

# Socialist Challenge



## Right wing plot to remove Foot?

Last week's Sunday papers carried stories of a right-wing plot to remove Foot from the leadership of the Labour Party. These could not have come at a better time to damage Labour's by-election campaign in Bermondsey.

Bill Baxter from New Riverhead, North London leaves union negotiator Ron Keating of NUPE in no doubt about waterworkers demands.

'We voted to come out on strike and we've got to vote on any deal. We're having no sell out'



It is quite possible they were released for just that purpose. But it would in no way be uncharacteristic for the right to be preparing such a plot. After all they plotted to turn the register agreed to at last years Labour Party conference into a green light for witch-hunts and expulsions.

They are openly plotting to drop Conference's radical policies from the manifesto.

They plotted to use Foot's period of leadership not to bridge the gap between the right and left, but to launch a campaign to crush the left.

Now if they succeed in these objectives they are quite capable of plotting to ditch Foot in favour of a consistent representative of Labour's right-wing, like Healy.

### Critical

So the coming weeks will be critical for the left. The right-wing have used every peace treaty to prepare a new stab in the back.

Foot has fashioned the noose by which the right are plotting to hang him. If the left continues to equivocate new defeats are inevitable. If a fight is launched now in defence of socialist policies and against expulsions the right can be stopped.

Labour's vote did not collapse when it was leading mass demonstrations against unemployment. It collapsed when Foot tagged along behind Thatcher, the SDP and Healy in the Falklands war.

Votes lost to Tatchell in Bermondsey are not the result of radical policies but the result of the witch-hunt, endorsed by Foot, organised by the right-wing and whipped up into a smear campaign by the Tory press.

Labour's nuclear disarmament policy may be unacceptable to NATO and Healy but it has the support of millions of workers.

### Blocked

The same trade union barons who are working with Healy and friends against the Labour Party left have blocked, dissipated and stabbed in the back those workers who have taken on the Tories in industrial action.

Yet the miners showed in 1974 that exactly that kind of action could impose a bitter defeat on the government.

The right-wing are plotting. The left-wing must start organising.

Now is the time to launch a massive campaign to put unilateralism and other radical policies into the manifesto; to block the witch-hunt by supporting CLPs that refuse to expell Militant; and to re-organise the left around a socialist campaign for a Labour victory.

## Waterworkers must decide!

# FIGHT ON!

By Pat Hickey

WITH victory in sight and water workers stepping up their action, the union leaders have devoted their energies to sitting around the arbitration and conciliation service (ACAS) headquarters. They have been waiting for the outcome of the 'independent inquiry'.

The independence of this farce was shown on Sunday, when Michael Bett, industrial relations board member for British Telecoms, changed his mind about a settlement formula after making a phone call.

Who was that call to? Perhaps another 'independent' like government minister Tom King who has been pressing the Tory's pay policy since the beginning of the dispute. One thing is sure, the outcome will be an insult

to the struggle that the workers have waged over the past 4 weeks.

The claim for comparability with gas and electricity will drop out of sight, and the only extra cash offered will be tied to productivity. This can only mean more job losses in an industry which has already lost 15 per cent of its manual workers in the last 5 years.

The full claim means an average increase of £21,

and would cost the employers a fraction of the £300 million they have saved through productivity in the past 5 years.

The reply from workers to this sell-out proposal should be 'No deal — stand out for the full claim!'

The workers at Hampton in West London have shown how the claim needs to be fought, by building mass pickets to stop scab contractors bringing in supplies.

For the past 4 weeks management have been able to get coal in and keep the service running in London. But with the craft unions out and the problems accumulating they cannot keep it up for another month.

The message is clear. *The water workers can win* — there should be no retreat on the full claim. When the National Joint Industrial Council (NJIC) meets, the union leaders

have the power to call off the dispute. So far the officials have refused to give any undertaking that the membership will be allowed to vote on whether to accept or reject the deal.

No doubt they will have the backing of Norman 'secret ballot' Tebbit who will not be insisting on a two-thirds majority before a return to work. But the water workers must insist on no return without meetings and a full ballot of the members.

# Editorial

## A Tory landslide?

'LET'S face it — Labour's electoral prospects are now desperate'. These were the words of Michael Meacher MP in last week's *Labour Weekly*, and his view seems to be borne out by the opinion polls — with a Tory lead over Labour of anything from 11 to 21 per cent.

The regional variations in the polls give a clue to the meaning of these polls. In the South East the Tory lead is a gigantic 31 per cent. But in Scotland Labour have a lead of 16 per cent.

In those areas which have been hard hit by unemployment, with the exception of the West Midlands, Labour support is holding up. Elsewhere it is collapsing, against everyone's expectations that Tory support would gradually dwindle as the 'Falklands factor' wore off.

The Tory success in curbing inflation through massive deflation is one reason for their buoyancy in the polls. For those people who have a job, living standards have not fallen drastically over the past three and a half years. This is of course a contrast to the last period of Labour government, when under Healy as Chancellor living standards fell drastically three years running.

But there is something more fundamental at work — the lack of credibility of the Labour leadership. The sharp divisions inside the party, or to put it more bluntly the sabotage of the right wing, have blunted the decisive electoral issues — nuclear weapons and unemployment. Labour is seen as weak and divided, while the Tories are seen as a 'strong' government.

In 1931 Labour reaped the electoral whirlwind for the betrayal of the right wing and the weakness and timidity of the left leadership. The colossal victory of the National Government in 1931 was the product of crisis and the need for a strong lead.

Unemployment doesn't necessarily produce a shift to the left. Workers want a strong determined lead, a leadership which can defend their living standards and interests in a time of trouble. Fewer and fewer people see this in Foot, Healy, Shore and company.

The price to be paid for another period of Tory government will be very high. Then living standards will fall, as wages are forced down and the welfare state torn up. Labour needs to go into the election on the basis of a mass campaign for the socialist policies decided at the conferences of the past few years, including nuclear disarmament, a 35 hour week and no incomes policy. To ensure it we need a socialist campaign for a Labour victory.

## Final issue

With next week's issue, no 283, *Socialist Challenge* is ceasing publication. But don't worry! *Socialist Challenge* supporters have decided to turn all their energies towards supporting a new paper being launched in the Labour Party and the trade unions called *Socialist Action*. Many of the writers who now contribute to *Socialist Challenge* will be writing for the new paper.

After next week's final issue there will be a one week break and *Socialist Action* will appear on 16 March. Subscribers to *Socialist Challenge* will have their subscriptions transferred to *Socialist Action*, unless they indicate otherwise.

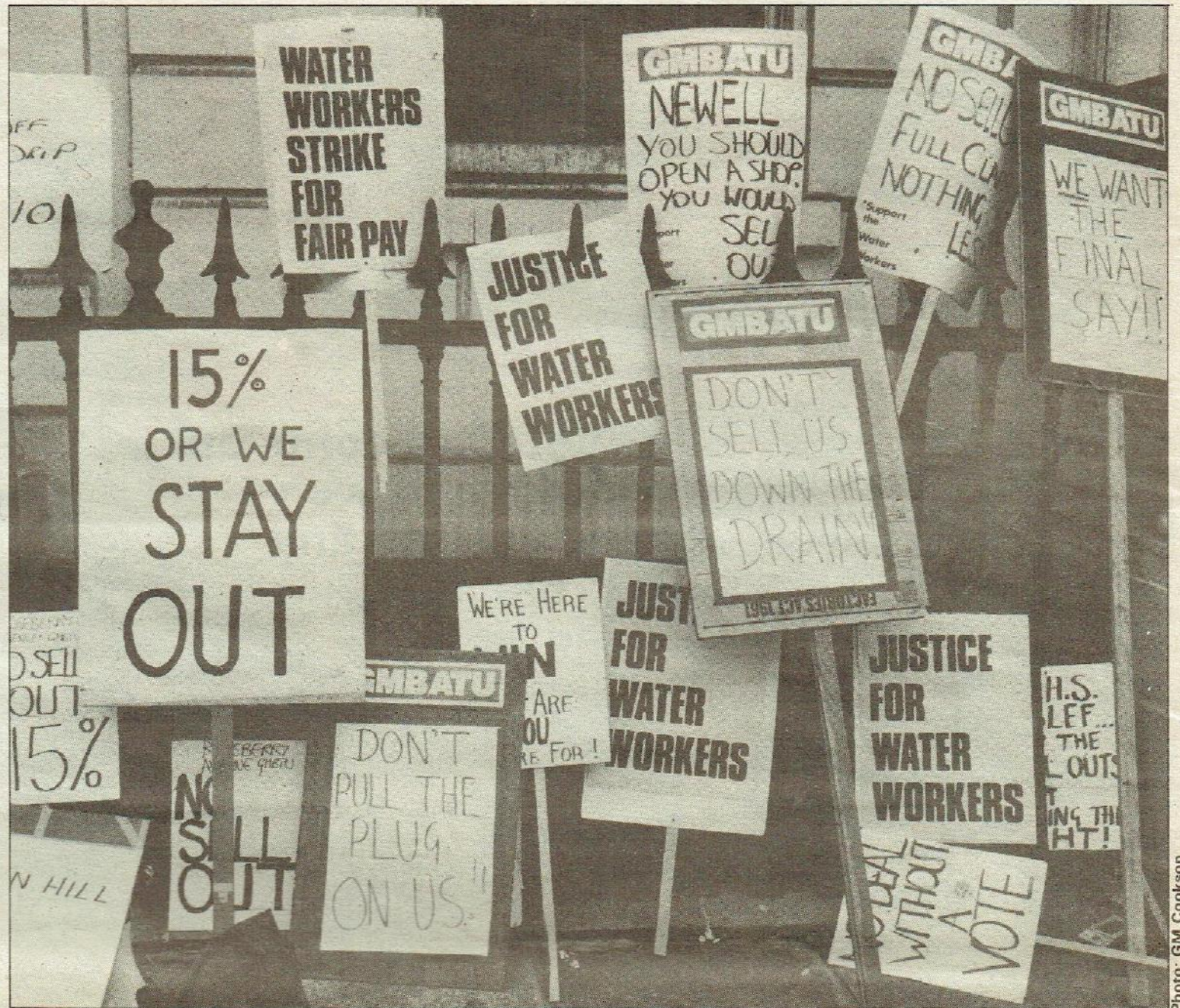


Photo: GM Cookson

# No sell out! Full claim! We want the final say!

By Celia Pugh

**THIS WAS** the angry message on 20 February from over two hundred lobbyists outside the inquiry into the waterworkers 15 percent claim.

Waterworkers had come in their coachloads from Sheffield, Rotherham, Oxford, Birmingham, Leeds and London, backed up by wives, companions and labour movement supporters.

Fury and frustration boiled over when lobbyists stormed through the doors of the Arbitration Conciliation and Advisory Service, charged up the stairs and occupied a room within shouting distance of the inquiry meeting. For fifteen minutes the conciliators were left in no doubt of the demands and mood of the chanting waterworkers.

## Feelings

Eddie Riggs from the Hampton strike committee in West London, his eye still blackened after police treatment, explained the lobbyists' feelings to *Socialist Challenge*. 'Eddie Newell, the GMBATU union negotiator has not spoken to the members since he went into that building.

'We are worried about a sell out. He should at least find out what his members think. We employ him and he should come and listen to us'.

Martin Burgess from New Riverhead in North London echoed this. 'We're not going back un-

til we get the full claim. We're in militant mood. For the first time we're really united and we're not going to be put down'.

Evidence of sell out circulated through the lobby. A telex from Maurice Reed, national industrial officer of the GMBATU had just been sent to regional officers. This instructed them to halt the water industry craft strike, due to start at midnight, if the manual workers were ordered back to work over the weekend.

As the hours dragged on and no news came from the ACAS committee rooms, lobbyists exchanged experiences in the cold of the street or the more welcome warmth of a convenient pub.

## Scab

From Leeds and Rotherham to Birmingham and London, the stories were the same. Private contractors used to clean filter beds and mend mains. Staff and management paid thousands of pounds to scab. Cowboy

labour used to move chlorine with scant regard for safety and to break solidarity of chemical workers. Management blaming waterworkers for hitting domestic users but deciding to divert water from homes to industry. Police intimidation and arrests.

## Lessons

Despite all this the strike is beginning to bite everywhere. Strike committees are starting to learn valuable lessons. Flying pickets are sent out daily and plans are now afoot to concentrate these in mass pickets on the most important battlefronts like the Hampton pumping works, which services most of London.

Coordination of the efforts of strike committees has started. The first week in the life of the All London Strike Committee saw a successful solidarity demonstration and the calling of the ACAS lobby.

Lobbyists grabbed with interest the picket bulletin brought down by South Yorkshire Water and Pollution Control Branch. Ian Drayton explained how this is used to inform pickets of latest developments and gear them up for action.

Impressed strike committee members from

other areas thought this was an idea well worth copying. They discussed approaching local Labour Parties and support committees to help them with printing facilities to get these bulletins out.

Lobby chat turned into serious proposals as they considered coordinating strike activity on a national level. Foundations began to be laid to set up a national strike coordinating committee to overcome the absence of leadership from the national officials.

Harry Bristow from the London strike committee summed up many of the comments made that afternoon. 'We were naive about all sort of things when we started this strike. We've been able to go a long way with help from supporters in other unions like the NUR, who've been through this all before. We should have been doing this sort of thing at the beginning. We should also get other industries involved.'

## Solidarity

The importance of solidarity from the broader labour movement was well understood that afternoon. Media attempts to blame 'outsiders' for the occupation of ACAS were roundly put down by pickets.

The bulk of the occupiers were indeed waterworkers but they willingly embraced the involvement of 'outsiders' from other unions, the Labour Party and left organisations. One picket, from Coppermill Lanes pumping station in East London, insisted 'We can't fight this alone. It's going to be a tough battle and we need all the friends we can get from the labour movement'.

Phil Symons from Birmingham underlined this saying 'This Tory Government want to get us all. The only way round this is to unite'.

## Warmed

Examples of solidarity warmed the atmosphere on that cold Sunday afternoon outside ACAS. Hetty Cowpe, one of the few women stewards in the industry explained how nurses from the local hospital in Leeds provided a caravan for pickets.

As she joined her brothers for the long journey back to Leeds she summed up the message of the day 'We've come here to tell the officials we want the full claim. If they think we can manage on anything else, they're talking out of their hats. We don't want a sell out'.

## 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.

# Tories boost the nuclear family

By Bob Pennington

**THE WELFARE STATE** may be falling apart. Unemployment may be rocketing to four million. Workers' purchasing power may be declining.

For millions of people Tory Britain might seem to be getting grimmer and grimmer. But don't worry. Mrs Thatcher's team are going to sort all this out.

No, they are not going to create more jobs. Nor are they going to put more money into the NHS and other wasteful things like education, care of the aged and luxuries like nurseries. Nor, you will be relieved to learn, are they going to boost your spending power. That would only make you better off and put more people in work.

The team: Maggie, Geoffrey, Norman, Michael, Norman, Keith and friends are just full of ideas on how we can be trained to learn to suffer and still smile. You might

call that masochism. They describe it as being a 'self reliant, responsible, capable, enterprising and fulfilled adult'.

One of their suggestions is that women should stay at home. This means that they can resume 'responsibilities taken on by the state for example, responsibility for the disabled, elderly, and unemployed 16-year olds.'

This is sheer brilliance. What a day it could be in the life of a woman. She can sit grandad in a chair near the telly. Then she can prop up some disabled

relative on the couch while she cleans the house, makes the meals, looks after the kids and in between takes two or three unemployed 16-year olds for a walk around the park.

What a 'fulfilling' prospect. And what economy. Think of the money we will save on welfarism so we can buy more cruise and Tridents.

Now you all know how these kids are big spenders. Particularly if their mams and dads are unemployed, some of them are known to 'do in' as much as a quid a week on sweets. But all that is going to end.

Geoffrey Howe, Patrick Jenkin and Norman Tebbit are going to 'train children to manage their pocket money.' As Tebbit points out: 'If they



Maggie: families must look after themselves.

don't save up how can they ever afford to buy a bike to go job seeking?

Geoffrey and Patrick are even more foresighted than Norman. They want children to learn the art of saving so that when they join the dole queue they will not waste money on food, but will invest part of their giros in 'business and wealth creation'.

The new plans will also help our overworked police force. Parents will

be responsible 'for some of the anti-social behaviour of their children'. This could help in two ways. If some kid commits a 'crime' they could be sent to borstal and their parents could go to Holloway and Parkhurst.

This could be a real deterrent to all those unemployed who were thinking of having a family and at the same time would cut the unemploy-

ment figures quite drastically.

You thought Maggie's team were not too keen on immigrants. How wrong can you get? They want to publicise 'success stories of immigrants who have made good' like 'Asian corner shops'. So presumably every immigrant will be given the money to start a corner shop. But will there be enough corners?

You might be

suspicious of all this and think it's a return to Victorianism. Well you are right. The Tories are quite serious about chopping welfare, making you pay for education, keeping you and your kind in your place. They know it's the only way to build a Britain where free enterprise and profit dominate our lives and human values get trampled underfoot. But that is what Toryism is all about.

# Solidarity with the waterworkers

By C Savage

**NATIONAL UNION LEADERS** look set again to drag sell out from the jaws of victory. Last year ASLEF drivers were stitched up, just as solidarity was building up and the strike was getting solid. Health workers were dragged through the same sordid experience.

Waterworkers are in fighting mood to challenge another sell out. And the solidarity they need to win is growing daily.

A fine example was a lunchtime solidarity demonstration through Islington, North London on 17 February. Jointly organised by the waterworkers strike committee at New Riverhead and Islington council workers, this attracted delegations from NALGO, NUPE,

NUR and Kings Cross ASLEF.

Speaking to the 350 marchers, Mick Hall from the East London strike committee explained 'We will stay out if we don't get what we want. We will insist that any final offer is brought back to meetings of members. We are in a stronger position now with gas and electricity workers

lined up for a dispute. They can come in behind us and ride on our backs or they can join us so that we come through together. This means the TUC has to get off their arses and organise to back us'.

Bob Chaplin from the Coppermill Lanes picket line in East London explained to Socialist Challenge 'This march shows some of the solidari-

ty between us and other workers. We need this sort of thing. The longer we keep divided the longer Thatcher will keep defeating us. The waterworkers fight is everybody's fight'.

Islington NALGO representative Dave Burn told the rally 'The Islington council trade unions have organised today's march because we are fully behind the waterworkers. We support your fight against the real enemy. It's not just the Water Board but the government. The govern-

ment have manipulated negotiations, they have threatened to dismantle your negotiating machinery and have threatened your jobs'. But the speech that really drew cheers was from MP Denis Skinner. He said:

'This week the palace of varieties discussed the water industry for the first time in years. They never bother about waterworkers until you down tools. So they're debating this with a background of a tremendous struggle.'

'I remember the Wilberforce inquiry in the miners strike of 1972. The

miners had been out on strike for 6 weeks and they were beginning to get a grip of the economy. For the first time the Heath Government recognised the power of the working class.'

'So they got some posh men together from the elite class. They did this when, like you the miners were winning their strike. And like the miners, the amount of money you get demands on the resistance you show before and after.'

'With Wilberforce they gave the miners almost all they wanted because they stayed on strike. And the miners pushed their ad-

vantage and said we want more than that.'

'So you should go for the full claim. Don't settle for less. They say a lot about your union being moderate. I'm on Labour's executive with your leader and I can tell you, he is. But it's not David Basnett that counts but the strength of the people here today. You decided to strike with a vote bigger than anything Thatcher ever had at the last election. The waterworkers are on the verge of a tremendous victory. Be like the miners. Demand the full claim. You're worth it.'

## Bristol. Strike is solid

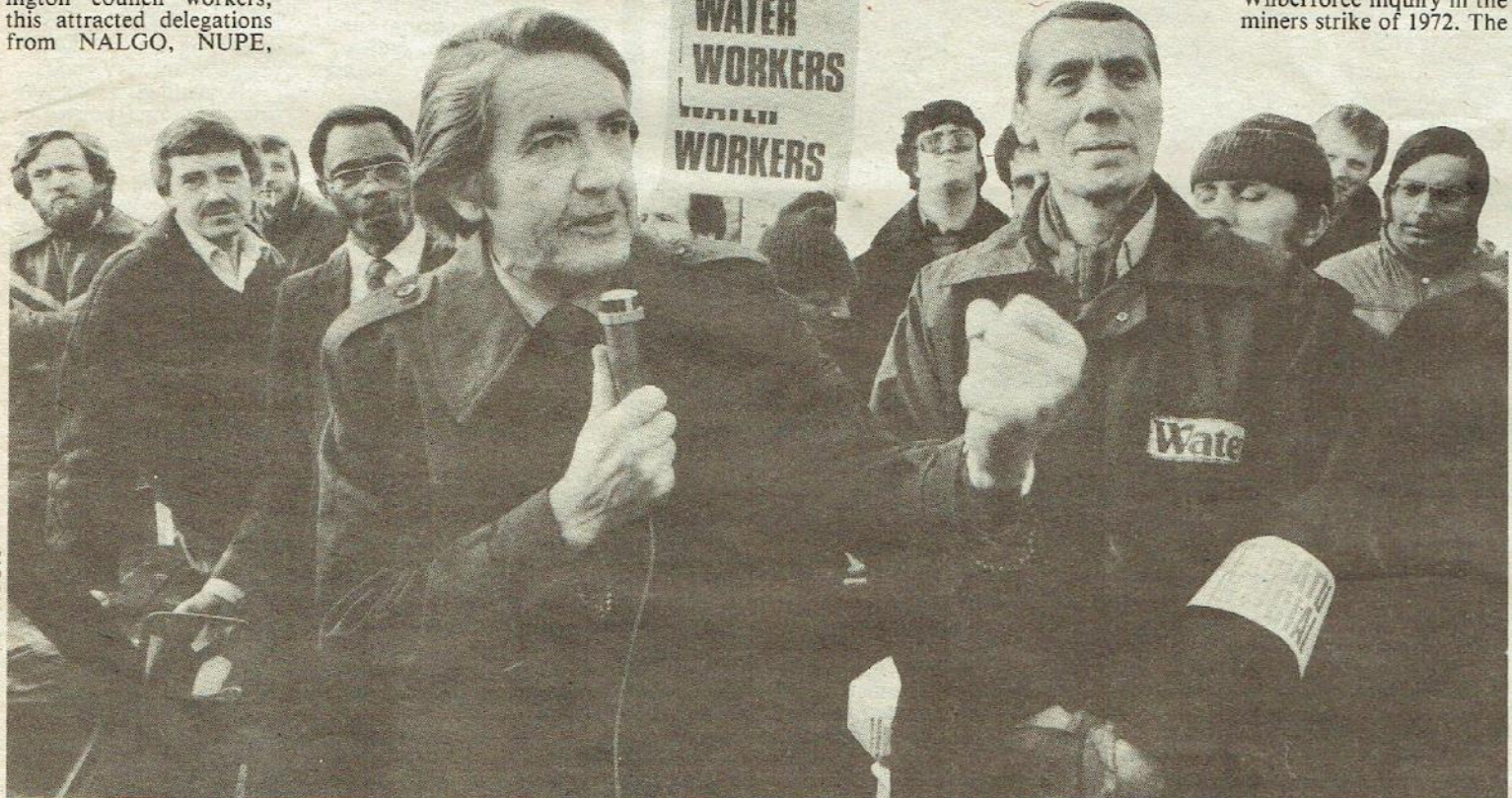
**TERRY HOSIER**, Bristol and District branch secretary GMBATU told Socialist Challenge supporters: 'The union could have not asked for more support. The members have been brilliant. We are one hundred per cent solid in this area'.

There is a 24 hour picket in Bristol and surrounding areas, including one mass picket. Emergency cover is provided, but as Terry said it is 'under union control. We decide what is an emergency, not the management. Every burst water main is a boost for our morale'.

Only three AUEW craft workers are crossing the picket lines and the union has got their names on record. Management strike breakers have been offered over £600 a week ex gratia payments. By contrast a collection has come from sympathetic office staff for the strike

fund. Terry explained that workers occupying a works in Shepton Mallet, to prevent the changing of chlorine bottles, were evicted by police without a warrant. Needless to say the police have taken no action against the dangerous and illegal transport of chlorine in unmarked vehicles.

Despite these problems the strike in Bristol is well organised and solid. Support had come in from the local labour movement with cash and resolutions from busworkers, the NUF, NUT, CPSA among others.



Dennis Skinner MP gives forceful backing to waterworkers.

Photo: G M COOKSON

For conference decisions. Against witch-hunt!

## 'What I'll fight for'

AS SOCIALIST CHALLENGE appears on the streets, Bermondsey voters will be passing their verdict on a by-election which has grabbed national attention. The media have waged a bitter campaign against Labour, helped by Labour's right wing.

On the eve of the initial press conference the Labour leaders cancelled the conference and pulped the election leaflets printed on the presses of *Militant*. It appears the end of the campaign will be equally dramatic. On the day before polling, the National Executive Committee are likely to expel the five members of *Militant's* editorial board.

The right wing witch-hunt plays straight into the hands of the Tory press. The long struggle in Bermondsey to stand the candidate of their choice embodies the rank and file determination to have a leadership accountable to the party and which will carry out decisions of conference.

During the last days of the by-election, candidate PETER TATCHELL reflected on his campaign, and told Socialist Challenge reporter CAROL TURNER what he planned to do in parliament.

How do you think the last three weeks have gone for Labour?

All the odds have been against us from the outset. For the last 15 months, there's been a non-stop campaign of vilification by the popular press. And some of the mud has stuck.

Despite this, we're still showing a strong lead. The recent opinion poll results — showing the SDP only six points behind Labour just aren't mirrored in our canvasses.

There are two things in particular I've noticed about the campaign. One is your concentration on local issues. The second is the relative absence of nuclear disarmament among the issues you've

raised. What has your campaign been about?

The main attack by the opposition is to say that the Bermondsey Labour Party isn't a party of local people. I've focussed on local issues to undercut this argument.

The other issues I've taken up — and which I'm personally committed to defending — are withdrawal from the Common Market, the need to provide more employment especially in areas like Bermondsey, and a one-year rent freeze when Labour's returned to government.

I think that a lot of people still need to be convinced on the question of nuclear disarmament. They remember the blitz and there's a feeling that we shouldn't be caught napping.

I've tried to counteract



Meeting the electorate

this view by putting the case that far from making Britain more safe, nuclear arms make us a prime target. With cruise missiles we'll be number one target for a nuclear attack.

During the recent meeting organised by Bermondsey CND, your opposition came from the so-called left — the Communist Party and the Revolutionary Communist Party. Labour had a rough ride at that

meeting. What did you make of it?

I think that such oppositions are the best allies of the Tory Party. All they do is attack the Labour Party.

Throughout this campaign, the opposition parties have put forward no positive policies. Their campaigns have been backward-looking.

Every single day, for



the last two and a half weeks, I've had a press conference where I've outlined Labour's positive policies — what we propose doing is to solve the problems of working class people. Yet hardly a word of this has appeared in the popular press.

What do you think of the Labour Party's response to your by-election? How have decisions like the one to scrap your election leaflets affected your campaign?

I don't think the decision to impound my leaflets has helped my campaign one bit. And I'm opposed to purges inside the party.

I would like, though, to thank everyone who's helped during the campaign. There's been a good response from the activists outside Bermondsey. But we still need lots of help

during the final days of the campaign, and particularly on polling day itself.

When you finally do get to parliament, what are you going to be concentrating on?

I will concentrate on the policies I've been campaigning around. And I want to join the Campaign Group of MPs.

They're fighting for the supremacy of conference policies and against the witch-hunt. I believe MPs have to link with the party outside parliament — and that's just what they're trying to

do.

During this election we've had to pick up pieces of 30 years neglect by Labour's right wing. Apart from smear campaign in press, the biggest failure we've been fighting apathy — disillusion about the ability of Labour to improve the of working class people.

This by-election shown me the importance of establishing a group of MPs who will campaign inside the party for greater accountability, and I will campaign outside help rebuild Labour mass base among working class.

## Broad Left in conference

By Pat Hickey

THE BROAD Lefts Organising Committee conference on 19 February attracted 106 delegates from most of the main trade unions in Britain.

In a wide-ranging discussion, which drew on experiences from many different union delegates constantly returned to the theme the need for the left in the unions to organise a new way.

The failures of the AUEW broad left were a benchmark for many of the delegates. They stressed the importance of Broad Lefts being campaigning bodies, and not becoming simply 'voting machines'.

The best part of the conference was its understanding that the fight in the unions and in the Labour Party were not separate struggles but were the same fight.

The discussion paper from Phil Holt centred on the issue of the election of delegates to the TUC and Labour's NEC. But on this the paper was a bit weak.

It said that 'Delegations should have at least half as lay members elected by conference or by the relevant democratic process'.

There seems little reason to limit elections to half of the delegations. The right will fight just as vigorously against this proposal as they will against the election of all delegates.

An important point which was left out of the paper was the need to mandate all delegates to

Labour Party Conference NEC and TUC, on conference policies. None less, the proposals in paper for limiting power of the officials advancing that of the delegates are very good.

It would go a long way towards ending the premature use of votes, and manipulation of the ballot to elect right wing NECs whose main aim to frustrate Conference decisions.

Overall, the conference was a definite advance to be welcomed by left. The organising committee, which will meet in March has a big job. Building a new left in unions will depend on how closely the left can tie questions of democratic fight for socialist policies.

In that regard J. Aitken's campaign in EETPU for general secretary was a model from which BLOC can learn.

The conference showed the opportunities building a campaign left in the unions. We must unite to seize these opportunities.

## British Rail blackmailer comes for more

LAST WEEK the British Rail Board announced the total closure of engineering workshops at Shildon in Durham, Horwich in Greater Manchester and Temple Mills, East London.

Three thousand five hundred workers will be thrown on the dole heap. CHRIS JONES and CELIA PUGH report.

Last year, the National Union of Railwaymen threatened national strike action when this closure plan was proposed. The British Rail Board backed down, but at a price.

NUR leaders signed a slimdown agreement in July, shedding 3,500 jobs. Union members warned that acceptance of voluntary redundancies would not prevent closure. The blackmailer would come back for more. How right they were.

The pledge of national strike action should be taken up again. With the election campaign to replace Weighell coming to a head, the time is right for left-backed candidate Jimmy Knapp to show the



Horwich workers protest against closures

members that he means to change the NUR into a fighting union.

Workers at Horwich, Shildon and Temple Mills are already planning a fightback.

At a mass meeting on 18 February, the Horwich workers voted to resist the

closure. Works convenor Dennis Green said after the meeting 'I counted only eight people against the campaign out of a meeting of 1,500. We are going to fight tooth and nail and I am talking about industrial action'.

He wants joint action

with the other threatened workshops and will be calling for full support from the NUR. The Labour Party has already pledged full support nationally.

BR boss, Sir Peter Parker has already welcomed parts of the Serpell Report, which pro-

poses cutting the railway system to the bone. Fighting workshop closures is the beginning of the resistance to Serpell.

Messages of support should be sent to: Works Committee, Horwich Loco Works, Horwich, Lancashire.

## Outrage at Greenham prison sentences

By Valerie Coultas

ON WEDNESDAY 15 February thirty six women from the Greenham Common peace camp were sent to prison for fourteen days, after refusing to be bound over to keep the peace.

The trial, at Newbury Court, ended in chaos as the women stood on their chairs singing peace songs, as police surrounded them. The previous day hundreds of women, and a smattering of men, had come from all over the country to express their solidarity. They too sang peace songs, cooked pancakes and danced.

Six of the forty two women agreed to be bound over but all pleaded not guilty. Their case was that their invasion of the missile silos at the RAF base on New Year's Day was aimed at keeping the peace not breaking it. Nelly Logan, at 72 the eldest of the group, said that after living through two world wars 'I just can't sit by and see these dangerous weapons being made.'

Indeed if ever there was a trial where the sympathy of the public is with the defendants this was it. The day before the trial, 1,000 women marched in solidarity in Manchester.

The first day of the trial saw a sympathy march in Sweden. As soon as the sentence was heard women in the Isle of Wight and Wales came out on the streets to set up vigils and camps in protest at the sentences. By Thursday Holloway prison was being picketed. US draft dodgers chose to start their prison sentence to coincide with the Greenham verdict to highlight international solidarity.

Neither is it simply an

active minority that supports the demands of the Greenham Common Women as the popular press would have us believe. The opinion polls vary, but the opposition to the siting of cruise missiles in this country is a majority and among women, a larger majority than among men.

### Action

The women of Greenham Common forced Francis Pym to admit that the British government had no control over the launching of the missiles. They forced Thatcher to organise a cabinet reshuffle to put whiz kid Heseltine in charge of the anti-CND campaign.

Now they are upping the stakes by calling for a women's day of action all over the country on May 24th. This will provide an opportunity for the arguments on cruise to be taken up in housing estates, schools and factories.

Socialist Challenge supporters should be ac-

## Labour CND launches Manifesto Campaign

Labour CND decided at its annual general meeting on Saturday 19 February to launch a national campaign to ensure that Labour's full commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament is included in the campaign document that will form the basis for Labour's election manifesto.

The largest AGM ever, with over 300 delegates, representing well over one hundred Constituency Labour Parties, agreed that if this commitment is fudged they will campaign for a special Labour Party conference to be convened to uphold the 1982 conference decision.

Dame Judith Hart MP explained to the meeting that the Campaign's document would now be delayed till March, making

it more difficult to force changes before a possible June election.

But Labour CND will use the time between now and then to build up a massive head of steam against any fudge.

The AGM also became one of the first national Labour Party campaigning groups to refuse to apply for registration on the NEC's register of non-affiliated organisations.



Women picket Holloway prison after sentences.

Photo: GM Cookson

tively involving themselves in Greenham Common support groups and turning this day and all the other actions the Greenham Common women call for into the broadest possible mobilisation of women. The labour movement

can give backing and support to these actions but the most important battle to be fought in the coming months will be over Labour Party and TUC decisions. Will the labour movement really back up the militancy and courage of these women by taking

industrial action to stop the missiles? Will the Labour Party stick to its conference decisions and keep unilateralism in the manifesto?

For details of Greenham support groups and activities phone Valerie Coultas on 01-359 8371.

## Getting arrested at Greenham

The day that Michael Heseltine went to Newbury, one of our supporters, POLLY VITTORINI was arrested at nearby Greenham. Here she describes the day's activities.

We arrived at Greenham at 10am; four of us in a car from Swansea after a three hour drive, still unsure of what we were going to do, except that we were not, definitely not, going to get arrested.

We started our blockade at the green gate, where the police were very jumpy. There was more traffic than we had expected, and so it was not very long at all before we were warned that unless we stopped sitting in all that mud we may have to be arrested.

Due to our lack of resources we decided to

blockade one at a time. So I lay in the road while others stood around me protectively and held my hand. I was the only one to be both cautioned and arrested, so for me the worst part was just waiting until the long arm of the law pulled me up by the sleeve. The charge, we learned later, was obstruction of the highway.

In the police van I watched as eight of my sisters were hauled up and fumed as we were told that we couldn't sit on the filthy seats because we were filthy.

We spent the rest of the day in a cell. For eight hours we sat in a seven foot square cell and shouted across to the other 90 women who were penned at various times of the day.

Despite our protests we were only given one cup of warm water each, so we mostly sang and wrote a letter to Heseltine. Later our spirits were quite low as we received messages through the window about all the excitement we were missing.

Now the moral of this story is that 60 women are going to be tried in Newbury on 18 April, and your support is greatly needed. Be there!

## Manchester supports Greenham

Flaming torches flickered through the centre of Manchester on Monday evening as 1,000 women marched through the rush hour traffic to show their support for the Greenham Common women in court in Newbury.

All day we'd been on a vigil in St Peter's Square, Manchester's Speakers

Corner, and after the march women stayed all night and all the next day.

On Monday night it looked as much like Greenham Common as you could get in the centre of a big city. The bushes flickered with night lights, a massive woollen web stretched across the grass to create a cosy corner where a brazier burned all night, and women stayed to sing — after the dancing had died down.

We've show that an appeal to women to mobilise against the missiles can tremendously broaden the nuclear disarmament movement. Actions like ours in Manchester have to be supported by every one who wants to stop the missiles.

Phone Deirdre or Clem on 061-224 5959 for details of Manchester activities.

## CND Diary

CND Diary will be a regular column in Socialist Challenge, giving a round up of useful facts, news and dates of forthcoming events in the Anti-Nuclear movement. The listing of events is free and the details should reach us by the Wednesday, one week before publication. Send to CND Diary, Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

A NEW HAZARD looms for Anti-Nuclear protestors. The German 'Green' Party have got wind of a plan to stockpile Plastic Bullets for use against anti-nuclear protestors. Following the example of Swiss militants, they are about to launch a massive protest campaign.

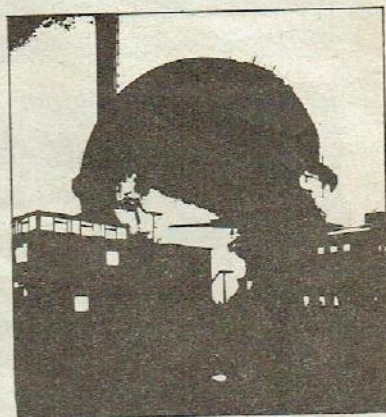
TALKING ABOUT stockpiling, our own government isn't doing too badly for itself. About a month ago news leaked out that the government was stockpiling petrol for use after a nuclear war. It does this by a rather clever mechanism. All the larger petrol distributors are forced to hold large stocks at their distribution points. This scheme, which is already in operation, only leaked out because the government is in the process of extending it to the smaller distributors, and they're objecting to the cost.

PETROL, it seems is not the only strategic material the Tories are stockpiling. They have been secretly buying in key metals and minerals. Several South African companies have been approached with orders for chrome, manganese and other strategic materials. The consensus is that orders worth between £10m and £15m have already been placed.

RED FACES at the Pentagon. Casper Weinberger's annual report to Congress let slip that the Americans have ordered three times more Pershing II missiles than are called for by NATO's 'modernisation' plans. NATO is supposed to be deploying 108 Pershings in West Germany, but it has ordered 311 missiles. The most likely reason for this is the launchers may be planned to have a 'relaunch' capability. If so the Pentagon is going to have difficulties with its numbers game at Geneva, since it insists on counting SS-20 reloads, but not Pershing reloads.

- ★ 23 Feb-2nd March Welsh Peace Week
- ★ Fri 25 Feb. Picket of Tarmac Construction Ltd. who have a major contract at Greenham Common. London Office at 50 Park Street, W1 and Head Office Birch Street, Wolverhampton. 8.30 - 5.30
- ★ Fri 25 Feb-Sun 6 Mar Hounslow Council/Hounslow CND Anti-Nuclear Week. Details from 01-577 3429.
- ★ Sat/Sun 26-27 Feb Conference Against Sizewell 'B', Blackfriars Settlement, Nelson Square, Waterloo, London. Details from 37 Cowley Rd, Oxford.
- ★ Sat 26 Feb Labour CND fringe meeting at Scottish LPYS Conference in Glasgow.
- ★ Sat 26 Feb Swansea March from Town Hall to Guild Hall followed by Rally with Euro-MP's. March starts 10.30.
- ★ Mon 28 Feb Showing of John Pilger's anti-nuclear film 'The Truth Game' at 9.00pm on ITV.
- ★ Wed 2 March Film '8 Minutes to Midnight' organised by Islington CND. Islington Central Library, Fieldway Crescent, N5.
- ★ March 3-10 Film 'From Hitler to Marx' at the Rio Cinema Dalston, London.
- ★ Sat 5 March Scottish TUC CND Conference. 10am AUEW Halls, West Regent St., Glasgow.
- ★ Sun 6 March Women's blockade of Faslane Naval Base. 10am-4pm. Tel: 041 221 1177 on Saturdays for details.
- ★ Sun 6 March Peace Chain from Marconi 'Stingray' Torpedo factory nr. Neston to Capenhurst British Nuclear Fuels plant. Arrive 10.30. 'Link' from 12.00-1.00. Rally at Capenhurst at 3.00.
- ★ March 6-8 'Stop the Arms Race' (STAR) Women's Peace Demonstration in Brussels. Details Margot Miller 0993-842480.
- ★ March 10/11 Picket of Royal Aeronautical Society seminar on Electronic Warfare. Details from Ann on 10-633 0133 ext. 22.
- ★ Sat 12 March North London CND sponsored hike around the bunkers. Assemble Mill Hill East Tube 10.45, start 11.00.
- ★ Sat 12 March Labour CND fringe meeting at Scottish Labour Party Conference. 12.30-2pm at Windsor Restaurant, Perth.
- ★ March 7-19 (provisional). Distribution of Strathclyde Regional Council anti-nuclear broadsheet to every home in the region. (This covers half of the population of Scotland!)
- ★ Thurs 17 March 'The War Game' showing at Hargrave Hall, Hargrave Road, London N19.
- ★ March 19/20 Oxford YCND march from Oxford to Greenham Common. For details contact Oxford YCND, 10 Cunliffe Close, Oxford.
- ★ Sun 20 March Faslane Peace Camp Festival
- ★ Wed 23 March 7.00-8.00 Surround the Town Hall in support of the Peace camp and in opposition to Civil Defence.
- ★ Thur 31 Mar 12 hour blockade of Greenham Common (women only) and Burghfield Royal Ordnance Factory (mixed).
- ★ Fri 1 April 14 mile human chain from Greenham Common to Burghfield via Aldermaston. Starts 1.30pm, followed by a festival at Aldermaston.
- ★ Sat 2 April Scottish CND March in Glasgow. Starts in George Square and ends at Carnival in Kelvingrove Park.
- ★ 8-10 April Nuclear Free North Atlantic Conference Mitchell Theatre, Glasgow.
- ★ Sat 30 April East London Labour Movement Conference Against Cruise and Trident, to be held in Queen Mary College.
- ★ May March from Truro to Exeter via Plymouth, Barnstable and Somerset (only for the fit!) Details from Stephen Hugget Tel: Plymouth 268724.
- ★ Sat 7 May Youth CND Festival for Peace. Starts at 11am with a demonstration from Embankment marching to Brockwell Park. Bands, speakers and a festival village.

# THE NUCLEAR NIGHTMARE



**THIRTY FIVE BILLION POUNDS.** That's the estimated cost of the new generation of ten nuclear power stations planned by the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) with the full support of the government. The ten billion pound cost of the Trident system is small in comparison.

These power stations will employ Pressurised Water Reactors (PWRs) — the type used in the Three Mile Island disaster in the United States where the radioactive core came close to melting through its concrete container. **ANDY MILLER and BRIAN LAWTON explain why we shouldn't accept a nuclear future.**

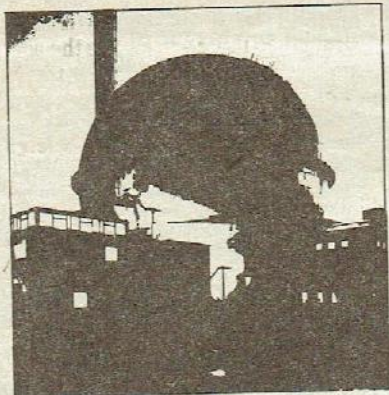
The first of the PWR reactors is to be sited at Sizewell in Suffolk. The inquiry taking place there is intended to give PWRs a clean bill of health. The CEGB has spent an estimated £2½ million on the presentation of its case. It is so confident that it will go ahead that it has already bulldozed the site.

If it goes ahead the PWR will increase the nuclear generating capacity by 3½ times. That increase represents the energy equivalent of 35 million tons of coal — the entire annual production of the Scottish, Welsh, Midland, Kent and Lancashire coalfields employing a total of 60,000 miners.

The CEGB is embarking on this programme at a time when there is already a 29 per cent excess capacity in England and Wales. This is set to rise to 42 per cent as new plant comes on stream between now and 1983.

It is clear that if the Tories and CEGB get their way the future facing the miners is a grim one; the wholesale destruction of the industry and its reduction to a handful of super-pits, which they no doubt intend to sell off to their business friends.

The PWR programme won't just prevent a massive threat to miners jobs. It will increase the danger to all working people.



When nuclear power was first developed the press talked about electricity beaming 'too cheap to meter'. Today the nuclear dream has gone sour — but still the electricity board puts huge sums of money into telling us that nuclear power is safe, cheap and that we can't do without it. All of these claims are untrue.

Is it safe? No form of nuclear power is safe. Some types have a greater inbuilt danger than others. Pressurised Water Reactors use pressurised water as a coolant. Leaks in the cooling system can cause the water to flash to steam and a dramatic rise in the temperature in the reactor's core. This is a permanent danger because water at high pressure is extremely corrosive.

In theory back-up systems exist to cope with a loss of coolant pressure. At Three Mile Island these systems failed to work properly. This type of accident had been thought impossible. According to the American safety

authorities 'golden rule' only one operating failure could occur within the operating system at any one time. But at Three Mile Island six independent failures occurred.

Three Mile Island (TMI) also revealed another inbuilt hazard in the PWR reactor. A metal called zirconium is used as a cladding for the rods of nuclear fuel in the reactor core. Zirconium is very resistant to corrosion, but it also reacts with steam to produce highly explosive hydrogen gas. This happened at TMI when a large hydrogen bubble formed inside the containment vessel. This threatened an explosion which would have led to a massive leak of radioactive material over the surrounding countryside.

And if all this wasn't enough, design faults in some PWRs have led to leaks of highly radioactive coolant water into the water used to power steam turbine generators.

No one knows what the final cost of the TMI accident will be. In the six months following the accident the rate of deaths of babies below the age of one double in a ten mile radius of the power station. The two million people who live within a fifty mile radius of the plant have been hit by radiation equivalent to 300,000 chest X-rays. The effects of this could take years to show. These two million people live with the increased danger of cancer hanging over their heads. Four years on, the work of clearing up has only just begun. The TMI station is filled with hundreds of gallons of radioactive gas and water.

Three Mile Island was a lucky escape and not an isolated incident. The US Safety Information Centre has disclosed that of the 2,000 accidents investigated in 1979, no fewer than 32 could have ended in the catastrophe of the core melting through the containment vessel.

Since 1979 no new PWRs have been built in the USA. The fall in orders for new stations had begun four years before. TMI set the seal on a decline that would have taken place anyway.

This is not to say that the British safety record has been better — the British nuclear industry has simply been more successful in maintaining its cloak of secrecy.

The Confederation of British Industry enthusiastically backs the PWR programme. But American bosses have decided to back out. They did so at the height of the energy crisis when oil prices were at their peak — a time when the prospects for nuclear power should have been at their brightest. Nuclear power had priced itself out of the market.

Independent studies in America have shown that electricity produced from PWRs is 25 per cent more expensive than electricity from coal-fired power stations. In Britain, the CEGB bosses have used every trick in the book and a few more besides to make nuclear generation appear cheaper than generating electricity from coal.

That's not just the view of a few anti-nuclear critics. A select committee of the House of Commons, no less, came close to accusing the CEGB of lying when it said that the cost figures they had presented were 'highly misleading as a guide to past investment decisions and entirely useless for appraising future ones'.

The Monopolies Commission accused the CEGB of 'producing investment appraisals which are seriously defective and liable to mislead'. The Electricity Consumers Council accus-

ed the Board of producing 'appraisals systematically biased in favour of nuclear power'.

The CEGB is Britain's biggest corporation. Its vast assets are meant to be managed in the interests of working people. The lengths to which the CEGB have been prepared to go in cooking the books show that nothing could be further from the truth.

Far from being cheaper than electricity from coal, nuclear power is around 40 per cent more expensive.



## Just a coincidence?

**TONY ADAMS** died of acute myeloid leukaemia last month. He used to work at the Magnox nuclear power station in Sizewell. He was the third nuclear power worker there to die from Leukaemia.

Dr John Bonnel said that Tony's death was pure chance and that there was no evidence of a direct link between death from cancer and exposure to radioactivity at the plant.

Dr Bonnel will be one of the 'experts' presenting evidence to the Sizewell B enquiry.

Oh yes, I nearly forgot to mention it — John Bonnel is the chief medical advisor for the CEGB!

By the CEGBs own admission Drax A, a coal-fired station built in the 1970's is considerably more cost effective than nuclear stations built at the same time. Yet, according to CEGB planners, no more coal-fired stations will be built.

Do we need nuclear power? The last fall-back argument from the pro-nuclear lobby is that we need nuclear power to fill the 'energy gap' as our energy needs increase and finite fossil fuels such as oil and gas run out. But this argument rebounds on itself. Firstly because nuclear power depends on uranium — which is itself in very limited supply. It is estimated that currently known reserves are enough to last for forty years.

Uranium will be running out, or will be prohibitively expensive at just the time when, we are told, we'll be needing nuclear power the most.

The government and the CEGB are banking on the development of a new type of reactor — the Fast Breeder Reactor (FBR). In theory the FBR produces more fuel than it consumes. Sounds too good to be true? It is.

The FBR will be the most dangerous reactor yet. It uses as its fuel plutonium which is also what is used in nuclear weapons. The coolant is liquid sodium which explodes on contact with air or water. The main catch is that the plutonium 'bred' by the reactors needs to be reprocessed — a highly dangerous and risky pro-

cess. Besides this the methods of reprocessing tried at industrial level give rise to large plutonium losses which could exceed the gains made in the reactor.

Far from being the prudent insurance policy its supporters try to make out, the PWR programme is a reckless gamble. While they plan to close existing mines and halt the development of new ones, the Tories are banking on a technology which may never even work!

Nuclear power can only be used to produce electricity. Electricity itself only produces only 11 per cent of energy used — the nuclear contribution currently represents a tiny 1½ per cent. This is what has been achieved after 25 years and at a cost of £20 billion. The PWR programme costing £35 billion will increase the proportion to 7 per cent (based on current levels of consumption). If energy consumption increases as the CEGB planners continue to insist, nuclear power will make a marginal contribution — at a huge cost.

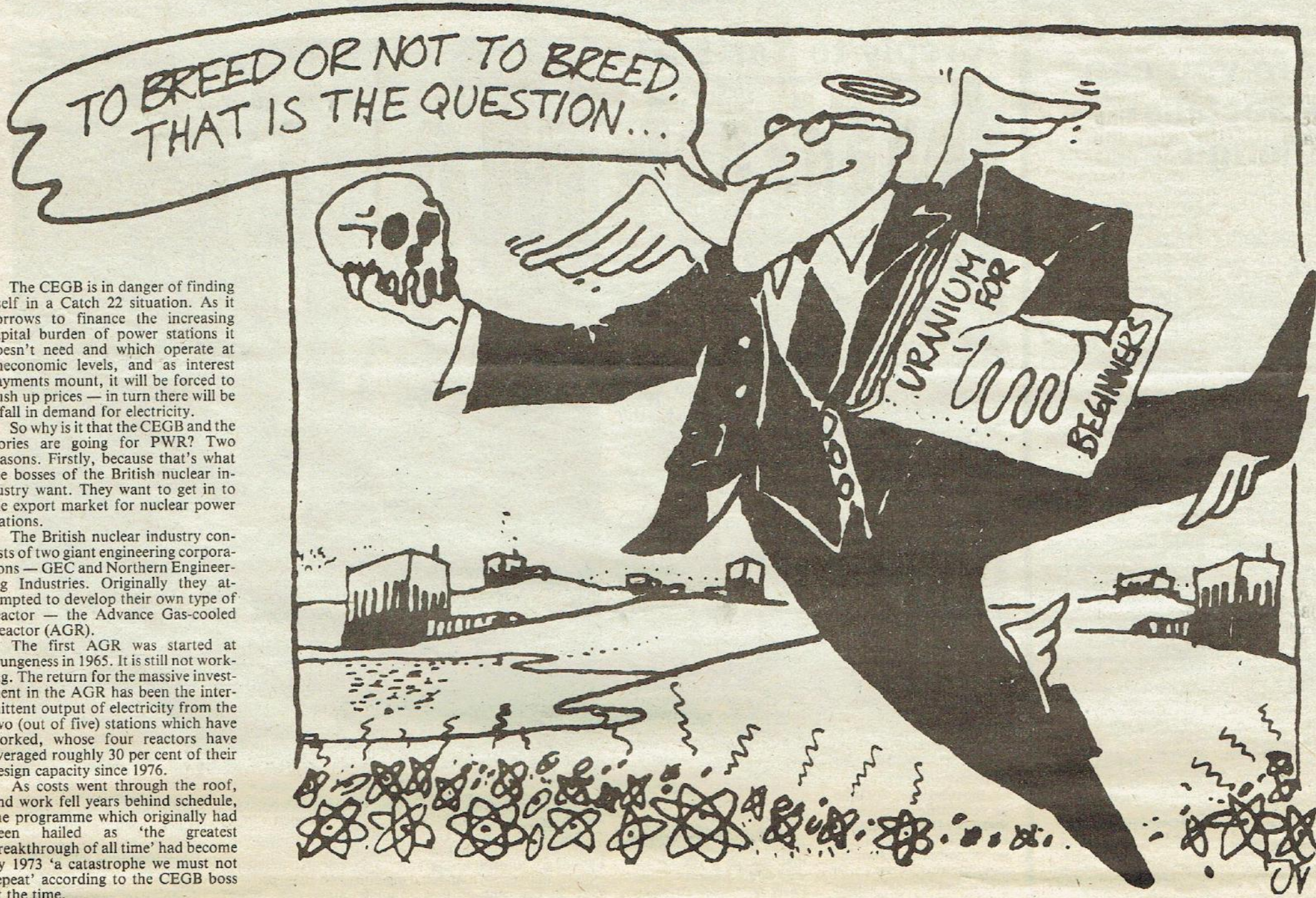
Over the last ten years electricity consumption has been continuously falling. The CEGB planners insist that there is a rising demand. Consumption fell by an average of one per cent a year between 1973 and 1980. This was despite continued economic growth. The recession had caused an even greater fall — in 1980 consumption was down 5 per cent on the previous year.

## How nuclear cover-up went wrong

TOP officials at British Nuclear Fuels Ltd decided from the start to cover up the facts about radioactive leak from their Windscale plant because they feared repercussions at a critical moment in the site's development.

Even when they were urged by officials from the Government's Health and Safety Executive to make the facts public they still said nothing, although by staying silent they contravened the spirit of the Nuclear Installations Act.





The CEBG is in danger of finding itself in a Catch 22 situation. As it borrows to finance the increasing capital burden of power stations it doesn't need and which operate at uneconomic levels, and as interest payments mount, it will be forced to push up prices — in turn there will be a fall in demand for electricity.

So why is it that the CEBG and the Tories are going for PWR? Two reasons. Firstly, because that's what the bosses of the British nuclear industry want. They want to get in to the export market for nuclear power stations.

The British nuclear industry consists of two giant engineering corporations — GEC and Northern Engineering Industries. Originally they attempted to develop their own type of reactor — the Advance Gas-cooled Reactor (AGR).

The first AGR was started at Dungeness in 1965. It is still not working. The return for the massive investment in the AGR has been the intermittent output of electricity from the two (out of five) stations which have worked, whose four reactors have averaged roughly 30 per cent of their design capacity since 1976.

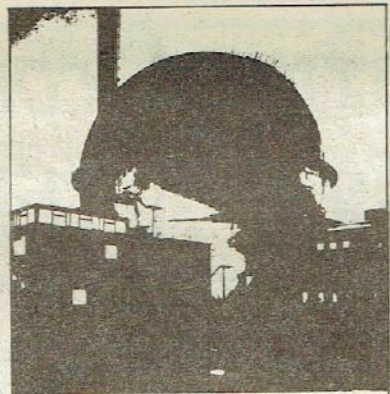
As costs went through the roof, and work fell years behind schedule, the programme which originally had been hailed as 'the greatest breakthrough of all time' had become by 1973 'a catastrophe we must not repeat' according to the CEBG boss at the time.

The nuclear industry bosses were forced to recognise that they had backed a non-runner. To get back into the race they had to back PWR — but not with their own money. Having made a killing from the AGR white elephant, they now want electricity consumers to put up the stake. The need for such a large ordering programme is dictated not by energy needs but by the needs of the nuclear construction industry who have to have a guaranteed market.

For the Tories the PWR programme offers another considerable benefit. According to a leaked Cabinet minute: 'A nuclear programme would have the advantage of removing a substantial portion of electricity production from the dangers of disruption by industrial action by

coal miners or transport workers?

The Tories hope that nuclear power will allow them to break the strength of some of the most powerful sections of the working class. They're not just out for revenge, they know



## Windscale deaths

AT LEAST 13 people are now known to have died from the effects of the fire at the Windscale reactor in 1957.

The National Radiological Protection Board published a report last week which which blamed 260 cases of thyroid cancer, 13 of them fatal, and more deaths from other cancers on the results of the accident.

Windscale produced plutonium and the fire, which burned for two days, released radioactive iodine into the air — the cloud spread over England, Wales and parts of Europe.

So far, this has been Britain's worst nuclear disaster.

that if they want to carry through their programme of destroying our unions and driving down living standards they have to take on the miners and railworkers.

The Electricity Board chiefs have shown themselves one hundred per cent loyal to the interests of their class, to the bosses and bankers, to the shareholders of the GEC and NEI and to the Tories. To do that they have shown themselves quite willing to stonewall, cook the books, bend the facts and when it suits them tell outright lies. In theory the CEBG chiefs are accountable, but their record under successive Labour governments shows this is a myth.

For instance, they didn't reveal the full extent of a major leak of radioactivity from Windscale in 1977. They kept an internal development review outlining their future strategy a secret from the Labour government. The plans for the PWR programme were laid before the Tories came to power — the CEBG simply omitted to send a copy of the document outlining its strategy to the energy minister, Tony Benn.

There are alternatives to a nuclear programme. Alternatives that can safeguard jobs and resources. For a start there is energy conservation. It is estimated that if the capital costs of a nuclear power station were spent on insulation it would save three times as much energy as the station would ever produce. It would also produce thousands of jobs. The view that economic growth automatically requires ever increasing energy supplies simply does not hold up. Money could also be spent on more efficient coal-fired plants. The most modern coal-fired stations have achieved a 25 per cent increase in fuel economy.

The biggest potential for savings is in the use of combined heat and power (CHP). A normal power station is about 30 per cent efficient — the remaining 70 per cent of the

generated heat goes up the chimney or into the cooling water. CHP makes use of this waste heat to heat houses and factories close to the station, increasing the overall efficiency from 30 to 70 per cent. CHP provides 20.7 per cent of the power used in West Germany, 29 per cent in Belgium and 35.8 per cent in Denmark. Britain has only one CHP station at Battersea.



This is part of what could be achieved under a sane energy policy. That's the kind of policy that the electricity board bosses and the top civil servants at the Department of Energy can't and won't develop. They are too closely tied to the interests of the bosses and know only too well on which side their bread is buttered. Instead of the chaos of the current energy policies what is needed is a workers' plan for energy. A policy which puts the needs of working people first.

The development of such a plan will mean overcoming the combined opposition of CEBG chiefs, top civil servants and the bosses of the nuclear industry. To do that a Labour government will have to link up with workers in the energy industry, with the workers of GEC and NEI-Parsons.

The alternative is to be forced into a corner by the nuclear hierarchy. This is what happened when the

Labour government decided to give the go ahead for two new AGRs at Torness and Heysham. These two reactors will be the most expensive in the world to date. They weren't needed — the AGRs had already proved a disaster. The government's justification, as given by Tony Benn, was that the alternative being pressed for was a £25 billion programme of PWRs.

The lessons of this experience must be learnt. What we need is a strategy to unite workers in the energy and ancillary industries. For too long many sections of the labour movement have sat on the fence over nuclear power. Or they have left the field clear for right wingers like Frank Chapple who claims that opposition to nuclear power is inspired by Moscow.

With the proposed PWR programme the Tories have thrown the gauntlet to the labour movement. It's time for us to face up to the challenge.

Nuclear power isn't safe, it isn't cheap and it won't close the energy gap.

There is one energy gap that the PWR programme certainly won't solve — that's the gap which results each and every year in thousands of old people dying of the cold. The tragedy is that the vast expenditure in money and human skill and effort will mean more old people dying from hypothermia.

It will mean more families cut off for non-payment of electricity bills. It will mean tens of thousands more jobs lost in the coal and transport industries.

This is the inevitable result of the twisted logic of a system that puts the profits of a few before the jobs, welfare and lives of the vast majority.

This is the prospect facing all working people if the Tories get their way in pushing through the PWR programme.

But there is an alternative. 1983 can also be the year when opposition to nuclear power begins in earnest.



## Where you can buy Socialist Challenge

### Scotland

**ABERDEEN:** SC available at Boomtown books, King St. For more info ring Bill 896 284.  
**EDINBURGH:** SC sold Thur 4.15-5.15pm Bus Station, St. Andrews Square and bottom of Waverly steps 4.30-5.30; Sat 11.30-2pm East End, Princes St. Also available from 1st May Books, or Better Books, Forrest Rd. More info on local activity from SC c/o Box 6, 1st May Bookshop, Candlemaker Row.  
**GLASGOW:** SC sales every Thur/Fri 4.30-5.30pm at Central Station. Also available at Barretts, Byres Rd; Clyde Books, High St; Glasgow Bookshop Collective, Crosswell Lane; Hope Street Book Centre.  
**HAMILTON:** SC sale every Sat 1-5pm outside Safeway, shopping centre. For more info contact John Ford, 53 Elliot Crescent, Hamilton or Paul Youngson, 18 Forrest Crescent, Hamilton.

### Wales

**CARDIFF:** every Sat in Bute Town 10.30-12. Also available 1-4-8 Books, Salisbury Road.  
**NEWPORT:** every Sat in town centre 11-12.30.  
**PONTYPRIDD:** SC sales every Sat outside Open Market 11-1pm.  
**PORT TALBOT:** Sat 11am-1pm town centre.  
**SWANSEA:** SC sales outside Co-op, Oxford St, 11am-1pm, Saturdays.

### England

**BATH:** SC on sale at 1985 Books, London Road, and Saturdays 2pm-3pm outside the Roman Baths. Phone 20298 for more details.  
**BIRKENHEAD:** SC on sale at Labour Club, Cleveland St, Thur nights; in precinct outside Littlewoods, Sat 11-12.  
**BIRMINGHAM:** SC on sale at The Ramp, Fri 4.30-5.40, Sat 10-4. For more info phone 643-5904.  
**BOLSOVER:** SC on sale in 'Angel', back room, Sunday dinnertime. Phone Chesterfield 825140 for details of local supporters' meetings and activities.  
**BRADFORD:** SC at Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate.  
**BRISTOL:** SC on sale 11-1, 'Hole in Ground', Haymarket. More info Box 2, c/o Fulmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Montpelier, Bristol 6.  
**BURNLEY:** SC on sale every Sat morning 11.30-1pm St James St.  
**COVENTRY:** SC available from Wedge Bookshop.  
**HUDDERSFIELD:** SC sold Sat 11am-1pm. The Piazza. SC also available at Peaceworks.  
**LEEDS:** Sat 11-1 at Lands Lane Pedestrian Precinct and 10.30-12.00 at Headingly Arndale Centre. Corner Bookshop, Woodhouse Lane.  
**LIVERPOOL:** SC on sale from News from Nowhere, Whitechapel and Progressive Books, Berry St.  
**MANCHESTER:** SC sold 11-1pm Sat at OLDHAM outside the Yorkshire Bank, High St; at BURY in the shopping precinct and at Metro Books; at BOLTON in the town centre; and in MANCHESTER at Gorton and Droylesden markets 11am-12.30 Sats and at Grassroots and Percivals Bookshop. Tel: 061-236 4905 for further info.  
**MANSFIELD:** SC on sale at Stockwell Gate and West Gate, Saturdays 11-12. Phone Mansfield 653216 for details of local supporters' meetings and activities.  
**NEWCASTLE:** SC on sale every Sat 11-1pm outside Fenwicks. Also available at Days of Hope bookshop, Westgate Rd. Every Friday outside Newcastle University between 1-2 and outside Newcastle Polytechnic between 12-1 every Monday.  
**NOTTINGHAM:** SC sold every Sat 12-1 pm Slab Square. For info phone 863916.  
**OLDHAM:** SC sold every Saturday outside Yorkshire Bank, High Street. For more information about local activities. Tel: 061-682 5151.  
**OXFORD:** SC sold Fri 12-2pm outside Kings Arms and every Sat 10.30-12.30pm in Cornmarket.  
**SHEFFIELD:** SC on sale Thursday, Pond St, 4.30-6pm; Saturday, Fargate 10.30-12.30pm.

**SOUTHAMPTON:** SC on sale Sat 10am-12 noon at Above Bar Post Office (Shopping Precinct).  
**STAFFORD:** SC on Sale Market Sq Sat lunch-time.  
**STOCKPORT:** SC sold every Saturday, 1pm, Mersey Way. Can be delivered weekly: phone 483 8909 (evening), 236 4905 (day).  
**SWINDON:** SC on sale 11-1 every Sat, Regent St (Brunel Centre).  
**TESSIDE:** SC on sale Sat lunchtime in the Cleveland Centre, and in Newsfare, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, and outside Woolworths on Stockton High Street.  
**WOLVERHAMPTON:** SC sales on Thur/Fri at Poly Students Union from noon-2pm and British Rail 4.30-6pm; and Saturday near Beatles, town centre from 11am-2pm.  
**YORK:** on sale every Thursday, dole office, Clifford Street, 9.30-11; University Vanburgh College 12-2; Saturday at Coney Street 11-1.

### London

**BRENT:** SC sold Willesden Junction Thur 4.30pm.  
**EALING:** SC sold Thur, Ealing Broadway tube, 5-6pm.  
**ENFIELD:** SC at Nelsons newsagents, London Rd, Enfield Town.  
**HACKNEY:** SC on sale on estates throughout Hackney, at public meetings, and local factories. Contact us c/o PO Box 36, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8 2NF or phone John at 359 8288.  
**HOUNSLOW:** SC sold outside Hounslow East tube, every Wed 5.15-6.15pm.  
**ISLINGTON:** Every Fri, 8.15-9am at Holloway Road tube and Highbury tube.  
**KILBURN:** SC sales every Sat, 10am in Kilburn Square, and Thursday 8.30am at Queens Park tube.  
**LAMBETH:** SC sold Thur and Fri evenings and Thur mornings outside Brixton tube.  
**NEWHAM:** SC sold Sat 11am to noon, Queen's Rd Mkt, Upton Park.  
**PADDINGTON:** SC sold at Portobello Rd market Sat at noon.  
**WEMBLEY:** SC Sat Fri 6.45am at North Wembley BR Station.

### Bookshops

**BANGOR:** Rainbows, Holyhead Road, Upper Bangor, Gwynedd.  
**BRADFORD:** Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Sandgate.  
**BRIGHTON:** The Public House, Little Preston St.  
**BRISTOL:** Fulmarks, 110 Cheltenham Rd, Bristol 6.  
**BIRMINGHAM:** Other Bookshop, 137 Digbeth, Birmingham.  
**DURHAM:** Durham City Co-op Bookshop, 85a New Elvet.  
**ILFORD:** South Essex Bookshop, 335 Ley Street.  
**MILTON KEYNES:** Oakleaf Books, 109 Church Street, Wolverton.  
**OXFORD:** EOA Books, 34 Cowley Rd.  
**LEICESTER:** Blackthorn Books, 70 High St, Leicester, and V Karra, 53A London Rd, Leicester.  
**LIVERPOOL:** News from Nowhere, 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool L1.  
**LONDON:** Central Books, 37 Grays Inn Rd; Colletts, Charing Cross Rd, WC2; Paperback Books, Brixton and Charlotte St; Kilburn Bookshop, Kilburn High Road, NW6; The Bookplace, Peckham High St, SE15; Books Plus, Lewisham; Balham Food Co-op; Housmans, 5 Caledonian Rd, N1; Compendium, Camden Town NW1; Owl, Kentish Town; New Beacon, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, N1; Bookmarks, Seven Sisters Rd, N4; Centreprise, 126 Kingsland High St, E8; Dillons, QMC, Page One, E15; The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper St, N1; Reading Matters, Wood Green next to Sainsbury's; Village Books, Streatham; Tethric Books, Clapham; Paperback Centre, Brixton; Oval tube kiosk; Shakti Books, 46 High St, Southall.  
**PORT TALBOT:** McConville's Newsagent, Station Road.  
**NOTTINGHAM:** Mushroom Books, Heathcote St, Hockley.  
**SOUTHAMPTON:** October Books, Onslow Road.  
**YORK:** Community Books, Walmgate.

## A reply to Tariq Ali

# Against PR

By Peter Hain and Geoff Hodgson

Socialist Challenge should be congratulated for opening up its pages for a serious debate on the issue of proportional representation (PR). This topic is bound to be of importance for the labour movement in Britain in the 1980s. Unfortunately, Tariq Ali's personal contribution to this debate in last week's Socialist Challenge leaves a lot to be desired.

Tariq ignores the two most important arguments against PR and produces only weak arguments in its defence. In our pamphlet on the topic we argue that PR is undemocratic on at least two counts.\*

First, the introduction of PR in Britain is very likely to mean monster constituencies with 300,000 or more electors. In these circumstances it will be very difficult for the candidates and elected MPs to maintain close and informed links with the local communities.

Furthermore, it would be very difficult to ensure that an MP was held accountable to the local party organisation and its membership. Power to select and de-select candidates would shift even further away from the grassroots of the political parties to the regional and national offices and the full-time apparatchniks.

Second, the introduction of PR would mean permanent coalition government, the complexion of which may have no relationship to the preferences of the electorate. Tariq argues that the Labour and Tory parties are in fact 'coalitions' between right and left in each party, and he mentions the Lib-Lab pact. What he ignores, however, is that these 'coalitions' have a good chance of being removed at the next election under the system of first-past-the-post.

### Deals

Under PR the character of government, and the actual coalition ties, are formed by deals behind closed doors at the centre, after the election, and without reference to the electorate. It is possible to have a Prime Minister as part of a coalition government who's own party has a very small slice of the vote. (The ultra-right has a disproportionate influence in Israel under PR for these reasons.) PR reduces the power of people to determine the sort of argument that they would like.

Let us turn to Tariq's own arguments. He says that we are 'opportunists' because we do not mention the fact that Labour was originally in favour of PR. If Tariq would turn to page 27 of our pamphlet he would find that we do mention that Labour was in favour of PR from 1918

to 1926 — or to be more accurate, the 'Alternative Vote' system which most PR advocates now oppose since it is not fully proportional.

Tariq blames the existence of Apartheid in South Africa on their system of first-past-the-post. We find this argument somewhat unusual for someone who claims to be a Marxist. Apartheid is the legacy of Dutch and British imperialism. Furthermore, their system of 'first-past-the-post' is for whites only — hardly the sort of electoral system that we would advocate!

In his interview, Tariq makes much of the point that 'under a PR system you would have a Labour Party compelled to create a mass base'. We find this unconvincing.

Presumably, Tariq has in mind a process in which a party is automatically inclined to create a mass campaign to build and maintain majority support.

### Catapult

If this rather mechanistic argument was correct then it would apply to the existing system for parties which had a chance of winning power.

True enough, the Liberal Party has a community-based campaign of sorts. But, on the other hand, the SDP tried to catapult itself into power through the mass media, ignoring the long and tiring process of building up a mass organisation. And as the prospect of another majority Labour government waned (temporarily we hope) from 1979 to 1982 did the Labour Party find itself automatically compelled to turn to the masses?

### Shortcut

Of course not. Tariq's PR world is just as likely to lead to American-style razzle-dazzle than genuine grassroots campaigning and mass action. PR is no shortcut to campaigning politics.

Notably, Tariq fails to specify which system of PR he advocates: STV, the list system, the additional member system? Every system of PR has defects, but he can avoid these problems by failing to nail his colours to the mast. It is surely a bit cavalier to concentrate on the defects of



Peter Hain speaks at Tribune rally.

the existing system without specifying an alternative.

Finally, we agree entirely with Tariq that a Labour government would require the support of at least 50 per cent of the electorate (and a great deal of will and determination) to get through radical measures like unilateralism and public ownership of the top 25 companies. However, this does not mean that we should go along with PR.

That would be like converting to Judaism just because we think that pork is bad for you.

To obtain majority support, the Labour left should argue for mass campaigns on the radical policies in Labour's Programme, leading to referendums on key issues such as the cruise missiles, industrial democracy, etc.

In this way a Labour government can build ma-

majority support for radical policies, and legitimate its actions. Such a scenario is more likely than one under PR which, by its nature, leads to fudge, mudge and moderation and which is supported by the centre-right as a device to marginalise the labour movement.

\* 'Proportional Misrepresentation?' available from Tribune, 30B Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8DY, £1 inc. p&p.

## CRITIQUE CONFERENCE MARX AFTER STALIN

Friday 4th March:

7.30pm — **Marxism after Stalinism** — Hillel Tickin, Nigel Harris et al.

Saturday 5th March:

10.00am — **Stalinism, Historical Materialism and Marxist method** — Chris Arthur, Scott Meikle, Jonathan Ree

11.45am — **Workshops:** Scott Meikle 'Stalinist method and the alternative'; David H. Ruben 'The Nature of Historical Materialist Explanation'; Chris Arthur 'Stalinism and Dialectics'; Norman Geras 'Marx and human nature'; Roy Edgley 'The problem of violence'; Simon Clarke 'Idealism and materialism in Marxism'

2.00pm — **Workshops:** Bob Sutcliffe 'Marxism, Stalinism and underdevelopment'; Mike Davies 'Marxism in America'; Baruch Hirson 'Marxism and the National Question'; Middle East forum on 'What a Nationalist Party has borrowed from the Stalinist model — a case study'; Neil Harding 'Lenin's Marxism and its legacy on the Soviet state'; David Law 'Trotsky's Marxism'; Paddy O'Donnell 'Marxism, Stalinism and psychology'; Sandy Smith 'Planning after Stalin'; Kate Marshall 'Feminism or Marxism?'

5.15pm — **Plenary:** Open forum on the 'USSR in the World System'.

**FRI. 4th. SAT. 5th. March 1983**  
**UNIVERSITY of LONDON UNION (U.L.U.)**  
**MALET STREET Tel. 041-339-5267**

### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

#### Revolution/Socialist Challenge Celebration Rally

Come to the rally and hear speakers invited from

- Greenham Common
- Youth CND
- Ireland
- Nicaragua
- El Salvador
- Women Against Apartheid
- Palestine

Come and celebrate and help build all the campaigns fighting for Women's Liberation and Socialism. Displays, films and music also available.

Friday, 4 March 1983, 7.00pm  
 County Hall, London SE1  
 (Waterloo Tube)



# Nine reasons for 'Troops Out'

**NEXT SATURDAY** the Labour Committee on Ireland's conference looks at the issue of plastic bullets. The LCI see that stopping this or that weapon is not the end of the problem. Labour must be broken from Tory policies which advocate a military solution to the Irish situation and start calling for British withdrawal. The organiser of the Plastic Bullets conference, **MARTIN COLLINS** explains why the left should argue for troops out.

IN WEST GERMANY, the Green Party have discovered the police are stockpiling British-style plastic bullets for use against anti-nuclear protesters. How do arms manufacturers test out weapons for putting down political unrest. They need to produce expensive tests or stage dramatic constructions — they give a living advert on the streets of Belfast anderry. What better way to test out a baton round and effect modifications to improve accuracy? 55,834 rubber bullets were tested in on Irish people. The date was the plastic bullet. By the end of 1981, it had been tried out 669 times. Thirteen months later, there is a new model on the market which does its job even better.

Ireland serves as a testing ground for many kinds of state repression — knock out gasses, interrogation and torture, psychological warfare, anti-insurrection techniques, 'riot shields', and on the aggressive style of the SPG. Make no mistake, these will be used in Britain. We've already seen the SPG, the rest are coming. The Labour Left's every interest in putting an end to these tests.

IF Reagan can't put his use missiles in Britain, there is the next best option? Irish neutrality, ready compromised by membership of the EEC is under threat from the British and the Americans who are working flat out to get Ireland into NATO. The Irish working class is the only force capable of resisting this pressure. They don't have any more interest in joining NATO than we do belonging to it. At workers have been split up and divided by the British through Partition which weakens Irish CND well. To get rid of Partition, the British troops must be removed.

WHERE can AUEW members be found dead in my barracks without the Union doing anything about it? Where can union members raising political issues risk being taken out of union premises by arm-reactionary thugs and led to lay off? The answer in the North of Ireland and the reason is that the union bureaucracy in the

North is the most reactionary section of the union bureaucracy as a whole.

We are told not to discuss Ireland in the unions because it 'alienates the Northern membership'. But the people who are alienated most by discussion about Ireland is the right wing. They know they can count on a solid block of support for themselves, and do not want to risk losing it. We have heard of one major union where an investigation into voting procedures found one official to be acting as a one person block vote — filling in ballot papers for the entire membership. The left has everything to gain by breaking up this cosy alliance between the union right wing and its loyalist counterparts. Committing the British unions to a policy of withdrawal from Ireland would certainly do the trick.

4. THE Labour left says it has no illusions in the neutrality of the army if a really left government started to implement socialist policies. The dark figures around the Tory right and their 'secret armies' have made their intentions clear. They don't give a toss for parliamentary democracy if it tries to work against them.

But one section of the British ruling class has already tried it out. In the reactionary Ulster Workers' Council strike in the early seventies, the Unionists openly defied the British parliament using their own private armies. What is more, they persuaded the regular army to let them get away with it.

These forces will be the storm troopers of the counter revolution in Britain unless we stop them. The power of the Irish civil rights movement made a start by splitting the ruling classes' political party into two — the Conservatives in Britain and the Unionists in the North.

Getting the troops out of Ireland is the only way to split the ruling class itself and cut off the support which Unionists have from loyalist workers. What better way of trying to make sure socialist policies could be put to practice than by starting to fight to get the troops out now?

5. RIGHT from the early days of 'democracy' in Britain, we've had our rights taken away under the pretext that it was a necessary 'temporary' measure caused by the refusal of the Irish to 'play the game'.

The Prevention of Terrorism Act which increases police powers to stop and search, to hold people for days without reason, to break into peoples homes without warrants, looks less temporary every time it is renewed.

These attacks on democratic rights will go on as long as the Labour Party goes on backing Tory policies by the occupation of Ireland.

6. WHO was the SDP member of Parliament who quit the party over its refusal to campaign against Prevention of Terrorism Act or for British withdrawal from Ireland? Not reported in the British press, but widely covered in Ireland, it was supposedly the Islington MP Michael O'Halloran.

This rightist left the Labour Party to join the SDP when the struggle of the left for accountability of MPs got too close to him, only to find the SDP couldn't stomach him either. It couldn't have been because of his struggle on behalf of the Irish, because Shirley Williams said he hadn't been to a single SDP meeting.

The gross opportunist O'Halloran got his come uppance in the end. It is inconceivable that any Labour Party would adopt him as a candidate again. But how many right wing MPs are kept in their positions because they can make an appeal to the Irish in the constituency who think the left says nothing about the Irish question or British withdrawal?

7. WHEN the British fleet sailed off to do battle in the South Atlantic, there was a big diplomatic cam-

paign to make sure they could count on the backing of all the Western European powers. Where was the weak link? In Ireland of course.

Not even the reactionary Haughey government could cling to office if it was seen to back Britain against Argentina whose claim to sovereignty over the Malvinas was supported in Ireland in the same way as Irish sovereignty against British interference. In Dublin, the Argentine consul even had volunteers asking if they could join up!

The Labour left wanted to stop the fleet. One part of its campaign should have been to help isolate Britain's invasion diplomatically. The Irish workers share with us an interest in opposing British imperialism all around the world. If they could get the British troops out of their country, it would be a blow against the British ruling class whose impact would be felt everywhere, including in Britain.

Our fight for socialist policies becomes progressively more possible to win as blows are struck against the ruling class from all quarters. Getting the troops out of Ireland which we can help in, is an important part of that.

8. WE hear lots about the lefts' alternative economic strategy. But what about the lefts' alternative foreign policy? A policy that aims not at restoring the glorious days of gunboat diplomacy and British Empire, but of scrapping it altogether, just like the Trident missiles.

We have already seen that unilateral disarmament is a big potential vote winner for Labour. We know that a majority of people want the Irish problem solved and think Britain should get out.

Ken Livingstone did not get voted Londoners' second choice as man of



Photo: Derek Spinks (FF)

the year because he kept his mouth shut on important questions like Ireland. He had something to say. Labour must say it too — get the troops out now!

9. Did you know that it costs over £1000 million every year to maintain the British military presence in Ireland?

## BAN PLASTIC BULLETS CONFERENCE

SATURDAY 26th FEBRUARY

UMIST, BARNES WALLIS BUILDING, SACKVILLE STREET, MANCHESTER 1  
Starts 10.30am. Last minute registration on door.

## Edmund Baluka must be freed

By Oliver MacDonald

Over the last week news has arrived from Poland that Edmund Baluka is gravely ill in prison after four weeks on hunger strike. His case demands urgent action from the entire left.

Baluka has played a historic role in the life of the Polish working class. He led the workers' strikes in Szczecin in 1970-71 that brought down the Gomulka regime and laid the foundations for the tradition of independent working class action that re-emerged in August 1980 in the strike movement that gave birth to Solidarity.

Forced into exile in the early 1970s, Baluka lived for a number of years in Britain, working in a Manchester factory. In the late 1970s he moved to Paris and, with the help of Marxists there, he produced a bulletin championing workers' rights and socialist ideas.

In the Spring of 1981 he returned illegally to Poland — the demand of the Szczecin strike committee in August 1980 that he be allowed to return had not been acted upon by the authorities. He regained his job in the Warski shipyard, his old work-place, and was very active in the working class movement there until the military coup of 13 December. He was then interned for many months.

While all the other internees in Wierzychowo

camp were eventually released, Baluka was not. Instead he was arrested in the camp and held in the notorious Szczecin Kaszubska prison in complete isolation. He remains there to this day.

Baluka is one of the very few original internees to be held in jail under arrest. The other two groups are the seven top leaders of Solidarity and the five prominent KOR activities who played an influential role in Solidarity.

## Organise

Baluka himself was not a leader of Solidarity, but the police have a special reason for singling him out. He formed a socialist party in Szczecin and proclaimed the need for the workers to organise their struggles around a socialist programme. The great majority of the workers did not see the value of creating a separate party outside Solidarity and Solidarity itself did not formally adhere to a socialist programme.

But the regime saw the long-term threat that Baluka posed and also noted the enormous per-

sonal authority he still commanded amongst the Szczecin workers. This universal respect was enhanced by his courageous and intransigent leadership amongst the internees. Baluka also is the only one of the top leaders of the 1970-71 movement to remain prominent in the working class movement. For all these reasons, the police want to break him and smear him with lies and slanders in the media through a show-trial.

The projected trial of the 7 Solidarity leaders and 5 KOR activists must be a key focus of protests by the labour movement in Britain. But the fate of Baluka must be given equal prominence on the left, all the more so because he will gain little publicity in the mass media here in comparison with the other two cases.

Edmund Baluka was a founding sponsor of *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* and educated those of us who knew him on the real conditions of the working class in Poland. He helped, in the late 1970s, to bring together the different strands of socialist opinion here in a common effort to defend workers' rights in Eastern Europe. That unity is needed now in his defence.

Protest letters and telegrams calling for his release should be sent to: *The Governor, Areszt Slędczy, U1, Kaszubska, Szczecin, Poland.*

Plastic Bullets Conference fringe meeting

### 'FOR A SOCIALIST REPUBLIC'

JOHN MacANULTY who is a Peoples' Democracy councillor from Belfast talks about the fight for socialist policies in Ireland. He welcomes the campaign against plastic bullets and argues that British socialists should stop backing Prior's Northern Ireland Assembly and work towards getting the troops out.

Small Assembly Hall, ground floor UMIST, at conference lunchbreak.

Supported by: Socialist Challenge, Socialist Organiser and Revolution. Entrance free.

LABOUR COMMITTEE ON IRELAND  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE/AGM  
April 23rd, 10.30am, County Hall, London.

This week in our series on social democracy, Chris Bertram looks at French social democracy in the post war period. He shows how after taking over from Leon Blum, Guy Mollet led it from one disaster to another. He then looks at how Mitterand revived its fortunes and shows what has happened since the election of the Mitterand government in 1981.

# Social Democracy in France

## From Mollet to Mitterand



Mitterand: his government is fast moving to the right.

concerned to maintain 'business confidence'. This has meant a policy of price and wage restraint that constrains wages rather more than prices.

Working class resistance is contained by the union leaderships; the CGT, the CFTD and Force Ouvriere. When the SP leadership realised that their attacks on CGT policy over Poland could undermine the ability of the Stalinist leadership to hold back struggle, they toned down their criticisms. Unemployment and rising prices are the order of the day for the French working class.

### Policy

The government's foreign policy has been unashamedly atlanticist. True, Mitterand endorses the Socialist International's perspective of a 'third way' between Havana and Washington for Latin America and appoints the ageing Regis Debray to advise him. It would be wrong to see this as more than a recognition that imperialism must find a political solution to the problems of Central America.

Any illusions on this score are dispelled if we look at the French role in Africa. Paratroopers are busy 'defending the national interest' all over Djibouti, the Ivory Coast, Senegal and Gabon. Finally we should mention their commitment to the nuclear 'deterrent', their hostility to the Soviet Union and their increasingly pro-NATO stance.

### Opposition

It might have been expected that the traditional 'left' of the Socialist Party, the CERES, might have put up some opposition to these policies. The CERES has long been an advocate of central planning as opposed to the market economy and has always been stridently anti-American in its foreign policy. But the anti-Americanism is the product of extreme nationalism and CERES leader Chevenement is firmly integrated into the government.

Yesterday's advocate of 'workers self-management', Michel Rocard, is now demanding further and bigger attacks on the living standards of the working class. He is aided and encouraged by Edmond Maire, leader of the CFTD.

The Communist Party remains silent, locked into the government. The workers of Citroen and Renault have taken on the austerity offensive in the face of victimisation and racism. The working class can force the government to make the bosses pay for the crisis, to keep its promises on abortion and military service. In the process however it must build a new leadership that represents and fights for its interests.

policies of a Socialist government or to organise against them.

Using the language of class struggle, the Union of the Left came within a hair's breadth of victory in the 1974 Presidential elections. The narrowness of Giscard's victory made the left confident that they would win in 1978.

### Fearful

Then only months before the elections the CP leadership, fearful that they were losing support to the Socialist Party, launched a series of violent attacks on the social democrats. Although the allegations that the Socialists were seeking to water down their commitments as their chance of forming a government got closer were not without truth, the attacks of the CP led to electoral defeat.

### Austerity

The balance sheet of the Socialist government two years after May 1981 is not a good one for the working class, for women or for France's racial minorities. Despite the limited nationalisations and some real progress in the area of the notorious State Security Court, the watchword has been 'austerity'.

Prime Minister Mauroy, with the help of Fifth Republic technocrat Jacques Delors, has been



Campaigning for the Union of the Left.

torate who voted Communist. Thirdly, the impressive industrial organisation of the CP and their control of the most important union confederation, the CGT, could be used either to police the economic

notion that by cobbling together a mishmash of anti-communist, anti-gaullist parties an electorally effective coalition could be built.

Unfortunately for Mollet, his party was coming apart at the seams, together with the Fourth Republic. The SFIO gave its wholehearted support to the colonialist wars in Indochina and Algeria. Opposition within the party was repeatedly crushed and the SFIO found itself in a series of increasingly unstable 'third force' coalitions.

The war in Algeria implicated Mollet and his cabinet in torture and repression. Francois Mitterand, never a member of the SFIO, was Mollet's Justice Minister.

In 1958 General de Gaulle seized power in a semi-legal coup d'etat. The weak and inadequate government of the Fourth Republic had been dispensed with by the French ruling class. De Gaulle, who had been expected to prosecute the war with increased ferocity, disengaged from Algeria. The majority of SFIO deputies voted support for de Gaulle and for a new constitution that looked like an elective dictatorship. The handful of non-communist deputies who voted against the new regime, such as Francois Mitterand, won no small amount of political credit for themselves in the long term.

The dying SFIO continued to disintegrate. On the left a series of clubs and associations proliferated instead of parties. Mitterand was in the almost unique position of being a figure who could unite the left-wing groupings but, when he ran for President in 1965 no-one expected him to do well.

As it happened Mitterand forced de Gaulle into a humiliating second

round run-off. It seemed only a matter of time before the reformist left would return to power.

However in May 1968 the career of Francois Mitterand was interrupted by the sound of tear gas grenades and marching feet. Without asking the permission of their reformist leaders the working class followed the lead of students and staged one of the largest general strikes in history.

### Pathetic

Against this background Mitterand, suggesting he be made caretaker President, appeared rather pathetic.

He had chosen his moment badly, the CP and the trade union leaderships scuttled to restore order and, with the workers demobilised, de Gaulle hammered the left in a snap election. Humiliation was repeated in 1969 when the SFIO Presidential candidate, Gaston Deferre, received only five per cent of the vote.

### New

At the Epinay Congress in 1971 a new Socialist Party was born out of the ruins of the SFIO and the left wing clubs. Soon Michel Rocard would lead part of the leftist PSU into the new party.

Mitterand had understood that 'third force' politics was dead. The Socialists needed the

MAY 10 1981 was a day of celebration for millions of French workers. In Paris crowds surged to the Bastille, the city was deafened by the sound of car horns, Francois Mitterand had won.

Today there is little cause for celebration. The government elected in the wake of Mitterand's victory has not brought with it the promised change.

Instead, the workers of Renault and Citroen find themselves fighting a government that has cut their real standard of living. Women find that, out of deference to 'religious families', the cost of an abortion is not met by the Social Security.

Conscripts find they must spend a year in uniform, as opposed to the promised six months. France is developing its own neutron bomb in the face of the 'Russian threat'.

Many have been hocked by this apparent turn-around. The leftist rhetoric of the mid-1970s was deceptive, with its talk of 'workers self-management' and 'breaking the power of big capital'. If we scratch the surface we find, underneath all the verbiage, a bad old social-democratic party.

### Mess

French Socialism finished the Second World War in a mess. The Communist Party, because of its active Resistance record, had become the major party of the French working class. The Socialist Party (SFIO) was weak and internally divided with the ageing Leon Blum losing the leadership to Guy Mollet. Mollet and his faction used Marxist language but only to hide their rabid nationalism and anti-communism.

Following the expulsion of Communist ministers from the government in 1947 with the onset of the 'Cold War', French social democracy developed a strategy based on the so-called 'third force'. This was based on a

New Issue of IVP price 65p. Obtainable from The Other Bookshop.

The conflict with fundamentalist Islam

## The women of Iran

Reviewed by Ros Young

INTERNATIONAL Women's Day in Tehran in 1979 saw 20,000 women demonstrate for equal rights with men. This was a few months after the success of one of the most important anti-imperialist revolutions this century, and the coming to power of its leadership, Ayatollah Khomeini and the Islamic clergy.

It was a revolution that shook the world in terms of the massive mobilisations of the population and the ousting of the Shah's brutal dictatorship and US domination in the Gulf region.

Women had been part of this revolution. However the new regime's decree on the abolishment of the Family Protection Act and for the compulsory wearing of hejab (Islamic dress) was the alarm signal for the beginning of a wave of repression against women that continues today.

In the last three years women have been systematically driven out of the workforce into the home where their position as third class citizens is regulated by the Islamic codes on, among other things, marriage and divorce.

So why did women (and workers, peasants and the left) mobilise behind Khomeini and the clergy?

This is one of the main questions asked and analysed in 'Women of Iran'. This series of excellent papers were the result of much research and interviews with women in Iran. They were brought together through the personal involvement of Farah Azari, Soraya Afshar and Sima Bahar in the Iranian women's movement, and they explore the situation of women in Iran and the contradictions in their support for Islamic fundamentalism.

Farah Azari, in 'Islams Appeal to Women — Illusions and Reality' survey's Islam's attitudes to women, from what is written in the Koran, Shi'ite history and myths to the present day Islamic law codes.

She also gives a critique of the main Iranian theoreticians in recent

years who have had an enormous impact on organisations such as the Mojahedin and on the educated young in general.

An example is Dr Shariati and his theories of Islamic socialism and denunciations of 'western feminism'.

In her paper on sexuality, Azari brings together sexual repression, women's oppression and the puritanical nature of the Islamic regime's 'crusade against sexuality and pleasure'.

### Rooted

She looks at how this is not only rooted in the traditions of Islam, but also at the reaction against the decadence of western domination experienced under the Shah's regime.

Soraya Afshar explores the economic base for the revival of Islam. Through original research she explains that Islam, as a mercantile ideology is rooted in the merchant class and the bazaar.

They provided the base for the clergy's coming to power and this is directly related to women's economic position in the society.

Sima Bahar gives a historical background to the women's movement and Soraya Afshar presents an outline of the attitudes of the Iranian left to the women's question. These are extremely important for an understanding of why, before 1979, there was no autonomous women's movement.

They raise a fundamental issue of relevance to the interna-



Iranian women face increasing repression

tional women's struggle — do we fight for women's rights before gaining independence or socialism or do we begin now?

As the left in Iran said 'Let's solve the problem of democracy and then we will get to women's issues'. They contended that an autonomous women's movement only splits the anti-imperialist, working class movement.

The result was that when the attacks on women were launched, women and the left were in a much weaker position to fight it. At worst groups like the Tudeh party (communist) capitulated to the regime on the question of women's rights.

Together, these papers are an invaluable contribution to the debate on the Iranian revolution, providing a great deal of important material and insight into Iran, before and after the revolution.

Politically, the authors place the oppression of women clearly in the context of Iranian society as a

whole and the Khomeini regime's attacks on the national minorities, especially the Kurds, the working class and unions.

They also examine the differences in the situation of Iranian women, both in class terms and also nationally and regionally. The criticisms of the present regime (and also of the left) are given in the context of the history of both the brutal repression by the Shah and of western domination.

### Equip

This book should be read by all on the left and in the women's movement here. Hopefully it will clear up a lot of misconceptions prevalent on the left as to the nature of the Islamic regime and will equip us with a better understanding of the dynamics of the anti-imperialist struggle — that when successful it does not in itself automatically guarantee democratic

rights to women, workers and so on, let alone lead to socialism.

It is also of relevance to us in Britain, in the light of the growing attacks on women by Thatcher's government!

Azari ends on an optimistic note when she explains that, despite the repression, for the first time in Iran the question of women's rights has become a major issue.

The experience of being repressed violently as women since the revolution has resulted in a new awareness of women themselves as women, and a growing recognition of the need for an autonomous women's movement.

'Women of Iran — The conflict with fundamentalist Islam' is edited by Farah Azari and published by Ithaca Press, London. Available from the Other Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, London N1 (01-226 0571) price £4.50.

## Sheffield action against deportation

By Martin Hill

OVER 300 PEOPLE demonstrated through the centre of Sheffield on 12 February. The march, organised by the Sheffield Asian Youth Movement was a protest against the threatened deportation of Ranjit Chakravorty, a Bengali who has lived in Sheffield since 1977.

Ranjit came to Britain as a student and has now been offered a full time job as a social worker. Despite this and the invaluable help he has given to the City's Bengali community, with welfare advice and interpreting, the Home Office claim he has 'illegally overstayed' in Britain.

The campaign against Ranjit's deportation has met with wide support, including backing from Sheffield's

Labour Council and from local MPs.

The threat to Ranjit has fuelled the anger over racist attacks on the Asian community and police indifference and harassment.

Racist graffiti were found after an arson attempt on Shirland Lane mosque. A severed pig's head was left outside another place of worship. No police action has been taken in either case. One family was hospitalised when fumigation pellets were dropped through their letter box.

When fifteen youths attacked a restaurant the police were suspiciously slow to appear. When they arrived they arrested the Asian waiter who tried to defend himself!

Taxi drivers have been racially attacked. One lost the sight of one eye. Again, the only arrest has been a taxi driver assaulted by a customer who refused to pay.



FIGHT RACISM badges 25p each (+ 16p p&p); 20p for orders of 20-50; 15p for 50 or more. Send cash/cheque with order (payable to Socialist Challenge) to: SC Badges PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

## Root out the racists

TORY HOME Secretary William Whitelaw renewed the government's commitment to 'strict immigration control' in the 15 February parliamentary debate on new immigration rules. These regulate the movement of husbands and fiancés of British women, shifting the responsibility onto the couple to prove that the marriage is genuine.

Arranged marriages, common in many cultures, will be placed under the brutal spotlight of racist immigration officials and families will continue to be divided.

Home Office Minister, David Waddington revealed Tory government intentions to make immigration an election issue when he summed up the debate. 'I hope that plenty of people in the country will remember during the

course of the next election that the Labour Party is now pledged to repeal the British Nationality Act. We have kept our faith with the electorate and brought immigration down'.

These Tory threats show how urgent is the demonstration organised by the Campaign Against Racist Laws for Sunday 27 March in London.

Campaigning for the demonstration demands will be vital to defeat Tory plans and build pressure for a Labour government to carry out its promises. Dozens of trade union and Labour Party branches have pledged support for the CARL demonstration and this should be built on in the remaining weeks.

Carl Demonstration: Repeal Immigration and Nationality Acts. Stop race checks. Stop racist deportations. Unite the divided families now. 12 noon. 27 March. Jubilee Gardens, London.

## Nicaragua Benefit

Fun, celebration and solidarity were the themes of the highly successful Evening for Nicaragua organised by the Nicaraguan Solidarity Campaign on Sunday 13 February and compered by socialist comic Andy De La Tour (see photo).

The Shaftesbury Theatre, in London's West End, was packed to the seams to witness a thrilling assortment of song, comedy, drama and readings from a spectrum of notables including Uruguayan singer Daniel Viglietti; comics Alexei Sayle, Rik Mayall, French and Saunders; musicians Emma Thompson and the Johnson Brothers; poet Benjamin Zephaniah and performers Julie Christie, Maggie Steed and Alfred Molina.

The Nicaraguan Ambassador brought greetings from the revolutionary government of Nicaragua with a special message to Britain's unemployed and the women of Greenham Common.

The evening raised over £15,000, to be sent to Nicaragua for education and health projects — that's 100 percent more than the United States Government has sent in over two years!

Highlights of the evening will be televised by Channel 4 later in the spring. Don't miss it.

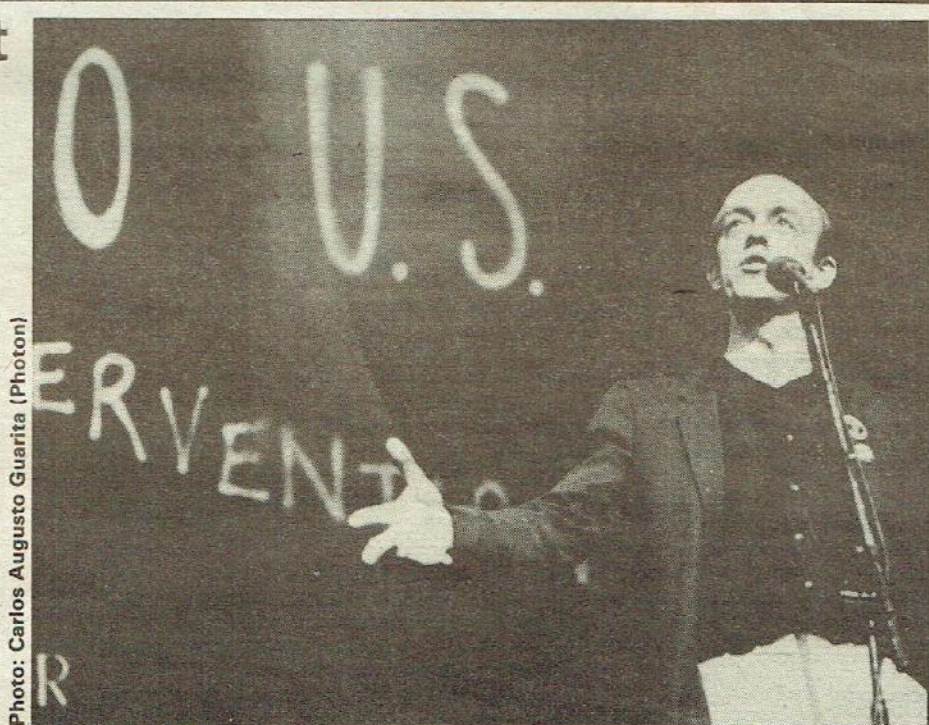


Photo: Carlos Augusto Guarita (Photom) Andy de la Tour

## DEMONSTRATE

Sunday 27 March

12 noon Assemble Jubilee Gardens near Waterloo Station

CAMPAIGN AGAINST RACIST LAWS  
 ■ Repeal the Immigration and Nationality Acts  
 ■ Stop race checks ■ Stop racist deportations  
 ■ Unite the divided families now

# Socialist Challenge

Militant five face expulsion

# STOP THIS WITCH-HUNT NOW!

## CLPD executive flouts conference decisions

By Mandy Moore

**THE NEW** executive committee of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy has overturned the decisions of its own rank and file membership and is to campaign for a 'sanitised' register proposal rejected by the campaign's recent Annual General Meeting.

At its first meeting the new executive backed the Hendon South resolution to the London Region annual meeting of the Labour Party, which embodies the principles of the 'Manchester Withington' amendment, twice rejected by the AGM.

### Mistaken

The new executive says the decision of the AGM was 'ambiguous'. But the resolution passed is quite clear: 'It would be mistaken and dangerous to incorporate into the Labour Party constitution the restrictions and requirements placed upon groups contained in the Manchester Withington amendment... accordingly this AGM believes that CLPD should not support such proposals, but instead should campaign for and support only those proposals which seek to completely reverse the

1982 decision or which seek to establish and safeguard the positive rights of groups... (eg the Greenwich amendment)'. The Greenwich amendment says that anyone can be a member of the Labour Party who supports the Party's aims and does not stand candidates against it. The new executive is turning its back on the two-pronged strategy which the AGM voted for — outright opposition to the register, with a Greenwich-style amendment as second prong. The AGM rejected a resolution stating 'this AGM therefore considers that in the coming year CLPD should campaign for two alternative proposals, both of which would replace the NEC's register. One of these to be on the lines of the amendment incorporated into the Manchester Withington resolution, the other being the constitutional amendment submitted by Green-

wich CLP to the 1982 conference.' The new executive is to implement a two pronged attack based first on Greenwich and second on a yet unwritten 'fallback position'.

### Clear

It is now clear that the new executive means to ride roughshod over the democratically-decided policies of CLPD. To ensure this can be done, six co-options were made to the EC on Saturday, all of those co-opted with full voting rights. All of them, although on the pro-register slate at the AGM, were defeated in the elections. On top of that, the EC also appointed 28 'keypersons' — all of whom again have full voting rights on the EC. Now the total appointed members at 34 exceeds those elected by the AGM! Only five of the co-options are women.

CLPD is about democracy in the Labour Party — what the hell has happened to the democracy of CLPD?

## Miners strike over sit in sackings

By Vera McElhone

**TWENTY-EIGHT** miners from Tynmawr-Lewis Merthyr pit in South Wales staged a sit in underground on Monday 21 February.

The miners, including Des Dutfield, South Wales miners union vice president refused to come up until

Wednesday 23 February, when an area conference discussed threatened closure of the pit.

The Coal Board is refusing to invest money to open up new seams.

The South Wales miners executive had a

special meeting the day after the sit in to discuss a response. Two thousand miners from Tower, Mardy and Penrhiwceiber pits have come out on strike in support of the sit in and to call on the executive to support the fight against closure.



Five for the chop: Clockwise from the top left hand corner: Peter Taffe, Ted Grant, Lyn Walsh, Keith Dickinson and Clare Doyle.

Photos: Militant

## THE LABOUR PARTY'S National Executive Committee is set to expel five Militant editors on the eve of the Bermondsey by-election.

The party's organisation subcommittee has already decided to recommend expulsion to the NEC when it meets as our paper goes to press. Even as the NEC discusses their case, right-winger John O'Grady is busily trying to wreck Labour's election prospects by standing against Tatchell in Bermondsey — while still a

Labour Party member. The expulsions, if they go ahead, will be the first serious test of the opposition to the witch-hunt. All the signs are that the right wing wants to draw blood. The most effective defence — which the Militant has so far rejected — is likely to be a firm stand by the constituency parties in refusing to

recognise expulsions. The NEC clearly has further expulsions in mind, so that the 'Militant 5' will be the test case.

The three parties in which Militant editors are members are Islington Central, Hammersmith North and Norwood, which are likely to reject any attempt to impose expulsions on them.

Hornsey Labour Party has shown that such attempts can be resisted, in preventing — so far — Tariq Ali's ejection. But much more is now at stake and if the NEC decides to press ahead it may well attempt to disaffiliate these CLPs, even in the middle of election preparations. They too will therefore be in the firing line.

These events make it critical for our readers to back the initiatives taken by Labour Against the Witch-hunt. LAW is organising a campaign to commit CLPs and individuals, in a large advertisement in Tribune, to refuse to recognise expulsions and to defend those taking this stand.

It is to approach the Militant-led Labour Steering Committee Against Witch-hunts for joint action in defence of the five editors if they are expelled, and is to hold fringe meetings at the upcoming regional Labour Party conferences, all of which have anti-witch-hunt motions on the agenda.

If your CLP or ward has not yet sponsored the advertisement, ensure that they do now. If your GMC has already taken a position against the witch-hunt, your officers can take the necessary action.

If you are a delegate to regional Labour Party conference, or can attend to help the anti-witch-hunt campaign by distributing leaflets and helping with the fringe meetings, please contact the campaign secretary: Keith Lichman, 11 Wilderton Road, London N16 (Telephone 802 1709).

## Socialist Challenge supporters beaten up

TWO Socialist Challenge supporters were viciously attacked in Oldham last week for wearing CND badges. John Wilcox, a member of the NUR, and Tony Wilson a member of the AUEW were attacked by skinheads in a fish and chip shop.

John suffered cuts and bruises, but Tony received

a fracture of the leg so bad that the bone came through his skin. Tony will be in hospital for two or three weeks and off work for up to three months.

Get well messages etc. can be sent to: Tony Wilson, Lees and Fawcett ward, Oldham Royal Infirmary, Oldham.

## Socialist Challenge FUND DRIVE '83

### No Tory charity for Socialist Challenge

The Tories are proposing that 'employers should be encouraged to deduct charitable contributions at source rather than relying on employees to pay their contributions to voluntary organisations'.

Now Socialist Challenge is a voluntary organisation which is of the opinion that the working class should voluntarily overthrow the Tories, which we think would be a very charitable act on behalf of humanity in general.

Somehow we are very doubtful that the Tories will recognise our charitable status. And we are very sceptical about the idea that employers will deduct contributions from their workers or shareholders to send to our Fund Drive.

So we do not think that the Thatcher team's proposals for making us all 'enterprising and fulfilled adults' are going to benefit Socialist Challenge, its readers or the working people.

So that means we are back to our own form of 'self help' and what the team calls 'self reliance'. Only you and your money can keep this paper go-

ing. And when you see what Thatcher's team have in store for you — read page three — then it's well worth your while to send us an immediate donation.

Bath	£26.25
JA	2.00
Mooney	5.00
SE London	290.00
Manchester	157.00
Outer West London	170.00
Islington	80.00
Blanco-White	40.00
Huddersfield	35.00
Liverpool	40.00
Middlesborough	40.00
Leeds	94.00
Cardiff	164.00
Oxford	120.00
Hemel	25.00
Lambeth	200.00
Swansea	40.00
Leicester	50.00
Leamington	18.00
Aberdeen	70.00
<b>total</b>	<b>£1666.75</b>
<b>total so far</b>	<b>£5289.75</b>