

Socialist Challenge

SPECIAL 4 PAGE PULLOUT
Labour women's
festival &
conference

STOP THE WAR MONGERS



EXCLUSIVE! - Labour's
new programme
- US hospitals: nuclear plan

The war abroad

WHY HAS Britain been taken to war? Not for 'democracy', not for 'peace', nor to 'protect the empire'. We are at war to protect Thatcher's class, and her cronies defending: \$4bn worth of investments through the world — more than they have invested in Britain.

Their military presence in the Caribbean, Mediterranean, Indian Ocean

and South East Asia which gives Britain political influence over half the world. ● The spoils of world domination as America's junior partner — and the second biggest military power in the Western world.

The task force is allegedly being used to 'protect' islanders

— who were told three years ago they could not have British citizenship under the Tories' racist Nationality Act.

It is supposed to be 'resisting a fascist dictator' armed with ships and planes sold

by the British government.

But if the troops stay on the island they will be used in exactly the same way as the task forces Britain has stationed in the rest of the world: to crush by force or terror anyone who

threatens to revolt against the economic slavery imposed by the Western multinationals.

Britain is currently the most warlike of Western powers because its rulers are the most desperate. That is why the oc-

cupation of a tiny island in the South Atlantic led to a battle of 'Star Wars' dimensions.

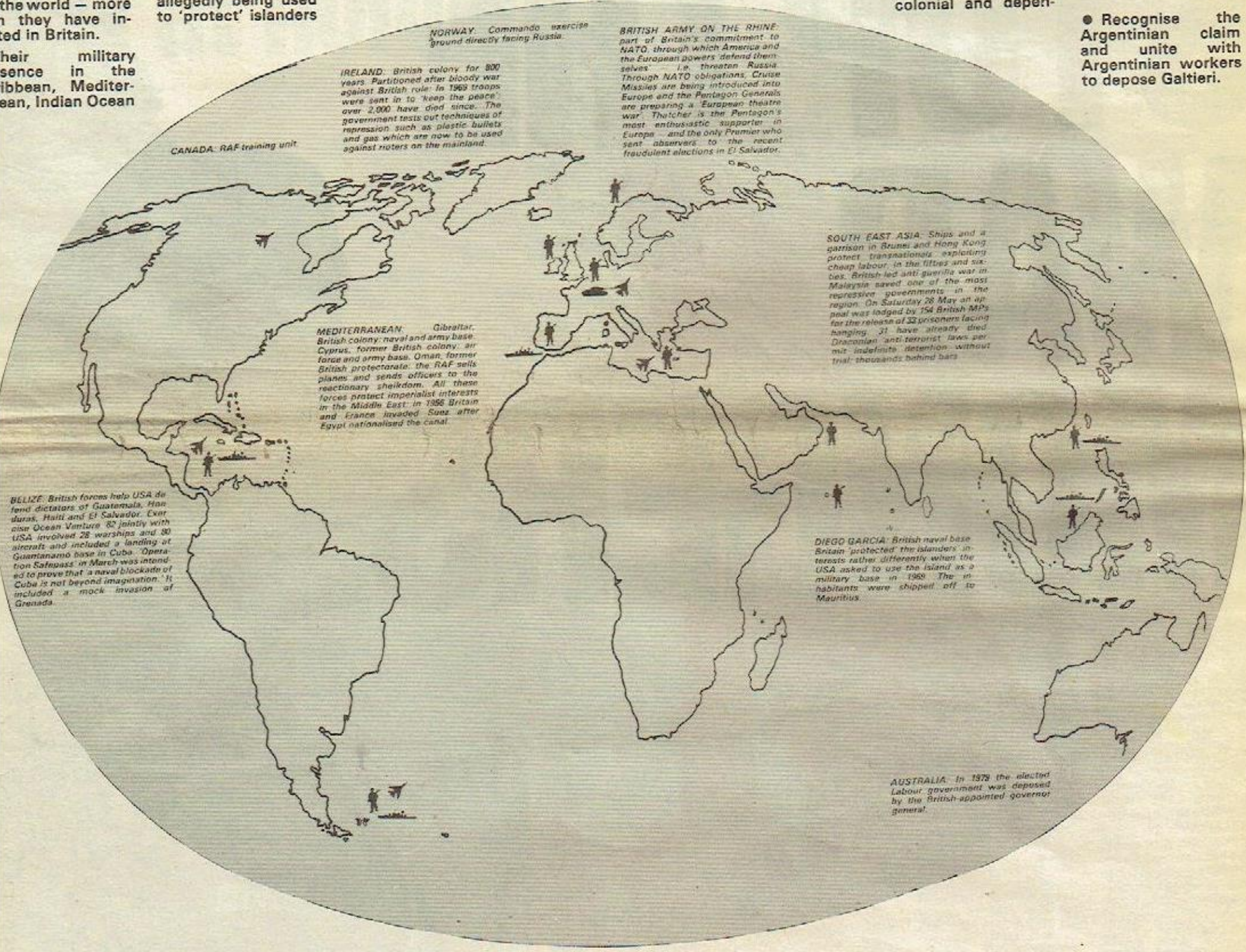
This war was provoked by Thatcher. It is not our war. It will not benefit working people anywhere. It is a rich person's war, directed against the colonial, semi-colonial and depen-

dent peoples of the world. That is why Socialist Challenge says, and has said from the outset:

● Withdraw the task force.

● Get rid of Thatcher and her government.

● Recognise the Argentinian claim and unite with Argentinian workers to depose Galtieri.



By Martin Collins

AS THE task force blasts away in the South Atlantic, Britain's other war continues close to home. A war where the weapons are the armoured cars, plastic bullets and prison camps of an occupying army.

No state of war has been declared, yet over 2,000 have been killed in the past 13 years. For the Irish, the cost of this war is measured not in pounds, but in the grief of a whole community, currently re-living the horrors of last year's H-Block hunger-strike, through the anniversaries of ten lingering deaths.

The battlefields of Ireland are the decaying concrete jungles of Belfast and Derry, and the rolling countryside of South Derry and South Armagh. That is where the Marines and Paratroopers find their victims. No guilty soldiers are brought to justice for smashing the skulls of young innocents. This is war. It is a war where peace negotiations and political

solutions employ thousands of paramilitary policemen and scores of parasitical politicians. But they have achieved neither peace nor solution. Instead they reinforce the repression of a nationalist people who will not be silenced nor submit.

As in the South Atlantic, journalists who even try to present a view of the 'other

side' — cutting through the mist of self-censorship and government restrictions — are branded as traitors undermining the national interest. Colonial war can only be justified by lies, by news management and distortion.

They say it's a war against lawlessness and anarchy. We know it's a war against the Irish people to maintain Britain's grip. If they defeat republican resistance it will be the British establishment and Western imperialism which is strengthened.

They say it's a war that results from petty religious difference. We know it's a war to ensure that Irish workers do not unite as a class — North and South, and across the sectarian divide —

against their common enemies.

Our demand that Britain get out is not just the only road to peace in Ireland, but is a step towards weakening imperialism everywhere.

60 years ago, Britain's premier, Lloyd George, said: 'Suppose we gave in to them, it will lower the prestige and dignity of this country and reduce British authority to a low point in Ireland. It will give the impression we have lost our grip, that the Empire has no further force and will have an effect in India and throughout Europe.'

Change the time, and it's Thatcher today on the Irish. Change the place and that's her on the Argentinians.

THE WAR AT HOME

COMMANDER Margaret Thatcher and her motley crew on the HMS Tory government has sent the task force out to attack the working class in Britain. Right from day one three years ago, Thatcher has first blitzed living standards and created millions of unemployed. When even that has not resulted in any significant defeat of the workers movement, a direct assault on the rights of trade unions — in the form of Tebbit's law — is launched.

And all of this, like the sending of the task force to the South Atlantic, has been done in the name of freedom. But the only people who will benefit from their vicious policies are the Tories and their friends in high places: the bosses and the landowners. But like the Argentinians, the workers in Britain are fighting back:

TEBBIT'S LAW: claiming to be for individual 'freedom' this 'unemployment' Bill gives 'rights' to 400 who refused to join a union and attacks the rights of 10 million trade unionists —

taking strike action. As miners' president, Arthur Scargill said, 'We don't operate under these acts. We couldn't care less about this legislation. If we are in violation of the Tory government's legis-

EVERY LAW HAS ITS PLACE IN HISTORY

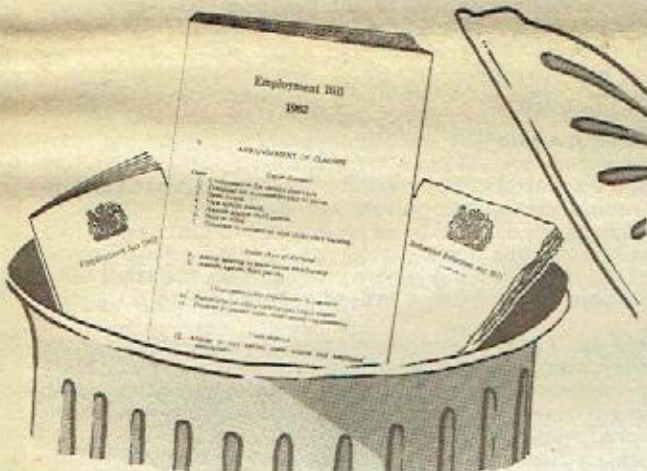
Photo: STEVE PROCTER



THATCHER has declared war on all fronts. Black people are harassed by police every day; they face horrendous immigration laws which divide families and they are brought before courts on trumped up charges.

Today in Leeds the Bradford 12 face conspiracy charges which carry the possibility of life imprisonment. As Mick Connolly from the South East Regional Council of the TUC said on a picket in Leeds last week: 'These people are being victimised for their past political activity. The charges are designed to put them in jail for years.'

Now one of the defendants, Jayesh Amin, has had all the charges against him dropped. Although he had a cast iron alibi for when the offences were alleged to have taken place, he spent 3 months in jail and has sat through four and half weeks of the trial before it was agreed he had 'no case to answer'.



JOIN THE TUC FIGHTBACK AGAINST TEBBIT'S LAW

LOOK AFTER YOUR UNION

rights that have been fought for over two centuries.

Trade unionists everywhere are giving their answer to the present employment act and Tebbit's new bill. Miners, water workers, steel workers, all intend to show their solidarity with hospital workers by

lation, then so be it.'

The South Wales miners' message to the NUPE conference summed up what the mass of the population feel about the Tories' derisory offer to health workers: 'We know and appreciate what you do for us. This is a little in return.' Such unity will defeat Tebbit and Thatcher.

Photo: PETE GRANT (ISC)



'The poor are poor because they don't have enough money'

Sir Keith Joseph



FREEDOM and rights don't extend to the Black British forced to queue to get into Britain. Nor under the Tories does it extend to the Falklanders themselves. Last year the Tories opposed an amendment to the notorious Nationality Act which would have given the islanders full citizenship. 'The fact remains that the Falklands are not and have never been part of the United Kingdom,' said Lord Trefgarne speaking on behalf of the government. As far as Thatcher is concerned, the same criterion applies to black people.



THE TORIES have lost some important battles in their war on the unions. The miners took strike action and forced the government to stop pit closures. The train drivers took on the Tories and won. Now they and all railworkers face another fight against job losses and worsening of conditions.

Council workers have taken industrial action against privatisation of local services, such as in Wandsworth and workers have occupied up and down the country in defence of jobs.

The most determined were the workers of Laurence Scott in Manchester. For over a year they fought tooth and

nail to save their jobs. Occupying their factory, they faced bailiffs, police and flying helicopters. When the leaders of the engineering union failed to support them, the Scott workers took up a campaign into the union itself. Their struggle was an inspiration to all other workers facing redundancies.

Sign up against war

by Jim Coutts, CND National Committee

A VICTORY for the freedom fighters of El Salvador will be a victory for the youth of Britain, and a victory for the youth of Britain in their fight against nuclear weapons will be a victory for the people of El Salvador. This is because we face the same enemy — the imperialist expansionism of Reagan and Thatcher.

This is how Manuel Prado — British representative of the Salvadorean MLN — views Youth CND.

CND has dealt a serious blow to the warlike of Reagan and Thatcher by mobilising thousands of young people against Cruise and Trident.

But Youth CND, unlike the leadership of CND, have called for the urgent mobilisation on 7 June when Reagan arrives and have instructed local groups to campaign against Thatcher's task force under the slogans of 'No war with Argentina' and 'Bring back the fleet'.

Youth CND has taken these decisions because it understands the importance of being against imperialist aggression whether it be introducing first-strike nuclear mis-

siles, aiding the murderous regime in El Salvador, or using the navy to attack others.

The ever-increasing use of military might by Reagan and Thatcher shows they are scared by revolutions erupting in places such as Nicaragua, Grenada and El Salvador, and worried by the growing resistance to their domestic policies of austerity and mass unemployment.

The time is ripe to launch a new war — against Reagan and Thatcher; a war of international unity and solidarity by the working class and youth. However when we try to unite with workers of other countries the first obstacle is the misleadership of the Labour Party and trade unions.

When Foot lets Thatcher send the navy against Argentina, he condemns thousands of Argentinian workers to death. Only by aiding workers in Argentina against British imperialism will we gain their support in our struggles against Thatcher.

So in our fight against war we also have to fight to remove the Labour misleadership. By uniting the labour movement and youth in struggle with workers of other countries we can kick out the Tories and the Foots, and we can make sure that Britain never again sends its fleet against other countries.

**Jobs not War
No Cruise no Trident
Hands off El Salvador**



March with Revolution and sell Socialism! Join us on the big day and help sell socialist papers. Socialist Challenge and Revolution contingents on the 6th of June are joining the South London feeder march. Look for the Revolution/Socialist Challenge banners. There will be a collection point for paper sellers just by the banners. If you are coming down by train or coach look for a Revolution or Socialist Challenge seller who will have a map of how to get to our central assembly point, at Belvedere Road next to Waterloo Tube. There will be sellers with information at the following places: Paddington Station; Kings Cross Station; St Pancras Station; Euston Station; Waterloo Station; Victoria Station; Ladbroke Grove Tube; Hampstead Heath BR (North London Line).

How can we ensure a lasting peace in the South Atlantic?

by Richard Rozanski, Revolution Youth

THE CND Ad Hoc Committee, which has organised London's anti-war marches, calls for negotiated solution through the United Nations. Unfortunately this will not bring peace. The United Nations is dominated by the major Western powers — Britain, United States, West Germany. In this supposedly post-colonial era it is used by them to defend their international interests.

These imperialist powers use the UN to mediate between themselves and the workers of Eastern Europe, to oppose national liberation struggles, and when necessary to fully back counter-revolutionary projects like in Korea and the Congo.

Many just causes recognised by the UN General Assembly are ignored by the imperialist-dominated Security Council. Namibia is a good example. Constant calls to introduce black majority rule are ignored by the Western powers who support the apartheid South African regime.

The real problem is this: why should anyone other than Argentina be involved in negotiations over the Malvinas? If there is no one living on the islands then it would be obvious from their loca-

at Britain's expense, but not to claim the territory on Britain's behalf.

If Britain wins the war, that will not be the end of the matter. British troops will be stationed on the islands for years to come, not only to stop Argentinian military re-occupation but to stop the spread of any opposition to imperialist domination in the whole region, which is just waiting to explode.

The imperialist powers are not just sitting back. Already they are contemplating invasions of Nicaragua and El Salvador. Tomorrow they will do the same in Brazil, Chile and Argentina. The resulting wars will make the present one look like chicken feed. Far from bringing peace, a British victory would store up future bloody conflicts.

By demanding an end to Thatcher's war and the recall of the fleet we are already placing the blame on Thatcher. We must take this to its logical conclusion: full recognition of Argentina's claim to the Malvinas! Britain must hand over the islands!



Part of lobby at South Wales Labour Party conference

Photo: C PUGH (SC)

Call Foot to order

RESOLUTIONS are flooding from Labour Party and trade union branches opposing Michael Foot's disgraceful support for the war. Keep them coming: we hope to print a selection to show the extent of labour movement opposition to Thatcher's war. But a further step is needed. We appeal to our readers

to see that resolutions go up to conference supporting those MPs who voted against the government, condemning the front bench's position, and calling for withdrawal of all British forces from the South Atlantic and the unilateral renunciation of any British claim to be written into the manifesto. Keep us posted!

Socialist Challenge FUND DRIVE '82

Fight the warmongers

HOW CAN YOU fight back against the warmongers? Socialist Challenge and its sister paper, Revolution Youth, are dedicated to world socialism; we think this is the only way to end the war.

In our view, it is imperialism, its greed, thirst for profits and the degeneration it brings, which causes war. We place our trust in those who have nothing to gain from war: the working and oppressed people of the world. From the very beginning Socialist Challenge opposed the war in the South Atlantic, demanded the withdrawal of the fleet, and exposed the injustice of the British claim, and showed how Britain and the United States robbed the Argentinian economy and people. We have campaigned tirelessly against it.

Our articles have been translated and reproduced by socialist papers as far away as Brazil, Peru and the United States. We fight to build an international socialist organisation, the Fourth International.

Will you join our struggle? In every major town there are organised groups of supporters of Socialist Challenge and Revolution. Help us sell our paper; help write it; but most of all, help us put its ideas in practice. Fill in the form below, and we can put you in touch with your nearest local group. Join us now — before it's too late!

£5,000 raised

LAST WEEK we announced that mounting costs threatened our future. We appealed to you, our supporters and readers, for a week's wages to put us back on the road. Our paper staff set a target of £4000 in the first week.

There is only one way to describe the response — overwhelming. You have saved our paper. We have already received £5,590 with pledges amounting to hundreds of pounds more.

Last week we said 'We are quite aware that in asking for a week's wages we are asking a tremendous sacrifice from our readers and supporters. But we think it is worth it to keep the flame of revolutionary internationalism burning'.

Hundreds of our readers have responded to that appeal in a fantastically generous way.

One of the most moving letters we received, together with a £10 donation, came from a retired woman living on social security.

She told us: 'I cannot send you my week's wages. I have not got any. I live day to day on Social Security. On top I am ill and old. I really might be the poorest of your readers. What is happening in Las Malvinas is a disgrace. This country should have returned it to Argentina a hundred years ago.'

'How can an island in South America be part of Europe? Thatcher is playing with the lives of other mothers' boys. Her son should go there! And the boys of everyone in her cabinet. I do hope that people come to your help. If something happened to your paper it would break my heart'.

On top of sending us £10, she also sent us a subscription to the paper. To her and all the other readers and supporters who did rush to our help, we extend our heartfelt thanks.

But the response that we have received is only a quarter of what we need to stabilise us. The costs of producing a revolutionary socialist paper, without the benefit of big business advertising which sustains the national press, is becoming astronomical.

We ask all of you to follow the example of some of our poorest readers who have made an immense sacrifice just to send us a small amount of money. We need all of you to send a week's wages to set us on a firm footing to carry on the fight.

Next week we shall publish a full list of all those who have donated to our special fund drive appeal.

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

If you would like to be put in touch with Socialist Challenge supporters in your area or would like more information fill in the form below

Name.....

Address.....

Age.....

Union/CLP (if any).....

Send to: Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

Reagan prepares hospitals for Euro-nuclear war

We fought World War One in Europe, we fought World War Two in Europe and if you dummies will let us we will fight World War Three in Europe.
 — Rear Admiral Gene La Rocque, former Pentagon planner

THE US DEFENCE Department is campaigning for every major US hospital to set aside a minimum of 50 beds to supplement military medical facilities in the event of a major war overseas. Nuclear war is included among the possible justifications for this programme.

DAVY JONES looks at Reagan's preparations for a limited nuclear war in Europe.

The Civilian-Military Contingency Hospital System (CMCHS) was launched by the Defence Department in 1980 in a handbook entitled 'In Combat, In the Community, Saving Lives Together'. It explains its role as follows: 'CMCHS is a mechanism which will prepare our nation to medically support a future major conflict outside the United States.'

'Because of technical advances in weaponry and the great mobility of armies today, a future large-scale war overseas will probably begin and end very rapidly, and produce casualties at a higher rate than any other war in history.'

'Thus we have created the CMCHS, which provides a mechanism for civilian hospitals to agree in advance to supplement the military capability early in any large-scale future conflict.'

The handbook goes on to explain how the civilian medical facilities harnessed by the CMCHS would be co-ordinated by area military medical commanders. It explains that some 50,000 beds in all are sought for the CMCHS programme for US casualties from such a war in Europe.

A response from the US Department of Defence to an inquiry concerning possible nuclear conflict states: 'The most likely scenario for a future military conflict would be in an overseas area using conventional weapons. This does not rule out the

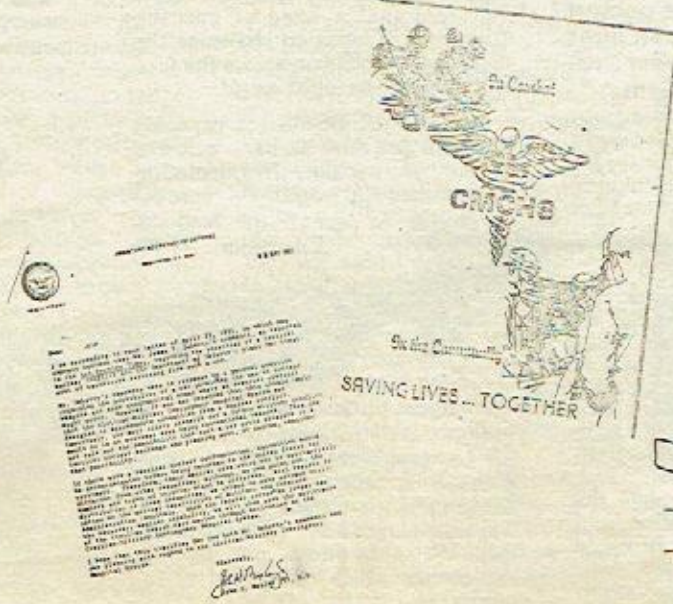
possibility that such a war could escalate to a tactical nuclear exchange and planning must of course, consider that possibility.'

Another response states: 'It is possible, of course, that such a war could escalate to the use of chemical or tactical nuclear weapons within a combat theatre. It is believed however that any casualties resulting from such an escalation could be accommodated by our present military health care system and through the CMCHS framework.'

The US Defence Department by March this year had persuaded some 433 hospitals to participate in the CMCHS programme, providing over 30,000 beds. The cost of this massive operation in reimbursing the civilian health centres for their charges has never been revealed. The cash could only come from the Pentagon's military budget.

Last year there was considerable publicity given to the remarks of President Reagan and Secretary of State Alexander Haig about the possibility of 'a limited nuclear war in Europe' through the use of 'tactical nuclear weapons'. These 'tactical' nuclear weapons are defined as those of 20 to 25 megatons. To grasp the awesome scope of this 'limited' war it is enough to recall that the Hiroshima bomb was one-eighth of a megaton.

The CMCHS programme clearly illustrates that detailed planning is now being made by the Reagan



administration for this horrendous military option. Opponents of the CMCHS programme within the US medical profession has been led by the Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR).

The PSR claims that the Defence Department's hints at the scale and character of casualties envisaged strongly imply 'a limited overseas use of nuclear weapons', and their hypothetical casualty list shows 'a predominance of blast and thermal injuries' of a kind incurred in a nuclear exchange.

They also point out that the number of hospital beds envisaged for use in such a conflict (an unknown proportion of the 85,000 Veterans' Administration beds, some 20,000 Defence Department beds plus a further 7,000 for war time, added to the 50,000 from the CMCHS) total 162,000, which is more than the number of hospitalised casualties in the 15 years of the Vietnam war.

The PSR's campaign has had some effect. A number of hospitals, including the University of California and Stanford University, as well as medical staff in a number of local and regional bodies have refused to participate in Reagan's war preparations.

Many of those opposing the CMCHS scheme have alleged that its function is to accustom the public to and to make preparations for a so-called 'limited nuclear war in Europe'. They point out that preparations for dealing with casualties from such a catastrophe are about as useful as our own Ministry of Defence's 'Protect and Survive' handbook, with its tips on makeshift fallout shelters made of old doors.

For example, there are only 1,000 special care burn beds in the whole of the United States. Yet such treatment would be at a premium for victims of nuclear war. Dr Howard Hiatt, Dean of the Harvard School of Public Health, reinforced this

point for the PSR by recounting the case of a casualty with third degree burns over 85 per cent of the body roughly similar to nuclear casualty proportions.

In a special burns unit he received 281 units of fresh frozen blood plasma, 147 units of packed red blood cells, 37 units of platelets and 36 of serum albumin. After six surgical procedures and a vast array of drugs, life-supporting technology and specialist attention round-the-clock the patient died on the 33rd day. What chance the 150,000 other casualties envisaged under the CMCHS programme?

Socialists and peace campaigners have been joined by many specialists and experts in questioning the very idea of a 'limited nuclear war in Europe'. Even former US Secretary of Defence Harold Brown and former Presidential Science Advisor and weapons' expert George Kistiakowsky have argued that once nuclear weapons are used the parties in the conflict will be driven to the use of strategic nuclear weapons, subjecting the world to the risk of annihilation.

These new revelations of Reagan's nuclear war-mongering should be publicised as widely as possible. They illustrate just how ruthless US imperialism is prepared to be in defence of its worldwide interests just as Thatcher's war in the South Atlantic has confirmed British imperialism's war capacities.

As Reagan visits the European capitals in the coming week socialists and peace campaigners should demand to know whether their own governments are co-laborating on the CMCHS programme. They should use this new information to extend the movement for an end to all nuclear weapons, and for the overturn of the imperialist system which engenders nuclear madness.



Task force has nuclear weapons

By Davy Jones

THE BRITISH Falklands fleet is equipped with nuclear anti-aircraft missiles according to the German news weekly magazine Der Spiegel.

Quoting US secret service sources *Der Spiegel* claimed that Admiral 'Sandy' Woodward is empowered to use these nuclear missiles 'under serious circumstances'. The explosive power of the missiles and the torpedo warheads is estimated at between 1.5 and 20 kilotons, compared with the 13 kilotons of the Hiroshima bomb.

Tony Benn demanded from Thatcher at the outset of the conflict an answer on whether the fleet was carrying nuclear weapons. Thatcher con-

sistently refused to answer. When confronted last week with the report from *Der Spiegel* the Ministry of Defence equally refused to comment.

It appears that even the US warmongers are unhappy at the prospect of Britain's task force carrying nuclear weapons. *Der Spiegel* claimed that the US government was 'extremely concerned'.

For the labour movement in this country it is even more serious. In our

name the British armed forces may have been authorised to nuke Argentina.

Most British workers are completely unaware of this possibility thanks to our wonderfully free press, which has consciously failed to report the *Der Spiegel* story (with the exception of a small report in the *Times*).

The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and socialist activists should utilise this *Der Spiegel* story to boost the growing opposition at the base of the labour movement to British aggression in the South Atlantic.

RAYGUN

REAGAN

The T-shirt to be seen in this summer! Just the thing for all CND/El Salvador demonstrations. Only £2.95 including p&p. Sizes small, medium and large. Cheques payable to Cardinal Enterprises. Orders to: T-shirts, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

NUCLEAR IM



By Phil Hearse

RONALD REAGAN's visit to Europe will see mass demonstrations in Rome, Paris, London and Bonn. In Britain the main demonstration will be organised by CND on 6 June. Ronald Reagan is rightly regarded as the person who has given the green light for a massive nuclear re-arming of US imperialism.

But the new and deadly nuclear arms race is only one arm of Reagan's military policy. In El Salvador the US is more deeply involved in a counter-insurgency war than at any time since Vietnam.

Socialist Challenge believes that US involvement in El Salvador, its threats against countries like Nicaragua and Cuba, and its massive conventional re-arming, are part of the same policy which leads it to bolster its nuclear armament. Both are part of defending the American empire.

Here we attempt to explain the new rise of American militarism, and why US imperialism is of necessity nuclear imperialism. And we show why it has been during revolutions that the US has come closest to using nuclear weapons.

Defending the Empire 1 — From Saigon to Teheran

In the early 1960s President Kennedy decided to take the United States to war. He decided to draw the line against 'international communism' in Vietnam. By 1964 there were half a million American troops fighting the National Liberation Front and the North Vietnamese army.

At first sight this seems extraordinary. Why should the US go to such extraordinary lengths to save South Vietnam, a country of little economic significance? The answer has to be found in America's world role — that of international cop for capitalism.

In 1959 the US suffered a severe defeat. In Cuba, Fidel Castro's guerrillas came to power, overthrowing

the US-backed Batista dictatorship. The revolution rapidly moved in a socialist direction. Elsewhere in the 'third world', guerrilla movements were challenging colonial powers. In Africa, movements in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea challenged Portuguese imperialism. The US became convinced that a wave of guerrilla struggles was going to challenge the interests of capitalism across the face of the underdeveloped world.

In 1964 the US started bombing Vietnam. The most barbaric weapons of war — napalm, fragmentation bombs, chemical weapons — were used against the National Liberation Front.

Vietnamese peasants were indiscriminately slaughtered. The US was saying that revolutions anywhere would face the full force of the world's mightiest military power. The war was intended as a demonstration that the US would not tolerate movements which threatened its interests.

The American war effort was broken on the rock of the resistance of the ordinary people of Vietnam. Who was winning the war was made very obvious by the Tet offensive in January 1968. The United States was on the road to defeat.

The final debacle came in 1975. During April the NLF soldiers sent the South Vietnamese army reeling. The NLF entered Saigon on May Day. As a final humiliation, the remaining Americans had to flee the country in a rapidly organised airlift, with helicopters taking off from the roofs of government buildings as gunfire echoed around Saigon.

After 1975, battered and demoralised, American imperialism pulled in its horns. But the situation was turned around by new and rising threats to American imperial interests.

In 1973, the Arab-Israeli war sent shockwaves through the Western world, because for the first time the rulers of the oil-producing states decided to raise prices and restrict supplies as a weapon against Western support for Israel.

The US especially, with its huge consumption of oil products and very expensive local oil, was hard hit. An

The NATO doctrine conventional weapons then we will fight conventional weapons until we blow up the world.

— Morton Halperin official

an imperial despot put into power in 1953 by a CIA-organised coup, is one of the United States' most faithful and powerful allies in the 'third world'.

His overthrow came as a shattering blow to American prestige and morale.

The US received another sharp blow when in July 1979, the revolutionary guerrillas of the FSLN overthrew the Somoza dictatorship in the tiny Central American state of Nicaragua.

Further trouble was also developing in Africa. When South African troops invaded Angola in 1976, the Cuban government in concert with the Soviet Union sent troops to repel them.

Cuban troops were also involved in the defence of the Derg regime in Ethiopia, which had overthrown the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie.

The US believed, rightly, that in many countries in the 'third world' its interests were under attack.

Because of the dominant anti-communist ideology of the US, its officials began to see this as all part of a 'Russian plot'. Security adviser Brzezinski began to talk of 'linkage' — that any advance in arms talks with the Soviet Union must be linked to Soviet commitment to hold back the colonial revolution.

The US, as we shall see later, began preparations for a fight back in the 'third world'.

Defending the Empire 2 — Nuclear Imperialism

'American nuclear superiority should permit us to use military force in defence of our interests with comparative freedom if should become necessary'
Eugene Roscow, Head of the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

The development of the arms race has reached fearful proportions. During 1981 the US embarked on a programme of re-arming which will involve the spending of one trillion dollars. This has led to a massive movement of protest in Europe. The insanity of spending vast fortunes on the huge MX missile project, the updated Trident submarine missile system, the deployment of Cruise missiles in Europe, the Stealth bomber and so on is obvious to millions of people.

More and more, nuclear war — especially a 'limited' nuclear war — has become a 'thinkable' proposition. To many it is involved in the new peace movement, this furious re-arming and the Soviet response is indicative of a world in which the two leading powers — the US and the USSR — are power mad and insane. We disagree.

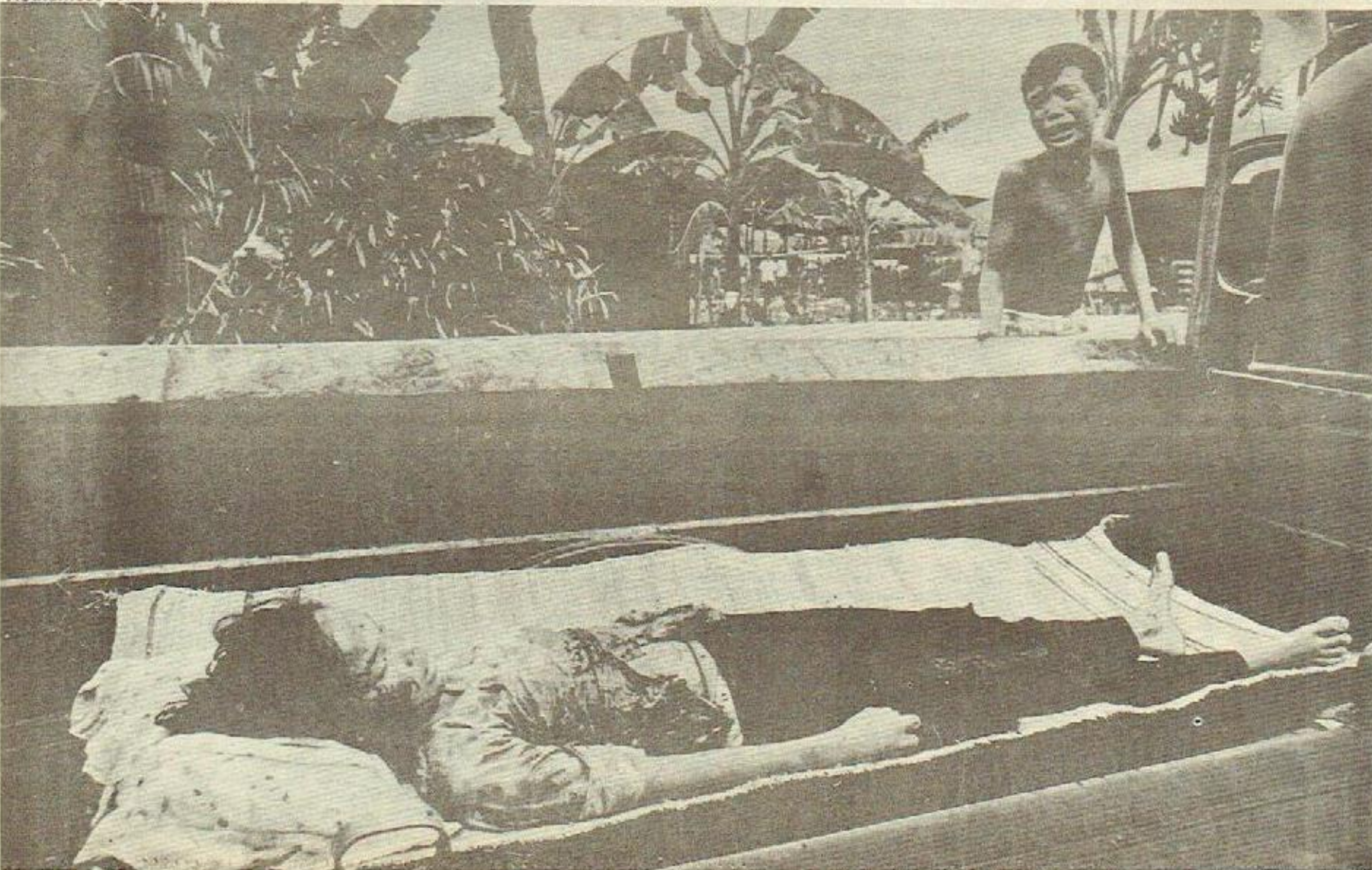
In fact the new arms race is a quite deliberate part of the US strategy to defend the interests of world capitalism. Since the Vietnam world war, US military strategy has always been based on massive nuclear superiority and the threatened (but) use of nuclear weapons. Nuclear



Imperialist chieftain Nixon



Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh



Socialist Challenge

Labour's new programme for women

THE LABOUR PARTY'S National Executive Committee is now discussing a draft programme which is to be put before the conference in October.

This programme has been passed to Socialist Challenge. Over the page we print an outline of it, and explain our reasons for doing so.

What does the new programme propose for women? We asked *Jude Woodward*, from Manchester Labour Women's Council to explain and comment on the draft proposals.

Socialist Challenge greets the Labour Party Women's Festival and Conference

JUNE is a great month for women in the labour movement. On 5 June women will come from all over Britain to a giant festival to celebrate and discuss women's rights. A march through London to the festival will proclaim in action our right to jobs and to equality.

The following weekend in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Labour Party women meeting in annual conference will debate and decide many of the policies which will advance the cause of women.

In these few pages we take up some of the issues which confront women today.

We look at the draft manifesto for the next general election which is to be discussed by Labour's National Executive Committee. We also look in detail at some of the key questions which women are having to deal with every day:

- the basic arguments for positive discrimination as given by a woman railworker
- why abortion rights continue to be threatened and why the trade unions should campaign for them
- interviews with women from different backgrounds on what the Falklands war means to women
- a programme to beat the Tories

Even if the best policies in the world were to be adopted by the Labour Party they would mean nothing if they didn't get backing in action by the mass of the labour movement. It is only through mass action on the streets and in the factories that a real change in society can take place.

The sort of movement which repelled anti-abortionist MPs such as White, Benyon and Corrie is necessary to win the fight for positive action, for a woman's right to work and for all the other policies which women need.

Anti-abortionists get smack in eye

DESPITE the massive amounts of money and energy poured into the campaign to stop women having abortions, more people than ever think that women should have the right to choose one.

A recent Gallup poll shows conclusively that:

- 81 per cent of men and 79 per cent of women support the right to choose in con-

sultation with the woman's doctor.

- 76 per cent of men and 69 per cent of women think that abortion should be provided on the NHS.

And in a real blow to the Pope the poll also shows that seven out of ten Roman Catholics support the woman's right to choose, despite the official teachings of the Church.

THE LABOUR PARTY has long promised a policy statement on women. It is excellent that the NEC will be discussing one.

It gets one very important issue right: that women's economic dependence underpins their whole status in society. It proposes changes such as

- Reform of the regulations covering social

security payments.

- Extension of nursery provision.

- Extension of the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts so that groups of workers can collectively use the tribunal procedures.

In addition the paper recognises that women are being forced to provide unpaid services in the home to make up for the gaps as a result of the cuts. It recognises that women are concentrated in low paid,

UNIONS DEFEND ABORTION

ALTHOUGH the Tories backed down from prosecuting doctors who challenged recent DHSS moves to restrict women's right to abortion by imposing a restrictive notification form on the health service, the threat still exists.

We reprint here an article written by a group of Post Office engineers active in *Women in Telecoms* who argue that the POEU should defend the right to abortion.

THE ISSUE of abortion is a highly emotive one, having as it does ethical, religious and political implications, but there is a tendency for people to sit on the fence and declare that it does not affect them. It is thought of solely as a women's issue, but in fact has wider implications as a trade union issue and affects everyone.

So long as abortion is not freely available the question of the reliability of women as workers lurks in the background somewhere and women, their employers and the unions face an added difficulty in working towards equality in the workplace.

When the government attacks the ability of one section of the workforce to work, a united front is necessary or the power of the union itself is undermined.

Whatever your particular ethical view on abortion, that is your right as an individual; but neither the law nor any religion classifies the foetus as an independent human being. Miscarriages are neither given a death certificate nor a religious burial.

As union members we should expect our unions to protect the rights of all workers to exercise as much control as possible over their worklife and

their career development. That means supporting the right of an individual woman to decide whether or not she wishes to continue an unwanted pregnancy and not impose that decision on her.

The public debate around abortion has its reflection in the TU movement. Both the TUC and the Labour Party now understand abortion to be a union issue and have committed themselves to taking action to gain the right of individual women to decide whether or not to continue an unwanted pregnancy.

Before the '67 Abortion Act abortion was illegal and women broke the law. If they were rich a private hospital gave them a 'small gynaecological operation'. If they were poor they used knitting needles or gin.

The passing of the '67 Act made abortion legal if two doctors agreed there were grounds which made the continuance of the pregnancy more a danger to the mother's health.

The doctor could take into account the effect of social factors. This leaves the legal, political and moral interpretation of the act to the discretion of doctors.

This has led to large regional abnormalities: for example, in Dudley six per cent of abortions are on the NHS compared with 97 per cent in Hartlepool. It is unacceptable that whether or not a woman gets an abortion is the result of

unskilled jobs, and it pledges a future Labour government both to attack low pay and take measures to end job segregation.

This is a step forward. But it would not remove two major weaknesses from the Labour Party's policy on women.

First, what should be done about job segregation? 'Women's jobs' have a lower status and pay than men's jobs. We need a pledge from the party for a programme of positive action to get women into traditionally male dominated jobs.

The policy is also weak on the issue of a woman's right to choose. Abortion does not appear in the section on women, and only merits two lines in the section on health. While there is a pledge to improve facilities to achieve a woman's right to choose, the programme does not incorporate the three-point plan proposed by the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign.

This would mean, for example, that the Labour Party would not be pledged to decriminalise abortion. People like Dr Huntingford in East London would remain open to prosecution with the possibility of 14 year sentences just for performing abortions.

The greatest problem, however is that of a strategy to win women's rights. The document concludes:

an anti-abortion gynaecologist imposing his/her political views on women.

It is also unacceptable that parliament has not put this right. Safe, early abortions can only become nationally available on the NHS through a change in legislation to make abortion legal at a woman's request.

In 1975 the National Abortion Campaign was set up to defend the right of women to abortion on demand. In a coalition with the TUC, the Labour Party and many other organisations, the NAC organised overwhelming public pressure which stopped three attempts to further restrict the 1967 abortion act.

As a union we have not discussed or voted on the issue of abortion. Although the POEU officially has no position its delegations to the Labour Party have voted to defend the 1967 Act and endorse the position that 'a fundamental part of women's rights is control over their own fertility'.

Our sponsored MPs' positions on abortion reflect the lack of discussion in the union.

The purpose of this article is to argue why the POEU should accept abortion as a legitimate subject for debate and why it

EXCLUSIVE

LABOUR'S PROGRAMME '82

- Labour proposals for women: this page

- Labour's economic and social strategy: page 8



Labour MPs accept petition from NAC and LARC. LARC's three-point programme should be Labour policy

'to ensure our strategy for women's equality is carried out the next Labour government will appoint a senior minister (with Cabinet responsibility) with special responsibility for all matters related to women and equality between the sexes'.

Unfortunately a great deal more is needed. The policy statement does not pledge the party to build a mass women's movement that could be necessary to sweep aside the obstacles to women's equality.

It doesn't point to the central role of the mass abortion campaign in defending the gains of the '67 Abortion Act or the role of the numerous industrial struggles of women for equal pay in winning the Equal Pay Act.

Moreover, struggles by women at factories such as Lee Jeans, Royal Pride and Famous Names defended women's jobs against the Tories and struck a real blow for women's economic independence.

Ministers for Women are all right. But what we need first is a Labour Party that fights for women's rights by building a mass women's movement. That's how the LP will win the support of working class women — and that will help put Labour in office. Otherwise the LP may not be in the position to give us a Minister for women for a very long time.

should endorse the TUC's position that women should legally be entitled to an abortion on the NHS.

Women's rights is a new area for the union to deal with. The influx of women into the engineering grades will naturally promote these discussions in the whole membership.

Child bearing is obviously an important and necessary function in society, a function exclusive to women, and there is no reason why women should be penalised for it.

The fact the women can fall pregnant when they do not wish to is not something they should be penalised for either.

The power to decide to continue or terminate such a pregnancy ought not to be held by the Church, State, a doctor or any other arbitrary body but by women themselves.

ORGANISATIONS that can supply more information. Branches or individuals may consider affiliating to the NAC/LARC trade union liaison committee. (NAC) National Abortion Campaign, 374 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1. Tel: 01-276 0153. (LARC) Labour Abortion Rights Campaign, PO Box 110, London SE21 8ND.

Labour's programme 1982

LAST WEEK Tony Benn came under attack from the party leadership because he publicly stated in *Tribune* that 'the party will be told not to worry about policy, just to get out and do the canvassing.' Michael Foot does not want the rank and file in the party to discuss the Programme that Labour will base its election manifesto on.

This Programme has been passed onto us, with the exception of the section on foreign policy and defence. Labour's Programme 1982 will not appear before the membership until after the deadline for conference resolutions. That is why Socialist Challenge has decided to print extracts from the 600 page document. Over the next few weeks we will look at different aspects of the Programme in more detail.

We believe that the Labour Party can only benefit from having the fullest possible discussion throughout the labour movement on what policies are needed if Labour is to not repeat the mistakes and betrayals of previous Labour governments.

Now is the time that resolutions for conference are being put in the constituencies. These resolutions should form the basis of Labour's manifesto for the next election — a manifesto that should be decided on by the membership and not a small clique that is accountable to no one.

Photo: GM COOKSON



Labour's Economic Strategy

The first priority for a Labour government must be to tackle this immediate economic crisis and repair the damage — to expand the economy, to create jobs for all men and women, who wish to work, to rebuild industry and to restore public services ...

The next Labour government will frame its policies with the clear objective of reducing unemployment at least below a million within five years ...

To this end we must support overall economic expansion with a crash programme of job creation, training and employment support to make sure that jobs are available for those who want work ... We will improve and expand training to prepare young people for working life ... to eliminate discrimination, and to ensure through positive action that women and black people have an equal right to employment ... to improve industrial relations by repealing damaging Conservative legislation and promoting positive development of trade union rights ... The next Labour government will encourage ... a 35 hour week with no loss of living standards. We will also encourage more flexible arrangements so that men and women can share the responsibility of looking after children ...

We have also made clear our opposition to incomes policies ... There is a need for a national economic assessment of the prospects for the growth of the economy ... (which) has to embrace such issues as the share of the national income going to profits, to earnings from employment, to rents, to social benefits and to other incomes ... Consideration is also being given to the possibility of a national minimum wage ... Labour will comply with its international obligations and in-

roduce a right to equal pay for work of equal value ...

Labour will create legal rights for unions to organise effective industrial action without being subjected to legal challenge ...

The key elements of our programme for common ownership are as follows:

*The public assets sold by the Conservative government should be restored to public ownership and the public monopoly restored where it has been breached.

*The public sector should be extended to include profitable firms in key sectors of industry and public enterprise should be used to support industrial planning ...

We will thus return all industrial assets sold off by the Tories into public ownership at the earliest opportunity; we will restore the public monopoly in the field of post and telecommunications and end private schemes such as 'Project Mercury'; and restore the rights of the British Gas Corporation and British National Oil Corporations ...

Sectors in which we have made specific commitments to extend public ownership in industry include electronics; pharmaceuticals and health equipment, the construction industry and building materials; the private road haulage industry; major ports; fishing, forestry and timber. We are committed to take a majority stake in all existing and future North Sea oil fields ...

A Report on the Financial Institutions will be presented to conference this year. Among the proposals being considered

Confidential Labour Party 20.12.81/May 1982

National Executive Committee

MANIFESTO PROGRAMME 1982

[First complete draft]

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are the following:

— a **national bank** operating through post offices could be established by merging and developing the National Girobank and National Savings Bank ...

— a **public stake** in the banking system could be established by taking one or more major clearing banks into public ownership.



Labour's Social Strategy

At its core it must guarantee certain fundamental social rights:

— the right to work for all who want it.

— the right to an adequate income whether in work or out.

— the right to a decent home at a price people can afford.

— an education which will develop each person's true potential and equip them for their roles as worker, parent and member of the community.

— the right to health care on the basis of need not ability to pay ...

It is essential to act directly on inherited wealth which is by far the greatest source of inequality. The next Labour government will introduce an annual tax on personal wealth ... the exemption limit would be set at around £150,000 in 1982 prices ...

The National Health Service is today facing a double edged attack. While resources

to the services are being cut, private practice is being actively encouraged by the present government ... We shall therefore separate private practice from the NHS by removing all pay beds within the first 2 years of the next Labour government. We shall also take into the NHS those parts of the profit-making private sector which can be used to meet local health needs and reduce waiting lists...

A massive housebuilding and renovation programme has a priority claim and restoration of the Tories' cuts in housing investment would make a substantial contribution to reflation of the economy ... Labour's policy on council house sales is as follows: We will relieve public landlords of any statutory obligation to sell with effect from our first days in office ... We will legislate to ensure that all future sales are at full market value ... We do not expect any increase in council rents in the first year of a Labour government ...



Democracy and Human Rights

Our aim is to ensure that we have a truly accountable police force. We will ensure that the Police Authority ... and not the Chief Constable will be given responsibility for determining the area's general policing policies. London is a special case. We will, therefore, introduce special early legislation to create a policy authority for London ... The London Special Patrol Group and local SPGs ... should be disbanded ...

We are opposed to the use of CS gas, water cannon and plastic bullets ... We believe that people with authoritarian and racist attitudes should not be recruited to the police force ... Searches of persons in the street should be prohibited unless the officer has actually made an arrest or there is clear evidence that an offence might have been committed ...



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

Ethnic minorities

One of the main reasons that black people do not receive equal treatment and face discrimination in nationality and immigration law has been the insistence by successive governments that black people are themselves the problem. Nowhere has this been more evident than in immigration control ... The repeal of the 1971 Immigration Act and the 1981 British Nationality Act will be among the highest priorities for the next Labour government ... The Labour government will take the lead in stimulating a wide range of positive action programmes in favour of black people ...

Homosexuals

We will legislate to ensure that the age of consent is reduced from 21 to 16 for homosexuals ...

The House of Lords

It is our intention to abolish the House of Lords ...

The European Economic Community

The Labour Party and the labour movement in general is now firmly committed to Britain's withdrawal from the EEC. We shall therefore put this issue to the British people in the Manifesto and if elected on that basis we will take it as a popular mandate for withdrawal ...

Northern Ireland

Our aim is to help bring about the unification of Ireland by agreement and consent between the two parts of Ireland ... The people of Northern Ireland will not be expelled from the United Kingdom against their wishes. We do not accept, however, that this must mean a veto on political developments in the hands of the Unionist leaders ... Until such time that devolved government is achieved we would wish to continue with direct rule ...

We oppose an immediate or early withdrawal of troops. The policy of gradual withdrawal should be continued ... Whilst we do not see a return to jury trials for terrorist offences in the near future, we do believe that certain reforms of the present system should be carried out ... We will repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act as soon as we take office.



Local government finance

Labour's first priority will be to reverse the Tories' massive cuts in rate support grant and in capital allocations to allow councils to reverse the serious cuts in local services ... Labour will act to remove the threat of personal surcharges and bankruptcy which now hangs over councillors ... We will repeal Heseltine's legislation and any penalties imposed against councillors ...



Youth

The Labour Party recognises that young people are a distinctive section of society whose special needs and aspirations must be provided for ... We will give all 16 and 17 year olds the right and opportunity to receive education, training and work experience within our two year student-traineeships ... We will provide these young unemployed in the student-traineeship with at least £30 a week (at 1982 prices) to rise with the increase in average earnings. The allowance could be topped up through collective bargainings ... We will give consideration to reducing minimum voting age to 16 and of candidature to 18.

Women and war

Why we oppose votes for men

1. Because man's place is in the army.
2. Because no really manly man wants to settle any question otherwise than by fighting about it.
3. Because if men should adopt peaceable methods women will no longer look up to them.
4. Because men will lose their charm if they step out of their natural sphere and interest themselves in other matters than feats of arms, uniforms and drums.
5. Because men are too emotional to vote. Their conduct at baseball games and political conventions shows this, while their innate tendency to appeal to force renders them particularly unfit for the task of government.

Alice Duer Miller, 1915

Alice Duer Miller, the American novelist and poet, lived from 1874 to 1942.



TRADITIONAL images of women present them as weak, submissive — and 'peaceloving'. The left has not been immune to this. In particular many in the Labour Party have fallen into this easy trap of saying that women should oppose the war because of their peaceloving natures.

Socialist Challenge asked three women about their attitude to war. Pat Arrowsmith is a veteran campaigner and pacifist. Terry Marsland is secretary of the Tobacco Workers' Union. Barbara Pulford is a supporter of Revolution Youth, a sister newspaper of Socialist Challenge.

Pat Arrowsmith

I REGARD the Falklands as a colony snatched by the British. The people who live there do have a choice — either to live under Latin American sovereignty or to move. People are often forced to move — no one thinks anything of moving people to find work. Practically the whole of Corby, the steel workers' town, is populated by Scots who moved down in search of jobs.

Britain cannot garrison the islands — in the long run they'll have to be Argentinian. Many people are putting forward the United Nations as the peaceful solution but, to my mind, it would depend what the UN did — it's most likely to support imperialism. I favour a ceasefire but the most realistic way to achieve it would be if the fleet were withdrawn.

I am a pacifist, which means that I don't believe in war as a method of solving social conflict. Pacifism doesn't mean you do nothing — it just means you take action of a non-violent nature.

I think it's a contradiction for socialists to applaud killing. I believe in sabotaging property — pacifists in the United States have messed up the nose cones of Trident missiles. There are methods of non-violent action — such as mass industrial action which could bring the state to its knees, but in Northern Ireland, for example, that is more difficult.

I don't condemn the IRA bombings in public — I explain that they are a direct response to British policy — in some situations it's not useful to preach pacifism. But I don't think violent tactics work. I was a child in World War Two. I was fifteen when the bombs were dropped on Hiroshima; I became a pacifist because of the nuclear bomb. You have to look for an alternative to armed conflict when you see how far it can go.

The Malvinas episode bears this out: suppose it escalates into a nuclear war? We don't know that there aren't nuclear weapons aboard the Task Force.

I think it's significant that all weapons are named after male gods (apart from one laser called Helen), but I think they should name one after Thatcher. It's simplistic to assume that women are more peaceful. Look at Gandhi, Thatcher, Meir. Nazi SS camps were personned by women as

well. People who are oppressed can become oppressors.

There's an element of truth in the slogan 'take the toys from the boys' — men do like gadgetry etc, but that's only on one level. I don't think we should have a separate women's section against the Malvinas war, but I do think the women's movement should work against it.

Also, women have played a major part in the CND movement from the beginning. I think that could be to do with being a woman — women have less vested interest in war. Perhaps they are more concerned about children and the future; but that doesn't make it a feminist issue. I don't think all issues worth supporting are feminist issues as such. I would like the black, gay and women's movements to join the fight against the bomb but it's not especially a women's issue.

My pacifism has more to do with my family. An uncle of mine, for example, was a former governor of the Falklands!

RAJ-END

Our flabby union jack now hangs slack. We forget the ack-ack guns of world war two ran out of flak decades ago.

That shabby flag (and all it sags for) is just a fleshy rag no longer fabricated in mills of Accrington, but manufactured where this scrap of cloth no longer flaps its flaccid vanity — in India, Taiwan, Sarawak.

The Union jack is just a load of cack. PAT ARROWSMITH 21.4.82

*Apologies for misprint when we first published this poem.

Terry Marsland

I AM totally opposed to this war. I don't necessarily think the Argentinians were correct to invade in the first place but this government's attitude is completely wrong. The amount of money which is being poured into the operation — and hospital workers are having to go on strike for a decent living wage. I think it's appalling that young men are dying for this — on both sides.

I would like to see a ceasefire. Our union has called for the implementation of resolution 502 of

the United Nations. There should be an immediate withdrawal of the fleet.

I think it would be a good idea for the TUC to talk with the CGT trade union federation in Argentina. Workers are always capable of resolving things more than the bosses.

I think the unions should begin a campaign among the memberships to explain what is going on. This war is going to escalate and I think that attitudes will begin to change very rapidly.

Barbara Pulford

I THINK all young people should oppose this war in the Falkland Islands. Eighty per cent of school leavers are unemployed. We have no financial independence.

In September, with the Tebbit proposals we'll have to wait till we're seventeen before getting social security. When you leave school you have to go on a slave labour scheme to get £15 per week. Most of which will have to be paid to your mum and dad. Young people get a rough deal out of this government.

This war won't give us anything. After all the deaths and killing young people will end up worse off. We might end up with this Tory government for another five years if they win.

It's like Ireland — Britain has no automatic right

to these places. And the Falkland Islands are 8,000 miles away. Britain has gone into this war just to show its strength as an imperialist power.

I'm against this war but I'm not a pacifist. I don't think most people like to see people being killed, but there's a difference when you're fighting for your very existence, like in El Salvador. People have got the right to determine their own lives. The Tories don't allow anyone to determine anything.

There are a lot of women in Youth CND, but it's not because we are more peaceful as women. It's women like us in Nicaragua and El Salvador that are fighting to the death in the war against American imperialism.

Women throughout our history have been determined fighters against oppression — not



Pat Arrowsmith

that you would know that from reading school history books. The reason is that we've got less to lose than men.

The women's movement should oppose this war because Thatcher is waging war on women too. Seventy years ago a section of the suffragettes supported the first world war. They gave

up demanding women's rights and supported the war effort instead.

But we should oppose the war, not because we're gentle, peaceful women but because it's against our interests — and against the interests of all working people, young, old, black, white, male and female.



Women demonstrators at the Greenham Common Cruise missile site.

Women's Rights

⇒ BRITISH RAIL ⇒

Case for positive action

BRITISH RAIL is supposed to be an equal opportunities employer giving women a chance to take jobs that up to now have been open to men only. JUDITH ARKWRIGHT spoke to ROSE KNIGHT, one of the few women BR guards, about working in rail and the broader questions involved in fighting for positive action in law and practice.

British Rail is an equal opportunities employer. What does this mean?

I don't think it's made very much difference at all. Women still do the low paid jobs — they still work in catering, cleaning, secretarial and office work. I work as a guard with two other women guards and over 200 men in my depot. According to BR there are only about 40 women guards in the whole country. And this is seven years after the Sex Discrimination Act.

I don't think being an equal opportunities employer has made any difference to BR at all. Jobs in BR are still divided along sex lines with men taking the highly paid, skilled jobs and women in general taking the low paid, unskilled jobs.

Why do you think it is that women don't take these jobs? Surely in many cases they don't apply?

Many women don't know they can get these jobs. How many women know they could become a train driver or a guard? Working as a guard, you get some very startled looks from passengers. The industry doesn't advertise the jobs. London Transport ads, for example, show women driving buses and this encourages women — but this is not the normal practice.

Also, there's prejudice at the point of hiring. For exam-

ple when I wanted to get a job as a guard, I signed my name without putting Mrs or Miss and I got letters back to Mr Knight. I finally got offered a job and it wasn't until I got to the interview that they realised I was a woman — then I think they felt too embarrassed to turn me away.

But I did this because I knew they wouldn't offer me this job — they would offer me a job in the office or a cleaning job. That's the sort of prejudice that exists. Then there's the question of training. I was treated very well and every effort was made to make sure I kept up with everybody else.

But there are certain things in training to make sure that women can't or won't go on to take the job. For example we had to lift a very heavy piece of metal called a buck-eye. The instructors gave us very clear training and showed us the techniques but since I've been a guard I haven't had to lift one because modern trains don't use them.

I found out that many women had left the course because of it. This example exists in many jobs along with height qualifications which are often totally unnecessary or chest expansion requirements. Things which are deliberately put there to cut women out.

A lot of it has to do with confidence as well because even very heavy metal bars can be lifted if you feel confident and you're taught the technique.



Unions should fight for positive discrimination at the point of hiring

But there are jobs which women simply could not do?

I don't accept this. If you look round the world you see that women do very heavy agricultural work. In the USA you've got over 3000 women miners. You only have to look to the war period in Britain when women did just about every job that had to be done. The training school at the depot where I work was set up during the war in order to train women guards in fact.

You have to say that there are certain requirements needed for a certain job and that job then should be open to both men and women. What should be born in mind is that women, because of the past, because they've only done certain jobs may need special training in order to get over some of the hurdles — particularly in jobs requiring manual labour.

But why should women want to do these jobs?

Because women for too long have had jobs with rotten pay which are badly organised. Women want well paid jobs — they want jobs which are well organised in terms of unions. And they want jobs that are more interesting. Women only earn about sixty per cent of men's wages. This is because of the types of jobs which we do.

But isn't discrimination of the type you describe illegal under existing legislation? For example, surely employers aren't allowed to discriminate at the point of hiring for a job?

Well if you can prove it, yes. But it's usually hidden discrimination. You cannot prove that someone hasn't offered you a job because you're a woman. The Sex Discrimination Act is negative in that respect. What it does is to allow positive discrimination in

advertising and in training. But it doesn't allow any form of positive discrimination at the point of hiring.

It doesn't say that unions can demand that a certain percentage of women must be taken on.

So in that sense it doesn't go anywhere. What the Sex Discrimination Act did was to try to remove certain obstacles but it didn't force employers to radically change their employment practices by forcing them to hire women and train them.

In fact, under the Act quotas and targets are illegal. If BR or the Coal Board decided to take on 50 per cent of women across the whole range of jobs to make up for past discrimination, under the present law they could be taken to court by a man and accused of sex discrimination.

So what you're arguing for is a favouritism towards women. But isn't there a danger of favouritism at the expense of men?

I think that's the kind of argument that the management uses and sometimes an argument you get from the men you work with. All jobs ought to be available to both men and women and it's only because of unemployment that people see women as taking men's jobs. It's also because of a rather old fashioned idea that men are still the breadwinners. But there's a high percentage of women who are single parents and bringing

up children on their own.

In reality, even if women are living with men the family wage is made up of the wage of both people. It's quite impossible now for most families to live on the wages earned by the average man. The woman has to go to work and her work is as equally important as his work in terms of their economic needs.

But in the present situation where there's only a certain amount of jobs to go round is this policy practicable?

By insisting that only men can apply for jobs because of unemployment, you're not tackling the basic issue, which is that more jobs should be provided. What you're doing is discriminating against one section of the labour force.

What needs to be recognised is that women have a right to a permanent place in the workforce. What positive action does is to show they don't have this. They're only allowed jobs when the economy requires it such as during war time. That situation has to be done away with and there must be compensatory measures to make women equal.

Some people think — even people in the Labour Party — that positive action is divisive because it highlights women's demands at the expense of other working people. Others say it's irrelevant to

working women because it's only about getting more women newscasters or more women MPs. What good will that do us?

Working class people are already divided because job segregation exists. The employers use this to their own advantage to lower everybody's wages.

For example, if you're a carriage cleaner in BR — and carriage cleaners work much harder than I do — and take home around £55 per week, that's seen by the employer as the basic rate and all other wages are determined by this. They only get away with this because most of the cleaners are women and because of the threat of unemployment.

I don't think that socialists should stand back and accept this situation. I think that if you fight to get women equal pay and equal access to all jobs it means you're taking up low pay as a campaign for every worker, and you're doing away with the idea that it's possible in the 1980s to pay people disgustingly low rates of pay.

On the second part of the question, I can't understand it, because it's precisely working class women that have the rotten jobs — who work part time — who work in non-unionised, sweated industries. So positive action is more relevant to them, not less.

What can be done?

We have to take the issue up in the unions and Labour Party. A lot of people don't know that the TUC has a very radical policy which calls for positive discrimination at the point of hiring. It wants the law to be changed to allow employers to recruit employees of one sex only. This actually means amending section 48 of the Sex Discrimination Act.

This would make a very big difference particularly in industries like heavy engineering where there are virtually no women at all. Some form of mandatory procedure needs to be implemented. We need very heavy fines and methods of enforcement. We don't want another situation like the Equal Pay Act where employers spent five years getting out of it.

The Labour Party should take this up and commit the next Labour government to the necessary amendments. In fact it's something that I think would make people vote Labour if they showed they were really committed to this process and not half hearted about it.

We need action as well to defend women's jobs and attack management's discriminatory practices. I think that unions must insist on information about where women work and what percentage of women work and what they earn.

I think we could start negotiating around the question of goals and targets and monitor the progress of employers like BR which call themselves equal opportunity employers but which do nothing to put this into practice.

Many people don't even know if their employer is an equal opportunity employer. Such a process will uncover discriminatory practices in all areas including redundancies and has to be part of the overall fight against unemployment.

Over the next 10 weeks we will be publishing further extracts from Labour's Programme Make sure of your copy

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IMPERIALISM



that we will fight with us until we are losing, with tactical nuclear losing, and then we will formerly a top Pentagon

by thousands of miles of hostile borders from Turkey to Japan while the US has great strategic security. Many of the countries which surround the Soviet Union are hostile to it — like Pakistan and Turkey — and have US nuclear bases and forward strike positions. The US has, however, always refused to accept Soviet 'forward basing'. The classic case is the Cuban missile crisis. The decision to site Soviet medium-range missiles in Cuba — which in the early 1960s context of no Soviet possession of ICBMs would have meant a big change in the strategic balance — was met by the US with the threat to go to war unless the missiles were withdrawn. Cuba was blockaded by the US navy and Soviet ships were stopped and searched. The prevention of Soviet 'forward basing' is dependent on overwhelming nuclear superiority.

4) US nuclear superiority enables it to use its conventional forces much more freely. For the US to respond to developing revolutions in the colonial and semi-colonial countries it needs new and flexible conventional forces — but these have to be backed up by a nuclear umbrella. The conventional force build-up is taking the form of the construction of the Rapid Deployment Force which aims to put 100,000 men in the field within ten days.

Already it has engaged in a massive exercise with Egyptian troops. Just to demonstrate the flexibility of US conventional forces bombers flew from bases in Colorado, dropped their bombs in the Egyptian desert, turned round and flew home again.

The Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia is being turned into a fortress by the US. Diego Garcia is within a couple of hours flying time of nearly the whole of the Middle East's oil producing region.

These are just some of the more visible signs of US preparations to go to war against colonial revolution.

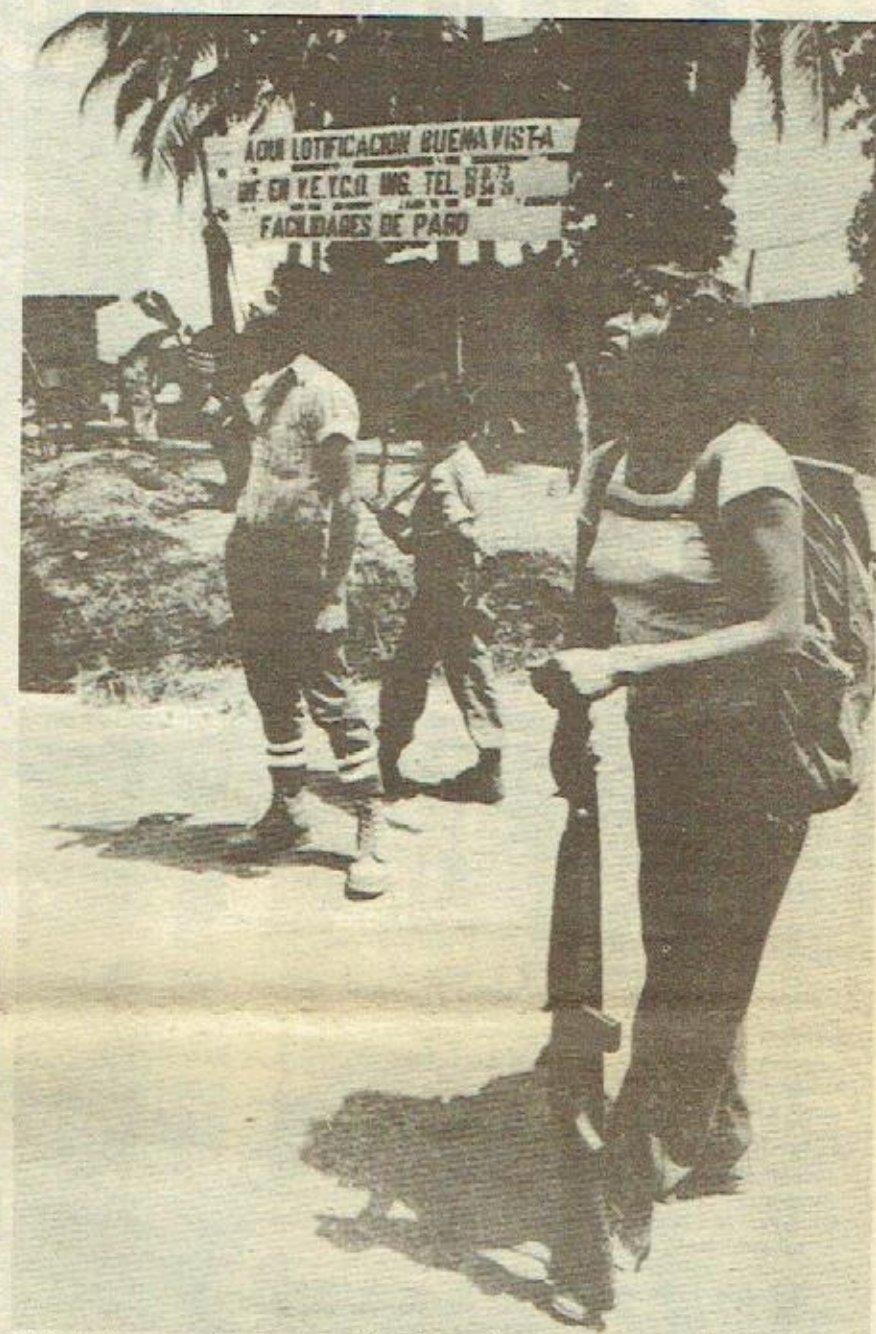
But in addition the US maintains permanent military 'advisors' and aid to reactionary dictatorships world wide.

Since the second world war, the US has used its conventional forces directly against the colonial revolution on many occasions. The most notable are: the Korean war of 1950-3; the CIA-officered overthrow of the left-wing Arbenz regime in Guatemala in 1954; the sending of marines to the Lebanon in 1958 to put down a left wing revolt; the crushing of the left wing Bosch regime in the Dominican Republic by 40,000 marines in 1965; and of course the use of half a million troops to try to crush the Vietnamese revolution between 1965 and 1971.

This world wide use of US military muscle requires decisive nuclear superiority because in fighting revolutionary, nationalist or other movements detrimental to its interests the US also threatens the strategic interests of the USSR which possesses nuclear weapons.

Thus US imperialism is of necessity nuclear imperialism. When Socialist Challenge supporters march for a nuclear-free Europe on 6 June, we shall also be marching against the system which gives rise to nuclear weapons — imperialism. To defeat nuclear 'exterminism' means to defeat the system of permanent oppression and barbarity which Reagan represents.

Thanks to Mike Davis who let us use some of the material in his article 'Nuclear Imperialism and Extended Deterrence' from the book 'Exterminism and Cold War' (NLB forthcoming) in drawing up this article.



El Salvador guerrillas prepare for air attack

dominance is not just about confronting the Soviet Union. It is about providing the strategic umbrella and back up to all the US military operations against revolutions.

In fact, the times when the US has come closest to using nuclear weapons have not involved an eyeball to eyeball confrontation with the Soviet Union in Europe — the so-called 'Central Front' — but confrontations with revolutions in the 'third world'.

During the Korean war in 1950, when US forces were in full retreat to the Pusan peninsula and when a year later Chinese troops intervened to prevent the defeat of the North Koreans, whether to use nuclear weapons was closely debated in US ruling circles.

In 1962, President Kennedy went to the brink of world war in a conflict over missiles in Cuba. And when, in 1954, French troops were on the verge of their devastating defeat at the hands of communist troops in Vietnam at the battle of Dien Bien Phu, the US hatched a plan to rescue them by using tactical nuclear weapons against the troops besieging them.

Again, President Nixon threatened the use of nuclear weapons against the Vietnamese in the early 1970s, during the siege and blockade of the North Vietnamese ports.

Although from the point of view of humanity the nuclear arms race is totally irrational, from the point of view of US capitalism, it has a logical and functional purpose. Overwhelming nuclear superiority by the US serves four crucial purposes:

1) It maintains a form of economic siege warfare against the Soviet Union and its allies. While the arms race is good for business in the US, for the USSR — because the Soviet economy is nationally planned and not subject to the profit motive — it represents a permanent drain on its resources. In any case, the Soviet Union is economically weaker and technologically far less developed than the US. The US has always attempted to economically damage the Soviet Union by controlling exports to the Soviet Union, including an embargo on advanced technological goods, through military competition and the use of blackmail over grain exports. President Reagan, in a parody of Khrushchev's famous 'We will bury you' statement, warned the Soviet Union: 'We will bust you'.

2) It forestalls the possibility of the use of Soviet conventional military force in Europe. The first use of nuclear weapons has been a key pillar of NATO strategy since the formation of the alliance in 1949. Soviet conventional forces in Europe have for years been immensely more powerful than those of the Western powers. Thus to prevent defeat in Europe in any type of military conflict the US has always threatened the first use of nuclear weapons. Recently there has been much talk of the possibility of a 'theatre' nuclear war limited to Europe. The Cruise missile is designed precisely for such a purpose.

3) It deters any Soviet attempt to improve its overall strategic position. The Soviet Union is surrounded



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El Salvador - the front line

By Phil Hearse

POWER in El Salvador has been held for decades by just 14 families. But in July 1979 in neighbouring Nicaragua the dictator Somoza was overthrown by the Sandinista revolutionaries, opening up new possibilities for all the people of Central America and posing the United States with immediate problems.

Its allies - Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador - are, like Nicaragua, small states run by oligarchies which rule through military dictatorships or governments incorporating the military.

The US feared the growing power of the left in El Salvador especially. In October 1979 they engineered a coup against the dictator Humberto Romero. This brought to power a combined civilian military junta led by Christian Democrat Duarte, which promised reform.

Romero's replacement by the junta indicated the weakness of the ruling oligarchy and not its strength. From October 1979 there was an explosion of mass struggle - demonstrations, land occupations and strikes - with the revolutionary organisations being significantly strengthened.

When the Duarte junta collapsed in February '81 the revolutionary groups joined with other anti-oligarchy forces - including the social democratic MNR and the Christian Social Party - to form the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR). They also formed a joint military command, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN).

February 1980 was a crucial turning point: Archbishop Romero, a champion of the poor, was assassinated by right-wing death squads commanded by Roberto D'Aubuisson now president of the assembly. The armed organisations of the FMLN came out on the

streets to protect the mass demonstrations.

During Romero's funeral the army and national guard showed their colours by firing on the hundreds of thousands assembled before the cathedral in San Salvador. A bloody war of attrition had opened up.

Since then, up to 25,000 people have been slaughtered by the death squads - right-wing paramilitary organisations with strong links with the national guard. But the revolutionary organisations, all of which have mass political fronts as well as military wings, utilised the new situation to organise in the countryside. Liberated zones were established in many parts of the country including near San Salvador the capital.

The FMLN prepared for a 'generalised' offensive as the politics of the countryside became polarised between those for the oligarchy and those for the guerrillas.

The offensive was launched on 11 January 1981. Military positions all over the country were attacked. The town of Santa Ana was occupied. Attacks took place all over San Salvador.

But the general strike called for by the guerrillas was only a partial success.



Two sides of the El Salvadorean revolution: results of the death squads and an FDR/FMLN celebration



The urban poor, particularly in San Salvador, were not in a position to be protected by the guerrillas, and the FMLN had neglected preparatory work in the towns.

But the January 1981 offensive was not the 'final

offensive' that the bourgeois press claimed. It was a rehearsal for a prolonged war of attrition to bring down the junta.

The United States responded to the 1981 offensive by pouring in military aid and personnel to

strengthen the Salvadorean armed forces; they launched a counter-attack, raiding villages all over the country. But the FMLN re-organised and strengthened itself.

By autumn 1981 the

tide had turned again and the FMLN launched renewed offensives, sabotaging industrial and economic targets, bringing down power lines all over the country, destroying half the Salvadorean air force in an audacious at-

tack on the main base, and extending the liberated zones in the countryside.

The struggle of the Salvadorean people was also gaining more international recognition - which culminated with the recognition of the FMLN/FDR as a legitimate political force by the Mexican and French governments.

The recent fraudulent elections in El Salvador, boycotted by the opposition, brought a sharp shift to the right in the oligarchy, with the big electoral success of the extreme ARENA party led by Roberto D'Aubuisson. It was also marked by further military attacks by the guerrillas. Whatever the manoeuvring and disagreements between the US and the right-wing gangsters who run the country, the outcome of the struggle will be settled by the armed struggle.

The danger that the US will intervene with troops is very real. But whereas international reaction has lined up behind the military rulers, the FDR/FMLN need much more international support. They are in the front line of the struggle against a system which keeps small and ruthless minorities in power, and the ordinary people in dire poverty.

Until their final victory our task is unremitting solidarity, continuous campaigning against American involvement backed by Thatcher. The people of El Salvador, like the people of Vietnam before them, will not fight alone.

Contact the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign at 29 Islington Park Street, London N1. Tel. 01-359 2270.

Polish workers fight Stalinist repression

By Davy Jones

ALMOST six months ago, on 13 December, the Polish military moved to crush the independent trade union movement Solidarnosc. Dozens were killed, factories occupied by the riot police, and thousands put in internment camps.

The crackdown by the military outlawed all union activities. Those organising resistance were jailed. Leader Lech Walesa was put under house arrest. All justified by the need to 'defend socialism'.

But Solidarnosc was no threat to socialism, only to the bureaucratic elite who run Polish society. Solidarnosc never called for an end to state ownership of factories and workplaces. It called for an end to the privileges and corruption of the bureaucrats and party officials.

Solidarnosc represented twelve million workers, small farmers, students and others united in favour of workers' self-management and democracy.

Solidarnosc was itself a model of democracy. All discussions were recorded and available to every

member, all negotiations openly broadcast. Every official was elected and recallable. Its programme was adopted only after exhaustive discussion.

But Solidarnosc posed a deadly threat to Poland's rulers, a huge bureaucratic apparatus organised by the Communist Party with its own economic and political privileges in a post-capitalist state.

It was this apparatus backed up by the Kremlin which ruthlessly moved to repress Solidarnosc. In so doing it reinforced the myth that the only alternative to capitalist misery and exploitation is Stalinist terror and dictatorship.

But Solidarnosc has not been crushed. Its deep roots facilitated widespread underground resistance. On May Day 100,000 marched in the

capital Warsaw and Gdansk, birthplace of Solidarnosc.

Solidarnosc needs the British labour movement's support. Reagan and Thatcher shed crocodile tears. But as enemies of socialist democracy they are no friends of the Polish workers.

The Labour Party, trade unions and youth should take the lead in organising solidarity with Solidarnosc. Already exiled militants have toured workplaces, and Polish prisoners have been adopted by labour organisations. The Solidarnosc trade union working group co-ordinates these activities.

Solidarity committees based on the labour movement spread Solidarnosc's message. The Manchester committee have called for a national labour movement conference for October, already endorsed by several Labour MPs and union officials.

Activists should campaign to commit the Labour Party and TUC to

call a national demonstration in December to mark one year of martial law, and to help establish

a solidarity movement in this country championing the cause of workers' power.

Solidarnosc Solidarity Committees

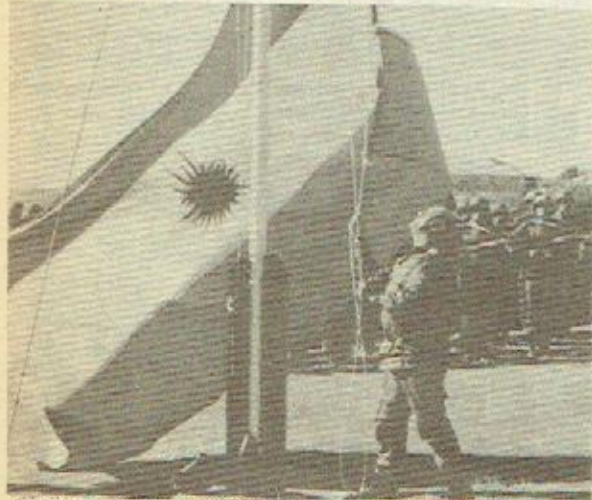
- Glasgow Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Gordon Morgan, 59 Durward Avenue, Glasgow G41. Ring 041-649 8958.
- Edinburgh Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Edinburgh & District Trades Council, 12 Picardy Place, Edinburgh.
- Greater Manchester Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Jon Silberman, 51 Montrose House, Crete St, Oldham, Lancs. Ring 061-620 2885.
- Leeds Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Dave Feickert, 28 Roundhay Mount, Leeds 8, Yorkshire. Ring 0532 490927.
- South Yorks Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Rab Bird, 279 Ellesmere Road, Sheffield, S4 7DP. Ring 0742 617174.
- Nottingham Labour Movement Solidarity with Solidarnosc, c/o 3 Elm Close, Nottingham.
- Birmingham Polish Solidarity Committee, c/o Roger Murray, 28 Blackford Road, Birmingham 11. Ring 021-773 5396.
- Coventry Solidarity Committee, John Fisher c/o ASTMS, 26 Queens Road, Coventry.
- Oxford Labour Committee on Poland, 468 Banbury Road, Oxford. Ring 0865 58238.
- Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign, 10 Park Drive, London NW1. Ring 01-458 1501.
- Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, Box 23, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8.
- Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group in UK, 64 Philbeach Gardens, Earls Court, London SW5. Ring 01-373 3492.



Malvinas/Falklands

THE VOICE OF THE ARGENTINE PEOPLE

'Malvinas yes, government no'



Raising the Argentinian flag over the Malvinas



Argentinian firepower on the streets after 1976 military coup



Rafael Runco

Photo: GM COOKSON

THE GENERALS have run Argentina with a rod of iron since 1976, with 30,000 oppositionists 'disappeared' — kidnapped and vanished without trace — or killed. Many British socialists believe a British victory in the South Atlantic will help oust this despicable regime.

But this is not the way the Argentinian people see it, according to an exile who spent five years in the junta's jails. **Rafael Runco**, interviewed here by **Socialist Challenge**, explains that they see the current conflict as a chance to settle accounts both with the junta and imperialism.

Whom should we trust to deal with the junta? The Argentinian working class, which has struggled heroically

against it for six years? Or Thatcher, who armed it, fêted its ministers, and closed Britain's doors to the refugees fleeing from it?

Socialist Challenge supports a class response: stop the war, bring back the fleet, and recognise the Argentinian people's rights — including sovereignty of the Malvinas/Falklands — in order that they can deal with their rulers, while we deal with ours.

International working class unity is only possible if we refuse to support the aggression of our own ruling class against another working class. As Rafael Runco says, stopping Thatcher's war-mongering is the best way to help get rid of General Galtieri.

everywhere. Frequently they have nothing to do with the bureaucracy, and in some places they are formed by the left, not by the five parties. Because the name 'Multipartidaria' is allowed by the government, they are using it.

The unions have taken the CGT into their own hands and in every factory are setting up local CGTs. So now we have the strongest and best organised opposition to the government ever.

In the first weeks the effects of the crisis were very good, because there was a rebirth of anti-colonial feelings, not just in Argentina but also reactionary governments like Venezuela and Peru opposed Britain, and America as well. Even Venezuela, the most reactionary civilian government in Latin America which has supported American strategy of intervention in Central America, has called for an Organisation of American states without the USA because of Reagan's stand.

When the actual fighting began, bringing the first casualties, we think that the situation changed. Now the continuation of the conflict is what the government needs in order to justify themselves continuing in government.

The people are saying 'Malvinas yes, government no'. But the government knows that when the crisis is over they will carry on saying 'government no'. So we think that Thatcher is giving the justification the armed forces need in order to stay in power.

Argentines don't want this war, any war. But Britain's role in this conflict is the continuation of two hundred years of aggression.

Everybody is ready to go to war against Britain if this aggression continues. But it doesn't mean we support the government.

The CGT made an attempt to visit Britain which was rejected. Have they made any further attempts?

No one in Argentina puts any confidence in the CGT leaders. But those are the only organisations allow-

political control, especially when faced with economic bankruptcy. Also, the internal solidarity of the armed forces was being weakened.

All the underground movements recently started to reappear. From last December — when Galtieri took over — there were strikes and demonstrations.

On 30 March, there were nationwide demonstrations including 20,000 in Buenos Aires. About 2,000 were arrested and, in Mendosa, one killed. There was a movement, led by the relatives of 'disappeared' people and of political prisoners, against human rights violations.

Even sections of the middle class and bourgeoisie were disturbed by the economic situation. So the armed forces were in a tight corner and needed to do something.

They had three aims. First, to divert attention from internal problems. Secondly, to regain prestige internally and also all over Latin America and the Third World, especially after sending troops to Central America, and intervening in Bolivia.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, to rebuild unity and solidarity within the armed forces.

What has been the response?

The government wasn't able to sell its line to the Argentinian people. From the very first, with the demonstrations of 200,000

after the occupation, everybody went on to the streets, not only to celebrate because of the recovery of the islands, but to demonstrate against the government. The slogan was 'Malvinas yes, government no'.

So the government's first aim failed: they couldn't divert attention from internal problems. The second aim, that of gaining prestige, also failed. Although countries like Cuba and Nicaragua support Argentina they make clear that what they are supporting is Argentina's anti-colonialist claim, but not the government.

Revolutionary organisations like the Salvadorean FMLN have taken the same position, and have also asked Galtieri to withdraw his troops from Central America — which he has now done. Thirdly the government failed to unite the armed forces.

What's been happening recently?

There has been a very fast recovery by the oppositional organisations; in particular of the Multipartidaria, a unifying front of the five main political parties from the Peronists to Christian Democrats.

The trade union federation, the CGT, which is dominated by Peronists, has been growing because most workers support it.

But people have taken advantage of this, and local CGTs and Multipartidarias are springing up

ed, so everyone takes advantage of them, and they are used as a cover for other activities.

A week after the crisis began a group of politicians and trade unionists decided to go abroad to put the people's case. The government offered to pay the tickets, but they refused in a press conference. They said they were going to explain the people's point of view, and that they would have nothing to do with the government.

They came to Europe and said they wanted to contact the British TUC. But they received no answer.

The 1980 Nobel prizewinner, Esquivel, spent two weeks in Paris trying to get a visa to come here to put the Argentinian people's point of view. He doesn't support the government — he was in prison with me after he got the Nobel Prize. The Home Office refused him a visa.

The British government, and probably the trade unions, have been closing their ears to any attempt by any section of the Argentinian people to explain the real situation.

If the TUC, or any section of the labour movement, invited them and if this was not a manoeuvre to use the opposition of Argentinians to the

government, I think the CGT would still be ready to come. We refugees are willing to talk to anyone, if our opposition to the government is not used to support the British in this war.

What do you say to people who support the British, as a war against fascist dictators?

We don't think a victory for the junta would mean the end of British imperialism, although it would help. Nor will a British victory end the dictatorship. The continuation of the war is what the regime needs to justify continuing themselves in power.

The only way to help the Argentinian people, not only in the war against imperialism but also in the war against the dictatorship, is to stop this war.

Argentina can't go back and negotiate the question of sovereignty. This is not because Galtieri and company are patriotic. It is because the Argentinian people have taken the matter into their own hands.

What we would make clear is that we are not going to let them negotiate sovereignty. This is not an issue for the military. This is now an issue for the Argentinian people.

Let them be heard

SUPPORT is growing for the demand that the Argentinian trade union federation, the CGT, should visit Britain. Several MPs have taken it up, as did delegates at a fringe meeting addressed by Rafael Runco during last weekend's ASTMS conference.

We appeal to readers to pass motions in Labour Party, LPYS and trade union branches, calling for the CGT

to be invited to Britain, to set up meetings addressed by Argentinian refugees, and calling on their leading bodies to support this demand.

Please report resolutions to Socialist Challenge, to help co-ordinate the campaign. Argentinian speakers available via the Argentinian Human Rights Committee, c/o CARILA, 29 Islington Park St., London N1. Tel: 01-359 2270.

What led the junta to take over the Malvinas/Falklands?

The armed forces took power in a bloody coup in 1976 because of the in-

creasingly strong working class movement and popular mobilisations which had threatened imperialism's grip on the country. But after six years of dictatorship the country was in deepening political and economic crisis.

The military found it impossible to assert its



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The left in the Labour Party: what next?

'MANY NOW feel, quite justifiably, that Foot is not the right man to lead Labour into the next general election.' *London Labour Briefing's* editorial this month took the Labour Party leadership to task over its 'bankrupt' role in the Malvinas crisis. The editorial continues: 'Such weak, decrepit and clapped out leadership is an electoral liability.' Teresa van Gelderen spoke to the editor of *Briefing*, GRAHAM BASH, on the role of *Briefing* and the left over the coming period.

Why did you choose to print this month's editorial in *Briefing* which is a direct attack on Michael Foot and suggests that he should be replaced?

The Falklands crisis is an acid test for the labour movement. There can be no fudging at all on this question. A lot of thought went into the editorial and although it is in very strong terms, it was meant to be. If we didn't say now what we think of the Labour leadership, it would have been too late.

Our view is that Michael Foot and the Shadow Cabinet do not speak for any significant section of activists in the labour movement, whose voices were being drowned by the bipartisan policies of Foot and Healey. We had to make our position clear in order to give expression to the thousands and thousands of people in the Labour Party who have contrary views to that of Foot and Healey.

Two weeks ago Socialist Challenge said that Foot must go. We argued also that the Falklands/Malvinas issue was a crucial test which Foot had failed and that Tony Benn should stand for the leadership.

This has never been an easy question. Personally, I've had long hesitations about this. In fact the wording of the editorial is still a little cautious.

But we are trying to give expression to the objective reality that there are more and more active members of the Labour Party who have lost any last illusions in Foot.

In many ways it's regrettable. I'd much rather we could say in the editorial that we had a leadership we could be proud of and above all, that we could trust to express the feelings of the grass roots of the movement. That is not the case and we have to test the water to see if there is a possibility of an alternative to Foot at the next conference.

The best person, if there is to be an alternative, would be Benn because of his record over the past few years and the fact that he already has fought for the deputy leadership.

Foot and the other leaders might argue that the view expressed in your editorial over the Malvinas and hence the leadership might represent the view of the constituencies. But the recent trade union conferences have been mixed, to say the least, in their opposition to the war. This comes back to the continual problem that Benn faced in the deputy leadership campaign, that the left face, of winning over the trade unions.

We're not saying that we speak for the labour movement as a whole but for a section of the activists in

LONDON LABOUR 30p
BRIEFING
No 20 JUNE 1982



The left has to orientate to women and the unions

the Labour Party. The question of the trade unions is the vital question facing the left. We went almost as far as we could go along the old road in the deputy leadership election last year.

Having got that far there now had to be a turn, in the sense that the constituency activists had to really begin to organise in the trade unions themselves, among the mass of inactive supporters of the Labour Party. Unless we did that there was a real limit as to how far we could go. That is still the case.

The precondition for reaching out to the trade unions is to show to the mass of members that there is an alternative voice in the Labour Party, that Foot doesn't speak for the Labour Party and especially on this life and death question of the Malvinas crisis, there is an alternative that must be clearly put forward.

It is true that one of the strengths of *Briefing* has been to unite many disparate forces on the left. But over the past period you have had a number of issues that has allowed you to unite in action: the GLC elections, the local elections and to some extent the deputy leadership campaign. But more and more there seems to be a tension inside *Briefing*; for example around the editorial on the GLC a few issues back and so on. How do you decide editorial policy and what issues are you going to take up without a clear focus?

Of course there is a real tension at all times. That shows we are on the right road. When there is an absence of tension, or of contradiction, then you're bound to be going one-sided, one way or the other. There's been a

danger that we could dissolve ourselves in the broader movement so that we are unable to give any lead at all.

On the other hand there has always been the danger that we can so isolate ourselves that we can't express anything that's real in the movement. We have to get the best of both worlds.

Personally, I would like *Briefing* to be putting a consistently revolutionary position on every aspect of life itself. But we are justified in doing that only to the extent that we would bring some important sections of the movement with us.

What do you see the role of *Briefing* over the next period? The Labour GLC has disillusioned many activists. The local election results did not give any more joy to the left than the Labour

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Young Socialists against the war

JOHN CUTTS, a Stockport Revolution supporter, and delegate to the recent Labour Party Young Socialists National Conference told Socialist Challenge what he thinks about Britain's war on Argentina and Militant's position.

At the LPYS Conference, the Militant-controlled National Committee produced a statement stressing the need for an 'independent class position'.

Militant says there's no difference between the two countries and that the warden's must take as much responsibility for the prisons as the

authorities. Surely Galtieri, and his fellow jailers the world over, are running the prisons on behalf of their imperialist employers?

Their 'class appeal' to Argentine workers, who consciously support Argentina, will be laughed at unless Labour comes out and demands the recall of the fleet.

International workers' solidarity means taking the side of the oppressed against the oppressors. This means fighting to bring back the Task Force, and taking the side of Argentina in the war, no matter how unpopular this might make us.

Party as a whole. It seems that the witch-hunt will continue. On all those issues *Briefing*, certainly in London, has been in the forefront — the GLC, local elections, defending Peter Tatchell and Tariq Ali.

Put very simply, the role of *Briefing* will be what it always has been — to provide our readers with information in order that they can become aware of their collective strengths.

Our tasks must be to 'organise at the cross roads'. That is to provide the connections between different sections of the movement: between the different industrial and political wings of the movement; between different sections of the revolutionary left, bet-

ween the revolutionary left and the hard Bennite left and between the labour movement and the women's movement.

We must attempt to fuse different levels of politics on the one hand and personal, sexual politics on the other. Until we can unite all of these different forces then we can't seriously struggle for power at any level. The constituencies themselves do not represent the mass of people.

We must ensure that the Labour Party orientates to the masses of people who are not yet politicised. That means not only relating to the trade unionists but to the people stuck at home, especially to women. That's the crucial question for the left to address itself to.



A 'decrepit clapped out leadership' at the end of the line?

Lambeth: 'If they want riots this summer, they'll get them'

'THE PEOPLE of Lambeth have been robbed of victory because of the treachery of Johnny Johnson. Lambeth council under the Tories will capitulate to Heseltine with cuts and redundancies. There will be new attacks on the black population in Lambeth.' — Ted Knight, now leader of the opposition in Lambeth council after Labour's defeat last week. GREG TUCKER, Labour election agent in Vauxhall, looks at the situation in Lambeth.

150 picketed Lambeth Town Hall last Wednesday as outgoing Labour mayor, Johnny Johnson, used his casting vote to usher in a new Tory mayor, Lieutenant-

Commander Hugh Chambers. This allowed the Tories, relying on the votes of the SDP, to take control of the council. There have been some arguments about how

Labour lost control. Some pointed to ultra-leftism in Vauxhall. The fact was that we in Vauxhall merely attempted to put across our policy of 'no cuts, no rent or rate increases'.

Now we must stop the Tories from attacking the local community. As one black youth on the picket put it: 'If the Tories reverse the council's race policies there'll be one hell of a show. If they want riots this summer then they'll get them.'

Janet Boateng, who had been Labour's choice

to head the local Social Services Committee, says: 'For the first time people have realised how important it is to be involved in politics. We will be going out to make sure they are organised.'

With no guarantee of an overall majority, the Tories must attempt to push their policies through the council sub-committees and they will not allow detailed debates on policies at ordinary council meetings. Even at the first council meeting some

Labour councillors were threatened with expulsion from the chamber.

The Labour Party will have to mobilise the local labour movement, especially making an effort to repair their relationship with the local authority unions. Organising tenants against the Tories' planned rent increases will also be important. The lessons of these elections — that taking on the Tories half-heartedly doesn't work — has to be learned.

Metal Box workers force new talks

By Frank Gorton, shop steward, Metal Box, Hackney, East London

THE STRUGGLE against compulsory redundancies, including three leading shop stewards, hangs in the balance at Metal Box, Shipley, West Yorkshire. Top management has been forced to the negotiating table — but at a cost to the workforce.

A mass meeting last Wednesday week agreed to management's demand to end the occupation and return to work. Engineering union officials made it clear that official support and any future strike pay

depended on a return to work.

Shop stewards were successful in winning suspension of the compulsory redundancies but only after first rejecting the AUEW's official de-

mand for compulsory redundancies on a 'last in, first out' basis. The workforce is still united. During negotiations last week, the workers stopped work.

Such unity will bolster the shop stewards' confidence that the 'suspension' of compulsory redundancies will soon be replaced by their 'withdrawal'.

Messages of support and donations to the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, c/o A Mackin, Treasurer, 14 Westcliffe Rd, Shipley, West Yorks. Tel 0272 590520.

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CONFERENCE: Immigrants and the welfare state on three separate Thursdays, 27 May and 3, 17 June. Africa Centre, 38 King St, London WC2.

Sponsored by the Joint Committee for the Welfare of Immigrants and the Law Centre Federation. Details and booking forms please write to: Jamal Hasan, Camden Community Law Centre, 146 Kentish Town Rd, London NW1 or ring 01-485 6672.

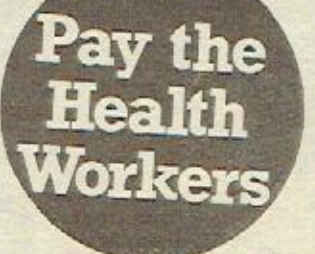
Socialist Forum for Southern African Solidarity Public Meeting: Sanctions — a strategy for the Anti-Apartheid Movement? A critical approach by Neil Faulkner, SWP Southern Africa Group, Saturday 5 June, 2.30-5.00, at Caxton House, 129 St John's Way, London N19.

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Pay the Health Workers



Photo: GM COOKSON (SC)

Lobbying parliament

Rail closures opposed

By Dave Carter & Chris Jones

THREE thousand people marched through Shildon, Co Durham, last Saturday, to protest over the proposed closure of British Rail wagon works.

Several MPs and trade union leaders spoke of the impact of closure on the town, which is built around the works, opened in 1827. Unemployment will top 50 per cent, yet no speaker proposed strikes or occupations.

Shildon is in the centre of the Durham coalfield, near Consett. A former steel worker spoke of the mistakes made there in the fight against closure, and of the demoralisation now, two years later.

If Shildon and the two other threatened BR workshops at Horwich and Swindon are not to go the same way then support must be broadened. As part of this process the previous Tuesday, 25 May, delegates from the workshops, backed up by 600 workers from Shildon, lobbied MPs at Westminster.

Local MPs admitted the disastrous consequences that the closures would have on their towns. Roger Stott, MP for the Horwich area, and a shadow transport spokesperson, stated that the Labour Party is preparing a plan for BR based on investment and modernisation.

Delegates expressed their readiness to strike to save their jobs. Shildon works chairperson, John Priestley, warned that a strike was inevitable. Harry Hammond, district secretary of AUEW Darlington, warned of the dangers of parochialism and stressed the need to maintain unity. In fact, the Triple Alliance, of coal, steel and rail workers, needs now to be brought into effect.

depended on a return to work.

Shop stewards were successful in winning suspension of the compulsory redundancies but only after first rejecting the AUEW's official de-



Strikes at S&K Wholesalers, Birmingham. On strike for 2 weeks for union recognition. Donations to S&K strike fund, TGWU, 211 Broad St, Birmingham 15.

Kigass and Abex strikers stay out

By Stuart Sleath

THE 80 women strikers at Kigass in Leamington Spa and Abex in Warwick decided to continue their nine-week strike for union recognition at a mass meeting on Friday. The women, members of the AUEW, voted unanimously to stay out after management had offered recognition at both plants but with 'strings'

at Kigass.

The company had previously stated that union recognition was not on offer at Abex. However, last week they reversed their stance, although it seems uncertain whether engineering employers' federation rates of pay are on offer.

At Kigass not only do

previously reported restrictive conditions apply, but management say they will only take back 12 strikers immediately with the rest to follow as work builds up.

The strikers intend to stick together until union recognition is conceded at both plants, on their terms, not management's.

Send donations and messages of support to Mrs E Stanford, 77 St Helens Rd, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.

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Socialist Challenge

Thatcher's war at home

SAVE THE NHS

PAY THE HEALTH WORKERS

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE asked *Janet Maguire*, a health worker at Guys Hospital, London, about the 12 per cent pay claim advanced by National Health Service unions.

She is secretary of South East London Medical branch of ASTMS, and a member of ASTMS Womens' advisory committee. Here she speaks in a personal capacity.

This is not just about pay. If the Tories win, the entire NHS will suffer because thousands of trained and experienced staff will be driven out. By backing our claim you are not just supporting badly paid workers; you are defending your health service against a government that spends £2.5bn to kill hundreds of workers in the South Atlantic, and begrudges the pittance needed for decent health care.

The Tories have cut the NHS to the bone and want to run what is left as cheaply as possible.



Janet Maguire

Junior technicians have not been offered a penny. Obviously with three million unemployed, the Tories think there will be plenty of cheap labour around — so why bother giving money to the junior grades? 400,000 health workers are earning less than £82 per week — the government's own poverty line for a married person with two children.

The Tories know people can't live decently on these wages. But they want a 'cost effective' health service. How do you

measure the value of a life? If you're a Tory — dead cheap.

The dispute challenges the government's pay norms. It is a dispute that can be won. If we do win, it could begin a real national fight back against Thatcherism.

Because working people want a free health service they can be rallied to take action in support of our claim. Already miners in parts of Yorkshire have taken solidarity strike action. Water workers are prepared to strike, and South Wales miners voted by an overwhelming majority to strike in support of our claim.

At BSC's River Don plant, steel workers are coming out on strike for 24 hours on 8 June. I think this is only the beginning.

The TUC has not called for coordinated strike action, but when it meets on 9 June it must remedy this and call on all the affiliated unions to come out in solidarity with us.

If we are given the backing, Thatcher's pay norms will be broken. If not, then the rest of the working class will be forced back on the pay front.

The dispute also challenges the Tories' attacks on union rights. Prior's 1980 picketing laws made it illegal for other workers to join our picket lines. Now Norman Tebbit will make sympathetic strikes illegal.

But workers should have the right to support the NHS — it's their health that's affected. Who else is going to de-



Health workers are mainly women or black

Photo: G BARNETSON

Tory talk

'THE cost of the union demands is £700m in England this year which is more than the country can afford in its present economic position.'

Kenneth Clarke, Minister for Health

'WE have made no estimate of costs. We are concerned with the success of the operation.'

John Nott, Secretary of State for Defence speaking on Falklands war which has already cost an estimated £1bn to rise to £2.5bn.

send us? The Tories are always going on about the greedy unions — but their anti-union laws aim to stop the unions defending the sick and the low paid!

Of course they should come on our picket lines. We want to see them on our picket lines. Miners' president Arthur Scargill is right to say he will defy the government. The Tories want to use their laws to keep workers on the poverty line and go on running down the health service — which means more

people suffering and even dying prematurely. The labour movement must not permit that.

As Scargill said: 'If we are in violation of the Tory government's legislation, then so be it.' The anti-picketing laws and Tebbit's Bill can be swept aside by a united labour movement. There is no doubt that the 12 per cent pay claim in the NHS has the power to create such a movement. Such an opportunity to win must not be thrown away.

Edinburgh - all-out strike call

By Neil Cruickshank & Duncan Smith

HOSPITAL workers in Edinburgh have been on strike since 20 May in opposition to the 4 per cent pay offer and in support of their 12 per cent claim.

NUPE members in the Royal Infirmary and the City Hospital are continuing their action. Initially COHSE members in these hospitals were out as well, but the union's national organisers refused to make the action official.

Many from both unions feel that a one-day national stoppage on 4 June is not enough. They want an all-out national strike, with only proper emergency cover.

Socialist Challenge spoke to people involved.

Davy Burnett, shop stewards' convenor at the Infirmary, said that the hospital managers are acting in a typically hypocritical manner, making great play about 'people lying in their own muck'.

He pointed out that the strikers are providing emergency cover and so no one will die as a result of the strike. He is annoyed at press slurs that patients' deaths will be on the consciences of the strikers, for they never print stories about people dying as the consequence

of NHS expenditure cuts, and they only talk about how vital is the work of health workers when they're on strike.

COHSE, he said, are in a weak position with no national funds to finance the strike. The strike coordinating committee has contacted the NUM and Eric Clarke, the Scottish area secretary of the NUM has arranged with branch secretaries for pit-head collections. The National Union of Seamen and Workers at Ferranti Electronics have also promised support.

Billy, a NUPE picket at the Infirmary, claimed the police had been trying to start trouble. The sympathetic driver of a mail van had halted at the picket but the

police informed him he couldn't stop inside the gate because it was hospital property and couldn't stop outside because he was obstructing traffic.

The police had also said there should only be six pickets on each gate. According to Bill that's 'only Thatcher's law' and he is in favour of 600 if necessary.

Vernon Sollas, shop steward in the laundry at the City Hospital, explained that a delegation had gone to the Southern General Hospital in Glasgow, where laundry workers are also on strike. He received promises of backing from all the unions, who are raising a levy to keep the laundry workers out indefinitely.

Vernon said that a few COHSE workers are still out on unofficial strike with them and the NUPE strikers had agreed to help them through collections from their own strike pay. Management, he said, are trying to undermine the strike by manipulating the emergency cover provisions: the more the strikers provide, the more management want.

Cathy, a full-time laundry worker at the City Hospital, in a job which involves handling soiled laundry, and thus risking infection, takes home only £49 per week. For her, 4 per cent would mean an increase of less than £1 per week after deductions.

	Present annual basic wage	Present basic weekly wage	Weekly increase proposed by DHSS	Net weekly increase after deductions
Cleaner	£3071	£59.05	£2.36	79p
Technician	£3339	£64.22	£2.57	85p
Staff Nurse	£4438	£85.34	£5.46	£2.34
Clerk	£3160	£60.77	£2.43	76p
Porter	£3339	£64.22	£2.57	85p

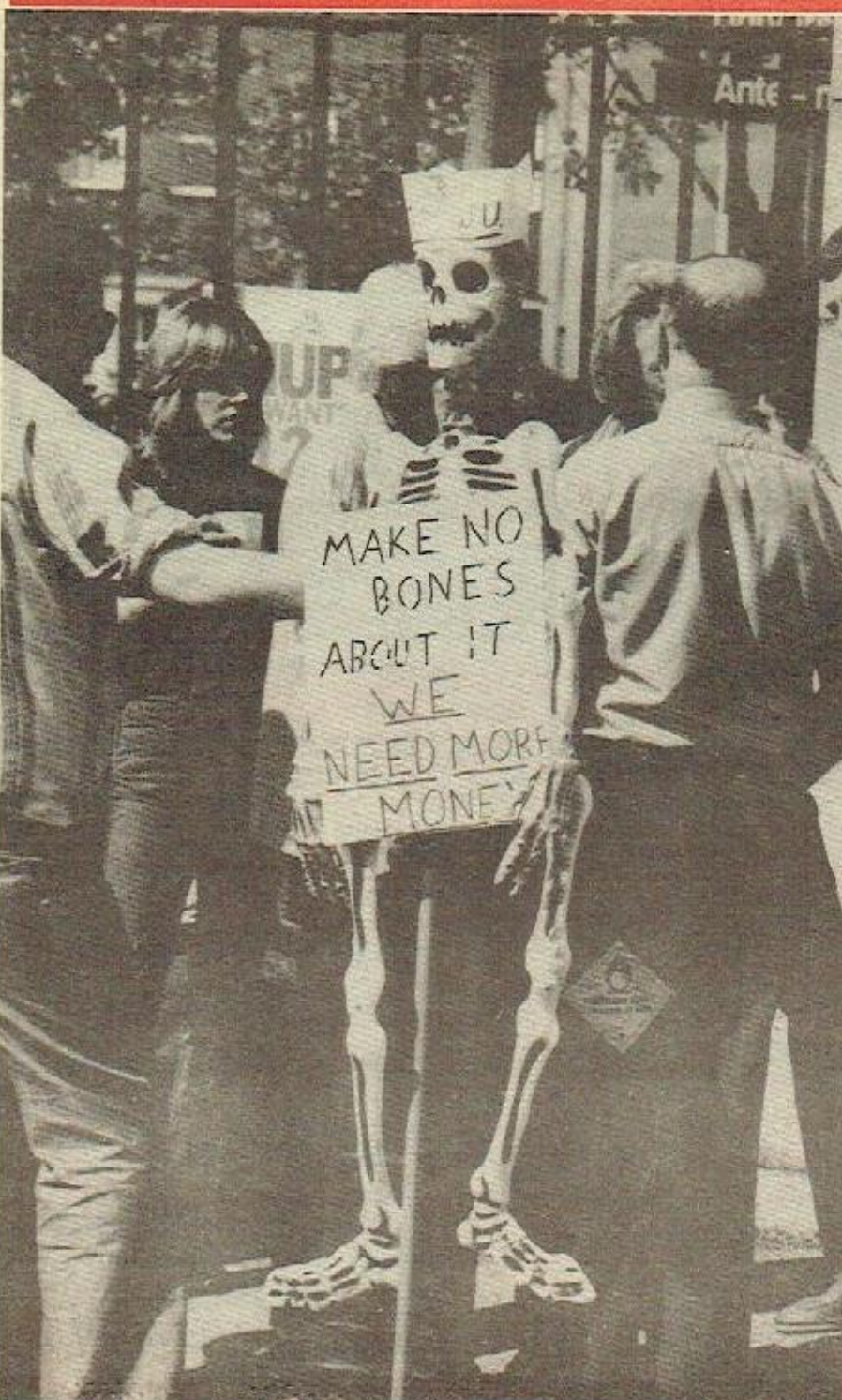


Photo: G BARNETSON