

Socialist Challenge

SOUTHALL 23 APRIL: BLAIR PEACH WAS

MURDERED



BY POLICE

By Tariq Ali, parliamentary candidate for Socialist Unity in Faling/Southall

THEY STRUCK as he was trying to leave the demonstration. The police cornered him in a cul-de-sac and battered him to death with their truncheons.

His horrified comrades saw him go down, little realising they would never see him alive again. Blair Peach died later in hospital, a victim of Labour's law protecting fascist order.

When everything else is forgotten about Southall on Monday, when the debate over tactics has died down, the memory of Blair Peach and how he was murdered will remain.

Blair was a teacher in East London. Correction: he was a white teacher, a militant activist in the National Union of Teachers, a strong supporter of the Anti-Nazi League.

In the past he had been assaulted by fascists in London's East End, he had received threatening letters, local fascists had vowed to kill him. In the end the marauders in blue did the job for them.

Southall resembled an armed encampment on Monday. Mounted police with long white truncheons paraded around the High Street like latter day Cossacks; riot shields were in evidence throughout.

Groups of the hated Special Patrol Group moved around

pouncing on Asians and West Indians, carting them off to police stations throughout London.

While Southall was treated like an old imperialist colony, the leaders of the local Labour Party were nowhere to be seen.

We were in the People's Rights Centre when the police charged the building, hitting everything and everybody in sight. With many others I was hurled and kicked down the stairs.

Then the front door was opened and we were forced to crawl through a gauntlet of baton-wielding police. 'Fuck-ing bastards', 'niggers', 'let's kick their heads in' were their war cries.

At 2am they released us from Rochester Road. Only then did we learn that others had suffered more, much more.

We remember Southall in June 1976 when Gurdip Singh Chuggar was murdered by white racists. Now it is Southall again, but this time the victim is Blair Peach, this time the killers wore blue uniforms.

Blair was killed because he had wanted to march for the thousands of Chuggars who still live in Southall.

And while Blair was dying 30 racist hoodlums were meeting in Southall Town Hall, protected by 5,000 police. What a strange public meeting that was!

All these members of the 'public' were brought by coach from outside Southall, and those who live in the area were not allowed to go near the meeting. And then they dare to call that 'defending democracy'.

Blair Peach was a white anti-racist. The tragedy of his death is another forceful reminder that our strength lies in the unity of black and white people. The enemy we face is the same.

In the days to come Southall will pay its own tribute to Blair. For the moment it is necessary to repeat that we will not be intimidated by the police, we will continue to fight

against racism and fascism, we will treat with contempt the obscurities of the establishment politicians who condemn our resistance and utter not a word of criticism of the police killers.

But next time we will be more disciplined, better organised and struggle for clearer aims. We do not want more deaths, more arrests, more harassment, but the only way to prevent them is through the unity of all anti-fascists and anti-racists and through an iron self-discipline.

That will be the best tribute to Gurdip Singh Chuggar and Blair Peach. There will be another day.

All-out Saturday, 28 Apr, 2pm, Dominion car park, The Green, Southall
Sunday, 29 Apr, 1pm, Shoreditch Park, New North Rd, Hoxton, E. London

Socialist Challenge, 328/9 Upper St, London N1. Editorial 01-359 8180/9. Distribution/advertising 01-359 8371.

The day they turned

A vision of the strong state

ANY doubts that law and order would be an issue in the election were washed away in blood last Monday in Southall.

One after another those responsible for implementing that 'law and order' have been stepping into the shoes of the legislators. Sir Robert Mark, the former Metropolitan police commissioner, echoed by Lord Denning, the Master of the Rolls, compared the trade unions with the Nazi party — a remark whose full viciousness is highlighted by the attitude the police take to the real Nazis. The Police Federation, the supposed police 'trade union', placed adverts in most national dailies calling for harsher penalties.

And in most instances these appeals have been combined with calls for a Tory vote. Last weekend's events were a conscious preparation for a Thatcher government as the dawn of a great new age of hang 'em and flog 'em. Southall, Leicester, and even Islington and Wandsworth, were a calculated show of force to raise the political stakes on behalf of the hoped for Tory government.

The Tory leader's post-Southall remarks about 'the full might and power of the law' and prospective Home Secretary Whitelaw's concern for the NF's 'democratic rights' should be seen as the warnings they are.

The Labour leaders are playing it rather differently. These people who have treated black people so scandalously are nevertheless embarrassed by the defection of Labour appointees such as Mark and also more sensitive to the deep anti-fascist sentiment in the working class. The mobilisation of the Asian community has made a breakthrough when a Prime Minister is forced to refer to the NF as 'reminiscent of Hitler'.

Labour's left has not gone much beyond that. Southall MP Syd Bidwell could not even take time off from a ward meeting to attend the demonstration, while Anti Nazi League spokesperson Peter Hain (who was away stewarding for Callaghan on Monday night) contributed some unhelpful remarks comparing the NF to the IRA. If there is a comparison to be made with Ireland it is with the brutal and colonial manner in which the forces of the British state took over Southall, treating the local population with the contempt that they feel is due to a conquered people.

That comparison is made even more poignant by the signal failure of the police to defend Troops Out demonstrators from the far from gentle attentions of Loyalists in Glasgow at the weekend. Clearly, not everyone has their democratic rights protected in the extravagant manner of the Southall operation.

That is the real point at issue — not the question of the NF's legal rights under the Representation of the People Act. At Leicester on Saturday and again in Southall that Act was used not to defend democracy but as a cover to viciously attack the democratic rights of the black communities. And how could Socialist Unity's candidate exercise his democratic rights to campaign when his entire constituency was occupied?

And while we should be aware of the dangers of a law 'n' order-hungry Thatcher administration, it is still a Labour government which is carrying out these attacks. If the Labour government is attacking, it is the labour movement which needs to respond — with a massive movement in defence of the black communities and against the National Front.

The first step is an inquiry into the Southall events organised by the trade unions and working class political organisations — a workers' inquiry, not a state-sponsored 'public inquiry'. But we need not wait for the results of such an inquiry to say that there needs to be an immediate campaign for all charges against anti-fascists arrested at Southall to be dropped and for London police chief McNea to be sacked.

And, although we were not the sole 'instigators' of Monday's events as Whitelaw has alleged, Socialist Unity played a major part in the demonstration and is standing the only candidate who challenges the right-wing policies of Labour and Tories on racism and law and order. And that goes for every Socialist Unity campaign.

An urgent appeal from the Editorial Board

THERE'S a question mark over the future of Socialist Challenge — and it's getting bigger all the time.

Last quarter we failed to make our fund drive target of £2,500. These targets are not a luxury, but aim to make up the loss built into our finances.

We do not depend on advertising but on our readers' financial support. Recently that support has dropped to almost nothing.

So far this quarter we have received £271.75. That is just over a tenth of what we need in almost a third of the time we have to get it.

Obviously this means that Socialist Challenge is going to have to take a long hard look at itself and where it is going after the general election.

We hope you all agree that the work we have been doing in putting across a socialist

alternative to Callaghan's policies in the general election will be all the more vital after 3 May.

But there's no way we can carry on without the money needed to meet our bills, and to do that we need to average a minimum of £190 a week.

If all our readers gave a few pence a week through whip-rounds, football cards (available from SC) or moral persuasion we would cover our costs.

It's a smaller problem at your end than at ours, so please give us a helping hand.

Thanks this week to: J. Irvine, £1; A. Buchanan, £3.75; British Oxygen workers, £10; James Marksfield, £1; C. Zakalwe, £5; D. Silverstone, £3; Carl Gardner, £10; S. Raithatha, £5; Colchester IMG, £30. Total £71.25.

By John Thackara, Oliver New and Anwar Hussein

Noon. Southall is completely shut-down. The shops are shut and even the banks are closed. It is a strike against the decision to let the NF use Southall Town Hall.

The mood is tense. Pockets of Asians are gathering all along the High Street on either side of the town hall. The only 'shop' open is the Socialist Unity headquarters, where placards are being manufactured at high speed. Their message is simple: No Nazis in Southall.

As the SU candidate, Tariq Ali, arrives he is besieged by groups of Asians. What is going to happen? When? How? What time is the NF arriving?

The questions are in Punjabi and Tariq responds, but before he can finish replying to one set of questions, there are more arrivals. They seize placards.

A 60-year-old Sikh woman arrives. She addresses the youth: 'Go into battle today like lions', she shouts. 'We will, mother', they shout back.

2.30pm. Hundreds of youth are gathered on either side of the High Street with the banner of the Southall Youth Movement the most prominent. Tempers are rising. By 3pm there have been a few minor skirmishes.

Balwinder Singh, the local Anti Nazi League leader, shouts through a microphone: 'No provocations, please. There is a long time yet.'

Tariq Ali stresses the same message. But the impatience of the 'young lions' is overpowering. They attack a bus and clashes with the police follow. Walls are knocked down so that bricks can be used as missiles. It is a big mistake, born of anger and frustration, and as the day evolves everyone will realise that this is so.



The cossacks — cops on horseback with two-foot long white batons — move in and the riot shields are brought out. The police beat back hundreds of youth. They disperse in the side streets. They will regroup later, but the damage has been done.

4.30pm. By now the entire High Street is cleared by the police. Over a square mile of streets is solely occupied by the police and cordoned off.

The four major roads leading

to the town hall are blocked by solid ranks of police four lines deep. Behind them are two double rows of police horses spaced 50 yards apart. In all the car parks, dozens of coachloads of police are held in reserve.

The armed encampment is complete. The forces of law and order have transformed Southall, with its predominantly Asian and Irish population, into a colony of white imperialist Britain.

In the name of the Representation of the People Act, a community is being brutally repressed. To allow a handful of Nazis to threaten that community, a police state has taken shape in Southall.

The scene outside the inappropriately named Safeways supermarket is typical. Six Special Patrol Group vans, lights flashing, drive at speed into the crowd. The squads jump out and rush into the crowd, arresting Asian youth at random.

Those arrested are pushed, banged and shoved against trees and railings. Others are dragged off, heads violently twisted, arms wrenched up to necks.

Watching the SPG at the end of one cordon is PC256. 'Fucking unbelievable,' he says with a broad grin on his face.

A mounted cop asks one next to him: 'Do you think you'll be able to hold her (the horse) if we go in?' 'No chance,' is the reply.

A plain-clothes cop with a boxer's face, leather jacket, and bright red shirt boasts to another in a pin-striped suit:



OVER 5,000 demonstrated in Southall on Sunday against the NF meeting that was to be held the following day.

THERE'S A PROMISE. WE'LL FIGHT FOR A SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE AND KEEP YOU

Southall into a colony



Revolution had brought a loud chant of 'Southall revolution!'

Dell, an Asian who runs a disco, tells the police over the PA: 'You can break up our demonstration, but you can't silence us. This is our music. We are the people of Southall. We'll stand up for our rights.'

As the police lines deepen around the town hall, the cops move on even the tiny group of demonstrators who had been allowed to make their protest in front of the meeting place. The cops are challenged over the PA to come and explain why it's necessary to move 30 people.

A 15-year-old Asian woman takes over the microphone to say: 'Are you going to wait until there are six million Asians killed before you recognise the NF are Nazis?'

'We will not let the NF do to us what Hitler did to the Jewish people.'

The only reason the police haven't stormed the room above the café is that an ITN camera team is sharing the window with the loudspeaker. TV and film cameras protrude from dozens of the windows overlooking the town hall. Some belong to news teams, others to the police.

Press photographers flock from street to street, in search of the nearest melee. But the press does not trouble to speak to the Asians.

The police aggressively push the press back on to the pavement out of sight of an SPG swoop. Their assurance and arrogance extends to contempt for the press. Their attitude is simple: they're attacking Asians and no one will mind.

6.45pm. The People's Rights Centre in Park View Road is stormed by the police. Among those inside is Tariq Ali. Another is Avis, who receives similar treatment. She says:

'I was in a room clearly marked "medical room". The police burst in and attacked everyone — including people who were badly injured and a doctor who was clearly looking after them.'

'I was thrown to the floor and trampled on. Once out on the landing I saw people being thrown downstairs, including one Rasta guy who had blood streaming down his face.'

'They punched him around the face, pulled his hair, then threw him downstairs. They were particularly violent to the blacks and Asians.'

'Once we'd got downstairs we could see police outside forming a wall a couple of feet off the ground with their riot shields.'

'People were forced to bend down under them, and as they did so the cops kicked them really hard. They were all arrested. Only a few of us managed to get away.'

'We also heard that one guy had been thrown from a second floor window.'

7pm. The NF arrives. Martin Webster turns up in a battered car. He is pale. At the door, an NF steward's hands shake as he inspects press passes. Local and national journalists confirm that none of the 30 who arrive for the meeting is local.

Mr Virendra, an executive member of the Ealing Community Relations Council, is refused entrance to the meeting. The NF steward tells a chief inspector that Virendra is a 'hostile'. The chief inspector duly turns him away.

A union jack flies over the town hall, the first time anyone can recall seeing it there. The volume of the PA system is turned up as speakers let the police and the NF know what they think of them.

Over in Ealing, in a more peaceful part of the Southall constituency, Labour candidate Sydney Bidwell, MP for the area since 1964, is attending a ward meeting.

Only the Friday before, at a ward meeting organised by the Indian Workers Association, Bidwell was forced to respond to a question by calling on people to mobilise for the town hall demonstration today.

Meanwhile, however, he arranged to bring forward the Ealing ward meeting from Tuesday to Monday night...

10pm. The NF leaves the town hall by a side exit. The police remain on the streets. Three hundred predominantly young Asian workers are in jail waiting to be charged. Many have sustained injuries from the police truncheons, batons, and fists.

Tariq Ali is charged with obstruction and insulting behaviour, and released at lam.

Balwinder Singh: 'It was a foolish mistake to fight at 3pm. The fascists were not due to arrive till 7pm. This lack of discipline, however understandable, is inexcusable. It makes no political sense.'

Tariq Ali: 'The ANL's tactics and Balwinder's role were exemplary. Those who thought otherwise must now be convinced. The fascist meeting did take place in Southall. This is an unpalatable but sad fact. It needn't have done, if some of us had been more disciplined. There are times when the brain is more useful than brawn.'

Tuesday: The day begins with a picket of Southall police station, organised by the National Union of Teachers, to which Blair Peach belonged. It is joined by several hundred Asian and West Indian youth.

Another 500 attend a press conference to which 50 journalists come to hear the anger about yesterday's events and what is to happen next.

Speakers include: Vishnu Sharma, president of IWA Southall; Bernard Reagan, secretary of East London association NUT; Balwinder Singh and Paul Holborow of the ANL, and Tariq Ali, whose description of Southall being turned into a colony and demand for the release of all the political prisoners brings a rapturous response from the audience.

The call is for an independent inquiry into Monday's police violence, and a demonstration next Saturday, 28 April, with the slogans: Avenge Blair Peach! and Black and White United Against Racism!

The assembly point is the Dominion car park, The Green, Southall, which is two minutes from Southall BR station. Be there at 2pm.

The last words to the leader of the Southall Youth Movement: 'Blair Peach is our brother. We mourn him like we mourn Gurdip Singh Chaggar.'

Obituary of Blair Peach, p4.

'Nicked 12 in that little sortie. Not a bad work-rate.'

5pm. There is a mass sit-down by the railway bridge some 200 yards from the town hall. The police are making continuous arrests, wading in, beating people with truncheons, and lifting them into the vans. A number of young Asian women resolutely refuse to move.

By Southall Park, down the High Street from the town hall, the police are running along indiscriminately batoning those waiting for the NF to arrive.

Park View Road is opposite the park, and a number of Asians and some white anti-fascists are gathered here.

Paul, one of the anti-fascists, describes what happened to him:

'I was in Park View Road, and as the police charged down it we ran into front gardens. The cops dragged me from one front garden.'

'Even though I said "I won't struggle" they punched and kicked me and then threw me onto the ground. I heard an inspector say "Hold his head back", and then I felt the boot hit my teeth.'

'Then they picked me up, spreadeagled me against a lamp-post, and then marched me to a police station.'

'I was lucky, though,

because they didn't charge me. In the confusion my arresting officers couldn't be found. Anyway, I was white.'

'While I was in the police station I saw an Asian guy brought in clutching his head, with blood streaming down his face. One cop said to another, "Does he need a doctor?". The other replied, "No, of course not".'

'Another guy was brought in green after being unconscious. He was picked up and shaken violently. In a cell next to me I heard a cop say to a black guy: "That's typical for someone of your colour. None of you is

civilised, only monkeys throw bricks".'

In one of the charges by the police, Blair Peach is murdered.

ANL member Martin Gerald described the attack which killed Blair Peach:

'About 20 members of the SPG emerged from two blue police vans carrying riot shields and truncheons. They started to attack the anti-racist demonstrators indiscriminately with truncheons.'

'At the junction of Beechcroft Avenue and Orchard Avenue, Blair was hit twice on the head with police truncheons and left unconscious.'

'He was taken into a house in Orchard Avenue and from there to New Ealing Hospital, where he died in the early morning from a fractured skull.'

'Most of us were trying to get away from the police. It looked as if we could go home, but a number of police forced us into a side street. Blair Peach was with us.'

6.30pm. The NF meeting is due to begin in 30 minutes. Immediately opposite the town hall, above a cafe, Socialist Unity has set up a 200-watt public address system.

It has been in operation for an hour, alternately blaring out Asian, West Indian and new wave music, slogans, and speeches.

A new song comes over, it's called *Can You Feel the Force*. Earlier, before the police had moved in on the town hall area, Steel Pulse's *Handsworth*

ELECTIONS

Leicester anti-Nazi demo

Militancy in plenty, but no points for organisation

THE POLICE presence to protect the National Front in Leicester on Saturday was massive and smoothly co-ordinated. Five thousand cops from 21 forces converged on the city, to be briefed in a local sports stadium.

Then out came the TV-equipped police helicopter, the riot shields, police dogs and horseback cops wearing riot helmets and visors.

It was to be a day of heavy police violence, many arrests, and frustration for the anti-fascists.

By Davy Jones.

Victoria Park, where the anti-fascists first assemble, is surrounded by police. The anti-fascists are divided.

In one corner of the park is the Unity march, backed by the Communist Party and the Indian Workers Association. Pledged to peaceful non-confrontation, a thousand people march off three miles away from Wyggeston school where the NF are to hold their meeting.

In another corner are a few small leftist groups denouncing the ANL and everyone else for inaction. They march off determined to confront the NF, shepherded by a large phalanx of police.

At the Anti Nazi League lorry, Paul Holborow urges everyone to leave the park in small groups and meet up in the city centre where the rest of the ANL forces have already been sent.

This is easier said than done as the cops have cordoned off all the main roads leading to the city centre.

Meanwhile the 500-strong NF demo sets off closely guarded by the police. After 200 yards it meets a barrage of stones, bricks, and smoke bombs from behind a large advertising hoarding.

That's the end of the demo for a few dozen NF and police. But the police military command immediately re-routes the NF march. Their ragged ranks arrive at the school after a paltry 10-minute demo.

The main forces from the ANL have blocked a main road on the original route of the NF march. There are a number of skirmishes with the police, as demonstrators try to break through the police lines to reach the NF.

Elsewhere another large group of ANL supporters, including hundreds of black and white youths, is trying to find the NF march or the other ANL supporters. At last a militant and united demonstration is formed. But the way is blocked by the police. They sit down in the road, meetings and arguments — people seeking out every side street, frustrated by the police grip on the demonstrators.

Then a sudden clash. Was it

started by a Special Branch provocateur? There are plenty around, and a few are beaten up before the afternoon is over.

Out come the riot shields and the truncheons as the police lure demonstrators into a carefully laid ambush. In the vicious fighting one youth is thrown head first through a window by the Special Branch.

The rest of the ANL forces arrive and after a few more police attacks 4,000 people march to the university campus. The police lines are ten thick between us and the NF hall nearby. A few speeches then a completely unprovoked police attack. They invade the campus and are met by a hail of stones and sticks. Many people are wounded here — the police, protected by their riot shields, coming off lightest.

Then came the worst police violence. Determined to clear the campus, the dogs are let loose on the marchers. Unprepared, they panic and a number are mauled by the dogs. The TV cameras film it all, but nothing of this is shown on the news programmes.

In Victoria Park the ANL leadership claims the day was a victory. Very many demonstrators are sceptical. Throughout most of the day they had no idea what they were doing or of the ANL's plans.

Dispersed into small groups, they did not even have the solidarity of a big counter-demonstration to the NF. Frustrated by the police and the lack of leadership from the ANL, many were demoralised by the street battles they were doomed to lose.

The final toll was over 100 arrests, including at least one comrade, Seamus Burke, initially held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and now charged with assaulting the police. A few dozen anti-fascists were hospitalised. The NF may be badly bruised and their morale dented, but the anti-fascists did not come out unscathed either.

Leicester showed that there is still a very broad anti-fascist movement, particularly among the youth who are prepared to fight heroically against the police.

But the scope of the police operation and kind of repressive instruments they



used means that the left has to urgently reassess its tactics and match the cops in numbers and co-ordination.

There is now a desperate need for a national ANL conference to discuss strategy and tactics for fighting fascism.

To support the defence campaign for those arrested at Leicester, contact Leicester Polytechnic Student Union.

WEST BROM

A MASS picket of a major NF election meeting in the Midlands is being organised on Saturday, 28 April, by Sandwell Campaign Against Racism and Fascism. Assemble 4pm in Hardware Street, West Bromwich.

WANDSWORTH

By Colin Talbot
Wandsworth IMG

OVER 500 people turned out to picket the NF's first big election meeting in Wandsworth on 18 April. Many local people, including groups of black youth, joined the picket, which was organised by the Anti Nazi League and Wandsworth Against Racism.

Inside Battersea town hall, protected by hundreds of police, NF leaders Tyndall and Webster had an audience of less than a hundred, half of them imported from South-east and East London.

On the picket were three Labour candidates in the general election, Alf Dubbs,

Stuart Holland, and John Tilley, who ignored a call from the Labour agent for Battersea South to stay away. Also present was the Socialist Unity candidate for Deptford, Janet Maguire.

After the picket had dispersed the police harassed a group of black youth who had supported it. Earlier in the evening they had arrested one

black youth and searched a group of anti-fascists. The youth has since been charged with 'threatening behaviour'.

Activists in the area are now building a big Rock Against Racism gig to be held on Friday 27 April, at the Cornet of Horse Pub, Lavender Gardens (off Lavender Hill), 8pm to midnight. 'Crisis' plus disco. Wageless 50p, others £1.

International Marxist Group
PUBLIC MEETING

'For a Labour government,
but fight for a socialist alternative'

Friday 27 April, 7.30pm

Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London NW1

Blair Peach obituary

By Bernard Regan

BLAIR PEACH, killed by the police in Southall on Monday, was a well-known trade union and anti-racist militant.

Until March this year he was president of the East London Teachers Association — the Tower Hamlets branch of the National Union of Teachers.

Blair was a revolutionary socialist, active on a wide number of issues.

He was a member of the Anti-Nazi League from its inception, a member of the Rank and File Teachers group, and supported the Socialist Workers Party.

Throughout his working life he was an active member of the NUT and a committed anti-racist. He was never absent from major anti-racist or anti-fascist demonstrations.

Blair was particularly concerned about the situation in the East End. He was secretary of the local NUT anti-racist sub-committee and had taken

part in the demonstrations at Brick Lane protesting against the National Front presence in the area.

He had been the subject of personal attack. Last Autumn he was pulled off his bike on the way home from work and beaten up by two individuals who said that they supported the National Front.

Blair was an active organiser in the NUT. In 1974 he played a leading role in the London Teachers Action Committee, which forced the union bureaucracy to make a stand to defend teachers' living standards.

But Blair wasn't only concerned about teachers, he wanted to aid the fight of all workers in struggle.

Recently he was to the fore in organising support for the public sector strikers. He raised money for his local NUPE strikers among teachers and helped to organise support in his area.

He understood the need for a rounded socialist alternative to the reformist strategies of the labour leaderships.

He actively supported campaigns against the oppression of gays and women, such as the Campaign Against Sexism and Sexual Oppression in Education.

Above all else, Blair was an internationalist. He supported the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and welcomed the overthrow of the Shah of Iran.

And he worked hard to win the support of his membership in East London for the policies that he supported.

Blair always put forward his views without rancour. Despite occasional disagreements he was always pleasant to work with, generous, witty and good humoured.

For us all his murder is a political blow; for many of us who were fond of him it will mean an irreplaceable loss.

Defend East London against the racists and fascists!
March through the constituencies where
Webster and Tyndall are standing!
Demo and rally, assemble 1pm, Sunday 29 April
Shoreditch Park, New North Road, Hoxton
Supported by over 30 anti-racist, Asian,
West Indian, and left organisations

Why SU is standing

By Dodie Wepler

MARGARET Thatcher is contesting this general election with policies that even the capitalist press admits reflect a shift to the right in the ideological climate in Britain.

At the same time, significant sections of workers have recently taken wide-scale militant action around their wage claims. Under these circumstances, some have questioned Socialist Unity's decision to stand candidates.

The arguments come from two corners: from militants understandably concerned to keep out Thatcher, and from abstentionists.

Surely, the first argument goes, we should close ranks and return Labour. With the disastrous policies pursued by the government, it will need every vote it can get. And no matter how much we oppose these attacks, a vote for Labour at least represents a class against class vote.

Socialist Challenge has consistently argued for the return of a Labour government. But it has been the right-wing policies of the Labour and trade union leaders that have demoralised sections of the working class, paving the way for a Tory victory.

So it's necessary to fight both for a Labour government, and

against Callaghan's Tory policies. This election can be used to develop the fight to replace the Callaghan leadership.

Socialist Unity offers working class voters an opportunity to record both their disgust for the government's policies, and their active support for a position to the left of Labour.

The campaign's activist approach is the best way to return a Labour government, because it starts from a clear rejection of Callaghan's policies. There have been decades

The kind of global alternative Socialist Unity represents is hard to come by today, although there is no doubt it's needed. Callaghan has moved to the right — occupying the so-called 'centre' — as Thatcher becomes more frenetic. The Labour left? Outside of one or two exceptions, they long ago fell into silence once their leading lights had been bought off by government office.

If anything has been proved by the decision of the Communist Party to stand in

As long as working class voters identify a vote for Labour with backing for Callaghan's policies, the Tories will win this election.

If there is one thing that can help change the mind of such people — as long as these alternative policies are not actively supported on a more credible scale — it is the ability to point to concrete actions in the fight for alternative policies to problems they confront.

Several of the British sects have taken up the call for an abstention in the election. This stems from utter confusion. The abstentionist sentiment is not a break from Labour to the left, but a retreat from the fight against the right.

Advocating such a course — if these sects had any influence — abandons the organisations of the working class to right-wing bureaucrats. Nothing could please Callaghan more.

Furthermore, it is also a refusal to fight against the return of the Tories — the party of the bosses.

Socialist Unity rejects this. It sees the need to have the Labour leaders back in the dock — where the working class can best judge their actions, and when their complete inability to defend working class interests is discovered by the British masses, they can be discarded.

Vote Socialist Unity

of mixed experiences, calling for 'critical support for Labour'.

However, today in only a tiny handful of constituencies are there groups of activists who could promote the fight against Callaghan's policies. The experience of Labour's rule has transformed most constituencies into a shell.

In this situation, calling for 'critical support for Labour' — without at the same time standing independent revolutionary candidates — amounts to telling people to vote for right-wing policies.

Hackney on a manifesto to the right of Labour candidate Ernie Roberts, it's that the CP just doesn't provide the alternative that many militants are seeking. That's probably helped several stewards at the British Oxygen plant in Hackney to decide to support the Socialist Unity campaign.

Socialist Unity's activist approach is also the best way to tackle the abstentionists. Any Socialist Unity canvasser can provide ample empirical evidence to suggest that this will be a major problem for Labour.

Into battle again in Liverpool

By Tony Meehan

SOCIALIST Unity decided to stand in the Toxteth constituency of Liverpool in the general election mainly because there is a history of self-organisation and struggle in the area's diverse communities.

Black youth face discrimination from employers (80 per cent are unemployed) and from the police (with the highest number of 'sus' arrests outside London).

The SU candidate, Paul Adams, is himself a member of the local black community. He knows what it means to be unemployed — he has been unable to get work for the last four years.

Paul was arrested last summer on an anti-fascist mobilisation in the city centre organised by the ANL and Merseyside Anti-Racist Alliance.

And the SU campaign will be making anti-fascist/anti-racist activity a major priority.

In particular it will be

mobilising all-out for a demonstration which has been called for next Sunday, 29 April, when NF leader John Tyndall is expected to be in Liverpool.

Unemployment will also be an important issue in the campaign. In much of the constituency it is as high as 35 per cent.

The recent factory closures on Merseyside (the latest being Dunlop), together with the

fight to save jobs at Plessey's and other local factories, have provided a focus for organising a fightback.

Socialist Unity will thus be placing demands such as the 35-hour week and work-sharing without loss of pay at the forefront of its campaign.

Other questions to be taken up will include the fight for abortion rights. The national

publicity around the 'live foetus' at Whiston Hospital is bound to boost SPUC and other anti-abortionists.

Socialist Unity will reply mainly by building a local campaign for a day-care abortion centre in Liverpool — a city where it is notoriously difficult to get an NHS abortion.

Last week SU supported a UTOM picket of a major Labour Party rally addressed by Callaghan. The demand for troops out of Ireland will be taken up throughout the campaign via leaflets, further pickets, and meetings in shopping centres.

An anti-recruitment leaflet is also planned by those building the national Revolution rally and NUSS members in the local schools.

Last month SU fought the Edge Hill by-election. Today we have swung into action in Toxteth. Socialist Unity is now firmly on the map in Liverpool as a focal point in the fight for a socialist alternative.

SU EVENTS

TOWER HAMLETS: SU fund-raising jumble sale, Sat 28 April, 1 to 3pm, Bow Triangle, Wellington Way, Bow, E3.

ISLINGTON: SU public meetings: Thur 25 April, 7.30pm, Manor Garden Library, Manor Gardens — 'For a socialist alternative' (speakers incl John Suddaby, NUPE; Dave Burn, NALGO; Red Bacon, GPAA); Tues 1 May, 7.30pm, John Barnes Library, Camden Road — rally against imperialism (speakers on Ireland, Iran, Zimbabwe).

ISLINGTON: SU election night benefit bop, Thur 3 May, 8 till late, with Sports and Charge plus disco, bar and food, Ladbroke House, N London Poly, Highbury Grove, NS, Adm. £1 (75p wageless).

HULL: SU benefit bop, Fri 27 April, White Lion Hotel, Lombard St. (opp bus stn.), 6pm onwards. Bar extension to 11.30pm. Tickets 50p from Bols or SU supporters. Also May Day eve disco, Mon 30 April, Waltham Club, Norfolk St. Late bar. All welcome.

MANCHESTER Socialist Festival, Sat 28 April, starts 2pm at Birch Lane Community Centre, Rusholme, South Manchester. Stalls/jumble sale/entertainment/musical discussion. Evening £1 (75p wageless), hot meal from 5.30pm/women's disco/Red Flu/Manchester's top reggae band — Messengers. Organised by SU.

TOWER HAMLETS: Socialist Unity festival, Sun 29 April, 4pm onwards at Robert Montellors school, Vallance Road, E1. Speakers include Tariq Ali and Ray Varnes, music from three bands, food, drink, etc.



MANCHESTER Ardwick. Candidate: Jeff West (Boilermakers Union). Address: 14 Piccadilly, Manchester 1. Phone: (061) 225 9857.



GLASGOW Queens Park. Candidate: Walter McLellan (assistant secretary, Glasgow District NALGO). Address: 312 Cathcart Road, Queens Park, Glasgow. Phone: (041) 424 1167.



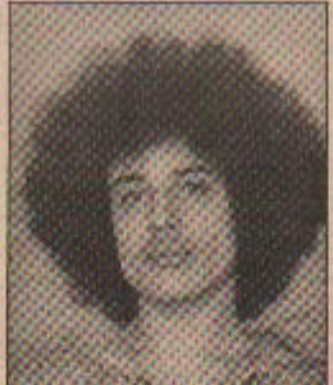
LONDON Deptford. Candidate: Janet Maguire (ASTMS branch secretary). Address: c/o PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Phone: none.



BARNSELY. Candidate: Brendan Gallagher (Independent, sponsored by SU). Address: 35 Huddersfield Road, Barnsley. Phone: 45012.



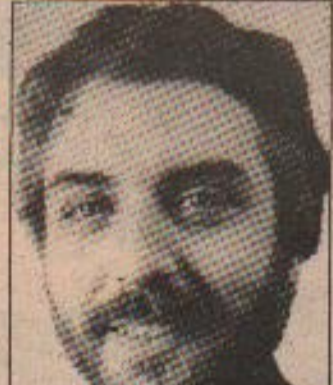
BIRMINGHAM Small Heath. Candidate: Chris Adanson (former NUPE area officer). Address: 78B Digbeth, Birmingham B5 6DY. Phone: (021) 643 8208. Socialist Unity is also standing candidates in all four wards in the local elections: Salfley (Geoff Green), Newtown (Steve Griffith), Duddesdon (Kathy Ambrose), and Small Heath (Rick Hazoner).



LIVERPOOL Toxteth. Candidate: Paul Adams. Address: 131 Granby Street, Liverpool 8. Phone: to be confirmed.



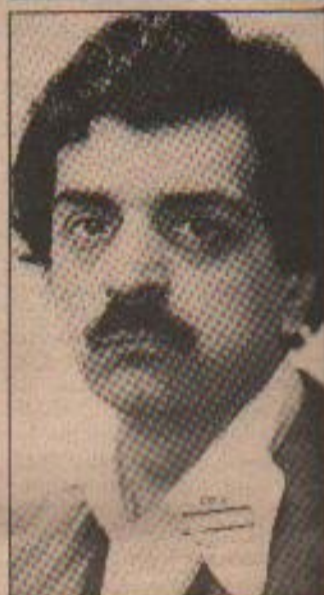
NOTTINGHAM East. Candidate: Ian Juniper (ASTMS). Address: 5 Maple Square, Woodborough Road, Nottingham. Phone: 584190.



LONDON Bethnal Green & Bow. Candidate: Ray Varnes (ILEA district secretary, NUPE). Address: 13 White's Row, off Commercial St, E1. Phone: (01) 247 2717.



LONDON Islington North. Candidate: Mike Simpson. Address: 110 Hornsey Lane Estate, N19. Phone: (01) 263 3367.



LONDON Southall. Candidate: Tariq Ali (editor, Socialist Challenge). Address: 23 Hamilton Road, Southall, Middlesex. Phone: (01) 871 5018.



HULL Central. Candidate: Pauline Stanton (ASTMS, Hull Trades Council executive). Address: 3 Stepney Lane, Hull. Phone: 41984.



CARDIFF South-East. Candidate: Pat Arrowsmith (Independent Socialist, sponsored by SU). Address: 1-5 Books, 108 Sallisbury Road, Cardiff. Phone: 30183.

BOOST THE FIGHT AGAINST RACISM BY FUNDING YOUR PAPER

ELECTIONS

WRP stand 60

By Bob Pennington

LAST week the Workers' Revolutionary Party announced that it is standing 60 candidates in the general election. This is the largest number of candidates that a group describing itself as Trotskyist and revolutionary has ever stood in a British general election.

There are two criteria on which revolutionaries should decide to cast their votes in the election: first, if the party concerned draws mass support from the working class; second, if the party actively fights for policies to tackle the central issues in the class struggle. On both counts the WRP fails.

The terms 'Trotskyist' and 'revolutionary' are self-styled and bear little resemblance to reality. On every single vital issue of the class struggle the WRP has failed the test to build united class action.

Furthermore, this sect bitterly denounce the autonomous women's movement, the Anti Nazi League and organisations like the United Troops Out Movement, and presents its own bizarre brand of sectarianism as the only way forward.

Like all sectarians the WRP is not averse to the worst forms of opportunism, especially when it comes to their friend, and Idi Amin's former friend, Colonel Gaddafi. Its election manifesto hails the 'conquests led by the PLO, the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party of Iraq, the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah' and for good measure throws in the '...Republic of Syria'.

Under the 'benevolent' and progressive regime of the Iraqi Socialist Party members of the Communist Party are hounded, tortured and executed. The devout Moslem Colonel Gaddafi might have a soft spot for some of the WRP leaders, but the posters in Tripoli and Benghazi are quite clear that Trotskyists and such like are not welcome. They boldly proclaim: 'Party Politics is Treason'.

Meanwhile Syria still keeps its troops in Lebanon after stepping in to keep the PLO in line — an intervention gratefully supported by American imperialism.

Unfortunately, the fact that the WRP is standing 60 candidates means that for many people who are starting to look for an alternative to reformism it will appear in that light.

Once again, the failure of the British far left to stand a united slate is coming home to roost. If the Socialist Workers Party had agreed to such a proposal there is no doubt the joint forces of Socialist Unity and the SWP would have attracted far wider support than the members of far-left groups.

A joint slate would almost certainly have been able to field 50 candidates, getting media time and far broader support than Socialist Unity will gather, even though they would not have any oil in their sandhills! Instead, this caricature of a revolutionary organisation, the WRP, is able to put itself across as the biggest alternative to reformism, with its shrill cry that civil war is only a short step away.

Ernie Roberts interviewed Candidate from Labour's left

ERNIE ROBERTS, recently retired as assistant general secretary of the Engineering Union, and a leading member of the ANL, is standing as Labour candidate for Hackney North and Stoke Newington. With a 10,000 majority to defend, he is virtually certain to become the most left-wing MP. Socialist Challenge asked him about his policies and election campaign.

Interview by Geoffrey Sheridan

The demands in your election address closely correspond to those of Socialist Unity, which says that the policies it's fighting for will not be won in Parliament but by the working class taking action in the workplaces and the communities.

Your policies, though, come across in a somewhat abstract way. The election address does not suggest what's necessary for their implementation.

How the party and I see the attainment of what's outlined in the election address is through Parliament and the local authority.

The question of wages and working hours, for example, is one that concerns the government because it employs 7 million people, so a Labour

government has to have a policy which is in line with trade union aspirations.

We do see our policies as issues which can be attained through Parliament, particularly on the question of public ownership — of banks and finance houses, and indeed for the planned economy.

That needs government decision to take over as much of the economy as they need in order to control it in the interests of the people.

Although your election address is an implicit indictment of the record of the Labour government, it does not openly criticise the Labour leadership.

Surely this hampers a fightback. Doesn't it mean challenging the supporters of the Concordat, for example, with a recall Labour Party

conference after the election?

The party at this stage has made up its mind to be positive in its demands, as well as making criticisms of cuts in social, health, and welfare services.

We've demanded full employment, jobs for all, the 35-hour week without loss of pay, an end to wage controls and low pay, and control of prices and profits.

We haven't thought it would be a good thing to go into this election where Labour is fighting, if you like, with its back to the wall by fighting the Labour government.

We want to convince people that it's necessary to return a Labour government and to fight for socialist policies on the return of a Labour government. It can only be done in this way.

A particular point about Socialist Unity's intervention is that it aims to help the fightback, by using the election campaign to build activities against the NF, in support of the civil servants' strike,

North Hackney & Stoke Newington



Ernie Roberts

Labour

Thursday 3rd May

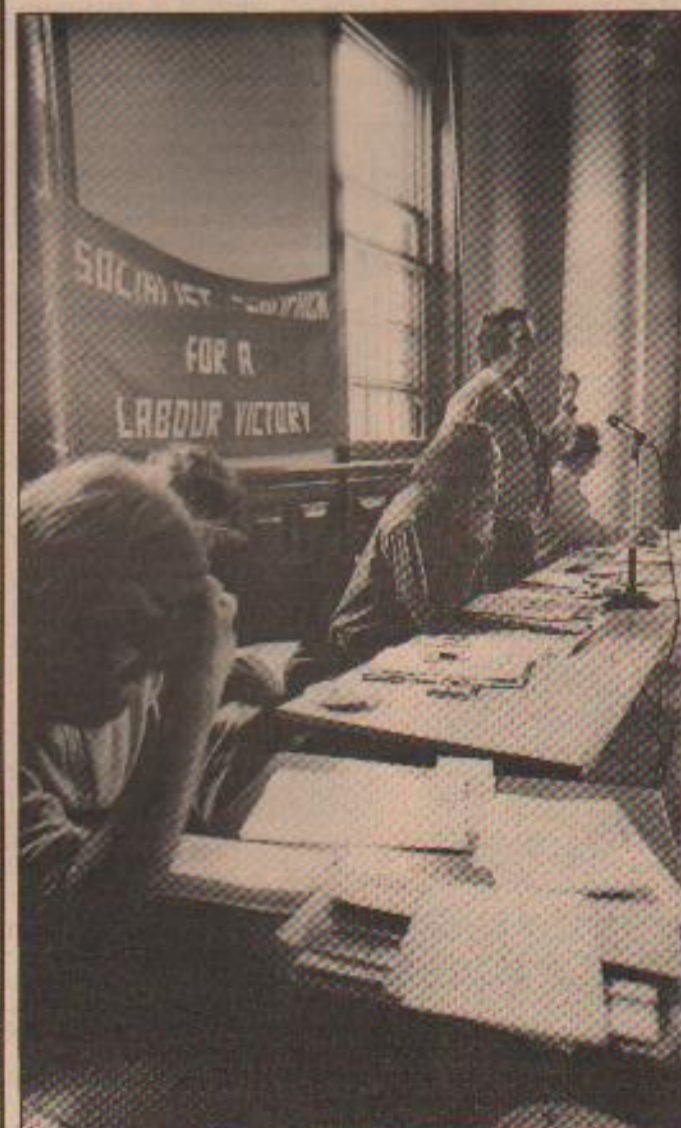
nursery campaigns and so on. Is this the kind of activist approach that you've adopted as the basis of Labour's campaign in Hackney North?

The Hackney North Labour Party is well known for its anti-fascist activities. It has been a keen supporter of the ANL since its foundation. The

ANL is calling an eve of poll mass meeting in the constituency, at which I will be speaking.

I'll be taking part in the Tower Hamlets demonstration against racism and fascism on 29 April, and we'll be paying our share of the costs from election expenses.

What kind of socialist campaign?



TED KNIGHT speaking at SCLV conference last year

By Martin Meteyard

ELECTIONS are the time when the pressure is greatest inside the Labour Party not to 'rock the boat' — in other words, raise any questions about the Labour government's record and policies. So how has the left inside the party responded?

The Tribunites, the Labour Co-ordinating Committee (which groups Benn's supporters), and the current supporting Militant have all dropped their criticisms and are working for the re-election of the Labour government on the basis of its right-wing manifesto.

Not so the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, whose policies — decided on by a conference of its supporters last year — are being put forward to varying degrees in the campaigns of the three Labour candidates in London who have sponsored the SCLV: Ernie Roberts (Hackney North), Ted Knight (Hornsey), and Ken Livingstone (Hampstead).

Ernie Roberts' manifesto, for instance, calls for the nationalisation of the banks, finance houses, the land and major industries; a 35-hour week without loss of pay to secure jobs for all; an end to wage controls and low pay; the repeal of the 1968 and 1971 Immigration Acts; free abortion on demand; and troops out of Ireland.

SCLV leaflets outlining these various policies have been

produced for distribution on the main streets and estates. **But what they don't say is how we're going to get them.**

Ernie Roberts' answer, in the interview printed on this page, is quite clear: 'through Parliament and the local authority'. And the problem with the SCLV is that it isn't using the election to put forward an alternative way of organising for class struggle policies.

For instance, its leaflet on Ireland simply concludes: 'Vote Labour and join us in working for: the immediate withdrawal of the British Army from Ireland; the end of the Orange Northern Ireland state, and a United Ireland.'

Not a mention of the United Troops Out Movement; just a call to join the Labour Party.

This stands things on their head. What it means in practice is trying to channel all struggles and campaigns into the bureaucratic structures of the Labour Party instead of fighting to turn the party out towards them.

The special election issue of the SCLV's paper *Socialist Organiser*, shows what this leads to when it ends up backing Roy Mason against troops out campaigner Brendan Gallagher in Barnsley.

Even within the framework of building a current in the Labour Party the SCLV programme has its limitations. Nothing is said about how to deal with the major obstacle blocking the fight against Tory

policies — the right-wing Callaghan leadership.

If they are honest, the SCLV comrades must admit that the vast majority of militants who have consistently fought the Labour government's attacks are not members of the Labour Party.

They therefore have a responsibility to build forms of action through which all those defending working class interests can fight side by side — regardless of which party or group they belong to. This is in fact the only practical test militants can make of the political possibilities held out by the Labour Party.

Furthermore, it is a direction which is still open to the SCLV — and one in which it has, at least in Hackney North, taken some faltering steps.

Thus Ernie Roberts has sponsored the anti-racist demonstration through Tyndall and Webster's constituencies on 29 April; and he will be speaking from the platform at an eve-of-poll ANL meeting on 2 May.

Perhaps most significantly, the Hackney North Labour Party has agreed to put on its expenses an International Marxist Group leaflet putting an independent case for voting Labour in the election.

Such willingness to work with forces outside the party holds out promise for the future. But much work still has to be done if an organised class struggle current is to be built which is capable of taking on the Labour leaders.

ALTERNATIVE POLICIES DON'T GROW ON TREES. DONATE NOW



Glasgow marchers defy Orange attack

By Martin O'Leary

AMID a hail of bottles and eggs the Glasgow 'Troops Out' march went ahead last Saturday.

The 1,000-strong march was persistently attacked by union jack-waving Loyalists. Despite this the demonstrators marched two miles in good order.

At Gorbals Cross, less than half a mile from the intended destination at City Halls, the march was halted by a police cordon.

The police forced marchers onto waste ground and for a while it appeared as if they had been trapped by a now open combination of police and Loyalists. Fortunately the discipline of the marchers held up and they managed to extricate themselves.

The attack on the march had been stirred up by Glasgow Tories. Ross McKay, former National Front member and Tory candidate for Glasgow Springburn, led a move by local Tories to have the march banned.

The Scottish press gave massive publicity to McKay, and the fact that the march was organised by Sinn Fein as well as the United Troops Out Movement was used as a peg

for an anti-Republican witch-hunt.

But the Glasgow left managed an effective response to the Tories. The press was bombarded by protests from Glasgow United Troops Out Movement and the Socialist Unity campaign in Glasgow Queen's Park.

Radio Clyde was pressured into giving air time to UTOM, and the Glasgow Herald felt obliged to give over a half-page article to the movement.

A foretaste of the trouble to come was an incident in Queen's Park Secondary School, Toryglen, on the eve of the march.

After Socialist Unity had given out leaflets there, one of its supporters among the school students was stabbed by pro-Loyalist classmates and had to have six stitches.

Despite all this the left's activity produced results. The march included a 200-strong contingent from Socialist Unity and a 300-strong one from the Socialist Workers Party.

It was the biggest turn-out for any Irish march so far in Glasgow, proving that it is possible to defy and defeat the Orange reactionaries.

Five 'Troops Out' supporters

were arrested, but special mention should be made of the James Connolly Flute Band.

It was they who headed the march and bore the brunt of the attacks. Two of their stewards were lifted by the police and their drums were destroyed by

Orange thugs.

An appeal for financial help, both to replace the instruments and for legal defence costs for those arrested, has been launched. Money should be sent to UTOM, 64 Queen's Street, Glasgow.

Troops out — 'seditious libel'

By John Stevenson

'THE right of free speech, while absolute, should not be wantonly used to insult others', said Judge Mynett at Oxford Crown Court on 17 April. He was dismissing the appeal of Troops Out supporter John Skinner against conviction for insulting behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace.

He and others had sold Troops Out literature during the display. Twenty minutes after it had packed up, a group of soldiers returned and assaulted Skinner.

Both the corporal, who

admitted the assault, and Skinner were arrested. But only Skinner was charged.

During the two-day appeal the judge frequently attacked the 'scurrilous' picket. Describing the literature as 'seditious libel', he threatened to refer it to the DPP.

Skinner intends to take the matter to a higher court and campaign in the labour movement on the issue. But funds are urgently needed and should be rushed to John Skinner Defence Campaign, c/o Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N12XP.

Northern elections, most unbritish

By Geoff Bell

WE HAVE been told that what unites 'the mainland' and the six North-east Irish counties is a common way of life and a common political tradition.

If that were the case then the general election in the North of Ireland would share the same characteristics as in Great Britain.

Thatcher, Callaghan and Steel would be speaking to audiences in public halls in Belfast, Derry and Armagh. Prices, unemployment and tax cuts would dominate the political debate, and the main parties would be dispatching full-time workers to win over the marginal constituencies.

It is stating the obvious to say that none of this applies. There is no need for Callaghan, Thatcher or Steel to campaign in the North of Ireland, or to send party workers to organise the campaigns. There is no need because they aren't standing.

That in itself is the best example of how 'different' the North of Ireland is from England, Scotland and Wales. Another is to ask the average voter in the latter to explain the difference between the Unionist Party of Northern Ireland, the United Ulster Unionist Party, the Official Unionist Party, and the Democratic Unionist Party.

Not only will the average voter — or the average reader of Socialist Challenge — not know, but they won't much care.

Yet these differences are the main feature of the election in the North of Ireland. The main contest is for the Loyalist vote, the main interest in the outcome is which brand of Unionism will emerge victorious.

Will it be the most extreme form — represented by Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party, which is contesting five seats? Or the most moderate — represented by the Alliance Party, which is contesting all 12 seats?

Is there a real chance of Enoch Powell losing his seat to a member of the SDLP in South Down because of a Unionist split? Will newly independent

Unionist Jim Kilfedder, who is backed by the DUP, take the North Down seat from the Official Unionists of which he was a member till earlier this year?

For the record, Powell will probably just hang on to his seat, the Democratic Unionist Party should increase its vote, the Alliance Party is unlikely to win anything, and the Official Unionists should gain a majority of Loyalist seats.

Even if they do emerge as the party with the highest number of seats — between five and seven — this will still be a hollow victory compared with ten years ago, when they won all the Loyalist seats that were going.

But all this is somewhat irrelevant for if there is one thing about the election in the North of Ireland which can be said with a good deal of confidence, it is that the results will have only the most marginal influence on what happens in Ireland in the next five years.

What is important is that the Loyalists remain split; split into different organisations, split on tactics, split on the ends they want to see.

The real loser in that situation is British imperialism, because the one discernible strategy Britain has had in Ireland for the past ten years is to try to build a cohesive alliance, with wide popular support, on which it can depend to oversee the North of Ireland in Britain's interest.

At one time it was hoped that the Unionist Party, now the OUP, could be 'reformed' and attract significant Catholic support.

Then there were great expectations in the newly formed 'non-sectarian' Alliance Party. Then a power-sharing arrangement between the 'moderates' of the now Unionist Party of Northern Ireland and the mainly Catholic Social Democratic and Labour Party was the dream.

All these attempts failed, and the continued split in the Loyalist forces, together with the pressure on the SDLP to become more Republican, will ensure a continuation of that failure after the election.

WHAT'S LEFT

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

WEST London UTOM presents A Sense of Loss — full length feature film on Ireland. Fri 27 April, 7.30pm. Ealing Technical College, St Mary's Rd, W5. Tube: South Ealing Bus: 65. Adm: 80p.

PICNIC against SPUC, Sat 28 April, 12 noon, Beakers Corner. SPUC is having a mass rally for Day of the Unborn Child. We'll welcome them celebrating Day of the Wanted Child. Bring food. Play 'It's a NAC out'. Balloons available.

CRITIQUE Conference: USSR — Prospects for Change. Sat 6 May, 11am to 9pm. Speakers: Hilke Ticktin, Mick Lese, David Law. Students Union, Keele University, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs.

JOHN BERGER, Eric Hobsbawm and Raymond Williams will speak on the theme of 'Peasantry Today'. 7.30pm, Fri 4 May, at the ICA, No. 10, Covent Garden House Terrace, London SW1.

Admission 75p plus 25p ICA day-membership.

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present

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GENERAL election — left perspectives, positions, and arguments. Plus Secret DHSS code, Provisional IRA

interview, Press Council attack, Mugabe interview, New American Right, Plastic People busted — again, Caryl Churchill's plays, and a comprehensive listing of socialist publishers. The May Lavalier: 40p or 65 annual subscription. 87 Cavendish Rd, London N1

SUPPORT picket of Labour Party headquarters, Wed 2 May, 11am-3pm, Transport House, Smith Square, SW1. Smash all immigration controls. Troops out of Ireland now. No vote for Labour. Organised by Revolutionary Communist Tendency.

LUTTE Ouvriere Fete and Conference 2-6 June. Coach leaving London 1 June direct to site near Paris. Return late £30. Write to BM ICT, London WC1V 6AX or tel 274 3851 for further details.

KACKNEY Anti Naz League, Election Rally Against the Naz Candidates, Stoke Newington Town Hall, 7.30pm, 2 May.

FOLLOWING on from national conference, Yorkshire/Humber side socialist feminists are planning a regional conference. Planning meeting 28

April, 2-6pm, 16 Shoolbrooke Avenue, Leeds 5, Wetherby, Leeds LS29427.

SPARTACIST League Public Meeting — 'Remember Labour's Betrayals!' 7.30pm, Tues. 1 May, Australia Bar, Hurst St, Birmingham. Further information on 021-472-7725

SPARTACIST public meeting 'Remember Labour's Betrayals! No Vote to the Labour Traitors!' Friday, 27 April, 7.30pm, Central Library, 65 Holloway Road, London N7. (Tube: Holloway and Islington or Holloway Road).

NO VOTE For Labour. Why a vote for Labour is a vote against workers interests. Two Revolutionary Communist Tendency election meetings, Friday, 27 April, 'Oppose Labour's war in Ireland; fight racial oppression — No Vote for Labour.' Tuesday 2 May, 'Workers and the election — Break with the Labour Party.' Both meetings, 7.30pm, Britannia Pub, Mare Street, near Hackney Town Hall.

LONDON: 'Britain Out of Ireland!' Prisoners' Aid Committee and the Revolutionary Communist Group joint

Forum no. 8. The Labour Party: Racism and Imperialism — What choices in this Election? Speakers Dipak Basu, PAC, Provisional Sinn Fein, RCG Monday, 30 April, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W1. Holborn tube. Adm. 20p.

TORY or Labour? What difference for women? General discussion on the election and the issues which face women: unemployment, cuts, Ireland, etc. Organised by Brent Socialist Feminist Group, Thursday 26 April, Brent Womens Centre, 138 Minet Ave, NW10. 8pm. All women welcome.

THE Transformation of Education in Mozambique. Meeting addressed by Chris Searle, recently returned from two years in Mozambique, Wed 2 May, 9pm, Africa Centre, 38 King St, London WC2. Adm. 50p. Organised by Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Information Centre.

COMMUNITY Worker speaking Gujarati/Punjabi/Urdu, with own initiative, required to join team of two workers at Community Centre in inner city area of Cardiff. £4245 pa. Details:

South Riverside Community Centre, Brunel St, Riverside Cardiff, Tel. 0222 23320. Closing date: 1 June 1979.

BENEFIT social with Soulyard and Tropicanae, Sat 28 April, 8pm, Bar extension, Caxton House, St John's Way, Archway, N19 5T, wageless 75p. Proceeds to SWAPO medical aid.

HULL Reclaim the Night march, Wed 2 May at 8.30pm from the Student Union Building, Hull University, Gracie provided, Rally, Women's Disco. Hull Trades Council is supporting it.

WOMEN GENERAL

WOMEN have now had the vote for 51 years. On 3 May, for the first time ever, women in Britain will have the chance to vote for a member of their own sex as Prime Minister.

The press has made much of Margaret Thatcher's gender but they have not, characteristically enough, looked seriously at Tory policies on women.

The Labour Party, apart from a few sexist quips from Callaghan, has not exactly taken the bull by the horns and confronted the

at the bottom

By Valerie Coultas

THE Tory Party is the party of business, as its tremendous power and influence in the election campaign has shown. In tribute to the Conservatives the press have fallen over themselves to praise and comment on Margaret Thatcher's sex. Yet in the 30 pages of their manifesto, the Tories do not mention women, as a group, once.

What would a Conservative administration mean for women?

Taxes: Top rates of income tax will be cut and the higher tax bands will be widened. Taxes on earnings will be switched to taxes on spending.

This means the lower paid will pay for tax concessions to the higher paid. Women are the largest single group of low paid workers in the country. An Thatcher has suggested that social security payments should be taxed.

Cuts: Public spending cuts are promised by the Tories and we certainly won't be seeing any socialist policies like the nationalisation of land which would really reduce the price of houses.

Cuts mean more work for women. Every resident in a Tory-controlled borough will know. That's why women have been in the forefront of fighting against closures in public facilities like libraries, law centres, swimming pools, nurseries or abortion day-care units.

Education: The defence of the direct grant and grammar schools figures in the Tory manifesto. A 'parents charter' is suggested. But what is in store with the Tory government is freedom of choice — for a minority of affluent parents at the expense of the vast majority whose children are experiencing the educational apartheid of the post-war years.

Family Life: Family life will be supported by allowing council tenants to buy their own homes. Welfare services will concentrate on 'those in real need'. Buying a council house is like taking a voluntary redundancy. In the short term your family may benefit but in the long-term the job or house is gone forever. Tenants who can't afford

The trouble with Labour...

By Jude Woodward

FOR WOMEN the choice between Labour and Tory doesn't seem like a choice at all.

The Tories don't promise women anything, while Labour is full of promises but hardly anything comes of them.

Women's real experience has not changed under the Labour government.

Women are still the lowest paid workers, together with youth and blacks.

We cannot get nursery places for our children, we are still primarily responsible for childcare.

We do not have control over our own bodies — abortion is not easy to get on the National Health, and cuts have made it even more difficult.

We still see our bodies paraded in a degrading and insulting way from every bill board. Sexual and other violence towards women has increased rather than decreased.

So what do women say in this election? How do we project our struggles and demands into politics nationally?

Traditionally working class women have looked to the Labour Party to provide a lead.

The Labour Party has supported equal pay for a long time, it introduced the welfare state which removed enormous financial and caring responsibilities from the shoulders of women in the family, it took a small step towards giving us control over our bodies by giving us family planning on the NHS.

In 1949 legal aid was granted for divorce cases allowing working class women to sue for divorce.

Its 1974 election manifesto promised bigger strides towards equal pay, a sex discrimination Act, with independent tribunals and enquiries to tackle sexist employment and promotion.

It also promised more family allowances to help women, more and better childcare facilities, a better health service and many other things.

But Labour has certainly not come up to scratch on its 1974 election promises.

The Equal Pay Act — which was never framed in such a way as to give all women equal pay — has not noticeably affected women's pay at all.

Women's average earnings are still only 60 per cent of male average earnings — exactly the same as they were before the Act.

In fact some figures show that women's pay now lags even further behind than it did before the Act.

The Sex Discrimination Act is a toothless instrument that can have no fundamental effect on the position of women.

The Act itself effectively outlaws positive discrimination in favour of women which is the only legislative route to real inroads on male hegemony of skills and higher paid employment.

Labour will want to present the Sex Discrimination Act, child benefits legislation and other measures as a consistent record of activity towards women's equality.

But feminists will have a totally different analysis. What good are rights in law if the facilities to exercise them are not available; if attitudes are still ranged against us; if legislation tells us we are equal but the material circumstances of our inequality have not changed at all?

And we won't just say that Labour has failed to do anything positive for women, we'll point out how it has attempted to sap women's struggles by diverting them through Parliament, tribunals and the courts.

Callaghan attempted an ideological onslaught around the family with his 'Ministry of Marriage', rather than looking at ways to pull women out of the drudgery imposed by married life.

Worst of all it has sold out the low paid — the defeat of the NUPE strike this winter, which the government went out of its way to help, was an immense blow to women workers.

The pay rise Labour gave them will mean little more than 75p to most part-time female local authority workers.

So there seems little reason to vote for Labour.

Many women are saying that there is nothing to choose between the two, that the only course open to women is to abstain.

This is an understandable reaction but it does not help us in developing the struggle for women's rights and liberation.

As socialist feminists we understand that our future as women is fundamentally linked to the future of all the other oppressed groups in society and in particular to the future of the working class as a whole.

That we need a total change in society as the pre-condition for our liberation.

Our struggle as women is part of the struggle of class against class.

To take this struggle forward we have to throw off the old leaders of the class who have shown they will not really fight for our interests and come forward with new organisations, new forms of collective action and new policies which can really take us nearer our goal.

For us, as women, this means building the women's movement, fighting for feminist policies in the unions and in the communities and it means building strong campaigns to fight for our rights.

We want to attract more and more women to our organisations and our goals. The election provides a big opportunity to do this.

But we also have to vote, it is important that a Labour government is returned at this election.

But we don't vote Labour because it won't be as bad as the Tories — it would be very shortsighted to do that.

Labour is just as capable of anti-women and anti-working class policies as the Conservatives — though thanks to the determination of thousands of women fighting for their rights, they will face more of a revolt in their ranks — which they can't ignore — when they attempt it.

We have to vote Labour because that is the best way to carry on the fight to build an alternative to this party that claims to represent the interests of the exploited and the oppressed.

It's not hard to imagine the reactionaries that would be unleashed if the Tories got in.

SPUC would be given an enormous boost; judges who prefer to put rape victims on trial rather than rapists would get a green light; bosses clamping down on the least organised — like women — would have no brakes applied; police attacking women's marches would be applauded.

After four years of Tory government — with reactionaries having a free rein — Labour will start to look very attractive.

We'll have a new breed of 'left' leaders claiming to defend our interests and the work of destroying illusions in Labour will have to begin all over again.

So at this election women should vote Labour, but each candidate should be grilled on every aspect of their policies where they affect women.

Do they support the Concordat? Because if they do they don't have the interests of low paid women workers at heart.

Do they want the repeal of the immigration laws? Because if they don't then they condone virginity tests being done on immigrant women.

Do they oppose all cuts in health service expenditure? If not they are condemning women to back street abortions, bad health care and more work in the family.

Do they call for troops out of Ireland? If not they are saying British soldiers who rape women, wreck families and destroy lives should get on with it.

And in addition to this we should carry on fighting for women to organise with us to build a strong independent women's movement and a fighting socialist movement.

A woman at the top - but the rest

AND THE ELECTION

Tories head on, defending its record on women's rights.

Perhaps it feels this would be no easy proposition.

Should women vote on 3 May? How should they vote? Below we look at Conservative and Labour policies on women. JUDE WOODWARD and VALERIE COULTAS explain why they think socialists and feminists should be organising to keep Thatcher out, and fighting for a socialist and feminist alternative.

to buy their houses will subsidise mortgages with the revenue from higher rents. Luxuries like day-care abortion units won't stand a chance.

The Unions. The unions are the one thing we can turn to when our rights are attacked as workers and women. Thatcher would try to make the unions even more undemocratic than some of them are now.

Women would find that the secret ballot would reduce their 'participation' in unions to voting fodder for right-wing leaders — the popular press would ensure that.

We want women's participation in unions to be encouraged, not discouraged.

The Labour government has paved the way for these attacks on women. Its policies on paper may sound different but its practice has been dreadful. However, it is decidedly not from the ranks of the Tory Party that a mass women's movement will be built.

We don't want the Tories in power because they can do nothing for women except attempt to demoralise and defeat us.

We want Labour in power because it's the best way the women's movement can prove that reforms in the system are useless for women and that revolution is needed to win women's liberation.

Make feminism an issue!

THE general election is a time when all the hard work women do — especially in the home — suddenly gets noticed. The family budget, the sale of council houses, parents' rights and child benefits all become issues for Maggie 'Housewife' Thatcher and Jim 'Family Man' Callaghan.

The women's movement today — unlike the suffragettes — has tended to ignore elections as an arena for feminist

struggle. Women are participating, but as individuals, in different election campaigns.

The images of women promoted by politicians shouldn't go by unchallenged by the movement. It's true that as housewives women are affected by rising prices, but we are not simply housewives today.

In recent years, 90 per cent of new recruits to unions have been women. Women have taken strike action for equal pay, for the right to join a union, to defend the health services, and in the recent public sector strike.

Women's domestic labour is stepped up when refuse collectors and water workers go on strike, but the majority of strikers' wives usually support their husbands' action because they see the boss as a common enemy, and understand that strike action will have long-term results in their favour.

Women do need higher child benefits but they also need the right to decide when or if they have children. Women with children need freely available creches and nurseries. And legal and financial independence is part and parcel of any real freedom of choice about whether to marry or divorce.

The real problems of family life today — the violence and turmoil faced by women — can be tackled with the help of refuges and rape crisis centres under the control of women.

But none of these will be handed to us on a plate. We need organisation and a determined fight. The general election opens up possibilities for action.

Women's groups should prepare a leaflet on local and national issues concerning women and demand that Labour Party candidates put the leaflet on their election expenses. Socialist Unity already has a policy of accepting leaflets from movements it supports. This is the way the women's movement can project alternative policies to those offered by the reformist and bourgeois parties.

Above all, feminist contingents should be prominent in each and every mobilisation throughout the pre-election period — whether it be on marches against the fascists, in defence of social facilities or living standards, or to get British troops out of Ireland.

If Margaret Thatcher comes to your town — make sure she is not seen as a defender of women's liberation!

Feminism can be an election issue if we act!

Part of a socialist alternative

ON ONE issue the Labour and Tory parties are in complete agreement — the need to defend and re-assert the traditional values of the family.

By the family, of course, they mean the white family — not families of immigrants who have to beg for admission to this green and pleasant land.

When any issue affecting the family is raised in Parliament, Labour, Tories and Liberals alike unite to talk about decency, traditional values and morality.

Whether it's the Child Pornography Act or the law governing relations between homosexuals, these parties overwhelmingly share the same views.

The family must be defended, so lesbians, homosexuals, young people, and women generally are denied the freedom to define their sexuality in the name of decency.

If we want to see these issues raised in the election, or in national politics at all, then an alternative to Labour is crucial; an alternative that raises feminist and socialist issues.

Nationally there is no alternative to Labour. But in 12 constituencies there are candidates supported by Socialist Unity.

Socialist Unity involves in its ranks many socialists, both members of political organisations and independents, including many active feminists.

We want to create a dialogue with the women's movement, which requires more involvement from active socialist feminists — to take up issues such as female sexuality, violence against women, and childcare within the local



Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

campaigns. This kind of involvement is vital to the kind of campaign that Socialist Unity runs.

The election alliance doesn't just fight on questions of women's liberation. It is presenting an alternative to Labour's policies on racism and immigration, Ireland, the trade unions and the Concordat, public expenditure and the cuts, and many other issues.

All these affect women, as well as the other oppressed and exploited groups

We need an organisation which can represent the interests and fight for policies that are needed by all the oppressed — women, blacks, youth, the working class as a whole.

Socialist Unity is not this political party. It has more limited electoral aims. But uniting in this election campaign can only help in the long run to build such a revolutionary organisation fighting for the liberation and rights of all the oppressed.

What NAC is doing

By Teresa Smart, Judy Watson, Jan McKenley, Jeanne Saint, Gill Butler, Sarah Roelofs (steering committee, National Abortion Campaign)

WITH the coming elections and the possibility of a Tory government looming over us, we could be faced with further restrictions in Parliament — another White or Benyon Bill.

With a much longer parliamentary session (till Autumn 1980), any restrictive Bill would have a fair chance of getting through.

But NAC is ready to attack while defending. We will use our Declaration of a Woman's Right to Choose to state clearly what we want, and will continue our campaign for abortion facilities.

The election period is an ideal time

for NAC to win support for our positions. We will not be calling for support for specific candidates or parties as we are a broad-based political campaign. We will be putting our demands to all candidates at local election meetings.

We are proposing that local meetings should be arranged where candidates have to answer questions specifically relating to women; we should have pickets of MPs' surgeries; and use local press and radio. NAC is preparing its own election leaflet ready to counteract SPUC's propaganda.

Many regions will be organising public meetings to launch the campaign around the law for abortion facilities. We are calling for an amendment to the 1977 NHS Act for the mandatory provision of contraceptive facilities on the NHS to be extended to include abortion facilities.

All MPs are being sent questionnaires calling for their support and sponsorship. NAC has drawn up model resolutions for use in trade unions, Labour parties, community health councils, as well as a national petition.

NAC's national conference on 9 June in Manchester will discuss NAC's future and further activities.

We want to continue our involvement in the international campaign; we want to take part in the Fightback conference in May, to maintain links with the Depo Provera campaign, as well as fight for abortion facilities and against any restrictions.

NAC still needs money and people urgently to carry out these plans. For further information and to send money, contact: NAC, 374 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1 (tel 01-278 0153).

* The NAC election leaflet is available from the campaign at the above address.

* 27 April, 6.45pm, EGA, Euston Road, London NW1: 'Menstrual Regulation and Abortion Facilities'. Speakers from EGA campaign (on well women clinics), legal workers (on the abortion facilities law), and Our Bodies Ourselves (on menstrual regulation).

* 28 April, 12 noon, Marble Arch. Picnic Against SPUC. Bring food. Balloons and play: 'It's a NAC Out'.

Youth demand: blot out the cane

By Alan, Manchester NUSS
 ABOUT 50 school students picketed the National Union of Teachers conference on 16 April. National Union of School Students members turned up from Hull, Leeds, Manchester, Huddersfield, and even Glasgow.

Some teachers joined us and supported our demand for an immediate end to corporal punishment in the schools but a lot of teachers were hostile and mocked us. The officials running the conference tried to keep us quiet and called the police, but we carried on as we weren't breaking the law.

We were outside the conference for about two hours at lunchtime with placards and a megaphone. We 'borrowed' some newspaper billboards and reversed them to make placards.

Slogans included: 'If the kids are united, they'll never be defeated. Join NUSS!' 'Recognise NUSS now!' 'End corporal punishment now!' 'Sexism and racism out of schools!'

Although we had no leaflets because the London NUSS people didn't turn up, we were

able to make a good protest with a lot of chanting slogans and shouting. We sold a lot of copies of Blot, the NUSS paper, and Revolution.

After the picket everyone said that we should organise a meeting of NUSS members in the North of England and of people who are interested in joining NUSS to talk about doing more lively activities and taking up other campaigns.

There was a lot of dissatisfaction with the leadership of NUSS because they hadn't turned up to the picket. Phone numbers and addresses were exchanged and we hope to get the meeting organised before the end of the summer term so that the NUSS conference in July will be more active and more people will go.

In Manchester the school students who went to the picket are now involved in the Socialist Unity campaign in Ardwick and will be leafletting schools in the area about the election campaign and organising NUSS meetings with sales of Blot.

Tony Collins from Hull NUSS adds: The NUT Executive was obviously shaken by the

protest. They decided to postpone the debate on corporal punishment, due for the afternoon session, to 'a more appropriate time' — when we weren't there!

When the debate finally took place, conference voted to support physical attacks on school students by teachers, a decision which is all the more scandalous in the light of the TUC's recent opposition to the use of corporal punishment.

The NUT might be harming its own pay claim by its decision not to recognise the NUSS. Only a year ago Birmingham teachers were virtually forced to call off their sanctions because of militant action by school students demanding that the schools should stay open during dinner hour.

Instead of co-ordinating its action with the school students the NUT chose the suicidal course of denouncing them as troublemakers. If it had chosen to build the NUSS and encourage support for its claim among school students it would have been in a far stronger position today in its fight for 36 per cent.



Right stays on top at NUT

By Bernard Regan

THE closest last week's National Union of Teachers' conference came to discussing its attitude to the general election was a motion from the Socialist Teachers Alliance calling for a vote for Labour. This was ruled out of order.

The executive opposed also the move from the STA and the Rank and File grouping (led by the Socialist Workers' Party) to step up action on the 37 per cent pay claim. Instead it simply called on members to refuse to do voluntary activities, like dinner duties.

General secretary Fred Jarvis called for a few per cent increase on the present pay offer of nine per cent, and a commitment on phasing.

While the right certainly retained total dominance, the debate has broadened and the left has registered progress. For instance, 4,500 of the 2,000

delegates signed a letter initiated by 'Women in the NUT' protesting against the executive's sexist comments. By the end of the conference one executive member was forced to apologise to a Barnet delegate for referring to her as 'the wife of the general secretary'.

The Communist Party, which is permanently aligned with the right wing in the union, opposed the adoption of the TUC Charter for Women at Work. Instead it supported a list of 'major priorities for the teaching profession', including such half-hearted proposals as removing restrictions from 'access to opportunities for family planning and control'.

In contrast, the STA fought openly on the conference floor and at fringe meetings for a united left opposition to the right's betrayals. It is calling for a single left slate in the next national election.

Scotland: SNP turkeys vote for early Christmas

By Desmond Tierney

POLLING day is approaching quietly in Scotland. The heat even seems to have gone out of the devolution issue.

Unless the parties give the proposed Scottish Assembly a radical programme to tackle unemployment, poverty, and bad housing, working class voters are bound to be more concerned with the choice between Labour and Tories.

Under no pressure from the left, either inside or outside the Labour Party, Labour MPs are campaigning on the basis of defending the government's record.

They praise the government's supposed protection of

jobs, even though unemployment in Scotland approached 200,000 during Labour's time in office. But its regional development grants and direct intervention at Chrysler and Marathon Shipyards allow the government's supporters to portray Labour as a 'lesser evil' to the Tories 'lame-duck' policies.

More promises are in store. The powers of the Scottish Development Agency (SDA) are to be increased and its funding raised from £300 to £850 million a year. The many job programmes which the Labour government has used to disguise the length of the dole queues will be maintained.

The already weak manifesto waters down the 1974 proposals for increased government control of the economy.

The Scottish Tories are only slightly less complacent than the Labour Party. Since 1974, when the SNP ousted them as Scotland's second party, the Conservatives have wanted to use this election to re-assemble

their middle class and rural support.

They wheel out the familiar Tory policies: increase punishment for offenders, weaken comprehensive education, decrease the stock of publicly owned housing through 'give away' sales, and decrease the powers of the SDA.

They have even dropped the timid 1974 proposals for a Scottish Development Fund financed by oil revenues. And they don't even genuflect in the direction of an Assembly — which they supported in 1974.

The SNP has retreated from its emphasis on an independent Scotland and is pursuing a 'minimum' programme of setting up the Assembly, increasing regional spending from oil revenues, and supporting policies to cut unemployment. They are running a populist campaign against foreign ownership of Scottish land, but this includes only overseas owners — English absentee landlords can continue to sleep easily!

How will the major parties fare on polling day? When the nationalists trooped into the House of Commons lobby with the Tories in support of their 'no confidence' motion, Callaghan likened them to turkeys voting for an early Christmas. This comparison still seems apt.

Unless the SNP can reverse the 1978 by-election results, most of their seats are vulnerable. Many of their traditional supporters voted 'no' in the referendum which could endanger at least five of their eleven seats.

Labour will increase their representation at Westminster. It will try to hold both working class 'yes' and 'no' voters and win back supporters from the SNP.

The Tories should also record increases. They wouldn't need much to improve on their terrible 1974 performance, and their stand on the assembly will win them back rural and middle-class voters fed up with the SNP.

Student leaders drift right

THE Broad Left and right wing swept the board in the national executive elections at this year's National Union of Students Conference. Mick Archer of the Socialist Students Alliance made a strong challenge in the presidential election but only two far left members were elected, both from the Socialist Workers Students Organisation.

The election took place in an atmosphere in which the candidates' theatrical talents seemed to matter as much as their politics. And crucially voting took place before the policy debates.

But the left still achieved a number of victories. In the constitutional debate which dominated the conference it blocked Tory moves to impose secret ballots. The Broad Left proposal, supported by the right, to introduce an inflexible system of subscriptions which

would benefit only the university sector, also fell.

And conference took an important step in recognising the right of women to self-organisation when it agreed to proposals for a national women's aggregate.

Nevertheless the union has been weakened by the rightward drift of the national leadership over the past couple of years. With organised support for all political tendencies in decline an appeal for a new alliance was distributed, signed by leading members of the Broad Left, the Union of Liberal Students and others.

The fact that section of the left such as the SSA and SWSO were not approached to sign the 'Open Letter' reflects the main failure of the appeal.

Any new alliance, if it is to prove capable of leading the NUS out of its present crisis, must have a clear response to

the attempts to make students and workers pay for the contradictions of a capitalist economy.

It must reject notions of a 'limited national cake' and put forward a clear socialist programme that can unite the left in the fight for an open and democratic education system.

The very ambiguity of the 'Open Letter' on these questions indicates that even its authors cannot reach agreement on what kind of alliance is needed. Indeed they call for a full debate on the nature, structure and organisation of a new alliance, at a conference at the Polytechnic of Central London on 26-27 May.

We will be continuing the discussion on what is required of a new alliance between now and then and we urge all socialists to take up this discussion and attend the conference.



HELP BUILD THE LEFT IN THE UNIONS. SEND US A CHEQUE TODAY

INTERNATIONAL

Zimbabwe: '101 per cent' turnout in fake poll

AS Rhodesian jets darkened the sky over neighbouring Zambia, bombing and strafing, 108.1 per cent of the electors of Mashonaland Central were casting their votes in the 'internal settlement' election.

RICHARD CARVER reports on various aspects of Ian Smith's elections. The picture on this page is of foreign arms used by the Rhodesian forces and captured by the Patriotic Front (see story below). It was taken by MAI PALMBERG of the African Groups of Sweden.

THE Smith regime was pleased with its election result. Since all parties opposed to the 'internal settlement' are banned the vote was bound to favour the status quo.

But even more important than the result was the turn-out — 101 per cent in Mashonaland as a whole, the northern region which includes Salisbury. In Mashonaland Central the figure was as high as 108.1 per cent.

The British press views with equanimity this evidence of widespread electoral fraud. The same papers which are sneeringly self-righteous at announcements of a 99.9 per cent poll in the Soviet Union or Iran (which is at least theoretically possible) argue that the British government should now recognise the Rhodesian regime.

Ballot-rigging was the simplest thing in the world. With the entire country under a State of Emergency, and with no electoral roll, white farmers drove truckloads of their black employees to the polls under the watchful eye of the security forces.

Whether the fraud was carried out by taking people to vote more than once or simply

by fiddling the figures we shall never know — and it hardly matters.

But even easier than perpetrating the deceit was selling it to the world. The decision to lift censorship of foreign press reports was purely cosmetic, since journalists had no control over where they could go or what they could see.

For most British papers these constraints were unnecessary. Repeated Rhodesian raids on neighbouring countries, which have continued throughout the election period, have provoked little comment. Even the commando raid on Lusaka, the Zambian capital, earned more praise for its military dexterity than condemnation for its brutal disregard of national sovereignty.

Rhodesia is now in a state of undeclared war with Mozambique and Zambia. Just imagine press reaction to, say, a raid by Italian commandos on Paris and the racism of the coverage of the war in Africa becomes clear.

And so much concern was being expended on alleged Patriotic Front disruption of the poll that few papers could find much space for the arrest

of large numbers of ZAPU members the day before voting started.

Most of those who did mention it could not be bothered to report the Patriotic Front figure of 1000 arrests, preferring to believe Rhodesian government statements. And no-one commented on the implications of this massive crackdown for the democracy of the election.

The Smith regime has won a temporary victory by holding the election and ensuring the victory of Bishop Muzorewa, now the white regime's favourite son.

But its first problem is that even those blacks who genuinely voted for the Bishop are not a reliable base of support. More than anything theirs was a vote for reconciliation with the Patriotic Front — which is not what either Smith or Muzorewa intend.

The success of the election hinges on international recognition for the new government. But even the most rabid Tories will think twice before they recognise a regime which is so inherently unpopular and unstable, particularly given the inevitable repercussions on British trade with black Africa.

Nevertheless, every Tory instinct tells them to back Smith, while Labour is lined up with mainline imperialist opinion in demanding an all-party neo-colonial settlement.

All the signs are that the Rhodesian crisis will soon be coming home to Whitehall — where it all began.

Smith troops use British arms

LEG shackles, rifles, an anti-personnel mine, and pistols are among the items of foreign military equipment being used by the white Rhodesian armed forces. Details of the equipment, captured by the Patriotic Front guerrillas, were recorded by two members of the

ZIMBABWE INFORMATION GROUP BULLETIN

'ELECTION at Gunpoint' is the subject of the new Zimbabwe Information Group bulletin. It includes a full review of the state of the country and political forces. Individual copies are 30p. UK subscriptions £1.50 for 5 issues, airmail overseas (except Europe) £4.00, surface overseas (and Europe) £2.00, from ZIG, 1 Cambridge Terrace, London NW1 4JL.

Anti-Apartheid Movement's executive on a visit to Zambia this month.

At a press conference in London on Monday the AAM's Honorary Secretary, Abdul Minty, the pair of British-made shackles on the table in front of him, presented a list of the equipment seen by the executive members, Mike Terry and Margaret Ling.

The list, which contains details of the manufacturer and serial number of each item, is largely made up of military communications equipment, but there are also large numbers of Belgian-made FN rifles, the standard-issue NATO infantry weapon.

The equipment comes from Britain, the United States, France, West Germany, Canada, Australia, Belgium, Italy, Japan and South Africa.

This is the full list of items of British origin, with the name of manufacturer:

*Gas canister and camping stove — Europleasure Gas Ltd,

Dorking.

*Air pilot's helmet, dark green with visor — Denis Ferranti Meters Ltd, Bangor, North Wales.

*Field telescope of type which can be fitted on helicopters — Cooke, Troughton & Simms Ltd, York.

*Typewriter — Underwood.

*Wire tape measure, as used by security forces — John Rabone & Sons, Birmingham.

*Field telephone receiver for use with military radiocommunications — ear-piece made by A.P. Besson Ltd.

*Radio transmitter — Racal.

*Singer sewing motor — the Singer Mfg Co.

*Communications radio captured in Mazoe area by ZIPRA forces — Racal.

*Pistols — Webley and Scott, Birmingham.

The shackles, removed from a ZAPU fighter captured by the security forces, were made by Hiatt and Co Ltd of Birmingham, Britain's only manufacturer of handcuffs.



Are they really democratic?

THE British Press and the Tory Party habitually brush off accusations that the 'internal settlement' elections are undemocratic. Either they say that the arrangements may not be too wonderful, but they're good enough for Africans — which is racism. Or they simply claim that the elections are democratic — which is a lie.

*All black parties opposed to the 'internal settlement' are banned. The regime argues that the 'terrorists' have placed themselves outside the law. In fact they never had much choice. ZAPU was banned as long ago as 1962, ZANU in 1964 — both only a year after they were formed.

*All newspapers are censored and any black paper that is critical of the regime is closed down. In 1975 the authorities even destroyed 750 copies of the Johannesburg Sunday Times 'in the interests of public safety'.

*Many works of literature are regarded as undesirable or are prohibited, including the works of Doris Lessing, Simone de Beauvoir, James Baldwin, and Jean-Paul Sartre.

*Freedom of speech does not exist for Africans. During the visit of the British Peace Commission in 1972 a group of young boys was even arrested for wearing T-shirts with the slogan 'We say No to the proposals'. Anyone convicted of having 'subversive material'

or making a 'subversive statement' is liable to up to five years in jail.

*The country has been under a State of Emergency since 1965. This suspends many constitutional rights, allowing the regime, among other things, to detain without trial, implement forced labour, move the population, create curfew and free-fire zones, confiscate crops and livestock, and destroy property and vegetation.

*There is no electoral roll. Voting is based on a 1969 census. Electoral fraud was supposedly avoided by dipping each voter's hand in invisible paint once they had been to the polling station!

*Every white voter has had the chance to go to the polls twice — the first time to elect a separate group of 20 white MPs, the second to vote on the remaining 80 seats. Eight of those are also reserved for whites. There are 270,000 whites in Zimbabwe and 6.8 million blacks.

*Transition to majority rule is not guaranteed in the 'internal settlement'. All the document says is that such a transition may take place in 'at least' ten years 'if a government commission recommends it'.

*Section A, Clause 2 of the agreement is a guarantee of the rights of private property which will effectively protect against nationalisations and land re-

form — as do other settlement proposals such as the Anglo-American plan. At the moment land is divided roughly half and half between black and white.

*Again like all the other settlement plans, the 'internal settlement' guarantees the continuity of the state apparatus. The white racist army, police, and judiciary will remain in office. Thus any black-led government will remain the prisoner of the white regime.

Intercontinental Press combined with IMPRECOR

WHEN Bani Sadr, the ideologue of Iran's Islamic Republic, challenged Trotskyist leader Babak Zahraie to a television debate, he cannot have known what he was taking on. Zahraie's comprehensive defeat of Bani Sadr on the nationally networked programme has won an enormous new audience for the Socialist Workers Party. A full report appears in the latest Intercontinental Press/Imprecor (Vol 17, No 15).

Single copies are 30p. Subscriptions are £9 for one year, £5 for six months or £2.50 for an introductory offer of 10 issues. Write now to Intercontinental Press/Imprecor, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP. Cheques payable to Intercontinental Press.

REACH INTO YOUR POCKET TO HELP MAKE ZIMBABWE AN ISSUE

Khomeini committees 'more like reactionary White Guards'

From Michel Rovere
Tehran

EVERY night in Tehran, starting at midnight, militias from 15 neighbourhood committees carry out their regular patrol. Their job is to search out SAVAK agents and prominent figures in the old regime, and to maintain order — in a word, to defend the revolution.

The regime has decided to keep the revolution within the narrow confines of the Islamic Republic and the reconstruction of the bourgeois state. Will the neighbourhood committees and militias be the last outposts of non-conformity in this process of normalisation?

It is a bit more complicated than that, since it was from these same committees that the counter-demonstrations against the women's marches were drawn. And it was from among the Tehran militia fighters that volunteers were recruited to fight against the Turkoman peasants who had begun to occupy their land.

So some of the Khomeini militias are beginning to look more like reactionary Whites than Red Guards whose aim is to deepen the Iranian revolution. The Khomeini or 'Imam' committees are central to the attempt to reconstruct and keep the structures of self-organisation under control.

These committees, which exercise basic political and administrative power in the major towns, provinces, and districts of Tehran, were not elected. They were appointed, co-opted centrally from Tehran, Khomeini's entourage,

and the Council of the Revolution, to fill the power vacuum left by the fall of the old regime and take charge of all the existing structures.

Their nucleus is often the religious authorities or representatives of the bazaar merchants, chosen for their unconditional support for Khomeini.

But their heterogeneous membership has sometimes caused a crisis within their ranks. One such example was when the Council of the Revolution decided to use ex-SAVAK agents at the same time as the militias were continuing to hunt down and arrest members of the political police.

Before the incidents at Sanandaj barracks it was the pretensions of the Khomeini committee which provoked the Kurds' anger.

In Turkestan it was the Khomeini committees which were at the root of the confrontations, when militia members opened fire on a meeting of Turkoman autonomists or when they defended the Persian landlords who were being driven from their estates by the peasants.

In Ahwaz, against the oil workers and the Arab minority, it was the Khomeini committee which tried to block the formation of independent trade unions and to dissolve the oil workers' strike committee.

Right from the start these committees have directed part of their activity at the working class. In Tabriz the Khomeini committee, which is well-implanted in the tractor factory and in a machine-tool factory, tried to ban the distribution of

all leaflets except their own.

For good measure it decided to close down the university, which had become the political forum for the whole town.

In Tehran, in the General Motors and Iran National factories, the Khomeini committees or their representatives have ousted the old strike committees. Previously the workers had demanded to elect their employers.

As in the towns, former SAVAK agents have been integrated into the Khomeini committees in certain factories to block the setting up of trade unions. The Ayatollah's supporters have tried to use the structures of the old vertical yellow unions which were set up by the old regime under the direct control of the political police.

The neighbourhood committees were only set up at the end of December, often at the initiative of the local mosques to distribute oil and fuel during the general strike. They were often discussion forums than decision-making bodies, and hardly ever voted on anything.

Above all the leadership of these committees passed into the hands of the religious hierarchy and the local leaders who were soon to form the Khomeini committees.

It is clear that in certain areas, Kurdistan and Turkestan for example, the Khomeini committees have become the active instruments of the counter-revolution. But elsewhere they continue to be the terrain for political battle, of struggles for influence between the various factions and different class interests.



Why the Empress lost 17 pounds

'HE HAS been accused of stealing millions of pounds from his poverty-stricken people; of allowing one of the most vicious secret police forces in the world to terrorise his subjects; of being the complete autocratic dictator; and now there are rumours of extra-marital affairs. For most women this would be enough to undermine their love and loyalty.' (1)

'He', in case you hadn't recognised the unmistakable description, is the Shah of Iran. His wife Farah Diba, however, seems unconcerned by the less than loyal attitude shown by her husband's subjects.

As she tells the mass circulation magazine *Woman's Own* this week, 'The title of my husband is Shahanshah, King of Kings, Shadow of the Almighty, Vice-Regent of God and Centre of the Universe, and he always lived up to this, no matter what people say.'

Her own loyalty is unquestionable: 'I had married him for better or worse. If necessary I would die by his side. I would live in a poor village and starve if I had to.' But unlike the vast majority of Iranian women she was not put to the test in this



way, and things continue to be better rather than worse at the Pahlavi hide-out in the Bahamas.

The opening sentence quoted above is the only indication in a two page interview that 'the abuse and hostility which has been heaped on her husband' might have been justified. Hence one of the most important political events of the century is reduced to 'a story of a woman's love that

holds its age-old mystery...that defies all reason.'

'Reason' is not the strong point of Mary Hampson's interviewing technique. Rather than give in to the fashionable desire to bring politics into everything, Hampson gives us such useful information as the fact that the 'weeks of strain and anxiety' caused Farah to lose 17 pounds. (That is presumably pounds weight, since the other sort were safely in a Swiss bank account.)

The interview does have a political point however. Most obviously it tries (not very convincingly) to rehabilitate the Shah's regime, mainly by showing how Farah 'was deeply involved in some 50 charities'. Many of her good works were concerned with women and it is, of course, as a woman that the magazine is interested in Farah.

She remembers: 'When I was living as a student in Paris I saw how wonderful it was for the women in the western world. They had freedoms... they had the right to be full human beings.'

Farah, for *Woman's Own*, is the ideal Iranian woman. She is not a Moslem obscurantist and therefore incomprehensible to

the racist prejudices of the western journalist.

But the advantage of interviewing her rather than any of the women actually fighting for women's rights in Iran is that she conforms so perfectly to the sexist stereotype of the beautiful, loyal wife — in other words *Woman's Own's* idea of the 'free' western woman.

The Iranian Women's Solidarity Group is organising a women's movement delegation to Iran to investigate the reality of women's oppression there. Its next meeting is at 5pm on Sunday 29 April, at South London Women's Centre, 45 North Street, Clapham, London SW4, and is open to all women who support the group's aims.

Future events include:
• 1 May, picket of Iranian Embassy, 16 Princes Gate, London SW7, from 5-7pm.

• 12 May, Iranian Women's Conference at the City University, London. The afternoon session will be in English.

• 19 May, National Demonstration, 2pm, Trafalgar Square. March to Iranian Embassy.

Writer denounces Colombian repression

LATIN America's most distinguished writer has protested against the current wave of repression in Colombia (see last week's *Socialist Challenge* for details).

Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the author of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, says in a letter to the Colombian President, Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala:

'Denunciations of cases of torture and illegal treatment inflicted in Colombian military

prisons have been so frequently and so convincingly reported by the world press and by authoritative individuals that it is difficult to imagine that they could all be fabrications of the opposition.'

'The Habeas Foundation for the Rights of Man in Latin America, of which I am president, consequently proposes that you agree to our sending neutral observers to Colombia.'

Free Libardo Gonzalez

LIBARDO Gonzalez Florez was arrested by the Colombian secret police on 29 March. He was taken to the artillery barracks in Bogota where he was tortured. His lawyer has been denied any rights to organise a proper defence and a writ of habeas corpus has been refused.

Libardo Gonzalez is the author of books on Eurocommunism and on the Colombian political parties, a member of the central committee of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR — Colombian supporters of the Fourth International), and a leader of the university teachers union. He had been chosen to represent his union at the Forum for Democratic Rights in Bogota on 30-31

March. The government claims that Gonzalez is suspected of belonging to a Trotskyist terrorist organisation, the Workers Self-defence Organisation, known by its initials MAO!

An immediate international campaign is needed to free Libardo Gonzalez, just as past campaigns have defended the lives of Latin American Trotskyists such as Hugo Blanco.

Send telegrams to President Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala, Palacio de San Carlos, Bogota, Colombia, with copies to *Combate Socialista*, Apartado aereo 13750, Bogota, Colombia.

ELECTIONS

Trotsky on elections

SHOULD revolutionary Marxists stand in elections against the Labour Party? Should they place conditions on voting for Labour candidates? Should they vote for Communist Party candidates?

Many people are grappling with these questions for the first time in this general election. But the questions themselves are not new; nor are the answers which we give to them.

Was the ILP correct in running as many candidates as possible in the recent General Elections, even at the risk of splitting the vote?

Yes. It would have been foolish for the ILP to have sacrificed its political programme in the interests of so-called unity, to allow the Labour Party to monopolise the platform...

There is always a risk of splitting, and of losing deposits, but such risks must be taken. Otherwise we boycott ourselves.

Was the ILP correct in refusing critical support to Labour Party candidates who advocated military sanctions?

No...It should have given critical support to all Labour Party candidates, i.e. where the ILP was not itself contesting...

The Labour Party should have been critically supported not because it was for or against sanctions, but because it represented the working class masses...

The war crisis does not alter the fact that the Labour Party is a workers' party, which the governmental party is not. Nor does it alter the fact that the Labour Party leadership cannot fulfil their promises, that they will betray the confidence which the masses place in them...

Revolutionists never give critical support to reformism on the assumption that reformism, in power, could satisfy the fundamental needs of the workers...

No, in war as in peace, the ILP must say to the workers: 'The Labour Party will deceive you and betray you, but you do not believe us. Very well, we will go through your experiences with you, but in no case do we identify ourselves with

A clear statement of the basic principles at stake was given by Leon Trotsky more than forty years ago in an interview with a member of the centrist Independent Labour Party in November 1935.

Below we reprint the most relevant extracts; the full text can be found in **Writings of Leon Trotsky 1935-36** (Pathfinder Press).



the Labour Party programme.'

Morrison, Clynes, etc. [the Labour leaders] represent certain prejudices of the workers. When the ILP seeks to boycott Clynes it helps not Baldwin [the Tory leader] but Clynes himself.

If successful in its tactic, the ILP prevents the election of Clynes, of the Labour government, and so prevents their exposure before the masses. The workers will say: 'If only we had Clynes and Morrison in power, things would have been better'...

It is argued that the Labour Party already stands exposed by its past deeds in power and its present reactionary plat-

form... For us — yes! But not for the masses, the eight millions who voted Labour... Let us suppose that the ILP had been successful in a boycott tactic, had won a million workers to follow it, and that it was the absence of this million votes which lost the election for the Labour Party.

What would happen when the war came? The masses would in their disillusionment turn to the Labour Party, not to us.

If soviets were formed during the war the soldiers would elect Labour Party people to them, not us. Workers would still say that we handicapped Labour. But if we gave critical support and by that means

helped the Labour Party to power, at the same time telling the workers that the Labour Party would function as a capitalist government, and would direct a capitalist war — then, when war came, workers would see that we predicted rightly, at the same time that we marched with them.

We would be elected to the soviets, and the soviets would not betray.

As a general principle, a revolutionary party has the right to boycott parliament only when it has the capacity to overthrow it, that is, when it can replace parliamentary action by general strike and insurrection, by direct struggle for power.

In Britain the masses have yet no confidence in the ILP. The ILP is therefore too weak to break the parliamentary machine and must continue to use it...

The ILP should have more sharply differentiated itself from the Communist Party at the elections than it did. It should have critically supported the Labour Party against Pollitt and Gallacher [the CP leaders].

It should have been declared openly that the CP has all the deficiencies of the Labour Party without any of its advantages. It should have, above all, shown in practice what true critical support means.

By accompanying support with the sharpest and widest criticism, by patiently explaining that such support is only for the purpose of exposing the treachery of the Labour Party leadership, the ILP would have completely exposed, also, the spurious 'critical' support of the Stalinists themselves, a support which was actually whole-hearted and uncritical, and based on an agreement in principle with the Labour Party leadership.

Thus the pamphlet concludes that those who agree with the approach it puts forward should consider joining the IMG now in order to strengthen that fight — for a new unified revolutionary party which is both democratic and internationalist.

'For a Revolutionary Party' can be ordered, price 30p plus 10p p&p, from: The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XQ.



Waste not, want not

ONE OF Thatcher's major campaigning points has been the increase in bureaucracy, red tape and 'waste' caused by Callaghan's allegedly 'socialist' policies.

In fact a genuine workers' government could offer the cheapest state of all — by abolishing the large part of it which is concerned with keeping working people down rather than necessary administration.

For instance, even in Cuba (which is far from being a workers' democracy) there is no police force at all; yet crimes of violence are way below Western levels, and crimes of property are almost unknown. All police work is done by voluntary committees.

Or take so-called defence expenditure — officially estimated at £7,178m for 1979-80. Most of this is used to beef up imperialism's war machine and could be scrapped forthwith in a socialist Britain.

Working people would find a much better defence against their real enemies — private capital — through a simple people's militia and by building international working class solidarity.

It was this kind of defence which defeated the armed might of the USA in Cuba and Vietnam.

In the same way, large parts of the civil service (and much private administration) is

wasteful and could be scrapped.

It is difficult, of course, to calculate the full social benefits of such changes. But as a minimum we could add together the results of eliminating all non-productive jobs paying over £15,000, abolishing the police and standing army, junking the monarchy and aristocracy, and scrapping the bulk of the arms programme.

This alone comes to some £15,000m, or about 15 per cent of the economy's present productive resources.

Modern capitalism is in fact doubly wasteful. Not merely are there obvious absurdities such as the millions of unemployed alongside idle plant. There is also a growing waste which comes from competition as such.

The more that huge monopolies and cartels come to control the market, the more they compete through other means than price competition. Hence the bigger the proportion of resources devoted to totally wasteful activities such as advertising, marketing, and so on, the more money thrown down the drain in 'gadgets' and built-in obsolescence.

This contributes nothing to the real material and social well-being of working people and could be done away with tomorrow through planning based on people's needs.

The fight for a revolutionary party

'FOR a Revolutionary Party' is the title of a new pamphlet by Bob Pennington which has just been published by the International Marxist Group.

The pamphlet points out that the opportunities for those fighting for socialism have seldom been better. On a world scale imperialism has been forced onto the defensive after its defeats in Indochina, Angola, and now Iran.

In Britain capitalism staggers from one crisis to the next. The Labour leaders like Callaghan and Healey are forced to act more and more openly in defiance of basic working class interests.

But as Pennington points out, there is a real risk that these opportunities may be wasted. The Labour 'lefts' —

and the Communist Party, for that matter — have become totally trapped in their schema of securing social change through parliamentary channels.

An alternative, however, is slowly beginning to take on form today in the various struggles and movements against wage controls, for the right to work, for women's liberation, against racism, for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland.

The pamphlet argues that capitalism will only be overthrown by developing this self-organisation of working people around policies which challenge the right of the ruling class to decide how society is organised.

Central to that is the building

of a revolutionary party. Through its fight for a Marxist programme based on the historic lessons of the working class movement and drawing on the experience of current struggles, such a party can provide an overall perspective for the establishment of workers' power.

This party must be democratic, allowing free discussion within its ranks on a whole range of tactical questions; it must also be internationalist — not merely in the sense of solidarity but by basing its activity on an understanding of the current stage of the international class struggle.

Pennington argues that today only the Fourth International provides that necessary framework for revolutionaries

in Britain. And while the IMG would not make affiliation to the FI a condition in the establishment of a new unified organisation in Britain, it would insist on its right to continue arguing and organising for such a position.

Thus the pamphlet concludes that those who agree with the approach it puts forward should consider joining the IMG now in order to strengthen that fight — for a new unified revolutionary party which is both democratic and internationalist.

'For a Revolutionary Party' can be ordered, price 30p plus 10p p&p, from: The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XQ.



ABOLISHING the police would cut state expenditure!

Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Socialist Challenge)

LETTERS

How should socialists vote?

I THINK that there is a need to open out the discussion on how Socialist Unity should intervene in the elections and how socialists should vote.

How do we vote when there isn't a Socialist Unity candidate standing? Do we always and automatically vote Labour? I would argue that if such organisations as the Workers Revolutionary Party stand candidates, as they are doing in 60 seats, then we decide whether to vote for such candidates on the basis of their class struggle record. Otherwise we vote Labour. Also we shouldn't campaign for the politics of the WRP.

An argument that we often hear, especially in marginal seats, is that you always vote Labour to keep the Tories out — the lesser evil. This is a simplistic argument.

The Labour Party under Callaghan has moved consistently to the right. They are never going to implement the 'bold socialist policies' that we often see called for in the headlines of *Militant*. To stand any chance of pushing Labour to the left, 'Callaghan Must Go', as *Socialist Challenge* correctly stated after the election was called off last September.

Simplistic arguments of the lesser evil variety only hold any water because we live in a system dominated by two major bourgeois parties, even though one of them claims to be the party of the working class. The Tory and Labour parties will fight against the most modest electoral reforms, such as proportional representation, because it is in their interests to do so.

One final point about marginals. What happens if we find ourselves in a situation, due to the bankruptcy of the Labour Party, that a large minority or even a majority of seats become marginals? The number is rising all the time. Do we stand SU candidates in such seats? In my opinion, most definitely yes!

STEVE ROSE (Preston)

Nuclear risks

ONE point the Harrisburg nuclear disaster highlights is how much we are at the mercy of nuclear safety experts. Some people are rightly demanding that the nuclear industry open its books to critical experts.

Will this be enough to guarantee workers' and public safety? Can workers be guaranteed safety if alternatives to nuclear power are adopted? One thing is sure in a profit-oriented society — industrial processes won't become safe overnight nor without some kind of struggle.

Workers now face two basic



problems. One, their work experience is fragmented in centralised processes like the Ford's line or electricity production. Two, scientists and technologists dominate the design and maintenance of the processes and play largely a management role.

For example, the asbestosis research council covered up real risks when helping to set the safe limit of asbestos in air. The higher the technology, the more inaccessible management 'scientific' safety becomes.

In the short-term battle for safer industry in the energy sector, it makes sense to oppose the expansion of nuclear power where the dice are most heavily loaded. Conventional technological alternatives exist (with more, skilled jobs in shipbuilding, turbo-generators, light engineering, to name a few) — alternatives where the labour movement is consolidated and building on some successful battles on health and safety.

Nuclear Power Group, British Society for Social Responsibility in Science

Upminster arrest

WHEN Jim Callaghan addressed an election meeting at Neave Hall, Upminster on 11 April, he was heckled by supporters of Hands Off Ireland! Immediately the heckling began, one supporter was arrested by the police and has been charged with threatening behaviour.

Anyone who saw this incident is asked to ring 737-3922 as soon as possible.

TERRY MARLOWE (for Revolutionary Communist Group)

No sabotage

RAY Varnes in his interview (5 April) refers to the dust strike in Westminster as an example of how full-time officials undermined strike action for the £60/35 hours demand. Unfortunately, he is wildly inac-

curate.

The dustmen came out on strike on the 22 January day of action and continued to strike for several more weeks. However, they did not send any delegates to any of the depots of other council workers to explain their case — which would have proved advantageous.

Many workers, who might have been willing to come out in solidarity over the national claim, were reluctant to do so because a rumour was circulating that the dustmen were striking over clearing up money rather than the £60/35 hours demand.

There was no attempt by full-timers to sabotage the action. As a shop steward who attended the meeting of all Westminster council workers' stewards I can vouch for this. Every shop steward reported back on the attitude of the members — not one depot wished to take sympathy strike action, although a considerable number were prepared to raise levy money to be paid to the dustmen.

On hearing this, the dustmen walked out — an action that, though understandable, could do little to help mend the divisions that already existed between them and other council workers.

It is all too easy to blame bureaucrats for every setback that the working class faces. This simplistic and blinkered attitude hides a fact that many leftists do not want to face — that some sections of the working class are not prepared to go into action at the moment.

This fact may be obscured because revolutionaries do not want to admit how divorced they are from the class — and how little they are doing to rectify this deplorable state of affairs and help build mass socialist consciousness.

NICK HEATH (NUPE steward, Westminster General branch)

Importance of 'Writing'

COLIN Smith's review of *Writing* (22 March) was well-intentioned but

actually unhelpful. Rather than discussing the literary and political questions raised by the wide selection of work in the anthology, he chose, in effect, to review just the Afterword — and found it wanting.

What a 'popular' movement like the growing worker writers' movement needs is sympathetic and constructive criticism of the work it produces and the political-aesthetic directions it follows. The writing so far produced raises real issues of socialist culture, and it is these issues — which can only be tackled by studying the writing itself — which need understanding.

No, it's true there are 'no budding Joyces, Audens, or Austens in this book (*Writing*)'. But there are a lot of people writing with great energy and commitment against racism, sexism and capitalist/labourist work relationships in a way that many other people can identify with, and who might not give as much thought to these issues if they were only presented in conventional political terms.

Writing reaches the parts other forms of political analysis didn't know even existed.

KEN WORPOLE (London N16)

'Lampoon' drawbacks

I AM writing about Sally Feldman's review of *National Lampoon* (15 March). I too found it funny (in the tradition of naive American satire, i.e. *Mad* comics), but I did not fail to notice the rampant sexism and racism. The women in the film appeared as totally in the role of bed-fellows and as jealous-minded petty bitches.

The racism of one scene was truly nauseating. There was a scene in a bar which was a black 'dive', and the white middle class students had walked in by mistake. One of the male students says to his 'date', 'Say, what you study?', and she replies, 'Anthropology, you know, primitive cultures', and then the camera swings to a close-up shot of the black rock

and roll singer.

The film also validates a certain smugness many Americans have about their capacity for self-criticism: their 'yes we are a marvellous sincere nation, we allowed Watergate to be known publicly and we are the nation of decent-minded folk who laugh at pomposity'.

ALYSONN BROWN (London N20)

Skegness points

I HAVE just returned from the SWP rally at Skegness and wish to comment on an incident that occurred there.

While I must praise the organisers for their success in persuading the camp's regular security staff to take a back seat over the weekend to avoid intimidating anyone, I would just like to ask why this was not made public and no alternative arrangements were made? As a direct result of this an attempted rape occurred one night.

The last event of the weekend was a speech by Tony Cliff on 'Revolutionaries in the last ten years and the struggle today', and this had to be threatened with disruption before women comrades were allowed a platform to speak on the aforementioned incident. Maybe the organisers felt that the struggle by women revolutionaries is not of great importance?

Another point for discussion. An ANL meeting about Leicester was held at Skegness, but it was restricted to members of the SWP only. Perhaps the gutter press is right and the ANL is a front for the SWP!

Unconditional but critical praise for the weekend in general.

JOHN MAY (Swindon)

THE LENGTH of letters printed will usually be kept down to 400 words in order to encourage as wide a range of contributions as possible. All letters may be cut at the Editor's discretion. Unsigned letters will not normally be published, although we will withhold real names from publication on request.

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 2362.

GREAT 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.

OLDHAM Socialist Challenge group meeting: 'Return Labour but fight on'. Thur 26 April, 8pm, at Sergeants-at-Arms pub (top room), King St. Iopp. Co-op. Main speaker: Jeff West (Ardwick SU candidate). Other speakers from Abdul Aziz Defence Committee, SWP.

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

NORTH EAST

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

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

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

SCOTLAND

For information about the paper or its supporters' activities throughout Scotland please contact Socialist Challenge Books, 54 Queen St, Glasgow. Open Wed, Thurs, Fri and Sat afternoons. Phone for alternative arrangements (221 7481). Wide range of Fourth International publications.

EDINBURGH Socialist Challenge supporters group meets regularly. Phone George at 031-346 0468 for details.

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

HAMILTON supporters sell Socialist Challenge every Saturday in the Hamilton shopping centre, 1-3pm. For details of local activities contact John Ford, 553 Elliot Crescent, Hamilton.

MIDLANDS

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

LEAMINGTON Socialist Challenge group meets every other Sunday. Contact 311772.

YORKSHIRE

HUDDERSFIELD Socialist Challenge group meets fortnightly on Thursdays at the Friendly & Trades Club, Northumberland Street.

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

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

SOUTH WEST

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.

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 Macfisherie. Ring Bath 20298 for further details.

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

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

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

SOUTH EAST

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD supporters meet regularly on Sunday evenings. For details phone Mick on Hemel Hempstead 41037.

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

BRIGHTON SC forums fortnightly on Tuesdays. Contact Micky on 806052 for details.

NORWICH Socialist Challenge sales every Saturday in Davy Place (opp market) and bookstall Thursdays at University of East Anglia.

LONDON

PADDINGTON/N KENSINGTON Socialist Challenge forum: 'The general election — how should socialists respond?' introduced by Hilary Driver (Southall SU) and Gerry Hedley (GLC candidate, 1977). Thur 26 April, 8pm, at the Meeting Hall, 1 Thorpe Close, W10 (just off Ladbroke Grove, underneath Westway flyover). PADDINGTON/N KENSINGTON supporters sell the paper every Saturday at noon at junction Portobello Rd/Westbourne Park Rd, W11. Also at Ladbroke Grove tube: Thur 26 April, 5pm; Thur 3 May, 7am and 5pm.

PADDINGTON/N KENSINGTON election night social — 10pm till morning. Follow the results on TV with booze and food provided to sustain you through the night. At Basement Flat, 24 Powis Sq, W11.

HACKNEY Socialist Challenge group meetings temporarily suspended until

after election. For details of activities meanwhile write c/o PO Box 50, London N1 2XP or phone Martin on 359 8180 (day).

BRENT supporters sell every Saturday, 2.30pm, at Kilburn Sq., Kilburn High Rd, London NW5.

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

BRENT Socialist Challenge open forums are held on the first Tuesday of every month at York Room, Anson Hall, Chichele Road, NW2, 7.30pm. Everyone welcome.

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. Vans newsagent, Middle Lane, N6, and Bookmarks, Finsbury Park.

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

HACKNEY supporters sell every Saturday, 12.2pm, in Kingsland High St, Dalston — meet outside Sainsbury's.

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

WRITE US A LETTER — AND ENCLOSE A DONATION

UNDER REVIEW

Saatchi and Saatchi The selling of Thatcher

'THE TRUTH is that people succumb to simple arguments', says the 1978 annual report of Saatchi and Saatchi, the advertising agency hired by the Tories to mastermind their election campaign.

If the selling of the Tories is based on that philosophy then Thatcher and Saatchi is more than a business arrangement; it is a meeting of like minds.

By Geoff Bell

If ever there was a perfect example of the Conservatives' ideology in practice, Saatchi and Saatchi is it.

The agency has enjoyed a 17-fold increase in pre-tax profits since 1970, and last year it had a 69 per cent return on capital. Although it is ranked only fourth in the advertising agencies' 'top ten', there is no doubt that Saatchi and Saatchi is the most famous in the country.

The agency's contract with the Tories has been the cornerstone of its success. Not merely has the company been allocated a rumoured £3m to promote Thatcher and friends, but through that campaign Saatchi and Saatchi itself has become a household name.

By advertising standards the company deserves both the money and the fame. Their campaign for the Tories — with posters such as the dole queue with the slogan 'Labour isn't working' — has been just about the slickest piece of political propaganda for a long time.

How many votes it will produce is a different matter. But one study of voting behaviour in the American state of Illinois in 1972 showed that in a contest without television advertising, newspaper ads alone swayed 3 per cent of voters from one party to the other.

If that pattern is transferred to Britain, with the TV ads thrown in, it just could be that Saatchi and Saatchi will win the election for the Tories. And if such an interpretation was

placed on a Tory victory, then the agency would reap yet more benefits.

A recent article in the *Financial Times* commented that the Tory campaign has 'done nothing to alienate the roster of blue chip clients who can be expected to be pleased if the agency's work helps Mrs Thatcher win the election'.

Saatchi's clients come in all shapes and sizes. One of the most faithful is United Biscuits, who gained an injunction against 'secondary picketing' during the lorry drivers' strike and have Tory unions spokesperson James Prior as a director.

Not that Saatchi is only prepared to serve the guardians of free enterprise. Nationalised industries such as British Rail or companies like British Leyland, government bodies such as the Manpower Services Commission have all used the agency.

That's on top of the big private clients: Dunlop, Schweppes, Rowntree Mackintosh, Sainsbury's, Brutus Jeans, and so on.

The money involved in such custom meant that last year Saatchi had a turnover of £59 million.

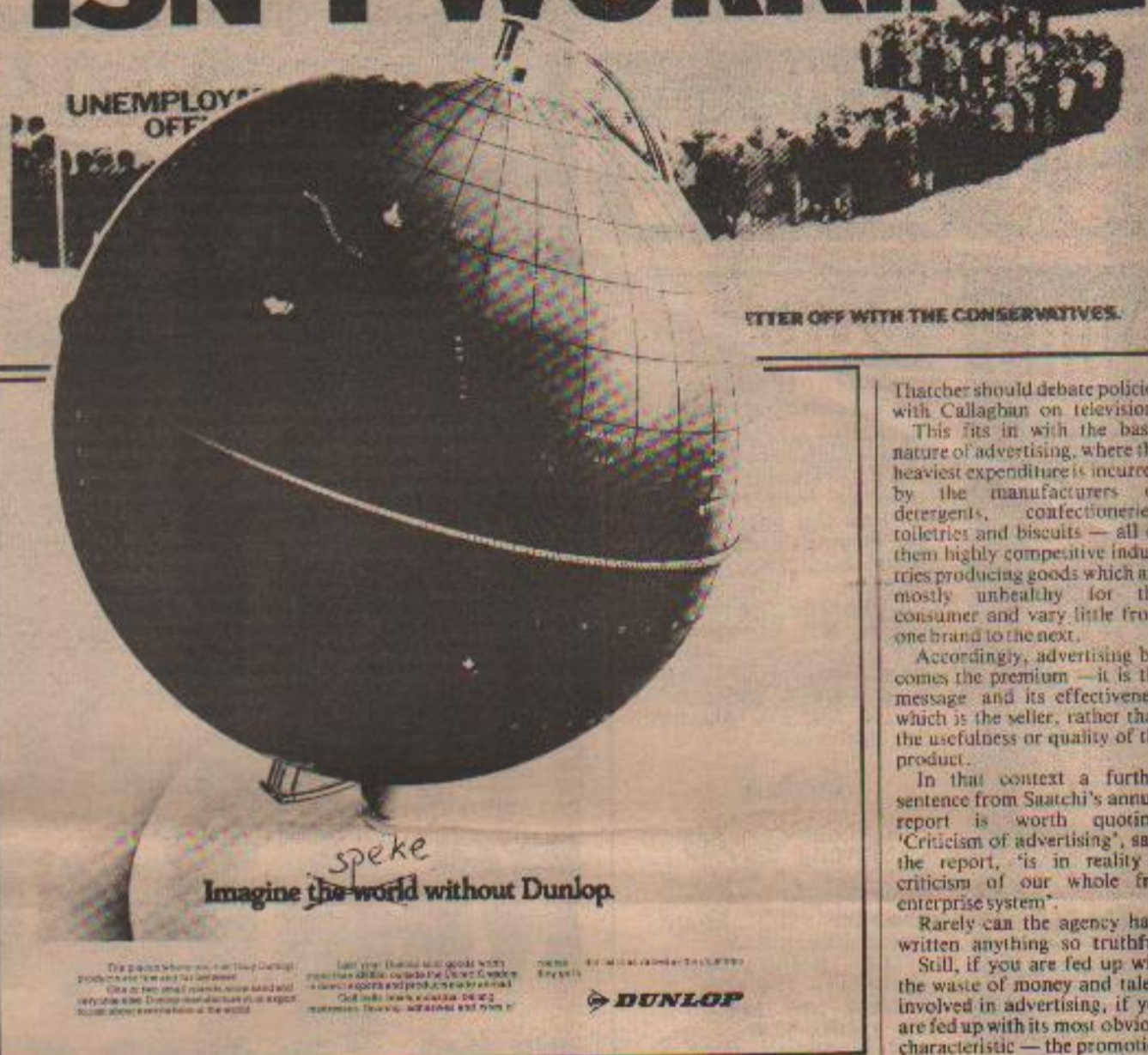
Because there are only 20,000 employed in the advertising industry as a whole, the profits involved — twice the industrial average last year — end up in the pockets of the directors, the shareholders, and, to a lesser extent, the smart-alecks who spend their 'working day' thinking up ways to persuade 'the consumer' to buy more,

spend more, and vote the right way. The means used in such pastimes are well illustrated by the Tory ads. As little is said or argued as possible, as much as possible is implied.

Thus 'Labour isn't working' is in itself a fair enough

LABOUR STILL ISN'T WORKING

UNEMPLOYED OFF



LETTER OFF WITH THE CONSERVATIVES.

A Saatchi advert for Dunlop. The workers at Dunlop's factory in Speke — which has just been shutdown — find it only too easy to imagine the world without Dunlop. And it's not hard to imagine it without Saatchi and Saatchi.

statement, because unemployment has doubled in the past five years — but there is no suggestion about what the Tories would do to halt that process.

The other famous Saatchi poster, 'Cheer up, Labour can't hang on forever', with

'the Conservatives are coming' in small letters, says nothing whatsoever. It is almost apologetic; its purpose is to amuse, to reduce political argument to jibes and repartee.

Far better that type of approach, say the Tory campaign managers, than that

Thatcher should debate policies with Callaghan on television. This fits in with the basic nature of advertising, where the heaviest expenditure is incurred by the manufacturers of detergents, confectioneries, toiletries and biscuits — all of them highly competitive industries producing goods which are mostly unhealthy for the consumer and vary little from one brand to the next.

Accordingly, advertising becomes the premium — it is the message and its effectiveness which is the seller, rather than the usefulness or quality of the product.

In that context a further sentence from Saatchi's annual report is worth quoting. 'Criticism of advertising', says the report, 'is in reality a criticism of our whole free enterprise system'.

Rarely can the agency have written anything so truthful. Still, if you are fed up with the waste of money and talent involved in advertising, if you are fed up with its most obvious characteristic — the promotion of women as sex-selling objects — if you are fed up with this non-productive industry promoting goods which hardly merit production in the first place, if you are fed up with the meaningless banalities which scream at you or whisper intimately to you from the TV screens; if you are fed up with all this, cheer up — free enterprise can't hang on forever.

Malice in Wonderland

By Roger Profz

I HAVE to admit to a sneaking sympathy for newspaper editors and other media bosses. General elections are hard enough to cover without the two major parties appearing to change places in the political spectrum.

In the past week I have had to keep pinching myself to make sure I was awake and not deep in some Malice in Wonderland nightmare.

On the little screen and in the pages of the papers were the comforting conservative tones of Jim Callaghan, warning against people who 'wanted to tear things up by the roots' and the more abrasive style of the Margatolahi, claiming to be the modern heir of the labour movement.

It says a lot for the gutless, policy-less nature of Labour's manifesto and the party's slither towards 'moderation' that the Tories can have the brazen affrontery to present themselves to the electorate as the apostles of change.

This theme was taken up by Peregrine Worsthorne, a high priest of the Tory right, in the *Sunday Telegraph*, where he claimed — and I think his tongue was not in his cheek — that the Tory Party of Thatcher and Joseph embodies the spirit of social democracy.

Warning to his theme, Worsthorne called for a return to the spirit of 1945 and the reforming zeal of the post-war Labour government.

Before you reach for a stiff drink at the thought of the Tories introducing some

measure of change in the interests of working people, be warned: Worsthorne is a subtle dialectician of the right.

The Attlee government, he said, had been forced to smooth some of the excesses of capitalism such as unemployment, poverty, poor health and lousy education for the majority.

But now the pendulum has swung too far and we need Tory radicals to free us from the modern excesses of stifling bureaucracy and state interference.

Missing from this eloquent piece of chop-logic was the fact that social democrats do not as a rule include in their programmes — though they may well move in such a direction in practice — a massive switch of taxation in

favour of the rich, cuts in public spending that will penalise the poorest members of society and a mean, vicious and hysterical anti-trade unionism.

The press gives coverage by the acre to the absurd radical posturings of the Tories yet nowhere is there any analysis of this strange political animal, the reforming Conservative.

But then analysis is something of which the British press fights desperately shy; if they start probing and analysing why, God forbid, people might start asking questions.

PS: You won't forget, will you; please don't go around tearing things up by the roots. In the Labour Party, they leave that sort of thing to the Tories.

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Socialist Challenge

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with

Marx

By JOHN HILL
A THOUSAND schoolchildren are expected to march at an astonishing Marxist rally.

The children will have "lessons" on how to form pupil unions and will attend "workshops" on subjects including sexuality.

Firebrand former Ulster MP Bernadette Devlin—now Mrs McAliskey—and Vietnam war protester Tariq Ali are among the speakers.

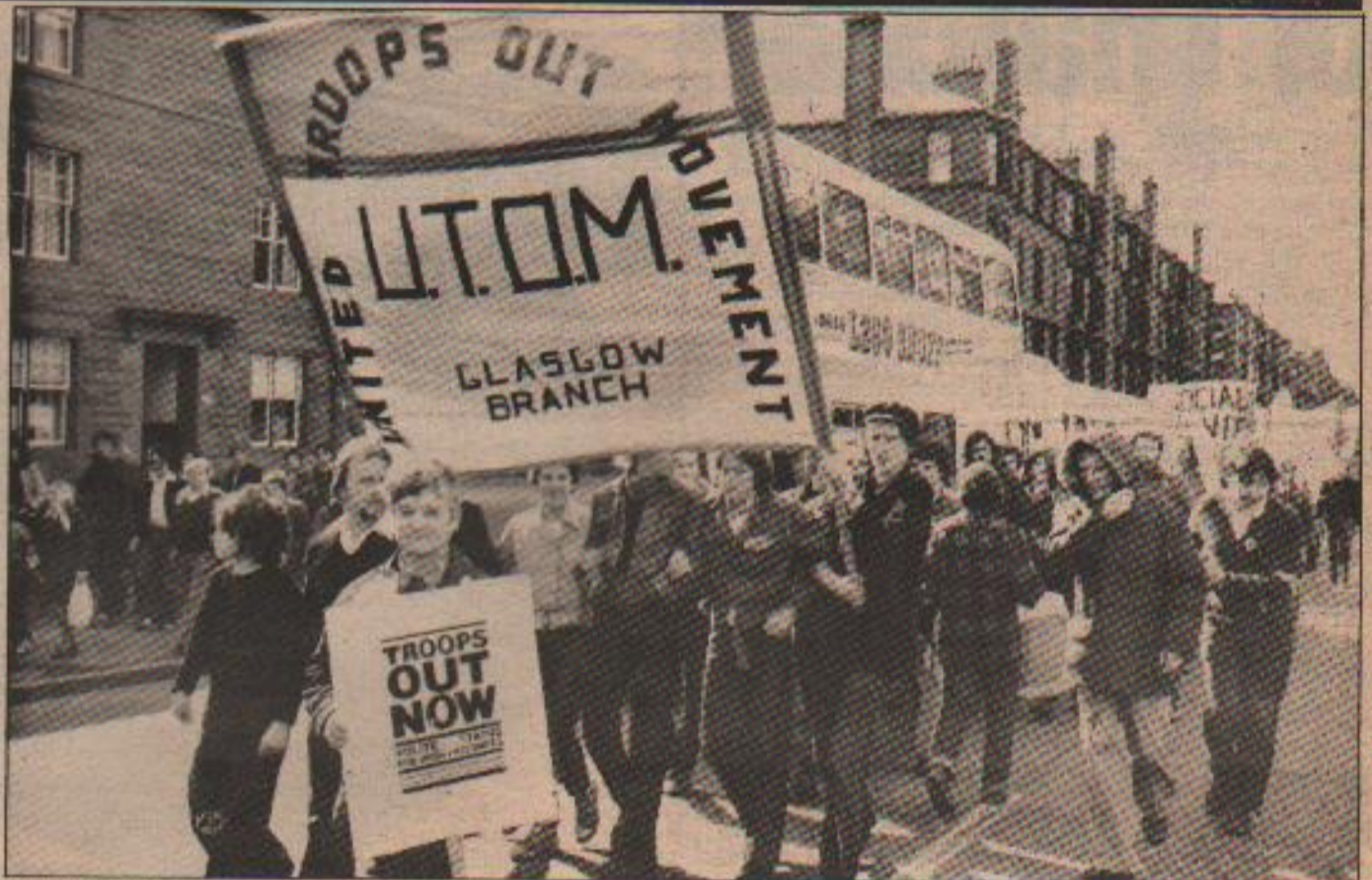
Group

The one-day event at the City University in London on May 5 is being staged by a new Socialist youth group called Revolution.

The group backs abolishing the age of consent and lowering the voting age.

It is named after a journal founded by supporters of the extreme Left-wing paper Socialist Challenge.

Mr Brian Grogan, of the paper, said yesterday: "This will be a red-blooded political rally."



PAT ARROWSMITH heads 'Troops Out' march in Glasgow — see page 7

Making Ireland an issue — we claim responsibility

THROUGHOUT the general election campaign we and our supporters have attempted in every way possible to make Ireland into a major issue.

We have constantly heckled Labour leaders — particularly James Callaghan — staged 'blanket protests' outside election meetings, and demanded the immediate withdrawal of troops from the North of Ireland.

Examples include the heckling of Callaghan in Cardiff, Birmingham, Hemel, Huddersfield, and Manchester; the holding of a dozen meetings on Ireland throughout the country; the stringent questioning of ex-Northern Ireland junior minister Stan Orme at the National Union of Students conference in Blackpool.

Others have participated in this activity. They include members of Sinn Fein, the Revolutionary Communist Group, and the United Troops

Out Movement. But we are the only candidates standing in this election who have put the issue of Ireland to the fore in our campaigns.

Because of this activity we have been smeared by Callaghan as 'terrorists', we have been subjected to a hysterical attack in the *Observer* by Conor Cruise O'Brien, and one of us, Pat Arrowsmith, has been arrested — as have a number of our supporters.

We make no apology for this activity, because we have thereby had some success in breaking the consensus of silence on Ireland by the major political parties. We note as an example the editorial in the *London Evening News* of 20 April, headed 'Ireland should be an issue'.

The only reply from Callaghan has been to tell hecklers that 'you should be ashamed of yourselves'.

Will he now comment on the

latest scandal of his government — the decision of the Northern Ireland Director of Public Prosecutions not to bring charges against the soldiers responsible for the killing of wildfowler James Taylor, who was shot in the back by the SAS last September? We very much doubt it.

Yet a recent opinion poll published in the *Financial Times* showed that Ireland was thought to be more important as an election issue than devolution, immigration, education, nationalisation, or Zimbabwe.

We may be the only candidates putting the Irish issue forward, but we are by no means alone in demanding that it should be discussed.

We shall not be intimidated, harassed or arrested into silence. Until the last British soldier leaves Ireland we will continue to make Ireland an issue — in this election, after it,

and if need be in the next election and the election after that.

Signed:
Paul Adams (Socialist Unity candidate, Liverpool Toxteth)
Chris Adamson (SU candidate, Birmingham Small Heath)
Tariq Ali (SU candidate, Southall)
Pat Arrowsmith (Independent Socialist candidate, Cardiff South-East)
Brendan Gallagher (Independent candidate, Barnsley)
Ian Juniper (SU candidate, Nottingham East)
Walter McLellan (SU candidate, Glasgow Queen's Park)
Janet Maguire (SU candidate, Deptford)
Michael Simpson (SU candidate, Islington)
Pauline Stanton (SU candidate, Hull Central)
Ray Varnes (SU candidate, Bethnal Green and Bow)
Jeff West (SU candidate, Manchester Ardwick)

ELECTION or no election, last Saturday's Sun decided that the Revolution rally on 5 May was a bigger news story.

There on the front page was the story of how '1,000 Revo kids make a date with Marx'.

Sorry, old Karl can't make it. But don't worry, plenty of others can — like Bernadette McAliskey (Devlin), Lucy Toothpaste, and Tariq Ali.

There'll be films as well — 'Home, Soldier, Home', 'Blacks Britannica' and 'An

Egg is not a Chicken'.

There's food, drink, music, stalls and workshops on Ireland, sexism, and fascism.

There's a gig in the evening starting at 8pm but the whole show gets under way at 12 noon.

City University is the venue, £1.50 the entrance fee for school students and wageless, £2.50 for the rest. Don't let the Sun down, make that date on 5 May.

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