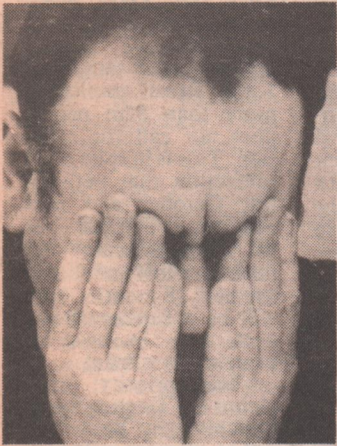


Socialist Challenge

↑ JOBS NOT BOMBS ↓



3m UNEMPLOYED

DON'T DESPAIR

MARCH AGAINST THE TORIES GLASGOW 21 FEB



Cubans issue appeal to defend Salvador revolution

TEN Hercules transport planes arrive every day in El Salvador bringing American military hardware and US military 'advisers' to the beleaguered dictatorship.

For over a year now El Salvador in Central America has been in a state of virtual civil war.

Workers

Three weeks ago the forces which represent the overwhelming majority of the Salvadoran workers and peasants — the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) — launched a nation-wide insurrection.

It is now clear that despite the blows dealt to the regime by the insurrectionary offensive, the massive influx of American arms and military advisors has prevented the FMLN forces from holding the towns captured in the initial wave of the offensive.

The struggle will be more drawn out than was originally expected.

Drown

The pouring in of American aid to the dictatorship is an attempt by the Reagan government to drown the revolution in blood.

The American ambassador has been sacked by Reagan in order to bring in someone even further to the right.

The popular forces and civilians alike are suffering heavy casualties at the hands of the military and their unofficial 'death squads'.

Last week, the Cuban government made an appeal for an international united front to defend the Salvadoran revolution.

Solidarity

The movement of solidarity is growing: last Saturday 15,000 people marched through the streets of Frankfurt to demand an end to US intervention in El Salvador.

In Britain, War on Want has launched an emergency appeal for aid to the victims of the repression. We urge all readers to support this appeal.

Send money to: El Salvador Appeal, War on Want, 467 Caledonian Rd, London N7.

Editorial

Socialist Challenge

Revolutionary Socialist weekly

PO Box 50, London N1 2XP

Phone 01-359-8189/8180 (editorial and distribution)

British politics at a turning point

'AN unstoppable combination.' That's how David Steel described the prospect of a social-democratic-Liberal electoral alliance during his party political broadcast last week.

Many commentators have seen the emergence of the Council for Social Democracy as marking a decisive turning point in British politics; that we are witnessing something entirely new in post-war politics. This estimate is undoubtedly correct.

For many years politics in Britain have been paradoxical. While the economic and social crisis went from bad to worse, the old political certainties appeared to remain: the centre held.

During the last Conservative government, from 1970-1974, it seemed that perhaps the pattern was changing. Labour swung left as the 'Bennites' developed their 'alternative economic strategy'. This was in itself a response to the dramatic emergence of the mass trade union struggle after 1968 — the biggest wave of industrial struggles since the 1920s.

This development was stalled in 1974 by the election of a Labour government, with the right wing firmly in control. Labour's austerity offensive was met with only sporadic working-class resistance until the winter of 1978-9. But during Labour's time in office the Tories had moved decisively to the right.

What we are seeing now is a rapid politicisation of the crisis.

The view put forward by bourgeois commentators and some Labour Party activists that the swing to the left in the party is the result of clever burrowing by leftist activists is pure myth.

Certainly, there has been a prolonged campaign for democracy in the Labour Party. But what is being worked out are the inevitable consequences of the development of the mass industrial struggle — of the miners' strikes, the struggle to free the five imprisoned dockers, the battle for the right to work at UCS, and so forth.

Ultimately the struggle between left and right will be resolved by the mass struggle and not merely by in-fighting between left and right in the party.

The polarisation of the two major parties creates immense difficulties and dangers for the ruling class. If Thatcherism is a failure, it will not be as easy as it was in 1964 and again ten years later to turn to the Labour Party.

An important factor in the emergence of the 'social democratic' council is the attempt to prevent the election of a Labour government while the left is so strong inside the party. The crisis of political 'leadership teams' which faces the ruling class is resulting in new formations of the centre which can be utilised to force coalition government — or at least to prevent Labour's outright victory.

The scene is now set not only for an attack on Labour from outside the party, but a major fightback inside the party spearheaded by people like Roy Hattersley whose differences with the Gang of Three are not political. It is their tactical approach which is different.

Within the constituencies we can expect the right wing to launch a witch-hunt of the left.

It will attempt to repeat the operation of the 'Campaign for Democratic Socialism' in the early '60s. In order to guard against this danger, it is vital that left caucuses function in all the constituency parties to prepare the battle against the right.

From now on battle will be joined between left and right in the unions in a much fiercer way. What Socialist Challenge has been saying for months — that the Labour left has to organise in the unions — is coming home to roost.

It is hopeless relying on the benevolence of the 'friendly' union leaders. As Foot proceeds with his project of attacking the left and 're-centring' the party, the union leaders will be pulled into line. The spotlight which has been put on the block vote has exposed above all the undemocratic way in which it is wielded in most unions.

Fighting for democracy and accountability in the Labour Party necessitates doing exactly the same in the unions.

British politics, then, are certainly being remoulded. Whether the system can be remoulded to benefit the struggle for socialism remains to be seen. The crucial battles between left and right in the coming months, both in the Labour Party and the unions, will not be the only determinant of the outcome.

The struggle against the Tories will determine the final outcome. The fight for socialism was never advanced by constant defeats of the working class.

If the surge of the Labour left is the result of the working class struggle in the early '70s, the product of defeats on unemployment, the cuts, and wages will be the re-consolidation of the hold of the right in the '80s.

Home News

The TUC's road to the dole

By Patrick Sikorski

MEMBERS of the TUC General Council expressed 'outrage' at the latest unemployment figure of 2,419,452. To show how outraged they can get, the TUC has just published a 40-page pamphlet entitled *Unemployment: the fight for TUC alternatives*.

Unfortunately their outrage will not prevent TUC leaders from attending the National Economic Development Council this week, with the prime minister in the chair — with the bizarre illusion that the Tories can be forced to change course.

The TUC's pamphlet spells out the problems. Industry is in decline, machinery is out-dated, exports are dwindling — and much of the world is in a recession. The government's policies, says the pamphlet, are 'leading to economic disaster'.

A wealth of statistics illustrate how the official unemployment figure last October of 2,066,000 ignored another 1,390,000 'hidden unemployed', including a number of married women, those affected by short-time working, and others whose only job is on a government training scheme.

The pamphlet drafts the historic decline of investment in British industry to the present day when a British worker has £7,500-worth of machinery to work with while a West German worker has £23,000-worth, and a Japanese worker £30,000-worth.

For the Tories and the bosses the main problem isn't unemployment. It is to get inflation down in order to return to profitability. In the process they are not much worried if sections of industry are destroyed.

Individual bosses give themselves golden handshakes as unprofitable firms are merged, while the bosses' organisation, the CBI, dominated by the British branches of the multinationals, is happy to see the closure of thousands of competitors.

This further concentration of capital can only help the survivors to monopolise the remaining markets.

It is not surprising that the latest CBI survey based on a highly

representative sample of 1,800 firms employing more than 32m people does not call for deflation. This is in spite of its prediction that between last October and next May up to 500,000 jobs in manufacturing will have been lost and that in the next 18 months there will be a further 30 per cent drop in new industrial investment.

The priority, proclaims Sir Terence 'bare-knuckle fight' Beckett, is not to increase inflation.

What does the TUC propose? Apparently powerless to halt the flood of closures and redundancies let alone kick out the Tories, the TUC leaders call for: boosting public spending; creating new jobs now; planning for industry; controlling imports; controlling prices and sharing the wealth.

Thatcher is about as likely to implement these policies as President Reagan to nationalise the ailing Chrysler car corporation under workers' control.

There is a section headed 'Union policies in action' under which the main section is concerned with 'Bargaining for jobs'. Here is some of the advice: 'When jobs are threatened, unions should always aim to oppose redundancies and seek alternatives. In some cases this may not succeed, and job loss will be unavoidable. Then unions will need to go for maximum compensation for members who must lose their jobs.'

When 590 workers at the Gardner diesel engine plant in Manchester were told last October that they had to lose their jobs they gave the reply that the whole of the movement should be giving now.

They didn't sit down with the enemy and negotiate like Murray and the TUC — they occupied and fought and won.

In the next few weeks we will be examining policies such as worksharing and the demand for the 35-hour week.



While 3 million suffer on the dole TUC leaders try to persuade the Tories 'to change course'

HOW TO GET TO GLASGOW ON 21 FEBRUARY

LONDON: Regional Labour Party train departs from Euston on 20 Feb at 10.15pm. Tickets at £18, tel. 01-703 6511.

NORTH-WEST: Regional Labour Party has three trains. Tel. 061-736 7439.

TEESSIDE: Stockton Trades Council coach. Tickets at £4, tel. 0642 817699 or 0642 582351.

SCOTLAND: Details from the Scottish Regional Labour Party, tel. 041-332 8946.

LAMBETH workers say NO cuts in serv.

Lambeth manual workers strike out

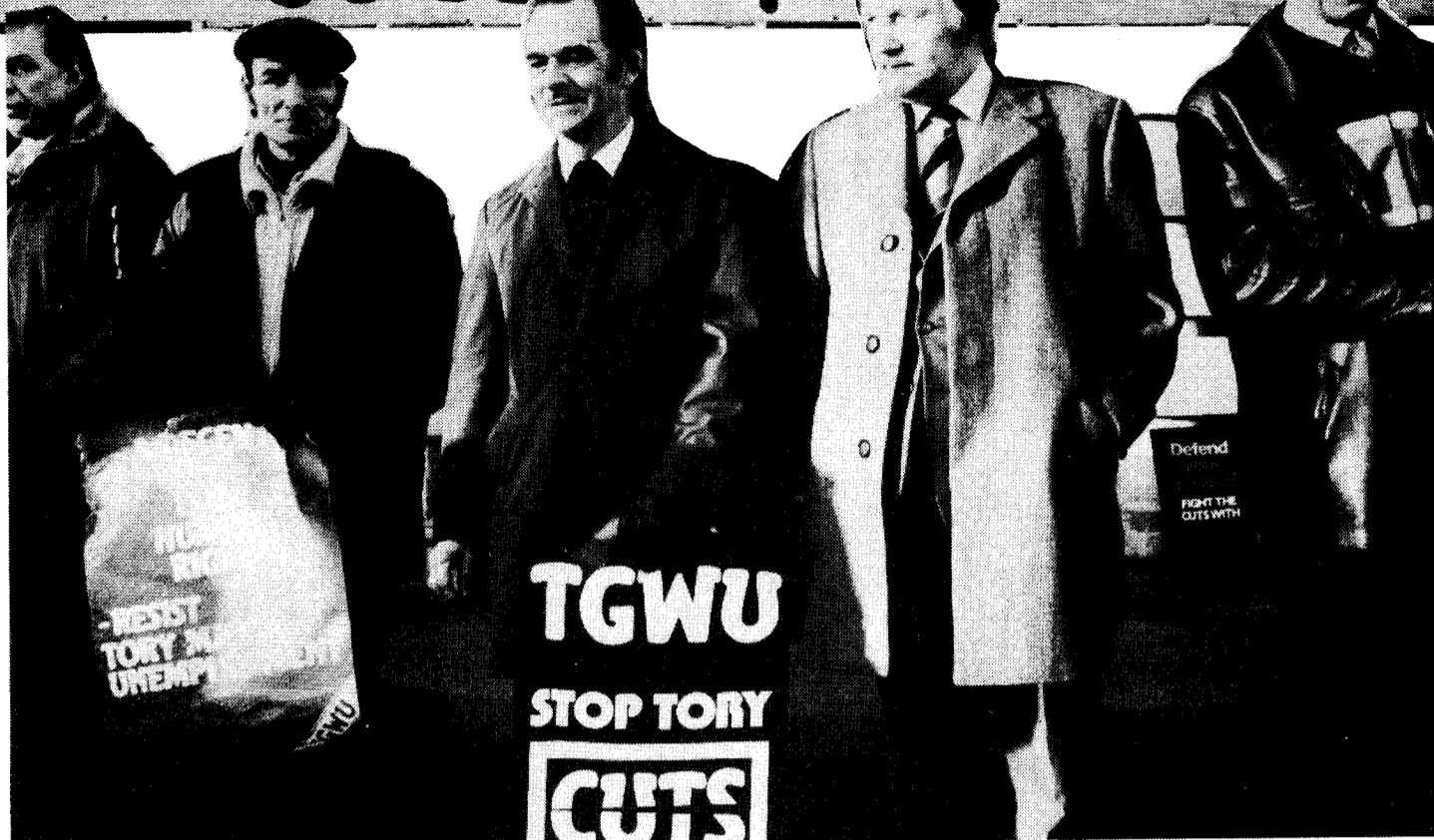
THE Lambeth week of action against cuts has won firm support from the council's manual workers. 1,400 construction workers struck on Monday along with more than a thousand other manual workers, including refuse collectors and roadsweepers.

Senior shop steward Alf Sherwood said: 'This is just the beginning as we know our jobs are on the line.'

NALGO branch secretary Mike Waller explained: 'We are trying to persuade the government to have a total change in policy. The way the government has squeezed the council means that unless the trade unions in this borough are successful we can see quite disastrous consequences in terms of cuts in service and redundancies.'

Lambeth council leader Ted Knight, the subject of a sustained witch-hunt in the Tory press, supports the week of action against Tory cuts in social spending.

He commented: 'The council and the workers are under attack from all angles.'



Ted Knight, second from right, on Lambeth picket line last Monday

Socialist rate rises?

By Geoff Bell

CHRISTOPHER Murphy, Tory MP for Welwyn and Hatfield, has announced plans to introduce a Private Members' Bill in parliament which is likely to be greeted with applause by working class people.

Murphy wants to abolish rates. With massive rate rises on the way for millions of people his proposal is one which would, at first glance, find ready acceptance.

However, when the finer details of Murphy's plans are looked at his rate-free utopia disappears. The money which rates bring in would still have to be found from somewhere: Murphy favours an extra, flat-rate tax on everyone on the electoral roll.

Mess

There is no doubting that the present rates system is a mess, full of injustices and inequalities, but a flat-rate tax system would make things even more unfair.

The current rates-system is based, at least in theory, on the rate-payers' ability to pay. The larger the house or building, and the more amenities it enjoys — which in general means the richer the occupier — the higher is the rateable value.

Murphy wants to scrap that, but by saying

that everyone should pay the same that means the rich would pay less than they do now, and the poor would be charged more.

Murphy's proposals are just another Tory subsidy for the rich. Nevertheless, to many almost anything will seem preferable to the present system and the promised rate increases.

Policy

It should be stressed — as the wall message illustrated opposite does — that these rate increases are, in the first instance, a consequence of national government policy. The cuts of Tory minister Michael Heseltine added to previous ones by the last Labour government mean that the local authorities are receiving less money from central government, which usually accounts for just under half of local government revenue.

As a consequence, many councils feel that if decent services are to be maintained they have no option but to increase rates, which provide just under 25 per cent of council revenue.

Recently, councils have had another burden loaded on them by the Tory government. This involves the increased allocation of their resources they are obliged to spend on 'law and order'. As a result of decisions taken by the Tories nationally, the number employed in law and order services — police, court staff, and



probation officers — went up three per cent last year.

At the same time many teachers and workers in the social services were being sacked. As much as 8.5 per cent of councils' wage bills now go on 'law and order', which is twice as much as goes to workers in housing and the fire service combined.

All this might suggest that councils, especially Labour councils, have no alternative but to increase rates. That may indeed be the case — but only if councillors see themselves as operating in the isolated, localised world of this or that borough.

The fact that they are faced with the consequences of national, axe-wielding, Tory government policies shows that such an isolated, localised world does not exist.

To pretend it does is to court disaster. For although the rates system is fairer than that being proposed by Christopher Murphy, rate increases do hit the working class, just as do rent rises, or

cuts in local government services.

There is no such thing as a socialist rates rise. Although the advocates of such rises can argue that such a policy does not hit working people as hard as cuts might do, it still hits them hard.

It can also in the end hit the councillors themselves.

While some Labour councillors argue that if they didn't raise rates and rents the council would go bankrupt and would be replaced by commissioners sent in by the Tory government, it is also likely in many places that massive rates rises will, in the end, lead to the councillors being thrown out of office by the electors.

Working class people are hardly likely to be encouraged to believe in the socialist credentials of a Labour council which raises rates with as much apparent enthusiasm as the Tories raise unemployment.

To refuse to implement rate rises, as well as rent increases or cuts in social spending, means in

effect refusing to have anything to do with passing on, even in a watered down form, the policies of the Thatcher government.

It involves telling the electorate that rather than raising rates or imposing cuts, the council will face the prospect of being expelled from office by Thatcher and Heseltine. It would also mean fighting such an expulsion before it happens, when it happens and after it happens.

And that in turn would require mobilising local unions, tenants, and all working people in that fight; in encouraging other councils to take the same stand; in linking up with them when they do.

All that might not seem an easy option, and indeed it is not.

It is always more convenient to manage capitalist policies than to oppose them root and branch. But such an opposition is what socialists are in business for — and it is what Labour councillors should also be in business for.

Lambeth might hate Thatcher's rate rises, but how will it react to those imposed by its own Labour council?

New attack on Labour councillors

By Phil Hearse

IN the London borough of Camden, Labour councillors are under vicious attack by the Tories and the courts for paying their local authority workers a living wage.

Following the local authority workers strike in 1979, Camden paid its workers an extra £10 a week and shortened hours. The authority workers had their earnings raised to the royal sum of £60 per week. As the result of a complaint to the district auditor by Tory councillors the case has now been referred to the High Court.

If the court upholds the auditor's report that

the payment was uneconomic and unjustified, then the local workers' wages could be cut and the Camden councillors could have to pay £2m back to the council — £60,000 each! NUPE's local full time official John Suddaby told Socialist Challenge:

'The intervention of the district auditor is an outrage. If our wages are cut, then we shall certainly be pushing for strike action. The Labour councillors must stand up to this attack. Only by mobilising a massive campaign among local trade unionists and the community can we resist these attacks.'

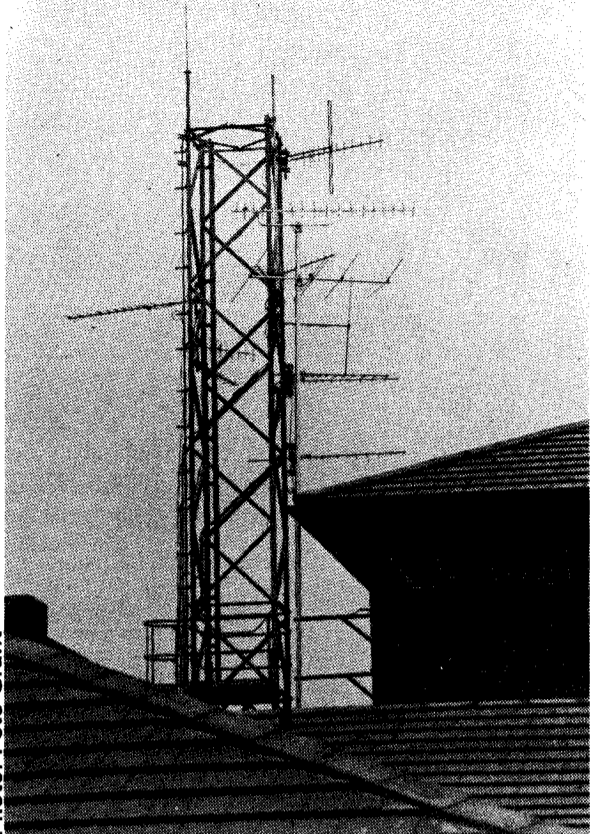
Camden demonstration against the cuts, Saturday 7 February 11am. Judd St, Camden Town March to Kentish Town.

Photo: JOANNE O'BRIEN

Photo: JOANNE O'BRIEN

WINNING A MAJOR NUCLEAR DISARM

Photo: Pete Grant



South Road Primary School, Southall

Frying Tonight!

By Alan Lenton

IF YOU come out of Southall station, turn right, and walk a little way down the road, you come to the new South Rd primary school, which is due to open at Easter.

At first sight it seems a perfectly ordinary school. Until, that is, you go round the side and find a radio tower.

It is a standard VHF radio tower, complete with yagi aerials for point-to-point relays, and dipoles for all-round communication with vehicles. This is not a common feature of primary schools. Neither is the block-house structure at the back of the school.

The truth is that South Rd school stands above the London North-west region Civil Defense HQ.

Thirty feet below ground, protected by 8" thick steel doors, our would-be lords and masters will shelter while those of us on the surface fry.

The bunkers are equipped with all the latest radio and telex equipment.

The HQ is connected to the Fylingdales early

warning radar base, which gives the officials the four-minute warning that the government won't be giving the rest of us.

The bunkers will be staffed by 55 local and central government officials. The regional controller (the Ealing town clerk) will have absolute authority in the event of an attack and there will be armed police, based in the bunker to back up his orders.

Opposition to the bunker has been fueled by a recent decision of Ealing's Tory council to spend a further £45,000 to stop the bunker periodically flooding with sewage.

Rowena Wood, chairperson of Ealing teachers' panel, who successfully moved a local NUT resolution calling for public protest against the bunker says: 'It's a scandalous waste of resources. We need more spent on under-fives education, not on hiding the government underground so it can start nuclear wars with impunity.'

The NUT is calling a meeting of representatives from local unions, the trades council, and Ealing CND to co-ordinate this campaign.

By Kevin Holmes
'STOP Cruise, Stop Trident, Jobs not Bombs!' That was the chant taken up by 1,500 CND marchers in Edinburgh last Saturday morning.

Organised by CND at four days' notice, the

1,500 on Edinburgh march

march was part of a weekend of disarmament activities. It was followed by a 2,000-strong rally called by the Scottish TUC.

Local CND activists wanted to start the new year with action on the streets, and we distributed thousands of leaflets in support of the

national labour movement conference against the missiles.

The final event of the weekend was a local CND conference attended by over a hundred people. A major feature of the discussion was how to build working class support for CND's aims.

Priorities decided upon were building the Scottish CND demonstration in June, the campaign for 'Jobs not Bombs', and intervening around that slogan at the 21 February unemployment demonstration in Glasgow.

The conference gave full support to Lothian

regional council in its continuing campaign against implementing civil 'defence' measures.

A young CND group was also set up.

● In London at the weekend a conference of London region CND heard proposals for local CND groups to support the Liverpool to London unemployment march with 'Jobs not Bombs' contingents.

Strategies for banning the bomb

Labour Party and the bomb

In the concluding part of his review of *The Protest Makers*, JULIAN ATKINSON explains how CND's politics of neutralism in the 60's put it outside the anti-Vietnam war movement and how the Labour left failed to fight for unilateralism.

Amazingly, after the Scarborough conference the Labour left managed to be placed on the defensive ideologically. Gaitskell raised the issue of NATO repeatedly and harangued the 'neutralists and fellow-travellers'. The Labour lefts tried to avoid the issue, while CND was in the process of refining its ideas on NATO.

Stuart Hall in a 1960 CND pamphlet put the case well: '... to make any sense of its case against the use of nuclear weapons, CND must now encompass the case against the nuclear alliances and since NATO is all we have... by way of foreign policy, the campaign must see itself politically involved, over the coming months, in hammering out the elements of a foreign policy.'

'Weapons, after all, do not (yet) explode themselves: it is not the technical discoveries which brought us to the edge of war... it is the strategies and the politics of our present system of alliances — that is, the main direction of our foreign policy.'

From this argument came the call for 'positive neutralism'. Unfortunately this concept was profoundly ambiguous. It could mean the rejection of pro-imperialist policies that had been the staple of Labour governments.

It could have led to an anti-imperialist and socialist foreign policy which made no concessions to the bureaucratic manoeuvrings of the Soviet leadership.

The aim would have been a socialist and non-bureaucratized world order that is the only real answer to the threat of nuclear war.

A rival, and more widespread interpretation was based on critical praise for scoundrels like Haile Selassie and Nehru and a concept of neutralism as a balance between Russia and America. This policy was effectively conservative and defended the status quo.

Positive neutralism as a balanced equilibrium was supported by the Young Fabians, who saw the Labour Party as uniquely fitted to carry out such a policy due to the diversity of opinion in the party.

'For a foreign policy of neutrality... the existence of such diverse tendencies within one political framework, far from being a liability becomes a positive asset. Pressure from both right and left on a neutralist Labour foreign secretary would in fact help him, not hinder him.'

CND was to show itself less neutralist than

neutered in 1968 when it took a position of neither approving nor disapproving of the massive demonstration of solidarity with the NLF of Vietnam and formally announcing that it refused to join the march.

In the confusion caused by the inability of the Labour lefts to take up the issue of NATO, Dick Crossman and Walter Padley of USDAW floated their 'compromise'.

This came out for the establishment of a non-nuclear club to avoid the proliferation of weapons; for disengagement in Europe; for NATO to reject a first strike strategy, and for Britain to remain in NATO.

Frank Cousins, the TGWU general secretary, wavered and played with the idea of reforming NATO from within. In *Tribune*, just before the March '61 CND conference, Michael Foot backed the 'compromise'. The retreat became a rout.

The USDAW conference narrowly rejected unilateralism in favour of the 'compromise', which was later dropped thus allowing the USDAW leadership to have free rein to support Gaitskell. The Engineering Union voted

narrowly against unilateralism after a number of delegates broke their mandate — 22 out of the 26 AEU divisions were unilateralist.

After the USDAW and AEU defeats, Foot cleared up the matter of the compromise. Although the Crossman-Padley line marked 'a step forward from the position which the leadership of the party has hitherto accepted', it was 'a substantial retreat from Scarborough'.

Foot explained how he respected the mood that called for unity in the party. The left, however, was not to blame for the lack of unity. It was the fault of the leadership with its 'barren debate over Clause Four' and the 'attack on the left in the party'.

The rejection of unilateralism by the 1961 Labour Party conference came as no surprise. The Labour lefts, showing great skill and ingenuity, had managed to stab itself in the back.

The Labour Party is like a pantomime horse. The front end is basically a liberal capitalist party, while the end is a muddled working class one. The Labour left was determined to respect the

boundary limits of what the right was prepared to accept.

The front end of the horse was not prepared to accept unilateralism. The back end, rather than risk a split, was reluctantly pulled into line. CND neither foresaw nor guarded against this.

Instead of a policy of leaving the Labour Party struggle to the Labour lefts, the campaign should have made a clear turn to the labour movement, without shifting from its mass campaigning orientation.

CND did not produce literature to reach the union and Labour Party rank and file, nor contact the branches. It used mainly moral arguments rather than spell out the political issues involved and the economic consequences.

It refused to raise the issue of industrial action. It did not fight its important labour movement friends when they equivocated over NATO. The new CND is faced with the old Michael Foot. Let us not repeat history.

'The Protest Makers' by Richard Taylor and Colin Pritchard, is published by Pergamon Press at £10.



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I won't die for Thatcher

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RITY FOR IAMMENT

Paul Smith

CND's new pamphlet, *Nuclear Disarmament for Britain*, is part of its campaign to 'win a majority for nuclear disarmament'.

The arguments that author Betty England puts forward on the so-called Soviet threat, NATO's strategy, and unilateral disarmament have a lot to commend them.

She demolishes the 'red peril' threat by quoting the recent government defence White Paper: 'We have no reason to believe that the present Soviet leaders are deliberately planning to attack NATO.'

Deterrent

Similar sharp treatment is given to arguments about the need for Britain to possess an independent deterrent. The author points out that Britain 'cannot have an independent deterrent'. She quotes Field Marshall Lord Carver, by no means an opponent of nuclear

weapons, who expressed a belief 'that the retaliation would totally destroy this country and almost all of the inhabitants in it.'

In other words, the main danger to Britain in any war would come precisely from the fact that Britain possesses a nuclear arsenal.

Unilateral

This is part of the case put forward for a unilateral rather than a multi-lateralist approach to disarmament. There is also the failure, so far, of international attempts to limit nuclear weapons.

Betty England points to the need for Britain to re-align its foreign policy, to ally with the non-nuclear club. This would, she argues, strengthen international pressure on those powers retaining nuclear weapons. 'We could add our strength to all those countries, particularly in the third world, which have so insistently demanded multilateral nuclear and general disarmament.'

But Britain's foreign policy is tied hand and foot to US global strategy. One cannot but agree with Betty England

that abandonment of Britain's nuclear weapons implies a major political shift in all aspects of both domestic policy and foreign alignments, including rejection of NATO and Carter's and Reagan's war drive.

That means that the campaign against nuclear weapons has to become part of the fight against the Tories and their priorities.

The pamphlet is subtitled 'Why we need action not words'. It is unfortunate therefore that only the last two paragraphs of the 22-page pamphlet discuss what action should be taken.

It says: 'Things have now reached a stage...at which it is possible to carry the argument to the whole population and — perhaps in twelve months — to win a majority for nuclear disarmament by this country. To help in that job is the object of this pamphlet.'

The case against nuclear weapons is well to the fore in national politics. Tens of thousands have marched against nuclear weapons. Composite 45, adopted at the Labour Party's 1980 conference, has committed the party to unilateral disarmament. On 28 March there is to be a labour movement conference against the missiles.

Strength

Such large-scale actions, showing the growing strength of the mass movement, are the key to winning 'the whole population' to oppose the missiles and support disarmament. This approach to building the movement against nuclear weapons is not reflected in CND's new pamphlet. It proposes taking the

'message to the 70 per cent who are not yet convinced. This means more public meetings, film shows and literature, more active groups...'

Where is this activity to be directed? '...the tremendous potential support which exists in the churches, in youth organisations, in the women's movement. Above all, perhaps, it means consolidating the victories in the labour movement.'

It also means a major national focus for the fight in 1981. Where is that?

Crucial

CND's national council has posed 1981 as a year of consolidation. Regional carnivals, local activities, the Scottish and cross-Pennine marches; these are to be the staple diet of the campaign over the coming year.

Using the argument that the centre must catch up with the branches and that it would be dangerous to peak too soon, CND's leadership is in danger of dealing a serious blow to the momentum of the movement.

The pamphlet reflects this lack of direction despite the fact that it says 'the coming year is going to be crucial. Things have started to shift in this country but the battle is by no means won.'

The number one priority for 1981 should be a fight for a joint CND/Labour Party/TUC march which could easily be a quarter of a million strong. Turning resolutions into mass public political action — that is the only means of 'consolidating the victories in the labour movement.'

'Nuclear Disarmament for Britain', by Betty England. Price 50p from CND, 11 Goodwin St, London N4.

Anti-missile Action Guide

WHAT'S on against the missiles? The following events are listed by CND. If you have a film show, a demonstration, a public meeting or other anti-nuclear event, please send the details to us and CND.



21 February: CND student conference at North London Poly, Holloway Road, London. One delegate each from a student union or CND student group.

28 March: Labour movement conference in Manchester. Delegates will be accepted from all bona fide trade union and Labour Party organisations — two from each Labour Party branch or constituency, trade union branch, trades council or shop stewards committee, at £3 a delegate.

11 April: Youth CND conference in Birmingham.

12 April: Trans-Pennine march starting in Manchester and arriving in Leeds on 16 April.

Second stage in Brussels on Easter Saturday, 18 April, where a demonstration will take

place outside NATO headquarters. This will be joined by anti-nuclear demonstrators from several countries.

Information from: Sebastian Halliday, Pennine Anti-Nuclear Co-ordination Committee, Laneside, Woodtop, Hebden Bridge, West Yorks.

14 April: March across the sky. Disarmament demonstrations across West Yorkshire, featuring flares and fireworks. Organised by Bradford END c/o Ruth Overy, 7 Albert Tce, Wyke, Bradford BD12 9BS.

May Day: Nuclear disarmament to be a theme on May Day events.

9-10 May: National CND conference in London. Further information from: CND, 11, Goodwin St, London N4. Tel 01-263 4954.

If a one-megaton bomb hit Sheffield...

STOP THE
MISSILE
MADNESS

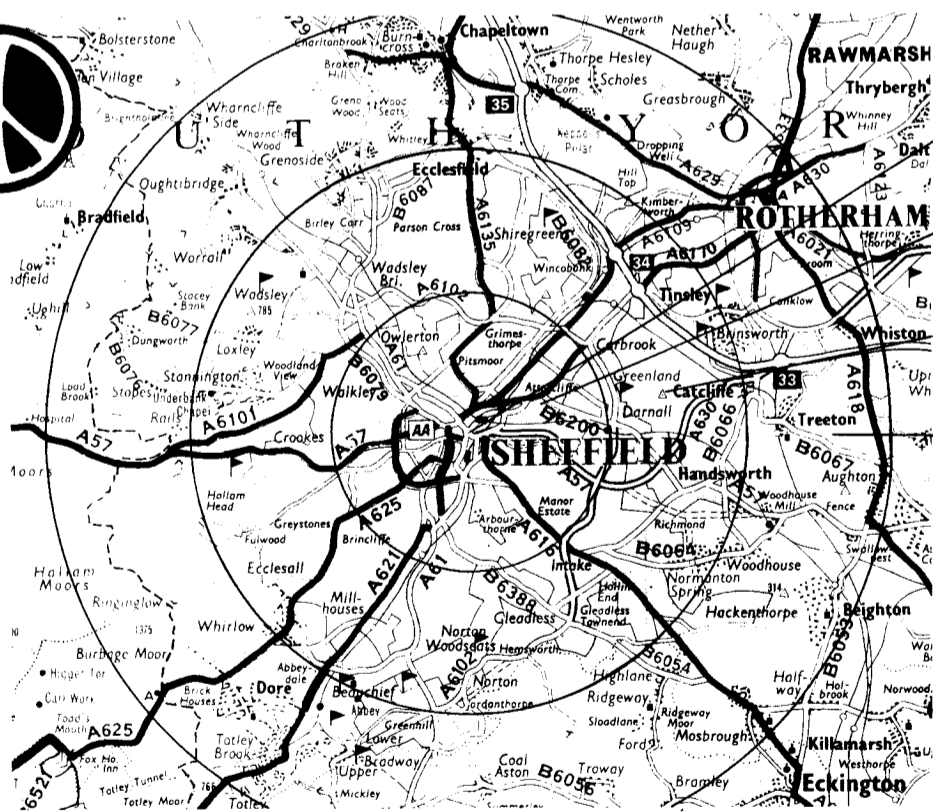
JOIN CND

On October 26th, 80,000 people marched through the streets of London to protest against the Cruise and Trident missiles. The demonstration was organised by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. We can stop the Missile Madness. There are three years until the Cruise missiles are sited. The £5000 million Trident system can still be cancelled. Protest and Survive.

CND's immediate policy is for Britain unilaterally to abandon nuclear weapons. CND campaigns for a world free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. Sheffield CND consists of local groups, affiliated organisations, and individuals from a broad range of viewpoints. We are constantly organising meetings, film shows, pickets and vigils, petitioning, selling CND literature, writing to local papers — all to get the message of disarmament across to as many people as possible.

Sheffield CND, 43 Chantrey Road, Sheffield, S8 8QU. Membership rates: £1 waged, 50p unwaged, 25p school students.

This wall poster can be adapted to your area. It is distributed by Sheffield Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, 43 Chantrey Rd., Sheffield S8 8QU. Designed, typeset and printed by Lithoprint Ltd., 329 Upper Street, London N1.



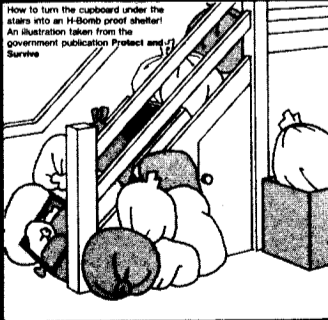
"In the event of nuclear war there will be no chances, there will be no survivors — all will be obliterated. I am not asserting this without having deeply thought about the matter. When I was Chief of the British Defence Staff I made my views known. I have heard the arguments against this view but I have never found them convincing. So I repeat in all sincerity as a military man I can see no use for any nuclear weapons which would not end in escalation, with consequences that no one can conceive." Lord Louis Mountbatten, 11th May 1979

CITY CENTRE
A crater 140ft deep and 1,300ft across.

0-2 MILES FROM CENTRE
All buildings destroyed, and 90% of the people killed or seriously injured.

2-4 MILES FROM CENTRE
Most buildings destroyed, and 50% of the people killed or seriously injured.

4-6 MILES FROM THE CENTRE
Many buildings destroyed, and 35% of the people killed or seriously injured.



The Government say hide under the stairs!

Extracts from 'The Bomb and You' Sheffield Star series 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 October, 1980

"Sheffield is a major city. In a recent Home Defence 'war game' it was assumed a three megaton bomb made a direct hit on the city and killed 130,000 people outright.

"Another 80,000 were trapped or injured. Thousands more died from radiation in the days and weeks that followed."

"In our small, crowded island there can be no protection from nuclear war. We might escape the blast and the heat but not the fallout. This was the tacit admission behind the disbandment of the old Civil Defence."

"Directly after an attack there would be no-one to help us. The Government has made it clear it is staying undercover until it is safe to come out."

"There is no cure for radiation sickness. Victims need rest and intensive nursing — both unlikely after a nuclear attack."

By Martin Dawes

For further information

Protest and Survive, edited by E.P. Thompson and Dan Smith, Penguin paperback, £1.50
Overkill, John Cox, Penguin Books, 80p
Civil Defence: the Cruellest Confidence Trick, Philip Bolsover, CND pamphlet, 40p
Sanity, bi-monthly magazine of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

The effect of a thermo nuclear bomb depends upon the height at which it is exploded. Exploded near the ground, it scoops out a vast crater, smashes everything for several kilometres and forms a towering mushroom cloud of radioactive dust and debris that comes down as deadly fallout. A near direct hit would obliterate any underground shelter. Exploded high up, where the air is thin and more energy goes into heat, it is mainly a fire weapon for use against people and buildings above ground. A 5 megaton explosion 30 miles up would send a searing heat wave over an area of 30 miles diameter.

A 10 megaton bomb would:
★ flash quicker than the eye can blink for protection, burning the eyes of people looking in its direction from 240 or 300 miles away

★ grow within 40 seconds to a blindingly bright fireball nearly 4 miles across, as hot as the inside of the sun

AND, depending on the height of the explosion,
★ blow a crater, deeper than London's deepest underground railway and over ¾ mile wide, producing a rim of piled up wreckage up to 2 miles wide

★ smash everything within 3½ miles, destroy all steel bridges for 7 miles, block streets for 15 miles and cause further severe damage up to a distance of 30 miles

★ fatally burn anyone in the open (up to 23 miles) and ignite fires (30 miles). The fires would coalesce into a 'fire-storm' — a gigantic uncontrollable fire that sucks in air at hurricane force to fan and feed the flames — to consume everything in the area within 20 miles of the explosion centre

★ kill most people within a 30 mile radius.

WOMEN IN POLAND

A week in the life of Poland...

Jenny Flintoft describes the problems of daily life encountered on a recent visit to Poland

SUN 21 Dec

Board London-Warsaw train, packed with Polish expatriates. By Dutch border tongues have loosened and current situation being discussed quite openly.

MON 22 Dec, 10am

Zbaszynck — snow-covered platforms, steam trains. Brest-Dresden train full of Russian soldiers. Expatriate Poles gaze at them with open hatred, fingers jabbing aggressively in their direction.

5pm

Warszawa Gdanska station. By car to flat. T wearing Solidarnosc badge, shows me Solidarnosc bulletins. 'Before September everything in Poland was made out to be wonderful by the media,' T tells me. 'Now suddenly everything is in a state of collapse.'

TV News shows a group of workers who have queued all night for coal and not got any. They express their anger very forcibly.

TUE 23 Dec

Go to nearest grocers for bread — 'Nie ma' (none). On to another shop where there is a long queue for bread. Leave G in queue and go to buy deodorant. Another queue but not so long.

Queue again for milk and bread. This shop has some bread, though not very fresh. G still nowhere near front of bread queue. Decide to buy not-so-fresh bread.

A queue for chocolate has formed outside one shop. It has no chocolate but a rumour has gone round that some may be delivered. Z tells us that when a queue forms people just join it.

Some of them don't even know what it's for, they just know it must be something in short supply.

FRI 26 Dec, 6pm

Go to Opera House to see *The abduction from the harem*; very socialist realist. In the interval T tells us about an opera performance in Lodz a short time ago.

There was chocolate on sale at the buffet. During the second half of the first act the theatre emptied as the audience met to queue outside the still closed buffet.

The puzzled singers thought there was a fire!

11pm

Satirical TV programme comedian says, 'Margaret Thatcher had better watch out. There was another country where the leader disagreed with the trade unions. That leader lost his job!'

SAT 27 Dec, 11.30am

Go to bar for cognac and coffee. Get chatting with English-speaking group there. One Pole expresses admiration for Margaret Thatcher. Horrified, I take a deep breath and ask why. 'Because she is anti-communist,' I am told.

Calmly I point out that she is also racist and displays remarkable callousness in the face of 2.5m unemployed. He is a bit shaken by this figure, keeps saying 'two and a half million unemployed? It's not possible'.

He rallies a bit: 'But her foreign policy is good'. I point out that her foreign policy includes deployment of Cruise missiles, some of which are targeted on Warsaw.

Seems a bit shaken by this too. Voices rise, heads turn, we are making an exhibition of ourselves.

MON 29 Dec, 5.30pm

Go to J&M's flat for dinner. Very luxurious flat littered with status symbols. 'I got this in India and this photo was taken in Peking.' J has been to virtually every country in Europe and many others.

There are three phones in a two-room flat. I ask him if it is necessary to wait a long time for a phone to be installed. 'Normally several years,' he replies, 'but I got mine in three weeks.'

By now it is pretty clear he is a party member.

I say that in England it normally takes three to six months for a phone but that in Hampstead it is likely to take less time than in the East End. 'After all,' I say, 'working people don't need phones so much.'

J smiles. G adds: 'After all working people don't get ill so they don't need to phone the doctor.' Too late J realises we are being sarcastic.

A socialist paradise?

By Jenny Flintoft

WOMEN in Poland have, unlike their sisters in Britain, formal equality before the law.

They have the right to work. They don't have to put up with page three nudes, the sexist film advertising outside cinemas, the exploitative pornography that outrages the woman walking through Soho. Men aren't encouraged to regard women as objects for consumption.

Polish women work in jobs not usually open to British women: they drive heavy vehicles, work as customs officers, and take a much fuller part in the 'masculine' fields of science and engineering.

So — a socialist paradise for women? Sadly the answer is no.

Cultures

Poland lies at the intersection of two cultures: the *Slav* with its traditional contempt for women — 'A chicken is not a bird, and a peasant woman is not a human being' says a traditional Russian proverb; and the *Roman Catholic*, its veneration of woman as Virgin/Mother concealing the profound oppression of women in all Catholic countries.

Add to this the legacy of Stalinism, with its glorification of domesticity and motherhood, and it would be truly amazing if Polish women were any more liberated than their Western counterparts.

A woman's right to work, in itself an advance, becomes in Poland a dreary necessity since wages are so low. For most women it means the wearying obligation to do two jobs, the second being in the home.

Share

Polish men are even less likely than their British counterparts to do a fair share of housework, and Polish women cannot buy the wide range of convenience foods available to us.

Nor do they have the labour-saving devices we have in Britain. Until recently washing-machines were only sold in Pewex, the hard-currency shop, and the only one I saw was in the flat of a Communist Party member.

Polish men may not be much use where housework is concerned but they are hot on gallantry. There is lots of handkissing, and no

A WOMAN sent the following poem to the Solidarnosc strike bulletin office:

One day a woman goes to the doctor:
'Doctor, give me an examination!
'You've come to the wrong place, I'm afraid,
I am just a vet.
I don't look after humans.'
'Oh, that's all right, doctor,
I feel just like an animal.'

'When I get up in the morning,
I dash through the house,
Panting like a dog or a cat,
I gallop to work like a horse,
I cling to the bus like a monkey,
Loaded up like a camel,
Defending my marriage like a lion.'

'I'm already asleep when I get
back from work in the evening, and
then I hear my husband whispering
Above my head, "wake up, owl!"'

'Perhaps you have some miracle cure
Which will make me a human being.'



Veteran strike leader Anna Walentynowicz



Queues, queues and more queues

woman accompanied by a man is allowed to open a door, carry a parcel, or even get on a tram unaided. This gallantry is however mainly for the middle classes.

Picture the average working woman's life: up early to prepare the breakfast for her family, she then waits in darkness in the driving sleet for the packed, lurching tram or bus to take her to work.

This is likely to be monotonous, alienating and possibly even dangerous — in the field of safety at work Poland is just as bad if not worse than Britain.

At the end of an exhausting day, after endless queuing in the bitter cold for food, there is another meal to prepare. And all this six days a week.

Appeal

As in Britain formal equal pay is meaningless when, despite advances, women are still concentrated in low-paid jobs such as cleaning, waitressing and nursing.

Small wonder, then, that the church has such a seductive appeal for many Polish women. To their drab lives it brings art and music, beauty and dignity, love and hope.

The Pope is idolised. In the Basilica in Warsaw I saw women praying with a fervency I have never seen anywhere else in Europe.

Another possible escape route is prostitution. Naturally there aren't the adverts in newsagents' windows that you see in Britain.

Nonetheless in places like the Grand Hotel in Warsaw, where customers spend on a meal for four what amounts to a week's wage for the average Pole, one finds 'girls for hard currency' dining with oil-rich Arabs.

As a quite ordinary jumper in Marsalkowska — Warsaw's Oxford Street — costs half a week's wages, and a pair of shoes nearly two weeks', it is hardly surprising that some young women use their youth and attractiveness to eke

out their meagre wages for a few brief years.

Prostitution is, of course, not supposed to happen. Polish men like to see 'their' women as sweet and innocent.

East German women are 'bitches', American women 'domineering', Swedish women 'undress but they are cold', but Polish women, ah Polish women are wonderful, they enjoy being in the kitchen, they know how to respond to a man's gallantry, how to make themselves attractive, how to make a man 'feel like a man'.

Important

Sadly, many women fall for this. At times, seeing University-educated women deferring prettily to their menfolk, I felt as if I were going back in time at least fifteen years.

How can Polish women move forward? They may not be able to play an equal part in Solidarnosc, but they have been able to play in important one.

Outstanding women

such as veteran militant Anna Walentynowicz have been an inspiration to everyone, but there are countless other, less well-known women actively organising all over the country.

It is notable that Solidarnosc has been able to unionise the traditionally hard-to-organise, such as waitresses and female shop assistants. Even the women workers in Pewex wear Solidarnosc badges. At a Solidarnosc teachers' meeting I attended it was clear that the women were playing an active and equal part in planning and discussion.

Nurseries

Solidarnosc's 21 demands do include assurances of a reasonable number of places in day-care centres and nurseries for the children of working mothers, and paid maternity leave for three years.

The Szczecin Joint Demands included a rise in family allowances. Alina Pienkowska, health service delegate to Solidarnosc's national delegate meeting, also called for a sharp increase in nurses' pay.

Solidarnosc offers women no easy, magical route to liberation. Nonetheless it is currently the only possibility. And in a situation in which almost everybody is politically inexperienced, women in Solidarnosc are in some way perhaps not at such a disadvantage politically as British women.

Certainly, Polish women's liberation is linked indissolubly with that of the working class. At the present moment that link is with Solidarnosc.

I TOOK Paul Gilroy's advice (22 Jan) and went to see the film *Babylon*, much to my enjoyment.

However I was left wondering about one particular scene in the film where the sole white member of the sound system was physically assaulted and rejected by his black peers.

This occurred after the white racist family who lived opposite the lock-up where the youths stored and often played their sound system late at night had broken in and wrecked the equipment.

The youths returned to witness the damage and one after another turned to stare at the

Babylon — race or race and class?

white youth.

'Why are you looking at me?' he asked. 'It wasn't me who did it. I don't sympathise with them!'

'But you're one of them. It's your kind that did this,' was the reply.

Beefy, one of the black youths, headbutted his ex-comrade and the others, although thinking that Beefy was going a bit too far, nevertheless shared his

view. The white youth was left rejected by his peers, black youths, on the basis of his skin colour.

Now for me the film left an ambiguous question here. My impression watching the film was that the black youths were unable to understand and distinguish between the class character of the attack on the equipment and their friend's class position — I use class in

a political rather than sociological sense.

For the black youths it all boiled down to the question of race, not of race and class. They were unable to see that one set of whites were racist, the other anti-racist.

Now I don't blame blacks for feeling hostility and suspicion to all whites, quite the reverse. But I do disagree with Paul's view that this scene 'is impor-

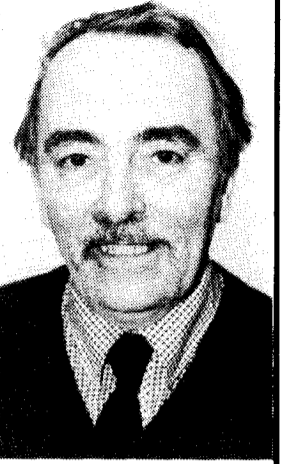
tant because it helps Rosso (the director) emphasise the class character of the youth's sub-culture, so that race and class consciousness are seen as inseparable aspects of the same dynamic process'.

I thought that the scene did exactly the opposite; it reduced everything to a question of race, completely leaving out the question of class.

I may be wrong and I may misunderstand what Paul and Rosso are saying. If so, some enlightenment from Paul or others would be welcome.

STEVEN ARCHER, Leeds

The Insane Society Sinatra, the mafia and Princess Anne



Bob Pennington

Bob Pennington Frank Sinatra, long-time buddy of Ronald Reagan, has had the gaff blown on him by another 'singer', one Jimmy Fratianno.

Mr Fratianno and Mr Sinatra worked for the same company. The Weasel, as Fratianno is known, worked on the waste and disposal side of the business — 'wasting' people at odds with the Mafia, then disposing of their bodies.

He admits to eleven assassinations, but his friends say he is being too modest and has a much better score than that.

'Ole blue eyes' had a different job. One of his tasks was procuring, like the time he fixed up President John F Kennedy with a new lady friend called Judith Campbell. Believing in spreading joy around, Sinatra also introduced the lady to top Mafia boss Sam Giancana.

Even the fun-loving Kennedys, whose motto was 'a bed is a bed is a bed', got worried about that and John F was instructed to seek company elsewhere than at Ms Campbell's.

Sinatra's bosses were a little put out that Frank had not delivered the president. In fact, Johnny Formosa, one of Giancana's hitmen, offered to demote Sinatra by putting a hole between his ears. However, tolerance prevailed and Sinatra was given another chance.

Again he put his nose to the grindstone. He wormed his way into the favours of those two super crooks Spiro Agnew and Richard Nixon, and helped the Mafia at its Villa Venice night club in Illinois, where he performed without pay — what greater devotion can an employee show than working for nothing?

He even got Reagan to sign his application for a gambling licence in Las Vegas where only Mafia appointees run the gaming joints.

He became a real pal of William Smith, the new US Attorney General — the man supposedly responsible for fighting crime — who claims he has never heard of Sinatra's links with the Mafia.

Now Sinatra's hard work is in jeopardy because Fratianno has become a 'gun who turned canary' to save his own hide.

For years government, big business, and organised crime have happily collaborated. They all believe in free enterprise and the power of the dollar. All hate reds and troublemakers like workers who want better wages and decent conditions.

In a system where the profit motive rules and human needs come a poor second, organised crime will always flourish, both in and out of government. Politicians will always be up for sale.

Reagan and his Attorney General have much more in common with the Sinatras and Giancanas than they do with the working people of America.

Meanwhile in Britain a lady whose family owes all its wealth to organised crime — even the Mafia could not organise the rape and plunder of five continents — has decided to take up the academic life.

Anne Phillips, née Windsor, has decided to go after her nan's old job as Chancellor of London University.



To the consternation of the establishment, Anne faces an election for the post — an unusual experience for the Windsors. One candidate is ex-TGWU national secretary Jack Jones whose sponsor Tessa Blackstone admires his contribution to the Social Contract.

The other candidate is black liberation fighter and Robben Island prisoner Nelson Mandela.

Normally Socialist Challenge does not concern itself with elections for the chancellorship of London University; it is after all a purely symbolic post. But because of its symbolic importance this time we are supporting a candidate.

A victory for Mandela would show that the graduates side with this courageous fighter against apartheid. A vote for Mandela is a vote for human dignity and human rights.

A vote for the royal offspring is a vote for privilege and represents an obsequious kowtowing to an archaic and reactionary institution. The best service Jack Jones can do for progress is to withdraw in favour of Mandela.

GMC's should elect Labour leader

THE defeat of the Labour right at Wembley was obviously a step forward. But our unconditional support for the 40-30-30 position looks alarmingly like that age-old fallacy, 'left' equals better.

True, it is important to seek to enfranchise trades unionists who pay their political levy. True, the arguments of the Owen clique would leave control of the Labour Party vulnerable to any Tory who felt like taking out a party card.

And revolutionaries ought not to allow a gang of rank opportunists to make press mileage out of the issue of participatory democracy without some very good answers.

But the argument that the union block votes are in the hands of the bureaucracy need careful attention.

Anyone with ten minutes experience in a trade union knows that the fight to make the leaderships accountable to members on issues such as this has scarcely begun. We can't ignore this because it is inconvenient.

On the other hand, active trades unionists can make their voices heard in the Labour Party through their delegates to general management committees.

Surely the answer to the 'democratic' Owen gang should be to propose leadership elections through open votes of the GMCs, the elected representatives of all active party members. Isn't this the kind of democracy we stand for at the level of the state?

Yes, such a proposal would have got nowhere. But how much influence did Socialist Challenge have on last Saturday's decision?

If SC supporters had succeeded in convincing even one constituency party of such a position, we would have been able to argue publicly that Labour workers need not choose forever between appointed union bureaucrats and self-appointed parliamentary leaders.

Surely that would have been worthwhile?

MARTIN BUCHWALD Oxford



Books for the Southern African revolution

I AM once again making an appeal for funds for Books for Southern Africa. Our last appeal brought a fair response and we have been able to send quite a lot of books to groups of South African revolutionaries all over Africa.

The increasing cost of books and freight charges have now exhausted what money we had.

These books provide vital ammunition for our comrades who are trying to lay the foundations for building revolutionary socialist parties in Africa. We are also hoping to provide them with the means of publishing their own material.

I know there are great demands on comrades' money but this is part of the job of building the world party of the socialist revolution.

All funds to: Books for SA, PO Box 50, London N1.

CHARLIE VAN GELDEREN, London

Keynesianism is no solution

IT IS pathetic that some Labour leaders should now be preaching 'Keynesianism' as the solution to Britain's economic problems; for example John Silkin and Tom Jackson on a recent 'Any Questions' programme.

Silkin himself raised the question of how a great increase in public spending was to be financed — and airily dismissed it. Jackson said that such a scheme would 'pay for itself'.

The truth is that it could only be financed in two ways: by taxing the masses and thus

reducing our purchasing power and putting us back to square one; or by taxing the capitalists, which would reduce their 'inducement to invest' which, according to Keynes, is of supreme importance.

And indeed it is if the system is to continue! There is more than a grain of truth in Tory assertions that the country 'can't afford' this, that and the other. What they mean is that the capitalist system can't afford it!

It is of course perfectly legitimate to ask how 'the country'

can afford massive spending on 'defence', while having to cut spending on welfare.

But the final proof that Keynes' ideas don't work is that if they did work Maggie would now be pursuing them and we would never have heard of Friedman and his monetarism.

After all, Keynes was trying to reform capitalism, not establish socialism.

Why are these 'socialists' so anxious to find substitutes for socialism?

JIM PARKES, Walsall



Merchant banker and bon viveur Roy Jenkins



Catholic anti-abortionist and ex-Labour MP, Shirley Williams



David Owen, author of social democratic credo, 'Face the Future'

THE LABOUR SPLIT

1931

By Geoff Bell

THE British Labour Party has led, for most of its life, a moderate, temperate existence.

Quarrels and disturbance have always been present but they have bubbled under the surface or been confined to occasional rows at Labour Party conferences, after which they can soon be forgotten.

Like other British institutions, the Labour Party usually settles differences by smothering and fudging them.

This time that does not look likely to happen. Nor was the issue avoided in 1931 when the Labour Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald and a few of his cohorts ditched the party they had led to form a 'national government' with the Tories and some Liberals.

The split of 1981 will not be a replica of 1931, but there are similarities.

The most obvious is the background in which the split took place: rising mass unemployment and a capitalist system intent on punishing the working class in order to save itself.

The concurrence of economic crisis and splits in the Labour Party is not coincidental, because the nature and purpose of the party is always most acutely posed when the future of capitalism is at stake.

In 1931 the Labour government had been in power for two years. The 1929 election had seen Labour winning 287 seats, the Tories 260 and the Liberals 59. Labour's election manifesto, although a rather timid document compared to previous ones, had still promised much.

Proclaim

In a foreword Ramsay MacDonald had boldly proclaimed that Labour 'unlike other parties is not concerned with patching the rents in a bad system, but with transforming capitalism into socialism'.

The manifesto went on to promise 'an unceasing war against capitalism' and 'an unceasing war against poverty and working class servitude'.

Concretely, there were promises to establish a 48-hour week, a minimum wage for agricultural workers and, most ironically as it turned out, to raise the scale of unemployment benefits.

When MacDonald formed his government in 1929 the number of unemployed insured workers was 1,640,000. By December 1930 the total had reached 2,500,000, climbing to 2,700,000 by June 1931. The rise had been hastened by the Wall Street crash of October 1929 and the consequential shattering of the monetary and credit system of the capitalist world.

Manifesto

It was an excellent opportunity for the Labour government to launch the unceasing war against capitalism promised in the manifesto.

Instead the reverse occurred. A modest programme of public works was inaugurated

THE open threat by leading right wingers in the Labour Party to split and form a 'social democratic' group will have significant repercussions in the labour movement.

Not since 1931 have such prominent individuals within the Labour Party tried to divide the movement. The divisions in 1931 have a relevancy for today, and below GEOFF BELL recalls that famous split.

A new pamphlet which aims to stop the Ramsay MacDonalds of the future is also reviewed.

but only £42m was earmarked for it, with Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Snowden strongly resisting the allocation of more funds.

A plan, drawn up by cabinet member Oswald Mosley, to launch a more thorough-going attack on unemployment was resisted. Mosley resigned in protest and began a political journey which was to end up in him leading British fascism.

There were other critics of government inaction. The Independent Labour Party, which was then within the federally-organised Labour Party, urged the adoption of more radical measures. Both the PLP and the party conference of 1930 rejected the call.

Launch

If the Labour Party and its government were unwilling to launch their war on capitalism, the least that could be expected of it was to offer some form of shelter for those worst hit by the capitalist crisis.

The manifesto had pledged an increased scale of unemployment benefits of 20 shillings a week, with ten shillings for a dependent wife and five shillings for each child. When the government introduced its Unemployment Insurance Bill in 1929 the promises were forgotten.

Unemployment benefit for men stayed at 17 shillings, and the allowance for each child at two shillings; the rate for a dependent wife was raised, but to one shilling short of what had been promised.

All the government had to offer was rhetoric. The language of 'national interest' and 'common sacrifice', so familiar 50 years later, was evoked. Philip Snowden told the Commons in February 1930:

'Instead of party bickering, which we can resume later, we must unite in a common effort to take effective measures to overcome our temporary difficulties and restore our former prosperity.'

Sacrifice

To achieve this, said Snowden, what was needed was 'some temporary sacrifices from all, and those best able to bear them will have to make the largest sacrifice'.

The call for sacrifice from those 'best able to bear them' brings to mind the more recent declaration by Denis Healey that the Labour Government elected in 1974 would 'squeeze the rich until the pips squeak'. There was a similar non-deliverance from Snowden as there was later from Healey.

The budget of 1931 offered

PRES



Betrayer of a generation Ramsay MacDonald

no attack on the rich; the only tax increase was on petrol. In part Snowden was waiting for the judgement of the Committee on National Expenditure which, under Conservative pressure, he had established in February to enquire into government 'extravagance'. The committee was headed by Sir George May of the Prudential Assurance.

The May Committee reported in July and with it matters came to a climax. Unemployment was now 2.75m, and to meet the budget deficit of £120m May proposed a modest increase of taxation amounting to £24m and cuts of £96m, two-thirds of which was to come from assistance given to the unemployed.

Benefit

A 20 per cent cut in unemployment benefit was included.

Publication of the report saw finance speculators orchestrating a run on the pound. The financial crisis worsened

and MacDonald was offered on condition recommendations of the Committee were perfect. MacDonald agreed, but they knew a majority of the Labour Party and the TUC would not accept it.

By August 1931 the government had collapsed.

What followed was a political drama. The Tory and Liberal together with MacDonald King George V had secret meetings on the formation of a coalition government. Having agreed that necessary, the plotters were how they with the minimum position.

If this wasn't poor Hoare, 'It would be that Mr MacDonald main Prime Minister National Government Baldwin, the Tor

SPLITTERS – PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE



previous two years, the Labour Party when it came to fight the 1931 election was powerless to contest the idea of a 'national government'.

A landslide victory for the coalition dominated by the Tories but led by MacDonald followed, and this was in spite of unemployment figures spiralling towards three million.

There was much more to the Labour Party debacle of 1931 than the parliamentary manoeuvres and the political intrigue. For one thing the working class had still to recover from the defeat of the 1926 general strike. Nevertheless what happened in the years 1929-31 is relevant.

Excuse

Just as in the years 1929-31, the Labour government of 1974-79 had a precarious position within parliament itself, and used this as a reason for not being able to adopt the socialist measures which had been promised. In both instances that was a mere excuse.

The political inclination of MacDonald, Snowden, Wilson and Callaghan had never tended in the direction of radical socialism. With or without a huge majority in parliament they would have steered a similar course. Because the majority of the PLP, in both instances, supported such policies — rising unemployment being the most obvious — it made it all the more difficult to attach any degree of honesty to subsequent disavowals.

MacDonald, if nothing else, was at least consistent. Indeed, so is Shirley Williams.

The Labour splitters of 1981 will not bring about the same result as their trail-blazers half a century ago. MacDonald was in effect captured by the Tories, and while he sank into oblivion as soon as his patrons felt they could dispense with his services, his departure from the Labour Party in 1931 had come as a further blow to the labour movement.

Decimate

It was over a decade before the working class was to recover from the decimation of its ability to organise and its living standards brought about by its leaders and the bosses.

The splitters of today have taken their cue from the strength of the working class, rather than its weakness. While the ruling class needs the Tories to impose the policies required to meet the exigencies of the economic crisis, it cannot be confident that Thatcherism will succeed or that a left-influenced Labour government would pursue her good works.

Enter the Gang to offer what they hope will be a viable path to sustained employment and axed living standards. They will not sink into obscurity as rapidly as MacDonald unless the working class leadership challenges what the Gang stands for, not excluding the 'mixed economy' and allegiance to NATO.

The Gang are not quite Tories, but their ambitions will certainly help to keep the Tories in power. The sure way to relegate Owen & Co to a footnote in the history books is to throw Margaret Thatcher out of office.

How to spot a potential MacDonald

By Tom Marlowe

EVERY time a Labour MP is elected to parliament s/he becomes a potential Ramsay MacDonald.

This is not because of some character defect common to all such candidates, but because of the nature of the political game they are involved in once they step through the doors of the Palace of Westminster.

This point is made in an amusing one sentence dedication in a new pamphlet written by Chris Mullin and produced by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and the Institute of Workers Control.

The pamphlet is dedicated to 'Mr Reg Prentice and the 180 Labour MPs who sent a written appeal on his behalf to Newham North-east CLP.'

Version

That 180 Labour MPs supported the now Tory Prentice, a miniature version of Ramsay MacDonald, is worth remembering. It shows the distance that so many members of the Labour Party can travel once they are fortunate enough to get a job in the House of Commons.

Undoubtedly becoming an MP must be an awe-inspiring occasion. The minute it happens the flattery, the seduction, and the compliments begin.

It is all very ego building and consequently, as Chris Mullin notes: 'Many come to believe that the Parliamentary Labour Party is an independent institution with a life of its own, with a right to make its own policy decisions and generally to behave as it pleases.'

Pressure

'To some MPs the Labour Party, to which they owe everything, becomes an inconvenient pressure group.'

Chris Mullin's pamphlet is an aid to trying to stop this process. He sets out to advise on the intricacies of re-selection and how to give that process a real meaning by assuring accountability of MPs to their local party.

Mullin urges Labour Party members to check what



Persecuter of social security claimants, Labour MP turned Tory, Reg Prentice

their MPs say in parliament, to watch how they vote on crucial issues, and to demand consultation with them before important decisions are taken in parliament.

In his introduction, Chris traces the sorry history of previous Labour governments an argues that it is a repetition of this history which re-selection is designed to challenge.

'The truth is,' he argues, 'that plans to increase public spending, cut unemployment, and abolish nuclear weapons are just so much hot air until our parliamentary representatives are made accountable to the party in whose name they hold office.'

There is no doubting the importance of the victories the left achieved at the Blackpool and Wembley conferences.

They brought some much-needed democracy to the Labour Party, and began to challenge the notion of the sovereignty of parliament by insisting that members of the Labour Party outside of those who are

elected to Westminster should have some say in what the party does in that place.

The point worth making is that the sovereignty of parliament is in any case a myth. The backbench MP has less say in what the government does than treasury officials, the newspaper editors, the security chief, or a TV pundit.

Minimal

Giving the trade unions and the Constituency Labour Parties some minimal influence in the movement of which they are part, is — if nothing else — a small counterbalance to the civil servants and the media stars.

Accordingly, the Chris Mullin pamphlet is an essential guide for all Labour Party activists.

How to Select or Reselect Your MPs, by Chris Mullin. Published by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and Institute for Workers' Control, price 50p. Available from: CLPD, 10 Park Drive, London NW11.

Your MP's voting record

THE voting record of each MP is recorded in Hansard at the end of every Parliamentary debate. Hansard should be available in any good reference library. To use Hansard all you need to know is the date of the debate in which you are interested.

To assist Labour Party members to discover where their MP stands we have listed below the dates of debates on 10 crucial issues since 1975. The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy is compiling a table of each Labour MP's voting record on key issues.

Ten Crucial Issues

- 9 April 1975: EEC membership.
- 22 July 1975: £6 pay policy.
- 21 December 1976: Government economic policies following IMF loan.
- 3 May 1977: Agee and Hosenball case.
- 1 February 1979: Rhodesian oil sanctions.
- 27 March 1979: Defence expenditure.
- 13 July 1979: Corrie abortion Bill.
- 6 May 1980: Abolition of House of Lords.
- 4 March 1980: Continuation of Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1976.
- 10 December 1980: Northern Ireland emergency provision.

— From 'How to Select or Reselect Your MP'

agreed with this plan.

It is easy to see why they wanted MacDonald to lead the new attack on the living standards of the working class and the unemployed. As a leader of the Labour Party for so many years, MacDonald was more likely to get away with such an attack, and if the Tories were not seen to be leading the offensive they would suffer less unpopularity.

Handful

MacDonald agreed to the coalition and, with the support of only a handful of Labour MPs, he formed his National government. Arthur Henderson, the new leader of the Labour Party, refused to denounce the splitters saying: 'Whether the withdrawal of our colleagues be long or short, whether it be temporary or permanent, it is a direct loss to the labour movement.'

What are the odds that this script will soon be re-read by Michael Foot when he com-

ments on the departure of Williams, Owen, Rodgers and company?

As with Foot and Williams, the sorrowful nature of the parting of the ways between Henderson and MacDonald needs no deep explanation. There was no great ideological rift.

What MacDonald did in August 1931 was the logical conclusion of what he and Henderson and the rest of the Labour cabinet had been doing for the previous two years. As early as July 1929 MacDonald had turned to the opposition benches in the Commons and pleaded:

'I wonder how far it is possible, without in any way abandoning any of our party positions, without in any way surrendering any of our party principles to consider ourselves more as a Council of State and less as arrayed regiments facing each other in battle.'

The 'Council of State' was officially established in August 1931, but because its ideology had been practised for the

SC Sales

ABERDEEN: SC sold Saturdays outside C&As — for more info ring Colin, 574060.

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

BIRMINGHAM: SC on sale at The Ramp, Fri 4.30-5.40, Sat 10-4. For more info phone 643-0669.

BRADFORD: SC available from Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.

BRIGHTON: SC sales regularly every Sat outside Open Market, London Road, from 11am-1pm.

BRISTOL: SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. More info from Box 2, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpellier, Bristol 6.

BURNLEY: SC on sale every Sat morning 11.30-1pm St James St.

CARDIFF: SC sales Newport Town Centre outside Woolworths 11-12.30; Cardiff British Home Stores 11-12.30. Also available from 108 Books, Salisbury Road, Cardiff.

CHESTERFIELD: SC supporters sell outside Boots, Market Place, Saturdays 11.30am-12.30pm.

COVENTRY: SC available from Wedge Bookshop. For more info about local activities phone 461138.

DUNDEE: SC available from Dundee City Square outside Boots, every Thursday 4-5.30pm, Friday 4-5.30pm, Saturday 11-4pm.

EDINBURGH: SC sales every Thursday 4.15-5.15pm Bus Station, St. Andrews Square; Saturday 11.30-2pm East End, Princes St. Also available from 1st May Books, or Better Books, Forrest Rd. More info on local activity from SC c/o Box 6, 1st May Bookshop, Candlemaker Row.

ENFIELD: SC available from Nelsons Newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.

GLASGOW: SC sales every Thur/Fri 4.30-5.30pm at Central Station. Also available at Barretts, Byres Rd; Clyde books, High St; Glasgow Bookshop collective, Cresswell Lane; Hope Street Book Centre.

HACKNEY: supporters sell SC every Saturday morning at Ridley Road market, E8.

HAMILTON: SC on sale 8-11 every Sat, outside County Bar Almada Street, every Sat outside Safeway 1.30-5. For more info contact Paul, 17 Clyde View or John at 54 Eliot St, Hamilton.

HUDDERSFIELD: SC supporters sell papers every Saturday 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.

KILBURN: SC sales every Sat, 10am in Kilburn Square.

LAMBETH: SC available from Village Books, Streatham; Tetric Books, Clapham; Paperback Centre, Brixton; Oval tube kiosk. Also sold Thur and Fri evenings and Thur mornings outside Brixton tube.

NEWCASTLE: SC on sale every Sat 11-1pm outside Fenwicks. Also available at Days of Hope bookshop, Westgate Rd. For more info ring Phil or Pete on Newcastle 737507.

MANCHESTER: SC supporters sell 11-1pm Sat at OLDHAM outside the Yorkshire Bank, High St; at BURY in the shopping precinct and at Metro Books; at BOLTON in the town centre; and in MANCHESTER outside the central reference library in St Peter's Square and at Grassroots and Percivals Bookshop. Tel: 061-236 4905 for further info.

NEWHAM: SC on sale every Saturday, 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Market, Upton Park.

OLDHAM: SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities. Tel. 061-682 5151.

OXFORD: SC supporters sell every Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.

STOCKPORT: SC sold every Saturday, 1pm, Mersey Way. Can be delivered weekly, phone 483 8909 (evening) 236 4905 (day).

SWANSEA: SC sales outside Co-op, Oxford St, 11am-1pm, Saturdays.

SWINDON: SC on sale 11-1 every Sat., Regent St (Brunel Centre).

TESSIDE: SC on sale Sat lunchtime in the Cleveland Centre, and in Newsfare, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and outside Woolworths on Stockton High Street.

WOLVERHAMPTON: SC sales on Thur/Fri at Poly Students Union from noon-2pm and British Rail 4.30-6pm; an Saturday near Beatties, town centre from 11am-2pm.

Is your town or city mentioned above? If not, send in details to this sales column.

International Marxist Group notices

ENGINEERING: National fraction Sat 7 Feb at Manchester centre.

IRISH LIBERATION: fraction on Sun 1 March. Details to follow.

ABORTION: Day school on 1 March. Ring centre for details.

MISSILES: National fraction on Sun 8 Feb at Camden Social Services Centre, Cromer St, Kings Cross, WC1.

IMG MEMBERS: We urgently need you to fill vacancies in a variety of technical posts in National Centre. Any cdes interested ring Penny on 01-359 8371.

ANTI-RACIST: national fraction on Sun 8 March at national centre.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE: organisers' fraction on Sat 14 March at national centre.

STAFF NEEDED for The Other Bookshop. IMG cde needed with accounts experience or aptitude who could be trained. Cdes to do ordering and work on counter. Apply by ringing 01-226 0571.

Revolution Youth notices

CRUISE MISSILES: joint fraction with IMG on Sun 8 Feb. All branches send one cde at least. Ring Richard 01-359 8301 for details.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS: Cards now available for members of Revolution Youth. All branches should place orders with national office.

What's Left

RATES for What's Left. 5p per word or £4 per col. inch. Deadline: noon Sat. prior to publication. Payment in advance.

TOTTENHAM: Anti Nazi League Public Meeting. 'Don't Want no Nazis!', with film and the facts. Tottenham Park Lane Community Centre, Park Lane, London N17, near Spurs ground. 8pm Wed 25 Feb. Join the fightback.

SPARTICIST: Class Series — Womens Liberation through Socialist Revolution. Venues: North London Polytechnic, Kentish Town Site, TV Room, 6.30pm Tues 10, 17, 24 Feb, Thurs 5 March. Class 1: Why socialism is the road to women's liberation — the lessons of the October Revolution. 2: Women and Islam — the 'Iranian Revolution': Acid Test. 3: Women's Liberation and the Leninist Vanguard Party. (To contact the Spartacist Society phone 01-278 2232).

NATIONAL Campaign Against Social Security Cuts conference on fighting the cuts, rebuilding the social security system. Feb 21. Details: 23 Princes Rd, Abergavenny, Gwent.

ANL public meeting to rebuild local group. Wed 11 Feb 7.30pm Moonshine Centre, Victor Rd, London NW10. Bus route 18, 18a, Nrst tube: Kensal Grn.

SC Events

COVENTRY: Socialist Challenge public meeting 'Violence against women'. Speaker: Valerie Coultas. Thur 5 Feb, 7.30pm. Conference room, students union, Coventry Polytechnic.

LABOUR PARTY: Day school on the Labour Party, open to SC supporters Sun 22 March.

TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMMING!

OUR presses have been rolling for a week to produce one leaflet: but it's some leaflet! One hundred thousand copies have been printed of CND's publicity handout for the Labour Movement Conference against the Missiles to be held in Manchester on March.

The conference sprang from small beginnings. Manchester against the Missiles supporters mounted a lobby of the Blackpool Labour Party conference to demand that the conference supported actions to stop Cruise and Pershing missiles being sited in Britain. They circulated a petition calling for a labour movement conference.

The small band of Socialist Challenge sellers at Blackpool seemed to spend half their time arguing for signatures to the petition. These sponsorships started the ball rolling. Since then our paper has battled to make the idea of a labour movement conference a reality.

Along with other supporters of the conference we were elated to win CND and official Labour Party backing earlier this month.

Socialist Challenge has been a vital link in this chain of events. We've fought to build CND and to win mass working class action against missiles right from the start.

We succeeded because we have weapons to fight with. We have our paper and our press. But you can't keep these going on thin air and good ideas. It costs money.

Printshop

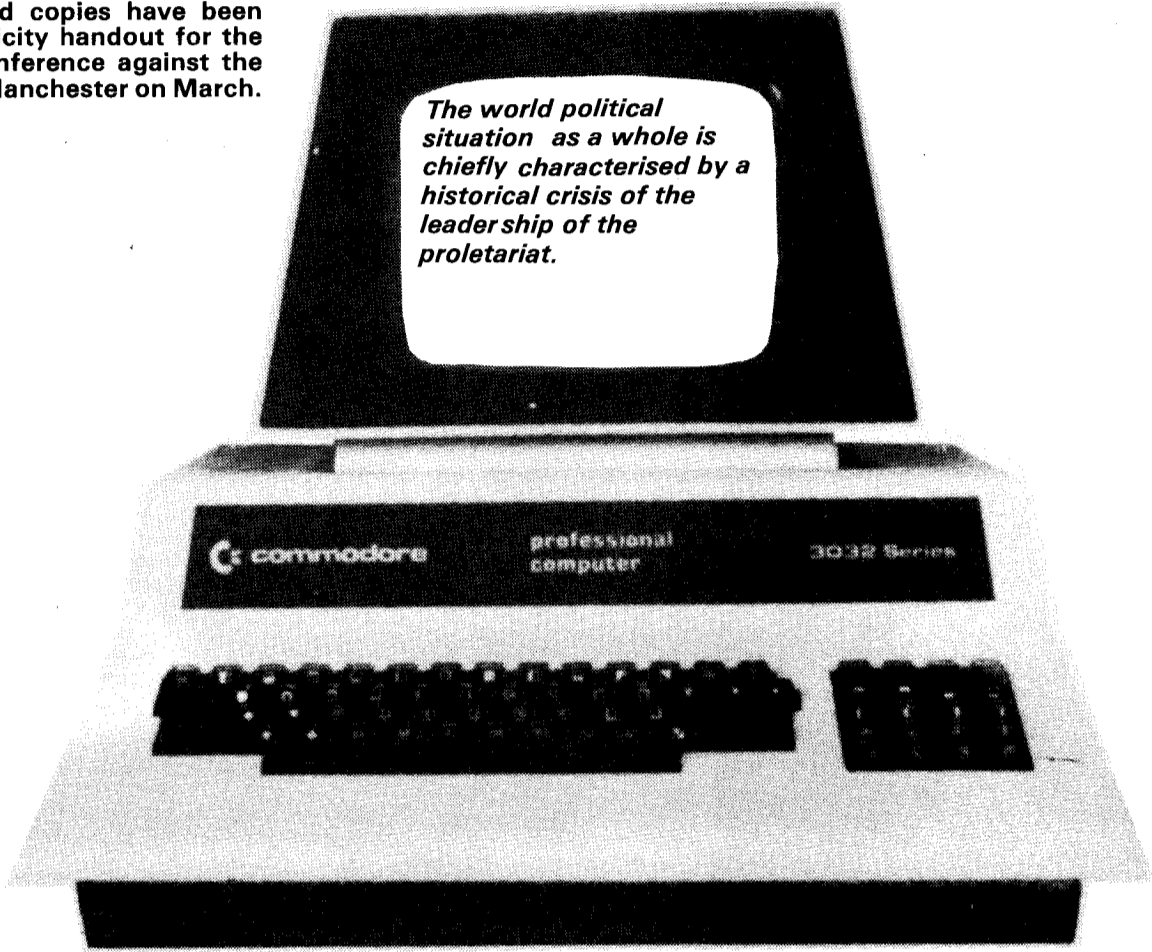
At the end of last year we finally made the last payment to own our printshop's large camera which makes the screens to reproduce photographs in *Socialist Challenge*.

Every month we have to find over £300 to pay another instalment on our new typesetting machine. We've channelled £1,500 so far from the fund drive into stocking and equipping the printshop and we want to invest another £2,000 this month.

We're also preparing to buy an HQ for the paper. The first step along this road is to complete essential building improvements. This month alone we've had to spend over £600 in security measures.

All this costs money: money to build your paper and the causes it fights for. That's why we launched a £100,000 fund drive in October, to buy and equip a centre for the paper.

By the end of January we reached the £10,000 mark. That's more than Socialist Challenge has ever raised in the same time span.



Our plans to buy a computer out of the fund drive money have taken a step forward — the first programme has now been written! It is a programme to produce the invoices for the Socialist Challenge Groups. This cuts down the time for this chore from a whole afternoon to three-quarters of an hour.

At the moment the programme is being run on a supporter's home computer, but obviously it will be easier when we have our own....

It's up to you!

But only £2,000 of this has come from our local supporters. That's our East London supporters who have planned events and activities

Progress chart

IN December we published monthly targets for each district and for the national centre. Below we show the percentage progress which each branch has made towards our £100,000 goal.

Branch/area	Percentage of target reached
East London	11.0
Outer West London	11.5
Brent	27.0
North London	2.5
Lambeth/Southwark	10.5
Other South London	17.0
West of England	17.0
South Wales	0.0
South England	12.5
West Midlands	1.0
East Midlands	4.0
North West	3.0
North East	22.0
South Yorks	1.0
West Yorks	5.0
Scotland	0.0
National Centre	8.0
National Target	10.0

£3,000 behind target — which is causing us big cash headaches.

From now till Easter we want a really big push on funds. We hope our local supporters will be following the example of

up through to May to bring in their target of £400 every month.

They will be out in force on the coaches and trains to the 21 February Glasgow demonstration with badges, tickets for

their £250 raffle, and subscription leaflets to win readers for the paper.

This is the kind of commitment we need. What are you planning to do to help us? Dig deep in your pockets and push us back on target by the end of February!

Our thanks in January to:

Anon	£4000.00
Sth London	
Poland school	40.00
January standing orders	152.00
Ed Mahood	10.00
KP Forester	3.50
Tooram Narshir	2.50
Lesley Caldwell	2.50
K Martin	2.50
Bill Wells	2.00
A Spalding	7.50
A Agathangelou	2.50
PB and MFP	3.00
J Nudger	0.70
Andy Herring	5.00
RD Hibbett	7.50
Bristol IMG	100.00
Lewisham IMG	31.00
Wolves IMG	20.00
Lambeth IMG	150.00
Swindon IMG	8.30
Leeds IMG	32.00
Brent IMG	25.00
Hemel IMG	30.00

Back a winner

STOCK up now and make a fortune on 21 February!

Badges and posters from our local activists are a sure-fire winner for fund drives. Make sure you've made an order and have a team ready to sell on 21 February.

All badges obtainable individually or in bulk: 20p each plus 12p post and packing, or 12p each for bulk orders, payment in advance.

Also available: new subscriptions leaflet with free offer of Harrison and Glyn's British Economic Disaster, 50p per 100 leaflets, despatched free if paid in advance.

Oxford IMG	20.00
Manchester/Oldham IMG	2.30
Middlesborough IMG	
	38.00
Total	693.80
Cumulative total,	£10,187.37

Dale Spender

Man Made Language

Routledge and Kegan Paul, £4.95

In this lively and wide-ranging feminist study of language Dale Spender shows how language is man-made and how its patriarchal character structures women's liberation.

Edited by Chris Searle Bricklight

Pluto Press, £2.95

This fascinating book contains a collection of poems and stories which document oppression and struggle in East London over the last hundred years.

James Connolly Selected Writings

Penguin, £2.25

Penguin have at last reprinted this collection of Connolly's writings which includes pieces on religion, women's rights, trade unions, nationalism and imperialism.

All books available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, London N1 2XP. Please add 15% to each title if ordering by post.

Belgian BL workers occupy

From Brian Grogan in Brussels

FOLLOWING the shock announcement of the total closure of BL's Seneffe plant in Belgium, the workers in the plant immediately occupied and are now operating a work-in. 3,500 cars have been impounded by the workers' committee, who are threatening to sell them and any others produced to help finance the strike fund.

As well as 2,800 jobs at the BL plants a further 2,000 jobs are in danger in companies manufacturing components and machine tools. This is a region already hard hit by unemployment.

The actions of the Seneffe workers come in the wake of a rising tide of in-

dustrial militancy, aimed at the government's austerity measures and rapidly rising unemployment (see page 10).

Hitherto, Seneffe workers, like the British steel workers, have been renowned for their 'moderation'. In the plant's 17 years of operation there has never been a strike.

On Saturday a demonstration was organised through the centre of Seneffe led by a mass convoy of cars, blocking all traffic for several hours. Workers in all other British plants in Belgium are being called on to take sympathy action. The Seneffe workers will also be taking up their struggle during a national strike against the government's austerity measures on Thursday.

Unfortunately the leaders of the trade

unions are attempting to turn the attention of the workers away from identifying BL as the enemy, to putting the blame on British workers. A false notion is being circulated that British workers will benefit from this closure.

The idea that what is bad for home workers is good for foreign workers, put about by the advocates of import controls, is once again shown to be a nonsense. Some 225 Cowley workers who make kits for the Seneffe plants are threatened with redundancy.

The Revolutionary Workers League (LRT) and the International Marxist Group, Belgian and British sections of the Fourth International, will be distributing a common leaflet to the plant this week showing the common interests of Belgian and British workers.

Shock waves spread through Central America

JIMMY Carter's last act as President of the United States was to authorise \$10m of military aid to the ruling El Salvador junta.

Ronald Reagan's first act as President was to cancel a \$75m loan programme to Nicaragua because of the Nicaraguans' support for the El Salvadoran guerrillas.

director of the national coffee institute both resigned accusing the government of corruption and repression.

Nicaragua: The FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front) issued an appeal on 27 January for the people to join the militias. Eden Pastora, commandant of the militias declared:

War

'Each Nicaraguan should be ready to go to war. If the North American marines want to invade our country for the fifth time they must be expelled by a prolonged war.'

Guatemala: the four guerrilla organisations announced on 27 January their 'unification in the revolutionary struggle'.

Pledging full solidarity with the Salvadoran and Honduran revolutionary struggles, they launched an appeal to the people to 'join in the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the government'.

Meanwhile it was announced that Abel Lemus, leader of the Guatemalan social democratic United Front of the Revolutionary Party, was found dead in the capital city.

Costa Rica: Congress learned on 27 January that large quantities of arms had disappeared from the national arsenal over the past two years. Rumours in the capital city suggest that the arms may have found their way to the struggles in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Honduras: Having recently completed a peace treaty with the El Salvador government, the Honduran minister of foreign affairs, Cesar Elvir Sierra, began discussions with his Salvadoran counterpart on a crackdown on arms for the Salvadoran guerrillas.

That sums up his statement last week that the US government's enemies 'would not go to bed with the same confidence' since his inauguration.

These actions have caused shock waves throughout Central America.

El Salvador: Reports now suggest that the guerrilla offensive has been halted by the regime's new US military hardware. Some reporters suggest that as many as 10 US Hercules transport planes are arriving daily in El Salvador loaded with war materials and US military advisers.

The Russell Tribunal is to try the ruling junta on charges of violations of human rights. In San Salvador the Secretary General of the El Salvador Human Rights Commission was abducted by the junta's security forces on 26 January.

Two other leading members of the commission have been assassinated in recent weeks since President Duarte accused the Commission of 'partiality against the government'.

Further leading figures have defected from the regime. On Wednesday 28 January the government economic planning vice-minister and the sub-



100,000 Belgian trade unionists march against austerity measures

Towards a general strike in Belgium

By Paul Lawson

TWENTY years ago, at a time of relative social peace in the rest of Europe, a near-insurrectionary general strike took place in Belgium.

Today history is repeating itself. Strikes and factory occupations have spread throughout the country in protest against the government's austerity measures.

On 24 January, 100,000 trade unionists marched

through the streets of Brussels.

Belgian capitalism is going through a grave crisis: unemployment is even higher than in Britain - currently it runs at around 12 per cent - and numerous factory closures are taking place.

In response to this, the Belgian Christian-Democrat-Socialist Party government coalition has introduced a vicious austerity law which suspends a number of collective agreements and prohibits wage increases for two years. It has also cut social security

benefits.

The merging of two large steel companies announced recently will result in a further 4,000 unemployed. The workers' response has been the unleashing of general strikes in the steel-making towns of Liege and Charleroi.

At the same time, textile workers have occupied railway stations and sat down in front of trains in opposition to threatened closures.

Other textile workers have begun a hunger strike against the threat to their livelihood.

The crisis is having big

repercussions inside the Socialist Party. While the leadership of the party participates in a government of austerity, the Socialist Party-dominated trade union, the FGFB, is involved in the counter-attack. Thousands of workers from the Christian Democrat trade union federation are also participating in the struggles.

Belgian trotskysts of the Revolutionary Workers League are intervening, too, calling for a general strike to impose a working class plan to beat the crisis

Polish workers wring further concessions from government

By Davy Jones

A WEEKLY TV programme and a weekly newspaper have been conceded to Solidarity, the independent union movement. Solidarity had been campaigning for the government to implement last summer's Gdansk strike agreements and reduce press censorship.

The Polish government have also backed down on the matter of Saturday working. Solidarity's national consultative commission announced that it would continue to fight for a 40-hour week but would appeal to all Polish workers to put in one eight-hour Saturday workday a month 'because of the state of the economy'.

They further demanded that the government provide full information on the state of the economy and called for public control of fiscal policy.

The outstanding dispute between the unions and the government is now over the registration of Rural Solidarity. A government commission has begun talks with the farmers and the Supreme Court will rule on the registration before 10 February.

The government concessions came in the wake of the threat from Solidarity to call a general strike from 18 February if their demands were not met.

Sexual Politics

Don't let the state repress lesbians and gays!

By Pierre Court

WITH a report on gay rights policy about to be presented by the Labour Party national executive, a march is to be held in Manchester on 28 February against the state repression of lesbian and gay people.

It aims to bring to light the many different ways in which this repression operates.

In court, lesbians with children are pressured to hide their sexuality for fear that they will be separated. Gay men face much heavier sentences than heterosexuals for comparable offences.

On the streets, the police arrest gays if we hold hands, kiss or chat each other up. They arrest us for having sex in 'public' places, but harass our private clubs. They refuse to protect us

from 'queer bashers'.

In school children are taught that heterosexuality is 'natural' and desirable. Young gays who come out are savagely repressed, harassed by the police, and liable to be put into care or sent to Borstal 'for their own protection'.

In mental hospitals, lesbian and gay people are given aversion therapy, shock treatment, drugs (including hormones to remove our sexuality), and brain surgery to 'cure our disease'.

In prison, we are emotionally and physically harassed by both warders and other inmates if our sexuality is known.

In the bedroom, young people involved in gay relationships are liable to be put into care or sent to Borstal or mental hospital. It is illegal for adult

men to have gay relationships with someone under 21 — or, in the north of Ireland, any age. The police have regular witch-hunts in which they use blackmail to gain information.

In the home, young people have no legal rights and so it is impossible for gay youth to assert their independence against their parents. The way the law is applied to marriage — for instance, the right of a man to rape his wife — helps to make the situation of married lesbians more intolerable.

In employment, public sector employers discriminate against gays if we are open about our sexuality, especially if we are in contact with young people. Employment tribunals have upheld the right of employers to sack us solely on the grounds of our sexuality.

In many respects state

repression is being stepped up, with an increase in police witch-hunts over the past year.

The Manchester demonstration will be calling for an end to police harassment and to discrimination in the courts. There should be no crime without a victim.

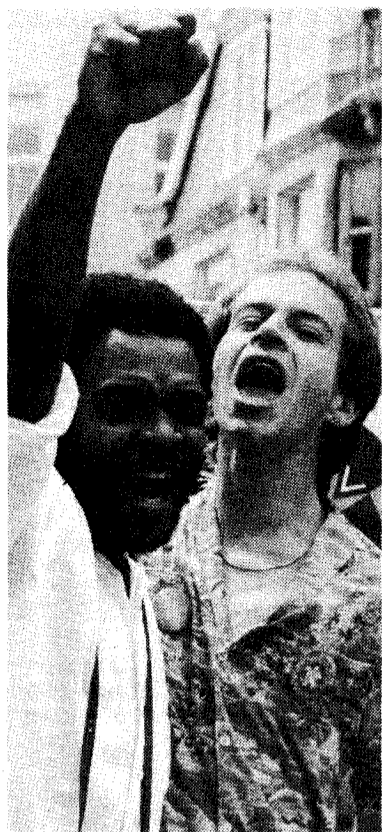
Young people should have the right to determine their own sexuality, and there has to be legal and financial independence for youth and women. The demonstration will also demand an end to medical torture of gays, and to discrimination in employment.

It will be the first march ever held on the general issue of state repression of gays. Support has already come from the National Union of Students and left organisations.

The organisers are calling for strong labour movement support, so this is a good opportunity to raise gay rights in your organisation, union or Labour Party branch.

Information leaflets and posters from: Campaign Against State Repression of Lesbian and Gay People, BM Gay Noise, London WC1N 3XX. Affiliation and donations to: CASR, c/o Gay Centre, 61a Bloom St, Manchester 1.

Photo: GM COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)



Turning abortion into a right

By Joan Twelves

SIXTY-five thousand women in England and Wales were forced to pay for a private abortion in 1979. Only 46.1 per cent of abortions in that year were performed on the NHS.

Abortion is the only operation in this country for which you are likely to have to pay. It is also the only operation which is illegal, except under specific circumstances.

A combination of Thatcher's axe and anti-abortion senior hospital consultants is making it even harder to get a health service abortion. While the number of abortions increases, the percentage carried out by the NHS continues to fall.

In some areas, like Liverpool and the West Midlands, it is virtually impossible to get an NHS abortion because of the attitude of consultants who are determined not to implement the 1967 Abortion Act.

Elsewhere the cuts have forced the closure of gynaecological wards, and promised day-care clinics have not materialised.

Survey

The National Abortion Campaign is doing a survey of abortion facilities to see what the current situation is around the country.

But there can be no statistics to show the number of women forced to have an unwanted child because they couldn't afford to go private or who have had to wait so

long that an abortion was no longer feasible.

The 1979 Royal Commission on the NHS advocated an increase in health service abortion facilities. The reverse has happened and the '67 Act is being further undermined through the lack of facilities.

Over the past few years we have seen numerous attacks on our existing limited right to abortion — all in the name of 'tidying up the '67 Act'. Yet the most glaring abuses of this legislation — the doctors who won't implement it and the unequal access to NHS facilities — have been ignored.

Right

The time has come for a counterattack. NAC and the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign, LARC, have called a labour movement conference in London on 14 March to discuss both the changes in the law needed to give women a positive right to abortion, and how this can be achieved.

LARC has adopted a three-point plan for positive legislation. First, there has to be mandatory provision of abortion facilities to all parts of the country. Secondly, abortion has to be decriminalised.

These are prerequisites for the introduction of legislation giving women a positive right to choose: there would be no point in giving women a statutory right to decide if no one was prepared to carry out the operation or if the woman had to travel or pay to exer-



Photo: ANGELA PHILLIPS (JFL)

FLASHBACK to the National Abortion Campaign march against James White's Bill, June 1975

cise her 'right'.

A bill on facilities along these lines has now been drafted and will probably be introduced into Parliament as a 10-Minute Bill later this year.

The chances of this tactic being successful are slim and it is essential that resolutions are put to the next Labour Party conference calling on the party to formally adopt the bill.

By raising the realities of women's experiences of attempting to get an abortion under existing legislation, the debate on abortion can be shifted away from the terrain of the anti-abortionists and towards what women really want.

Although we are talking about parliamentary legisla-

tion, parliament will not be the battleground for the fight for a woman's right to choose — although it can provide a useful focus.

Just as it was the mass movement outside parliament which was so decisive in the defeat of the Corrie Bill in 1980, and which scared Timothy Sainsbury off introducing further restrictions this year, so it will be that mass movement which will be crucial in winning positive abortion rights for women.

The NAC/LARC labour movement conference is the first stage in building a mass movement committed to fighting for positive legislation on abortion.

Many trade unions have

positions to defend the '67 Act and no more. Other labour movement bodies, like the TUC and the Labour Party, have positions supporting a woman's right to choose, but have not discussed how this will be achieved.

A commitment from the labour movement to actively campaign for and support the draft bill on facilities will be a

Draft Bill

For the provision of facilities for the termination of pregnancy

1. (1) It shall be the duty of the Secretary of State to ensure that each district health authority shall make such provision for the termination of pregnancy inside the National Health Service for all terminations carried out on women ordinarily resident in that area either:

(i) both within the NHS and the private sector, or

(ii) whether carried out by the NHS or not.

1. (2) The district health authority shall calculate the extent of facilities required to carry out this Act/Section by reference to the last year for which figures are available relating to termination of pregnancy in that district.

2. No payment shall be required from any person in respect of the termination of a pregnancy within the NHS.

step towards achieving a woman's right to choose. Delegates to the 14 March conference will have the opportunity to discuss how they can win that commitment and how the campaign for abortion rights can be taken forward.

Railworkers call for a woman's right to choose

By Hazel Macpherson, Paddington No.1 Branch, NUR

THE National Union of Railwaymen, as its title suggests, is a union usually associated with men, although in fact it organises large numbers of women in all sections. It boasts a large

number of sponsored MPs, most of whom voted for John Corrie's restrictive Bill on abortion. However the victory won over that Bill, due in main to the mobilisation of the labour movement, has not gone unnoticed within the NUR.

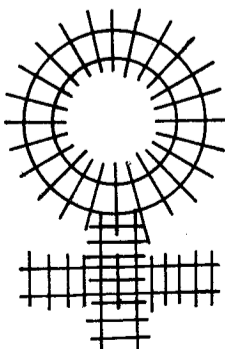
Paddington No.1 Branch has unanimously passed a resolution calling for

positive legislation on abortion which points the way forward not only for our union but for the whole labour movement.

It calls for the mandatory provision of abortion facilities by the NHS; the decriminalisation of the abortion operation, and for a future Labour government to pass a law giving

women a positive right to choose.

This resolution has been sent to the NUR executive in the hope that it will be selected to go on to the Women's TUC. Whatever its fate, Paddington No.1 branch is to be congratulated for taking the first step to turn the tide within the rail union.



WILL YOU BE REPRESENTED?

NAC
LARC

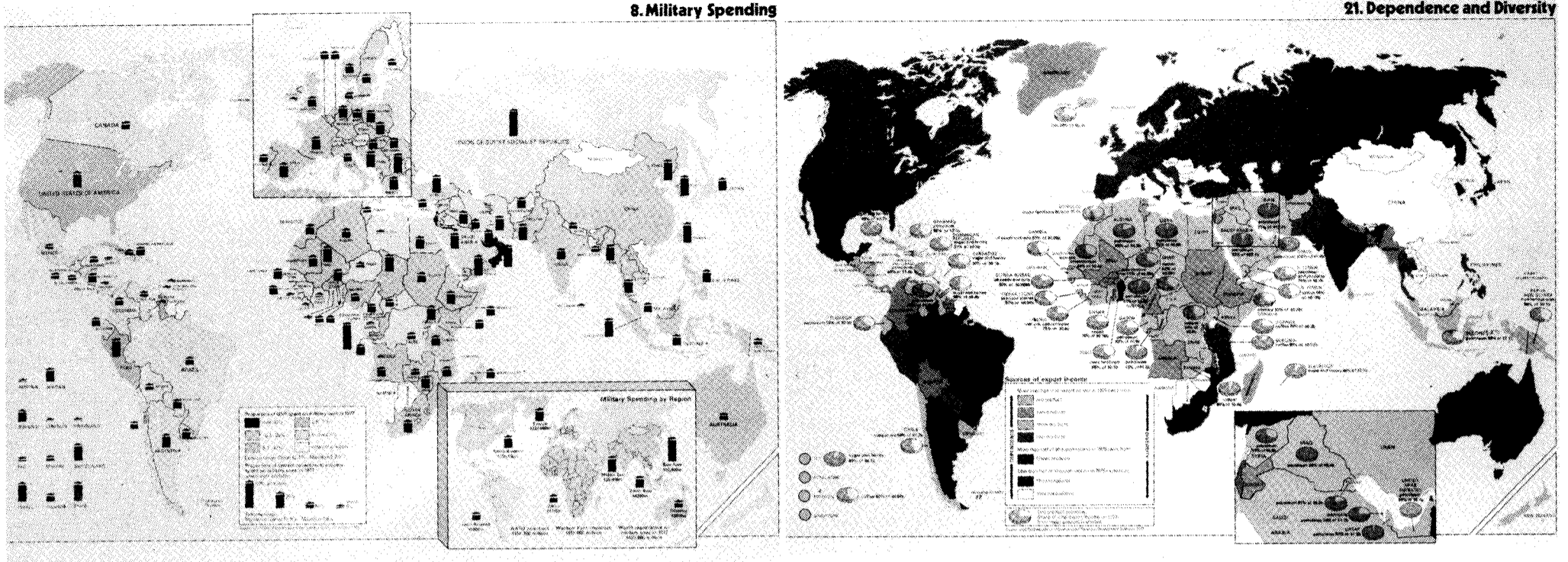
Labour Movement Conference

Abortion and Positive Legislation, London 14 March

The conference is open to delegates from any trade union body and from CLPs affiliated to NAC or LARC. To affiliate to LARC, send £2 to: 160 Rosendale Rd, London SE21. To affiliate to NAC, send £15 to: 374 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1.

Registration forms and further details of the conference from: NAC/LARC TU Liaison Ctee, c/o 374 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1. 01-278 0153.

Under Review



Mapping the politics of the world

By Adrian Yeeles
'THE State of the World Atlas is revolutionary both in content and form ...' So runs the back-cover blurb for the stunning new political atlas written by Michael Kidron and Ronald Segal.

Certainly this Pluto Press project, published by Pan Books, should find a place on the bookshelves of every socialist.

Its 66 full-colour maps vividly illustrate the widening gap between the rich north and poor south, the perils of pollution, and the situation of women workers from Iceland to Ecuador. And if you want to know how many phones there are per thousand people in Papua New Guinea, this is a book for you.

Question

That said, a closer examination reveals some disturbing inaccuracies which throw into question the authors' claim of a 'revolutionary' content.

For example, of the definitions of the wars in the north of Ireland and Cyprus, and the successful revolution which overthrew the Shah of Iran as 'religious conflicts'?

In a similar vein, the anti-Vietnam war movement strove for years to counter US claims that South and North Vietnam were two separate states, not one country artificially divided by imperialism.

It's sad therefore that Kidron and Segal repeat this fallacy six years after the country was finally liberated.

Fallacy

This particular map, 'States at War in the 1970', reveals the underlying fallacy of the authors' argument: that the source of the world crisis stems not from the

ravages of imperialism but from 'the proliferation of states and the growing dangers of competition between them'.

In short the atlas is based on the view of the world that equates Western capitalism with Eastern 'state capitalism' and the world crisis with the ravages of inter-imperialist competition.

Thus the help given by the Cubans to the Angolan liberation movement, the MPLA, is transformed into a war between Angola and Cuba. And no distinction is made between the

role of Cuban troops in Grenada and US military bases in Panama.

Logic

The most extreme expression of the 'state capitalist' logic appears on the map entitled 'Religions of Rule'.

In a definition that would not be out of place coming from Margaret Thatcher, the 'religion' of the workers' states is defined as Marxism-Leninism.

On that basis why are the religions of Reagan's

USA and Thatcher's Britain defined as Protestantism and not monetarism or support-for-a-mixed-economyism?

In an incredible note on the 'Religions of Rule' map, Kidron and Segal argue that the struggle between the Vietnamese-backed government and the Khmer Rouge mass murderers of Pol Pot involves a significant religious component — between the 'religions' of Moscow and Peking!

The authors explain in the introduction that

information from some states was not used because it 'would encourage misleading comparisons'. Yet they are guilty of that sin themselves.

On the map 'Air Power' we are asked to believe that the air force of China is fourteen times as powerful as that built up by the Shah of Iran.

Statistic

Of course if the crude statistic of numbers of planes is the only measure used then this

might be so. But this would be to equate the Mig 17 with the Phantom, which is much the same as equating a knight on a charger with a tank.

Invasion

Certainly the Vietnamese with an airforce only one-twelfth the size of the Chinese had little trouble repelling the latter's recent invasion.

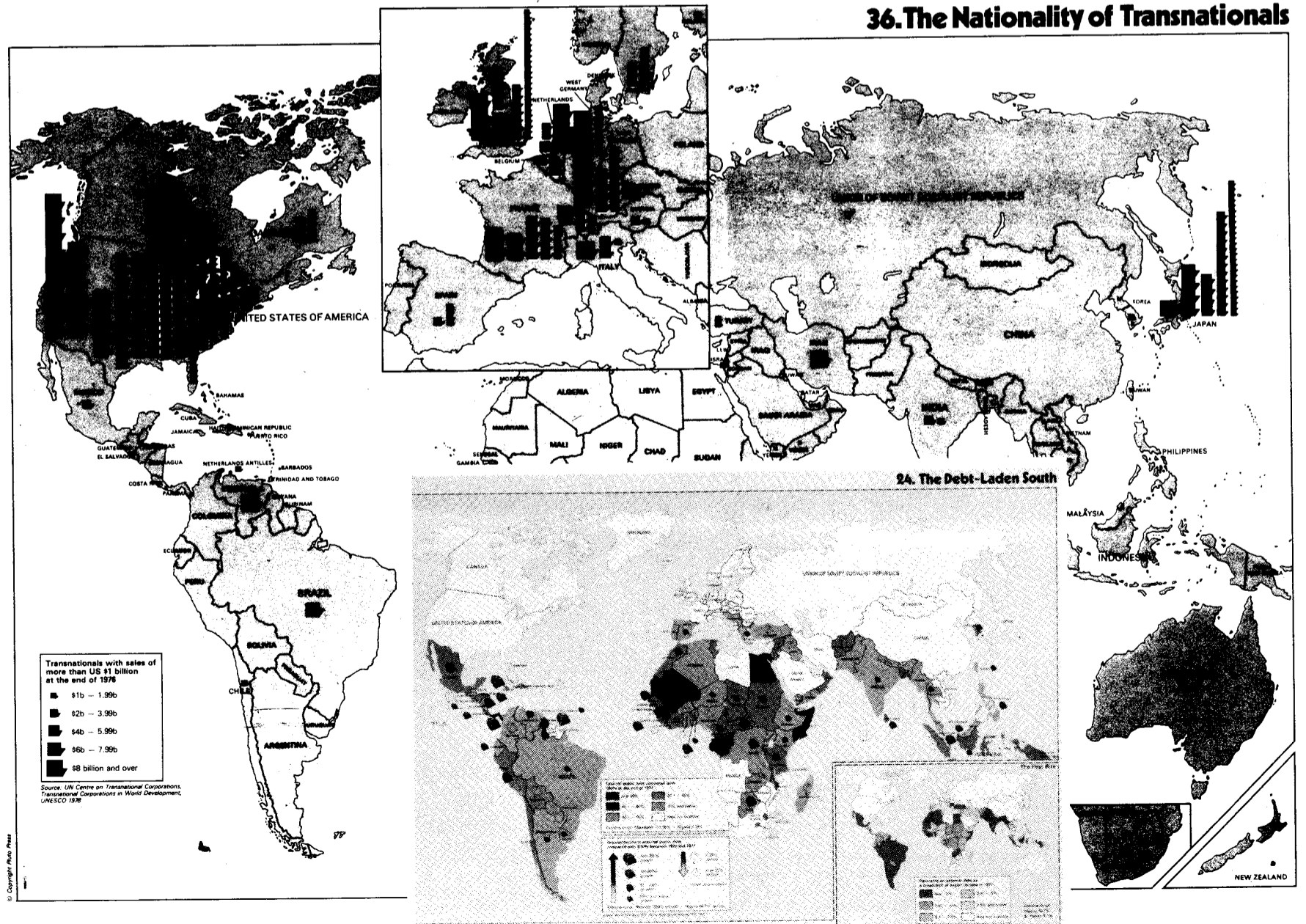
The authors' note at the back of the book explaining that China's airforce is 'seriously ob-

solescent' does little to correct the balance.

So buy this book by all means; you'll save yourselves hours trying to find out the infant mortality rate in Bolivia or the legal situation of Algerian women wanting abortions.

But don't let the beauty of the images lull you into totally accepting the authors' 'revolutionary' claims.

The State of the World Atlas, published by Pan Books costs £5.95.



H Block — 'on the brink'

By Geoff Bell

POLITICAL prisoners in the H Blocks of Long Kesh are reported to be 'on the brink' of a renewed hunger strike, according to the latest edition of *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, the newspaper of the Provisional Republican movement.

The new H Block crisis follows the breakdown of the 'step by step' settlement agreed by the British government and the prisoners just before Xmas.

Under the terms of this agreement — part of which was made verbally by representatives of the prisoners and the government — the major aspects of the prisoners five demands would be granted

to the prisoners as they de-escalated their protests.

Within days of this procedure being agreed reports began to come out of Long Kesh that prison warders were continuing to maltreat those in their charge. The accusations included one that the warders were still inflicting the hated 'squat search', by which a prisoner was forced to squat naked over a mirror while his anus was probed.

Despite this, the prisoners still tried to keep their side of the bargain. This involved the first 20 prisoners coming off their protests by washing, shaving, and having their hair cut.

On Friday 23 January these prisoners asked to be allowed to wear their own clothes. Under the terms of the agree-

ment the British government had conceded this right at weekends and other recreation periods.

Although the Friday was the eve of the weekend the 20 prisoners were refusing their clothes.

The harassment by the prison authorities continued when a number of prisoners were assaulted by the warders as they were moved to new 'clean cells'. At this point 96 prisoners who had already been moved to such cells began to smash their furniture.

Consultation among the prisoners is now taking place within the H Blocks as to whether and when a new hunger strike will be launched. Apparently a fresh set of demands has already been drawn up by the political prisoners.

LATEST reports are that Bernadette McAliskey is 'progressing well'. One of the bullets entered her throat and caused a temporary loss of voice, which has now recovered.

Michael McAliskey was released from hospital on Tuesday. His first action was to visit Bernadette. This will be the first time they have seen each other since Bernadette's operation.

Bernadette has an arm and leg in plaster. One of the bullets also entered her lung. This week should tell how complete her recovery will be.

● A march to commemorate Bloody Sunday will take place in Glasgow on 14 February. Assemble 10am, Dunolly St, Royston Rd.

Labour and Ireland: the civil rights question

THE Northern Ireland Study Group, set up by the national executive of the Labour Party, has just produced a consultative paper entitled Northern Ireland, the next step?

The Labour Party has asked for a full discussion on the paper's contents in constituency Labour parties and affiliated unions.

As an aid to this discussion Socialist Challenge is taking up the five questions raised in the consultative paper. This week we deal with the second question posed in the Labour Party's paper.

IN RECENT years, a considerable number of reforms have been introduced to attack discrimination and enhance civil liberties in Northern Ireland. But major changes are still needed if the people of Northern Ireland are to have the same rights as other citizens of the United Kingdom.

SC: Most of the 'reforms' which were passed lasted for only a short time.

One of the demands of the civil rights movement was for the disarming of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. They were disarmed, but only for a few months, then they were rearmed with better guns. The RUC has also retained its overwhelmingly Protestant membership.

A further demand of the civil rights campaign was to disband the exclusively Protestant para-military security unit, the B Specials.

The Specials were disbanded but the unit was replaced by the overwhelmingly Protestant Ulster Defence Regiment. Hundreds of members and ex-members of the UDR have been convicted of arms and 'terrorist' offences.

Perhaps the most famous of all the demands of the civil rights was for the scrapping of the Special Powers Act, which among other things allowed for internment without trial.

That, too, was scrapped — but it was replaced by the Emergency Provisions Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which together provided for internment without trial and many other attacks on civil liberties.

BILL OF RIGHTS

It is argued by some organisations in Northern Ireland that only a comprehensive Bill of Rights could protect the civil liberties of the citizens.

A report by the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights Commented that: 'A Bill of

Rights might be interpreted by the courts in a manner which would hamper strong, effective or progressive government...'

It is not clear, moreover, whether such a Bill of Rights would be for Northern Ireland alone or one which covers the whole of the United Kingdom.

SC: A Bill of Rights would make only a minimal dif-

ference.

There are already laws against discrimination but such discrimination continues; laws against the RUC and the Army murdering people in cold blood, but those murders continue; laws against torture but Irish prisoners have still been tortured.

Parliamentary legislation is not and never will be a guarantee of equality or human rights — in the North of Ireland or anywhere else.

EMPLOYMENT

THE Fair Employment Act 1976 exists to encourage equality of opportunity in employment between people of different religious beliefs.

It makes it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against a person on

grounds of religious beliefs or political opinion in either the public or private sector of employment.

It is the task of the Fair Employment Agency to ensure the provisions of the Act are carried out. It is not yet clear whether current legislation is strong enough to enforce the provisions of the 1976 Act.

It may be that we shall have to wait some time before the pattern of employment in Northern Ireland is radically altered.

SC: It is abundantly clear that the Fair Employment Act hasn't worked. The Fair Employment Agency has itself reported that a Catholic is two and a half times more likely to be unemployed than a Protestant and that: 'The

model Protestant male is a skilled manual worker, whereas the model Roman Catholic male is unskilled.'

There have only been a handful of prosecutions under the Fair Employment Act, and because most of the judges are Unionists, there have been only one or two convictions.

ABORTION, HOMOSEXUALITY

THE present law relating to abortion is similar to that which existed in England and Wales prior to the introduction of the 1967 Abortion Act; the law regarding homosexual acts corresponds with that which existed before the passing of the 1967 Sexual Offenders Act.

SC: The last Labour government promised to reform the law relating to gays, and then

changed its mind due to pressure exerted by Unionists at Westminster, with whom the government then had a parliamentary alliance.

Gays have a right to lead their lives without being harassed; women have the right to control their own bodies. No legal restrictions should be permitted which stand in the way of those rights.

CUSTODY RIGHTS?

IT was alleged by Amnesty International in a report published in 1978 that police at Castlereagh police station had used illegal methods to extract confessions and information out of suspected persons taken into custody.

It is believed that more than three-quarters of convictions were made on the basis of such methods.

The Labour government immediately set up a committee which reported in March 1979 that 'our own examination of medical evidence reveals cases in which injuries, whatever their precise cause, were not self-inflicted and were sustained in police custody'.

The report therefore listed over 60 ways of improving interrogation procedures and the rights of those taken into custody. All these recommendations have been implemented including external video observation of questioning and the right of access to a solicitor after 48 hours.

How can a Labour Government best promote and protect civil rights in Northern Ireland?

SC: The denial of civil liberties occurs not because of some sadistic tendencies among members of the RUC, the British army, or 'military solution' advocates like Roy Mason, Labour's last Northern Ireland Secretary.

Such practices, reinforced by discrimination, are designed to intimidate the Catholic population because of its opposition to the Northern Ireland state.

The establishment of that state and the partition of Ireland was in itself a denial of a basic human right — the right of the people of all of Ireland to determine that country's future.

It is only to be expected that the authorities, in backing up that anti-democratic settlement, find it necessary to employ other anti-democratic methods.

The best way the Labour Party can protect civil rights is to remove the reason why those rights are denied — the partition of Ireland and British presence in the north of that country.



Water cannons — the police response to civil rights demonstrators in Derry, April 1969.

By Ken Capstick,
Parkhill NUM delegate
to Yorkshire Area Council

Yorkshire miners pick up Thatcher's gauntlet

ALTHOUGH there was massive pit closure programmes, carried out in the late '50s and '60s, miners have never before felt that their jobs were in jeopardy.

With coal stocks currently estimated at about 6m tonnes, recruitment has been brought to a halt. Even miners' sons, who have been traditionally able to rely on a job in the industry, are being turned away from the pitheads.

The threat of another massive pit closure programme looms over the industry as the

capitalist recession bites deeper into British industry.

Against this background the Yorkshire miners' leadership has decided to grasp the nettle and ballot the entire Yorkshire membership. Members will be asked if they are prepared to take industrial action, including strike action if necessary, to protect any pit threatened with closure on any grounds other than seam-exhaustion.

A campaign has been conducted throughout the coalfield with mass meetings of up to a thousand workers who have listened to their area officials argue the case for a fight

to save pithead jobs.

At one such meeting at Castleford Trades and Labour club on 25 January it was estimated that apart from 1,000 miners inside, there were up to 200 outside who could not get in.

At this meeting Jack Taylor, the area vice president, warned that the Tories were trying to erode the organisation of the trade union movement.

Scargill

'We need strength and unity,' he said. 'MacGregor has introduced a ballot over the heads of the steel unions. Ed-

wardes had his ballot in BL.

'Tories never forget their friends, nor their enemies. They will want to settle old scores of 1972 and 1974. This may not be the best time but we have got to take them on because the time is now.'

'I have faith in this union,' he added. 'In the past unions have not been let down by their members — they have generally been let down by their leaders.'

Arthur Scargill informed the meeting that secret Cabinet minutes had come through his door dealing with nuclear fuel policy. They showed that the real intention of the government is to take away the power

of the NUM and the TGWU.

Warning against accepting redundancy payments, Scargill said that no one should sell their job for a few pieces of silver. 'No one has the right to sell a job in the industry. Anyone who did would be selling the job of a son who has never had a chance to work'.

Arthur Scargill received a standing ovation when he said: 'I am asking — no demanding — not only that you vote yes, but campaign for the most massive vote this union has ever had.'

When the ballots closed last Friday, early indications from most pits were that the miners

have responded to positive leadership as they always have in the past. Most pits are declaring in excess of 80 per cent for the proposals, with some as high as 97 per cent.

When all the results are in it is expected that the outcome will be between 80 and 90 per cent support for the union executive.

The Yorkshire miners mean business. We will carry out our threat if we have to. The challenge to Thatcher is now clear. If the Yorkshire miners take strike action, we will not confine our action to our own coalfield or even our own industry.

There will be no respect for anti-working class laws. Thatcher's gauntlet is now in the hands of the Yorkshire miners.

Opposition grows to Murdoch takeover

RESISTANCE has begun to build up among Fleet Street workers against Rupert Murdoch's takeover bid for Times Newspapers.

Last week 200 delegates from the Central London clerical branch of the print union NATSOPA voted unanimously to reject Murdoch's proposals, and they were critical of the way the print union leaders have handled the issue.

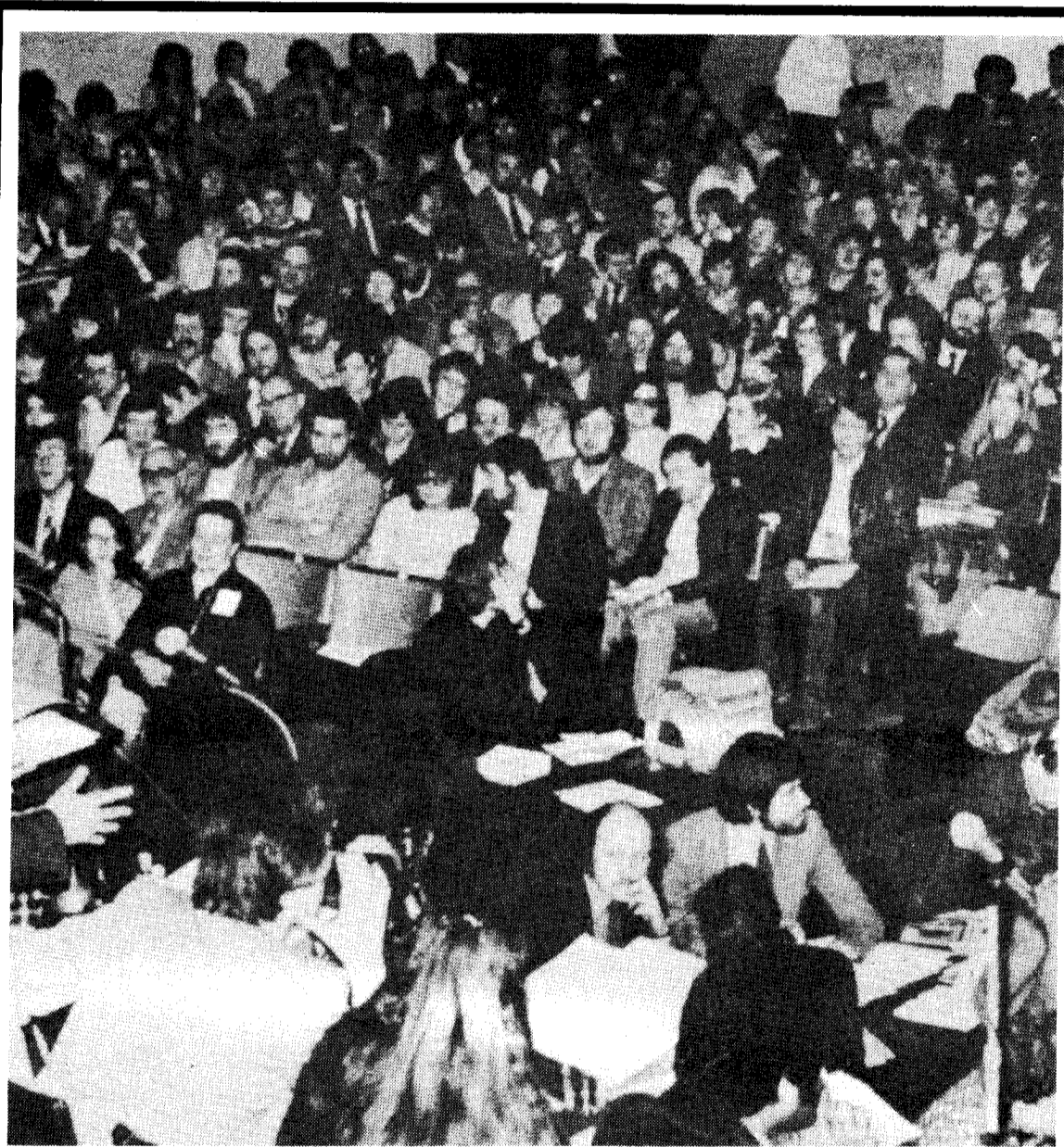
They have good reason. The union leaders have welcomed Murdoch's embrace, in spite of the latter's editorial record and his demands for sweeping job cuts. He wants cuts of between 30 and 50 per cent.

Leaders of the craft print union NGA have suggested to their workers at Times Newspapers that if they do not agree to Murdoch they will lose 4,000 jobs.

Journalists' union deputy general secretary Jake Ecclestone points out that if they do agree to Murdoch, 14,000 jobs will be lost across Fleet Street, since the effects of his axe will not be limited to New Printing House Square.

There was considerable anger when Murdoch wandered around the *Sunday Times* making a few editorial changes just before publication. He asked one busy printworker, who was about to transport a page to the presses, what he did there.

The reply was: 'As little as fucking possible.'



CPSA special conference last week

Benn backs Civil Service union Broad Left

A SPECIAL conference of the 200,000 strong Civil and Public Services Association has decided on a wide range of industrial action on wages. This will be put to branches for approval.

Delegates at the conference on 29 January supported selective action in key areas together with one-day strikes of the entire union member-

ship. They also agreed on a special membership levy to finance their campaign for a 15 per cent wage rise.

At a packed fringe meeting, the CPSA

Broad Left launched its campaign for the forthcoming presidential election. Its candidate is Kevin Roddy, from Tyneside, who will challenge president Kate Losinski, one of the most right-wing leaders of any trade union.

The Broad Left meeting was addressed by Tony Benn, who urged unions like the CPSA to affiliate to the Labour Party. He endorsed Roddy's campaign and compared it to the campaign for democracy in the Labour Party.

Heathrow fightback takes off!

By Hilary Driver

THERE was one hundred per cent support for the 24-hour strike of British Airways

workers on 24 January.

The action was provoked by BA management who have torn up previous agreements and offered an 8 per cent rise from 1 April.

Allowing for deductions, the offer amounts to £1.65 a week.

At a mass meeting on 13 January, 9,000 BA workers voted overwhelmingly for action against the offer. The unions are fighting for a basic wage rise of 20 per cent, plus improved shift

pay, London weighting, and a shorter working week.

The mass meeting pledged its total opposition to any planned redundancies.

While the national officials of the main unions involved have been luke warm in their support, the BA workers have no doubt been encouraged by the stand of the Engineering Union locally for increases in wages in line with inflation, a shorter working week, and five weeks holiday for all workers.

Manchester jobs battle

By Pete Clifford

WORKERS in five Manchester factories cannot rely simply on marches against unemployment to solve their problems. They face redundancies now at Kelloggs, Schreibers, Shell Carrington, Mosedale and possibly Massey Ferguson. A fightback is developing in the area following the successful occupation by Gardner workers against redundancies.

Schreibers' owner, Arnold Weinstock of GEC fame, has decided that in spite of £4.25m profits in 1980, the Manchester furniture plant has to go.

The 400-strong workforce has other ideas, as Phil Davis FTAT convenor explained: 'The workforce won't take it. Management has already cut production by 70 per cent without even a meeting. There's no solution for unemployment unless we're all out for a shorter working week.'

Further down the road is Kelloggs, the giant cornflake factory, with 2,000 employees. Management there wants 380 redundancies. Lapel stickers worn by members of USDAW, the main union involved, sum it up: 'Don't be Konned — Fight the Sackings'.

At Shell Carrington, the big petrochemical plant, management is trying to get 700 volunteers for redundancy with severance pay on offer of up to £50,000.

So far only 252 have taken the carrot. Fred Green, the Transport Union deputy convenor told Socialist Challenge that the stewards are putting in a claim for increased manning levels.

Massey Ferguson, the tractor firm is also heading for trouble. Last week a mass meeting voted for a substantial wage claim. It

was an act of defiance because the bosses of the multi-national have instructions from the bankers to make job or wage cuts. In North America that has meant forcing the United Auto Workers into a 3-year wage freeze.

Presently in dispute are 40 TGWU members at Mosedale brick works, who have been locked-out for two months. They were sacked for going on a 24-hour strike over higher bonus rates being paid to non-union labour!

One of the strikers says: 'Mosedales is only able to do this because of the situation in the building industry — the Tories are decimating it.'

On Wednesday of last week, 200 pickets from Gardner, Shell, Liverpool's direct works, and Schreiber ensured that Mosedale was closed for the day.

The Glasgow demonstration and the Liverpool-to-London march in May will have five groups of determined supporters from the Manchester area. But they are also fighting now for their jobs.

Donations and support for Mosedale strike committee to: J Brown, Sec TGWU 6/234, 216 Irlam Rd, Flixton, Manchester. Mass pickets every Wednesday at Rixton Brick Works nr Irlam.

Unemployment march Huddersfield

By Steve Vokes,
TGWU 9/14 branch

NEARLY two thousand people marched through Huddersfield last Saturday in protest at the Tory government's record on unemployment. Called by Huddersfield Trades Council and the local Labour Party, the march was the largest demonstration in the town since the 1930s.

Locally, more than 10 per cent of the workforce is unemployed. Most of the local textile and engineering plants are on short time.

Unfortunately the call for import controls by the main speaker, Labour MP and *Daily Star* columnist Joe Ashton, will only lead the labour movement up a blind alley.

Socialist Challenge supporters handed out more than 1,500 leaflets arguing for the implementation of a 35-hour week, and for worksharing with no loss of pay.

Striking journalists back anti cuts battle

NEARLY all journalists on local papers in London were on 24-hour strike last Thursday in protest at the closure of the *Camden Journal*.

Many joined the mass picket of the paper's printworks in Nuneaton, in an effort to halt production of scab issues of the *Islington Gazette* and *Hornsey Journal*, which are part of the same group.

While some members of the print union NGA have refused to cross the picket line, most are waiting for word from the union leadership, which is a long time coming.

Camden Journal NUJ father of the chapel Howard Hannah says: 'We are very much linking ourselves to other trades unionists in Camden. Their struggle over jobs and cuts is exactly the same as ours.'

This has been a feature of the weekly paper *Save the Camden Journal*, now selling almost 8,000 copies. A march against cuts to be held in Camden on Saturday 7 February is receiving wide support. It starts outside the town hall in Judd St at 10.30am.

Support to: *Save the Camden Journal* Campaign, 38-40 Camden Rd, London NW1. Tel 01-485 8207/8.

Socialist Challenge

Confessions of an opinion poll sample

By Dave Carter, Secretary, Cleveland Assn. of Trades Councils.

WALKING along Stockton's High Street with a workmate last Friday lunchtime, I managed to achieve every socialist's private fantasy: the chance to take part in a MORI opinion poll for the *Sunday Times* about the Labour Party right wing.

FORD DRIVERS TAKE A STAND

By Mick Drake

FORD Motor Company has laid off over 20,000 workers in a bid to smash a strike by 440 truck drivers at Dagenham. Car, truck and transit van production at the Dagenham, Langley and Southampton plants is at a standstill.

The Ford drivers struck on 27 January when management announced that in future outside contractors would be used for runs to Genk in Belgium. This broke an agreement reached with the unions in July 1980, and as that meeting was the final stage of the grievance procedure the drivers were left with no alternative but to strike.

Trucks

The drivers fight for the Genk run takes place against management attempts to reduce the truck fleet by giving

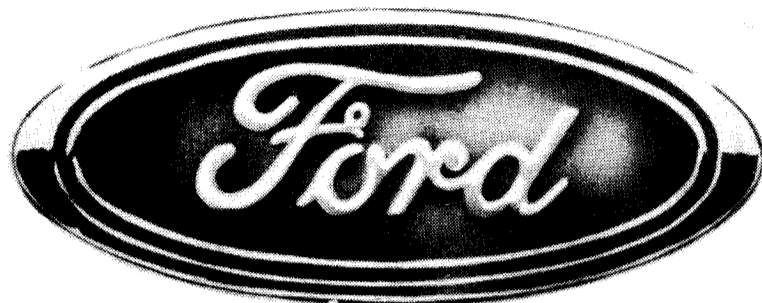
their work to contract labour — and against a background of nearly 5,000 jobs lost at the Dagenham plant in the past year.

Ford has interpreted the workforce's acceptance of a 9.5 per cent wages and conditions deal against union advice as a green light to press ahead with its attack on jobs and working conditions. And if agreements have to be torn up to achieve this Ford is quite prepared to do so.

Picket

The drivers fight is the first serious opposition to job loss at Dagenham. Despite this, the initial response of the Dagenham panel of trade union officials and convenors was to urge the drivers to lift their picket.

But the mood of the drivers was reflected in a poster on their picket line which read: 'Lech Walesa fights the official trade unions in Poland and faces tanks — the Dagenham panel doesn't have one.'



This determination produced results. On Monday 2 February the drivers agreed to temporarily lift their picket provided the officials negotiated their grievance with the company. Not only did Ford refuse to budge, they threatened to shift any driving work to outside contractors they consider cheaper.

After the meeting Ron Todd, Transport and General Workers Union chief negotiator, talked of getting the dispute made official.

The dispute took a further turn on 28 January when Silcock and Collings car transporter drivers went on strike after their management tore up an agreement which guarantees them basic pay when they refuse to cross

picket lines at Dagenham.

Subsequently seven Silcock drivers were sacked for dumping their transporters at the Dagenham depot. They have now joined the picket.

The issues are now clear cut: either the Ford drivers win and the Silcock drivers are reinstated or both will suffer a serious defeat.

THE drivers' dispute is breaking the new Tory Employment Act on at least three grounds. Dockers at Harwich are boycotting the movement of all Ford cars; Silcock and Collings drivers are picketing Ford which is not strictly their place of work; and there are often more than six people on the pickets.

So far there have been no moves from the company or the Tories.

Don't believe what you read about the polls being conducted 'scientifically'.

When I realised what the poll was about I went up to the canvasser and volunteered my services — hardly a random opinion!

The canvasser was so delighted at not having to cajole another harassed shopper into taking part that she forgot to ask the opening, but vital question: Was I a resident of the Stockton constituency?

Views

I didn't have the heart to point out to her that I was not, and that my views were therefore ineligible for the poll. I thus proceeded to answer a number of questions about my voting intentions and views on the Labour Party.

I informed the opinion poll statisticians that the new method of electing the Labour leader was infinitely preferable to the old one, and that the social democrats and liberals were 'highly unlikely' to form the next government.

Question

But I was flummoxed by the question: 'In view of the fact that the next Labour leader will be elected by 40 per cent trade union votes, should these votes be cast by trade union leaders or by a ballot of trade union members?'

I tried to explain that I favoured trade union branches formulating the choice, but was told that this was not an 'acceptable' option.

In the end I plumped for a ballot, but I've had sleepless nights ever since.

Pollster

My pollster told me that I was the last male elector she needed to make up her 'representative sample'. This was a great pity since by this time several of my friends had arrived and were preparing to give similar answers to mine.

Since this week's *Sunday Times* poll found that Bill Rodgers would lose his seat if he did not stand as a Labour candidate, my friends weren't needed.

Deptford blacks organise after fire-bombing

By George Reynolds

AT A packed meeting on 25 January, representatives of all black organisations in Deptford formed a committee to organise action in the area following the fire which claimed 12 lives last month.

The black community in the South-east London borough believes that the police and media are covering up a racist attack. Evidence points to this as being the motive for the fire-bombing.

attacks on black homes, and beatings by gangs of skinheads. Black youths say that cars are driven at them as they walk along the pavement.

Gang

One young woman told me that on the night of the fire, she, her brother, and some friends were threatened by a gang of white youth just up the road from the house where the party was held.

The house, which was totally destroyed by the fire which swept through it in minutes, is within sight of the route of the National Front march in 1977.

Fire

The driver of a car seen in the area at the time of the fire was black, but he reported the fire. The 25 January meeting dismissed reports that there had been a fight during the party or that gate-crashers had returned with a fire bomb.

Suspicion has centred on a white woman who entered the house looking for a purse and left soon after. When this was reported to the police they claimed that the woman was a vagrant, although they now appear to be investigating.

Attacks

There have been a number of racist attacks in the area, including black people being shot at with air rifles, shotgun



addresses of the victims of the Deptford fire, their families received racist hate-letters.

The local black community has little confidence in the police, coachloads of whom were brought in for the 25 January meeting. The emphasis at the meetings has been on black self-defence and the best way of organising it.

A day of mourning for the victims is planned, and discussion is taking place on the need for other action.

Thugs

The area is notorious for fascist activity. Column 88 claimed responsibility for a fire which burned down the Albany Theatre on Creek Road in 1978. British Movement thugs hand out leaflets at nearby Millwall football ground.

When a local newspaper published the

FREE BOOKS OFFER

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