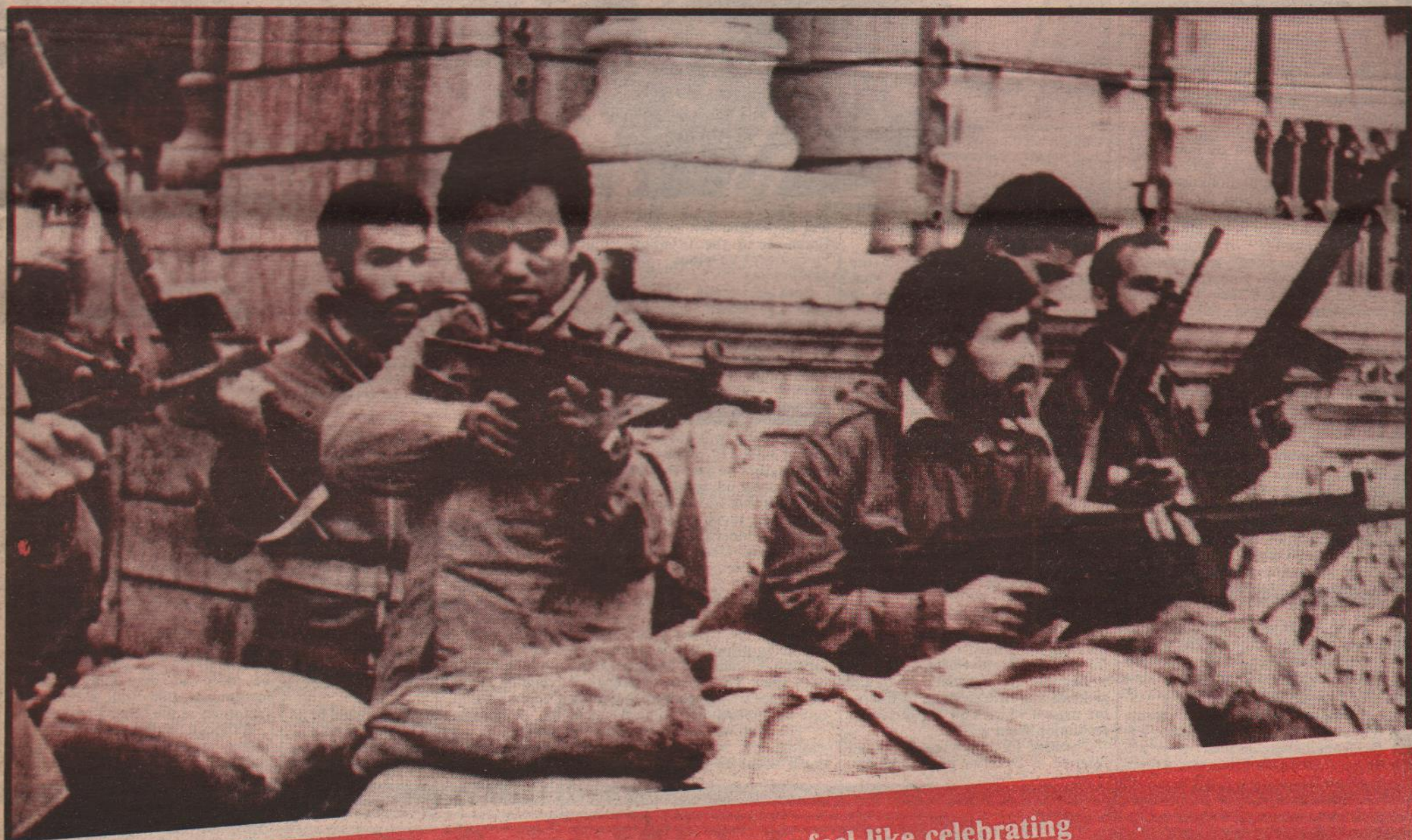


# Socialist Challenge

## IRAN: A NEW POWER IS BORN



'Revolutionary brothers and sisters we know that you feel like celebrating your victories but please don't fire your weapons aimlessly in the air. The enemy hasn't been completely defeated yet and we may still need those bullets...'

SABER NICKBIN AND BRIAN GROGAN REPORT FROM LIBERATED TEHRAN...P.3.  
More news and analysis on Iran...P.2, 4 & 5.



# Iran's February Revolution

'DON'T play at insurrection', Engels used to warn impatient and isolated revolutionaries. The Iranian masses demonstrated last weekend that they were in deadly earnest.

They resisted army attempts to impose law and order, raided arsenals, seized arms and inflicted defeat after defeat on troops loyal to the Shah.

Humiliated and concerned lest the masses follow through their victories by smashing the entire structure of the army, the military leaders sounded the retreat. They ordered the troops to return to the barracks. Some did. Others preferred to join the insurrectionaries.

The generals issued a pathetic statement: 'The army will remain neutral.' The masses laughed in their face. For the last year this 'neutral' army has been massacring thousands of Iranians.

The Shah's flight was the masses' first victory. The removal of his last appointed Prime Minister, Bakhtiar, marks the end of any hope the Shah may have had of saving his throne.

What makes the fall of Bakhtiar all the more important is that he did not withdraw 'gracefully' after negotiations. There was no peaceful transition. He was overthrown by a mass insurrection.

Even more importantly the insurrection achieved its immediate aim because the masses were armed. The guerrilla organisations now came into their own and took the initiative at several key moments.

The masses were politically armed by six months of continuous struggles. This armory was restricted to the overthrow of the autocracy, but this in itself gave their struggle a revolutionary dynamic.

At the crucial moment their political strength enabled them to take up real weapons and defeat the military offensive. The result was the fall of Bakhtiar and the storming of the Shah's fake parliament. Eleven thousand prisoners liberated themselves.

The radio and television stations were taken over by the workers and news of what was happening was broadcast to the rest of the country and the world. In his Moroccan retreat the once powerful autocrat heard Radio Tehran announcing the end of the monarchy.

Dual power now exists. But dual power does not automatically lead to the seizure of power by the oppressed masses. For the very term denotes that there are two powers in the land.

On the one hand is the Shah's army. It has suffered a serious blow, but it is far from being smashed. It is still under the control of the same officers



SECONDARY picketing — Tehran-style

who have organised large-scale repression.

But it could be crushed if the struggle continues and that is what Iranian revolutionaries will seek to ensure.

On the other side are the masses in motion. They are triumphant and proud of their successes. Rightly so. Their struggle offers hope to the victims of dictatorships throughout the world, starting with neighbouring Pakistan.

But the dual power which undoubtedly exists in Iran has yet to be institutionalised. Its political voice does not emerge as yet from discussions and debates in popular institutions or the base of a popular army. It comes from one man: Khomeini.

If this old man's obduracy and insistence on no compromises with the Shah has proved a major strength for the mass movement, it is his willingness to negotiate with the generals and his eagerness to disarm the masses which now threatens the revolution from within.

The BBC TV news a few weeks ago referred to Bakhtiar as a Kerensky.

The Economist last week compared Khomeini to the fifteenth century Florentine religious demagogue Savonarola.

Both are wrong. If anything he bears a closer resemblance to Kerensky, though analogies by their nature are never exact. That is why Lenin's insistence on 'a concrete analysis of the concrete situation' remains a far superior method.

Dual power will not last for ever. Sooner or later there will be a final test of strength. The mass movement is in an extremely advantageous situation at the moment. Its weakness lies in the fact that revolutionary workers' parties — indeed all working class political and trade union organisations — are very weak.

In our editorial statement on Iran last November we wrote:

'Even the most far-reaching bourgeois democracy is unlikely to satisfy the needs of the masses, who have spent months increasing their experience of independent organisation and independent political action.'

'The Shah will fall because he was pushed, not because of any vague death wish. In other words, what

exists in Iran today is an insurrectionary situation in which there is the possibility of the masses developing their own organisations of workers power — not simply to get rid of their present ruler, but to seize their own destiny once and for all.

'None of this is certain of course. The only thing we can predict with scientific accuracy is that everything is possible!

'One major obstacle still stands between the masses and power: an enormous armoury of repression furnished and maintained by imperialism.'

Events have tended to confirm our analysis. What is needed now is the generalisation and institutionalisation of the existing dual power. This will involve a struggle by the masses to retain their arms, the election of soldiers' committees and the establishment of armed workers militias to defend the masses against repression.

At the same time there should be no delay in organising immediate elections to a sovereign constituent assembly. It is only such a body which

can decide who forms a government. No administration appointed from above is acceptable.

If institutions existed which represented the masses more directly, institutions of a soviet type, and workers' or peasants' parties composed the majority, then we would argue for these parties to form a government based on soviet power.

But this power has yet to be created. Given the weakness of working class organisation it will develop out of the contradictions inbuilt into the struggle for a constituent assembly and democratic rights for the masses.

Such an assembly would be defended by armed sections of the masses. The trial of all generals and officers who participated in the massacres and their replacement by officers elected by the soldiery are both urgent measures. But they can only be carried through if the workers militias are strengthened rather than disarmed.

If elections for an assembly are organised the workers and peasants will need to form their own parties, trade unions and peasants' associations independent of all bourgeois forces. These would stand opposed to all varieties of mysticism, political and religious.

A revolutionary workers' party will fight for thoroughgoing land reforms, political and social rights for women, self-determination for the nationalities, nationalisation of all big capitalist firms under workers' control, and an end to all imperialist alliances. That is what Iranian Trotskyists are fighting for today. It is in the course of these struggles that a revolutionary party will be built.

The Iranian revolution will need to guard itself not just from its internal enemies. The latter have been sustained and backed by the United States and Britain. Imperialist strategy in the Middle East has suffered a serious setback with the fall of the Shah (see page 4) and the Pentagon planners will not give up Iran without a fight.

Their problem is that their only instrument in Iran is now the army. They need politicians and political parties. A concordat with Khomeini cannot be excluded, though the latter must realise that his mass support will diminish if he makes any deals.

Iranian revolutionary Marxists are presently engaged in building a section of the Fourth International. They and other revolutionaries must be aided in developing political instruments that will prevent any regression in the coming months.

Although the fall of the monarchy makes our political tasks more complex, everything is still possible.

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

\* I am interested in more information about activities in my area.

\* I would like additional literature and enclose 50p to cover costs.

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NAME

ADDRESS

Send to Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper St, London N1.

## OUR POLICIES

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

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

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

\* To begin to fight for the creation of a unified and democratic revolutionary socialist organisation which can, through an application of united front tactics, begin to be seen as an alternative by thousands of workers engaged in struggles. Such an organisation should be based on the understanding that:

**1** The struggle for socialism seeks to unite the fight of 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 the 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 seeing internal democracy not as a luxury but as a vital necessity. This means the right to organise factions and tendencies.



# 'This is the Voice of the Revolution'

By Saber Nickbin and Brian Grogan, Tehran.

TEHRAN has been liberated.

Apart from small pockets of resistance by troops loyal to the Pahlavi dictatorship, almost the entire city is in the hands of the masses after last weekend's mass armed insurrection.

The Bakhtiar government has been toppled and a provisional revolutionary government headed by Khomeini's nominee, Dr Mehdi Bazargan, has been proclaimed.

The insurrection began with a mutiny of **homafars**, airforce technicians, at Dowshan Tappeh airbase on the eastern outskirts of Tehran on Friday evening.

Elite units of the Imperial Guard were sent to the airbase to crush the rebels. News of the mutiny spread like wildfire throughout the city.

'The **homafars** have mutinied in Dowshan Tappeh. They are being attacked by those Imperial Guard murderers. We must go and help our courageous brothers the **homafars**!'

Thousands of demonstrators began gathering on the streets shouting, 'Long live the courageous and militant **homafars**! Death to the Immortal Guards!'

By Saturday morning thousands of armed and unarmed civilians mainly from the working class districts of south eastern Tehran had arrived at Dowshan Tappeh to support the rebels against the Imperial Guards.

The **homafars** broke into the airbase arsenal and handed out thousands of weapons to their civilian supporters. They set up sandbag barricades and soon a full scale battle had developed.

The insurrection had begun! Fighting spread to other parts of the city. The Imperial Guards were driven away from Dowshan Tappeh and a number of their Chieftain tanks captured and destroyed.

On Saturday afternoon the army tried in vain to impose another crackdown by declaring a curfew from 4.30pm on Saturday until 12 noon on Sunday.

Instead of returning to their homes millions of people throughout the city came out onto the streets. The soldiers

did not try to impose the curfew but disappeared from the streets.

All night there was frantic activity throughout the city. In every district inhabitants began setting up barricades, filling sandbags and distributing weapons and ammunition.

By Sunday morning they were ready for the final assault.

Detachments of what had now become known as the Peoples Armed Forces and Mojahedeen and Fadayee guerrillas began assaulting police stations, army barracks and other important locations.

The army generals realised the hopelessness of their position and broadcast statements on the radio that they were taking a 'neutral' position and had ordered their troops back to barracks:

'Up till now the Armed Forces have supported the legal government. But in the present situation we feel obliged to take a neutral position in the interest of national unity and prevention of further bloodshed.'

They had realised that further confrontation with the armed masses would lead to a total disintegration of the army and had decided to ditch Bakhtiar.

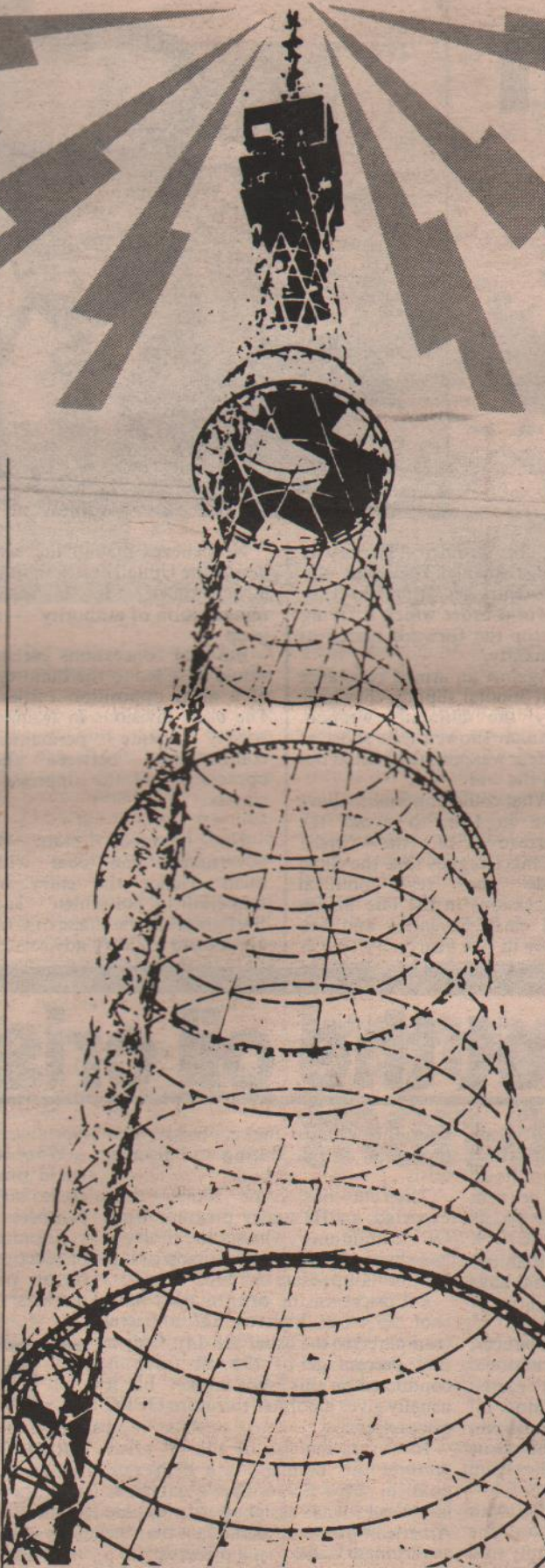
For the masses on the streets the generals' statement was a signal to intensify their armed assaults. By dusk all police stations, the headquarters of the paramilitary gendarmerie, a number of army barracks, the parliament, the prime minister's office, one of the Shah's palaces and many other important buildings were in the hands of the masses.

Thousands of soldiers had been captured or had surrendered and thousands of weapons distributed amongst civilians. At most of the army barracks demoralised and divided soldiers put up only a half-hearted resistance.

Only the Imperial Guards, who had moved out from their base into the city centre with Chieftain tanks, continued to put up fierce resistance.

The celebrated Chieftains have proved next to useless. In the restricted space of the city centre they have been easily overwhelmed by people with Molotov cocktails.

Saracen armoured cars have been taken intact and are being used by the masses in attacks on



## EYEWITNESS REPORT FROM IRAN

army-controlled installations.

The city's main prisons fell and tens of thousands of prisoners were released. At about 6pm, the state radio and television stations were captured from the soldiers who had occupied them for several months.

The radio programme was suddenly interrupted and a proud voice declared:

'This is the People's Radio of Iran, Voice of the Revolution. We have liberated the radio station from military occupation.'

The same voice continued to give instructions to armed units to move to districts where reinforcements were needed. Striking radio and television workers quickly returned to start running the stations.

'We thank you for liberating our radio and television station,' they declared to the masses on the air. 'It is now the true radio of the people, the voice of the revolution.'

'Once we manage to get the television working we will broadcast a film showing how the soldiers fled from the radio station in the face of our courageous fighters.'

'You should also know that by the time we arrived all but one of the scabs who had cooperated with the military had fled. We will never allow them to return.'

The Voice of the Revolution then continued with a programme of revolutionary songs and music, interrupted from time to time with news bulletins about the fighting and instructions to units of the Peoples Armed Forces and various requests of help from unarmed civilians.

'Surgeons and anaesthetists are badly needed at such and such hospital...Blood donors are immediately required in such and such locations...cars are needed to transport medical supplies...'

'People's homes are in danger of burning down in such and such district. We call on our brothers in the fire brigade to immediately go to this area...'

'There are reports that the director of Pars Air is planning to escape in a private plane with large sums of money. Airport workers are alerted to arrest him...'

'Danger! Danger! Danger! There are reports that Chieftain

tanks of the former dictatorship are moving towards your radio station. We call on units of the Mojahedeen and Fadayee guerrillas and other armed revolutionaries in the vicinity to come and defend the radio station...'

'Revolutionary brothers and sisters we know that you feel like celebrating your victories but please don't fire your weapons aimlessly in the air. The enemy hasn't been completely defeated yet and we may still need those bullets...'

On Sunday evening Khomeini broadcast a message to the people. He warned that the struggle is still not over and they must continue to be on their guard against the enemy.

He urged everyone to support and obey his provisional Islamic government. But his main message was that 'peace and calm' should quickly be restored and that private and public property should be respected.

Khomeini's speech was soon followed by a short speech by Bazargan, introduced as the Prime Minister of Iran. He said that the declaration by the armed forces that they would remain 'neutral' and assurances of loyalty to his government by the army chief of staff were a great victory for the people and called on armed units to immediately cease attacks on the army.

'As Imam Khomeini has said, the army are of the people and the people of the army. We must treat them as our brothers.'

The Fadayee guerrillas seem to have played a prominent role in the insurrection. Together with the Moslem Mojahedeen guerrillas they now control most of the armed units.

In contrast to Bazargan's line of compromise their message on the radio said that the remnants of the Shah's army must be destroyed and replaced by a people's army.

Meanwhile in the streets the armed masses don't seem to have taken much notice of Bazargan's pleas. They have seen too many of their comrades slaughtered by the Shah's army to believe that it is now 'neutral'.

They are continuing their assaults on army installations and occupying other government buildings.



# INTERNATIONAL

## Imperialism and Iran Permanent counter- revolution

'THE fundamental challenge of a revolution is this: certainly wise governments forestall revolutions by making timely concessions; indeed the very wisest governments do not consider adaptations as concessions, but rather as part of a natural process of increasing popular support.

'However, once a revolution is in train it cannot then be moderated by concessions. Once a revolution has occurred, the pre-eminent requirement is the restoration of authority.'

Henry Kissinger, interviewed in  
*The Economist*, 10 February 1979.

By Tariq Ali

CONFERENCE  
Saturday 31 March,

University College, London  
Committee Against Repression in Iran

Speakers invited include Fred Halliday, Hull and Liverpool dockers, and shop stewards from the Vickers Combine Committee.



EVENTS in Iran took the United States by surprise. It has still to recover its poise.

Like a wounded elephant it is stumbling, unsure of direction. The fall of the Shah has left it without a political instrument. The hunt is on.

While imperialist strategists in Washington are working out a line, the former Secretary of State has published a sharp factional attack on American policy, in a lengthy two-part interview in *The Economist*.

Kissinger's line is simple: permanent counter-revolution. Capital has to be maintained at all costs and through direct military interventions if neces-

sary. Democracy is of no real concern: 'In pre-empting the situation a sophisticated human rights policy can help. In dealing with revolutionary situations it can be inflammatory. In Iran our human rights policy has contributed to instability.'

The aim of the interview is to boost his own standing and embarrass the Carter regime. If General Haig is the next Republican presidential candidate Henry will not go unrewarded!

But Kissinger and other imperialist strategists are always confronted with an

insoluble problem. History is against them. They are the representatives of an imperialist world order which is trying to stop the forward march of humanity.

Against an armed resistance with popular support they have only the ultimate weapon. Vietnam showed that short of nuclear weapons they could not win the war.

What could imperialism have done in Iran to avoid the overthrow of the Shah? Kissinger argues that the Shah made too few political concessions in the late Sixties and early Seventies and too many in one year.

He believes that in the last period the United States should have argued for a 'local reimposition of authority' — a coup.

But real concessions earlier would have led to the build-up of a mass opposition earlier. The basic divisions in Iranian society create permanent confrontation between the oppressed and the oppressor classes.

No bourgeois state or government can deal with them. Hence the entry of 'imperialist policemen' and firefighters in the shape of CIA agents and military advisers.

If the army had carried out a coup it would have been resisted, as the present situation shows. So the risks would be enormous.

Kissinger's belief that 'a combination of the National Front and the army is likely to be more sympathetic to our objectives than almost any other grouping' makes more sense — but it's a bit late!

In the face of permanent counter-revolution on a global scale, what is needed is a revolutionary foreign policy by the Soviet Union and China. But the split within Stalinism leads China to a virtual alliance with imperialism against the

Soviet Union.

The latter maintains its own policies of accommodations and manoeuvres to avoid revolution. But there is an objective tension between the Soviet Union and imperialism which revolutionaries can exploit, though the price they pay in return is high (Cuba, Vietnam).

The lack of a proletarian internationalist policy in either Peking or Moscow places a heavy burden on the small band of internationalists in the labour movement in the imperialist countries. Our efforts in building solidarity must be multiplied in the coming weeks.

## Spot the oil crisis

By Richard Carver

'CRISIS, what crisis?' The Prime Minister's immortal catchphrase has quickly become a popular parlour game — and nowhere more appropriately than in the oil trade, where 'Spot the Crisis' has been a perennial pastime since 1973.

James Schlesinger, the US Energy Secretary, played a familiar opening gambit last week, with his announcement that 'the world oil crisis created by the stoppage of Iranian oil exports was prospectively more serious than the 1973-4 crisis when the oil price rose fourfold in as many months.'

Schlesinger's remarks immediately upset the world money market. The price of gold shot up and the dollar fell several points.

This in turn drew a few acid comments from Schlesinger's opposite number at the US Treasury, Michael Blumenthal: 'Secretary Schlesinger's statement yesterday that the situation in Iran is serious is clearly the kind of thing that makes people run to gold.'

On the one hand calculated alarmism; on the other placid Callaghanism.

Who is right? Is there an oil crisis? There is evidently an oil shortage, which is not quite the same thing. A drop in Iranian exports from something like 6 million barrels a day to nothing is not negligible.

Even when lost production is made up elsewhere, the dislocation of the

world oil industry is bound to create shortages. For example, British Petroleum, which gets the bulk of its oil from Iran, has announced a 45 per cent cutback in supplies of crude to its customers in the first quarter of 1979.

But 'shortages' are also manipulated. Britain, for example, could have made up its 14 per cent shortfall out of North Sea production.

But as well as being an oil producer, Britain is a member of the International Energy Agency, a consumers' cartel. IEA rules require that before more oil can be kept for domestic use Britain must increase exports by the same amount as the shortfall in supplies from Iran.

The oil companies are happy with this, since it keeps their profits up. The poor British consumer was simply told to blame it on bloody-minded tanker drivers.

But despite local shortages two things have protected the capitalist economies from the full impact of the cutback.

First, there is the safety margin operated by the oil consumers. World stocks always have at least 90 days' oil in reserve. At the moment they probably have 20 days more than that.

Secondly, Saudi Arabia has been prepared to make up a large part of the shortfall. Political and military dependence on the US has always made Saudi Arabia the most 'moderate' of the oil producers.

But it was always inevitable that the Saudis would have to cut production

later this year to make up for their increased output during the Iranian crisis.

The cut has come sooner than expected, partly under pressure from OPEC 'militants', who see the shortage as a chance for a price rise on top of last October's moderate increase.

Oil prices on the open market have shot up to as high as \$22 a barrel (compared to the usual \$13-14). Only a tiny percentage of the oil trade is conducted on this 'spot market' but it usually gives a pointer to future OPEC prices rises.

However, the use of the oil crisis scare at this moment is a deliberate political move. Schlesinger's statement last week was designed to prepare American workers for the fact that the government wants to put prices up.

The 'greedy Arabs' theory is useful for getting workers to accept unpalatable measures. It was widely used to explain the 1974-75 recession.

The argument was that the famous 'petrodollars' were withdrawn from circulation leading to a contraction of demand and production in the industrialised countries. A similar explanation was the idea that the 1974 crisis was a redistribution of wealth between rich and poor countries.

The entire argument rested on a false assumption. The petrodollars did not disappear into the vaults of Riyadh but were pumped back into the world financial system. What was happening was a redistribution of surplus value among different sectors of the capitalist

world.

What worries James Schlesinger is not a simple rerun of that economic crisis but a far gloomier political prospect.

Khomeini's plan for reducing production is no longer seen as the main threat. What now scares the financial markets and the oil company

boardrooms is the bogey that they themselves conjured up in 1974 — the 'third world' taking its revenge by turning off the taps.

In 1974 this was a propaganda exercise. In 1979, with the imperialist hold on Iran weaker than ever, the people could seize the oilfields and make it a joyful reality.

## DANGER-profits at risk!

BRITISH press reporting of the weekend's events was up to its usual high standard. 'The mob', 'the rag tag rebels', 'their bloodstained grip', 'an orgy of looting' — such phrases are not used lightly. This was a sure indication of something fundamental at stake — British profits.

The greatest fear is that any future Iranian government might simply nationalise the oil industry, lock, stock and [dare we say it?] barrel.

But Iran is also a major trading partner. British exports there totalled \$655 million in 1977. But now the \$2 billion contract for 1300 Chieftain tanks will probably be cut. So will a number of private defence contracts, the main one being the \$800 million British Aerospace deal for Rapier anti-aircraft missiles.

Iran has already cancelled \$7 billion worth of arms contracts out of an outstanding \$12 billion with the United

States.

Fleet Street will no doubt now expend considerable energy proving that Iranian workers are responsible for British unemployment.

The answer to this already exists. The Vickers National Combine Committee has drawn up a workers' plan for an alternative to building Chieftain tanks. Instead they propose making manufacturing equipment, mining machinery and energy and environmental devices.

There is already the celebrated example of the Lucas workers' plan for manufacturing socially useful products. A fight for the arguments in these plans — and the development of similar ideas in other firms — will be the perfect answer to those who argue that British jobs are dependent on mass murder in Iran.

\* For news of the struggle against redundancies in Vickers turn to page 6.



# INTERNATIONAL

## Iranian Trotskyists' statement

# 'The revolution cannot be stopped halfway'

MORALE is high in the heavily armed headquarters of the Socialist Workers Party, the new united Iranian Trotskyist organisation.

The comrades are pleased at the success of their paper **Che Bayad Kard** (What is to be Done?). In the days between Khomeini's return and the insurrection it was the only paper accurately to predict the role the army would play. This has won it a growing audience.

The new organisation, which supports the Fourth International, is composed of groups from exile in Europe and North America, a group originating in Iran, and the Iranian supporters of the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International.

Here we reprint the SWP's statement on the events of the last few days.

THE last bastions of the Pahlavi monarchy fell with the Bakhtiari government, the generals and the American imperialist advisers.

This historic victory has paved the way for winning freedom and throwing off the yoke of imperialism, autocracy and backwardness.

Today it is clear that artillery, tanks and machine guns cannot break the will of the people.

Today it is clear that to win freedom we had to overthrow the army and government of the Pahlavi court and its capitalist parasites.

The workers and all the toilers, the real producers in society, displayed a tremendous solidarity throughout the country in their brave and historic struggle.

A new power is arising — the power of workers and toilers in city and countryside, the power of tens of millions of the oppressed and downtrodden.

It is this power that can free our country of all the vestiges of dictatorship, poverty and backwardness and rebuild society on a new basis.

The fight to establish a democratic regime, which has been the central fight in this century, has never been so close to being won.

The Socialist Workers Party, which has been founded on the basis of a fusion of Trotskyist forces adhering to the Fourth International, hails this victory.

Historical obstacles to freedom and progress, represented by the monarchy, have been shattered.

The next step for all the workers and toilers can be summarised in one sentence: forward to the immediate convocation of a constituent assembly.

The present victory was won by the oppressed of Iran and it is the result of the stubborn and self-sacrificing struggle of tens of millions.

The future government that

### Our Comrade

**KAVOOS Hemmatianpoor**, a 20-year-old Trotskyist, was shot dead in the assault on Eshrat Abad army barracks, the second largest in Tehran, on Sunday 11 February. He died gun in hand.

Kavoos was a student of English at the National University of Tehran. Last summer he joined the group of revolutionaries which now produces the paper **Che Bayad Kard** (What is to be Done?) and which is in the process of fusion with other Trotskyist organisations.

We salute his memory.

can free Iran from the evils of imperialist domination the terror of autocracy and historical backwardness must also be decided by the people themselves.

Only the masses themselves, through discussions leading to decisions, can offer a real solution to the crisis forced upon our society by imperialism and absolutism.

The immediate convocation of a fully representative constituent assembly, in which all critical forces can participate, is the only way that the will of the people can find true expression.

Thus an assembly that represents the sovereign people will not be responsible to any authority but the people themselves and will recognise no power of others.

It should be based on direct, equal and secret ballot. Literates and illiterates should have voting rights. The high school youth who have displayed so much daring and self-sacrifice should vote.



The soldiers, those sons of the workers and peasants, who have solidified with the revolution, should have the right to vote. All the women and men of this land should be able to participate in elections to a constituent assembly.

The mass struggle organisations which shattered the rule of the autocracy should oversee the elections.

No government appointed from above can bring freedom to Iran and no such government can defend the gains of the revolution against the imperialist powers and reactionary forces.

This is possible only by relying on the power which made the present victory possible — the power of the masses — and by expanding and deepening the mass struggles, such as the occupation and protection of factories by the workers, expansion of the armed reservations in the neighbourhoods and the opening of secret files of SAVAK crimes, the opening of the books of the imperialist firms by the workers, the exposure of the crimes of the Pahlavi terror over the last 25 years, and bringing those responsible to the justice of the workers and toilers.

The constituent assembly, the expression of the people's will, will defend and support all these struggles and through democratic discussion will decide the big and the small questions and from that of nationalising imperialist mines, companies and banks, to ending the national oppression of Azerbaijan, Kurdistan and Baluchistan, to winning equal rights for women, to guaranteeing freedom of expression and assembly, to workers' control of the factories.

It is only through the immediate convocation of a constituent assembly that the people can be sovereign.

The central question facing the constituent assembly will be deciding on the future of government. The Socialist Workers Party proposes the

establishment of a workers' and peasants' republic, that is a government that supports the struggle of the workers and toilers of city and countryside.

The problems facing Iranian society from political repression to backwardness and poverty, cannot be resolved by a capitalist government.

No capitalist government will nationalise industry, encourage the seizure and distribution of land to the peasantry or the liberation of

Kurdistan, Azerbaijan and Baluchistan from the yoke of national oppression.

The train of the revolution cannot be stopped halfway, because this will result in being pushed back again. Government by internal or external exploiters should be ended.

With the establishment of a workers' and peasants' republic the historical demands of political and economic independence will become a reality and the chains of backward-

ness, poverty and political repression will be broken and the door opened to an era of freedom and abundance.

The masses achieved the present gigantic victory by their own power and only by relying on our own forces can we guarantee the final victory of the revolution.

Long live the Iranian revolution!  
For the convocation of the constituent assembly!

## Iran and Chile - more than an ocean apart

By John Ross

THE working class can smash even the most well trained and politically prepared modern army. That is one of the many lessons of Iran.

This puts into place all the propaganda of the Communist Parties and their insistence on the 'peaceful road to socialism'.

It is impossible to defeat the military, they have declared. The Communist Parties have insisted that revolutionary socialists have no practical explanation of how to destroy an army.

Instead, they have told us, we must ally with progressive generals and officers and at all costs avoid a clash with the armed forces.

And this advice has been put into practice. Chile is the most obvious example. The Chilean Communist Party supported putting generals in Allende's government.

CP leader Luis Corvalan insisted in 1970 that the army 'retained their spirit of professionalism, their respect for the constitution and the law'.

The party supported the generals' crackdown on rank and file opposition in the armed

forces — for instance against the sailors' mutiny of summer 1973.

Everything was aimed at avoiding a conflict with the army. The result was the bloody military coup of September 1973.

Chile is only one example. In Indonesia in 1965 half a million people were killed by a military coup against a CP-backed government.

Today there is the terror in Argentina, where the CP actually welcomed the 1976 coup. This is the record of the 'peaceful road'.

Each time the Communist Parties have argued that there is no alternative, that only romantic dreamers of the ultra left can imagine that the masses have the capacity for defeating a modern army.

No other army in the world was as well equipped, as well trained and as well indoctrinated as that of the Shah. Today this army is in tatters.

The Iranian masses have shown that if the mobilisations are great enough they make cracks in even the most monolithic and well-trained machines. Into these cracks the people can move, to fraternise with troops and begin to win

sections over.

The organisation of the masses encourages the troops to resist. As the fighting starts the military forces crack up and defiance of the people is reduced to the most hard core and elite units.

Against a mass mobilisation of millions, aided by even a few dissident troops, those units which will never be won over can be crushed.

This is the pattern of revolution — this is what is happening in Iran.

What is vital is that right from the start the working class is told that it needs to crush the violence of the enemy.

The millions who have come onto the streets of Iran in the past year have shown their willingness to defy the military might of the Shah. Thousands have died, but many more have returned to the streets.

Such mass mobilisation and the arming of the people which has accompanied it have proved decisive. A soldier who mutinies cannot afford to choose a losing side; he would be shot without mercy. When the masses begin to fight back and arm themselves that gives the ranks the necessary encouragement.



FRONT PAGE of **Che Bayad Kard** No 1. Copies are available for 15p plus p&p from Socialist Challenge [Iran].



# HOME NEWS

## Union leaders to blame BL strike call rejected

THE CALL by union leaders for an all-out strike in British Leyland was massively rejected by the workforce. The Longbridge walk-out was the only one at a major plant. The others — Rover, Jaguar, Triumph, and Cowley — all voted against strike action.

By Pat Hickey  
Deputy Senior Steward, SD No 1 plant, Birmingham

The uneven response of BL's workers was only partially due to the fact that some of the plants had little or nothing to gain from the parity programme.

Even plants like Cowley which had been promised substantial benefits from the parity pledges voted against action.

BL argued that the parity payments were dependent on achieving agreed productivity targets, and that as these targets had not been met the payments would be postponed.

But the lack of enthusiasm for

strike action was not so much due to management trickery. Rather it was a direct result of the course the union leadership at BL has pursued for the past five years.

Every year national and most plant union leaderships have urged the membership to sell jobs and conditions and to accept paltry wage rises in order to make BL profitable.

They have opposed attempts to confront the management by saying that this would involve confronting the government, and that it is impossible to defeat the government.

Consequently company propaganda about large scale

closure if the strikes went ahead gained a certain credibility. Management was merely repeating arguments that the union leadership had been using for years.

There was the further complicating factor that the Leyland combine joint negotiating committee had recommended acceptance of the parity deal last November — including the 'self-financing' aspect of the deal.

Many workers felt that the union negotiators were well aware that the company meant what it said when it talked of 'self-financing'.

Or that the negotiators had purposely avoided seeking precise information on the productivity required because they wanted to avoid a confrontation.

As a Solihull convenor put it,

'the management did not seem to want us to ask questions'. So the questions weren't asked.

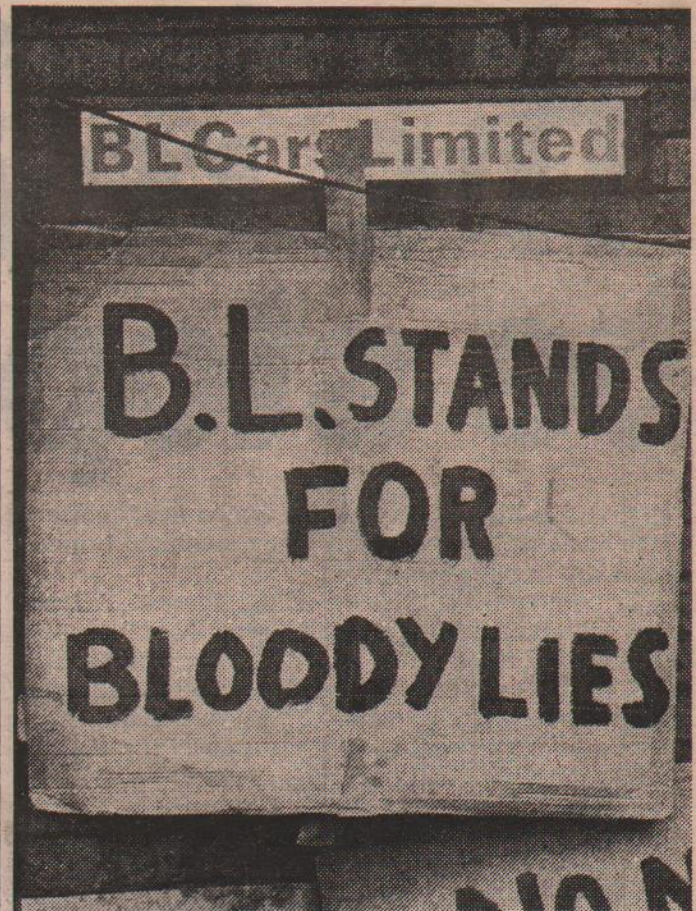
There is no hiding the defeat that the rejection of the strike call means for BL's workforce. It will give the company the green light to step up its attacks.

The five year plan involving plant closures and 20,000 redundancies will be speeded up, while wages will continue to be held down.

But a fightback will not be developed through bureaucratic strike calls issued to a demoralised and misled union membership.

The situation faced by BL workers requires political answers to the problems of jobs and profitability.

Unless those answers are developed it could soon be a situation of few jobs but much profitability at BL.



## Vickers workers campaign against closures

'WE ARE putting everything we've got into saving Scotswood. It's a real test of the strength of the shop stewards movement and of the combine committee.'

That's how Vickers Scotswood convenor Peter Tolchard puts it, and it's a pretty general view among leading shop stewards in the company. Already an aggressive campaign is under way, which began with a massive demonstration through Newcastle on 2 February.

By Hilary Wainwright

A threat of closure requires a major leap in workers' confidence and organisation to challenge management's control over investment, the government's refusal to intervene, the 'facts' of the market.

The Scotswood campaign has the sort of case on which a very broad and self-confident campaign can be built. The fight is against management's deliberate sabotage of viable and vital productive capacity (in heavy engineering).

It isn't that Vickers don't have the money to invest in Scotswood; Vickers is expecting £150m. in 'compensation' for the nationalisation of shipbuilding and aerospace.

It isn't that the markets aren't there for heavy engineering; major orders have been turned away and Chinese orders could be a real possibility.

It is simply that the profit and loss accountants on the 19th floor of Millbank Tower (Vickers HQ) have calculated that investment in Scotswood — and, for that matter, heavy engineering more generally — does not add enough to the profits side of the balance sheet.

The campaign's arguments have already had a wide hearing on Tyneside, and increasingly nationally.

Support has come from the most diverse sources: from workers at all the main Vickers plants in the country; from shop stewards committees in other companies on Tyneside; from trades councils and

tenants groups; from Tyne and Wear County Council, which has promised £10,000 towards the campaign; from MPs; and even from local parish priests.

But all this would be just so much froth if the campaign lacked real industrial muscle, and the will to use it.

The leadership of the campaign recognise this. Jim Murray, secretary of the campaign committee, puts it like this:

'Only industrial action will hit Vickers where it hurts. And this is what we are building up to: industrial action throughout Vickers led by the North East.'

Mass meetings at Elswick and Michell Bearings (the two other plants along the Scotswood Road) have committed themselves to it. The Confed. has agreed to support it now that procedure has been exhausted.

'The political lobbying and the widening of support — all communicated to the members through a weekly campaign bulletin — will help to build up the strength and will of the members.'

'I don't think Vickers realise what they've taken on. They believe their own propaganda too much.'

This is certainly true in relation to the combine committee. Vickers just refuse to believe that workers in such a multi-product company (ranging from huge dock cranes and power presses at Scotswood, through armaments at Elswick, duplicators and office furniture, highly sophisticated



PARSONS demonstration against redundancies on Tyneside in 1977, supported by Vickers workers

machine tools in Brighton, to fibre glass submersibles on the North Yorkshire Moors) would be able to build a strong unofficial combine organisation.

'Why on earth should they want to meet; they've nothing in common', management would bleat uncomprehendingly.

The rationalisations which began in the early '70s — of which Scotswood is the latest — provide the answer, the problem which workers in Vickers (as in other corporations) have in common.

And since 1974 a combine committee has gradually — at times precariously — been spreading its grip on Vickers

management. Its organisation is still very uneven, but nearly every meeting includes a new delegate.

In more ways than one, then, Vickers is on the run.

But don't Vickers have a resource which will win them the last lap — the power to offer high redundancy money?

This argument has worked in the past because workers have

seen no future in their job.

At Scotswood the campaign is showing clearly that there is a future, if Vickers are forced to invest: a short term future with existing products, and a longer term one with alternative, socially necessary products.

Another reason why trade unionists often end up selling jobs is because there is not the pressure reminding them of the effects of the job loss on the rest of the working class community and its future.

But in the case of Scotswood, the wide industrial and political commitment which is growing around the campaign is, in effect, saying 'these 750 jobs concern us all, these are not your jobs to sell'.

But there is a final problem: the role of the official negotiators, the Confed. (Confederation of Shipbuilding Engineering Unions).

After all, it was deals and delays coming from this direction which boxed in the workers at Speke, making the redundancy money seem to be the only way to make the best of a bad situation.

At Scotswood, however, the stewards have not waited for the officials. The shopfloor and office campaign committee have so far set the pace, pulling the Confed. behind them.

At CA Parsons on Tyneside, and now at Lucas Aerospace, this is proving the only way to win. If the Scotswood campaign committee, backed by the combine, can keep the initiative, then there is a real possibility of victory.

All possible messages of support will help. Send to: Save Scotswood Campaign, 12 St Albans Terrace, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear.

Full details about Vickers and the workers' struggle against it will be found in the forthcoming Works Report on Vickers, by Hw Beynon and Hilary Wainwright in association with the Vickers combine committee, to be published soon by Pluto Press.

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)



# HOME NEWS

## No concordat, but A workers' plan to beat the crisis

IN BREACH of the decisions of every major union conference, of the TUC Congress and of the Labour Party Conference, the government and the TUC General Council are putting the finishing touches to a new social contract — the so-called concordat.

By Jonathan Silberman

The substance of the concordat is reminiscent of an editorial in the *Daily Express*.

'There is no answer to all society's problems in confrontation', the concordat declares, 'we are all part of a community of interest'; what's needed is a 'general consensus in society'.

At the heart of this 'consensus' must be a 'partnership between the government and the trade union movement' as the basis for 'economic recovery'.

Many political commentators have stressed the unreal character of the concordat. There is no way it will bail out the Labour government in election terms.

The government's savage anti-working class policies over the past four years will ensure a massive Labour abstention in the General Election later this year.

Nor will the concordat roll back the immediate struggles on wages. The public sector strike is intensifying. The engineers' claim for 33 per cent and a 35-hour week was submitted this week.

Despite this, the proposals should by no means be written off as an irrelevant and vain face-saving attempt by Callaghan and company.

In the first place, the concordat represents a continuing political offensive aimed at weakening militant workers' struggles. It harps on about collaboration between the 'trade union movement' and the 'government', and goes on to specify some of the content of such collaboration.

It includes provision for increased use of secret ballots in deciding on strike action; a strict code of conduct on picketing, and a 'more flexible' interpretation of closed shop agreements.

Finally, it provides for an annual tripartite arrangement including the government, the CBI and the TUC to decide on the general level of wage settlements.

In a veiled passage, it lays down that by 1982 wage rises must be below 5 per cent.

In the absence of any alternative coming from any leading Labour politician or trade union leader, this political offensive will have some impact.

It will give a real fillip to the Tory offensive on industrial relations.

Ken Gill, TUC General Council member and leading member of the Communist Party, went on radio on Sunday to say that the concordat would mean 'death to the trade unions' if there were to be a tripartite arrangement for deciding wage levels.

But Gill put forward no alternative to the concordat's basic formula, other than that a higher growth rate 'of 10 per cent' would allow for larger wage rises.

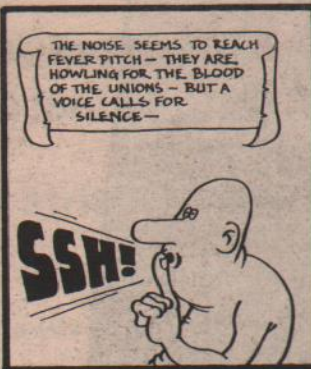
He made no appeal to recall the TUC to stop this attempt to overturn Congress decisions. 'Put agreed policy into concordat' was the headline of the *Morning Star* on Monday.

Initiatives from rank and file workers are pointing the way to an alternative to Callaghan's schemes. Cutting unemployment is suggested by the fight for the 35-hour week, and by workers' plans at Lucas and Vickers for the production of socially useful products.

Decisions by democratically elected strike committees in the both the lorry drivers' and public sector strikes on the provision of essential services answer the strike-breaking schemes of the employers.

Demands by teachers for cutting class sizes would both improve education and employ out-of-work teachers. Similarly, the call by building workers for a programme of direct public works would both cut unemployment and be socially useful.

Such actions and proposals are the start of, not a concordat, but a workers' plan to beat the crisis.



### Harrow

By Sue Spilling  
COHSE shop steward

THE struggle in Harrow is centring on Northwick Park Hospital. Lightning strikes have been taken by ancillary staff, and all members of the COHSE branch — including nurses and clerical staff — have operated overtime bans and work to rules.

Nurses at the hospital will be stepping up action in pursuit of their own pay claim. Indeed nurses in the psychiatric ward have already staged a one-day strike. However, closure of this ward resulted from staff shortages.

The situation at Northwick displays the link between the low pay of NHS workers and the crisis in the health service.

The cancer ward of the hospital was closed last Christmas due to staff shortages, while two private hospitals are under construction in Harrow and many staff at Northwick have already signed up to work there.

Low pay is driving NHS workers into the private sector.

order, the council promised that the workers would be sent home without pay.

The NUPE assistant divisional organiser, Alan Taylor, replied: 'All assurances on emergency services are now withdrawn. If any lives are lost as a result, the blame lies with the political leaders in Cleveland.'

The same night a meeting of shop stewards in Cleveland from NUPE, TGWU, and GMWU decided on an eight-point plan for escalating the dispute. This involves action by 10,000 workers in health, sewage, refuse, schools and town halls.

In both Stockton and Middlesbrough, pickets have been mounted by residents in two working class communities. The residents object to their districts being used as emergency dumps.

They have been turning away car-loads of rubbish from more prosperous areas.

### Nottingham

By Graham Attwell  
NUPE shop steward, Notts County Council

GROWING unrest with the leadership and its strategy during the past few weeks has characterised the public sector struggle in Nottingham.

Meetings of Nottingham No. 3 and social services branches have recently passed motions calling for all-out strike action.

In the city of Nottingham refuse collectors have called on their union, the GMWU, to call an all-out strike. They are unhappy about being called out alone and used as a spearhead.

Similar discontent is being expressed in NUPE and anger erupted when full-time officials ordered social services drivers to call off an overtime ban.

After several stormy union meetings the ban was unofficially reintroduced. The Campaign for Action in NUPE has undergone a rapid growth in the area and the 1,250 copies of the latest CAN bulletin ran out within two days.

### Liverpool

WITH most Liverpool hospitals operating an emergency-only service due to selective strikes, Merseyside Action Campaign Against Low Pay is calling a shop stewards conference for 18 February.

The conference will discuss the tactics involved in the strike, whether selective action is the best way to win, and whether union officials or the rank-and-file should control such action.

Sponsors of the conference include Whiston Hospital NUPE branch and South Sefton district committee of NUPE.

Sunday's meeting will take place at the SOGAT Hall, County Rd, Walton from 11.30am to 4pm. Credentials from: Kevin Earley, NUPE office, Walton Hospital, Rice Lane, Liverpool.

### West Glamorgan

By Glyn Jones  
NUPE shop steward

NUPE members in West Glamorgan have inflicted a heavy defeat on their local employers who had attempted to victimise workers taking action in pursuit of the £60, 35-hour week claim.

It was on 22 January that the West Glamorgan Health Authority told its employees that if they didn't work 'normally' they wouldn't work at all.

In line with this threat, 119 ambulance drivers were locked-out after saying they would operate an 'emergency only' service.

The NUPE area shop stewards committee for health hit back by organising a series of actions. Domestic workers worked to rule, porters took selective strikes, and laundry workers operated a restricted service.

The central store for half of Wales's hospitals was also reduced to emergency levels by NUPE pickets.

But last week eight porters taking part in the action in two hospitals were suspended by management. The reply from the union was to mount pickets in every hospital and depot in the area, leaving hardly any emergency cover.

The unofficial Ambulance National Committee threatened an all-out strike if its members in West Glamorgan weren't permitted to work emergency-only services.

These displays of militancy forced the area health authority to back down. Last Friday they gave in on the ambulance dispute and on Saturday lifted the suspensions against the porters.

### Camden

By Jane Sirkett  
NUPE steward for porters, Royal Free Hospital

WE HAVE been taking selective action for the claim, but we are also trying to take up the question of opposing the cuts.

The theatre sterile supplies unit at the Royal Free is on strike, with some emergency cover. This has reduced the number of operations from 45 a day to six.

Porters are holding lightning strikes and working to rule, but since the management brought in voluntary labour on the 22 January day of action we feel they broke the rules — so we're settling on our own rules.

One of our rules is that we won't service private patients. The beds have now been filled with health service medical cases.

We have a strike committee of the stewards which is meeting regularly and we'll be in contact with the striking council workers about what refuse collection we need.

Their strike committee has agreed to this emergency cover, operated

through the union.

\* Jane Sirkett was one of the speakers at a meeting on the public sector claim held by Camden Socialist Challenge Group on 7 February. Thirty attended.

Camden NUPE has called for a support committee to organise solidarity with their strike (see centre pages). This meets next on Tuesday, 20 February, 7.30pm, Greenlands Road Community Centre, London NW1.

### Teachers out

TEACHERS at half a dozen London schools refused to cross NUPE picket lines during a one-day strike by caretakers, cleaners, and school meals staff on 7 February.

Among those taking solidarity action were groups of teachers at Central Foundation, Langdon Park, and Morpeth secondary schools in East London. Other schools were forced to close for the day.

At Quinton Kynaston school in NW London, 18 out of 75 teachers refused to cross the picket line. This action was agreed at an NUT meeting held earlier at the school.

NUPE's London divisional council has now called on all trade unionists not to cross picket lines, and has promised full support for any teachers victimised as a result of their solidarity action.

The Socialist Teachers Alliance has said that while individual acts of solidarity by teachers would lay them open to victimisation by the NUT leadership, militants should aim to lead groups of teachers in solidarity action.

This would provide a basis for countering the NUT's order to scab, and help to prepare the fight over the teachers' own pay claim.

\* The NUT committee at Vauxhall Manor school in South London declared its opposition last Thursday to the 35 per cent claim lodged by the union leadership.

By favouring the top grades, the claim would widen existing differentials. The committee has called for a £25 flat rate increase, and is organising a picket of the NUT headquarters when Inner London union officials meet there to discuss the claim.

The picket is on Saturday, 24 February, 9.30am, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1.

### Gay TU conferences

THE Campaign for Homosexual Equality has organised a series of regional conferences on the problems of taking up the issue of gay oppression in the unions.

The conferences are in: Newcastle — 3 Mar; Bristol — 17 Mar; London — 3 Apr; Manchester — not yet fixed. For details contact local gay groups or Chris Beer, 01-785 9515.





Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

GEORGE TOMS, refuse collector: 'I was surprised at the vote at the mass meeting. There were a lot of people who didn't want to come out; people like caretakers on the estates, who were worried that they'd have to pay rent on their free flats if they were on strike. 'But we have to pay rent all the time. We've already been out for over a week, and we don't want the rest sitting back depending on us. 'It's solid at my depot for the all-out strike. That's what the NUPE executive should be calling for, but they want to sit back and let us do the work for them.'

**BY A SMALL MAJORITY-590 votes to 480 meeting on Tuesday of last week to go The difficulties involved in implementing Camden NUPE general branch's 2,500 members of the all-out action.**

**JUDE WOODWARD and GEOFFREY SIMONS pickets, and hearing the anxiety of home helps...**

DAY TWO of the all-out strike in Camden last Thursday dawns with pickets on all the depots and at the town halls — old and new — in the North London borough.

There is a total shutdown of refuse collection, cleansing sections, transport, public baths, boilers, petrol pumps, catering, and cemetery workers.

Meals on wheels is operating a limited service only, and other low-paid council workers are also taking action.

Around the borough, strikers are beginning a day of picketing and organising.

The strike HQ — a tiny prefabricated hut set in the grounds of the council transport depot in Arlington Road — is in the eye of the storm.

Through here, dozens of people pass every hour, with queries, problems and suggestions. The single phone line is in constant use.

At the desk in the office sits John Suddaby, secretary of Camden NUPE general branch and a member of the International Marxist Group.

The strike HQ is a good place to get an idea of what is involved in an all-out strike by 2,500 local authority workers in one borough. This is a day in its life...

### 8.15am

A call from Sandra Wilson, an acting steward for the home helps. This afternoon the home helps will be at a mass meeting to discuss what emergency cover they should provide.

John suggests that when the council presents its list of emergency cases it should be checked, whittled down, and that half the wages paid to home helps on the emergency rota should be handed over to the strike fund.

Sandra doubts that the home helps will accept this. She anticipates problems at this afternoon's meeting.

### 8.30am

The council's chief executive is on the phone, the first of their many calls today. They want to know what progress has been made in deciding about emergency cover for home helps and meals on wheels.

John can't say for sure, pointing out that such cover will be exceedingly difficult unless the council provides the strike with premises and more than one phone.

The Holmes Road transport depot has only one picket on duty. The drivers will be coming in to receive their final week's pay at 3.30pm so John Devitt, the branch chairperson, is asked to make sure he's there to organise them into picket rotas.

### 8.36am

A nursery nurse phones: 'Am I supposed to be on strike?' No, she's told, because she is in the NUPE officers' branch, not NUPE general.

Later she'll ring to say that her two helpers aren't in any union and John will send off

membership forms. In the course of others will come in union.

Another woman if she is on strike — school cleaner, e the Inner London Authority. She's number of ILEA N

She says everyone out, whoever they by.

### 8.45am

A NUPE member complain that he allowed to start didn't know he w and doesn't want to

'Did you come meeting on Tue John. 'No, I don meetings.' Well th

The Thames programme phone to talk to a strik worker to put the s

At last the cou day centres and o risk arrives. It's long — but now c how to arrange cover can really be

### 9.00am

Everyone is rushing strike committee Camden Labour the phone won't

Someone calls union injury ber union business h despite the strike.

# CAMDEN: ANATOMY

start talking about conscience then you can forget the money.

'Either we go back and run the services — and I don't want to do that because I've spent the last three weeks convincing them that they ought to come out, and now they agree — or we arrange voluntary cover by all NUPE members.

'I'm not callous — but it can't be left on our shoulders, everyone's got to muck in.'

For meals on wheels to operate the kitchens will have to go back. And they won't go back for free, because to them it's just being asked to work in a steamy hot kitchen for nothing.

### 1.30pm

John is preparing to rush off to the home helps' meeting when the phone rings — a supervisor at the town hall. The pickets stopped the beer lorry and the barislow on beer.

John will talk to the pickets — 'but quite honestly I think I

know what they'll say, and I don't blame them.'

### 2.00pm

At North London Poly the 300 home helps in Camden NUPE are assembling to discuss emergency cover.

John introduces the discussion, saying that the meeting has been called to solve the problem of emergency cover. But the barracking starts immediately.

Opinions in the meeting are divided. Some women are saying that emergency cover means full cover and they should be allowed back to work.

Others argue that this is hypocrisy and everyone knows that many of the people they visit don't absolutely depend on their visits.

Others openly say that they don't want to lose the money. There is clearly an articulate right wing who know what they are about.

'Either we go back to work,

and get our full pay, or we don't do any emergency cover at all' — a threat bound to hold the strike committee to ransom and press them to let the home helps return to work.

Some of these women start calling for a vote on a return to work. One of the home help stewards takes the microphone:

'Look, I voted against the strike, I was opposed to it, but the decision was made by a majority in the mass meeting. We just can't go back on it now.'

The demand for a vote intensifies, putting the stewards and John under enormous pressure.

Finally John says: 'Clearly I have to convey the feeling of this meeting to the strike committee.'

'But there is no way that I can allow this meeting — a tiny minority of the branch — to vote to reverse the mass meeting decision for an all-out strike last Tuesday.'

'That would be totally undemocratic.'

4.15pm Feelings run very high. The

home helps, only recently unionised and working individually without developing any collective consciousness, will prove an obstacle to the unity of the strike.

Finally a consultative vote is taken, to be referred to the strike committee. It is overwhelmingly in favour of a return to work.

The mass meeting breaks up as women begin to leave.

### 4.50pm

John and some of the stewards slump into chairs. John remembers that he hasn't eaten all day, and it is now nearly five.

Over a half of lager and a bag of crisps the implications of the home helps' vote are discussed.

'We've not arranged emergency cover for the weekend and the council will know that the home helps wanted to return to work — that gives them a lever.'

A meeting is arranged for 6pm with whoever is around to work out a framework for the strike committee to discuss in the morning, when Day Three dawns...

OUIDA HASLAL, deputy catering supervisor, Camden town hall: 'I voted against the strike. I don't see the point of going without pay, but you have to go along with the majority, so here I am picketing. 'The union is right to take action. The wages for home helps here are very poor.'

JEAN O'REILLY, part-time cleaner, on the picket line at Camden town hall: 'Many more should be picketing. The strike has to be all-out; it's the only way we've got. Cleaning and catering are just not important enough on their own, so we have to be with the others.'

'Obviously we should get more pay. I work for the council in the evening to 8.30, on £19.81 gross basic pay for clearing up everyone's mess. I leave home when my husband gets in. He looks after our child, and I get home too late for us to spend the evening out.'

'A creche for strikers would be a good idea, but I don't think it's of prime importance. Women are so busy making do.'

'The strike committee might like to see the councillors on the picket line, but then they'd be doing things like that. My family's always voted Labour. I'm supporting the Tories. They have something to say. They can't be any worse.'



cal authority workers in Camden, North London, decided at a mass all-out strike.

This decision, and the task of strengthening the indefinite strike of others, was what preoccupied the strike committee last Thursday, Day 2

FRIDAN spent the day observing events at the strike HQ, talking to helpers to return to work.

Finally everyone takes the opportunity to rush off to the strike committee meeting, leaving the phoning...

### 9.30 am

The strike committee, consisting of branch officers, shop stewards and rank and file members, elected at the mass meeting two days earlier, holds a two-hour meeting in Camden Labour Rooms, down the road from the strike HQ.

It discusses picketing rotas, press conferences and press releases, setting up a support committee, and fund raising — but mainly concerns itself with discussing the problems of emergency cover [of which more later].

The strike committee is an open body, gratefully accepting the help and suggestions of any union member who's interested.

There is considerable delegation of responsibility. Its main aim is to actively involve as many strikers as possible in the work of the strike.

### 11.45 am

John Suddaby is back in his office for the next round of phone calls and problems. A steward comes in to report that NALGO members in the old Holborn town hall are planning to do their own cleaning.

Someone else reports that an

oil delivery for the town hall's heating is expected the next day.

There is already a picket on the town halls, but it's agreed to step it up for the oil delivery.

Another report arrives that NALGO members at Euston town hall are bringing in toilet rolls and cleaning their offices.

John gets on the phone to Hugh Flynn, the NALGO branch chairperson, writing a cheque at the same time, with half an ear on a conversation about emergency cover in the corner of the office.

### 11.57 am

A steward smiles at John sympathetically: 'It's a good job he doesn't know what he's doing — if he did he'd end up in one of those homes.' The same could be said about the rest of the strike committee. Everyone is rushed off their feet.

Hugh Flynn at NALGO agrees to look into the situation at the town hall.

Paine, the council's deputy chief executive, comes on the line inquiring about the progress on emergency cover. 'We'll discuss the emergencies at the home helps meeting this afternoon and hopefully I'll be able to come back to you later today,' he's told.

The council offers better accommodation to the strike committee if the emergency

cover position can be resolved.

### 12.15 pm

A picket arrives to say that a NALGO supervisor has started up the boiler at the main town hall. 'He used the tools to do it — and he's not supposed to touch the tools — that's our job...'

Another call to NALGO. A group of strikers concerned with supplementary benefits come into the office.

A formal request to the local DHSS is needed, asking for a block application for the strikers — so that they don't have to deal with the social security individually.

Later this afternoon the block application will be turned down.

A local Labour Party executive member comes in to say that it is meeting that evening. Someone from the strike committee should go — John Devitt, the NUPE branch chairperson, agrees to attend.

The strike committee had agreed to hold a press conference on Tuesday, so a press release announcing this has to be written and distributed.

12.45 pm  
We are introduced to Fergus — 'one of our heroic petrol pump attendants'.

They came out first to get the strike started, halting the council's vehicles. He is collecting his first week's strike pay.

The public baths attendants' steward rings in for information about how the strike is developing.

### 1.00 pm

The meals on wheels' shop steward arrives and the major problem of emergency cover is again the subject of discussion.

Meals on wheels have been operating a 'Sunday service' since the strike was called — delivering meals to only those old people whose schedule includes a Sunday delivery — but this is clearly inadequate.

Just because an old person doesn't need a meal on Sunday doesn't mean that they are not an emergency on other days of the week.

The steward says: 'You can't go into a block of flats and feed three on the top floor and miss two on the bottom. It's just not on. They come to their doors with their hands out for a meal.'

'There's a list of over a thousand. You can cut out about 200 as non-emergencies but apart from that there's no way. The way I see it, if you

DAVE BARNES deputising as shop steward at the transport depot in Arlington Road, Camden: 'NUPE should have called an all-out strike from 22 January. Already some councils, like Westminster, are talking about going back and clearing the rubbish. Some haven't been out at all yet.'

'We knew that transport and refuse were strongly for all-out action. We expected there would be problems with social services, with people like the home helps and residential homes split up across the borough.'

'In a lot of areas picketing needs tightening up. With a nod and a wink from the council, private contractors have been clearing up rubbish and dumping it on public tips. We're picketing the tips.'

'Very unofficially, one or two of the Labour councillors — our employers — say they support the strike. We want them to declare this openly, and organise with us. As a borough transport worker, with an average take home pay of £50, which includes Saturday working and five hours' overtime, I reckon that's reason enough to be on this picket line.'



Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

# OF AN ALL-OUT STRIKE

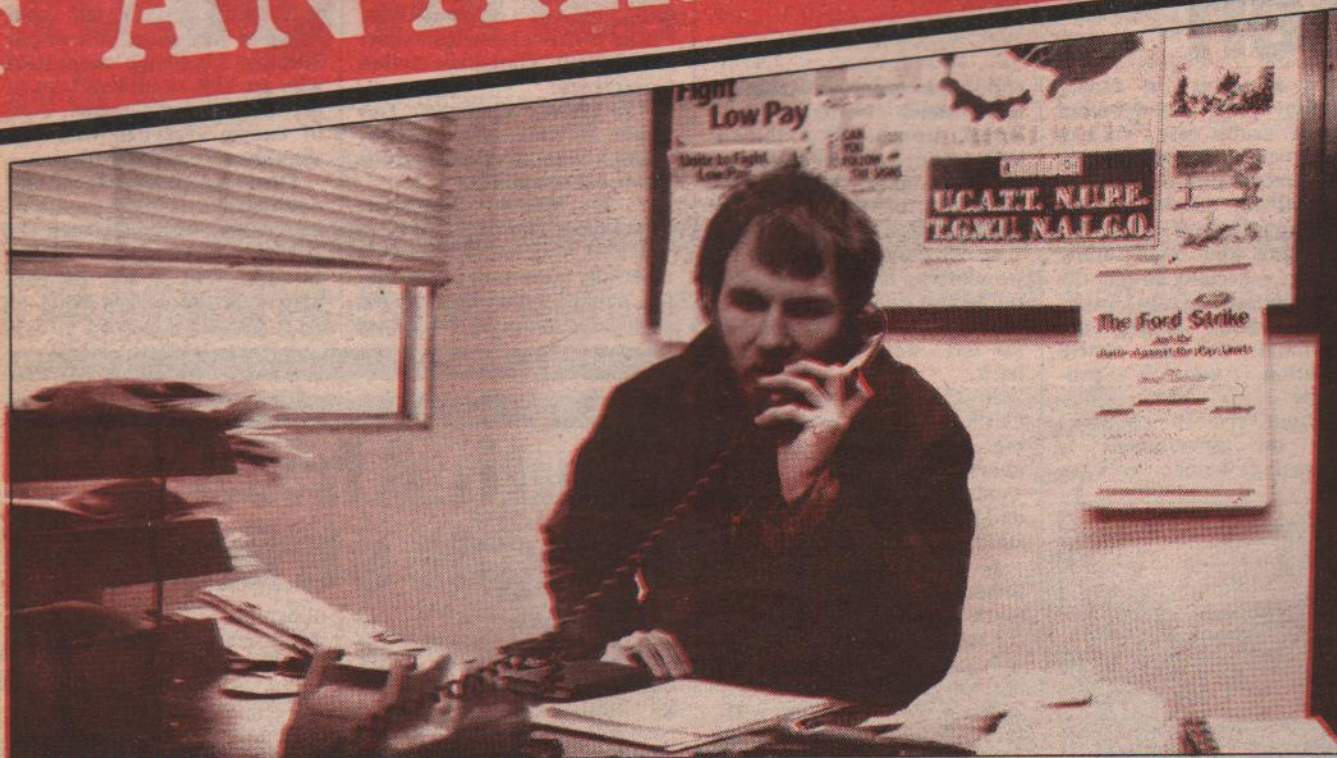


Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

JOHN SUDDABY: 'Pressurise NUPE into an all-out national strike.'

AND after Day Two... Branch secretary John Suddaby explains the strike committee's plans:

On Friday the strike committee accepted that home helps and workers in old people's homes should be exempted from the strike. They will pay £5 a week into the strike fund; £2.50 from part-timers.

In a way I feel we've shed an

albatross of social services and old people, and now we have to really turn to the positive side. We should have considered more carefully about bringing them out — there are so many complications.

Everyone else is totally solid, right behind the strike — so we can really go forward from here.

The strike committee has decided to try and organise an all-London demonstration, to hold a meeting to meet the

public and the council, and to really build for a big lobby of the council meeting on 21 February.

We aim to tighten up the pickets on the town halls and get them closed down — either through stopping the oil for the heating, or through health and safety because of the build up of refuse, lack of repairs, and so on.

Our major problem is the lack of involvement in the

strike. People have just gone home for the duration. A regular strike bulletin is very important from the point of view of letting everyone know what's being achieved, and involving them.

Our main aim now must be to pressurise NUPE into calling an all-out national strike, to bring the pressure on the government rather than individual councils.

Otherwise we could be left isolated.

# 'NUPE has to make it a national strike'



# Can Pakistan survive without Bhutto?

PAKISTAN will celebrate the thirty-second anniversary of its tortured existence next August. It has seen the bulk of its population opting for the new state of Bangladesh. It has been humiliated militarily by its powerful neighbour India.

Today strong nationalist currents exist in the minority provinces of Sind, Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP).

It is against this backdrop that the decision of the generals to hang Bhutto (for that is what appears most likely) must be seen. How long will Pakistan outlive its most ebullient bourgeois politician?

By Tariq Ali

GENERAL Zia's Pakistan is best symbolised by one of the more gruesome debates currently dividing the nation. Should thieves have their hands amputated or just the fingers?

The 'moderates' argue that to remove the whole hand would be a sin as the disabled 'thief' would no longer be able to pray. They are satisfied with merely detaching the fingers.

The 'hardliners' reply that the hand could then be used to steal again!

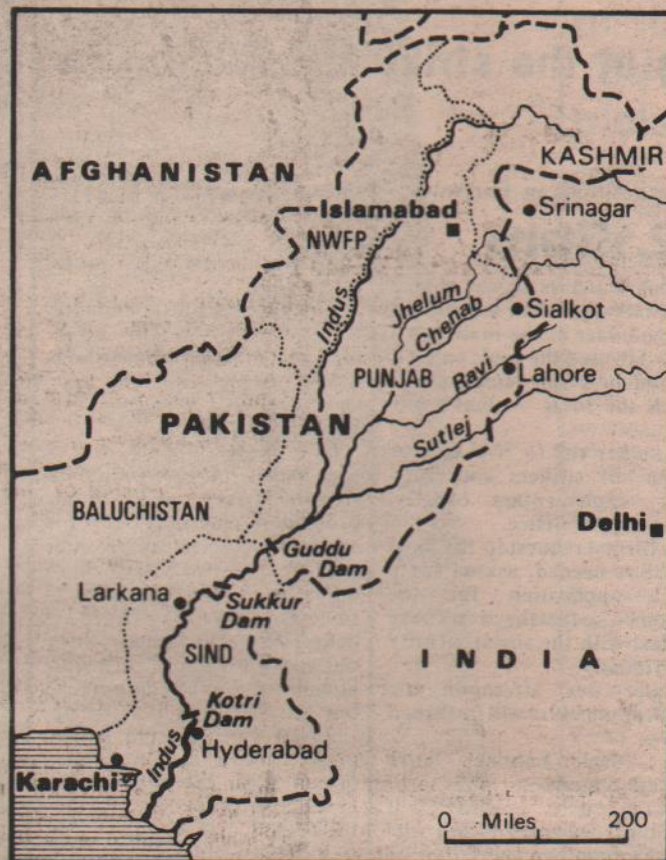
This bizarre application of orthodox Muslim punishments is related to the country's perilous economic situation. Zia and his political supporters hope that in this way they will ensure the full financial backing of Saudi Arabia.

His supporters are essentially

organised in the neo-fascist Jamaat-i-Islam (party of Islam). This grouping has always been well-organised and well-financed by the Saudis. So for both ideological and material reasons the turn to Islam serves a useful purpose and acts as a cover for the repressive measures being carried out by the army.

As we go to press it is still not clear whether Zia will allow Bhutto to be hanged. Most Pakistanis, regardless of their political beliefs, believe that a dead Bhutto will be more dangerous than a live one.

Zia and the generals, however, seem to be more obsessed with their own future. They feel that Bhutto alive, albeit in prison, would be a constant alternative to the military regime and might ultimately bring about their



downfall.

This is shortsighted, but General Zia was appointed Chief of the Army Staff precisely for his lack of intellect (even by military standards). So the chance is that he will, as he has promised, 'hang the blighter'.

And what of Pakistan after the hanging? Will Zia and the Jamaat-i-Islami fanatics be able to hold the country together for long?

From the dictator's statements it appears that once Bhutto has been removed and a number of politicians dis-

qualified a general election will be announced. Some are convinced that it will be a generals' election and right-wing parties will be given state backing.

In any event the country's future appears limited. Only a thoroughgoing social revolution could put the country back on the rails again.

This prospect is not as remote as it appears. For Bhutto's hanging might or might not result in immediate mass anger. What it will do is create a real hatred for the army and its political backers among the most oppressed sections of the masses.

Social upheavals would be the result. Whether they are transformed into a revolution will depend on the strength of the left.

The World Bank's report on Pakistan paints a gloomy picture for the masses. The trade deficit this year is likely to be the highest ever — \$2 billion. The bank further forecasts a massive increase in imports and a massive increase in inflation.

Against these very real pressures of capitalism and the world market, no amount of Islamic rhetoric or Islamic economic measures can deliver the goods.

The Saudis are not simply white-robed philanthropists. They are prepared to pay Pakistan for training their army and pilots, educating the more backward Saudi students and a few other services. But they will not bail out the

economy.

The Taraki regime in Afghanistan is bound, sooner or later, to make the national question in the NWFP a live one, if only as a reaction to Zia's arming of right-wing Afghani counterrevolutionaries.

The instability in Iran makes another border country undependable. So Zia will soon find himself confronted by a pincer movement on the internal and external flanks.

Pakistan will probably see a few more coups before its fate is finally decided.

Pakistani socialists must be in the forefront of the fight against the military dictatorship. But they should at the same time guard their political independence and not fall prey even to talented bourgeois politicians.

Bhutto was the most able bourgeois leader the country possessed. I recall him telling me in 1969: 'There are only two ways. Either that of Che, in which case you should go to the Baluchi mountains, or my way. That means compromises.'

History has shown that the latter offers nothing to be masses except more sacrifices. It will be up to Pakistani socialists to demonstrate that there is a third way.

If they fail they might find themselves without a country as Zia's sordid politics lead to the splintering and final demise of a 32-year old confessional monstrosity.

## Their bodies, themselves—the struggle of Latin American women

By the Latin American Women's Group

LATIN American women have never had the chance to control their own fertility. When there are 'over-population' problems, population control agencies and repressive governments force them to be sterilised or use long-term and often dangerous contraceptives.

In the case of Puerto Rico, for example, contraceptives are mostly unobtainable or very expensive, but sterilisation is

free and doctors are reimbursed US\$50 for each operation. 35 per cent of women of child-bearing age have been sterilised.

Since the 1973 coup Chile has seen a period of repressive fertility control aiming to reduce the numbers of poor and unemployed. Under the 'League of Responsible Parenthood' post-abortion and post-natal sterilisations have been carried out on poor women with the aid of experts from the United States.

40 per cent of the total health

budget is spent on family planning. To get any maternal or child health care, Chilean women must accept these programmes.

In Bolivia, despite its low population, there is still sterilisation and mass family planning, especially among the poorer Indians, because International Aid grants are conditional on an active population control programme.

Alternatively, in countries where the government is encouraging women to have

children in order to strengthen and extend its territory — Brazil, for example — there is little state control of family planning and facilities are difficult to obtain. In Uruguay contraception is illegal.

In all cases it is never the woman who has control. But in the face of opposition from the Church, the right and some of the left, women are fighting back.

In Colombia, Mexico and Costa Rica, they are campaigning for the legalisation of abortion so that thousands of women will be spared dangerous back-street abortions.

In Venezuela and Peru the issues of abortion and contraception are being raised openly for the first time.

Is a woman's right to control her own fertility a relevant issue in Latin America? This is the subject for a forum organised by the International Campaign for Abortion Rights with speakers from Chile and Bolivia and a member of the Latin American Women's Group, London. Friday 23 February, 7pm, Seymour Hall, Shouldham Street, London W1.

This is one of a series of meetings leading up to the international day of action for abortion and contraception and against forced sterilisation on 31 March. A mass demonstration in London is planned for that day.

## Zimbabwe conference

THE Anti-Apartheid Movement has named March a month of action on Zimbabwe.

The events planned include: \*3 March, Zimbabwe Action Conference;

\*17 March, Zimbabwe Day public meeting, organised by ZAPU, one of the Patriotic Front organisations;

\*21 March, Zimbabwe Fundraising Day.

The 3 March conference is especially important as a forum for debating the fast-moving political situation in Zimbabwe

and planning future actions by the solidarity movement.

Unfortunately, it has been called at very short notice, but Socialist Challenge supporters who are able should still try to get themselves delegated. And of course everyone who can should turn up on the day.

Further details of local and national events in the month of action are available from the AAM, 89 Charlotte Street, London W1. A full list will appear in the March issue of Anti-Apartheid News.

## South Africa hunger strike

By Colin Meade

TEN students at the London School of Economics are on indefinite hunger strike against the college's South African investments.

They began their protest on 8 February after the Academic Board had rejected a proposal to sell its £300,000 of shares in companies with South African subsidiaries. These include ICI, BP, Shell, Courtaulds and Metal Box.

The majority of the Academic Board argued that the decision to disinvest would be a political one and would, said Director Ralf Dahrendorf, create an atmosphere of

illiberality — an object lesson in whose interests are served by liberal morals.

Before disappearing for the weekend Dahrendorf wrote to the hunger strikers saying that he 'understood their feelings' and wondered if there was anything he could do to help.

A 350-strong union meeting voted overwhelmingly to support the hunger strikers. Mass student action next week can help Professor Dahrendorf discover the logical connection between his sympathies and what he can do to help. Disinvest now!

Messages of support to Students Union, LSE, Houghton Street, London WC1.



A LATIN American shanty town: women's fertility is under state control



## HOME NEWS

### 1 March referendum

# Vote 'Yes' for Welsh Assembly



SINCE THE mid-1950s, when 250,000 people signed a petition backing a Parliament for Wales Bill, there has been a revival of national aspirations in the country.

In 1962 Cymdeithas Yr Iaith Gymraeg (the Welsh Language Society) was formed, whose militancy has resulted in the jailing of hundreds of young Welsh people defending the language.

The Welsh Labour Party conference passed a pro-devolution resolution in 1965, and in 1974 the Welsh TUC — itself formed against the opposition of the British TUC — called for an elected assembly with legislative powers.

By Steve Bell

The rise of Welsh national aims has taken many forms, and has coincided with the wider social and political crisis.

Struggles have been launched around the destruction of arable land under reservoirs; actions on the language have ranged through occupations, pickets,

demonstrations, destruction of TV transmitters, painting out English, defence of arrested militants, and many forms of civil disobedience.

Other issues have also been raised, including the desperate position of small farmers, the forced emigration arising from unemployment, the decline of

the mining and steel industries, and the RAF low flight paths over rural areas.

As a consequence, the Labour government has made a number of concessions since 1974. These include legislation for the language in education, broadcasting and daily life; as well as the setting up of the Welsh Development Agency and the Development Board for Rural Wales. The most important, though, is the Wales Act.

The Act is a gamble for the government. The political base of the Labour Party was being eroded by the corruption of the Labour Party and the growth of Plaid Cymru.

The Act is an attempt to stem this. But it is opposed by the capitalists. Both the CBI and the Tories are actively campaigning against the Act.

Their fears don't arise because the Act contains radical socialist measures — the Welsh Assembly will have even more limited powers than the Scottish Assembly, which will at least be able to legislate on a number of 'development' issues.

What motivates the CBI and Tory opposition is that, far from reducing political tensions, the establishment of an elected Assembly would increase them.

Inside it would be dominated by the Labour Party and the left populists of Plaid; outside it would be impatiently watched to see if it was solving the problems of unemployment, housing, the language, and so on.

The Wales Act may define the Assembly's powers in one direction; but the class struggle may define them in another.

Overall, the Wales Act is not a

recognition of the right of Wales to self-determination. It is more an attempt to bury the question. Yet the fact that the voting in the referendum is confined to the 36 Welsh parliamentary constituencies is evidence that self-determination is an issue.

Socialists must not leave this to the separatists in Plaid Cymru. The message socialists must get across in the coming fortnight is that the concession should be taken and its limits challenged.

The International Marxist Group will thus be calling for a 'Yes' vote in the referendum on 1 March.

The most pressing limits to challenge are the ballot-rigging and consultative nature of the referendum. There must be rejection of the clause which

requires a majority comprising 40 per cent of all those entitled to vote for the Wales Act to be enacted.

This is a live question, as the most likely outcome of the referendum is a 'Yes' majority below the 40 per cent threshold.

Socialists should therefore be prepared to campaign for a recall of the Welsh TUC and Welsh Labour Party conferences in the event of a majority being obtained, to mobilise the working class against parliamentary or governmental manoeuvres.

**VOTE 'YES' meeting sponsored by Socialist Challenge, Morning Star, Tribune, and Y Faner Goch, Monday 26 February in Cardiff. Full details, tel. Cardiff 394755.**

## IRELAND

# Mason to the right of Young Tories

RECENT statements by Northern Ireland secretary Roy Mason have now placed him to the right of the Young Conservatives. Demands for the sacking of Mason continue to mount.

By Geoff Bell

The latest row follows comments Mason made last week on Northern Ireland's Downtown Radio.

He was discussing an opinion poll which suggested a growth in support for the Alliance Party and the Official Unionists (led by Harry West and Enoch Powell), and a decline in support for the Social Democratic and Labour Party and Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party.

Mason said that the poll 'reveals a picture that the moderate Unionists and the Alliance Party, bridging the sectarian gulf, are growing and those — like the SDLP, who have in recent times turned a little more greener, wanting

Irish unity above all, and the DUP, the extreme Protestants — they're losing ground.

'So it looks as if there's a gradual undercurrent of feeling towards moderation and crossing the sectarian divide.'

Embarrassingly for the 'wee Napoleon' — as SDLP leader Gerry Fitt recently dubbed Mason — his remarks about the Official Unionists being 'moderate' came in the same week as the Young Conservatives described the same organisation as too extreme.

In a report on a visit to the North of Ireland, a Young Conservative delegation accused the Official Unionists of 'duplicitous', commenting: 'whatever is suggested to them or whatever is offered they will

push for something more.'

The Young Conservatives also attacked Mason's 'moderates' for their opposition to power-sharing.

The absurdity of Mason's remarks was further emphasised by the evidence he used for his ridiculous conclusions. The Northern Ireland secretary claimed that the poll he was commenting on was one conducted by the EEC.

But it later emerged that the EEC had decided to disregard the poll as unrepresentative. This is hardly surprising, in that the pollsters only questioned 270 people, 85 of whom did not bother to reply.

This latest outburst from 'wee Napoleon' has brought

renewed calls for his sacking in even the most respectable quarters of Irish opinion.

As an editorial in the *Irish Times* put it: 'The Secretary of State has finally written himself off as a serious, concerned arbiter of Northern Ireland politics...when he finally departs he will leave behind the sorry record of a bankrupt approach to Irish politics.'

Joining in the criticism was the deputy leader of the SDLP, John Hume. Mason, said Hume, 'is anti-Irish', was 'bankrupt of any political ideas', and 'had revealed all too clearly that a person had to be some sort of a Unionist before he (sic) could have any part in a solution for the North'.

## Divisions deepen in Socialist Labour Party

From Sara O'Hara in Dublin

THE SOCIALIST Labour Party has lost its one spokesperson in the Irish parliament [Dail].

Last week Noel Browne announced that he would no longer represent the party, which was founded in 1977 after Browne and others were expelled from the Irish Labour Party.

Browne's decision followed a stormy annual conference of the SLP at the end of January.

The conference agreed that 'British imperialism is the cause of all violence in the North and so long as it remains we defend the right of the Provos and all other forces to take up arms to oppose British imperialism'.

The conference delegates went on to approve a motion instructing Browne and party chairperson Matt Merrigan, head of the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union, to initiate a labour movement delegation to Long Kesh.

The delegates also backed a



MATT MERRIGAN — the SLP chairperson instructed to initiate a delegation to Long Kesh

call for a conference open to all those prepared to unite in mass action around the demands: restore political status, troops out of Ireland now, end torture now.

Despite this clear policy for anti-imperialist action, confusion remains.

For instance, the conference refused to pass a motion dissociating the party from a letter to the *Irish Times* by Noel Browne which had condemned the H Block prisoners' protest as 'elitist'. Instead the motion was deferred.

Criticism of such vacillation came from the newly formed Republican Socialist Tendency in the party, who complained that the SLP has played only a minimal role in the mass struggles against British imperialism.

The tendency pointed out that the party had organised no meetings on the H Block issue, despite specific instructions at the last conference. Nor had the party appointed a spokesperson on the national

question.

Speeches and press statement from the party leadership on this issue were criticised for discouraging involvement in anti-imperialist activity.

The tendency called for action not just on H Block but also on the National Wage Agreement [the Irish equivalent of the social contract], and on contraception.

The party conference did pass a motion confirming the past position of the SLP for free, legal abortion.

The future political direction of the SLP remains in question.

Browne's resignation as parliamentary spokesperson — he has not resigned from the party as such — poses a challenge to the leadership and its willingness to press ahead with organising around the anti-imperialist policies adopted.

The Republican Socialist Tendency will be to the fore in insisting that no concessions to Browne are made or considered.



# WHAT'S LEFT

5p per word. Display £2 per column inch. Deadline: 3pm Saturday before publication. Payment in advance.

**TURKEY:** What's really happening? Monthly socialist bulletin in English — fascist ideology in Turkey, Kahramanmaraş, Martial Law, Kurds etc. Annual subscription £2.50. Postbus 9720, Utrecht, Holland.

**WOMEN and Health** — what are we fighting for? A workshop organised to bring together all women concerned with the fight against hospital cuts and closures and the fight to control our own bodies. Sessions include — an information exchange for campaigns, the politics of community care, racism and health, prevention — a public or personal responsibility? Sat 17 Feb, 10.30am-5.30pm, University of London Union, Malet St, London WC1. Adm: 50p at door.

**LONDON:** Britain out of Ireland. Prisoners Aid Committee and Revolutionary Communist Group forums — No. 4 'The struggle in the prisons'. Speaker from PAC, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1, Mon 19 Feb. Adm. 20p.

**WESTMINSTER Task Force** requires a team member for community work with pensioners in Paddington. Must be committed to participative management. 35 hours per week, £3,732 per annum. Closing date: 2 March. For job description and application form contact: la St Mary's Terrace, London W2. Tel: 01-723 7663.

**NAMIBIA in Struggle.** Sat 17 Feb, conference: SWAPO executive in UK. Workshops. Video/photo exhibition. 10.30am-5.30pm at Africa Centre, 38 King St, London WC2. Adm. 50p. SWAPO benefit dance with Unified Force and SWAPO singers, disco, bar. Adm. £1. 7.30pm at Institute of Education SU, Bedford Way, London WC1.

**SOCIALIST**, woman, 26 seeks own room in West London. Tel: 01-229 3422 or 232 or 01-997 9932 (eves).

**LEEDS Animation Workshop** (socialist feminist), temporary vacancy — background artist for health and safety cartoon. Details: 20 Westminister Buildings, New York St, Leeds 2. Tel: 0532-460171. Replies by 28 Feb.

**NALGO Action Group** conference, 17/18 Feb. Sessions include: this year's pay claim; social and residential workers; CWAN; typists' charter and much more, plus film, play and dance with group. All NALGO members welcome. Leeds Trades Club, Saville Mount, Leeds. 11am start.

**REVOLUTIONARY Communist Tendency:** first in a series of public forums. No 1: 'The imperialist state and reformism'. Speaker: Frank Richards. Fri 16 Feb, 7.30pm, The Roebuck, 108A Tottenham Court Rd, Goodge St and Warren St tubes.

**SHADY Characters** — artworks by Peter Ford. Blackthorn Bookshop Gallery, 74 Highcross St, Leicester. Tues 20 Feb-Sat 3 March. Closed Mondays.

**REDDER Tape** — rank and file paper of the CPSA. New issue out. Interview with Pete Colman, CPSA ex-vice president, plus pay, new technology, anti-fascism and letters. From Redder Tape distribution manager, c/o 24 Mary Datchelor Close, D'Eynsford Estate, London SE5.

**TASK FORCE** urgently requires someone with imagination, sensitivity and community work experience to join a small central resource team. Task Force has full-time staff at centres in 12 London boroughs, who work with pensioners through volunteers, neighbourhood care groups, pensioners' action groups and schools.

If you feel you have enough experience to support our centres by helping them to plan and evaluate work, providing training, promoting the exchange of skills between workers and developing links with other organisations, phone Tam Leger 01-960 5669 or write to Task Force, 1 Thorpe Close, W10, for Development Worker job description and application form. Salary: £4635. Closing date: 2 March.

**COULD YOU work with Pensioners?** Kensington and Chelsea Task Force are looking for three dynamic new people to complete a collective of six. These three positions are one full-time permanent, one full-time temporary and one half-time permanent worker. Driving licence an advantage. Salary: £3,732 p.a. For job description phone 01-969 9105/6 or write TASK FORCE, 11 Acklam Road, London W10. Applications close: 2 March.

**PICKET GARNERS:** Main pickets every day, noon to 3pm and 5.30 to 11 pm at 399 Oxford St., London W1 (opp. Selfridges); 243 Oxford St. (Oxford Circus); 40-41 Haymarket; 56 Whitcombe St. (Leicester Sq.). Mass picket every Saturday at noon, 399 Oxford St. Donations urgently needed as strike pay is only £6. All donations to Garners Strike Fund, c/o TGWU, Rm B4, 12-13 Henrietta St., London WC2. 01-240 1056.

**MAY DAY GREETINGS:** trades council or shop stewards committees, would your trade union branch put its May Day Greetings in Socialist Challenge? If so, just send us the name and address of the branch secretary and on 28 February the branch will be mailed allowing the item to be raised at the branches' March or April meeting. Copies of the circular, including rates, from D. Weppier, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

## OPEN FORUM

# NEXT STEPS TO REVOLUTIONARY UNITY

BELOW we print two more contributions to the debate sparked off by the 'Appeal for Revolutionary Unity' jointly signed by the International Socialists Alliance and the International Marxist Group and published in our issue of 4 January (copies still available).

The first is by two comrades in Liverpool who write: 'We have between us over the past fifteen years or so been members of the SLL, IS, Workers Fight, and IMG — and we are not disillusioned yet!'

The second is a short comment from a reader in Norway.

## Role for Socialist Challenge

By Roy Ratcliffe and John Strauther

THE IMG-ISA appeal for revolutionary unity and a campaign of joint work appears deceptively modest. Despite this, it possesses a great underlying strength and significance.

This derives from the fact that it has identified some of the crucial areas of strength and weakness, both objective and subjective, facing the revolutionary movement in Britain today, and the key tasks involved in solving the problems of building a revolutionary organisation.

The experience of various revolutionary groups in Britain shows that many of the same problems of organisation and politics recur in each, relating to the questions of 'democratic centralism' or socialist democracy.

Clearly an alternative approach is required if these problems are to be solved.

The most important part of the joint appeal is therefore that which calls for the formation of a new unified revolutionary organisation.

Each group, and any new organisation, must be prepared to suspend much of their past assumptions and practices, and listen to those previously outside such circles, such as socialist feminists.

The revolutionary left in Britain today is inhabited in the main by young, devoted



Socialist Challenge — the organ of the new unified revolutionary organisation in formation?

oppositionists to capitalism and imperialism, but who nonetheless remain woefully uneducated in Marxist methods and retain highly developed reflexes of dualism, sexism and hierarchy and competition.

All these tendencies are directly opposed to the theory and practice of socialist democracy and make democratic centralist structures completely uninhabitable for many workers, feminists, gays and non-whites.

A serious approach to a unified revolutionary organisation will need to do more than just repeat the hope and 'belief' that it is possible to advance, but will itself have to lay down the prerequisites for that

advance: an internal struggle to purge ourselves of sexist and hierarchical methods.

### Socialist Democracy

The formation of a new revolutionary organisation requires not only the fusion of hitherto separate traditions and movements — IMG, ISA, socialist feminists — but also the development of perspectives and programme, which can only be achieved by the democratic centralisation of all revolutionary socialists and their debates.

In this, practical steps such as trade union and women's

conferences obviously are called for, as is the organisation of collective political intervention in elections.

The best guidelines for such a democratically centralised political practice are in our opinion to be found in the *Theses on Socialist Democracy* of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, correctly counterposed to the basically Stalinist conceptions of 'democratic centralism' current among most of the British far left.

These *Theses* should form the basis of a discussion aimed at the formation of a new revolutionary organisation, together with the IMG-ISA appeal.

### The IS Tradition

A tendency appears to have arisen in recent 'theoretical' articles in *Socialist Challenge* to dismiss the British labour movement, its history and traditions, as a load of old rubbish, compared to some abstract revolutionary doctrine such as 'internationalism'.

The point here surely is that internationalism, like any other revolutionary practice, as distinct from theory, begins at home.

This is why the revolutionary programme of the International, as the world party of the socialist revolution, must become fused with at least a part of the British labour movement, if it is ever to become a real political force in this country.

For various historical and political reasons, the most likely part of the British labour movement today to be responsive to this approach is that represented by the 'IS tradition', including the ISA and Socialist Workers Party.

This represents, however imperfectly, the only revolutionary tendency or tradition among the mass of the working class in Britain during this century: the rank and file and shop stewards movements.

### Autonomy

To become a part of a mass movement, and even to lead it, requires respect for its autonomy. Leadership must be proved concretely, in practice, and can never be simply declared, or even seized from outside.

What does all this mean for us? *Socialist Challenge* should seek to become the organ of the new unified revolutionary organisation in formation, and its organiser in fact.

This means that the paper itself must retain its own autonomous character, not becoming the organ of a particular faction. The new organisation could be formed around and organised by the paper.

Therefore the *Socialist Challenge* groups, which are the means by which this can be done, could also be organised autonomously from each

## A theoretical journal?

By H. Ebermann

THE highly encouraging 'new year resolution' signed by the IMG and ISA seems another step in the right direction — that is, that the revolutionary movement through this has taken important steps to overcome its previous sectarianism, and that it has gained a deeper understanding of the crying need for a unified revolutionary organisation.

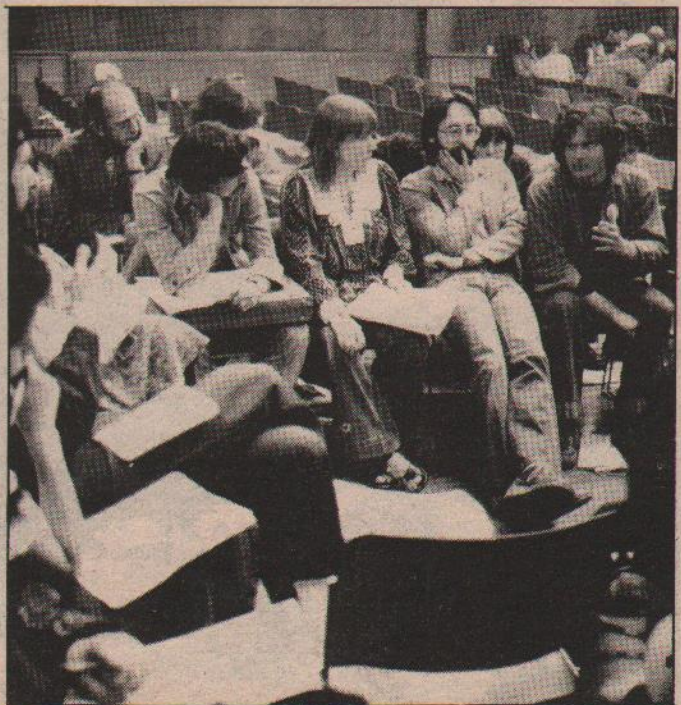
Personally, however, I found the theses in the resolution somewhat proclamatory and vague. They just laid down some fundamental political principles, which were not too controversial, although correct.

It seems to me that the ongoing process will gain considerably if the groups involved could establish a regular theoretical periodical, which could outline the de facto

differences that exist, the problems that are contained in the theses [if you delve into them], make criticism of other left tendencies, and discuss all sorts of questions that may arise out of joint work in the factories, campaigns and so on.

It seems difficult to continue the ongoing fusion process without a greater degree of theoretical clarity. Therefore I propose that both the IMG, ISA, and other involved forces start a discussion on the possibility of establishing a theoretical publication.

I think the regroupment process needs to combine joint work with educational polemics. For the IMG it seems that to turn International into a more open, non-party connected and more regular appearing paper might be a good start.



A workshop at the Socialist Challenge conference last year.

CONTRIBUTIONS to this debate are welcomed, but readers are asked to keep to a maximum of about 700 words. Longer contributions will almost certainly have to be cut — as happened to the first of those printed above.

particular group — IMG, ISA, or SWP — which might participate in them.

Thus the appeal for unity and a campaign of joint work can become a reality amounting to more than the sum of its parts.



## SURPLUS VALUE

# The need for a new Minority Movement



LEADING Communist Party members imprisoned in October 1925 — the government's way of preparing for the General Strike.

IN PREVIOUS issues we have argued that the main task facing socialists in the trade unions is to rebuild the left so as to provide a credible alternative leadership to the class collaborationist union leaders.

Just such an organised left wing — the National Minority Movement — was built in the early 1920s by the newly formed Communist Party of Great Britain. What is its relevance for today?

By Rich Palser

THE CLOSE collaboration by the trade union leaders in British imperialism's 'war effort' of 1914-18 saw the consolidation of a trade union bureaucracy.

This process of bureaucratisation had already begun earlier with widespread erosions of democracy and the growth of material and social privileges for the leaders as mass unions developed. But the First World War saw a positive effort by the capitalist class to integrate trade union leaders into the affairs of government and state.

This was all the easier since the latter worked on the basis that political advance could only be achieved through Parliament; the trade unions were merely for defending workers' conditions and wages within the capitalist system.

Many militants reacted to the class collaboration of the union leaders by rejecting any notion of leadership as bad in itself. An influential pamphlet, *The Miners' Next Step*, argued: 'Leadership implies power held by the leader. Without power the leader is inept. The possession of power inevitably leads to corruption.'

When the various shop stewards and reform committees first came together nationally, in August 1917, they would accept only an administrative national body without executive powers.

Even those who didn't totally reject the need for leadership tended to argue simply for non-reliance upon the union leaders whilst getting on with the job of building workers committees in the workplace.

'We will support the officials just so long as they rightly represent the workers, but we will act indepen-

dently immediately they misrepresent us.' That was the attitude of the wartime Clyde Workers Committee, one which is echoed today by the Socialist Workers Party and the National Rank & File Council.

But when the shop stewards movement began to collapse after the war, it became apparent that even this was inadequate. Non-reliance on the union leaders was not enough. You had to take the fight to them — to re-establish rank-and-file control over them and, where they failed to rightly represent the workers, to replace them with people who would.

It was this conception which lay behind the formation in 1924 of the National Minority Movement, drawing together a broad opposition inside the unions.

The change in tactics towards the trade union leaderships was best summed up in the campaign to strengthen the powers of the TUC General Council, giving it powers to lead a general strike. As the Minority Movement argued:

'We can guard against the General Council becoming a machine of the capitalists...by developing a revolutionary class consciousness amongst the trade union membership...and by so altering the constitution of the General Council as to ensure that those elected thereon have the closest contact with the workers.'

The aim was to break the unions from class collaboration and turn them into militant organisations for class struggle. How was the Minority Movement organised to achieve this?

The movement's highest policy-making body was its national conference. Delegates to it came from affiliated union branches, unemployed committees, trades councils, and also from Minority

Movement groups in different industries and localities.

The conference elected a national executive to take decisions between conferences. Furthermore, a section of the Minority Movement was organised in each industry — notably the mines, engineering, and transport — with its own executive committee. The Minority Movement conference decided on a set of policies covering most of the major issues of the day:

\*Against wage-cutting and for across-the-board increases, with a £4 minimum wage.

\*For stronger powers to the TUC General Council, and the building of workshop and factory committees.

\*For affiliation of the unemployed committees and trades councils to the TUC, and for workers control in industry.

\*For repudiation of the Dawes Plan, through which imperialism was trying to stabilise its rule in Europe.

Each section also added demands appropriate to its own industry. It was on the basis of agreement with this action programme that militants participated in the Minority Movement.

However, the Minority Movement failed to meet its first decisive test: preventing the betrayal of the 1926 General Strike. What did this show?

It had become clear nine months earlier that a major confrontation was inevitable over the employers' attempts to cut wages. The commission appointed to report on the dispute between the miners and mine-owners was a stalling tactic to allow the government time to prepare for a showdown with the unions.

The TUC did nothing to prepare the workers meanwhile. So the Minority Movement launched a campaign of preparation. It fought for the setting up of Councils of Action in every area linked to the trades councils, to see that all workers were mobilised for action and to ensure the distribution of food and essential services during the course of the strike itself.

On 21 March 1926 it called a Special National Conference of Action to prepare the rank-and-file, and campaigned to set up workplace and factory committees sending delegates to the Councils of Action.

At the same time it also demanded that the TUC General Council itself should organise by calling a National Congress of Action.

Increasingly, however, the Minority Movement began to foster the illusions of many rank-and-file members in the General Council instead of taking the fight to the union leadership whilst not relying on them to act.

The Councils of Action were presented as appendages to the TUC General Council rather than as an independent means of launching the strike or maintaining it in the event

of a betrayal:

'We warned however that the Councils of Action were under no circumstances to take over the work of the trade unions...The Councils of Action were to see that all the decisions of the General Council and the union executives were to be carried out.'

The Minority Movement had previously explained that such a major confrontation would no longer be simply about whether the miners' wages were to be cut; it would throw into question the rule of the capitalist class. Political objectives were needed.

And the union leaders, rather than countenance the use of the strike weapon for political purposes, to overthrow the Baldwin government, would choose to sell out the miners.

But the Communist Party failed to spell out what these political objectives should be until after the strike had begun. Only on 5 May 1926 did it call for the resignation of the Baldwin government, for a Labour government to take its place, and for the nationalisation of the mines. By then it was too late.

Only by fighting for such objectives throughout the preparation of the strike, and winning the Minority Movement to campaign for them could the basis have been laid for a real fight to continue the strike when the General Council called it off.

In particular, the way would have been prepared for a national conference of the Councils of Action to take the leadership of the strike.

The CP failed to campaign for these objectives because of Stalin's policy of wooing the 'lefts' in the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee. Using such an alliance to pressurise the British government not to act against the Soviet Union was seen as more important than warning British workers against a sell-out in the General Strike.

### SOCIALIST CHALLENGE TRADE UNION DAYS SCHOOL

THIS WEEKEND Socialist Challenge is holding a day school for supporters of the paper on the theme of 'Rebuilding the left in the unions'.

Its purpose is to discuss the experiences of the early Communist Party in building the Minority Movement and the lessons we can draw for today.

Rich Palser, writing here on the Minority Movement, will be introducing the morning session on this.

The afternoon discussions will concentrate on the public sector strike now taking place, asking:

\* How can we deal with Callaghan's campaign against the

Yet the betrayal of the General Strike, by cutting short a possible victory for the British workers, actually weakened the position of the Soviet workers state far more than the Anglo-Russian Committee was ever to aid it.

The Minority Movement failed not because it involved left reformists in its ranks, but because the CP failed to fight within it to see that it remained politically independent of the left reformist bureaucracy.

Today many militants turn away from Broad Leftism because the CP continues to subordinate its activity in the unions to an alliance with the Purcells of today — such as Scanlon and Jones. The *British Road to Socialism* now sees a left/right divide in the unions as running through the bureaucracy, with the left trend as 'at core' a healthy one.

It is not surprising that the fact that it is a reformist bureaucracy makes little difference to the CP, since its own strategy is based on a parliamentary road to socialism.

However the alternative sometimes put forward, of frontism in rank-and-file groups, is equally no solution.

In campaigning against Broad Left electoralism and for mass control by the rank-and-file over their own struggles, we should not reject the need to take the fight to the union leaders and win a new leadership in the unions. This is a mistake often made by Rank & File.

The only guarantee that a new Minority Movement today can avoid the mistakes of its predecessor is the building of a unified revolutionary party capable of winning that movement to a consistent class struggle position through open and democratic debate.

The tasks of building a new Minority Movement and of establishing a unified revolutionary party go hand in hand.



AJ COOK — elected miners' union secretary with Minority Movement support.



# UNDER REVIEW

'THERE is no class struggle, just one between victims of some unchanging law of the jungle.'

That was one of the criticisms of *Blue Collar* made by Paul Tickell in his review of the film published in Socialist Challenge on 1 February.

Four readers have written in to express strong disagreements with the review.

## How things really are

By Sue Aspinall  
PAUL TICKELL'S review of *Blue Collar* made some good points but it was based on expectations of the film which I think are wrong.

He complains that the film 'gives no hint as to what lies behind the union bureaucracy — and the ownership of the factory'. He also complains of *Blue Collar*'s 'individualism', 'pessimism', 'naturalism' and its lack of historical perspective.

In other words, Paul Tickell would have preferred a film which told its audience that the real enemy was the bosses, not the union.

He would have liked us to see the working class engaged in collective struggles, and he'd like an uplifting conclusion about socialism being on the agenda if we pull our fingers out. Oh yes, and the film should preferably be abstract and experimental if possible.

Maybe such a film would be good — but *Blue Collar* is also good, for different reasons, which Paul Tickell fails to appreciate.

How often do we see a Hollywood film which is truthful about the lives of working class men? *Blue Collar* shows us the reality of their lives: the brutality of the shopfloor, their sexist relations with women, their anxieties about paying the bills.

The film is anti-union because, as Paul Schrader the director and scriptwriter says, workers are pissed off with the union.

The film lacks a sense of working class history because workers themselves lack this sense. It is pessimistic because there is little cause for optimism

when you survey the consciousness of the masses.

Seeing *Blue Collar* is a grueling experience precisely because of its realism.

The contradictions in the relationship between Zeke, Gerry and Smoke are spelt out: they're 'pals' only when they share the same interests; they are racists when they can't see that they do.

The film doesn't sentimentalise or glamorise — it uses a dramatic situation to show how things really are. That seems to me to be a great achievement.

## Critique of individualism

By Paul Gilroy  
I WAS both depressed and angered by Paul Tickell's blinkered and negative review of *Blue Collar*.

Although the director's comments about the film have been a bit dodgy, I am frankly aghast that a socialist reviewer should make them so important at the expense of engaging with the eloquent testimony of the film itself.

I concede that the film is very male, but one of its strengths is that the sexism of working class men is linked causally to their position as an oppressed class in the scene after the party.

This seems to be a correct position. I don't know where Paul was during the important moment of solidarity between the two black wives?

I am lost as to why he finds the film so individualist, it presents a critique of individualism by the way that individualist 'solutions' to wage slavery are shown to perpetuate it. A closure operates at the end of the film as the key words 'Everything they do is to keep us in our place, to divide us' are repeated.

The link between individualist solutions and the division of workers which is a central theme in the film is underscored by the phrase 'They pit the lifers against the new boys, the young against the old, the black against the white'. This link invites the real resolution of the situation in the possibility of workers coming together.

Thus the film is only pessimistic from an individualist perspective. Paul Tickell should think a bit about Gramsci's famous phrase 'Pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will'.

Most importantly, I find it deeply significant that he chooses to express his criticism of the film's supposed lack of class struggle by reference to the racist metaphor 'law of the jungle'. That the film addresses itself to such crucial questions about the ability of black and white workers to act together as the relation of the super-exploited underclass to the white proletariat, the connections between capitalism and racism, and the sectional interests in the workplace has eluded him completely.

I feel this spotlights the theoretical inadequacies of the white left as a whole, as well as Mr Tickell's own racism. Even the Hollywood film director does better when he observes: 'The moment a black audience in Detroit or Chicago sees the film they'll realise.'

If *Socialist Challenge* wants to be taken seriously by other socialists, let alone blacks, it had better watch out for racism in its cultural coverage, and not let that page turn into a soft opportunity for an ignorant reviewer to play the bourgeois critic.



Smoke, Gerry and Zeke the morning after an all-night coke party in Smoke's flat.

## Keenly observed

By Paul Seligman  
I MUST take issue with Paul Tickell's review of *Blue Collar*. It is unforgivable for a film reviewer to summarise the plot to the end and reveal the fate of each of the main protagonists. This is especially so with a film like *Blue Collar* which works excellently just on the level of a thriller — if you don't know what's coming.

Although I agree that the film doesn't offer any solutions to the situation it depicts, it doesn't claim to be putting forward a political programme! What it does do is keenly and entertainingly observe that situation.

However, Tickell contradicts himself when he writes: 'The film remains locked in individualism...and its message seems to be: Don't mess around with the system — it's too big and powerful for you the individual.'

If that is the message, then it suggests that only collective action can be of use.

I also don't understand the objection to showing workers who are 'real characters'. The 'masses' aren't just grey blobs devoid of personality.

Tickell clearly doesn't understand much of what he's seen. The final sound-over is not about the fatalistic struggle between young and old, black and white, them and us.

As the accompanying interview with the film's director, Paul Schrader, makes clear, it

is about how the establishment divides the work-force by playing off black against white and so on, so that it can continue to rule.

Tickell has also ignored a valuable aspect of the film; the way it shows, mainly through Zeke, the structural racism that black workers in the United States experience at work and in life generally. The final confrontation is most importantly racial, and not because the individuals are racist.

I hope your readers will go and see the film and judge for themselves.

## Judge it as a film

By Wendy Baptiste  
UNTIL I read Paul Tickell's review of *Blue Collar* I had thought that *Socialist Challenge* was attempting to break from the left's tradition of merely seeing cultural artifacts as political tracts.

The failure of Tickell's review stems from his refusal to recognise that he was reviewing a film, a Hollywood movie at that, which attempted to deal with work.

As he didn't approach his criticism within that framework, he produced misinformed nonsense, coming to the incorrect conclusion that the film was fatalistic and pessimistic.

The film's locations and shots are all derived from the factory: the first shot of Detroit focussing on the exterior of the factory; the bar (and meeting place) next to the factory; the homes of the workers on a factory estate.

What leads Zeke and Gerry, two men, to their decision to rob the union office is their role in their families and the economic needs of those families. Gerry's daughter needs dental treatment the state won't provide; Zeke's large family can't exist on his wages, and it's his concern for them that leads to his ultimate sell-out.

The film offers no clear-cut solution and herein lies its strength.

All three men reject the FBI attack on corrupt unions as a solution. They believe in

working class strength through unions — Gerry is an active militant, regularly attending union meetings, and was a mainstay of the pickets in the last strike.

Although Smoke is the most individualistic, in some ways he is the most perceptive. His comment that the bosses divide black and white, young and old, and that therefore unity is vital, is admirably demonstrated in a non-fatalistic way.

Although Zeke and Gerry are friends, they are divided because of their colour, which helps Zeke's compromise in accepting a job from the union. Unlike Gerry he can't ever have the opportunity to 'make it' because he is black.

Although the men are seen as individualistic this is not presented as an innate quality, but one produced by their changing situation. Their attitudes are a combination of resistance as well as resignation.

The last shot of the film — a frozen frame with Zeke and Gerry poised to attack each other — has the voice over of Smoke, not as a fatalistic jibe, but to underpin the film's illustration of how individualism is produced.

The interview with Schrader was presented in *Socialist Challenge* in a crude, reductionist way. Although he may think 'I hate unions' we should, as Marxists, apply the same criteria to him as to anyone else; judging people by what they do rather than what they say.

Although subjectively Schrader may hate unions, that in no way serves as an explanation of *Blue Collar*, which is in objective contradiction to his own statement.

Similarly, the interview with Robert Altman (18 January) implied by merely using his own words that he allied himself with a feminist perspective. Yet there was no critique of his latest film, *A Wedding*, to show what (if anything) this meant in practice.

I hope in future you will be able to get reviewers to criticise films as film rather than seeing them as political pamphlets.

**BLUE COLLAR is showing at Gate 2, Brunswick Square, London WC1 and is likely to be given a limited regional release.**

# SOCIALIST CHALLENGE EVENTS

THE DEADLINE for this column is midday on the Saturday before publication.

## NORTH WEST

WARRINGTON Socialist Challenge group meets regularly. Ring Manchester Socialist Challenge offices for details. 061-236 2352.

GREATER MANCHESTER Socialist Challenge. School students who support the paper and would like to get involved in anti-fascist activity, please contact Chris (273 5947, day) or Steve (226 4287, evening), or write to Manchester SC Centre, 14 Piccadilly.

SALFORD Socialist Challenge supporters can be contacted at the Manchester Socialist Challenge Centre c/o 14 Piccadilly, Manchester with a view to forming a Salford SC group.

MOSS SIDE Socialist Challenge supporters sell the paper at Moss Side Centre, Saturday, 11-1.

OLDHAM Socialist Challenge group now meets fortnightly on Wednesdays. For details phone 061-136 2352 or write to Manchester SC Centre, c/o 14 Piccadilly.

PRESTON Socialist Challenge group meeting: 'Southern Africa in ferment — what's behind the war in Zimbabwe?' Speaker Pete Evans (NW trade union anti-apartheid liaison committee). Thur 22 Feb, 7.45pm, in Windsor Castle pub, Egan St.

## NORTH EAST

NEWCASTLE Socialist Challenge local supporters are active! If you want

to join them, phone Pete on (0632) 29057.

DURHAM Socialist Challenge Supporters Group. For details contact: Dave Brown, 2 Pioneer Cottages, Low Pitington, Durham.

MIDDLESBROUGH Socialist Challenge sales, Saturday lunchtime near the lottery stand at Cleveland Centre. Also available from Newsfare in Linthorpe Road.

MIDDLESBROUGH Socialist Challenge supporters meeting: 'The public sector pay dispute', with speaker from local NUPE branch. Thur 22 Feb, 8pm, AUEW Hall.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES readers can buy Socialist Challenge from Green Books, upstairs in the Spencer Hall shopping centre.

## SCOTLAND

For information about the paper or its supporters' activities throughout Scotland please contact Socialist Challenge Books, 64 Queen St, Glasgow. Open Wed, Thurs, Fri and Sat afternoons. Phone for alternative arrangement (221 7481). Wide range of Fourth International publications.

EDINBURGH Socialist Challenge supporters group meets regularly. Phone George at 031-346 0466 for details.

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

## YORKSHIRE

HUDDERSFIELD SC group meets fortnightly on Thursdays at the Friendly & Trades Club, Northumberland St.

DEWSBURY Socialist Challenge sales regularly on Saturday mornings in Westgate at the Nat. Westminster Bank. 12.30-2.00pm.

HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge sales regularly Saturdays 11am-1pm in the Piazza.

YORK Socialist Challenge is on sale at the York Community Bookshop, 73 Walmgate or from sellers on Thursdays (12.30-1.45) at York University, Vanbrugh College; Saturdays (11.30-3.30) at Coney Street.

HULL Socialist Challenge meeting: 'For a united revolutionary organisation' — speaker John Ross. Fri 23 Feb, 1.15pm, Hull Univ. Union. Also school on 'Building the socialist alternative', Sat 24 Feb, 10.30am-4pm, at the Waltham Club, Norfolk St., off Beverley Rd. Beer and food provided.

LEEDS Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday at City Centre Precinct, 11am-1.30pm. And at Elland Road — when Leeds Utd are playing at home!

## MIDLANDS

For details of activities of local supporters throughout the Midlands contact the Socialist Challenge

Centre, 76b Digbeth High Street, Birmingham (021) 643 9209.

COVENTRY Socialist Challenge group meeting: 'The roots of racism' — speaker Julian Atkinson. Tues 13 Feb, 8pm, at Wedge Bookshop, High St.

NOTTINGHAM readers can buy Socialist Challenge regularly at Mushroom Books, Heathcote St.

## SOUTH WEST

ISLE OF WIGHT readers can buy Socialist Challenge from the Oz Shop, 44 Union St, Ryde.

BATH Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday, 2-3.30pm, outside Macfisheries. Ring Bath 20298 for further details.

SOUTHAMPTON Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday from 10am-1pm above bar, Post Office, Bargate.

PORTSMOUTH Socialist Challenge sales, Saturdays, 11.30pm-1pm, Commercial Road Precinct.

SWINDON supporters sell Socialist Challenge 11am-1pm Saturdays, Regent St (Brunel Centre).

FOR INFORMATION on activities in the South-West, write to Box 002, c/o Fullmarks, 110 Cheltenham Road, Bristol 6.

BRISTOL Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday, 11am-1pm in the 'Hole in the Ground', Haymarket.

## SOUTH EAST

NORWICH Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday in Davey Place (opp.

market) and bookstall Thursdays at University of East Anglia.

BRIGHTON SC forums fortnightly on Tuesdays. Contact Micky on 605052 for details.

COLCHESTER Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly. For details phone Steve on Wivenhoe 2949.

## LONDON

SW LONDON sales every Saturday, 11am-1pm, at Clapham Junction (Northcote Rd), Brixton tube, Clapham Common tube, Balham tube. Also on bookstalls outside Oval tube, Herne Hill BR.

TOWER HAMLETS Socialist Challenge supporters sell every weekend: Saturdays meet 10.30am, Whitechapel tube; Sundays meet 10am, Brick Lane (corner of Buxton St).

WALTHAM FOREST paper sales every Saturday, 11am-noon outside the post office, Hoe St, Walthamstow, London E17.

TOWER HAMLETS Socialist Challenge Group meets every fortnight (phone 247 2717 for details).

BRENT supporters sell every Saturday, 2.30pm, at Kilburn Sq., Kilburn High Rd, London NW6.

HACKNEY supporters meet fortnightly on Thursdays at 7.30pm in the Britannia pub, Mare St., E8. Next meeting 1 March: 'The Huntley Street case and the growth of the strong state'. Speaker Piers Corbyn plus video film.

HACKNEY Socialist Challenge public meeting: 'Why the council can and must pay the full public sector claim'.

Speakers include Cllr John Sweeney and public sector workers. Thur 15 Feb, 7.30pm, in the Britannia pub, Mare St., E8.

HACKNEY supporters sell every Saturday, 12-2pm, in Kingsland High St, Dalston — meet outside Sainsbury's.

HARINGEY Socialist Challenge group public meeting: 'Hunting Street, the housing crisis, and the growth of the strong state'. Speaker Piers Corbyn (Hunting St. Defence Committee), plus video film. Thur 22 Feb, 7.30pm, West Green Community Centre, Stanley Rd, N15 (Turnpike Lane tube).

HARINGEY Paper sales at Finsbury Park and Seven Sisters tubes, Thurs evening; Muswell Hill and Crouch End Broadways, Saturday morning. Also available at Muswell Hill Bookshop, Muswell Hill Broadway; Vares newsagent, Middle Lane, N8; and Bookmarks, Finsbury Park.

PADDINGTON/N KENSINGTON Socialist Challenge group meeting: 'Nuclear power — a socialist view'. Speaker Julian Cohen (BSSRS). Wed 28 Feb, 8pm, in meeting room of the 'Tabernacle', Talbot Rd. (Powis Sq.), W11.

LEYTON readers can buy Socialist Challenge from Patel's Newsagents, 326 Lea Bridge Road, E10.

WALTHAMSTOW readers can buy Socialist Challenge regularly from Sheridan's Newsagents, 86 Hoe St, E17.

HARROW Socialist Challenge supporters meet regularly, details from Box 50, London N1 2XP.



# HOME NEWS

## Wolverhampton defence campaign

# 'We thought the police were our friends'

DAVE STEVENS, the Wolverhampton anti-racist, charged with assaulting a police officer last March, is due to appear in Stafford Crown Court on Monday 19 February.

Messages of support have been flowing into the defence committee, many of them from local trades unionists.

By Rich Palser

'I would like to wish you every success on behalf of the firemen of the West Midlands Fire Service. During our dispute relations between the police and firemen were strained to say the least, and it opened the eyes of some of our members who thought the police were our friends.

'It just proved that they are nothing but tools of the capitalist class who will go to any lengths to divide our people. If you lose, the whole of the trade union movement does also. Keep your chin up and we will see you at Stafford.'

This was the message sent by Caven Foster, chairperson of 'E' division of the West Midlands Fire Brigades Union, to the Wolverhampton defence campaign.

The campaign will be picketing the trial of Dave

Stevens which opens in Stafford on 19 February, demanding the dropping of assault charges.

The West Midlands fire-fighters see this trial as a threat to the trade union movement, because it involves the right to peacefully protest. To get rid of the fear that when your march is attacked by a racist, it is the marchers who will end up in the dock.

Dave Stevens was stewarding a demonstration protesting against racist violence when one individual attacked the march.

Dave was the one arrested, on charges of assaulting police officers. If he is convicted, it means a possible prison sentence.

The firefighters are not the only ones supporting the picket. The Wolverhampton Trades Council, the West Midlands Area Committee of



DAVE STEVENS [Third from left] at IWA[GB] meeting which pledged to support the defence campaign.

the CPSA, Cannon Industries AUEW Shop Stewards Committee, are among local trade union bodies who will be sending contingents to the picket. Over nine colleges in the

Midlands and North-west are sending coaches and minibuses, and the ANL has backed it nationally.

Meanwhile a petition of thousands of signatures of labour movement activists has

been handed in to Renee Short, Labour MP in Wolverhampton, calling for the dropping of all charges.

Despite her request to submit these to the Home Office, she has been informed that the

matter is sub-judice.

Such legal evasions will not prevent a picket of the court making the same point — be there at 10am on Monday 19 February, Stafford Crown Court.

# 'He was beaten, punched and slapped'

By Malcolm Day

AT seven in the morning on Tuesday 6 February police officers from Hackney police station raided two black homes in Hackney.

Saying they were searching for stolen goods, they turned the homes of the Morris and Samuel families upside down, and took their sons to Hackney police station.

According to the Hackney Black People's Defence Organisation, the youths were threatened and brutalised.

'Philip Morris was held in Hackney police station for 36 hours, during which time he was continually told to confess to crimes he had not committed.

'When he refused to do this

he was beaten, his head was pushed down a lavatory bowl, he was punched and slapped about his body and face, he was told to stand up and sit down continuously...

'He asked to ring his parents and the police said they would do this — they never did.'

The Defence Organisation says that when Osbund Morris refused to admit to crimes a gun was pointed at his head.

These incidents highlight yet again the need for black people to organise in their own defence.

It is only two months since Michael Ferreira, a 19 year old youth, was stabbed to death on the streets of Hackney because he was black.

A protest meeting over this

murder called for a meeting of black people in the area to establish a defence organisation.

The Hackney Black Peoples' Defence Organisation then set about campaigning against racist violence and police harassment, explaining the need to organise.

Jointly with the Hackney and Tower Hamlets Defence Committee, and other black organisations, a mass funeral march for Michael was organised.

At one of the court hearings of the white youths charged with murdering Michael, Winston James, a supporter of the Defence Organisation, was arrested and charged with assaulting a police officer.

When police officers tried to clear the court of black people, Winston was among those who stepped forward to protest against the heavy handed treatment of Michael's mother.

He comes up in Highbury Magistrates Court on 27 February; the Defence Organisation is calling for a picket on the day.

Meanwhile, this Saturday at 1pm they will be picketing Hackney police station in protest against continued police harassment of black people.

## IN BRIEF

### Immigration lobby

TWO HUNDRED people demonstrated at Heathrow airport last Saturday against the harassment and abuse of black people, highlighted by the recently exposed virginity tests.

The demonstration was organised by the Asian women's organisation Awaz and supported by the Brixton Black Women's Group, the Indian Workers Association [GB], the IWA [Southall], and a number of other groups.

The demonstrators marched to Terminal 3 [which handles flights from India] and sat down chanting slogans. They had been banned from carrying banners and placards; however, the National Front has previously been allowed to demonstrate at Heathrow without restrictions.

### Orient Against the Nazis

ORIENT Football Club is one of the few clubs to have a large number of black players on its playing staff.

Five have played for the first team this season, and there is good support from the team's fans.

A rare example of racial harmony at work — or so people thought.

In fact the black players have had a hard time with racist abuse and harassment from the fans of other teams.

Jimmy Bloomfield, the club manager, admitted this in an interview with the Observer last year. He gave the example of a

game at Hull last season when Chiedozie, a black player, took an awful battering from the home fans.

Club fans decided that enough was enough and have set up Orient Against the Nazis.

The first leaflet got a really good response from Orient fans.

But Brian Winston, Club Chairman, was not so pleased. 'I'm Jewish myself and am against the Nazis,' he said, 'but we don't have that problem here.'

More info about the group from: OAN, c/o ANL, 25 Church Hill, London E17. Badges 20p plus 7p postage.

### Anti-fascist cleared

By Greg Tucker

THE POLICE case against four anti-fascists arrested on the Digbeth Young National Front counter demonstration in February last year eventually came to court on 26 January.

I was one of the defendants, but the case against me was successfully dismissed.

Two police officers gave evidence of having arrested me, but my solicitor was able to produce a photograph from the local paper showing me being arrested by somebody else.

The police tried to cover up for a while but on the second day of the case they dropped the charges against me.

The case against the other three defendants unfortunately continues, with possible prison sentences resulting from the charge of 'affray' if they are convicted.

### YNF turn up at Leicester

By John Smith

APPROXIMATELY 15 members of the Young National Front have surfaced at Leicester Polytechnic, many of them on full time courses.

They are seen in student pubs wearing Anti Communist League badges. These badges bear a blue arrow pointing down — as opposed to the red upward arrow of the ANL.

Recently Mackenzie Frank, an outspoken anti-racist at the Poly, had his jaw broken in an attack outside the Central Library. Other students have been followed home and threatened.

Students have replied to this by organising a Student Campaign Against Racism and Fascism in the Poly.

Its activities so far have included calling an anti-racist fair and issuing a leaflet exposing the NF's activities and naming some members.

The NF responded by spreading rumours about their opponents. And a threat of legal action came from Reed Herbert, a local lawyer with a history of NF sympathies.

A LOBBY of the House of Commons has been called for Monday 19 February at 6.30pm on immigration.

The lobby is supported by the Southall IWA, the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, and the Campaign Against Immigration Laws [CAIL].

### 'NO EXTRADITION FOR ASTRID PROLL'

Public meeting with speakers Jo Richardson MP, Lord Gifford (both Russell Tribunal), Larry Grant (expert on immigration law), Phil Kelly (State Research), Jane Grant (Friends of Astrid Proll).

Tuesday 20 February, 7.30pm, St Pancras Town Hall, Biddborough St, NW1.

Discussion, music, poetry. Admission free.

### 'NO EXTRADITION FOR ASTRID PROLL'



# WHO'S LOSING LABOUR THE ELECTION?

By Rich Palser

WHO'S LOSING Labour the election? Callaghan would have us believe it is the public sector workers.

That's what Junior Health Minister Eric Deacons told the Westminster Children's Hospital NUPE branch secretary, Jamie Morris, at a secret meeting involving Len Murray and Alan Fisher.

The meeting was held to try to persuade Jamie Morris not to recommend his branch members to step up their action after the victimisation of six domestic workers for refusing to clean private wards.

In private meetings and conversations up and down the country, the right-wing labour leaders are telling Labour Party and trade union activists — you are ruining our chances in the elections.

What nonsense. When Callaghan says that wage limits and public service cuts are needed, he is saying that workers must pay for the crisis.

Is it any wonder that working class people see no purpose in fighting for a Labour victory in the election?

When Callaghan says that he is better than the Tories because he can collaborate with the trade union leaders to make the workers pay, and then the union members rightly refuse to accept that collaboration, is it any wonder that Labour slumps in the opinion polls?

When low-paid workers in



FOR the real story behind this headline, turn to pages 8 and 9 — 'Anatomy of an all-out strike'.

the hospitals, having seen the NHS cut to ribbons, are forced in desperation into strike action only to be denounced as

'irresponsible' and 'uncaring', is it any wonder that after years of voting Labour they consider not voting or voting Tory?

Yes, many public sector workers are considering not voting Labour in the election. They must be persuaded that a return of a Labour government is necessary because a Tory victory will only strengthen the employing class and the right wing in the labour movement.

But whose fault is it that workers begin to think this way?

It is the fault of Jim Callaghan and the right-wing leaders, who offer only capitalist solutions to a capitalist crisis.

It is the fault of the TUC leaders who, instead of campaigning for the public sector workers and advancing a socialist alternative, busily negotiate 'concordats' against all their mandates.

It was the miners who saw off the last Tory government and got Labour in office. Any hope of returning a Labour government this time lies not with Callaghan and Murray but the public sector workers.

Now is the time to demand the recall of the TUC congress, so as to organise solidarity with the public sector workers and map out an alternative to the 'concordat'.

Now is the time to see that there is a Labour victory in the election, by recalling the Labour Party conference to draw up a manifesto which offers a socialist alternative to the capitalist crisis.

# How Labour councils could pay

By Hugh Richards  
Battersea CLP

SEVERAL Labour local authorities have said that they support the public sector pay claim. Yet none has said that it will pay the claim.

But there is a way they could pay it — meet the full claim and increase services and reduce rates at a stroke. That is to refuse to pay interest charges.

In 1976 Wandsworth council paid £18m in interest — more than either the housing or social services budgets. As a result an alternative strategy was put forward for a Labour manifesto in Wandsworth in 1978.

We argued then and now that interest charges should be unilaterally cancelled.

In Clay Cross, councillors refused to put up rents and broke the pay laws. They were victimised because they were isolated from the workers in the locality.

The largest group of workers in the area, the miners, were not mobilised — yet twice in the next three years they took on the Tory government and won.

Every other Labour council gave in because the Labour Party refused to organise opposition to the rent increases.

And yet...if every Labour council refused to accept a government directive, the government must back down. In 1978 Labour Minister Peter

Shore told councils to increase rents. Several in London ignored him — and the directive was withdrawn.

To challenge the government, any council must work with its workforce. This does not mean a letter with the pay slip, but a political offensive to build a mass movement similar to that which released the Pentonville Five and destroyed the Industrial Relations Act.

It also means building this movement amongst council tenants and other users of council services.

The result of this would be a change in the relationship between councillors and the working class. No longer would the former be able to stand off and say that they know best and were elected to do a job for four years.

This would also be a real weapon against Labour councillors who backtrack. Perhaps that is why Labour councils are unwilling to carry through this policy!

The public sector pay claim is the best ground on which to organise an offensive against the financiers and those in the Labour government who defend them.

Are Labour councillors prepared to stand up and be counted as working class militants by giving a direction to the struggle, or will they simply remain as sometimes benevolent employers?

## OUR FUND DRIVE

AFTER an early spurt, donations to our Fund Drive are starting to flag again.

This week's total would have been a sorry story indeed without the aid of two £50 donations. Even so, with half

the quarter gone, we are barely more than half way towards our target of £2,500.

This is unfortunate to say the least, since we had hoped to go well over the top to make up for last quarter's £1,000

shortfall.

But it's not too late to do something about it. Organise a fund-raising event. Sponsor a supporter to give up smoking. Start a jar of pennies for Socialist Challenge from your spare change at the end of each day.

You're bound to have lots more ideas. Just do it. Now.

Meanwhile thanks to:

Liverpool SC group	£10.00
Anon	.60
Southampton IMG	2.60
Anon	.30
J. Fowles	50.00
E. Fredenburgh	50.00
Camden SC group	3.00
Ed Mahood	10.00
D. Evans	5.00
A. J. Coult	.75
R. Fraser	2.00
G. Parker	1.00
J. McDermid	3.00
Prince Hal & Falstaff	20.00
Week's Total	£158.25
Cumulative Total	£1,331.08

### LOTTERY

**SOCIALIST Challenge Spring Lottery. Tickets 10p or £1 per book. Prize is choice of 12 volumes of Trotsky's Writings or a £25 book/record token.**

Draw is on 2 May in Socialist Challenge offices. Help yourself while helping the paper! Why not order a few books of tickets on a sale or return basis to sell locally?

Write to: Lottery, SC Offices, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Organised by D Weppeler.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

THE paper relies heavily on subscriptions. In January alone, £900 came from this source — the majority of it through new 6-month subscribers.

We want every area to help us increase this figure by getting a new subscription a month. We have new subscription forms printed which you can use to help sell them. These are available on request, free of charge.

A weakness in our domestic subscribers is among multi-reader institutions: libraries, research offices and so on. We'd like you to ask your local library this week to subscribe to Socialist Challenge. Tell us the results!

**HELP!** Our sales in WH Smith are falling. We want to remain a part of this distribution network and you can ensure we do just that.

\* If every individual in London, Oxford or Cambridge

who finds it convenient to pick up their copy of the paper from the local WH Smith shop put in a special customers' order, this would boost our sales.

Some WH Smith shops in London have it on display over the counter. These include: Waterloo, Kings Cross, Victoria, Harlow, South Hampstead, St Pancras.

\* Much bigger aid can come from SC Supporters Groups. Today, increasing numbers of Socialist Challenge are finding their way into local newsagents. But this occurs thanks to the individual efforts of supporters.

Many of these shops might presently be supplied by WH Smith wholesale houses. If this is the case, notify us, and we can try to make the stocking of the paper in this way much more efficient by going through WH Smith.