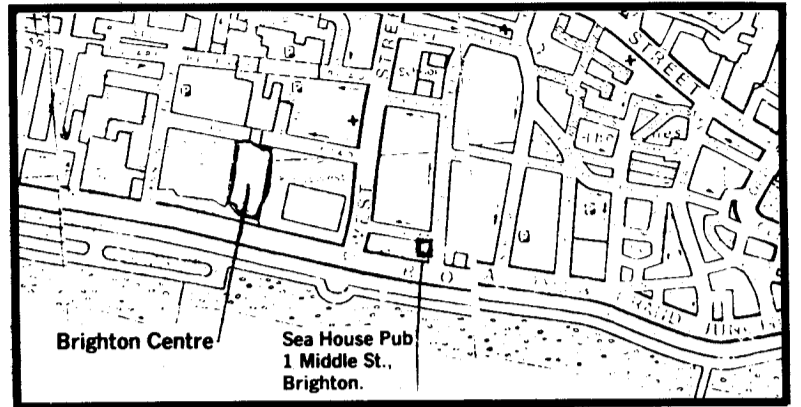
SUPPORT is building up for the 1 September lobby of the TUC on unemployment.

With over two million on the dole, the response of the trade union leaderships has been non-existent. As Bob Wright puts it in this week's Socialist Challenge, being against unemployment is like being against beating up old people. The point is, what do you do about it.

For the TUC leadership the answer is precious little. Many unions have policies against overtime and for the 35-hour week, but again very little is being done about it.

The lobby called by the Mobilising Committee on Unemployment is going to the TUC to demand that the TUC organise class-wide action to stem the flood of redundancies. The lobby will be outside the TUC at the Conference centre at noon and there will be a lobby meeting at the Sea House pub at 1pm, 1 Middle St., Brighton, just down the road from the TUC.

Speakers at the rally will include Dave Ward, branch secretary of Crawley POEU, Bernard Connolly the craft convenor at BSC Rotherham, and John Walsh, con-



venor of BOC Hackney. Socialist Challenge readers and supporters should be gearing up for a maximum turn-out at the lobby and meeting. For details of transport ring

01-359-8371. **NO TO UNEMPLOYMENT FOR A 35-HOUR WEEK NOW SHARE THE WORK, WITH NO LOSS OF PAY!**

Thousands remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki

THE quarter of a million people killed and the many more mutilated by the A-bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, undertaken to teach the Soviet Union a lesson, were commemorated last weekend by thousands who took part in rallies, marches, and vigils.

Reported on this page are the events in Manchester.

Some 500 people marched in to York, stopping off at the Hawkhill Home Defence College, where a letter was delivered protesting about the government's nuclear weapons policy.

The letter said that the existence of nuclear weapons in Britain made this country a potential target for massive and catastrophic nuclear attack,

No peace for nuclear weapons bases

and called for unilateral nuclear disarmament.

At a gathering of more than a thousand people in Carlisle, Julie Christie condemned the government's decision to site Cruise missiles in Britain.

At the Greenham Common RAF base, where Cruise missiles are to be sited, a 75-hour vigil was held, with up to a thousand taking part. Other events took place in Swindon, Bromley, and the West Midlands.

Photo: Andrew Ward (Report)



A Japanese Buddhist monk on a 75-hour vigil at Greenham Common, one of the proposed sites for Britain's Cruise missiles

March against the Missiles

Eve of Labour Party conference Sunday 28 September, Blackpool

THROUGHOUT the country there is a growing alarm over Defence Secretary Francis Pym's announcement of the NATO plan to site 160 Cruise missiles in Britain by 1982, and the proposed replacement of Polaris by Trident, costing the taxpayer £5 billion.

The Tories tell us we can survive a nuclear attack by whitewashing our windows and wrapping our head in a jacket. It is a pity that the citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki didn't have the benefit of this learned advice.

The Labour Party conference could take a dramatically different view — 131 motions explicitly oppose the decision of Thatcher, the cold war warrior.

Constituency parties and unions showed their concern over the siting of the missiles on the Labour NEC-organised march of 25,000 in June. Yet shadow Defence Secretary William Rodgers continues to speak out against this tide of opinion.

We've called this march for Blackpool to demonstrate to constituency and union delegates, MPs, and the NEC the massive support from party members and supporters for a campaign to stop the missiles being sited, to support blacking action by unions in furtherance of this objective, and to commit the next Labour government to cancel the Cruise contract.

All CLPs, unions, and individuals are invited to support this march.

Signed: Frank Allau, MP; Colin Barnett, NW TUC secretary; Paul Salvesson, Greater Manchester Communist Party secretary; Ken Slater, AUEW district secretary; Bob Walder, NW CND secretary.

Further details from: Labour Conference March Against the Missiles, 25 Osborne Rd, Levenshulme, Manchester. Tel 061-236 4905.

Manchester against the missiles

By Pete Clifford

AS many as 2,500 people marched through Manchester last Saturday to oppose the Cruise and Trident missiles.

The demonstration, called by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, was led by Frank Allau, MP for Salford, and Colin Barnett, secretary of the North-west TUC.

They were followed by a large contingent organised by Manchester Against the Missiles, a united action campaign recently set up in the area.

Tories out

There were hundreds of Labour Party members on the protest with slogans not just against nuclear war, but also calling for the kicking out of the Tories. A Socialist Challenge contingent also called for union action to stop the siting of the missiles.

Prominent among the march were scores of young people, many of them supporting Manchester Youth Against the Missiles, which is organising a mass campaign to demand that the BBC show The War Game, the anti-nuclear film banned 20 years



Photo: John Smith (IFL)

ago. Another striking feature of the demonstration was the

number of women marching; a large group were behind the Manchester Women for

Peace banner. Their organiser, Doreen Henshaw explained to Socialist

Challenge they were not just marching against missiles, but were also campaigning to get US troops out of the country.

They are sending a delegation to the US airforce base in Warrington on 3 September, to talk to the service personnel there about US withdrawal from Britain.

NATO

This theme was echoed in Frank Allau's speech at the end of the march. He argued: 'The impetus comes from the Americans. We have to oppose Britain's participation in any defence policy based on the use or threatened use of nuclear weapons. I agree we must get out of NATO.'

Referring to the forthcoming Labour Party conference, Allau welcomed the 131 anti-war resolutions, but argued that maximum unity was necessary at the conference in order 'not to defeat the main issue of missiles'.

In this light Allau will be trying at the conference to separate the issue of NATO membership from that of the missiles, by suggesting the two questions are dealt with in separate resolutions.

It seems a rather unreal division in that Britain is only a site for the missiles because of its NATO membership.

Allau is one of the sponsors of a proposed demonstration against the missiles on the eve of the Labour Party conference in Blackpool on 28 September.

NATO CRUISES TO WAR

'THE Soviet Union is engaged in a massive build-up of its armed forces and will soon achieve a position of superiority from which to threaten the security of the Western World. We have no choice but to increase defence spending.' So runs the argument employed by the Tory government to justify their decision to buy five billion pounds worth of Trident submarine-based missiles and to allow the United States to deploy Cruise missiles in this country.

The Soviet Union replies by charging the West with initiating the new round in the arms race and cites the refusal of the US to ratify the SALT II arms limitation agreement to back up their claim.

Who can we believe? One man specially qualified to shed some light on the conflicting claims of Washington and the Kremlin is Italian general Nino Pasti, who recently retired from military duties with the NATO command to become a member of parliament.

But Pasti is a retired military man with a difference: he was elected as a candidate of the Italian Communist Party. And his views on Afghanistan, Cruise missiles, and rearmament, which are set out in the following interview, would no doubt throw our Sandhurst-trained general staff, not to mention Margaret Thatcher and co, into paroxysms of rage.

General Pasti, most leading European circles see the December NATO decisions to deploy Pershing and Cruise missiles as the probable leading cause of the Soviet action in Afghanistan. US-Chinese negotiations over missile technology are similarly seen as a major factor. Could you comment on these two aspects of the present military situation?

Let's take China first. When US defence minister Brown visited China, the aim was to establish common points for harmonisation of US and Chinese military policy, with a view toward an eventual war against the Soviet Union.

The visit was organised before Soviet troops entered Afghanistan. Contrary to what some say, the Soviet move was not the cause of the intensified US-Chinese negotiations; the contrary is the case.

The second cause of the action in Afghanistan was the decision to install the Euromissiles. There is no question about this. It must be understood that the Euromissiles are not theatre nuclear weapons, but are strategic weapons, deployed to destroy targets well within the USSR.

As a result they cannot be termed tactical but are strategic, and thus cause an imbalance in the world strategic balance of forces. This destabilised the international situation.

The fact that the US Senate refused to ratify the SALT II agreements is significant in this regard. SALT II implied reaching a level of equilibrium in strategic

forces: parity. It is this parity which prevents war given that each side can inflict annihilation on the other.

The refusal to ratify means refusal to accept parity. The real meaning of the deployment of Euromissiles is therefore that the US is attempting to achieve superiority.

The Pershings and Cruises can hit targets within Russian territory. This is not a quantitative problem. NATO has over 7,000 nuclear warheads in Europe. The Pershing and Cruise is a qualitative change in the equilibrium.

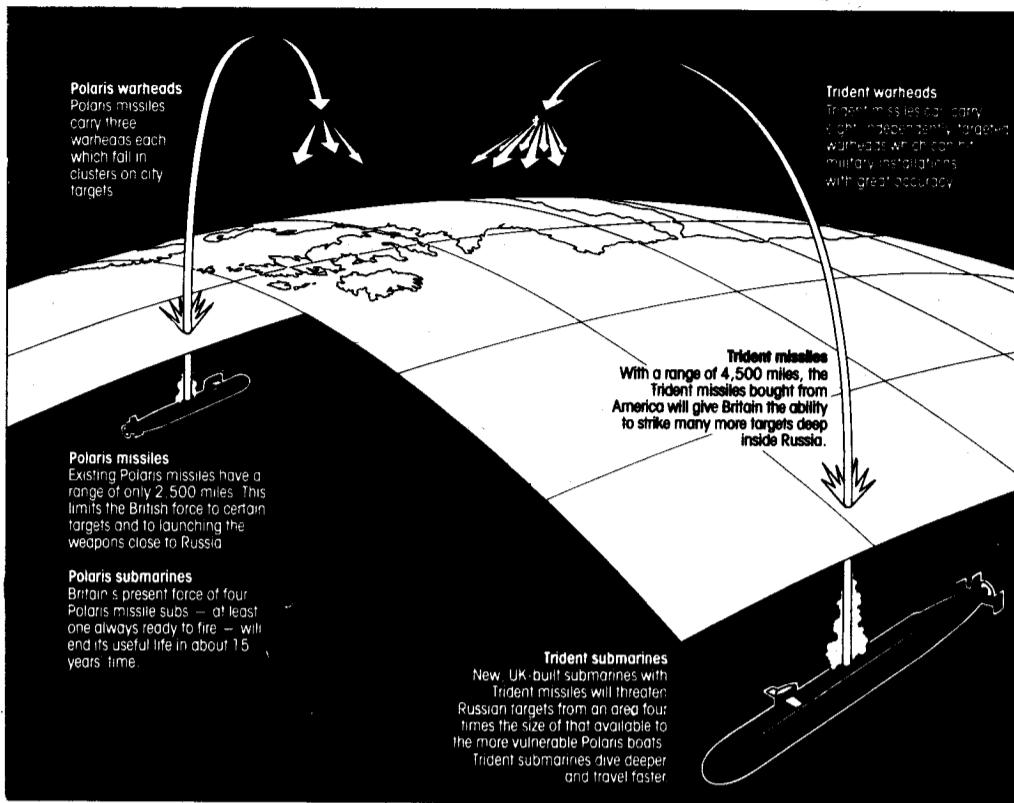
Given that the Soviet Union cannot and will not accept this, the deployment will lead to a major arms race, which carries with it the danger of a world war which would endanger the whole human race.

The NATO argument and propaganda to the effect that the Euromissiles were required to achieve parity following the deployment of the SS20 is simply false, for the following reasons.

The SS20s are theatre nuclear weapons which cannot reach US territory. They are a modernisation of the SS4 and SS5 whose precision and functions were outdated. The SS20 warheads carry three times less throw-weight per warhead than the SS4 and the SS5. Each SS20 missile carries three warheads.

The ratio of replacement is one new warhead for every three old missiles, a fact recognised officially by the US and Europe. What astonishes me is the replacement of SS4 and SS5s by SS20s. The United States has replaced their missile systems no less than several times.

It is important to note what Kissinger said when he was in



TRIDENT: THE LONG-RANGER

Vladivostok in November 1974. During the signing of the interim accord he declared in a press conference that it was the USA which convinced the Soviets not to include theatre nuclear weapons in overall negotiations, although the Soviet side wished to do so.

Using the argument that theatre nuclear weapons could not reach Soviet territory and were not strategic weapons, Kissinger asked that they not be included, whereas Gromyko wanted to negotiate on theatre weapons.

From the standpoint of Western Europe the deployment of Pershing and Cruise means only a much heavier targeting of Europe by Soviet missile weapons.

The new missiles can reach Soviet territory within four minutes of launch, giving the Soviet Union precious little time to decide on world war. Some have described this situation as a Cuba crisis in reverse.

Yes, it is a Cuba missile crisis in reverse.

But if we look at the other part of the equation, at China, every bit of new technology given is a threat equivalent to the Euromissiles and can be a cause for war.

The SALT II agreement does not include provision for the USSR's weapons aimed against China. That is the reason why the SS20 was made mobile. According to US intelligence sources, more than half the total amount of SS20s are aimed at China.

Now, the increase of technology to China increases the danger of war. Look at the change in strategic posture of the USA during the period 1973-79.

Before, it was based on massive retaliation. A strategy of 'counter-city': if you attack me and destroy my cities I will do the same with your cities; so war was impossible.

In 1973 Schlesinger invented the 'counterforce' doctrine. This presupposed a destruction of the enemy through a surprise attack.

Today, the USA has 10,000 warheads and the USSR has 5,000. The Soviets have more throw-weight, which is important to attack the cities, but not for a counterforce strategy which aims at wiping out the military forces of the enemy. This requires that they be able to hit small targets and many of them. It is more effective to have the same throw-weight but with many missiles than to have that throw-weight with fewer.

From the standpoint of military strategy, from the standpoint of Scharnhorst, Machiavelli, and the military tradition of the American founding fathers, the US strategy appears bankrupt, because as soon as the USSR monitors on their

US steps up war preparations

PRESIDENT Carter has just approved a plan which significantly shifts the emphasis of the United States' nuclear strategy — and increases the possibility of a nuclear war!

Presidential directive 59, which Carter initialled two weeks ago, requires the US Strategic Command to give priority to the destruction of Soviet military and governmental targets. The increased accuracy of the new generation of warheads — to within 200 feet after flying 5,000 miles — makes this possible.

Jargon

The US will no longer rely on 'deterrence' based on the theory of 'mutually assured destruction' — military jargon for the Soviet Union and United States being able to wipe out each other's cities.

'The new directive is founded on the belief that it is possible to have a nuclear war of some duration,' explained Harold Jackson in the *Guardian* 'and that the selective picking off of the Soviet capability to wage such a war will serve as a deterrent.'

Or, put another way, the selective capability to pick off Soviet missile sites means that the United States can start and win such a war!

Deploy

Coupled with the decision to build the \$34 billion MX missile system, to increase the number of Trident-bearing nuclear submarines, and to deploy Cruise missiles in West Europe, this new directive will lead, in Jackson's words, to a 'continued escalation of the growing American defence budget'.

And as General Pasti demonstrates in the interview above, far from being 'defensive' measures, the latest moves of the imperialist powers represent a major stepping up of the military threat to the Soviet Union.

That is only part of the story. If on the Soviet side, 11 per cent of the submarines are on permanent patrol, the US has 50 per cent of its submarines on patrol and is making a big effort to increase its number of submarines.

In short the United States is doing everything to reach superiority.

Then there are the MX mobile missiles. There is opposition from the General Accounting Office to these missiles, but Carter will go ahead with them. Then there is the second Trident that can be used very close to the Soviet seacoast.

Whitelaw's civil defence farce

THE government's decision to devote an extra £45m to civil defence is one off its most cynical decisions.

The main 'civil defence' proposal made by Home Secretary Whitelaw is that civilians should construct anti-fallout shelters in their own homes. Whitelaw argues that a 'substantial number of lives' could be saved by the expenditure of this £45m.

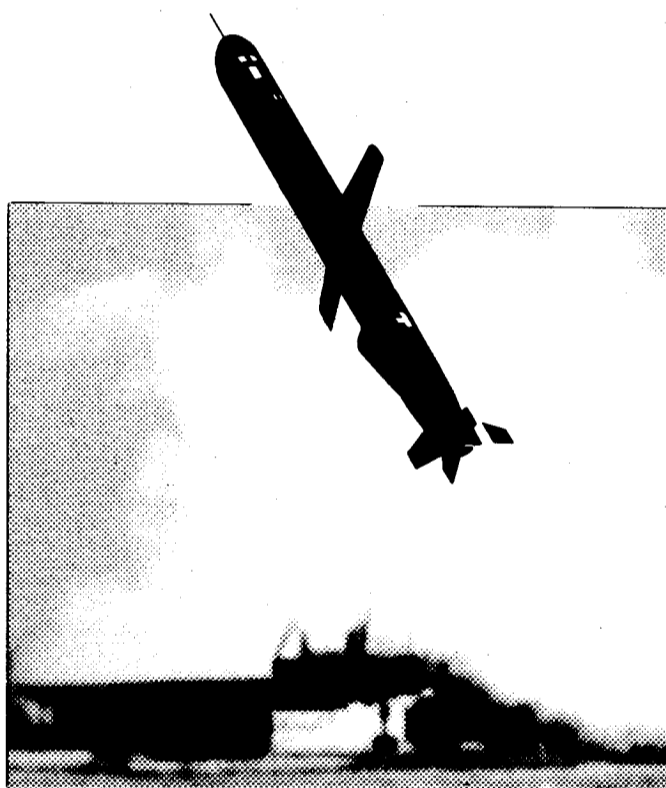
In reality, it is highly unlikely that most of the population would have the time to acquire the materials required to block off windows and to construct a shelter in the 'anti-fallout room'.

It is by no means certain that these 'shelters' would pro-

tect against fallout. And what little hope personally constructed 'anti-fallout' shelters afford — assuming that there's more than four minutes warning! — will be of no relevance to the millions of people in urban areas whose houses would be destroyed or severely damaged by blast and fire storm.

Whitelaw's £45m is not really about protecting the civilian population at all. 'Civil defence' is about convincing people that they could survive nuclear war. This is a particularly cruel and cynical hoax.

Its purpose is to make the Tories' war preparations more acceptable. The £45m spent on the civil defence public relations exercise is simply a down-payment on the thousands of millions for Trident and Cruise.



radar system a US launch it will release all its missiles — so the US missiles will be striking empty silos.

It seems that the reason for the USA's strategic posture is that they are preparing for a limited tactical nuclear war.

We must consider the possibility that the US could blind the Soviet early warning system. The US is making progress in this direction. So at the last minute, they could breach the Soviet early warning system.

But the Soviets will realise that.



THE PROTECTION RACKET

What do the protective laws say?

'WE demand no more protection than labour as a whole demands against capital' — Clara Zetkin, speaking at the International Workers Congress held in Paris in 1889 EVER since workers first began to combine in trade unions for protection against the employers, a debate has raged about whether women should work in the same jobs and under the same conditions as men.

In March 1979 the Equal Opportunities Commission urged the government to remove the protective legislation that has governed the conditions of work for women. The commission suggested that the legislation was outmoded and that it stopped women entering the workforce on the same terms as men.

Since then the debate in the trade unions and the women's movement on the protection racket has hotted up. Most commentators have urged the retention of some form of protection because of the vulnerability of female labour

VALERIE COULTAS traces the history of the debate in the labour movement and arrives at a different conclusion.

THE view that women should not go out to work at all, let alone in heavy jobs, has been current among trades unionists for well over a hundred years.

In 1867 the sixth general meeting of the German Workers' Association passed the following resolution:

'The employment of women in the workshops of modern industry is one of the most scandalous abuses of our times. Scandalous because it does not improve the material situation of the working class but makes it worse, and because the destruction of the family in particular reduces the working class population to a wretched state.

'This gives us all the more reason to reject the current efforts to increase even further the market for female labour.'

Even those socialists such as Marx and Bebel who opposed the view that women should be kept out of the workforce found some kinds of labour 'morally reprehensible for women'.

Feminine

Bebel wrote in *Women and Socialism*:

'It is truly not a lovely sight to see women even with child, vying with men in wheeling heavily-laden barrows on railway construction sites; or to observe them mixing lime and cement, or carrying heavy loads, or stones, as labourers on building sites, or to see them working at washing coal or ironstone.

'The women there are stripped of all that is feminine and their femininity is trampled underfoot, just as our men, in many different types of employment, are bereft of anything manly.'

Nineteenth century capitalists did perpetrate a violent exploitation of the labouring masses as a whole. Women and children were a symbol of the ruthlessness of that



August issue now out. Features on the housing crisis and the job losses in the hosiery industry; a guide to the Employment Bill; articles on the closure of a women's hospital in Glasgow and on the women threatened with deportation. Plus letters, local stories, campaign news, and a page one appeal for the lobby of the TUC for a woman's right to work, on September 1st. *Women's Fightback* costs just 5p, plus postage (up to 5 copies for a 10p stamp). Send to: *Women's Fightback*, 41 Ellington Street, London N7



Women miners in the States, after enduring considerable harassment from their fellow workers, are demanding higher standards of safety. Every miner benefits from this.

Women Working

GINNY trained in 1976 as a carpenter on a government TOPS course where she and another woman were the only females with two hundred men. In the *Directory of Social Change WOMEN* she recounts a job interview she had with a local council after she had completed her course:

'I had this kind of dialogue with the interviewer:

Him: Do you realise that in repair and maintenance, we spend a lot of time repairing men's urinals; that would be a difficult situation wouldn't it?

Me: What do you do when you're preparing the women's loos?

Him: We hang a sign on the door saying 'men working'.

Me: Don't you think you can put up a sign saying 'Women working'?

Him: Oh!

And later:

Him: You'll have to carry heavy weights and it's not easy.

Me: I know it's hard, but I know it doesn't happen very often. Besides I want the job and I know I am a carpenter and know what it entails.

Him: Listen, dear, I'm not trying to put you off but you will have to carry your tools around...'

Taken from the *Directory of Social Change WOMEN* published by Wildwood House.

exploitation. Free time for leisure was indeed scarce. When whole families worked from dawn till dusk the ten-hour day was a massive victory for every worker.

Pure

But we must also remember that the labour movement at this time was extremely male-dominated — even the International labour movement — and that the leaders of such movements cannot have avoided being influenced by the prevailing morality which promoted a vision of the female as pure and divine, despite the high levels of prostitution at that time.

The covering of the ankles of pianos in Victorian drawing rooms was one of the more absurd examples of the prevailing morality.

Many of the poorest women workers opposed the introduction of any protective legislation. They

rightly saw that it would restrict their earning power, excluding them from higher paid jobs. The Women's Protection and Provident League considered the legislation 'an infringement on women's liberties and prejudicial to their opportunities of employment'.

Women realised that by going out to work they were only swapping one master for another. Yet economic independence gave them the means by which they could raise their status in society and participate in the working class movement.

Kicked

The Open Door Movement, set up in Berlin in 1929, after women had been kicked out of 'male jobs' following the First World War, was also against any special protection for women. It argued that protection of workers should be governed by the nature of the job rather than the sex of the worker. Otherwise

Maintenance engineer

One Friday night it happened, some years after we wed. When my old man came home from work, as usual I said: 'Your tea's on the table, clean clothes are on the rack. Your bath's soon be ready, I'll come up and scrub your back.' He kissed me very tenderly and said 'I'll tell you flat — The service I give my machine ain't half as good as that'...

Chorus:
I said 'I'm not your little woman, your sweetheart or your dear
I'm a wage slave without wages, I'm a maintenance engineer.'

Well then we got to talking, I told him how I felt. How I keep him running just as smooth as some conveyor belt. For after all, it's I'm the one provides the power supply (He goes just like the clappers on my steak and kidney pie) His fittings are all shining, I keep 'em nice and clean. And he tells me his machine tool is the best I've ever seen...

The terms of my employment would make your hair turn grey. I have to be on call you see for twenty-four hours a day. I quite enjoy the pass though when I'm working through the night. For we get satisfaction — well, he will and then I might. If I keep up my production I shall have a kid or two. So some future boss can have a brand new labour force to screw...

restrictions would be placed on people's personal liberty.

The Social Democratic Party in Germany and the Socialist International condemned this movement, which drew its support from the Scandinavians, on the grounds that such a policy was directed against the interests of working women and employers would take greater advantage of female employees if the legislation were repealed.

The fight for a socially-defined working day, as opposed to one defined by capital, was vital to improving the condition of the working class. But it is less clear that protective legislation benefited the female workforce.

It did not protect women from super-exploitation in jobs where there was little or no male competition.

Today, no less than in the past, the legislation acts in a paternalistic way. It is based on the assumption that some jobs are just not 'feminine' enough. Women can slave away in hotels, laundries, and hospitals all night and every night. But work on a night-shift in a car factory or a print shop for a higher wage — no!

Employers in textile factories can gain exemption orders for women to work a ten-hour day producing cotton, but allow women to earn £100-a-week working down the mines — certainly not!

Exploit

Managers walk all over protective legislation when they want to exploit female labour. Yet when women want the chance to earn higher pay they have a hard time not only from management — which benefits from the high profits of female labour — but often with their 'brothers' in the trade union movement, too.

Patriarchal attitudes are strongly entrenched within the British labour movement and the very idea of women working nights or going down the mines would draw a hostile reaction. Male workers still take a different view on women's work than they do of their own jobs.

And it isn't simply male prejudice that has to be confronted. Women taught from the cradle that they are the 'weaker sex' view certain spheres of employment as not 'right' for them.

In the United States women work down the mines, as

stevedores on the docks, and on nightshifts. Male trades unionists are slowly realising that what women can't lift easily they can't always lift too easily either; that when women complain about safety conditions in the mines, this benefits men too.

Denmark has similar laws. In Scandinavia the protective legislation has been extended so that in most instances neither women nor men work nights.

If women want to break out of the female ghetto in Britain in terms of job opportunity, it seems as if there has to be a much broader debate about protective legislation than has so far occurred within the trades union and women's movements. It seems as if the Open Door Movement had a point when it said that the job should govern the legislation rather than the sex of the worker.

Keeping women out of high-paid areas of employment will never enhance their status in society or within the trade union movement.

Special

Women's special needs as women are clear. We need to control our own fertility; to have day-care nurseries in which to place our children; and we need special attention paid to our education and training, so that we are encouraged to enter male preserves.

The health and safety legislation should be extended to protect all workers from bad working conditions and exposure to dangerous chemicals. Maternity leave and paternity leave should be granted to workers in every industry.

Audrey Wise would still not be satisfied. In 1974 she put it like this:

'If the economy wants me to work nightshifts, then I want a different economy.'

No worker wants to have her or his life disrupted by nightwork. The only reason for people working nights is because they need the money.

To make work socially defined, in the interests of all workers, we need to abolish the rule of capital. Class struggle, not protective legislation is the answer to that. Trade union leaders and some feminists do not seem so concerned to involve working women in that — which is where our real power and protection lie.

They are set out in Part 6 of the factories Act 1961 and the Hours of Employment (Conventions) Act 1936.

1. Women cannot work for more than forty-eight hours a week.
2. Women cannot start work before 7am or go on working after 8pm (1pm on Saturdays).
3. No work on Sundays, bank holidays, Christmas Day or Good Friday without a week-day in lieu.
4. Women are not allowed to clean machinery if this would expose them to risk of injury.
5. There are also limited regulations preventing women working with certain toxic materials, or where they may be exposed to dangerous radiation.
6. Overtime is limited to six hours a week and one hundred hours a year. It cannot be worked during more than twenty-five weeks in one calendar year.
7. In factories working a six-day week:
 - (a) Women must not work for more than nine hours a day without overtime.
 - (b) They must have a half-hour rest period after four and a half hours of continuous work; or after five hours if they have a ten-minute break at some point during the five-hour stretch.
 - (c) The total hours actually worked in a day, including overtime, should not be more than ten (five and a half on Saturdays).
8. In factories where all women work a basic five-day week:
 - (a) Women can work for ten hours a day without overtime, or ten and a half hours including overtime (these time limits do not include meal breaks and tea breaks).
 - (b) If a woman is then employed on a sixth day in the week, she can work for only four and a half hours on that day and it must all be counted as overtime; she may do no other overtime in that week.
9. Night work: women are prevented from working nights unless there is an exemption order in force. Women employed solely in cleaning, including night cleaners, are not covered by the laws.
10. Exemptions: two million women work in factories. Nearly 200,000 are covered by exemption orders; 48,000 are specifically exempted for nightwork.
 - (a) Shiftwork: An employer can get permission to employ women on a double day shift provided the shifts do not begin before 6am nor end after 10pm and the shift does not exceed eight hours each day.
 - (b) Specialised processes: Laundries, factories making bread, flour, sausages, or confectionery can make women work a total of 10 hours a day on two days a week other than a Saturday.
 - (c) White collar women workers, eg nurses, are not covered by these rules of work.
 - (d) General exemptions: these can be given by the Health and Safety Executive over a whole industry if it can be proved that it 'will increase the efficiency of industry and transport'. Both sides of industry must be consulted about this order.
 - (e) Special exemption: these apply to individual factories and have to be renewed each year. The workers do not have to agree for the exemption order to be granted by the local factory inspector.

A trades unionist's guide to Mr Prior's new code

THE Employment Act, which spearheads the Tories' attack on trade union rights, is now in force. Coupled with the new legislation is a draft code on picketing and the closed shop, which James Prior, the Employment Secretary, aims to get through in the autumn.

While the code introduces clauses which will not ostensibly have the force of law, they will guide the courts when employers sue trades unionists.

GEOFFREY SHERIDAN reviews the proposed code.

Mr Prior introduced his code in the House of Commons at the beginning of last week with the remark: 'I believe it will make an important contribution to good industrial relations in this country.'

We should begin, therefore, by asking what Mr Prior means by 'good'? Trades unionists who have followed the pronouncements and enactments of Mrs Thatcher's government will have little difficulty deciding for whom the code is intended to be good.

In fact Mr Prior's next sentence suggested the likely candidates. 'It will reinforce and underline the increased protection which the Employment Act has provided to individual employees and employers against abuses of the closed shop and picketing.'

Cosy

Splendid! No one likes abuses and a lot of people have been affected by pickets and the closed shop in their time. But let's take some points from the code before we get into that.

'It is lawful for a person to induce a breach of contract in the course of picketing only if he (sic) pickets at or near his own place of work... An organiser of pickets should always maintain close contact with the police...

'An official is regarded as representing only those members of his union whom he has been specifically appointed or elected to represent.'

Well, that's all very cosy. Quite possibly Mr Prior has never been on large pickets like those at Grunwick during the battle over union recognition or Salfley Gates when engineering workers joined the miners in stopping the movement of coke in the 1972 strike.

Mr Prior has probably never had the pleasure of joining lots of strange but friendly people set on such an inspiring purpose as winning a strike. It's odd, though, that he should be concerned to restrict participation to those directly involved in a dispute.

Among the heroes of the Tory backbenchers, for example, is Mr John Gorst, who along with the police and the courts did much to help Mr George Ward continue to employ people at starvation wages by defeating the Grunwick strikers.

Mr Gorst, who is a Tory MP and a leading figure in the Freedom Association (formerly NAFF), doesn't know one end of a film processing lab from the other — although he does have a few ideas about strike breaking.

Most employers, of course, have no need of his services. They have such outfits as the CBI to help them out, and firms can always rely on other business people — if not their parent companies — to shift raw material and finished goods.

The truth is that Mr Prior is not so much worried about who is on a picket line, as how many.

'The number of pickets at the entrance to a workplace should be limited to what is reasonably needed to permit the peaceful persuasion of those entering or leaving the premises who are prepared to listen.'

As a general rule, it will be rare for such a number to exceed six, and frequently a smaller number will be sufficient.'

Mr Prior seems a chummy fellow, so perhaps he doesn't get lonely. But being out there, all six of us — if we're that lucky — persuading perhaps a few thousand workers not to go in, with a battalion of police to see that we do it nicely, and convoy trucks rumbling through the gates, could be chilly.

The Employment Secretary should remember that when he toddles along to his boardroom meetings or those nice evenings at the club.

Code

It has to be said, though, that Mr Prior likes things to be normal. He doesn't like the idea that goods or services might be interrupted by such unpleasant events as workers opposing pay cuts or job loss or those other minor disruptions of our lives.

'The movement of essential goods and supplies, the carrying out of essential maintenance of plant and equipment, and the provision of services essential to the life of the community should not be impeded, still less prevented.'

Mr Prior would no doubt say, and indeed has said, that he got the idea about essential business — and the code goes on to list a lot of essentials — from

the TUC's own code of conduct in disputes. But really that is no excuse.

Any form of industrial action, if it is to have any impact on the employers, involves the disruption of goods or services. That's the way things are, and trying to exclude a long list of essentials just doesn't help matters. Does Mr Prior not realise this?

The Employment Secretary adds a further point about picketing in his code, and here we can be sure that his personal experience has convinced him of its value.

'There is no immunity for interfering with commercial contracts by indiscriminate picketing at customers and suppliers or at associated employers of the employer in dispute.'

Indiscriminate picketing probably never did anyone much good, but discriminate picketing... The miners, for example, have been most discriminating, picking off power stations, coke depots, and the like, and even Mr Prior would probably acknowledge that that kind of enterprise sends shivers down his spine.

Bosses

As a director of United Biscuits at the time of the lorry drivers' strike, Mr Prior knows how awful it is to be confronted by workers who actually want to win their dispute. His company took a Transport Union official to court for allowing their premises to be picketed, and now Mr Prior wants to be sure that judges do the right thing.

And so to the closed shop, which, as the Employment Secretary acknowledges, covers more than five million trades unionists. He makes no bones about it — that's far too many workers. In fact none would be more to his liking. Mr Prior summarised the objectives as follows:

'The code in the closed shop emphasises that existing closed shops should be operated tolerantly and flexibly with proper regard to the views of those who do not want to join a trade union and provision for periodic review, and that new closed shops should only be set up if there is overwhelming support for them among those who would be affected.'

So there you have it. If a co-worker doesn't mind accepting the higher pay negotiated by your union, but doesn't feel like joining it — perhaps prompted by your employer or by one of those nice articles about unions in the press — then it's a free world: for anti-union bosses.

Among the latter should be included the likes of Mr Ward of Grunwick, who are very fond of low paid workers and are prepared to go to any length to keep them that way.

Since the government looks for its mentor in monetarism to an economist in the United States, it is perhaps not out of place to recall an episode in the history of the labour movement in that country.

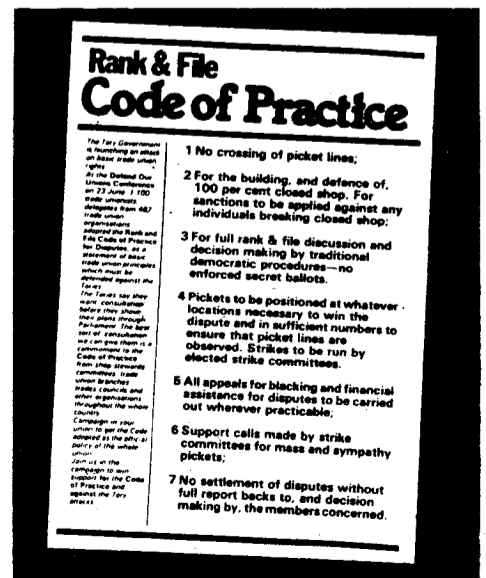
Crush

It's the Homestead lockout of 1892, when the Carnegie Corporation — later to be the US Steel Corporation and the first billion dollar monopoly — decided to crush the power of the unions.

It built a barbed-wire fence three miles round the plant, constructed barracks inside for strike breakers, and brought in 300 armed guards. Then it dismissed its workforce and announced that it would employ non-union labour only. After four months, many workers killed, and considerable assistance from the government, Carnegie won.

Of course, Mr Ward, Mr Michael Edwards of BL, and other employers eager to diminish trade union rights have not resorted yet to tactics like the above. But on the day Mr Prior revealed his draft code, the CBI — which had done much to influence its content — announced that it does not go far enough.

The bosses' organisation now wants 'a legal status for trade unions and defining their rights, including the right to strike in certain circumstances'. That goes even further than the former Tory government's Industrial Relations Acts. The bosses are pushing their luck. It's up to the labour movement to push out their government.



'The first time a goes to jail, the be talking about

BOB WRIGHT, assistant general secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, has for a long time been a leading left-winger in the union. He is the left's candidate in the forthcoming elections for president of the union. Patrick Sikorski asked him what policies he would be putting forward.

SC: What in your view are the main problems facing engineering workers?

BOB WRIGHT: The impact of the acceleration of the decline of our industries is priority number one. The unions, including the AUEW, have to adopt a much firmer policy of resistance to closures and to the rundown of the workforce. We've got to adopt an alternative strategy on the future of our industrial base.

To me, under whatever government, capitalism is failing to supply the necessary investment, the necessary revival and modernisation of our industries, and this process has been generated over 40 years. We've seen large sectors of the engineering industry virtually wiped out.

Our job is to ensure that everyone in Britain, whoever they are, has the right to a job. We need an economy that ensures a reasonable standard of living for all. We need massive government intervention in industries which are running down; a new investment strategy based on nationalisation and government intervention in industries like the steel industry, and the machine tool industry.

Alternative

Other examples are the virtual wiping out of the motor cycle industry, large sectors of the electronics industry, and so on. Insufficient private investment in technology is an important cause of these problems. This government's argument that industry will have to seek its own salvation is just not working.

North Sea oil should be publicly owned and provide money for investment, not to balance the books against the flood of imports from Europe. Our membership of the EEC has nothing to offer us; it is adverse to our interests as a manufacturing nation. There is nothing socialist about the Treaty of Rome.

The alternative economic strategy requires control of the City, the financial institutions, and the banks, which should be brought into public ownership. They handle the money of the people of this country but act quite independently of the interests of the people.

Those are obviously national policies for a future Labour government. What would you

say to a shop stewards committee or a district committee facing closures and redundancies?

We need a clear commitment and strategy to intervene and support resistance to further closures. Take the steel industry. Many workers were prepared to stand and fight on the question of closures. But we've continually seen trade union acquiescence in closures.

We must revive the demand for the right to work, and build up a massive campaign to force the government to change its policies.

So you would advocate that steelworkers facing closures should be occupying those plants to resist redundancy?

Well, occupation is just one method. But whatever the type of action, it's not a definite solution; it's just a means of resistance. We need national policy solutions based on public investment and control as envisaged by the alternative strategy. We have to challenge the government's strategy much more forcibly.

Any trade union leader can get up and condemn unemployment. That's just like being opposed to beating old ladies. The question is what do you do about it. We've got to get it across in the movement that it's not just a temporary set-back that we face, but the permanent undermining of whole communities.

It has to be fought on the industrial front, and the Labour Party has to respond to those struggles. We need to get rid of the Tories as soon as possible. But we shall need a fighting Labour government that puts the interests of working people first. We have not seen that with previous Labour governments.

One of the key demands is for a 35-hour week. Are you fighting for that?

Yes. We also need a shorter working year with more holidays. The new technology, as well as the recession, will hit jobs. In my view the 30-hour week is more like what we need.

It was a mistake for the engineering unions to ratify a tied-up agreement until 1984 with no reduction in the working week except for one hour in 1980-81. There should be growing pressure for re-opening discussions on a shorter working week.

Interview with Bob Wright, Broad Left candidate for president of the AUEW

What do you think we should do to oppose the Employment Act?

All our trade union rights won by workers who were prepared to struggle for those rights, both the pioneers and recent years. We've always had to fight repressive laws and police harassment.

I could relate from my own experience the struggle we had at the Roberts Arundel dispute in Stockport. The Employment Act is about isolating workers, struggle and preventing solidarity. We need national union action against it. The first time a worker goes to jail, the TUC should be talking about a general strike.

worker TUC should a general strike'



Photo: G.M. COOKSON [Socialist Challenge]

Our own union was persuaded to accept money for secret ballots, but in my view no union should accept money for ballot purposes. No self-respecting union should accept state hand-outs for its functioning. The next step is that the state will and intend to send out the ballot papers and intervene more and more in the affairs of the union.

With due respect to our national committee, I would say as a presidential candidate that we face an extremely dangerous trend. If we're not careful, we'll have the employers' organisations determining our policies. If the TUC laid down a policy of non-acceptance of government money for ballots, in my view it would be totally wrong to take

this money.

What went wrong in Leyland? Why was the victimisation of Robinson successful?

Edwardes was appointed by the last Labour government, in my view, to reverse the National Enterprise Board strategy for Leyland that had been worked out together with the trade unions — that of a continuing British capacity to produce cars.

Once that policy had been reversed by the Edwardes' plan, Edwardes had the upper hand. Robinson was victimised as the chief spokesperson of that former policy.

The workers *did* react to Robinson's victimisation. Six

Leyland plants came out over it. But it was the events after that which caused confusion. The vicious press attacks and the hysterical campaign against Robinson eventually led the workers to disown him. It's all connected to an intimidation of the workforce in Leyland.

Our own union allowed the situation to develop. The whole way it was handled was totally wrong.

What's your position on import controls?

There are certain sections of our industry that shouldn't be made vulnerable to imports that are heavily subsidised from rich countries. I'm very much in favour of planned trade, but not a complete free trade policy where goods can be dumped on the British market at the expense of jobs in this country.

At the moment we're importing unemployment.

Are you in favour of a new social contract with the next Labour government? Healey and Callaghan are talking about import controls now.

I would be automatically suspicious of Healey and Callaghan. The last 'social contract' was a one-way street. Large parts of it were forgotten by the government. It turned into just a wage restraint policy. I'm totally opposed to wage restraint policy.

Do you think we need to get rid of the present leadership of the Labour Party? Healey and Callaghan are talking about import controls now.

In the Labour Party, I'm very much in favour of accountability. During the last three Labour governments we've seen the parliamentary party in conflict with the rest of the party and the unions. Labour MPs cannot be estranged from the movement.

If they are, they need to be called to order by the movement.

Which way will the AUEW vote on democracy at the Labour Party conference?

The union's national committee did not commit itself, but instructed the executive to recall the national committee when the Labour Party committee of inquiry had reported. I believe that the union leadership is attempting to pre-empt a recall by making statements and commitments against more democracy in the party.

How is your campaign developing in the AUEW?

I think that the gilt is being stripped off the gingerbread very rapidly in terms of political understanding in the union.

Workers are not fools. You might lead them up the garden path once or even twice; but they are beginning to understand that this sort of safe, moderate, right-wing kind of leadership just defends the status quo. But the status quo means two million unemployed.



Photo: John Sturrock (Report)



Photo: Peter Harrap (Report)



Photo: John Sturrock (Report)

Ruling group lurch to the right but mass mobilisations continue

IRAN AT THE CROSSROADS

By John Leadbetter

WEEKS of uncertainty and manoeuvrings behind the scenes within the Iranian ruling class ended last weekend with the announcement that Mohammed Ali Rajai has been nominated as the new prime minister of Iran.

Rajai's appointment will mark the final success of Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic Republican Party (IRP) in securing overall control of the Majlis (parliament).

The parliament, in which the IRP has an overwhelming majority following the bogus spring elections, has been waiting since its opening session on 28 May for the outcome of a factional struggle between President Bani Sadr and the leaders of the IRP over who should be nominated for the position of premier.

Bani Sadr's grudging announcement of Rajai's appointment, still to be confirmed by the Majlis but already approved by Khomeini himself, signals the failure of the President to untie himself from the apron strings of the Islamic fundamentalists.

Hardline

The new prime minister is likely to appoint a hardline, Islamic cabinet in the days ahead. Rajai's credentials for the job were won in the Ministry of Education, which played a coordinating role in the recent purges of the universities and the launching of the Islamic 'cultural' revolution.

The stage is now set for the debate over what to do with the American hostages, who are at present held in far flung regions of the country. Differences remain within the Majlis over the hostage question. The faction around Ayatollah Beheshti — the IRP leader — favour putting the hostages on trial as spies, with a sentence to follow if they are found guilty.

Others favour a trial of the US itself, with the hostages merely present as 'witnesses'. Yet others — including the present foreign minister Ghotbzadeh (who is unlikely to serve in the new government since the ayatollahs generally consider him not sufficiently 'revolutionary') and possibly even Bani Sadr himself — would like to see the hostages released, and a normalisation of Iran's international relations.

Compromise

Exactly which faction wins will depend to a degree on the views of Khomeini himself.

For the ruling class, the hostage question goes hand in hand with the problem of how to consolidate its hold on power and rebuild the institutions of a bourgeois state. The obstacle which blocks their path are the genuine anti-imperialist feelings of the overwhelming majority of Iranians.

The deeply felt antagonism to the Pahlavi regime and its crimes, and to the role of the United States' government in the plunder of their country has become bound up with the righteousness of the hostage-taking in the eyes of many Iranians.

Any compromise on this issue would be seen as a betrayal of the revolution itself. The effect of these sentiments has been to tie the hands of the clergy and limit their room for manoeuvre in dealing with the hostages. Instead, they have been forced to pretend that the hostage-taking has been the most decisive blow struck in the struggle against imperialism and that the most central demand of the revolution should be the return of the shah or (following his death) of the shah's property.

However, the factions following the hardest line on the American captives have up to the present time been able to boost their own 'anti-imperialist' credentials and to establish their own position against those of the more 'wet' factions.

Yet not a single suggestion as to how to take forward the struggle against imperialism has come from any section of the ruling block. Nor is it likely to do so. Hostage taking has become a cover for not doing anything.

Collapse

The most important struggles being waged in Iran today are around solving the problems left behind by imperialism. The social and economic crisis deepens every day with inflation running at around 50 per cent a year and unemployment past the 3.5 million mark and still rising.

Income from oil, the motor for the shah's grandiose but lopsided industrialisation projects, has fallen well below even the conservative estimates of the govern-



Bani-Sadr



Iranian women at the time of the insurrection



Islamic politicians use hostage issue as diversion from anti-imperialist struggle

ment due both to a glut on the world market as the recession takes hold and to an actual fall in production through technical factors and through the measures taken by Iranian oil workers to limit exports of this non-renewable resource.

At the same time there has been a collapse of investments in both the private and public sectors as the government proves unable to impose discipline on the work force (minimum wages doubled over the last year) or to come up with any real plan for industrial reconversion.

The dependence on foreign technology and spare parts which characterised the shah's industrialisation is finally coming home to roost. The government's reluctance to break with the laws of the capitalist market prevent the introduction of a planned economy which could begin to resolve some of these problems.

The same reluctance to break with capitalist property relations has led the government into conflict with the pressure for a radical land reform from many sec-

tions of the rural population. The Shiite clergy has always been one of the larger landowners in the country through the religious foundations, and there are also strong links between the bazaar — the main social base of the ruling clergy — and the big and middle-sized Iranian landowners.

While about a thousand landowners possess some 25 per cent of cultivable land, nearly 10 million peasants have to subsist on another 30 per cent. Primitive farming methods, the breakdown of the large agribusinesses run by foreign capital under the shah, and a rising population inevitably mean food shortages — and the growth of a black market economy in food which directly benefits the middlemen of the bazaar.

Housewives protesting at price increases have been attacked by shopkeepers and merchants in the bazaars throughout the country. But to end speculation and get rid of the black market would require the complete redistribution of land and a

complete change in the structure of credits and price levels, as well as a long-term project of education, and social and technical assistance to the peasantry.

Trials of hostages are completely irrelevant to the solution of these problems which make everyday life intolerable for the majority of Iran's population. Yet for all the fiery speeches against the 'Great Satan' which echo from pulpits around Iran every Friday, each and every anti-imperialist action by different sections of the population has been met with repression and denunciation from the Islamic authorities.

The struggles of all the national minority groupings, especially the Kurds; the fight of women against the veil and against segregation; the land occupations among peasants in many different parts of Iran; the demonstrations of the unemployed for job creation projects; the struggles of workers in shoras or councils for higher wages and participation in the decision-making process within individual factories or industries — all these real and

justified attempts to extend the anti-imperialist struggle into areas which affect the everyday lives of millions have exposed the ugly face of Islamic 'anti-imperialism', Islamic culture and Islamic 'freedom'.

As yet, however, the ruling block has not succeeded in inflicting a defeat on these struggles. Massive repression on the scale which existed in the shah's days would require an army and a secret police totally dedicated to the clergy's project.

Kurdistan

Certainly the Khomeini-Bani Sadr alliance are giving this question their fullest attention. But the armed forces have not yet recovered from the massive blow to their morale which they received during the February Insurrection. Their performance against the Kurdish people, both last August and in the war which is continuing in Kurdistan today, cannot give the government much cause for optimism.

The exodus of American advisers last year deprived the army of much of its technical support, while extensive desertions in the Kurdish campaign indicate a reluctance both among officers and soldiers to fight against their erstwhile allies in the anti-shah movement.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guards remain loyal to Khomeini, but they are no substitute for a professional and reliable standing army.

The rightward lurch of the ruling block as marked by the renewed war in Kurdistan, the attacks on women in recent weeks, and the driving of the left organisations from their strongholds in the universities following the announcement of the 'cultural' revolution is a dangerous and serious development which socialists ignore at their peril.

The Islamic forces have not yet exhausted their stock of barbarities. But the rightward shift is taking place without there being any fundamental change in the balance of class forces. Although the Arab movement in Khuzestan province has been temporarily halted by a virtual military occupation, resistance groups continue to exist and organise. Oil Minister Moïfar continues to complain of 'unruly and uncontrollable oil workers' preventing him from 'rationalising' oil production.

Left

The Kurds have not been defeated, and there is a continuing tendency for land seizures to take place, organised by village and town councils and civil defence committees.

Among the working class, the development of shoras continues. Although these organisations still remain mostly confined to trade union-type activities, the fact that many of the industries have been nationalised and that the shoras are dealing directly with the government ministries brings out much more clearly for a whole layer of workers the bankruptcy of the government's policies and their inability to solve the problems facing the country.

For those of the oppressed masses who still place their faith in Khomeini — in particular the artisan working class who stand in a much closer relation to the merchants and small capitalists in the bazaar, and among the urban unemployed — a firm stand on the hostage question ensures their continuing support for the regime.

Yet the hostages cannot be kept indefinitely: as long as there exist extensive foci for opposition to the regime throughout Iran, Khomeini and his government will continue to rely on their anti-imperialist credentials to maintain their popular base. They will only be able to drop the charade when they have dealt a final, irreversible blow to the organisations of the working class, the left, and the nationalities.

Party

For socialists in Iran, the priority is to ensure the most favourable balance of forces when that confrontation arrives. The road to this lies through the self-organisation of the masses themselves, in the shoras, among village and town councils.

A mass revolutionary party will be built only through tirelessly campaigning for an extension, coordination, and centralisation of democratically elected workers' and peasants' councils. Against the anti-imperialist demagoguery of the Islamic regime, socialists must say clearly to the Iranian people: 'Let us build our own independent struggles against imperialism!'

The capture

'IN the early hours of Monday 9 August 1971, I was kidnapped from my bed by armed men, taken away and held as a hostage for five and a half weeks. I was not in Uruguay, Brazil, Greece, or Russia. I was in the United Kingdom, an hour's flight from London. I was in Belfast.

'A crashing on the door awoke me. I went downstairs in my pyjamas to answer. As I opened the door I was forced back against the wall by two soldiers who screamed at me, "Do you live here?"

'Overwhelmed by their perspicacity I admitted that this was so, whereupon they ordered me to get dressed. I foolishly asked why.

"Under the Special Powers Act we don't have to give a reason for anything," an officer said. "You have two minutes to get dressed." Through the window I could see in the dawn light half a dozen armed men skulking in our tiny front garden.

'I was given exactly two minutes to get dressed while a young soldier boosted his ego by sticking an SLR up my nose ... I was frogmarched and escorted at the double down the avenue by eight soldiers.

"Tie him up and gag the fecker," an educated English accent ordered. "That's hardly necessary," I said, as I was frisked for a second time up against a lorry, or "pig" as they called it.

'This was accepted, albeit reluctantly in the case of a corporal who was positively twitching with desire to practise his Boy Scout knots on me. My shoes were taken off me and I was put none too gently into the back of the "pig". Two men with sten-guns covered me.

"Nice morning," I ventured. "Shut your fecking Fenian mouth".

— John McGuffin

The torture

'THE hood was put on my head again and I was put up against the wall for a short time. They beat my head on the wall. I was then taken into a 'copter, taken a journey of one hour, put in the lorry and back into the room with the noise.

'I was put against the wall and left. I was beaten when I could not stand any longer, taken away for questioning, taken back to the wall, back for questions.

'Time meant nothing. I was only a sore aching body and a confused mind. After a time I was only a mind. Think about my wife, think about the babies, think about the martyred dead,

think about my friends. I prayed for God to take my life.

'I can remember being handcuffed to the heating pipes. I remember being left in a room seeing one cigarette and one match. I looked at them, felt them, and eventually smoked them.

'I remember singing 'Four Green Fields'. I remembered thinking that martial law had been declared and that they were going to shoot me. I had given up all hope.

'I think then I asked for a priest. I would have liked to have seen my wife and children before I died. a victim



Ninth anniversary of internment without trial

THE DARK SIDE OF DEMOCRACY

THIS week sees the ninth anniversary of the most recent introduction of internment in the North of Ireland.

GEOFF BELL recalls what happened, and assesses its relevance for the Ireland of today.



The escape

THE 1971-72 period of internment became notable for a number of spectacular escapes. The most famous was from the *Maidstone*, an ex-Royal Navy ship converted to a floating prison and moored in Belfast's River Lagan.

On 10 January 1972 seven of the internees on the *Maidstone* smeared themselves all over with butter. Then they daubed on boot polish, and clad for the most part only in football shorts, cut through a bar on a porthole with a fret saw, and slipped through.

Their comrades chatted to the armed guards as the men slipped into the water.

It was 5pm on a cold, dark January evening. The water was near-freezing point, there were constant searchlights on the water, and once clear from the porthole the men had to overcome barbed wire, and then swim some 400 yards; Somehow they managed to do it.

After a 20-minute swim they found land — but it was 500 yards away from where their comrades were waiting to pick them up.

All night they hid in a nearby bus terminus. Then at 6.30am they stole a double decker bus and headed for the Markets area of Belfast. They were spotted as they sped away, and as they drove into the Markets the district was surrounded by the British Army.

A confident Army colonel appeared on television to tell the public there was no way the men could escape. But as the colonel was saying this the 'magnificent seven', as they were instantly dubbed, were already in another part of Belfast, having been whisked away by local people in the Markets.

Within a week the magnificent seven were in Dublin, giving a press conference and telling the world their story.

AT 4.30am on the morning of 9 August 1971, the British Army raided hundreds of houses throughout the six counties of the North of Ireland.

A total of 342 men were arrested in these first swoops. Hundreds of others were to follow. They were held under the Special Powers Act, a piece of legislation once envied by a prime minister of racist South Africa.

Those arrested were told that they were to be held without trial in prison camps.

It was not the first time that internment had been introduced in Northern Ireland, but it was to prove of greater significance than on any of the previous occasions.

At the time, the parliament of Northern Ireland was still in existence, and was headed by Unionist Party Prime Minister, Brian Faulkner.

Repression

Faulkner was in trouble. For the previous three years the ruling Unionist Party had been confronted on the streets by a civil rights movement demanding equal treatment for Catholics. A mixture of repression and concessions had not succeeded in dampening the protest.

On the contrary, the battle against Unionism had at least partially turned into a campaign against the very existence of the North of Ireland state.

This campaign was led by the Provisional IRA, which declared that the experience of the first two years of the civil rights movement had proved that the North of Ireland was beyond reform; that the real 'civil right' which should be fought for was the right of all the Irish people to rule all of Ireland.

Faulkner had also to contend with his own right wing and the rising popularity of Ian Paisley. Both were demanding that Faulkner should go more onto the offensive against the Republican population.

Failure

Faulkner decided that the introduction of internment would solve all these problems: it would answer the call of his own right wing for more 'action', and it could be used to imprison the leaders of the civil rights movement and the IRA.

The Unionist Prime Minister's faith in internment dated back to 1956-62 when, as Minister of Home Affairs, he had used it against an IRA military campaign on the North of Ireland border.

Others involved in running the North of Ireland were not so sure of the value of internment. General Tuzo, the most senior British Army officer then serving in the North of Ireland, was against it.

But such opponents were out-manoeuvred by Faulkner who persuaded the Tory minister Reginald Maudling, then responsible for the North of Ireland, to back internment.

The Tory government agreed, as much in an attempt to save Faulkner from his own right wing than for any other reason. When it came to a

vote in parliament the Labour opposition abstained.

On every level the policy was a failure. British intelligence sources were later to admit that less than a quarter of those picked-up had any connection with the IRA. The

interning of civil rights activists, such as 15 members of Peoples Democracy, and the secretary of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, was proof that Faulkner was after his political opponents, not just the 'men of



violence'.

Most of all, internment and the torture which was inflicted on a number of those arrested, torture later confirmed by the European Commission for Human Rights, did not defeat the movement in the Catholic ghettos against Unionism, but increased its tempo massively.

In that sense the use of the internment measure by the Unionists, backed by Britain, was indeed the ultimate proof that no 'reforms' could be expected to be won from such quarters.

The movement for civil rights had been answered by jailing, without trial, without release date, of those who demanded such rights. From that point on what was at issue in the North of Ireland became the state of Northern Ireland itself.

This was to be confirmed six months later when 14 anti-internment demonstrators were gunned down by the British Army on Derry's Bloody Sunday. After that the Northern Ireland parliament was 'suspended' and direct rule from Westminster was introduced.

But it was Westminster which had ultimately given the go-ahead for the introduction of internment, and rule from Westminster was to prove no more beneficial to the majority of Catholics in Northern Ireland than that of the regime of the Unionist party.

Lesson

Internment was a savage lesson for those who lived in the North of Ireland and who voiced their opposition to the Union with Britain. But the lesson was learnt well, and the resistance which internment was meant to defeat remained. In a different form it remains today.

For those in this country, the full implications of what happened on 9 August 1971 in Northern Ireland have not yet been assimilated.

After all, that a 'liberal' Western democracy can jail its political opponents without trial is not something which the population of this country has been taught to appreciate. It happened, nevertheless, in the North of Ireland, nine years ago. And that's worth remembering.

The aftermath

IN late 1975 internment was brought to an end. It had proved a political disaster for Britain and militarily counter-productive.

But what replaced internment was, in civil rights terms, little better.

These were the 'Diplock courts', so called because of a government-sponsored report written by Lord Diplock which recommended a new style of British 'justice'.

Under the Diplock courts the 'accused' is tried and sentenced by one judge. Unlike normal 'trials', hearsay evidence is permitted, and the 'right of silence' abolished.

The accused, in the case of a 'confession', must prove such a confession was obtained by force if s/he wishes to challenge it; normally it is up to the police to prove such an admission was extracted willingly.

As a consequence, studies have shown that over 90 per cent of convictions in the Diplock courts are based on 'confessions' and no other evidence. Amnesty International has shown that many of these confessions have been obtained under torture.

In fact the whole Diplock system of 'justice' is internment under another name; internment in the sense that the accused are convicted and locked away without the normal standards of 'democratic' justice applying.

US workers need a labour party

WITH the opinion polls in the United States showing ex-film star Ronald Reagan way ahead in the race for the Presidency, many people see the Democratic Party — in the form of either Carter or Kennedy — as the lesser evil.

They argue, as does for example the American Communist Party, that socialists should give critical support to the Democrats who are to the 'left' of the Republicans. But these arguments are empty.

Both the major parties in the United States are capitalist parties. The Democratic Party has traditionally had the support of organised labour — 'lesser evilism' has tied the workers' movement to this bosses' party. The Democrats have used this support to carry through policies in favour of big business all along the line.

The last three Democratic presidents — Kennedy, Johnson, and Carter — have all been rabid champions of United States imperialism. They have not been noticeably to the 'left' of the Republican Nixon.

In the current presidential campaign, the American Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party are putting forward their own candidate — black steelworker Andrew Pulley. They are using this platform to push forward the growing movement for an independent party of working people.

Here ALAN BALL explains why a Labour Party was never formed in the United States and why it is urgently needed.

Tweedledee, Tweedledum, Democrat, Republican. That's the choice facing American voters in the presidential elections which will be held in November. Yet earlier this century campaigning socialists such as Eugene Debs won millions of votes.

The early American socialists, however, failed to do what was achieved by the working class in every European country, as well as in Australia and New Zealand, which was to build an independent working class party — a party of labour.

Why was this? In the United States, as in Britain, the Marxist left remained small and isolated. Workers found it quite easy to win both political and social advances without having to form their own party.

In Britain the working class turned away from revolutionary politics after the heady days of the Chartists in the 1840s, because the British ruling class — the most advanced in the world — could afford to give it some crumbs from its imperial conquests.

Rights

The working class here found it easier to work through the Liberal Party, which at that time was the traditional party of reform, to win democratic rights such as the right to vote, and working class rights, such as the right to organise and limitations on the working day.

It wasn't until British imperialism began to run into its historical decline — at the end of the last century — that workers found themselves forced to fight independently for their rights, and to form their own party.

Unlike the continental workers in Germany, France, and Italy, they did not form parties of direct action that fought in the streets as well as for seats in Parliament.

The British ruling class enticed the sober-minded trade union leaders into the parliamentary system after the defeat of the Chartists.

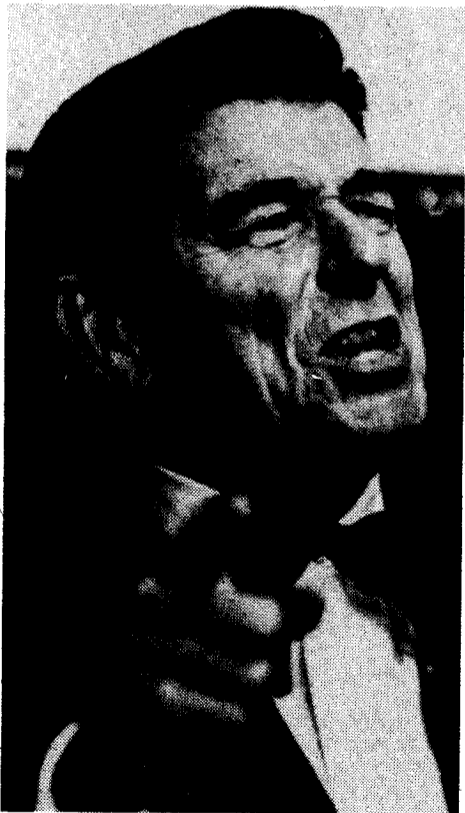
The leaders of the Trades Union Congress waited until the last minute to form a political party. They hedged it around with bureaucratic controls. They fought against it having a socialist policy. It was a party to represent labour in Parliament; never to encourage the revolutionary transformation of society outside Parliament.

Shackles

American socialists today find themselves in a situation similar to British socialists at the end of the last century. The American bourgeoisie has been able to offer sufficient material concessions to the workers in the past to discourage them from forming their own party.

This was made possible by the rapid and unfettered growth of American capital, free from feudal or absolutist shackles after the civil war in the 1860s, and by the rise of American imperialism which followed.

American capital did run into real difficulties in the 1930s and an



explosive wave of trade union struggles led to the formation of the Confederation of Independent Organisations (CIO). But the opportunity to form a labour party was missed.

The Communist Party in the USA aligned itself with Roosevelt, backing the Popular Front policies of the Kremlin. The Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party made important breakthroughs, particularly in the Teamsters Union, but they were still too small to successfully initiate the project of forming a labour party.

The Second World War gave American capital a new lease of life by hurling it into the position of the world's leading imperialist power. The world was rebuilt in the image of the dollar. Hopes of a working

class political revival in the USA faded with the cold war.

Today things are a little different in the United States. The American Eagle, like the British Bulldog half a century ago, is losing its bite. American imperialism since the defeat in Vietnam no longer has everything its own way.

At home it is having to ask its own working class to accept austerity.

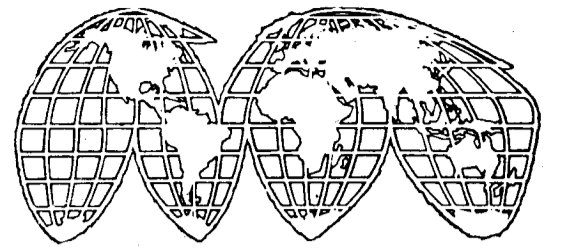
It is not only the living standards of the American working class that are threatened, but their political rights. Black people, women, and minorities will bear the brunt of the attack. The unions will be forced, as in the '30s, to find political ways of organising. The Democrat and Republican

caucuses, as the election campaign indicates, will turn their backs on even the labour bureaucrats just as the Liberal Party did in Britain in the last century.

Just as in Britain, millions of American workers will confront the need to seek political power in their own right in order to defend their class interests.

Who will take the lead in forming their party? The working class bureaucrats and the opportunists as in Britain?

The American Revolutionary Marxists are determined to see that this does not happen. That is why in the present election campaign Trotskyists in the USA are making the question of forming a labour party in America a central issue.



AROUND THE WORLD

West Germany

UNEMPLOYMENT is on the increase in West Germany, the country of the 'economic miracle'. Last month the unemployed total increased by 9 per cent, making 3.7 per cent of the population out of work. With industrial production on the decline German bosses are looking for scapegoats. And who better to blame than the workers.

This certainly was the opinion expressed recently by Otto Count Lambsdorff, the government's economic minister. West German workers, declared Lambsdorff, were 'layabouts'. He criticised them for not working harder, reporting sick too often and demanding longer holidays. He contrasted such indiscipline to Japanese workers, who he said, 'work very hard'.

How soon before Japanese bosses start saying that their employees have to work as hard as the South Koreans?

Iran

'I THINK he needs time to ponder about what he is going to do.' So said Princess Azadeh Shafik, neice of the dead Shah of Iran, in Paris last week.

Shafik was referring to the Shah's eldest son, Cyrus Reza, who is now the head of the Pahlavi family and a sort of shah-in-waiting.

The thoughts Reza was pondering concerned, said the princess, 'not about being shah but about what he is going to do as shah...He wants it very, very deeply. He was raised to be king.' Shafik's parting shot was that Reza 'wants to return to Iran...and for him the sooner the better'. Well, there's no time like the present.

Bolivia

THE Bolivian military regime has broken off diplomatic links with Nicaragua. A case, surely, where congratulations to the Nicaraguan government are in order.

Last week Bolivia's foreign ministry accused Nicaragua of 'aggressive conduct'. The complaint was that the government there had been urging the Organisation of American States to take concrete action against the Bolivian dictatorship.

So far only eight nations have recognised the new Bolivian regime: Argentina, Taiwan, Paraguay, Uruguay, South Africa, Brazil, Egypt, and Israel. What's the betting Margaret Thatcher makes it into the first 20?

United States

DON'T buy Wrangler jeans! That's the message coming this week from the USA. The reason is that the Blue Bell company which owns the Wrangler label are as reactionary as you can get.

No member of a trade union is permitted to work for Blue Bell, and the company has also decided to opt out of competing for federal government contracts because of its employment policy. This involves a refusal to abide by US government controls on the hiring of racial minorities.

'We want to avoid that because if you cannot meet the stipulation you sometimes have to hire people you do not want to hire,' said a company executive. Like blacks, Puerto Ricans, and trade unionists presumably.

Soviet Union

THE Soviet press last week accused two US diplomats of 'improper conduct'. Were the two — James and Judy Mandel — standing up for peace, love, and democracy, and thus the victims of a tyrannical campaign by the Soviet Union?

Not exactly. Apparently Judy Mandel, the political affairs officer at the US embassy in Moscow recently told a local family in the Uzbek region of the USSR that Jimmy Carter deserved criticism for 'his indecision and hesitation to use the atomic bomb against Iran'.

USA

THE power that US immigration officials have to refuse entry to gays is threatening the gay refugees from Cuba who have fled to freedom-loving America in the last couple of months.

The repression that gays suffer in Cuba persuaded several thousand of them to join the recent exodus from the country. But now, according to the US press, 'self-professed' gays are admitted to the country on what is known as a 'deferred inspection', meaning that no final decision has been made as to their eligibility for permanent residence.

Refugees are not allowed to leave the camps set up by the US authorities until they have sponsors. American gay groups have launched a major drive to find such sponsors for their Cuban counterparts.

'Entirely misleading'

SOCIALIST Challenge should be ashamed of its front page story 'Now Tories go for the kids' (31 July).

Certainly you should — at long last — be commenting on the Tories' attacks on benefits, and so drawing attention to the obvious suffering these will cause.

But to link these cuts to child abuse is not only gratuitous, it is also entirely misleading. 'Statistically', and the article claims to rely on 'statistics', there is no correlation between poverty and domestic violence.

Domestic violence, as the Women's Aid Federation has pointed out for many years, occurs in families of every class and every level of income. Does Socialist Challenge really believe that poor parents batter their children more than the rich?

The Tories' policy on benefits will mean that more children will suffer from malnutrition, rickets, and the cold. They will not be treated more violently by their families.

Children suffer violence from their parents because of an ideology that considers children (and women) to be the disposable property of their parents (and husbands); that considers children to be the sole responsibility of their biological parents; and from the 'alienation of capitalist society' — all subjects SC would do well to tackle before they resort to using pictures of battered children to support an inadequate examination of the present government's attitude to benefits and the welfare of children.

JULIA UNWIN, Liverpool

Violence against women is premeditated

YOUR reference to wife beating in an article about children and child battering (31 July) was most strange. You lump them together and suggest they have the same cause.

Surely the many articles in the feminist and left press (including Socialist Challenge) on the reasons why men rape and batter women cannot have completely passed you by?

Children can drive you to distraction, especially babies who cry and cry for no apparent reason. Poverty, as you rightly point out, makes it worse. Every parent has experienced that awful urge to hit their child — sometimes it becomes uncontrollable.

That is not what wife beating is about. The causes of wife battering are very complex, but one thing is for sure: it usually isn't an uncontrollable urge. Violence against women is generally premeditated; it is about the man's possession of the woman, about power.

Parents who batter their children are taking out on them the unbearable frustrations of living in a capitalist society (this is not of course to condone child battering); men who batter women are exerting control over their own property.

I'm not saying it is worse to batter a woman than a child; of course not. But please don't join the bourgeois liberals and blame wife battering on 'tensions and economic worries' — that's not what it's about at all.

KAREN FOSTER, London N16

Disappointing coverage of women's issues

I FOUND your coverage of the UN Decade of Women Conference (31 July) very disappointing.

In issue 157 (25 July) Valerie Coultas tried to show the importance of socialist revolution for the liberation of women. She took

as her starting point an article by Jill Tweedie in the *Sunday Times*.

I don't wish to defend Tweedie (indeed I would question whether she is even worth arguing with in the pages of Socialist Challenge), but my memory of the article is not that 'revolutions set women back', but rather questioning whether they take them forward.

Valerie's wham, bam, hit-them-on-the-head simplistic attacks do little to argue the case for the integral relationship between socialism and feminism.

The report from the alternative conference was most welcome, but the main article was a waste of space.

It consisted of little more than a list of the terrible effects of imperialism on women's lives. Do Socialist Challenge readers really need to be told that 'legal equality for women is not common in the semi-colonial world', or that imperialism 'often reinforces religious hierarchies and backward traditions to stabilise its domination'?

Socialist Challenge is not an Oxfam broadsheet which catalogues the degradation of the people of the neo-colonial world suffer; it is a fighting paper. It is not enough to tack a token two paragraphs on the end telling us that 'women's position... is intimately bound up with imperialist exploitation' without having argued that in the article.

Why is it so important for women in the 'Third World' to fight imperialism; why is the anti-imperialist struggle alone not sufficient to achieve women's liberation — these are the questions the article should have addressed itself to.

The article on the Bengali women's struggle was very interesting, but it happened thirty years ago. Why did you not write about the many struggles women are involved in now? Why not write about women in Zimbabwe or Palestine, why not translate the interview with a Nicaraguan woman which appeared in *Combate* (paper of the Spanish section of the Fourth International)?

Bridget Elton, London N19

Contemptuous attitude to the Welsh?

THE publication of a letter from the S Wales IMG on the arson and bomb attacks in Wales (31 July) was a great service to us in Wales.

It showed quite clearly that the IMG adopts the same contemptuous and arrogant attitude to the Welsh as it has adopted to those fighting imperialism the world over.

That the IMG is proud to stand 'against the arson campaign' is revealing in itself.

What have all the ruling class papers said about the arson: 'this is not the way to raise the issue'. Every socialist sees through the hypocrisy of that response.

What does S Wales IMG say? 'This is not the way to raise the issue'. What is the way?

Out of the IMG's magic hat of formalistic solutions to half-understood problems comes 'a mass movement'. We are supposed to leap from nothing to a mass movement, but such beginnings are precisely one way in which movements are built.

This year saw the biggest ever turn-out in support of the Abergele Martyrs Commemoration, for the two members of MAC who were killed when laying a bomb on the morning of the Investiture (of the Prince of Wales) in 1969. They showed that armed struggle against the British state is both possible and necessary.

The truth is that without the fires Socialist Challenge would not be talking about second homes in Wales.

If they are now 'emphasising these positions (against the arson campaign) in its political work', then the role that the S Wales IMG have taken upon themselves is to undermine the building of a revolutionary movement in Wales directed against the British state.

For a Welsh Socialist Republic.

ROD JONES, Caerdydd

Black with blue collar

Indignant Heart, Testimony of a Black American Worker, by Charles Denby (Matthew Ward). Published by Pluto Press 1979. 295 pages. Price £2.95.

INDIGNANT Heart is a very readable book. I took it to Rover to read in the tea-breaks, but kept finding that Patrick or Julian, two Afro-Caribbean workers, had got to it before me.

The book is in two parts. The first was written in 1951, at the height of the McCarthyite period, under the name of Matthew Ward, and describes Denby's life. His grandmother was a slave and he was brought up on a farm in the south. He represents the generation which migrated to the factories of the north.

He vividly describes the racism blacks met in the Detroit car plants and the struggles they launched against it. Some of the practices, such as all-white departments and low-paid jobs and no promotion for the blacks, are not unfamiliar in Britain today. The same goes for the attitude of the unions.

Denby was a member of the Union of Automobile Workers, which at that time was under the control of Walter Reuther. His view was that 'negroes shouldn't raise any problems about negroes as negroes in the unions'. This was backed up by officials saying 'if you raise the question of negroes as an issue, it is discrimination in reverse.'

Caucuses

The book describes the response of black workers and their limited success. By using black caucuses, and because of their large numbers, (the population of Detroit was over 50 per cent black, and in some plants blacks were over 80 per cent of the workforce) they won a series of minor but important concessions.

However, the UAW bought off this militancy by appointing 'Uncle Tom' blacks to union positions.

The second part of the book is mainly a commentary on all the major events concerning race in the US in the '50s and '60s.

Denby was personally involved in the civil

Freedom fighters, not dissidents

I THINK you make a grave mistake in referring (25 July) to Martin Meehan, an Irish freedom fighter, as a 'dissident'.

Generally speaking, the whole 'dissident' issue over the last few years has been used as a stick with which to beat the Soviet Union.

At a time when imperialism is stepping up the attacks on the Soviet Union, the 'dissident' campaigns have been used as further evidence of the Soviet Union's supposed inhumanity and as a cover behind which to hide the continuing war crimes of Britain and the USA.

Therefore to describe Martin Meehan as a 'dissident' is to totally deny the nature of the struggle he is a part of.

The fight of the Irish people, led by the brave Republican movement, bears absolutely no comparison with the plight of a few disaffected citizens of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries (a plight which has been deliberately magnified out of all proportion).

The Republican movement is fighting for freedom, not human rights. The Irish people are not dissidents, they are in the front line of the struggle to end British imperialism.

JANE PETRIE, Edinburgh

Charter 80 helping Brits?

IN THE article 'The Case for Charter 80' (31 July) you call Charter 80 'the campaign established in Britain to promote the demands of the H Block and Armagh political prisoners'.

Even a brief read through the demands shows this is untrue as the real demand of the prisoners is omitted from Charter 80.

This demand is for 'political status', and, because of the absence of this demand, Charter 80 denies the fact that the prisoners are prisoners of war,

rights movement, and his account of such incidents as the Montgomery bus boycott is impressive to read. But he dismisses the black power movement as unrealistic, and so fails to understand the rise of Malcolm X and the Black Panthers.

Denby was involved in the massive Detroit riots of 1967, acting as an individual. But his main concern was always fighting racism at the point of production. His weakness is that he has no overall strategy for organising blacks even at the point of production.

Autonomy

This is despite the fact that for several years he was involved in revolutionary politics. The Communist Party picked him up as a result of his interventions on the shop-floor. He soon broke with them when he discovered that they supported the 'no strike during the war' policy, and were against the Black March on Washington.

He moved on to the Socialist Workers Party, a sympathising section of the Fourth International. His experiences there clearly show how deep-rooted racism is among white Americans. It was only many years later, with the rise of the black consciousness movement, that the left started thinking positively about black history and culture.

Denby was expelled from the Socialist Workers Party for his refusal to take a group of blacks around him into NAACP and then keeping in touch with them. There is a lesson for the left here on black autonomy versus democratic centralism.

His experience is not unique in that quite a large number of blacks also went through it. At one time Denby even recruited about 100 blacks to the SWP in a matter of months. His wife was also a militant worker, and she has contributed two of the chapters.

Although the situation in Britain today is not really comparable, the two main themes of the book — arguing for black autonomy and black caucuses at the workplace — do reflect our own most burning needs.

Raghib Ahsan

ment, who presumably, on the criteria applied in *Cde Milner's letter* (support for Charter 80), must also be 'helping British imperialism'!

Ill-informed attitude to skinheads

WITH the growth of racist violence on the streets once more, Paul Lawson's advice to the left in Britain ('Time for the left to act', 31 July) is to 'revitalise RAR' in a patronising, ill-informed article which ignores the growth of black resistance to racism, and prefers to dabble in comments on youth culture and the crisis in the National Front.

According to Lawson the crisis is in the NF and that's where his analysis starts from. But surely we should look at the wider economic and political situation, and with two million unemployed surely the crisis is in capitalism not the NF?

The NF were quick to respond with their demo called on 17 August in West Brom under the slogan 'British jobs for British workers', and the Tories' right-wing policies have given credence to their propaganda.

Paul's article is wholly concerned with the white left's response, with no criticism of RAR's impact as a mainly white movement that did not, and still does not, draw black youth around it.

In Birmingham we have some, if limited, experience of the growth of racist attacks on the streets. Our response was to side immediately with the black youth willing to organise against these attacks, to defend their communities and, when necessary, to run the racist gangs out of Small Heath.

One of the best ways to fight fascism is to organise self-defence, and at this time that essentially means black self defence and an autonomous black liberation movement. Lawson doesn't even mention this. Why?

The article does hint at the fact that youth are important in the fight against the rise of racism and fascism, but the only answer he gives is to start RAR up again. We should defend RAR gigs from

New from THE OTHER BOOKSHOP for your HOLIDAY READING

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION FROM LENIN TO STALIN 1917-1929, by E.H. Carr (200pp). The research for the author's classic 14-volume *History of Soviet Russia* is here distilled into an introduction to the period aimed at the general reader. Papermac, £2.95.

MARXISM AFTER MARX, By David McLellan (355pp). Out for the first time in paperback, this is a second edition of McLellan's explanation of the history of Marxist ideas. It is supplemented by a full guide to further reading. Papermac, £3.25. (Also available in paperback by David McLellan: second editions of *The Thought of Karl Marx* and *Marx Before Marxism*, both £2.50.)

READER, I MARRIED HIM, by Patricia Beer (213pp). Taking its title from Jane Eyre's classic triumphant remark, this book examines the work of four women novelists — Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Gaskell, and George Eliot — in order to show how they depict women and their situation in society. Papermac, £2.95.

THE CONVERT, by Elizabeth Robins (304pp). First published in 1907, this novel brings the struggle for women's suffrage to life as few works of non-fiction could do. The Women's Press, £2.95.

LUANDA, by Jose Luandino Vieira (118pp). Originally published in 1964 while the author was in prison for agitating against the Portuguese regime in Angola, this newly translated collection of short stories depicts the daily joys and sorrows, victories and defeats of the people who lived in and endured Luanda's slums during colonial times. Heinemann (African Writers Series), £1.50.

All available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St., London N1 Tel 01-226-0571. Add 15% for p&p if ordering by mail

fascist attacks of course, but any re-involvement in RAR would need to include a hard, political battle to actively involve these layers in defence of the black communities against racist attacks.

Our perspectives among white youth do not start from the attitude that 'large numbers of these thugs cannot be won by the propaganda of anti-racists and the left'. We start from the knowledge that youth are always the most open to revolutionary politics, to fighting for their right to work, to leisure, to sexuality, and, by organising among the unemployed and young workers, to fighting against the Tories through local Revolution Youth branches and national campaigns.

The last point is, perhaps, the most complex: what is our attitude to 'skinheads'? It's not just a simple equation: skinhead = racist = violent = BM. How do you explain women and black skinheads in that context? How much is culture and fashion and how much is organised fascism?

The only attitude we can clearly have is that, from the point of view of black communities, a gang of skinheads coming into their area poses a threat in the 'uniform of fascism'. However we should always be careful to prefix skinhead by 'racist', 'fascist', or whatever is accurate.

Birmingham Revolution Youth will be building a youth contingent for the counter demo in Handsworth against the NF on 17 August. Now it's time for the left to act: Join us there!

BIRMINGHAM REVOLUTION YOUTH

Socialist Challenge

BANS WILL NOT STOP FASCISTS

FASCISTS and communists they're all the same, out to cause trouble. This is the view that is encouraged by the Public Order Act. It was passed in 1936, ostensibly to deal with Moseley's anti-Jewish demonstrations. But more often than not, the legislation has been used by the police to stop left-wing marches.

Socialists should oppose this law. We oppose any restrictions on the right to protest and demonstrate. Unlike the capitalists, who have Parliament, the courts, the newspapers, and television to put across their ideas, working people have only a few political means to express their opinions.

Why should the police, who are not accountable to the community — the murder of Blair Peach and Jimmy Kelly prove that beyond a doubt — have the right to say who will and who will not be allowed to demonstrate? Neither can the Police be trusted to implement bans in an impartial way.

Blanket

Selective bans are not possible under the Public Order Act — only blanket bans on all demonstrations — and this means the police can encourage the view that all those who demonstrate are a threat to the community.

On Sunday in Birmingham, the labour movement, the anti-fascist groups, and the Asian community should unite to express their opposition to the racism of the National Front.

The Public Order Act is not an adequate instrument with which to oppose racism and fascism. The Nazis will always find somewhere to march. Black and white workers alike should rely on their own organisations and their own strength to put a stop to the lies of the fascists.

Join the counter-demonstration in Birmingham next Sunday.

March against racist solutions to unemployment!
Assemble 11am Finch Road off Lozeles Rd, Handsworth, Birmingham.

Socialist Challenge supporters are urged to come along. Contact your local ANL for transport.



Nazi Webster ignores ban in Manchester in 1978 — he receives a lot of police protection.

Nazis jump on the dole queue

'BRITISH jobs for British workers.' This is what the National Front wants to chant through the streets of Smethwick next Sunday.

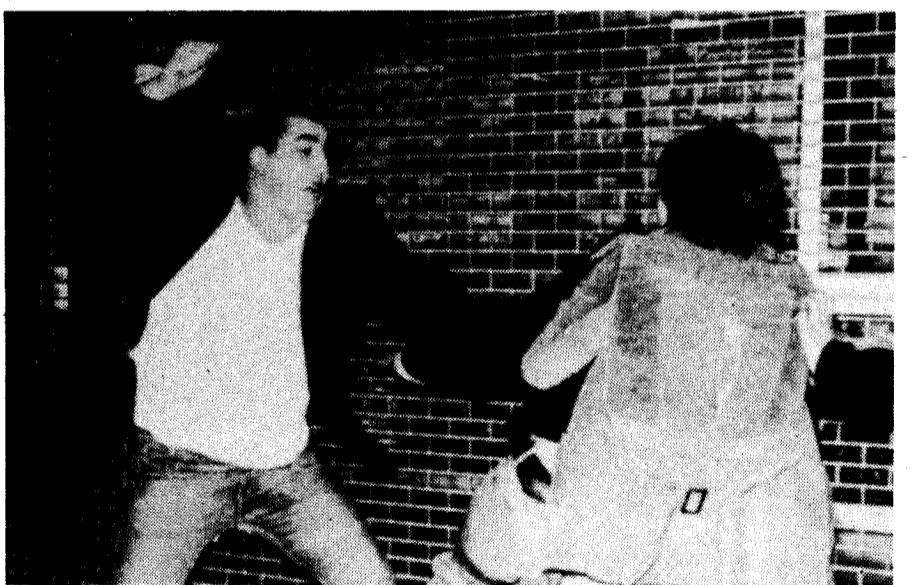
Its plan to focus on unemployment and thereby encourage race hatred inside the labour movement has met with a few obstacles.

Fearing retaliation from the Asian community to this provocation in Smethwick, the Chief Constable of the West Midlands has obtained from the Home Secretary permission to ban the demonstration.

The Front seems to have backed down and now plans to march in a less 'sensitive' area in the Midlands. Its message — wherever it marches — will be no less dangerous.

The idea that immigrant workers are responsible for the large dole queues in Britain today is a view that is quite widely held among even the most committed of trades unionists.

Trade union leaders who fail to give support to struggles of black workers and who urge solutions to unemployment which involve 'protection' of British industry from foreign competition encourage such nationalistic



Fascist violence could increase.

views.

The assumption that most black workers are not British is of course false, since many black workers were born in Britain. Immigrant workers however, be they West Indian, Asian, or American, are not responsible for today's high level of unemployment.

The economy is in a state of decline because for the past century and a half British capitalism has tried to expand itself by sponging off Third

World countries. Now that it no longer has such a privileged relationship with the 'colonies', its economy is feeling the pinch.

The National Front has no solution to unemployment that is in the interest of the working class. There is no possibility of British workers and bosses getting together to solve the problems of unemployment, as the Front implies.

Jobs will be protected only

if the labour movement is strong and united and refuses to allow any worker to be sacked. That applies in Britain, and the trade union movement would be far stronger if it were also applied through international solidarity.

The National Front's pernicious propaganda must be steadfastly opposed by the labour movement, particularly now as the dole queues lengthen.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ANTI-RACIST ACTIVISTS

18 OCTOBER 1980 to exchange info and ideas

called by Leamington Anti Racist Committee supported by ANL

for further details: Leamington anti racist Committee, Box 5, 42 Bath St Leamington

NO PAPER NEXT WEEK

There will be no issue of Socialist Challenge next week. This is to allow preparations to be made for the new-style paper in the autumn.

The next issue of the paper will be out on Thursday 28 August and will be back to our normal size of 16 pages.

HOME OR ABROAD — GIVE US A THOUGHT

BRISTOL Socialist Challenge supporters complained at our blanket reference to readers sunning themselves on continental beaches. 'Some of us can't afford such glamorous holidays,' they said. Quite right, too.

So this week we make two appeals. To those going or just back from abroad you have a special responsibility to help your paper over the summer. We will have a special issue for the Trades Union Congress at the end of this month, as well as material on the 'Beyond the Fragments' conference.

All this takes money. For those

readers not able to journey abroad, thanks for your continued support and how about organising some small fundraising events to help us through the summer months?

Our thanks this week to:

Alan & Colin	£47.00
MB	15.00
R Player	5.00
Ullabritt & Walter	5.00
J Silvertown	3.50
Middlesbrough IMG	10.00
Des Stevens	5.00
Bob Garland	5.00
E Mahood	10.00
Other Bookshop Tin	5.01
Total	£110.51
Grand total	£177.31

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