

Socialist Challenge

MINERS GRUNWICK FIRE FIGHTERS POWER WORKERS

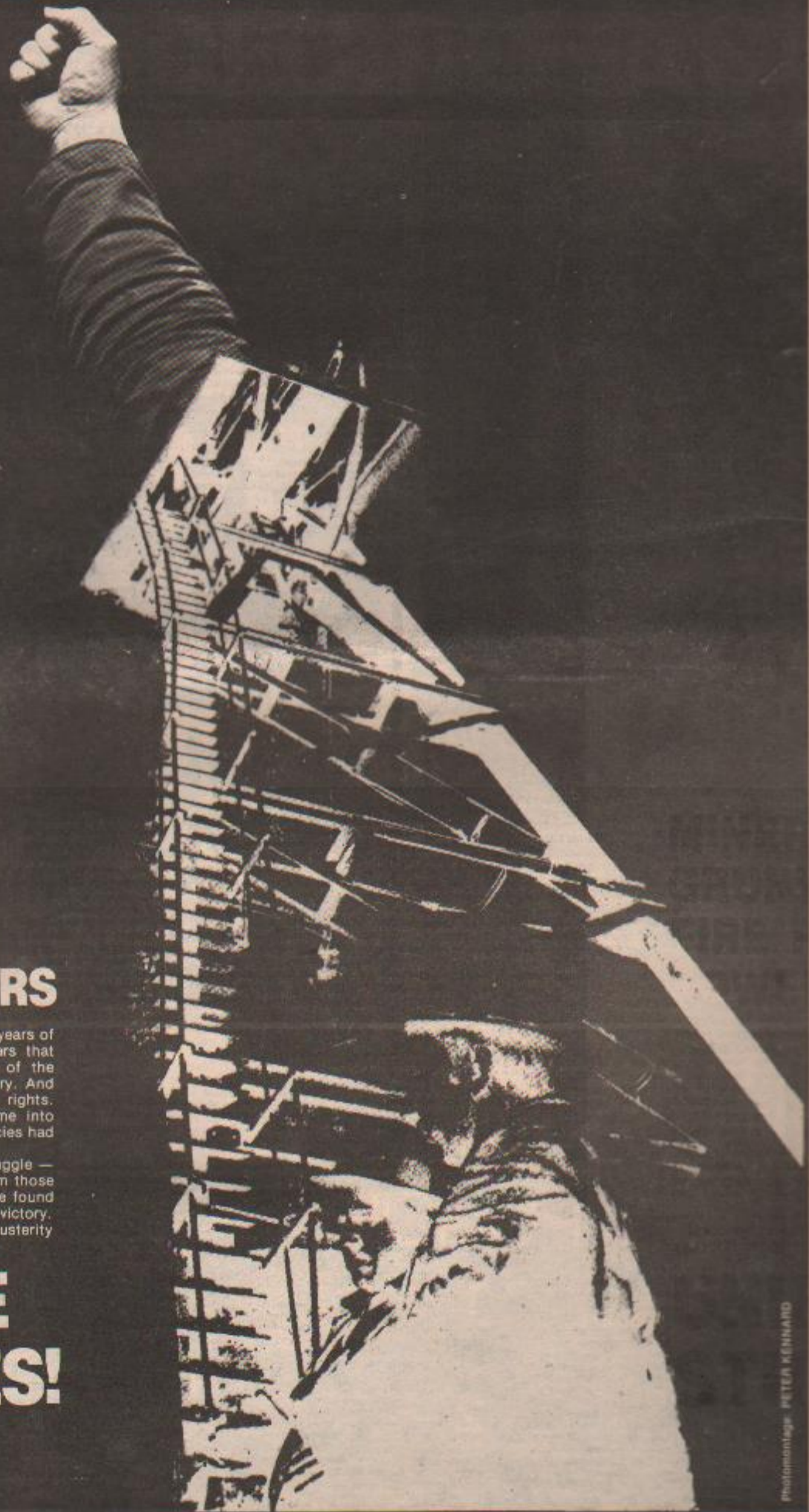
These are the workers who threaten to end three years of defeats, sell-outs and compromises. Three years that have seen the fastest fall in living standards of the working class since the beginning of this century. And some of the fiercest attacks on democratic rights.

Inflicted by a Labour Government which came into power as the result of the bloody nose such policies had received under the Tories.

These workers have pledged themselves to struggle — knowing in advance that they face desertion from those that claim to lead them. Their only friends will be found from those who have everything to gain from their victory.

Unite in action against the Government's austerity measures and for the right to organise.

UNIFY THE STRUGGLES!



Editorial

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Labour's pay thuggery

POLICE SAVAGELY attacked Grunwick pickets last Monday, putting ten in hospital with broken limbs and injuring many more. The Royal Highland Fusiliers began firefighting training as part of a military contingency plan to break the fireworkers' strike. The Labour Government has shown it is concerned with neither law and order nor people's safety. What it is concerned with is an onslaught on working class living standards in the lap of the Lib-Lab pact and ruling class needs.

The fireworkers' struggle for 30 per cent rises; the power workers' fight against the 12-month rule; and the half-day civil service strike last Tuesday — all have one thing in common. As soon as a group of workers begins to fight to defend its living standards it comes smack up against the Labour Government. That's why if the miners decide to fight to break through the 10 per cent norm and the 12-month rule it will not simply be a display of the miners' immense industrial muscle, but a direct confrontation with three years of treacherous Government policies.

Preparations against possible miners' action has been evident in many quarters: the National Coal Board, Fleet Street... and the right wing of the union. There must be similar preparation in the workers' movement. All these struggles need support from the rest of the working class. A programme of action to provide political solutions for the fightback is vital.

It certainly isn't going to come from the Labour left — indeed one can hardly say there is a Labour left in Parliament these days. Benn & Co. are almost completely identified with Government policy. Witness Benn's sell-out over the miners and his guilty silence in the face of the power workers.

A handful — like Martin Flannery and Dennis Skinner — have moved in another direction. Both marched with the Grunwick pickets to protest at police brutality and Skinner has correctly used his position to speak at factory gate meetings to organise support for the picket. But they too lack the policies for a fightback. A single question in Parliament on a single issue is hardly going to turn the tide. These MPs must be forced to place themselves at the centre of the current wage struggles, making a clear stand for the full demands of the workers.

The Communist Party leadership has managed far less than Skinner. It has belatedly rolled out the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, to meet in 'late February'. It reduces the fightback to the question of unemployment to dodge a confrontation with the left bureaucrats. And not surprisingly, for it was a CP member, Mick McGahey, who backed up the right bureaucrats when he signed the miners' union executive call for more productivity, just one day after the union had rejected the divisive tactic of productivity dealing. He only went one step further than his leaders' policies.

So the Rank and File Organising Committee's conference on 26 November stands out as a way of making a small step forward. But only if it adopts adequate policies and recognises — as Rank and File has so often failed to do — that a precondition for a united fightback is the adoption of thoroughly democratic methods of organisation. Pride of place must be given to workers in struggle, coupled with hard planning to ensure that every militant leaves the conference with fighting policies to support and extend the struggles.

We urge Socialist Challenge supporters to get delegated and fight for these policies:

- *an end to the 12-month rule, the 10 per cent norm and cash limits;
 - *no productivity dealing, to increase wages at the expense of jobs;
 - *for automatic wage rises to compensate for rises in the cost of living; for a sliding scale of public expenditure;
 - *for mass solidarity with workers in struggle; nationalisation of Grunwick;
 - *for industry-wide shop stewards conferences on pay;
 - *for local shop stewards conferences to set up local action committees on wages.
- Credentials from Rank and File Centre, 265a Seven Sisters Road, London N4. Conference on 26 November, Co-op Hall, Manchester.

Dennis Skinner on Queen's speech

'A fancy wrapping of the same old package'

The BBC staff who blacked out the Queen's speech last week did everybody a favour. Even by Labour Party conference standards, it was a non-event.

There will be no bill reiterating the right of postal workers to strike. There will be no amending of the Official Secrets Act, despite Labour's 1974 pledge to make public authorities justify withholding information. Even the Bullock committee's tepid proposals on industrial democracy have been shelved.

It was fitting that the speech was read in the House of Lords. Two MPs, Neil Kinnock and Dennis Skinner refused to scurry to the Lords to hear her majesty's announcements.

Skinner explained to Socialist Challenge: 'I have never seen the Queen or any member of the Royal family, except on television. I've never been to the House of Lords. I believe that the House of Lords should be abolished. Everybody should be accountable to what they do, to those who elected them.'

'Since nobody in the House of Lords has been elected, then I don't regard them as having a useful function at all. All the top bankers are represented, worn out trade union leaders, newspaper owners. 432 of them went to Eton. That's the sort of place it is.'

'I don't think you can say as I did at the Labour Party conference that the House of Lords needs abolishing and then a few weeks later trot in there to hear the Queen give a message, which anyway will be read out in the House of Commons the same day.'

Skinner, MP for Bolsover, didn't think he missed much. He described the contents of the speech in scathing terms:

'What they have drawn up to

by Geoff Bell

do, gives the impression that the IMF, the Liberal Party, Jim Callaghan and Denis Healey, with the connivance of Tony Benn and a few others, can present a panacea for all the troubles and ills of the country. In fact we're still beset by the same problems. The Queen's speech was just a fancy wrapping of the same old package.'

The main proposals in the speech are the Devolution Bill for Scotland and Wales, and the Direct Election Bill for the European parliament.

The former is clearly designed to win Scottish votes in the next election, the latter is a concession to the Liberals, aimed at ensuring Callaghan stays in power until that election. Other measures have the same cynical motivation.

The most provocative aspect of Thursday's parliamentary capers was the comment made afterwards by Callaghan attacking the miners. He spoke of the Government's 'responsibility and determination' to stick to its 'counter-inflation' wage cutting policies.

Dennis Skinner didn't think much of that either: 'MPs have



Dennis Skinner last Friday mobilising for Grunwick picket.

no business lecturing miners about what to do about productivity when they don't even clock on and clock off themselves.

'In 1975 me, Harold Wilson, Uncle Tom Cobby and all were elected on a manifesto which said there could be no interference with free collective bargaining in peace-time. I stand by that.'

Laurie Pavitt who as MP for Brent South, describes himself as 'MP for Grunwick', pointed to another omission in the Government proposals.

Referring to Grunwick he said: 'I don't see why we can't have a workers co-operative there, or, through the National Enterprise Board, establish some form of

collective responsibility or ownership'.

Whether Callaghan worries about such complaints is doubtful. He knows the majority of Labour MPs will march in to the Government lobby as readily as they marched into the House of Lords — no matter what the Bill is, or the proposals are.

Callaghan can then talk about the wonders of parliamentary democracy. The democracy of miners voting to reject the productivity deal by a higher majority than Labour can dream of winning the next election by is of course a different matter, which Callaghan sees fit only to condemn.

All out for Socialist Unity National Conference!

It is only two weeks since Socialist Unity crushed the combined Tory and Nazi vote in the Spitalfields council by-election with a resounding 20% share of the poll. These two weeks have not been wasted. Socialist Unity groups up and down the country are now pulling out all the stops for the first national conference of Socialist Unity to be held on 19 November.

This week-end, the Socialist Unity Steering Committee heard reports from Oxford, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Hull and York. In addition to these areas, meetings and activities have been held and will be held in many other towns. In Nottingham, for example,

over 50 people had already attended a meeting at which Bob Pennington of the Socialist Unity steering committee had outlined the potential for Socialist Unity nationally. In Hull the comrades are hoping for a good turnout at their meeting this week following a benefit last week at which 135 people were present to watch the

by Ted Coxhead

Grunwick film and to discuss.

In addition to the growing numbers of independent activists attracted to Socialist Unity, more organisations of the revolutionary left are now expressing interest. The Socialist Workers Party, despite the clear achievements of Socialist Unity, have still not replied to the letter sent to them in mid-September asking for discussions.

In addition to building meetings for the Conference it is urgently necessary that Socialist

Challenge readers rush in to the Steering Committee the names of activists in their area who are prepared to sponsor the Conference.

Amongst the latest signatories are Raymond Challinor, the labour historian and NATFHE delegate to Newcastle Trades Council and founder member of the International Socialists; Maggie Blagdon, Executive member of Hull Trades Council, Chairwoman of the Trades Council Women's Committee and Convenor of the Hull Anti-Fascist Committee. Martin Shaw of the Hull Socialist Alliance and a former member of the Socialist Workers Party has also signed the appeal.

OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

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

Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

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

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

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

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

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

**SOCIALIST
UNITY**

**National
Conference**

Saturday 19 November

The Garage — University College, London WC1

Credentials: £1 for employed and students, 50p for unemployed and people working in the home. Conference bulletin 20p. All from: Rising Free, Box 15, Upper Street, London N.1.

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)



CARL BRECKER

Hounslow Hospital 'Do it our way'

by Rich Palmer

Over 100 delegates attended a conference organised by the Hounslow Hospital Occupation Committee last weekend, to discuss how to fight cuts and hospital closures. Delegates looked at the lessons of the Hounslow Hospital campaign and discussed a 'guide to action' drawn up by the Occupation Committee.

Opening the conference Dominic Costa, of Hammersmith Hospital joint stewards committee, pointed out that Labour's Health Minister David Ennals was trying to claim that hospital closures were simply making the NHS more efficient, and did not mean cuts in services.

'This is pure bullshit. There's no other words to describe it', Costa said. '20,000 beds have been lost from the NHS in last two years. The Labour Government's cuts mean that over 640,000 people are now on NHS waiting lists.'

Pam Jones, NUPE steward from the Elizabeth Garrett An-

derston hospital work-in, explained how they had used the work-in tactic to fight their hospital's closure. She said it was important to resist every effort to move patients out, to put pressure on doctors to obtain new referrals, to block the removal of all equipment, to demand that all vacancies are filled, and to resist staff being transferred to other hospitals.

Carl Brecker of the Hounslow area joint union committee, drew attention to the proposals in the 'guide to action' for a recall conference in the new year, to assess developments in the different campaigns, and for a newsletter 'which receives and disseminates information on proposed cuts and on actions against them.'

On the proposal for a newsletter, Hospital Worker supporter and Hammersmith Hospital steward Bill Tizzard argued that 'it would be wrong to make a rival organisation around the newsletter to Hospital Worker.'

Other delegates argued the need for a newsletter giving

information on the fight against cuts in all services, not just health.

Neither argument really got to grips with the need for a newsletter linking different groups of hospital workers campaigning against hospital closures in London, Birmingham, Liverpool, Sheffield, and Nottingham.

Patrick Sikorski of East Birmingham COHSE branch said the guide to action needed to specify the aim of winning industrial action by other workers against forced closure attempts like the raid to remove patients at Hounslow.

There was an overwhelming vote in favour of producing a newsletter, a recall conference in the spring, and the redrafting of the guide to action by the conference organisers.

*Copies of the redrafted 'guide to action' will shortly be available from Hounslow Hospital Occupation Committee (01-570-4448).

Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM (IFL)



PAM JONES

News from nowhere

Fascist Threat

The International Marxist Group this week appealed to anti-fascists and the labour movement to defend militants from attack and harassment by fascist sympathisers.

The call follows a series of incidents up and down the country, including threats made to Socialist Challenge editor Tariq Ali, a member of the IMG national committee.

A letter containing a death threat was sent to Ali's home recently, and on November 5, his car was defaced with National Front stickers.

Elsewhere in the country socialist militants have been physically attacked and their homes and premises firebombed.

The IMG have also demanded that the police take steps to ensure Ali's security.

Post-prandial pontification

AS OUR readers may have noticed, after-dinner speeches are rather revealing. Fresh from his somewhat muted triumph at the Labour Party conference, Santiago Carrillo, general secretary of the Communist Party of Spain, has chosen more exalted post-prandial company.

Last month he addressed the exclusive Twenty-First Century Club in Madrid at the invitation of Manuel Fraga Iribarne, leader of the Francoist Popular Alliance. In his fulsome introduction Fraga was forced to admit the irony of the occasion. He had been a minister in a number of the Francoist governments that had persecuted Carrillo and his party.

No such qualms beset his guest, who argued that 'We are aware that on 15 June the country did not vote for a socialist transformation, but simply for democratic change.' It escaped his attention that if his party had been a bit more enthusiastic about a 'socialist transformation' before the election it might have got more than its pathetic eight per cent poll, and Carrillo might not have ended up trying to forge alliances with the Francoist Neanderthals. (The club was well known as a meeting place for top Francoists.)

We are wondering if there was any disillusioned Communist Party member at the dinner. If so, you know where to send the tape. After the Twenty Club the Twenty-First....

Personally speaking

CLEMENT FREUD, who is acting as mouthpiece for the witch-hunted Jeremy Thorpe, is chairperson of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality group in the House of Commons. As Freud rightly argues, Thorpe's sexuality — past and present — is entirely his own affair.

But why, we asked Freud, does the Liberal Party refuse to defend homosexuality?

The explanation, predictably, is that 'it would be difficult for the party to take a position on such matters as abortion, fox hunting, and homosexuality. These ought to be personal issues.'

Does the Liberal Party stand for women's equality? 'Yes, certainly.' So why doesn't it oppose gay oppression? Unfortunately we never found out because at this point Freud announced that he had dinner guests and he had to go...

For the record, Freud considers that the gutter press's real target is not Thorpe, but Sir Harold Wilson, who implicated South Africa in the attack on the

Liberal Party but has not been forthcoming with any facts. Although News from Nowhere does not normally subscribe to conspiracy theories of the press, it is noteworthy that *The Guardian* received its come-uppance over Colonel Cheeseman and the planted porn movie, while Wilson....

Da Do Ron Ron Ron

WHILE the ruling class are never prepared to acknowledge any sacrifices made by workers in the course of the class struggle, they are always ready to award those workers who scab on their class in the employers' interests.

Last week brought the news that Ron Hill, the TGWU member at Austin Longbridge in Birmingham who led the so-called 'march of the moderates' against a strike call by the Works Committee and Shop Stewards, has not been forgotten for services rendered.

The International Cultural Foundation has presented him with a silver medalion and a picture depicting freedom. The award is 'for the advancement of civilisation in the defence of principles'.

Socialist Challenge has not yet started a 'scab of the year' award but Ron Hill would certainly feature high on any list compiled for the advancement of capitalism in the defence of exploitation.

Score Draw

SUSPICIONS that the prime qualification for the West German police is being a trigger-happy gunslinger were dramatically confirmed last week. A deadpan agency report from Bonn told the world that one of the police officers guarding the home of Dieter Genscher, the Minister of the Interior, was shot dead. Another 'terrorist' outrage? Not quite. Apparently the dead man had been involved in a showdown with a colleague to see who was fastest on the draw. Strangely enough, the only police casualty during the Dutch train siege earlier this year was also self-inflicted. In a week of grim reports from Germany, it gives some hope.

Banner Headline

POLICE hatred for the trade union movement knows no bounds. Not content with smashing arms and legs at last Monday's picket, their evil gaze alighted on a £700 SOGAT banner propped up against a wall in Cooper Road. When the SOGAT comrades asked for it back, the police reluctantly agreed. The banner was in shreds.

Short Story

NEWS FLASH on our short story competition. We have had several complaints that the length we proposed, last week, 1,800 words, would be too short on story. So — in the interests of a fictional sliding scale — we are pleased to announce a massive percentage increase, to 3,500 words.

Send your entries, to arrive by first post on 1 December, to: Short Story Competition, Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N.E. Full details of the prize and judges are imminent.

HOW DO WE STOP THIS?

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)



'Miss, did you see that big lady with the thick glasses and blond hair yelling and screaming at the demonstration last weekend? That was my mum Miss.'

Sharon, a school student in East London, was one of several girls from her school who marched with anti-fascists in Hoxton last month. A few teachers on the march helped the students desperately dodge behind banners and placards to avoid the eyes — and vicious epithets — of National Front parents.

'I couldn't tell you what she was yelling, Miss — it's too awful.'

It is partly the growing anti-fascist sentiment among students which has prompted the entire staff of one East End school to take a stand against National

Front plans to distribute **Bulldog** — the fascist youth bulletin.

Bulldog — with its talk of 'putting immigrants in Chessington Zoo where they belong' — is sufficient to make even the right in the teachers' union take note. And, with the lead given by the East London Teachers' Association, unity has been forged on this issue with non-NUT staff.

ELTA offices issued a circular to union members immediately after the Front publicised its intentions, with a list of suggestions of what teachers should do. The NUT representative at the school which has taken the lead called a meeting of union mem-

bers to discuss the circular. Very quickly the meeting decided it was an issue for the entire staff and the matter was raised with the Staff Association.

After an intense one and a half hour discussion everyone was adamant that a public stand must be taken. The repercussions — where many parents are Front members and school Governors are far from sympathetic — were recognised.

The meeting drafted a strong letter of opposition to discrimination on any grounds — sex, religion, or race — for parents, the local press and the **West Indian World**.

If **Bulldog** sellers turn up at this school teachers will not wait for the fights they feel are inevitable. They will intervene

immediately and demand police protection of their students — but in the words of one teacher 'if we don't intervene, the police will come after fights begin and it will be our students that are arrested, not **Bulldog** sellers'.

UNITY

The consequences of the meeting have been far-reaching. Teachers have now scheduled further discussions to determine how to transform the school so its multi-cultural character is reflected.

Now it's time for other schools in East London to step in line to forge the real unity between student, staff and parents necessary to ward off the infiltration of fascist ideas in the schools.

How Labour lefts line up on the miners



JOE ASHTON: 'They're worth £135 a week. I'm surprised at the modesty of the claim. But there's still a lot that can be negotiated on. For example, miners who put in five full shifts could get paid for a sixth as a bonus. This will increase productivity without setting pit against pit.'

'This scheme has been in operation before. Admittedly there was some resentment over the fact that those off sick wouldn't qualify for the bonus. The miners need something like an extra £12 a week if we're going to fill the vacancies. No doubt shop assistants will get £6. It will be unfair, but not economically disastrous.'



JOAN MAYNARD: 'If the miners do well it will help all workers do well. I was delighted about the ballot. The danger with bonus and productivity schemes is that they encourage bad workmanship and they work people out of jobs. It's my job to win support for all workers in struggle.'

Whatever the miners go for, I will try to help and support them in every way I can. More people are breaking through the 10 per cent limit than is appearing in the media.

'I agree with Jack Jones, the more the Government keeps out of industrial bargaining the more likely we are to have reasonable attitudes from both management and the unions.'

RON THOMAS: 'I agreed with Scargill's analysis that the productivity scheme would set one group of miners against another. I support their legitimate demand for a substantial pay increase.'

'All we can do is support them. I've never felt one can achieve very much on these kind of issues in the most exclusive club in Europe. It's up to the miners what they do now.'



SID BIDWELL: 'A Labour Government containing Michael Foot won't confront the miners. They'll come to a compromise and then justify it. I'm sure of that. Even the lefts like McGahey are pledging themselves to increase coal production. It has all the hall marks of compromise.'

JEFF ROOKER: 'I'm neutral about the ballot result. Unless you've seen all the small print you can't say. It sounds to me a bit like the Leyland corporate bargaining ballot — a cock-up from start to finish, except that the miners came down on one side and the car workers on the other. That probably has a lot to do with the way the campaigns were run.'

'I hope we have given other workers confidence' Pay policy faces miners' pick-axe

by GEOFFREY SHERIDAN

LABOUR MP Joe Ashton, whose Bassetlaw constituency straddles coalfield country in Yorks and Notts, is confident there won't be a miners' strike. 'There are months of negotiations ahead', he considers, 'and all kinds of things can be negotiated.'

There can be no doubt that the Coal Board, Joe Gormley, and Jim Callaghan are praying that Ashton is right. Given that the 55 per cent majority to throw out the productivity deal took them all by surprise, it is likely that God will presently be entertaining a multitude of supplicants. The meeting today of the miners' national executive will set the pace of events over the coming weeks. The demand for a £135 basic wage for coalface workers, put up by the last National Union of Mineworkers conference and placed before the Coal Board three weeks ago, is top of the agenda.

Callaghan has already said 'over my dead body', while the TUC refuses to back attempts to override the 10 per cent pay norm, and defers to the Government and the international bankers over the 12-month rule.

AMPUTATE

The miners' claim, if it comes anywhere near achieving a tolerable wage, would amputate both arms of the Labour Government's pay policy. A ninety per cent wage claim is a little higher than ten; and the NUM conference decision is that it has to be payable from the beginning of this month, not — as the 12-month routine dictates — from next March.

In short, a clear success for the miners' demands would shatter Callaghan's policy of further depressing working class living standards in the interests of profit. With this and the very

existence of a right-wing Labour Government at stake, Joe Ashton is correct to suppose that an all-out propaganda offensive and back-room bargains are the order of the day for the bosses and their friends.

SCOTTISH MINER

VOTE NO — to a return to the piece-rate jungle

FIGHT FOR! — better and decent basic wages

The battle at today's NUM executive meeting will be over blocking the right-wing's attempts to hold back on the pay claim, on which a ballot will be necessary before industrial action can commence, following management's inevitable endorsement of the Government's pay policy.

As Emlyn Williams, president of the South Wales miners, puts it: 'If they were so keen to ballot on incentive bonuses, they must carry out their mandate on conference's claim. The important thing is to win the next ballot.'

If it reaches a ballot, the result is scarcely likely to conform to the Government-TUC pay pact, and so productivity scheming is what Gormley & Co are desperately trying to ply for. Their rejoinder to their thrashing last week was to issue an appeal to the miners to work harder, to fulfil the norms of a 1973 productivity deal.

Adding his signature to those of the NUM's president and general secretary — Gormley and Daly — was Mick McGahey, Scottish area president and leading member of the Communist Party. The statement said in part: 'We must explore the possibilities available at each colliery to achieve an increase in coal production in order to secure the future of the industry as envisaged in Plan for Coal.'

The effect of McGahey associating himself with the manoeuvres of the union's right-wing leaders will be to strengthen the bid to block the full wage claim through productivity ploys.

The reality of all the talk about raising coal output is clear from the scheme that has just been rejected. The Coal Board had told the Department of Energy that it would lead to a productivity increase of 10 to 15 per cent for a selected wage increase of little more than 4 per cent.

It doesn't take much imagination to see that the phrases 'blood on the coal' and 'pit against pit' used by the militant areas in their campaign for a No vote are no exaggeration. It took a determined and prolonged struggle by the miners in the last century and this to defeat the dangerous and divisive results of incentive, piece rate, and bonus schemes in the pits. But this is evidently not enough to deter Gormley & Co.

Uncle Joe is not altogether in the Government's good books at the present time. One Cabinet Minister said after hearing the result of the ballot: 'Joe Gormley



could be the first man to bring down two Prime Ministers by incompetence.' Gormley had removed himself to Australia for the duration of the ballot campaign.

Tony Benn at the Energy Department has also been up to his usual snakey performance. He refused at first to publicly endorse the incentive plan, but then told miners to vote for it when Callaghan leaned on him.

'The Conservative Party seems to imagine that it can divert Labour from giving support to the NUM,' Benn said during Heath's confrontation with the miners in the winter of 1973-74. 'But it knows nothing about the NUM or the Labour Party if it thinks either could ever be separated.'

As The Economist comments: 'This week the NUM started divorce proceedings.' The divorce clearly has to be with the Tory policies of Callaghan's crew and all those who support them.

Already, the train drivers' union ASLEF has announced that its members will not cross a miners' picket line. That demand, together with full support for the miners' claim, must be taken up throughout the workers' movement if the miners are to have the backing they will need to take on the Government, the TUC, and all their cronies in high and low places.

'I hope the outcome of the ballot has given other workers confidence,' Emlyn Williams told Socialist Challenge. 'Whatever the media say, the miners would receive strong support on the pay front. There is solid opposition at the base of the trade unions over the pay limits the leaderships have accepted.'

It is that opposition that the miners' struggle can now help to galvanise. Their victory would be a decisive step forward for the entire working class.

Left majority on first round Wright is favourite in AUEW poll

by JOHN GRAHAM

BROAD LEFT candidate, Bob Wright, now must be favourite to win the presidency of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers.

The post becomes vacant with the imminent retirement of Hugh Scanlon (RIP). The result of the first ballot in the election, announced last week, showed Wright gaining marginally less than his right wing opponent, Terry Duffy, (83,893 to Duffy's 83,959). But the Broad Left should be able to make this up by the time of the second ballot in March.

POSTAL BALLOT

Despite the postal ballot system, upheld by the right as the guarantor of democratic involvement, only 27.3 per cent of the AUEW membership voted. This can only reflect the feelings of a large number of the rank and file who found little to choose between Duffy's support for the Social Contract and Wright's failure to lead a fight for action in the AUEW against it.

Of the alternatives that were on the ballot paper, Roy Frazer's

vote of 19,071 came as a surprise for many. Frazer led the tool-makers strike in March that threatened to shatter Phase 2. It was this record which won votes for Frazer outside the ranks of the skilled workers.

POOR

But the vote of Ian Morris, the *Engineers Charter* candidate supported by both *Socialist Worker* and *Socialist Challenge*, was poor by any standards. His vote of 9,997 was less than the 12,137 received for the sectarian campaign of Alan Wilkins of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

This result was unsurprising in the light of the refusal of *Engineers Charter* to seriously attempt to draw in other left forces in the union behind Morris's campaign or indeed to organise a systematic campaign in the localities at all. For example, no meetings were held by the Charter at all in London, Birmingham, Leeds or Manchester, despite offers of help from *Socialist Challenge* supporters in the AUEW in these areas.

The fact that these candidates were the top five in the ballot

results means that the Broad Left can be fairly confident of victory in the second ballot.

But they should not be too confident.

Other AUEW election results announced at the same time show a far less rosy picture. Broad Leftist Ron Halverson, unlike Wright, publicly led the campaign against Scanlon's manipulation of the engineers' vote at the TUC Congress in favour of the 12 month rule. Nevertheless he lost on the second ballot for national organiser to right winger John Byrne by 92,383 votes to 142,647.

In Executive Committee elections the first of two ballots saw Communist Party member Les Dixon trailing behind 'moderate' Edmund Scrivens. Another defeat for the left was Harold Robson's victory over Vickers conveyor Jim Murray for EC member.

WARNING

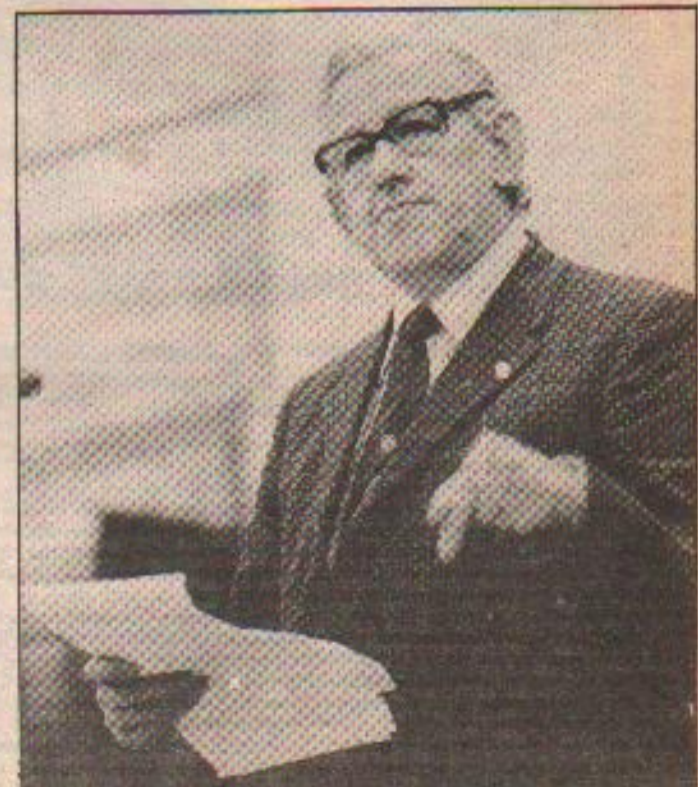
These results should come as a warning for the Broad Left that they cannot rely on the weakness of Duffy as right wing candidate to pull Bob Wright through the second Presidential ballot.

Wright's campaign contained a credibility gap as wide as the distance between his left talking against the Social Contract and his failure to support the struggles which were doing that job in the spring of this year.

That was why it was correct to back Morris as an alternative socialist candidate. Morris' poor vote does not reflect the unwillingness of the membership to fight back, but rather the refusal of the Socialist Workers Party (of which Morris is a member) to try to build a democratic, broad-based fighting tendency in the AUEW.

Wright should now be able to command enough votes in the second ballot to make sure that at least one firm supporter of wage restraint rises no higher in AUEW office. His verbal opposition to the policies of the Labour Government will benefit rank and file militants who want to take up the fight seriously.

It is for this reason that *Socialist Challenge* calls on all its supporters in the AUEW to actively campaign for Wright in the March ballot and as a first step build and attend the 20 November National Broad Left Conference at Digheth Civic Hall in Birmingham.



BOB WRIGHT

Build rank & file action!

SAVING lives, 'protecting the sick and old', these are the excuses for Tony Benn to endorse scabbing on the power workers. And that's why Merlyn Rees now has thousands of troops ready to go into Britain's fire stations.

What hypocrisy! If Benn really cared about health and lives he would live up to his left wing credentials and settle the power workers dispute immediately — in favour of their justified claim.

Merlyn Rees knows that the army is incapable of providing an efficient fire service and through his decision really does put lives at risk.

No the real aim is the same in both cases — strike breaking.

The most enthusiastic supporters of this policy are those who claim to represent the workers involved — the trade union leaders. Rank and file against the bureaucracy. That's how all the present struggles line up.

Let's look at them.

*Grunwick strikers still battling on despite threats to cut strike pay, no APEX support for pickets and now

being forced as the last resort to put their own lives on the line in a hunger strike outside Congress House.

*Miners win through against the attempts of Gormley and the Coal Board to split the strength of the union.

*Fire fighters only get the chance to follow up their pay claim by voting down their executive overwhelmingly.

*Power station workers. Deserted by their own unions, scabbed on by the power engineers union in collaboration with power bosses.

If any one of these struggles succeeds it will be the signal for millions of workers to fight against the policies of the Lib-Lab pact and those who push them in the labour movement.

A modest but vitally necessary start can be made in the long process of fighting for an alternative leadership to lead such a struggle in the labour movement at the Rank and File Conference in Manchester in two weeks time.



Power workers up against 12 month rule

It's been a real gift to the press: two of their favourite themes — the Dunkirk spirit and bash-the-workers — rolled into one. Unlike the workers taking industrial action, the people who make the news actually enjoy filling their pages with details of when your lights will go out; people huddled round shop windows trying to puzzle out the Electricity Board's cryptic tables; and the supposed threat to life and limb caused by the power workers action. CHRIS O'BRIEN reports.

You will have to read your paper very closely to find what the power workers actually want, or even to discover that at the moment they are only operating a work-to-rule.

For the record, work in the power stations is one of the most disgusting and anti-social things you could do for a living — on a par with going down the pits. Amid fuel dust, ash, and muck of all sorts the power workers work a dizzying shift system, with seven different stints changing each fortnight.

They are demanding a rise in their shift and travel allowances as a compensation for anti-social hours, and concessionary electricity rates — just as the miners get concessionary coal. But the significance of the dispute is not that the power workers are a 'special case'.

Like millions of workers they are hit by the effects of Government pay policy, and in particular the 12-month rule. This means they will have to wait until next March to settle their next pay claim. And the workers — about a quarter of all the manual workers in the power stations — aren't prepared to wait that long.

NEGOTIATIONS

Not so their union leaders. It isn't just our friends in Fleet Street who line up against the work-to-rule, but the same union bosses who have so enthusiastically supported attacks on their members' living standards all along. They claim that negotiations with the Electricity Council are proceeding satisfactorily.

Unofficial leaders, however, rejected the agreement over travel allowances — from 80p to £2 a week — as 'derisory'. Pickets were prepared to meet the Central Electricity Generating Board's plan to ship scabs

into the power stations.

Nor is the threat of troops — the bogey raised in 1974 — an immediate one. At the moment the most dangerous scabs are within the ranks of the trade union movement. Foremost among them is Frank Chapple of the EETPU, the electricians' union. He maintains that, 'The men should now realise that we have done all that reasonable people could expect.'

SELL-OUTS

This is explained by his additional comment that the workers were now 'out of our control'. Chapple knows what he is talking about. He probably has a better track record on sell-outs than any other union leader — which is some claim.

His latest effort was over the Port Talbot steel workers dispute. His first response when there was a whiff of trouble was to send personalised letters to all the workers urging them back to work. As with the power workers he consistently refused to make the strike official.

But his refusal to back the power workers' action has a wider significance. He explicitly accepts the Electricity Council's argument that an immediate award could not be made without an Act of Parliament!

Chapple describes the action as 'a battle that can't be won', and is doing his utmost to make that prophecy self-fulfilling. The reason? Quite simply, the 12-month rule.

That is the part of the pay policy that no main union leader has challenged, because it now provides the lynchpin for the strategy of holding down living standards and dividing workers by separating claims.

And quite apart from the fuel dust and muck and anti-social hours, that is why the power workers must win.

Block the scabs in uniform Support the fire fighters

32,000 fire service workers are due to strike from next Monday in an all-out fight for their 30 per cent wage claim.

The strike decision was carried overwhelmingly at an emergency conference of the Fire Brigades Union in Eastbourne last Monday. At the same time the army was being trained in fire-fighting to break the threatened strike.

The national strike will be the first ever for fire fighters. The last major dispute was a 10 day strike in Glasgow in October 1973, in which Army, Navy and Airforce personnel manned fire stations.

Delighted delegates in Eastbourne congratulated each other as they decided by 2-1 to stop work from 9 o'clock next Monday morning. No cover will be provided anywhere in Britain and the north of Ireland.

The Executive tried to recommend that the union continue to negotiate on a 10 per cent offer from the employers. After the vote Prime Minister Callaghan said this was the limit they were prepared to offer to the fire service, power workers, miners and anyone else.

What can be expected from Terry Parry and the TUC can be guessed from their antics in 1973 against the 656 Glasgow fire men who went on unofficial strike.

EXPELLED

Parry expelled the strike leaders from the union officers and withdrew their credentials. FBU officials met with the (then Tory) Scottish secretary of State to offer him advice on how soldiers, sailors and airforce staff could be used most efficiently to replace striking firemen.

Len Murray gave full support to this disgusting scabbing and ordered all trade union bodies in Scotland not to take any action

which would represent approval for their strike.

Despite all this the Glasgow strikers won through and gained their pay demand.

Similar preparations are being made for this strike. In Scotland basic training was being given to 50 soldiers of the Royal Highland Fusiliers. This training is part of a national mobilisation involving all three sections of the services. In the North West soldiers had the temerity to turn up to fire stations to train, and were turned

away by angry FBU representatives.

The use of troops is a threat to the whole working class. The only reason they have not been used in the power workers dispute is that they lack even the rudiments of training which could disguise their picket-busting role. Protests should be organised outside every fire station in the event of the use of these 'scabs in uniform'.

The fire fighters' case

TAKE HOME pay for fire service workers starts at about £39.46 on appointment rises to £40.80 after six months; to £42.21 after 3 years; £43.75 in the fourth year ending on £46.71 as the qualified rate. (FBU figures.)

This is for a 48 hour week. The claim is for 30 per cent to bring them in line with the average wage of an industrial worker, plus 10 per cent

because of the dangers of the job and the special skills needed. They are also asking for a reduction in their working week.

If the fire service does strike they will not receive any pay as their union has never built a strike fund or any other form of fighting fund.

Collection sheets will be vital for the success of their struggle. Get them organised now!

What's Left

Flares: 3p per word. Display £2 per column inch. Deadline: 3.00pm Saturday before publication.

PICKET of the US Embassy in protest against the Shah's visit to the USA. Tuesday 15 November 11-2pm US Embassy, Grosvenor Square. Called by the Committee Against Repression in Iran.

EAST LONDON IMG Public meeting. 'Grunewicks' Monday 14 November, 7.30pm at the Britannia Pub in Mare Street, Hackney, (next to the Town Hall). All welcome.

NORTH LONDON Socialist Unity on 'The Left and the elections: the next step.' Speakers: Hilda Keane and Bob Pennington. Tuesday 15 November 7.30pm. John Barnes Library, Camden Road, London N1.

OXFORD Socialist Unity Public meeting. Thurs. 17 November, 8.00pm, Blackfriars, St Giles. Speakers Bob Pennington, Hilda Keane and a member of the Asian Socialist Forum. For more information about Oxford Socialist Unity contact 38 Hurst Street.

BENEFIT for the Lewisham Defence Campaign in support of the Lewisham 200. Peggy Seeger and Ewan McColl at St. Pancras Town Hall (The Garden Centre), 25 November at 7.45pm.

WORKERS POWER Public Meeting. 'For a working class women's movement.' Speaker: Jill Daniels. Thursday 10 November, 7.30pm at the Roebuck, Tottenham Court Road.

MARKISM TODAY: November issue contains 'Inflation and Crisis' by Bob Rowthorn. Also articles on 60th Anniversary of October Revolution, Class and Students and Education. Obtainable from Central Books Ltd., 38 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1. SPS and various progressive bookshops.

MANCHESTER Public day school — 'Which Way Forward For Communists?' Sessions on the crisis and Ireland. Speakers include David Yaffe. Saturday 19 November, Basement Theatre, Town Hall Extension, Albert Square. 12am-6pm. Entrance 75p.

MIDDLESBROUGH. Revolutionary Communist Group Public Meeting 'Which Way Forward For Communists — The Crisis and the Labour Movement'. Speaker David Yaffe. Wednesday 16 November 7.30pm. Room A127 Teeside Polytechnic, Borough Road.

EDINBURGH. Revolutionary Communist Group Public Meeting 'Which Way Forward For Communists — The Crisis and the Labour Movement'. Speaker David Yaffe. Thursday 17 November 7.30pm. Trades Council, Picardy Place.

STIRLING. Revolutionary Communist Group Public Meeting 'Which Way Forward For Communists — The Crisis and the Labour Movement'. Speaker David Yaffe. Friday 18 November 1.00pm. Room 2A9, Stirling University.

GLASGOW. Revolutionary Communist Group Public Meeting 'Which Way Forward For Communists — The Crisis and the Labour Movement'. Speaker David Yaffe. Friday 18 November 7.30pm. Patrick Burgh Hall, Burgh Hall Street.

ORGANISE a film show and discussion around *The Miners Film*, 45 minutes (16mm) available from: Cinema Action. Tel 01-586 2762.

seminar on zionism
How to fight it
Newcastle Saturday 19 November

Subjects include: Arab boycott of Israel, Zionist oppression of Oriental Jews, Israel-South Africa cooperation, the Law of 'Return' and Aliyah.

Admission by ticket only. Organised by the British Anti-Zionist Organisation (in association with the Arab Students Union). Contact George Mitchell, 90 John St., Glasgow G1.

Revolutionary Communist No 7 Nov 1977

Main feature is a full length political analysis of the CPGB's Draft *British Road to Socialism 1977*. The article discusses the vital issues of imperialism, the state and revolution, democracy and the working class as raised in the Draft BRS. Included also is the first major review of the New Communist Party, based on their recent pamphlet.

Other articles include:
*Trade Unions and the State: the Struggle against the Social Contract.
*The CPGB and Ireland.
*Underconsumptionism and Crisis.
*The Politics of Technological Control.

Available from: ROG Publications Ltd (SC) 48 Baliton Road, London SE24 6LN. Price: 50p plus 15p postage

STUDENT Movement Campaign on Ireland (SMCI) National Planning meeting Saturday 12 November at LSE from 12.00 to 5.30pm Room 5101A. Open meeting for all supporters to discuss the campaign, plan for NUS Conference, assess Ireland Unfree and organise the campaign in the colleges.

IMG FORUM. 'Czechoslovakia Today. Speaker Mark Jackson. Friday 12 November, 7.30pm, Room S066 London School of Economics, Houghton St., London.

LEVELLER First Anniversary Party. Celebrate with us this Saturday, 12 November, 8pm at Ludgate Cellars, Apothecary Street, London EC4. Live: Dire Straits. Plus disco, real ale. 75p. Claimants, students 50p.

DON'T be seen without your Socialist Challenge badge, 20p plus 7p p&p from Socialist Challenge (Badges), PO Box 50, London N1. Cheques/PDs payable to 'The Week'. Bulk orders (10 or more), 15p post free. Cash in advance only.

JOBS for the girls? The Problems of Women and Employment. A one day conference to be held on Sat 19 November in the University Lecture Theatre Block (LTB2), University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester.

SPARTACIST Public meeting: 'Women and the Russian Revolution'. Speaker Judith Hunter. Fri 11 November, 7.30pm, The Roebuck, 106a Tottenham Court Road.

WHAT IS REVOLUTIONARY Unity? Public meeting of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency. Fri. 14 Nov. 7.30. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square.

WORKERS POWER No 5 Out Now! Articles include: Fascism and Anti-Fascism, The Workers Government, Socialist Challenge — a Statement, Euro Stalinism, Marx, Engels and German Social Democracy. From all left bookshops or from its Camberwell Grove, London SE5 8JA. 57p inc. postage.

SCOTTISH Conference of Socialist Economists. Weekend School, Edinburgh 12-13 Nov. Sat 10-4: Alan Freeman on The Nation in the Transitional Epoch; Jim Lewis on Accumulation, the Regional Problem and Nationalism. Discussion on future CSE work in Scotland. Sun 10.30-4. Mike Hughes on Finance Capital and the Scottish Ruling Class. Hugo Radice on The Scottish Development Agency. Ed—Inburgh Trades Council Hall, 12-14 Picardy Place, Crache. Papers by Jim Lewis available in advance. Mike Hughes will be developing his work in *Red Papers on Scotland* (EUSPB 1975) Registration: Hugo Radice, Glenesk, Perth Road, Dunblane, FK15 0HA. 0796-823248.

NO RETURN TO THE THIRTIES

A benefit for the completion of a film about the Right to Work march 1977, to be held at The Other Cinema on: **Saturday, 12 November, at 6.30pm.**

UNION MAIDS
By Julia Reichert and James Klein (USA). A documentary about women organising in the 1930s (45 mins). Plus:

LAND WITHOUT BREAD
by Luis Bunuel, 1932 (29 mins approx).

Also extracts from the Right to Work film, and a speaker.
Tickets £1.50, £1 to unemployed. Please support this benefit, organised by Rank and File films. Bar and food will be available.

Short film on *Socialist Challenge* will be shown also.

Which way for the abortion campaign? SWP speak out

SHEILA MacGREGOR speaks for the Socialist Workers' Party, continuing our series debating how to take the movement for women's abortion rights forward.

The National Abortion Campaign has organised regional conferences on positive legislation on abortion. What is your attitude to such legislation?

We would support any legislation which improves women's rights to abortion. But we don't want to get tangled up in arguments about time limits because we are not in favour of any time limits.

There has been a distinct shift in attitude on the question of abortion. The Labour Government allows MPs a free vote on anti-abortion bills. The process of capitulation by the Government is continuing.

Since James White's Bill, the Government has given the anti-abortionists a lever. Anti-abortionists will organise support for an anti-working class Labour Government — provided they get their way on the abortion question.

Today, they have got the ideal situation of Callaghan and Ennals working out a deal with the Tories to cut back abortion rights. This deal is a threat to millions of women who will be driven into the arms of back street abortionists.

That's the real debate today — and it is where the fight has to be launched. Under capitalism, and with the state of the health service, any time limit actually works against people who need an abortion. If the facilities are available, people go for abortions when they think they are pregnant. They don't wait for seven or eight months.

If it could be proved that the facilities were available, we would think the time limit debate is more crucial. The real problem now is to fight against the Government's self-out.

I wish the debate was around the time limit — we would be home and dry.

Some pro-choice campaigners have expressed concern that NAC is parliamentarian? What do you think?

The important thing is what people do.

Even if a Bill is put through parliament, the campaign to secure its acceptance will have to be extra-parliamentary. It will have to involve organising masses of women, adopting a serious orientation to women in the factories and workplaces and trying to draw women who aren't at work from estates into a mass campaign.

The only way the Government's legislation can be defeated and positive legislation won is through a massive campaign by thousands and millions of women, drawing the working class movement in behind them.

But just because people are proposing bills for Parliament, it doesn't mean they are parliamentarian. If people are going to rely on Labour MPs to stem the tide on anti-abortion legislation or on simply asking MPs not to vote for it, they are living in cloud cuckoo land.

The National Abortion Campaign was mass-action oriented in 1975. It brought thousands of women together up and down the country. But over the last 18 months this has been lost. It needs to be rebuilt.

Our attitude is to support and organise *Women's Voice* groups for pickets and demonstrations. *Women's Voice* also initiates activity. It held a rally on abortion rights.

The SWP obviously sees the need for involving the unions in the campaign.

Yes, because first of all, there are a lot of women in unions, and a lot of unions with policy on abortion. It's important that we get those unions involved in leafletting, holding meetings and organising women to fight back.

Also, the fight around abortion is a very good way of raising the whole question of women's equality. If the trade union movement wants active women membership then it has to take up women's issues, and abortion is a very basic right to fight for.

Another area is union-sponsored MPs. A lot of unions do sponsor MPs who then go off and vote bow



SHEILA MacGREGOR: "Abortion is crucial"

they like. We should be arguing that those MPs should be mandated to vote for the policy of the union.

I also think that Rank and File groups within the unions should fight around the abortion issue — doing articles in local bulletins, raising the issue in branches and workplaces. In *Women's Voice* workplace bulletins we will be raising the abortion issue.

The women's liberation movement has played an important role in the abortion campaign. Do you see its involvement as vital?

I think women involved in the fight for women's liberation should get stuck in with everyone else and campaign around the abortion issue.

The abortion question is the touchstone of women's liberation. If the right wing are able to make gains on abortion it would be one push in the direction of saying that a woman's real job is in the home and the kitchen — having as many children as God cares to send.

Abortion is crucial for stemming the tide and arguing that women have the right to their own livelihood, the right to work, to equal wages, full rights in the labour movement, adequate nursery facilities, contraception, health facilities and the rest.

What about unity between revolutionaries in the campaign?

Strategy can only be tested in practice. We do march together on demonstrations and stand together on picket lines. This is what should happen. Each group should have the right to put forward their own politics and strategy in the framework of united action.

We should all put out our own leaflets, get out our supporters for the marches, and sell our own newspapers on them. And as far as we are concerned, if people agree with the strategy we offer, then they should join the Socialist Workers' Party.

Interview by Dodie Weppier

Equal Pay Act - two years on

WITH THE second anniversary of the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts approaching a number of conferences are being organised to discuss the legislation and what has happened since. ANN CESEK reports.

The TUC will be marking the anniversary by a conference next month organised by its Women's Advisory Committee in conjunction with national unions. The purpose of the conference is to formulate specific amendments to the legislation.

The national women's conference of the General and Municipal Workers Union have proposed one amendment which would establish the right of unions to challenge job evaluation schemes. As such schemes are often the way by which companies avoid equal pay, such an amendment is long overdue.

Such amendments may be able to plug loopholes of the existing legislation. But many women are convinced that the experience of the last two years has shown that however good legislation is, it is not the most effective way to fight for women's rights on the factory floor.

The results of questionnaires organised by such bodies as the National Council of Civil Liberties and the Equal Pay and Opportunities Campaign have illustrated that the most successful way of achieving equal pay has been through collective bargaining machinery and union action.

TASS, the white collar section of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers has drawn a similar conclusion. Emphasis on reliance on shop floor action rather than legislation is unlikely to be made at

the TUC conference, but will get strong backing at the Working Women's Charter Trade Union Day School, called for 26 November. Women who have been actively involved in such struggles as the strikes at Yardley and Trico have been invited to speak. It is their experience which will be the meat of the discussion at the school, rather than specific amendments to existing legislation.

The school will also be addressing itself to the more general aspects of government policy and legislation which have a special effect on women. Cuts in social expenditure, unemployment and abortion rights will be topics for discussion.

The Charter school will be held in Reading and details can be obtained from Anita Turnbull, Flat 2, 3 Coleridge Road, London N.8. Tel: 01 348 1760



Trico: Showing the way forward in the fight for equal pay

Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

Sinn Fein President:

'Waving a green flag doesn't attract people any more'

Provisional Sinn Fein's annual conference was held recently in Dublin. We interviewed Sinn Fein's president, Ruairi O'Bradaigh, on his organisation's policies, women's rights and the situation in Ireland today.

Socialist Challenge does not share all of comrade O'Bradaigh's opinions — particularly those on women's oppression. But since the views of the Provisional Republican movement are usually suppressed or distorted we believe it important that they are heard.

O'Bradaigh began by discussing the recent elections in the South and the defeat of the Irish Fine Gael/Labour Party coalition.

'THERE were two reasons for the big swing in opinion, one on national grounds, the other on socio-economic grounds.

'On national grounds there was a feeling amongst the people that not only had the coalition government failed to pursue national aspirations, but they had not even paid lip service to them. The coalition were making out that they were ashamed to be Irish.

'I could go over the incidents. The handling of the Frank Stagg funeral, the bogus state of emergency, the brutality in the police stations and the conditions in the prisons. All this culminated in the intervention of Amnesty International. There was a feeling that the government was becoming increasingly fascist and had shamed us as a people before the world.

'On the socio-economic aspect there was the loss of our fishing grounds, our mineral wealth, the 160,000 unemployed, the cost of living rising by 24 per cent in one year, and the full membership of the EEC.'

SC: What difference will Fianna Fail make?

R O'B: 'Since they came into office they have wriggled. They are waiting until the people's struggle makes a British declaration of intent imminent, then they will come out and demand it. At the same time they will — as quietly as possible — put

leading and influential republicans behind bars, so that they will have the field to themselves. It's as cynical an operation as that.

'Fianna Fail are politically clever and perhaps dangerous. They act imperialist but they speak republican.'

SC: What is your attitude towards the demand for an independent Six Counties, which some nationalists are putting forward as a stepping stone to reunification?

R O'B: 'We reject it. The Southern state was meant to be a stepping stone, now it has become a stumbling block. Once these systems are set up they perpetuate themselves. Once the struggle is halted it is very difficult to get it going again.'

SC: What do you see as the long term solution?

R O'B: 'On government structures we have suggested four provinces. With the exception of foreign affairs, defence and national finance, every power should rest with the provincial governments and below. In the old province of Ulster the loyalists will still be in a majority of 58 per cent.

'South and West Ulster would be a nationalist majority, Belfast would have a Loyalist majority. There would be nationalist coun-

cils within a Loyalist region and vice versa. We don't just want to redistribute wealth, but political power as well.

'No section of the community will be denied political power, as happened with the nationalist minority in the North.

'We still see the state as the major instrument of economic development and that the key industries would be nationalised. Other things could be owned at provincial level, the whole process could filter down to local co-operatives.

'We don't say our aim is a united Ireland anymore. We call it a federal Ireland. We want to dismantle both states, make a new beginning.'

SC: How do you see the immediate struggle developing?

R O'B: 'There are an increasing number of men 'on the blanket' in Long Kesh. It is becoming more and more of a live issue, involving more and more people. We intend to press it very hard.'

SC: Do you see Sinn Fein mobilising people on this issue by itself, or in cooperation with other organisations?

R O'B: 'Well, like it or not we are the one radical movement in Ireland which has a mass following. We are the principle organisation so we must lead. But the door is always open to others.'

SC: What is the present state of Sinn Fein?

R O'B: 'Our members are raising more and more the ideological questions. This is very important we are in the world anti-imperialist camp. Waving a green flag doesn't attract young people any more. Quite rightly they want to know about people's rights and the quality of life. The war will end but liberation will go on.

'We see ourselves as a working class party. We look forward to the workers running the industry in which they work and each



RUAIRI O'BRADAIGH: 'We want to dismantle both states'

worker owning a share in his place of work.'

SC: What are your policies for fighting inflation and unemployment?

R O'B: 'The difficulty is we don't see any solution to these sort of problems within the existing set-up. It is reformist to think otherwise.'

SC: What about women's rights: abortion, contraception and divorce?

R O'B: 'On contraception we believe it is a matter for individual conscience. On abortion — we are against it.'

SC: Is this official policy, or your estimate of what the membership think?

R O'B: 'It is what I think the membership would think. It has never been adopted as policy, but

I am completely and entirely convinced this is what the membership believes. To put it crudely they would think abortion is murder.

'On divorce, yes we feel there should be a legal right to divorce, but we wouldn't favour making it terribly easy.

'I don't think the question of women simply revolves around these issues you mentioned. We believe in women taking their stand on terms of full equality with men. This was present very early in the century in the revolutionary movement in Ireland. Women were very much involved in the struggle. The first woman to be a cabinet minister, outside of Soviet Russia was a member of our revolutionary parliament.

'At the present time women have been fully, totally involved in the struggle. They are admitted to the IRA in terms of full equality. They have been involved in taking charge of oper-

ations. We have had women killed in action.

'We do not see women being relegated to secretaries or preparers of tea.'

SC: Finally what can people in Britain do to aid the Irish struggle?

R O'B: 'An anti-war movement, against British involvement in Ireland, for Britain to get out of Ireland and let the Irish people run their own country. That is what we would like to see.

'We would also like to see the Scots and Welsh people running their own country. Within England we would like to see the overthrow of imperialism and the workers of England running their own country.'

calendar for the SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

November 7-18 Student Movement Campaign on Ireland speaking tour of colleges (backed also by SSA and Women's Left Caucus). Details from Pamela Holmes, Kent University SU, Canterbury, Kent. Tel: 0227 65224.

November 12 East Midlands Conference on Ireland, Highfields Community Centre, Leicester. Details from Leicester TOM, c/o 7 College Street, Leics.

November 15 International Tribunal Planning Committee at London School of Economics, London. Details from Tribunal, c/o Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

November 18 Labour Movement Delegation to Ireland Conference, 'Britain out of Ireland — How and When?', Conway Hall, London. Details from LMDI, 1 North End Road, London W14.

December 10/11 United Troops Out Movement Open Conference, Sheffield University. Details from your local TOM branch or from UOTOM, c/o Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N1.



Long Kesh Letter

Congratulations on the tape recording revelations by Peter Cooper and the great publicity for Socialist Challenge. Everyone here was thrilled.

Dobson got the boot but the press weren't so hard with him as they would have been to a left-wing type. It just demonstrated how the press is largely right-wing controlled. They really are a bunch of hypocrites.

Mind you, we're use to hypocrisy from public figures over here. It is the hallmark of the present Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Roy Mason. The public image he portrays to the ordinary gullible person is that he is a very sincere type of character.

In fact he is the most devious

and adaptable figure in politics today, judging by a speech he made in Parliament on 25 April 1974 and what he has done since. In that speech he outlined the economic and social cost of the war in Ireland, stating:

'It just cannot go on. Deep seated hatreds are germinating in young breasts. Soon all the young men of Ulster will be filled with hate: hatred against their own kinsmen as well as our own forces.'

Mason went on to call for 'an end to British military policeman's role in the world'.

Since that speech the same man has gone in a directly opposite course. He has done nothing to relieve that hatred or prevent its germination. Instead he has been responsible for the building of more prisons to incarcerate the

same young people he pretended to be so concerned about in 1974. His solution has been to open

and sanction more torture centres like the notorious Castle-reagh, the equivalent of which is



only found in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Steve Biko died after interrogation in a detention centre, just as Danny McCooey did on his release from Castle-reagh. It is another example of hypocrisy for Britain to protest against what goes on in white Africa when they do Ekewise in Ireland.

The other big hypocrites are the £5,000 a year leaders of the Peace People. Last week they told us that they have come to an agreement with the British occupying army in Ireland to act as observers during searches of working class homes in Belfast. By putting on a few kid-glove search operations for these observers the Brits hope that all current and adverse publicity will be forgotten.

This would be a major propaganda coup for the Brits, at the expense of the working class people of the ghettos, and it would be thanks to the handful

of middle class Irish people in the 'Peace People'.

Those few in the ghettos who support the Peace People are largely comprised of aspiring status-seekers who consider themselves morally and materially superior to their neighbours, and who try and act as guardians of moral standards in their respective areas.

Maybe the Peace People will ask to be paid for the task of overseeing the searching of Irish working class homes by foreign troops? They might create a new organ of the state — Army Search Observers, earnings from which can supplement the £40,000 Nobel prize the Peace leaders received.

Such earnings ensures Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan life time employment as directors of the Peace Business Empire.

After all, bosses don't sack themselves.

Tiofaidh ur is

UN action on South Africa

A sick joke

The heady rhetoric about action against South Africa gave way to cynical realism on the part of the imperialist powers at the United Nations last week, writes ROY ALEXANDER.

Security council resolutions from the African states (already a compromise to forestall Western hostility) proposed a total mandatory arms embargo, an end to all atomic cooperation, and action to restrict trade and investment. The United States, Britain and France, backed by West Germany and Canada, exercised a triple veto over the proposals.

After protracted negotiations a further compromise was hammered out with the grudging acceptance of the Western members. All mention of economic sanctions — which might cut into the huge profits from South African investments — had disappeared; so had any provisions on atomic co-operation.

All that was left was a mandatory embargo on arms, military and police equipment, and the issue of licences for the manufacture of Western-licensed equipment in South Africa. Even this was watered down by limiting it to the issue of new licences. Member states were only 'invited to revise their agreements con-

cerning the manufacture of arms under existing licences.'

The UN has operated a voluntary embargo for the past 14 years, supposedly supported by most of the major weapons-manufacturing countries. But South Africa has had no difficulty expanding and up-dating its military power.

SELF-SUFFICIENT

Today its domestic munitions industry has grown to the point of self-sufficiency in small and medium-scale armaments. On the basis of its own techniques, supplemented by existing manufacturing licences, the South African arms firm, Armscor, not merely makes all the weaponry for the highly-armed South African police, but also manufactures tanks, armoured cars, field guns, napalm bombs, air-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles and through a subsidiary, many of the aircraft for the South African air force.

It was not false bravado that prompted the South African



Defence Minister recently to dismiss the threat of an arms embargo with the comment that South Africa was about to start exporting arms.

As the experience of the past 14 years shows, it is not even certain that this latest flimsy scheme will operate effectively. Arms have continued to flow into South Africa from countries supposedly observing the embargo,

through such devices as the classification of militarily-relevant equipment (such as telecommunications and transport) as 'civilian', and the transfer of second-hand equipment from third-parties (such as 1974 deals which transferred UK-made missiles and tanks from Israel and Jordan).

The only hope that the South African people have of effective

international action is through the struggle of the international solidarity movement against the collaborationism of the imperialist powers, and for a total boycott — economic, military and political — until the racist regime is overthrown.

BOYCOTT

*This betrayal came at the very

moment when the youth of South Africa were once more displaying their determination and unity. Despite a propaganda blitz of Government leaflets dropped from the air, 77,000 Soweto students boycotted final exams, thereby foregoing academic credit for the past year. This massive number was due to the wholesale rallying of primary school students to the cause.

Disturbing report from Namibia dissidents

SWAPO death camp charge

Disturbing reports have reached Socialist Challenge about the brutal and undemocratic maltreatment of the Namibian liberation organisation, SWAPO. ROY ALEXANDER takes a look at these allegations.

News of a factional struggle inside SWAPO has been known for some time in Europe under the heading of the 'Shipanga Affair'. This refers to the detention in April 1976 of Andreas Shipanga, founder-member of SWAPO and former Secretary of Information, by the Zambian Government, acting on the request of the SWAPO leadership.

Another 58 SWAPO militants were detained with Shipanga; they included Solomon Mifima (also a founding member and the Secretary for Labour), three members of the SWAPO executive committee, the President and the General Secretary of the SWAPO youth league, and two members of the Youth League Executive Committee.

In May Shipanga applied for a writ of *habeas corpus*, to procure his release on the grounds that he

was being illegally detained. This application was initially rejected, on the grounds that 'freedom fighters' in Zambia did not have the rights of ordinary citizens. When it seemed likely that an appeal to the Supreme Court of Zambia would succeed (as it did, too late to be of any effect), Shipanga and ten of his leading colleagues were secretly shipped off to Tanzania, where they remain imprisoned to the present day.

The SWAPO leadership alleges that Shipanga had secretly conspired to capitulate to the South African Government and join the phony Turnhalle 'negotiations', that he had deliberately stirred up dissent inside SWAPO to further his aims, and that some of Shipanga's allies in the military wing had betrayed a camp to the South African army. The

original accusation of a SWAPO Commission of Inquiry was that this had been done in collusion with the West German and South African Governments.

Esane Shipanga replied to this last charge in an open letter to SWAPO: 'This is an astonishing accusation considering that many of those in detention had been militant members of the SWAPO youth wing inside Namibia and had suffered floggings and other forms of brutal treatment at the hands of the South African police. These are the men and women who were forced to flee the country in 1974.'

WITHDRAWN

Significantly, SWAPO General Secretary Sam Nujoma chose not to repeat this particular accusation in a letter to the Swiss Anti-Apartheid Movement on the Shipanga case. If this has in fact been withdrawn it means that the SWAPO leadership's case collapses, because the other actions directly attributed to

Shipanga (as opposed to 'some' of his followers) certainly do not justify his indefinite imprisonment.

But the crisis inside SWAPO is of far greater proportions than the news about Shipanga has so far suggested. In April this year 32 SWAPO militants in Kenya published a lengthy statement which alleged that over a thousand dissident SWAPO militants had been held by the Zambian army in a detention camp since July 1976. According to the eyewitness report of two SWAPO Youth League members who escaped from the camp to Kenya, some fifteen detainees had been shot and killed by Zambian troops in August last year, and a further eight (including some young children) had died of starvation in February, because of the deliberate cutting off of food supplies to the camp.

In June this year 200 of the detainees were transferred to a UN refugee camp; it is not known how many are still being held.

It appears these dissident currents emerged from the large outflow of young refugees in 1974, following the brutal repression by the South Africans of the 1973 wave of struggle in Namibia. They enthusiastically joined the ranks of SWAPO, but rapidly became critical of various aspects of the organisation. Hence the prevalence of SWAPO Youth League members among the victims of the recent repression.

CORRUPTION

They concentrated their critical fire on two issues: the demand for convening the SWAPO Congress (the last Congress met in December 1969, and is supposed to be convened every four years), and allegations of corruption in the organisation which, they argued, had led to inadequate equipping of SWAPO military forces. They also expressed concern over reports of collaboration between SWAPO and

UNITA forces in Angola. Moves were made to set up rank-and-file anti-corruption committees to weed out such abuses. It appears that it was at this point that the leadership decided to crack down.

Whatever the substance of such charges, such legitimate political disagreements cannot be dealt with by repressive means; any organisation requiring the sort of unity required for a determined liberation fight is bound to be injured by such undemocratic methods. Moreover these actions have already given the South African Government and other reactionaries a powerful propaganda weapon with which to beat the liberation movements.

Genuine friends of the Namibian liberation struggle must take this issue up with the SWAPO leadership, and insist that they either substantiate or withdraw the accusations they have made, and cease resorting to the oppressive methods of the enemy in dealing with political disagreements.

Stop Namibia frame-up trial

from a correspondent

THE TRIAL of Victor Nkandi, accused of the killing of Elifas, Chief Minister of the Ovambo-Bantustan, began on 24 October in South African occupied Namibia. He faces a possible death sentence. Nkandi was arrested, along with Axel Johannes and other members of the South West Africa People's Organisation, and used in the trial of Aaron Muchimba and Hendrik Shikongo, also SWAPO leaders, for the same murder. Muchimba and Shikongo were released after a massive international solidarity campaign, the exposure of torture of the accused, and interference by BOSS, the South African secret police.

One of those tortured was Nkandi. He told the court that after days of hearings 'a police colonel and Lieutenant G. Dippenaar asked me what was the matter. I did not answer them, as I was wearing a white shirt which was covered in blood and they could see for themselves.'

Both Nkandi and Johannes refused to testify and were

sentenced to a year's imprisonment for contempt of court. In February 1977, on their release from prison in Windhoek, they were immediately rearrested and detained indefinitely.

Nkandi has been charged with the killing of Elifas, best known for his brutal floggings of SWAPO supporters, simply because the South African occupation forces are determined to pin the crime on someone. They have not produced any real evidence, but it is likely that they will again try to use Axel Johannes as a state witness. He has probably been tortured again.

Despite police brutality and torture Victor Nkandi continues to show his contempt for the South African court. When he came up at the beginning of the trial he gave a black power salute.

*International solidarity can free Nkandi, as it freed Muchimba and Shikongo. For details contact: Namibia Support Committee, 21/25 Tabernacle Street, London EC2. 01-588 4342.



FRENCH President Giscard dreams of repeating the German and Israeli exploits. He has sent several hundred paratroopers to Senegal on standby for intervention in the Sahara conflict. Ostensibly the aim is to 'protect' French citizens in Zouerate, Mauritania, threatened by the Polisario Saharan liberation forces. In fact Giscard is striving to increase direct French intervention in Africa.

Support the NUS Day of Action
SOUTHERN AFRICA
THE FIGHT FOR LIBERATION

Friday 11 November 7pm
Old Theatre, London School of Economics

Speakers include:
BARNEY MOKGATLE (Soweto student leader)
TONY HODGES
(journalist just back from Zimbabwe)

DEMONSTRATE: Sunday 13
November. Assemble 12.30pm,
Speakers Corner, (initiated by
Southern Africa Solidarity Cam-
paign).

Cohn-Bendit on West Germany

'Economic model has become a model of society'



DANIEL COHN-BENDIT is best known as one of the leaders of the May 1968 revolt in France. Of German origin, he now lives in West Germany. He has been one of the main far left critics of the Red Army Faction, at the same time as resisting state repression of 'terrorist sympathisers'. Although we disagree with many of the points Cohn-Bendit makes, we are reprinting these excerpts from an interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur* as a first contribution to a review of the debate that recent events have sparked off on the West German far left.

The hostages are safe and sound, Baader and his comrades are dead, and they've found Schleyer's corpse. Germany is divided between calm and anguish. What do you think is the political balance sheet of the past few days?

The balance sheet, the lesson for the future, is first the victory of the state, the state with all its horror, with all its most dubious aspects. The Red Army Faction wanted to prove that it alone was capable of freeing its imprisoned leaders: in failing they have done the most unexpected service to German state policy. What happened in the end? Under the cloak of humanitarian motives, the Wehrmacht has got a foothold in Africa. Today an operation in Mogadishu; why not others tomorrow, in quite different conditions?

It was a victory for Schmidt, then. But also for Giscard, Callaghan and various others. It's striking all the same, this sacred union, this holy alliance around the SPD...

That sums it up very well. For the first time since the war, Germany has played the role militarily that it has so far played economically. For the first time its famous economic model has become a model of society, based on the military and police.

BANNER

In what sense a model of society?

Because this whole affair has ultimately served to reveal a number of important tendencies in German politics. Because, by a single action, Germany has paid the price of reconstruction under the banner of a technocratic, and sometimes totalitarian capitalism. Because it has slowly installed the mechanisms of police repression and of militarisation of the economy, which at the same time gives birth to terrorism and represses it. And because ultimately these mechanisms could well be imposed tomorrow on other democracies, above all Italy, Spain, Portugal...

The old demons are always there. They have never left Germany. It is the same set of people, and sometimes the same individuals, who once served the Reich and today run the social democratic state.

Baader, Hitler's child?...

I was thinking above all of Schleyer.

Do you think there will be a new

strengthening of the state apparatus?

Yes, and for a simple reason. Social democracy has passed the test that is only presented by moments of crisis. Schmidt, who a year ago had run out of steam when it came to solving real problems, has now proved his ability as a statesman. Don't forget that three years ago, during a strike in the Ford factories, the Government had already set up the famous 'emergency staff', which has been in continuous session these last few days. In Germany today a factory occupation is seen as part of the same problem as terrorism and hostages.

It was hardly the same situation! I'm not so sure. Because what is important, what had the impact on public opinion, was less the freeing of the hostages than the exploits of the intervention squad. It's not the moral, humanitarian side of things, but the immense, colossal pride of German men, revelling in identifying with their elite troops.

The same thing goes for Baader and his friends: no-one seems to be very worried about the exact circumstances of their death.

Oh no, people are very worried. But not in the way we'd like to think. The suicide theory is officially interpreted as further proof of their incredible perversity. People think they took their evilness so far as to surround their deaths with inexplicable mystery. Alive, Baader terrorised Germany. Dead, he levels a final insult at the dignity and justice of the state.

SUICIDE

Do you personally believe in the suicide theory?

I don't know. I simply believe that there must still be people who continue to ask the question; who try and find out how on earth you can commit suicide in the most closely supervised cells in the world.

If I've read the press correctly, asking these sort of questions is tantamount to being a terrorist 'sympathiser'.

Yes. And it's even possible that the witch-hunt will get worse. It's like a pyramid. At the top there are the big intellectuals, liberals like (Günter) Grass and (Heinrich) Böll, under fire from an intellectual offensive. At the bottom is what the authorities call the 'swamp' of the far left, autonomists, outsiders of every



sort, caught in the police net. The day of Baader's death there was a series of raids and arrests on far left bookshops in Berlin. And then, half way up the pyramid, there is all the extra-parliamentary left, the ecologists for example who are now considered potential RAF members.

So who are the losers?

We are the losers. The extra-parliamentary opposition, which finds itself with its back to the wall, in a situation which it never wanted and in which it can do nothing. The youth, who want to resist ordinary fascism without giving in to the razzamatuzz and

cynicism of the armed struggle. They want us to take responsibility for a crime when the real criminals are our prosecutors: it's the height of mystification.

Sri Lanka Government seeks The most powerful president in the world

From Sri Lanka.

THE RECENTLY elected United National Party Government in Sri Lanka has launched two major attacks on the workers' movement. First came a proposed constitutional amendment to create one of the most powerful executive presidents in the world. Now there is threatened legislation to restrict trade union rights.

The UNP has an overwhelming 140 out of 168 parliamentary seats, after mass disillusionment with the previous 'United Front' Government, headed by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. The UNP was elected with a heavy vote from the youth and the minorities in the south — those in the north voted for the Tamil United Liberation Front, which is now the main opposition party.

But then came the attempted pogrom against the Tamils in August. The Government appeared bungling and ineffective at the very best. Most Tamils thought that the UNP was exploiting the situation to put pressure on the TULF to drop its demand for a separate Tamil state. So today most of the Tamils are disillusioned with the UNP.

In September came the constitutional amendment. The proposal means that the President will be supreme executive with powers to declare an 'Emergency' without recourse to Parli-

ament — somewhat ironic, since it was resistance to the previous Government's Emergency which gave the UNP its landslide victory.

He can declare war or invite foreign troops with equal impunity. He can address Parliament whenever he wants but is not accountable to it. He can dissolve it at will, even when it is trying to pass a no-confidence motion. He can choose who is going to be Prime Minister and other Ministers and what their jobs are going to be.

When the bill was announced Prime Minister J.R. Jayawardene made a long speech, but the actual content was not publicly known, and it was passed in three days with practically no discussion.

On 5 October the opposition SLFP tried to hold a public meeting against the measures and UNP thugs broke it up. The police stood by and watched. The UNP's promise that it is going to create a 'just and free society' is increasingly seen as a sick joke. Corruption and nepotism is rife. Not for nothing is it known as the 'Uncle-Nephew Party'.

Jayawardene said after the break-up of the SLFP meeting that he did not know who did it and it may have been the LSSP (an ex-Trotskyist party); and that in any case the SLFP broke up UNP meetings before. This has rather tarnished his cultivated public image as an honest democrat.

There is a lot of opposition to the proposed trade union legis-

lation as well. But so far the LSSP and Communist Party trade unions have not organised any action; they are demoralised and defeated. The Revolutionary Marxist Party (Sri Lanka section of the Fourth International) therefore took an important role in organising opposition, particularly through the Ceylon Mercantile Union.

At the same time as campaigning among the CMU membership for a one hour stoppage on 18 October, the RMP made a push for united action between all the unions. On 18 October the response of the CMU was solid and in some places other unions participated.

The Government was forced to issue a statement through the Minister of Labour saying that it did not propose to 'restrict existing trade union freedoms or compel members to leave existing unions.'

At least the Government has been put on the spot and will be forced to spell out its proposals. In line with the new style of government nobody yet knows exactly what they are!

*The Sri Lanka Government has granted an amnesty to 130 of those jailed after the 1971 uprising among them JVP leader Rohan Wijeweera. This is an important victory for the left in Sri Lanka. For the Government it is probably both an attempt to win back some of the popular support it is rapidly alienating through its autocratic policies and a move to discredit the Bandaranaike SLFP still further.

In Brief

ARGENTINA: Latest reports indicate that the week-long rail strike may be over. Official sources claim that the workers, whose real wages have dropped by 60 per cent in the past year, have gone back without winning their claim of 80 to 100 per cent rises. We do not know if this means that they have accepted management's 23 per cent offer, but a number of workers have been sacked or arrested.

Nevertheless, the events of the past week mark a significant increase in working class resistance to the military junta. Although the Argentine working class has not been as passive as the junta and its apologists would have us believe, this is the first time that broad sections of the labour movement, mainly in the public sector, have taken simultaneous strike action.

Rail workers were joined on strike by petrol workers, bank employees and workers in hospitals, post offices and shops. The junta replied by sending in armed police and troops to open the railways.

CHILE: A source from inside Chile reports that 19 regional branches of the Communist Party (PCC) no longer accept the discipline of the Moscow-based Corvalan leadership. The basis of their opposition is not clear, but undoubtedly the PCC's avid pursuit of an alliance with the Christian Democrats is a prime cause.

There has not yet been a split of the proportions of that between the Socialist Party leadership and the interior Regional Coordinators, but it seems that the crisis of the PCC is deeper than had been supposed.

CHILE: Miners at the El Teniente copper mine, the largest in the world, have come out on strike for a pay rise. This is the first time there has been an open strike since the military coup more than four years ago.

CHILE: Shop stewards at the Vosper Thornycroft yard in Portchester, Hampshire, have boycotted two replacement propeller shafts for Leander class frigates for the Chilean navy.

BOLIVIA: The Bolivian dictatorship has announced that elections are to be held on 9 July 1978. President Hugo Banzer will stand, backed by a new party called the Party of National Union, which is supported by a number of right-wing parties, including the Revolutionary National Movement and the Bolivian Socialist Falange.

ECUADOR: The Government has admitted killing 25 striking sugar workers. In addition at least 60 have been reported missing by their families. Union leaders claim the true death toll was 120.

The 1800 workers of the Azra sugar mill had gone on strike in protest at the company's refusal to abide by a collective agreement granting them a share in the recent sugar price increase.

About 700 workers and their families were occupying the mill when some 150 armed police arrived and gave them two minutes to leave. With all other exits blocked by the police the only way out was through a small rear door. As they tried to escape the police attacked with tear gas, sabres and guns. Many people fell into a deep irrigation ditch behind the mill and the official version is that they drowned.

The response on both sides has been swift. Other sugar workers have come out in solidarity and there have been violent clashes between police and students in Guayaquil. The police have arrested three strike leaders and others including Jose Chavez, the only national trade union leader still at liberty.

No unity short cuts

AS AN enthusiastic supporter of Socialist Challenge, I found your draft statement of aims (8 October) confusing and disappointing.

The sections on working class state power and on internationalism are okay, but the discussion of workers' democracy hardly measures up to the standard of the theses of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (Imprecor, 7 July 1977). And I am afraid that I remain pigheadedly of the persuasion that an independent Scotland or Wales is neither here nor there for a revolutionary socialist!

The other sections of the draft are pretty woeful. I'm glad that at this stage you skirted round the hoary old problem of the nature of the Eastern European regimes. But this would hardly be justifiable, were this document intended as some sort of programme. But where did you get the idea that 'the greatest international aid received by capitalism comes from the bureaucracy of the Soviet Union'?

And it's a gross simplification to say that 'the interests of the bureaucracy (a concept which,

personally I'm not too happy with) are those of 'class collaboration with the bourgeoisie'.

The analysis of the Labour Party is worse — and dangerous — because it touches on questions of central importance to the British working class today. As we sit here being clobbered by a totally nasty and reactionary Labour Government, what purpose is served by putting 'persistent demands' on the Labour leadership to 'break with the interests and organisations of capitalism'? And don't please answer 'in order to expose them'. This is the short road to dead-ends-ville.

And you must be living on another planet if you think that Callaghan and Healey need 'defending against ruling class attacks'. Scanlon and Jones are too busy selling their members down the river to bother about 'vile and barbarous forms of dictatorship', but their treachery needs to be explained, through a careful analysis of the fatal ambiguities inherent in the structural position of the trade union bureaucracy.

All these failings seem to me to

reflect what is a fundamental weakness of the draft — namely the belief that at this stage in the history of the left it is possible somehow to suppress real differences and conjure up socialist unity with a magic programme!

There are no short cuts to reunification — it's a long, hard slog. The urgent need now is for intelligent and detailed analysis of our situation and the elaboration of a set of policies which will push the class forward and around which all revolutionary socialists can work. Such demands — like the right to work, lump-sum wage increases protected against inflation, a national minimum wage, no redundancies, full lay-off, equal pay and so on — are hardly as exciting as drawing up plans for a British Soviet Constitution, but they are a bit closer to where we are really at!

STEVE SMITH [Colchester]

* Readers — especially Socialist Challenge groups — are encouraged to discuss the paper's programme and join in the debate on it in the letters' page. — EDS.

Fascists in Latin America

Incidentally this was the source of the persistent rumours that Juan and Eva Peron owed their high life-style to the millions in gold received in exchange for giving Bormann refuge.)

Specifically, land was bought in the remote southwest of Brazil and in Southern Chile for 'German refugees.' To this day fascists live in these enormous fortified colonies.

The investments in Latin America paid off. Legitimate businesses were established by Nazi refugees throughout south America. They have become integral to the phenomenal growth of German imperialism in the area.

In some countries these Nazis have lived quite openly, such as

Dr. Josep Mengele of Auschwitz in Paraguay. Paraguay's ruling elite is predominantly of German origin, including the notorious President Stroessner.

This wretched dictatorship has successfully committed genocide against Indians within Paraguay. It was little surprise when, a couple of years ago (to the embarrassment of Stroessner's ally the US Government), US narcotics agents revealed that Paraguayan generals and government ministers were major smugglers of heroin into the USA.

In 1971, Brazil prepared a contingency plan for the invasion of Bolivia if Banzer's coup against the left nationalist government of Torres failed. The contingency was not needed, but the direct links — at business, and secret police level — between Nazis in two countries was instrumental in preparing the operation.

Given this context, it's perfectly logical that Bolivia should be welcoming into its most fertile lands yet another generation of beleaguered white racists. Banzer's is an extreme reactionary regime, based on an ideology of racial superiority, with Nazis integrated into the ruling layers.

We should remember the lesson of Klaus Altman, the butcher of Lyons and successful Andean businessman — that big capital has no scruples about using fascists in its imperial ventures.

LEONARD LANE, Bristol

Socialist Challenge EVENTS

I'm a

Socialist Challenge

supporter

GREENWICH/LEWISHAM Socialist Challenge group meets every two weeks. For details ring Ray on 01-609-1187

EAST ANGLIA

CAMBRIDGE Day School, Sunday 20 November at Mawson Hall, Mawson Road, Cambridge.

Agenda:
11-11.30 — Registration
11.30-1.30 — Politics of the CPGB
1.30-2.30 — Lunch
2.30-4.30 — Politics of W. European CPs
4.30-5.00 — Balance Sheet of School

Speaker: Oliver MacDonald PLUS at the same venue at 7.30pm. Debate between the CP and IMG on 'The British Road to Socialism'. Speakers Bob Rowthorne (CP) and Oliver MacDonald (IMG). Registration £1 (50p unemployed).

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

COLCHESTER Socialist Challenge supporters group meets fortnightly on Tuesdays, 6pm, Room 3.322 University of Essex. For further information contact Mike at 11 Anglesia Road, Wivenhoe.

YORKSHIRE

Huddersfield Socialist Challenge meeting, Friday 18 November: 'Fight Racism Now'. Speaker: Rajib Hassan, Socialist Unity candidate in Ladywood by-election. Friendly and Trades Hall (opposite Huddersfield station), 6pm.

Sheffield Socialist Challenge supporters meet weekly on Thursdays, 7.30pm, the Lion Hotel, 3 Narsery Street, (off the Wicker), Sheffield.

HULL Socialist Challenge meeting, 23 November, John Ross: Lenin and building the party, 1.15 University Union; and at 7.30pm, YPI Building, George Street. After the social contact — what strategy for the rank and file?

MIDLANDS

For details of activities of local supporters contact Socialist Challenge Centre, 78b Digbeth High Street, Birmingham. (Tel: 021-643 9209).

LEICESTER Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly at Highfields Community Centre. On Wednesdays, 8pm.

NORTH WEST

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

Open Tuesday 8-9pm, Thursday 8-9pm, Saturday 10-11pm. Room available for meetings. Duplicating services.

LIVERPOOL Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Wednesdays at Stanley House, Upper Parliament Street.

BURY Socialist Challenge group meets at the Royal Hotel, Silver St., every Wednesday at 8pm.

LEIGH Socialist Challenge readers group. Next meeting 3 November, Courts Hotel, Church Street, Leigh. **WARRINGTON** Socialist Challenge group meets regularly. Ring Manchester Socialist Challenge offices for details. 061-236 2352.

DON'T be seen without your Socialist Challenge badge, 20p plus 7p p&p from Socialist Challenge (Badges), PO Box 50, London N11. Cheques & POs payable to 'The Week'. Bulk orders (10 or more) 15p post free. Cash in advance only.

HOME COUNTIES

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

SOUTHAMPTON Socialist Challenge meeting: 'Women's Rights and Socialism', Thursday 10 November, Anchor Pub, 8pm.

SCOTLAND

For information on Socialist Challenge contact Scottish Socialist/Socialist Challenge bookshop, 84 Queen Street, Glasgow (Tel: 041-221 7481). Open weekdays 10-4. Late closing Thursday 8.00pm. Wide range of FI publications.

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

GLASGOW Socialist Challenge Forum. 'Grunwicks: The view from the left', Thursday 17 November, Scottish Socialist bookshop, Top floor, 64 Queen Street. All welcome.

SOUTH/WEST

PORTSMOUTH Socialist Challenge readers group every Monday, 7.30pm at Wiltshire pub (upstairs), Hampshire Terrace.

BRISTOL Socialist Challenge Forum every fourth Tuesday of the month. Baptist Mills Centre, Horely Road, Bristol 2, 7.30pm.

LONDON

SOUTHALL. Supporters group meets fortnightly. For details phone 01-573 5395.

SW LONDON Readers and supporters meeting: 'What is Revolutionary Socialism?' First of a regular series of Socialist Challenge supporters and readers meetings, 7.30pm, Wednesday 18 November, York Road Library, York Road Estate, Battersea.

How to improve

YOUR PAPER is great but you should concentrate more on the following to give the paper broader appeal. The following steps could improve the paper:

1. Satirical and humorous articles and cartoons. It's very easy to make fun of the establishment to make political points at the same time.

2. Concentrate more on dealing with the arguments put over by the establishment media — like wages cause inflation. The press have been pushing this argument week in week out for years. There should be something in Socialist Challenge every week to prove the contrary no matter how small.

3. In times of 'belt tightening' which have been a permanent feature recently, the excesses of the establishment should be exposed. Concentrate more on giving shop floor militants basic arguments to deal with establishment ideology. Millions of people watch TV every night and talk about it the next day and Socialist Challenge should have a regular article on TV programmes even if its only a review.

MANCHESTER SUPPORTER, AUCHEW/TASS

*Unless there are mitigating circumstances, we ask contributors to the letters page to sign their articles.

Happy family myth



ONE IMPORTANT issue arising out of the Dobson affair that hasn't received much comment in Socialist Challenge is the press reaction to Pete Cooper's 'betrayal' of his father. Although on one level, this reaction has been used to divert attention from the real issues of racism and corruption, on another level it is the reinforcement of staple bourgeois ideology — that the family must come first.

Neville Sandelson, a Labour MP, commented at the time: 'Society must be aware of young people prepared to put ideology before family loyalties and trust'. We must make it clear that the family itself is part of bourgeois ideology. Loyalty to the family often cuts across class consciousness.

Many people refuse to go on strike, because they feel they have a duty to support their family. Many couples stay together only 'for the sake of the children'. After so much sacrifice, those who have invested heavily in the family obviously feel they are entitled to some reward in the form of loyalty.

The family does of course in some ways provide a refuge,

intimacy, and support from the alienation they experience under capitalism. But this small amount of control in 'personal life' is no compensation for control of social and economic life.

Revolutionaries must take up this contradiction, by showing how inadequate the family is in reality. The pompous ideology of 'loyalty' and 'betrayal' begins to crumble when we look at the reality of women's oppression in the family, at battered women, sexual frustration and rebellious children.

It's really important to shatter this myth of happy, loyal families. Most people's experience will tell them it's not true, but the myth lingers on, and prevents people from seeking an alternative to the family. Once the inadequacy of the family is admitted, its role as a partial refuge from boring jobs, competitive relationships, high prices, and so on will be undermined — and the need to find solutions to all these problems, including those of personal relationships themselves, will become more urgent and imperative.

SUE ASPINALL [N. London]

Kurdish rights

THE KURDISTAN Solidarity Committee has called a conference on the theme of 'End the International Silence'.

We have set ourselves two tasks with this conference. Firstly, we want to inform people on the history and practice of the division and oppression of the Kurdish people. To this end we have obtained permission to show a new film entitled 'Voice of Kurdistan'. This will be followed by a talk by Dr. Majeed Jaafar, a Kurdish academic who has studied the situation of Kurds in Turkey for many years.

Secondly, we want to have a discussion on the way forward for solidarity work in Britain. This will draw on the experience gained from the work we have done in the NUS, Labour Party and trade unions and will discuss practical activities for the future and the creation of a far broader solidarity campaign.

Stan Newens MP will be speaking at the conference, giving his personal account of

the problems facing the Kurdish people and their fight against oppression. There will also be a session on the Kurds and the situation in the Middle East.

Through the contributions of representatives of progressive non-Kurdish groups we hope to show that the struggle of the Kurdish people is complementary to that of the Arab, Persian and Turkish peoples. Other contributors to the conference will include Iain MacDonald (from War on Want) and Georgina Ashworth (from the Minority Rights Group).

The conference will take place from 10am to 5.30pm on Saturday 12 November 1977 at the Concert Hall, Imperial College Union, Prince Consort Road, London SW7. It is open to all those committed to support for Kurdish national and democratic rights, or who genuinely wish to be informed on the Kurdish question.

NIGEL WARD (Kurdistan Solidarity Committee)

Is STA an alternative?

BERNARD REGAN's article on support for Dave Whiteley in the teachers' union elections is in marked contrast with the interview with Whiteley in the previous issue of Socialist Challenge.

In the interview, Whiteley stated that the Socialist Teachers' Alliance was committed to a fightback on racism, sexism and the defence of education. We also assumed that this was the position of the STA — it was adopted at the STA's founding conference and the recent annual general meeting likewise passed policy motions on these issues.

We were therefore surprised to find that Bernard Regan motivated support for Whiteley purely on the STA's stand on economic

issues. Although he states that Whiteley omitted to call for a vote for Dick North in the Teacher election address, Regan himself doesn't appear to have noticed that there is also no mention of racism or the defence of education.

Regan's article raises the question of how seriously the STA regards — and campaigns for — non-economic issues. To what extent — apart from its more democratic structure — is it a 'real alternative' to Rank and File? If the STA hopes to unite large numbers of teachers it has to tackle these questions, now!

ALICE GRAHAME, GAIL MEYER [East London]

Their plan and our tasks

The gospel on Grunwick according to the FT

As assistant editor of the Financial Times and its 'Society Today' columnist, JOE ROGALY is a leading commentator for the ruling class. He is also the author of a new Penguin Special, Grunwick.

Following this week's 'Day of Reckoning', JONATHAN SILBERMAN — co-author of Socialist Challenge's pamphlet *The Battle of Grunwick: View from the Left* — examines Rogaly's assessment of the dispute and its implications for the struggle ahead.

Trade unionists and socialists are well aware of the role of the National Association for Freedom in the Grunwick dispute. NAFF has pulled out all the stops to ensure the defeat of the strikers. Through a campaign of propaganda in the media, active strike breaking to weaken the impact of the postal workers' boycott and, most importantly, through their legal activities and advice to George Ward, NAFF has exposed itself as the anti-union organisation that it is.

Joe Rogaly is critical of the NAFF. Like all the most astute ruling class political thinkers,

Rogaly does not favour the crude anti-unionism of the Tory 'hawks', such as the Seldon group of Tory MPs who proposed that Thatcher should appoint Ward as the Shadow Cabinet's special adviser on industrial relations.

In reply to Grunwick's boss and people who like the NAFF openly side with his anti-union crusade, Rogaly says that their argument 'may sound like good economics, but it is sociologically unsound and it is bad politics.'

Rogaly argues that the 'political insensitivity' of the NAFF, which alienates it from those 'who are



not wealthy or powerful', means that the NAFF is 'not a group with which one would want to associate oneself'.

But having disassociated himself from NAFF as an organisation, Rogaly goes on to argue the case for the very objectives championed by NAFF in the context of the Grunwick strike — the need for a 'clearly stated code of laws setting out both the rights and the responsibilities of trade unions'.

Scarman said in 1974: 'It is perhaps too often forgotten that

one of the merits of the rule of law is that it is a curb upon power — irrespective of the person or institution who wields it.'

Rogaly very much prefers this general way of posing the problem, to NAFF's crude and insensitive union bashing. But the conclusion is identical: 'Some government perhaps in the not too distant future, will have to grasp this nettle again, and extend the law to delineate the ground rules of trade union behaviour. People will say "That is impossible". Ask why, and the answer will be "The unions will not accept it".'

'This is the fatal defect in modern British society: that because the strongest extra-legal force will not accept the same obedience to general rules as all other sections of society, the adverse consequences must simply be accepted with a shrug of the shoulders.'

These are the grave and serious lessons drawn not only by Rogaly but by significant sections of the British ruling class from the Grunwick dispute. The dispute for them is not primarily concerned any more with issues related to small, badly organised workplaces with a high proportion of black workers. It is now a question of the unions generally.

The labour movement must look at the Grunwick dispute from the same standpoint and map out a way forward based on the stakes that are involved. We must understand how the policies pursued by the Labour Government prepare the way for the implementation of such anti-union policies by a future Tory Government.

As Joe Rogaly puts it: 'The first objective of the Government-TUC machine was met when the struggle was moved off the streets where it was difficult to control, into courtrooms.' Simultaneously the Government announced that it was considering



A familiar sight at Grunwick gates painted by Sheldon Williams

changes to at least the laws on picketing.

Rather than nationalise Grunwick without compensation in order to take the factory out of the hands of the reactionary George Ward and guarantee reinstatement and recognition, Callaghan and Co have joined with the moves aimed at helping Ward defeat the strikers, together with introducing anti-union legislation.

CAPITULATIONS

The trade union leaderships have completely failed to organise against the NAFF or against the Government's capitulations. They have sabotaged the mass picket, and failed to organise the boycott of services that they promised. The finger must be pointed firmly at the bureaucrats who are responsible for Ward's present confidence.

We must be prepared to organise independently from them. What is vitally necessary now is

not simply denunciations of the union bureaucrats, but a national delegate labour movement conference in support of the Grunwick strike. Such a conference would: organise the rank and file; provide the basis for a national network of support committees; and place maximum pressure on the union leaderships who always quake in their boots when the rank and file are prepared to act independently.

It would also provide a democratic forum for discussion on how to take the struggle forward against Ward, against NAFF, and against all the attacks on trade union rights.

Grunwick, by Joe Rogaly, is published by Penguin at 80p.



The Battle of Grunwick: View from the Left, now in its second reprint, is published by Socialist Challenge at 30p plus 10p postage. Orders for five or more post free. 20 or more copies post free and 10 per cent discount. Cash with orders, to: Falgout Ltd, 328-9 Upper Street, London N.1.

The Grunwick film: Is it good enough?

'Nostalgia is not enough' suggests CARL GARDNER as the headline for his critical review of *Stand Together*, a 52-minute colour film on the Grunwick struggle by the Newsreel Collective. GEOFFREY SHERIDAN wonders if he saw the same film.

Touring Socialist Challenge meetings in the North-west this week is a little-used experiment in support raising — the Newsreel Collective film *Stand Together*. It is a rousing, effective, and complementary aid to the strikers' appeal for mass pickets.

The footage and soundtrack were almost totally shot on the 11 July mass day of action. This alone constitutes both the film's strengths as an agitational tool and its weaknesses as a more useful film event within the broader political situation.

The film begins with strikers on the picket-line that day, explaining their reasons for being on strike and developments since the strike began. The remainder of the film consists of a chronological narrative of the day's events.

This narrative is underscored by interviews with dozens of participants from all sections of the movement. In particular we witness the colourful tide of trade union banners and contingents pouring into Willemsden from all over Britain. Unity, solidarity, and a vengeful purpose against Ward and NAFF are the key-notes of the text and images.

This technique — the overlay of myriad views with no 'privileged' voice as a substitute for an explicit view on the part of the film-makers — is the cinematic equivalent of spontaneism. This is a central problem in the development of a genuinely revolutionary film practice. That is not to advocate the vulgar imposition of a 'line' on the

soundtrack — but Newsreel bypass this problem of film strategy by an 'apolitical' device which is itself deeply political.

Worthy of note is the exposure of the presence of thousands of women, as a real active force within the dispute. Activists from the women's movement are given their voice — rare within the context of a trade union event. The patronising treatment of the striking women, particularly by male trade union bureaucrats, is obliquely highlighted in one ex-cruciating scene: 'big' Norman Willis of the TUC stands with his arm around 'little' Jayaben Desai throughout her whole speech!

There is only one overt intervention by the film-makers within the film, outside this obviously necessary, but partial, framework. At one point they illustrate the contrasting TV treatment of that day's events, selectively concentrated on the 'anrfulness' and 'violence' of the pickets. But it is precisely here — in opposition to the bourgeois media's consensus view of mass action as a 'threat to democracy' — that Newsreel start to run into problems.

Anxious as they are to stress the essentially purposeful and orderly (peaceful!) nature of the movement's response to Grunwick, they are unable to confront, within the film, a central political problem. Working class violence against a violent bourgeois State is both permissible and necessary. Only an occasional dissenting voice within the soundtrack is able to question the prevailing tone — that somehow massed trade union solidarity alone can win the day.

As a result of the political and chronological limitations of the

film's internal 'strategy' no discussion is possible of the demoralising TUC-led march away from the gates later in the morning (which may yet be seen as the turning-point in the dispute). Again occasional dissent is heard, but the event is still faithfully recorded as an accepted, 'natural' fact.

Similarly, because the film is foreclosed within the period of six or seven hours, any explanation of the wider economic and social origins of the dispute (in the contradiction between the expansion of the leisure market in home and holiday snapshots and the pressure of large capital upon small capital within that industry) is rendered impossible.

Impossible too is any excursion out of the realms of the immediate into the future, to discuss possible tactics, probable developments and the relation of Grunwick to the wider political struggle.

Yet it is precisely such 'generalisation'; such attempts within the film to forge links between this specific situation and the situation of other workers, which could render it accessible and relevant to those not immediately involved in the dispute (to whom it presumably will be shown).

A chronological narrative cannot handle this. Politics cannot be conveyed, even in film terms, simply by the literal portrayal of the euphoria of one day, no matter how stirring.

Despite these weaknesses *Stand Together* can play a real role in mobilising support. If that is now the makers' main aim, it should be largely realised. But when Grunwick is over it could well cease to have much purpose, except as mere nostalgia. Which is sad — film is too rare and precious a resource for its possibilities to be so curtailed.

CARL GARDNER



Location filming of *Stand Together*

STAND TOGETHER is a significant contribution to the Grunwick struggle and a notable achievement in alternative newsreel production, both of which in my view comrade Gardner misestimates in his review.

While he acknowledges the usefulness of the film in building solidarity, his idea of what a revolutionary film ought to be entirely belies Newsreel Collective's evident intentions, and argues for a film which would probably be of little interest outside the ranks of the far left.

would be best located in a theoretical journal, such as *Wedge*.

Resources, as well as politics, are clearly relevant. Given the cost of film-making, Newsreel deserves considerable credit for successfully pulling off an operation which required the kind of equipment, mobility, team work, and direction ordinarily devoted by wealthy TV companies to full-scale documentaries — biased, of course, in slightly less pleasant ways. I don't think the present size of the far left alone would justify this expenditure of finances and energy on a primarily theoretical film.

Is 'the wider political struggle' really ignored? Carl seems to have overlooked Brent Trade Council secretary Jack Dromey's statement in *Stand Together*: 'At any trade union meeting where anyone starts talking about "bloody blacks and Pakis" undercutting the movement, someone will say: "What about Grunwick?"'

The freedom lovers of NAFF are now threatening to challenge The Other Cinema's status as a charity because it screened *Stand Together* as part of a Grunwick benefit. NAFF appears to differ with Carl's assessment. The film does have a line, constructed through the songs, images, and interviews presented; and it is a line which stimulates precisely the kind of debate and action that are now vital.

GEOFFREY SHERIDAN

Stand Together can be hired at £17 from: The Other Cinema, 12-13 Little Newport Street, London WC2. Tel: 01-734 8508-9.

Socialist Challenge

GRUNWICK: NATIONAL STRIKE ACTION 4 DEC.

Last Monday was the bloodiest clash in the year and a quarter long Grunwick dispute.

George Ward's company cops used six vans of the hated Special Patrol Group to escort the scabs' bus into the factory. But that was relatively unimportant to them.

Their real aim was to physically smash up the Grunwick picket, as a warning to miners, fire fighters, power workers and all those who will follow, that opposition to Labour's policies of 'industrial peace' will not be tolerated.

'THUGGERY'

Jack Dromey of the Grunwick strike committee talked later of 'scenes of police thuggery'. Martin Flannery MP commented: 'I would never have believed that the police would take such action against peaceful pickets. It was sickening.'

Eye-witnesses told of incident after incident of police thuggery. First reports indicated that ten pickets are in hospital with broken limbs.

In one particular horrifying display of sadism a picket was dragged inside an SPG van and then had his head smashed through the window of the van from the inside. Ernie Roberts, ex-assistant general secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, and prospective parliamentary candidate for Hackney North, was one of many who witnessed that incident.

BRUTALITY

The police violence started on Dudden Hill Lane, near the Cooper Road entrance to the factory. A student demonstration was peacefully standing on the road when hundreds of police ran at them, punching and kicking people to the ground. Their aim was to clear the street to allow the scab bus to pass. It took an hour longer to get through.

It was then that the worst scenes of brutality occurred at the Chapter Road entrance to the factory, where the pickets were blocking part of the street. By



Monday's picket. The aim was to smash up demonstrators.

Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

now police motives were clear as they had no reason to launch the attack. (The bus was already on its way in by the other gate.)

Nevertheless, attack they did. Dromey described what he saw: 'Pickets were pulled out of the crowd at random. They were thrown left, right and centre. They were punched, thrown to the ground and trampled over.'

Police pressure was so intense that they pushed pickets against a wall which then collapsed. Dromey again:

'They saw people on the ground, pulled them by the hair, dragged them over the fallen wall and threw them onto the ground again. They picked up one elderly woman by her white hair.'

Altogether they arrested approximately 120 pickets and beat up countless more. They smashed the cameras of at least two press photographers.

The attacks by the state forces on the Grunwick picket line should remind us all of just how

important the Grunwick strike is. Monday's events have also given a new determination to the strikers to fight on.

Now a number of the strikers will be going on hunger strike outside TUC headquarters. It is a sorry comment on the leadership of the official union movement when strikers who have been out for 63 weeks, feel they have to starve themselves to get the TUC to act.

Now a new mass picket is planned, provisionally for 4

December. This time the strike committee are building not just for a picket but for sympathetic strike action. On Monday leaders of Southern England building workers and Kent miners pledged they would build strike action in their industries.

Now the South East Regional Council of the TUC is organising a conference to build support for the strikers. The best way to maximise support is to turn that conference into a national one. Militants should campaign for

the immediate sacking of Roes as the minister responsible for the police violence. They should be demanding the disbandment of the SPG and workers enquiry into Monday's events.

As for the events themselves the best comment is the one the pickets were chanting on Monday: 'Grunwick strikers, we'll support you ever more.'

Let us now turn those sentiments into reality. For national strike action on 4 December.

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE's first tax rebate arrived this week. An Edinburgh teacher pleased with the "recent successes of the paper" sent the £20 rebate at once.

We look forward to our other readers following this example. A form is printed on this page, so fill it in and send it today. We cannot stress enough the opportunity Healey has given our readers to improve *Socialist*

Challenge. If only 500 supporters gave their rebate the paper would be better off by £10,000.

Our readers at home and abroad rallied to the aid of the paper this week. £194.76 poured into our depleted coffers. We say readers as opposed to supporters as while the Department of Trade and Industry may read the paper we doubt if they could be called supporters. For the privilege of reading the Sir

Richard Dobson transcript in full Varley's ministry paid £5 to our fund drive!

Two £50 contributions were particularly welcome. The Canadian donation included the following message:

'In recognition of your commitment to a unified and democratic revolutionary socialist organisation, your campaign to build a class struggle majority in the trade unions and working class, your anti-fascist campaign, your support of equality for women.'

That certainly sums up the aims of *Socialist Challenge* and it is our intention to maintain that effort.

MESSAGE

Socialist Challenge intends to get its message over in the next weeks. Thousands of new posters with a photomontage by Peter Kennard are being distributed advertising *Socialist Challenge*. Also a new badge to tell the world you are a supporter of

Socialist Challenge has just come back from the printers. Turn to the *Socialist Challenge* events for details about obtaining your badge.

In the wake of Dobson the big firms seem to be taking more interest. Esso have just taken out a year's subscription — perhaps their Chairman fears a 'Dobson'.

To date, with this week's boost, the fund drive has accumulated £557.74.

Our thanks this week to—	
London readers anon.	50.00
J. Waller	1.25
J. Baker	1.50
J.B. & P.B.	2.50
E. Crawford	1.25
Southampton supporters	3.50
M.B.	15.00
Intervention collective	1.25
A. Tortomilla	5.00
Dept. of Trade	5.00
Cochester supporters	6.00
F. Mulhem	6.00
M. Tall	5.00
Anon.	5.00
V. Hill	6.25
B. Beaumont	10.00
A. Quint	1.25
Edinburgh teacher	20.00
D.E. Mahood	50.00
Total	194.76



I (your name) pledge to give E.....
(state amount) from my tax rebate due at the end of
November 1977 to Socialist Challenge.

Signed

Name

Address

Return to: Socialist Challenge, 328 Upper Street, London
N.1.