

# GREETINGS

# new **Socialist ACTION**

## Introducing ourselves

*Socialist Action* is a new weekly labour movement paper.

The first objective of the new paper will be to support all those fighting against the government

with the aim of defeating Thatcher and electing a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

The fight to stop the missiles and to commit a future Labour government to unilateral disarmament is vital.

Therefore we will support and help to build a socialist campaign for a Labour victory.

We will put forward a definite editorial viewpoint but our columns will be open to all those who agree with our immediate objectives.

Our editorial aim will be to act as a voice for the interests of working people world-wide — from Poland to Central America — inside the

Labour Party and the trade unions.

Our top priority will be to explain why the British labour movement should support the cause of Irish self-determination and freedom.

In the year of Karl Marx's death we will aim to show the living relevance of revolutionary Marxism for socialists today.

We publish greetings below of those welcoming a new voice on the British left without always agreeing with our editorial policy.

**Alan Freeman (Editor)**

of social policies. It has knocked for six ideas of consensus policies and restored Victorian ruling class concepts of government.

'One feels that almost a not so stealthy drift towards fascism is taking place.

'Any contribution towards uniting the labour movement to defeat this insidious development is most welcome. We look forward to your new journal *Socialist Action* playing such a role. Best wishes and good luck.'



**Ken Livingstone**  
(Leader of the GLC)

'A new paper, campaigning inside the labour movement to build support for a radical socialist alternative is a welcome addition to the labour movement armoury.

'I welcome an open paper which will promote the debate and discussions vital for the left to develop its strategy and move forward in unity.

'*Socialist Action* has an important role to play uniting those forces inside the labour movement who are fighting against the Tory austerity offensive and imperialism's war drive.'

## Flashlight

(Broad Left journal for EPTU members)

'Britain today is ruled by a thoroughly backwards Tory government. It governs on the basis of primitive capitalist theories in its economic policies. It is as authoritarian in all fields



**Tony Benn**  
(MP for Bristol South East)

'We need a wider range of journals writing about socialism. *Socialist Action*, if it can be independent of any particular view and can reflect the many initiatives that are occurring will perform a really useful job for the whole labour movement.'

◆ Now turn to page 14 to find out how you can help the new paper.

Socialists for Labour victory say:

# TORIES CAN BE BEATEN!

**HOWE'S BUDGET** marks the start of the countdown to the general election. The effect of his proposals is to widen the gap between those in and out of work.

The average industrial wage for a male worker is now over £160 gross. A married man on unemployment benefit with two children gets just over £42. Women's wages are much lower, and benefits often non-existent.

Over four million people are now unemployed. With their families this represents a mountain of human misery.

The Tories are on the

rampage. The measures they are discussing to carry out in a second term of office would remove most of our basic rights, and would provoke an all-out confrontation with the labour movement.

In this they will have the support of the SDP coalition brokers who have already voted for Tebbit's plans to smash up the unions. They are waiting in the wings with the Liberals to prop the

Tories up if they fall at the last post.

That is why the Labour Party leadership must pledge that it will never enter in coalition with these watered-down Tories. Any equivocation on this point will lead to more votes for the Alliance.

## Pits

The labour movement today is in retreat. But the retreat can be halted. Starting with the militant minority in the pits, in the factories, in CND and the

women's and black movements, a fighting unity can be organised.

## Policies

That needs policies, which the Labour Party and the TUC have already endorsed — socialist policies which begin to open up the way for socialist advance.

But unity cannot come from the left alone. The right must be forced to stop their attacks on left wingers in the unions and the Labour Party. Only by building on the principled

stand of the constituency parties who have refused to expel Militant supporters can this succeed.

These elements of strategy are beginning to be drawn together around the 'Socialists for a Labour Victory' set up in the House of Commons last week. This campaign unites constituency parties, MPs, trade unions, peace campaigners, black and women's groups. A lead has been given. Now let's build on it!

## Defend Greenham Common women

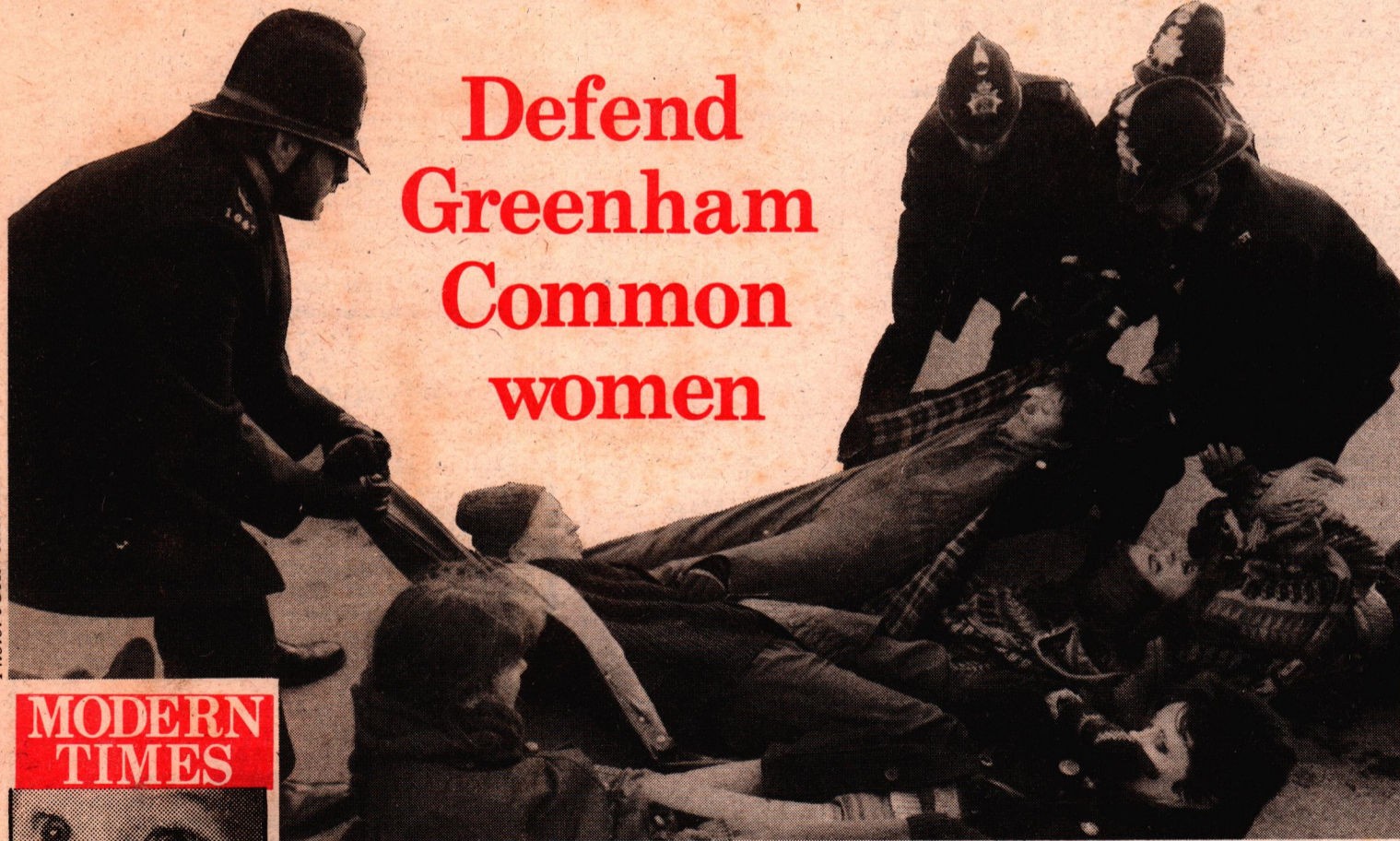


Photo: JOHN HARRIS

## MODERN TIMES



Guaranteed! Absolutely no pictures of Prince William in this paper!

**THE WOMEN** of Greenham Common have been in the forefront of the fight against nuclear annihilation. Their courageous and inspiring action has brought down the wrath and vindictiveness of the state.

Newbury Council, egg-

ed on by Thatcher's government and helped by the compliant Mr Justice Croom-Johnson, has got an eviction to drive them out of their peace camp.

His judgement could also stop the women from even speaking about cruise missiles. These outrageous and undemocratic decisions violate the right of political protest.

Every supporter of the

anti-missile campaign, every labour movement body, every student organisation and every women's group should demand the end of this sinister interference in democratic rights.

Socialist Action urges every one of its supporters to back to the full the following actions:

**The mass blockade of men and women of the**

**Trident factory at Burghfield on 31 March.**

**The 14-mile human chain from Greenham via Aldermaston to Burghfield on 1 April.**

**The 'die-in' in George Square Glasgow and the march to Kelvingrove Park on 2 April.**

Support the women of Greenham Common and stop the nuclear war threat!

## Workers demonstrate for Solidarnosc

**DEMONSTRATIONS** took place in Gdansk, Warsaw and Wroclaw last Sunday to mark 15 months of martial law. The biggest demonstration was in Gdansk where 1500 gathered at the memorial to the workers murdered in 1970.

When the demonstration re-formed, following an order to disperse, Zomo riot police attacked the crowd with batons, beating and arresting many young people.

The demonstration was watched by Lech Walesa from a backyard 200 yards away. Walesa has promised not to stay silent in the face of continued government repression.

The crowd chanted 'Free Anna' — a reference to Anna Walentynowicz, a founder of Solidarnosc from Gdansk, who is currently on trial.

Reports from Poland say that anger with the continuing government harassment of militants is mounting inside the Lenin shipyard, birthplace of the Solidarnosc union.

Photo: DAVID FOWLER  
Photo: LAURIE SPARHAM (IPL)



# CND EVENTS

**THE FALKLANDS** gravy train is well under way. The first reports are coming in of the scale of the contracts available to make the islands fit for prolonged British military occupation. The total value of the contracts up for grabs could be well over £200 million.

The biggest single contract is to build a new airport costing between £100 million and £200 million and a number of the big construction companies (Costain, Tarmac, Wimpey, Taylor Woodrow, Laing and Mowlem) have already flown experts out to start preparing tenders.

Smaller contracts include repairing the roads in Port Stanley — wrecked by the heavy military traffic they now have to handle (£2.5m), a new jetty for the harbour (£6m), and a £3m contract to sort out the road between Port Stanley and its airfield.

**A PROPOSAL** to set up a home defence force has been proposed by a motley crew of generals and admirals. A home defence force of about 700,000 is proposed to defend Britain against invasion!

God knows who would possibly want to invade us. Perhaps the generals think it would be useful for internal security? Pretty unlikely — such forces usually begin to reflect the strains in society very rapidly.

The cost of this brainchild? £120m to set up and £60m a year to run. A snip!

**LETTING the cat out of the bag** dept. While attempting to prove that the 'civil' nuclear power programme did not produce materials for British bombs, John Moore, Undersecretary for Energy let slip that Britain had sold weapons grade plutonium to Japan.

Since nuclear weapons are illegal under the Japanese constitution, we expect that our Japanese anti-nuclear campaigners will be very interested to hear of this ...

**STILL ON** the topic of parliament, Norman Tebbit confirmed that the government has been studying the feasibility of including a military element in its proposed youth training scheme for unemployed school leavers.

From the Concise Oxford Dictionary: **'Conscription ... Compulsory enlistment for military or naval or air force service ...'**

**AN INTERESTING** row has broken out between the French military hierarchy and the Mitterrand government. The cost of France's nuclear weapons is such that cuts are having to be made in its conventional forces (sound familiar!). The row has already caused the resignation of the French army chief-of-staff.

The 1983 budget calls for a 25% increase in the French military nuclear programme. Sounds like some urgent work for the French anti-nuclear movement ...

★ **7-19 March** 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** First public meeting of Civil Engineers for Nuclear Disarmament. Speakers: Prof Thring (QMC) and Dr Philip Webber (Imperial Coll.) At County Hall, London SE1. 6.30pm (More info about CEND from Neil Dodds, Tel: 01-889 9912).

★ **Thurs 17 March** Film 'If you love this planet'. Speaker Simone Wilkinson (Greenham Common Camp). 1.00-3.00pm, 34 Ravenscourt Rd, London W6.

★ **17-19 March** GLC Bunker Party at the Drill Hall, 16 Cheries St, Camden. Starts 7.30pm.

★ **Thurs 17 March** 'The War Game' showing at Hargrave Hall, Hargrave Road, London N19.

★ **Fri 18 March** Meeting 'Cruise missiles and nuclear war'. Speaker Mike Pentz (CND vice chair) at 8.00pm, Shrewsbury Technical College, London Road, Shrewsbury.

★ **18-22 March** Women from Greenham Common will be speaking in South Shields, Ryton, Hexham, Newcastle and Darlington. Details from Barbara Stabler on Newcastle 811668.

★ **19-20 March** Oxford YCND march from Oxford to Greenham Common. For details contact Oxford YCND, 10 Cunliffe Close, Oxford.

★ **Sat 19 March** Demonstration in Kingston Surrey. Assemble Kingston Poly, Penrhyn Road 11am. Details from Ruth on 01-949 6008.

★ **Sun 20 March** Faslane Peace Camp Festival

★ **Wed 23 March** 7.00-8.00 Surround Wandsworth Town Hall in support of the Peace camp and in opposition to Civil Defence.

★ **Wed 23 March** Film: 'The War Game' and 'The Peace Game' (The government propaganda film). 8.00pm at Jackson's Lane Community Centre, 271 Archway Rd, London N6.

★ **Thur 24 March** Aberdeen CND discussion with the Ecology Party. 7.30pm, 24 Adelphi (off Union St), Aberdeen.

★ **Sat 26 March** Glasgow West CND Rally. Speakers: Keith Bovey (Chair Scottish CND), Cllr Ian Davidson, and YCND Speaker. Film: 'Protest and Survive'. Starts 11.00am at Downhill Primary School.

★ **Sun 27 March** Ladbroke Grove CND showing of 'The Peace Game', at 1 Thorpe Close, London W10. Starts 3.30pm.

★ **Sun 27 March** GLC Bunker Party 7.30pm at Lloyd Park Theatre, Waltham Forest, London.

★ **28 March-2 April** International Peace Studies Week (for students) at Pimlico School, London.

★ **Thur 31 Mar** 12 hour blockade of Greenham Common (women only) and Burghfield Royal Ordnance Factory (mixed).



Photo: Socialist Action

Three thousand women joined Scotland's biggest ever demonstration for International Women's Day. This was the first 'Women for Peace' mass protest outside the Faslane nuclear submarine base near Helensburgh on 6 March. The feeling of solidarity showed the strength that feminism brings to the disarmament movement. Broad support came from the Scottish anti-missiles movement and the labour movement, including the Women's Advisory Committee of the Scottish TUC. 'Women for Peace' want to build on this to defend the Greenham Common women, to oppose Trident and gain support for the women's strike day of action in Glasgow on 24th May. Contact Women for Peace: Tel. 041-221 1177. (Sat after 1pm).

## Youth march message

# Defend Greenham peace women

**IN A TRIAL** behind closed doors last week, bailiffs were given the go ahead to remove the women's peace camp at Greenham Common. But the peace camp remains on the site.

There were over 450 defendants to the legal action taken by Newbury Council in the High Court in London's Strand. But most of the 113 women who attended the hearing walked out in protest after the judge had ordered for the second day running that the hearing would not be open to press and public.

Instead women read out statements they had prepared for the court in nearby Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Despite legal harassment the peace women are not going to be moved from Greenham Common. Last week the camp had moved fifty yards and was determined that whatever the courts would throw at them they would not be moved.

One of the first demonstrations of support for the Greenham women will be a march organised by Youth CND from Oxford to Greenham Common.

The march is backed by the Southern regions of the Labour Party and Labour Party Young Socialists. The marchers will be taking with them a message of support from the Lord Mayor of Oxford and the City Council as well as Oxford trades council.

Jim Coutts, one of the

march organisers, explained:

'We're going to Newbury to defend the rights of the peace women. It's about the right of people to protest now.'

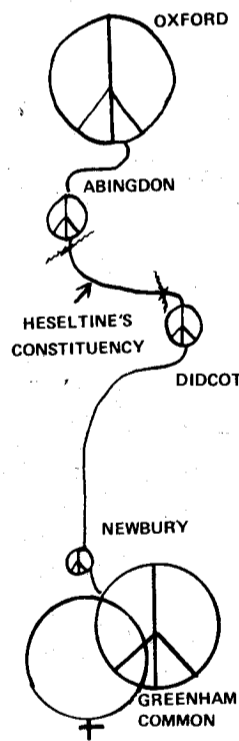
'The peace women have got the majority of people on their side.'

The march begins a spring campaign of action by YCND which includes getting the maximum number of young people onto the events at Easter around the peace camps and to the massive peace festival to be held in Brockwell Park London on 7 May.

● Further harassment of peace campers came last week with the arrest of 24 men and women at the Upper Heyford camp in Oxfordshire.

● At Faslane two women were snatched from their peace-camp by police under warrants issued by Newbury magistrates. After being held overnight in jail they were taken to Newbury for trial.

● Five British and one Irish woman were arrested at the Comiso Cruise missile base in Sicily last week. They face up to two years in prison if convicted. There is a picket of the Italian Consulate in protest on Thursday and Friday this week. Further details from Deborah on 01-226 1474.



**Join the march!**

**Saturday 19 March**

**Morning:** Civic send-off in Oxford Town Hall followed by march through Oxford — all welcome!  
**Afternoon** Rally in Abingdon. March on Heveline! YCND challenges him to a public debate.  
**Evening:** Rally in Didcot, followed by disco in Didcot Labour Club. Overnight stay.

**Sunday 20 March**

**Evening:** Rally at Greenham Common Base addressed by women peace campers. Coaches return to Oxford.

\* Food will be provided free over weekend  
\* Friday and Sunday night accommodation available for those coming from outside Oxford.  
Donations and details from Oxford YCND March '83, 10 Cunliffe Close, Oxford.

## 'This document is not party policy'

By Joy Hurcombe (Secretary Labour CND)  
**WHAT SHOULD** we make of the proposed policy on disarmament put forward in the NEC's draft campaign document?

**Labour Party members up and down the country will welcome the clear commitment to cancel the Trident programme and to refuse to allow Cruise missiles in this country.**

This was the very least we could expect after the vote for Composite 51 at the Labour Party Conference.

But this will fulfil the Labour Party's conference commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament. It will not give us a clear commitment to a non-nuclear defence policy.

The conference clearly voted to abandon all nuclear weapons, both existing and new.

To argue that we should keep Polaris, as the draft suggests, in order to give us a place in disarmament negotiations is totally contrary to the vote at the conference where our party voted to abandon nuclear weapons not to bargain with them.

We cannot have it both ways. This is a contradiction that will be exploited by every opposition speaker throughout the country and many Labour Party candidates will not be prepared to compromise.

It won't fool the electorate either, for once again we will be seen as the party of fudge and mudge. I for one will not fight on a platform to keep Polaris.

The whole section on Polaris should be taken out and replaced by a commitment to abandon all nuclear weapons in order to work for a non-nuclear defence policy for this country.

That should include nuclear depth charges, battlefield nuclear weapons and free fall nuclear bombs or are we keeping those as well?

One other area alarms and disappoints me. Conference clearly voted to close down all nuclear bases, British or American on British soil or in British waters.

It did not vote that this

would depend on 'agreement with other countries' and in 'co-operation with our allies' as the draft document suggests.

That would weaken the commitment beyond all recognition. It would appear to be an attempt to sabotage the policy of the party fought for and won at Blackpool.

The commitment to close down the bases has to be a unilateral act for it is dishonest to make-believe that America would agree to it or that NATO would welcome it, and it is wrong to suggest that we cannot act in our own best interest.

Are we going to wait for the other members of the EEC to agree to us leaving it? What sort of policy is that?

Clearly our party's commitment to NATO has caused much of the contradictions in the document. Composite 51 does not depend on getting out of NATO and had the clear support of the party.

We can have unilateral nuclear disarmament for Britain and remain within NATO but this document does not give it.

Even the thinking on NATO is highly unrealistic. What will the party do if NATO does not develop a non-nuclear strategy? How long will we wait? Will we leave if it doesn't? Have we got a realistic strategy on NATO at all?

Finally, have we to wait until international tension sharpens before we can pursue our immediate aims? Is that to be the ultimate cop-out on unilateral nuclear disarmament for Britain?

We have to unite around the policy of the party. This document is not party policy. It will clearly divide the party.

## Labour CND launches manifesto campaign

**AT ITS executive committee meeting on Saturday 12 March, Labour CND launched a campaign to include the full policy commitment of Labour conference to nuclear disarmament in the manifesto.**

**Plans include a newsletter, meetings and a campaign to get MPs, PPCs, CLPs and affiliated organisations pledged to the policy represented by the model resolution below.**

**Model resolution\* for CLPs and affiliated organisations.**

THIS (CLP/ward/trade union) expresses its concern and alarm that the draft campaign statement leaked to the press does not contain the full commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament which was carried by well over a two-thirds majority of the Labour Party conference.

We note in particular that the proposal to keep the Polaris force as a negotiating tool is totally contrary to the spirit of the conference vote on Composite 51.

Conference clearly and unconditionally voted to close down nuclear bases — British and American — on British soil and in British waters.

We demand that this clear commitment should be contained in the campaign document without compromise or fudge. We further demand that clear commitment should be made to support the position of Nuclear Free Zone local authorities.

(\* Note: this resolution can be used as a petition by altering the first sentence to read: 'We, the undersigned, express our concern ...')





The doomed Lewis Merthyr pit, South Wales

# “We’re not broken. We’ll bounce back”

WHEN IAN MACGREGOR took over the British Steel Corporation he declared his intention to make it ‘leaner and fitter’. The closure of the Lewis Merthyr pit in South Wales has shown that whoever becomes boss at the National Coal Board, MacGregor’s schemes for profit and carve up will rule.

The butchery won’t just affect individual pits. Whole coal fields will go. Reduced output will be concentrated in a limited number of super-pits and new computerised systems used to double productivity.

By Celia Pugh

In theory this could mean shorter hours for miners and cheap coal for

cut price electricity. Instead the new technology will be used to squeeze more profits out of fewer miners.

This means almost total closure for the pits in South Wales, Scotland and the North East. It means picking off as many pits as possible in Lancashire, the Midlands, Yorkshire and Kent.

The NUM estimate a minimum of 70,000 jobs lost. They argue it is an at-

tempt to smash the strength of the miners’ union and militant areas like South Wales. Arguments about safety and economy go out of the window as the government replaces coal with nuclear power and oil, which is 35 per cent more costly.

The NCB slimdown has involved investment starvation for the South Wales pits. In 1982, investment covering the 24,000 Welsh workforce came to £14.5 million, compared to £452.5 million for the 14,600 workforce in North Yorkshire.

Talk of financial viability dominated the Lewis Merthyr closure. But the NUM disproved arguments about exhaustion and geology. When the adjacent Tymawr colliery closed last year, miners were transferred to Lewis Merthyr. The NCB promised them work for 8 to 15 years. But these pledges evaporated as the Board refused the necessary investment.

Hope was offered of jobs at a new pit at Margam near Port Talbot and a planned non-polluting system for smokeless fuel at the Phur-nacite plant near Aberdare.

But the Margam project has been shelved indefinitely and the Ancit pilot system depends on a Government regional development grant and EEC investment, neither of which have materialised.

Last month the NCB parcelled Welsh pits into three groups based on present profitability — 11 ‘bleeder pits to be closed’, 12 ‘pits of uncertain life’, and 10 ‘possible contributing pits’. This is the clearest evidence yet that the NCB plan to decimate South Wales.

Of course, the most militant collieries appear on the hit list of 22 ‘bleeders’ and ‘uncertain’ pits. In 1981 the Welsh miners’ strike forced the Tories to make a ‘U turn’ on closures. Many miners thought the return to work was premature and based on empty promises.

Job losses across the British coal field have reached 23,328 since 1981 as pits are picked off and starved of investment. In December 1982, South Wales miners again voted to strike from 17 January if the NCB failed to guarantee recruitment, £400 million investment, a survey of reserves and investment for the Margam new mine.

In the ballot, only 2 out of 33 pits voted against action. Sadly the South Wales union executive proposed postponement of the January action on the thinness of promises from Area NCB director Weekes. Weekes didn’t even turn up to consultation meetings.

When the Blaengwrach pit closed at the beginning of the year, with no evidence of exhaustion, Lewis Merthyr miners were worried about trade offs against pledges of investment elsewhere.

Within days of their pit occupation strikes spread. As in 1981 the South Wales spark threatened to ignite a national strike.

The latest defeat has been a setback. But support for a jobs fight is still growing in South Wales.

In February 1981 only three pits were against a return to work. The January decision to postpone action was opposed by over ten pits.

Leading militants are convinced they have drawn vital lessons for the battles to come.



Tyrone O'Sullivan

## Tyrone O'Sullivan

(Tower lodge secretary)

IT'S THE right place and the right year to take action, no matter what people say. And that's not just to save pits and jobs. It would be good for the Labour Party.

The biggest mistake we made was to go for a ballot. We were building up the momentum when it went flat.

This defeat has taught us many lessons. We've got a strong wedge of a rank and file who are go-

ing for changes. We'll not win a ballot again. There are so many pits with a good life they are being used against the good areas. Areas like Nottingham don't see a threat.

If we want to stop closures we've got to picket them out. This was the great lesson of the unofficial strike in 1969.

We won't go back with our tail between our legs. We'll prepare for the next fight.

## Paul O'Sullivan Trelewis Drift

We are defiant. We're not beaten because we're going to come back fighting. We've learned lessons in the last weeks. We've used the arguments, we've got to do this, but words without action are no good. The Nottingham people said they wanted a ballot but they wouldn't

● What went wrong. p.12

cross a picket line. We've been constitutionalised out of action. We're not going to win in South Wales with national ballots. When we went to other areas we shouldn't have gone on a mission of diplomatic persuasion. We should have picketed them out.



Paul O'Sullivan

## The battle will go on

ON SATURDAY 12 March a conference of South Wales miners decided unanimously to call off their strike following the results of the national ballot.

The conference accepted that the closure of Lewis Merthyr is now inevitable.

But rank and file leaders are already planning the next stage of the battle for the future of their jobs and industry. DAI DAVIES from Penrhwiweiber and a member of the South Wales area executive (in personal capacity) explains:

‘We’ve lost the battle

over Lewis Merthyr but the fight against pit closures will continue. At the conference, speaker after speaker went to the rostrum to draw positive lessons from this strike.

‘As Des Dufield, area vice president said, “we’re not broken, we’ll bounce back”.

‘Next time we fight for a threatened pit we’ll go to every pit to ask them to come out on strike im-

By Barry Wilkins

mediately. The secret ballot was the biggest mistake. Next time we must spread the strike more rapidly by picketing and not rely on ballots.

‘The Coal Board is badly mistaken if it thinks this conference gives carte blanche for pit closures. Our vote went up to 68 per cent during the strike and this mandate for strike action against closures has not been called off.

‘So when the next pit is threatened there must be another strike which has to be spread rapidly.’



# IRELAND UNFREE

# Labour's campaign gets going

DAVE CARTER reports on the election campaign in Darlington.

The doors were locked at two by-election meetings in Darlington last week.

At the first Norman Tebbit addressed a small audience who had been locked in by the Tory stewards, who were alarmed by a large picket of trade unionists and unemployed cyclists.

Tebbit's arrival between Special Branch minders was notified to the bevy of journalists in the pub next door. They then spent the next ten minutes beating on the door of the hall begging to be let in — then retired back to the boozier to drown their disappointment.

The doors of Darlington's Dolphin Centre were also locked at a meeting addressed by Michael Foot and the candidate Ossie O'Brien because three times the anticipated audience turned up. The speakers spoke to the main meeting, an overflow meeting and an impromptu gathering on the stairs and in the foyer.

It was an emotional night for Darlington Labour Party activists marking the start of the real campaign by Labour.

Unemployment is the main theme of Labour's material — which is hardly surprising in a town where at the last election Thatcher said the Tories offered the only hope of reducing unemployment.

Disarmament has so far not been part of Labour's campaign, despite Ossie O'Brien's

longstanding support for CND which in this campaign has been kept quiet. However, the arrival of the CND caravan next week should change that.

A lack-lustre and low-key week with real doubts being openly expressed about Labour's chances was dramatically changed by Foot's meeting and the march last Saturday against the closure of Shildon Wagon Works.

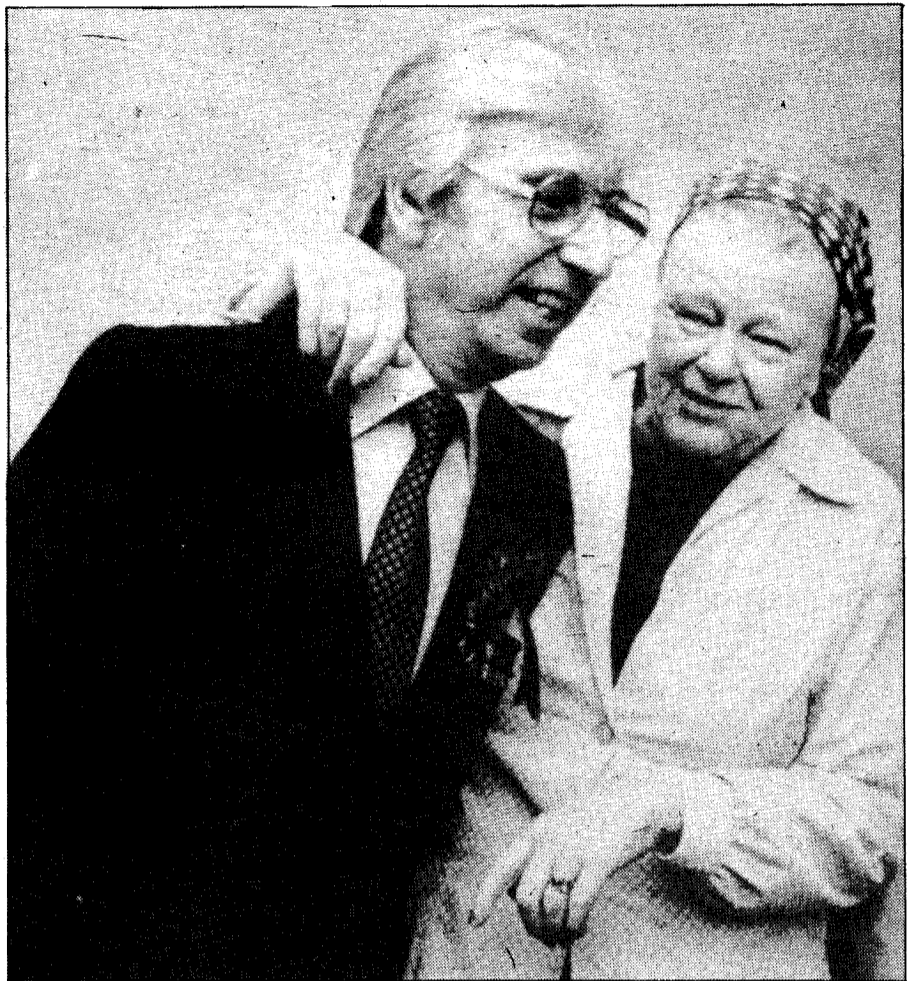
Over 2000 trade unionists backed probably the biggest demonstration ever seen in the town to save the Shildon workshops and the Wolsingham steel plant.

Suddenly the enthusiasm started to flow again as more and more Labour supporters realised Labour could win if it drops its mealy-mouthed compromises cautiously uttered at press conferences and takes to the streets with clear policies.

## Applauded

Defiance at the government's plans for the area echoed from the marchers through the packed town centre. All the shoppers stood to watch. Many applauded and joined in the march.

At last Labour was getting some vigour into its campaign. Roland Boyes the Euro MP for Durham summed up the situation at the rally afterwards say-



Ossie O'Brien — campaign picking up

ing: 'It's like a boxer going into the ring ... you have to stand and fight. You can win or lose, but there is no middle way.'

On Friday Michael Foot visited the Shildon works and told the 2000 strong workforce that Labour would save Shildon. But then added

'We can not promise to save every job.' This is nonsense. Every job could be saved if Foot implements the policies of disarmament and expropriation which Labour conferences have already agreed.

The rally and the weekend demonstration

prove that the enthusiasm is there. The people in Darlington are looking for a lead.

If Foot fails to give such a lead, the SDP candidate, who is a former Tory and cannot give a political statement without the aid of an auto-cue will be the main beneficiary.

Photo: Rick Matthews (IFL)

## European spotlight on the North of Ireland

RICHARD BALFE MEP explains why Labour and nationalist Euro-MPs support the setting up of the European Commission of enquiry into the war in the North of Ireland.

A group of us in the European parliament have tried from the very early days to internationalise the Irish issue. Our line is that it is not just an affair for Britain. A civil war is going on, and that's an issue for people everywhere.

This enquiry follows several previous initiatives, for example on plastic bullets and the H-blocks.

Lady Ellis for the Tories said that this was intruding into 'the internal affairs of our own country'. I said this was rubbish, because the European parliament was fond of looking into the internal affairs of countries like Poland and El Salvador, and we must now look at our own house.

The resolution was tabled by the Socialist and Christian Democrat groups, the two biggest in the Parliament, which include the Irish Labour Party and Fine Gael members. Fianna Fail also supported it giving it the backing of all the members from the Irish Republic. It was only opposed by the British Tories and Ian Paisley. No-one else.

We argued the others around on the basis that after thirteen years there is patently no solution, and that a resolution calling for a report on the economic, political and social dimensions of the problem was not unreasonable. Paisley moved to knock out the word 'political'. This has been referred back, but we have agreed to prepare a report on the economic and social issues — of course, they're all closely related.

It is difficult to see how the Tories can block it. Thatcher has called for a withdrawal of the 60 British Euro-MPs. This is a typical tactic which gets right down the European throat. But I don't see how she can stop an inquiry unless she is going to ban all the European Parliament from flying into Belfast.

I think it would be useful if we held some public hearings, but whether this happens has yet to be decided. One of the ironic things is that if we wished to interview, for example, Danny Morrison, we would have to do it in Brussels as he is not allowed into London.

I don't think that the inquiry will come up with anything sensational. It will probably end up being done by some liberal in the middle of the European spectrum. But in a way it is of value to send someone like that.

In some ways, a report by one of the Socialist or Communist MEPs is easier for the British government to push aside or write off as the reds getting at them again. It's more difficult when it's someone near to them ideologically. Even if they draw up a report that is mildly critical, that's an advance.

I think this report will help to break out of the ghetto of no discussion on Ireland, because it will be someone outside of Britain and Ireland looking at the problem and examining what is basically a territorial dispute.

It's about a population that feels it is living in the wrong country and is fighting to get out.

One of the French communists quoted Teddy Kennedy saying that the North is Britain's Vietnam. Kennedy was wrong. It is Britain's Algeria.



Britain's Algeria.

## Norwood expulsions blow up

A MAJOR row has blown up over the decision of the Norwood Labour Party general management committee to 'note' the expulsions of Militant supporters Clare Doyle and Lyn Walsh in that constituency, rather than actively defy the expulsions as in Islington Central and Hammersmith North.

This decision was behind the removal of Ted Knight, instigator of the Norwood decision, from the executive of the London Labour Party. Clearly a majority of delegates at the London Labour con-

ference thought a more active fight from Norwood was needed.

As a result of Knight's election defeat, Norwood secretary Ken Phipp has circulated a letter arguing that Norwood had been on the receiving end of 'an insidious smear campaign of lies and distortion against our CLP and particularly our chairperson Ted Knight'.

'This reached the gutter level of delegates being told in behind the scenes discussions that Ted has "moved the expulsions of Militant members from the Labour Party and that Norwood was backing the witch hunt",' Phipp says.

The letter goes on to

reproduce Norwood's letter to the NEC, in which in addition to 'noting' the expulsions expresses Norwood's determination to campaign for reinstatement of the expelled members.

In reply Clare Doyle and Lyn Walsh have circulated a long letter. This denies that there has been a smear campaign against Knight, but takes issue with Norwood's strategy of 'noting' the expulsions rather than refusing to implement them.

Doyle and Walsh say: '... we have strongly argued that "notes" really means "accepts", and this, in practice, means

# LABOUR BRIEFING

capitulation without a fight.

'Norwood CLP's renewed declaration that it will campaign to reverse the expulsions is completely undermined by not taking the expected action in refusing to accept the expulsions ...

'Today is not the 1950s and 1960s when the Gaitskellite right completely dominated the party. The overwhelming majority of

CLPs and an increasing number of active trade unionists are totally opposed to any attempt to trample on the democratic rights of CLPs.

'A determined fight does not "play into the hands of the right". It is capitulation without a fight which will strengthen the right, and encourage the right wing NEC to intervene even more boldly against left wing parties'.

## A PIECE OF THE ACTION

BY CORMAC

#1 3/83

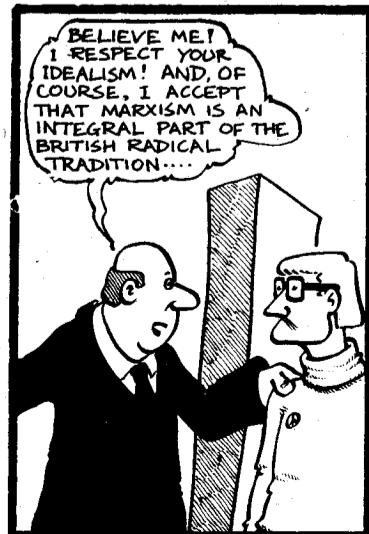






Photo: GM COOKSON

## Police try to smash campaign

**THE THIRD** march to demand a public enquiry into the death of Colin Roach, held on Saturday, 12 March, was attacked by police, who were determined to smash the demonstration and destroy the campaign.

As people marched to Hackney town hall, having held two minutes silence outside Stoke Newington police station in memory of Colin Roach, the police attacked the flat-backed van leading the procession.

By Tim Wright

They broke the van's windows and dragged out the driver, Labour councillor Twomey, who was subsequently taken to hospital as a result of his injuries.

They then attacked those on the back of the van and leading the march, arresting among 21 others Colin Roach's father.

There was no justifiable reason for the assault. The march had been entirely peaceful and, until the police intervention, promised to remain so. The police wanted to smash the march but they did not succeed.

Though temporarily disrupted, the marchers regrouped and continued

to Hackney Town Hall where a rally was staged. There it was decided to picket the station in which the arrested were being held.

Over 200 people then set off to City Road police station to establish a peaceful picket to demand the immediate release of those arrested.

At one point when the police tried to divert the march on a long detour, the marchers broke free from the police 'escort' and sought their own, more direct, route to the station.

Once at the station a delegation managed apparently to organise the

release of Mr. Roach and a 'juvenile'. When people tried to continue the picket, the police, without provocation, charged through the hastily set-up riot barriers and attacked the picketers. They arrested more people, among them Barnor Hesse, a long-standing black activist and a leader of the Colin Roach Campaign. The police have primed an explosion.

In a crude attempt to crush the campaign around the death of Colin Roach, the young black man they claim shot himself in Stoke Newington police station, they have achieved the reverse. The Colin Roach Cam-

paign, rather than being destroyed is going to become a symbol of black resistance to police racism, one which will inspire black communities and anti-racists throughout Britain.

On 27 March there is a demonstration called by the Campaign Against Racist Laws in opposition to the mass of racist legislation enacted over the past few years. This campaign, like the Colin Roach Campaign, has wide significance.

It is about confronting an increasingly racist, authoritarian and vicious state.

This march must have massive support.

# Self defence is no offence

**AFTER A** series of racist attacks in Newham in September of last year, Asian youths gathered to protect younger boys on their way home from school. Plain clothes policemen attacked and racially abused them.

Eight were arrested and charged with threatening behaviour and actual bodily harm to a policeman. All were subsequently charged with 'conspiracy' and will appear in court in the summer.

**UNMESH DESAI**, secretary of the Newham 8 campaign, explains the political implications of the case.

THE SLOGAN of our campaign is: 'Newham 8 are innocent! Self-defence is no offence!'. We first organised locally, winning the support of local black people and the labour movement.

Most importantly though we have attracted the whole-hearted and unequivocal support from local Asian youths radicalising in a racist society.

When the 8 first appeared in court a school strike was called. The response from Asian pupils in the area was almost 100 percent. From this secure base we have launched a national campaign with supporters like Tony Benn and supporters groups.

We have learnt from the Bradford 12 campaign in all this, but so have the police who are determined to teach black people a lesson after that victory.

But the Newham 8 is not an isolated incident. Racist attacks are continuing around the schools now.

This combined with police oppression of black people and the refusal of the authorities to take action has meant that young people are fighting back — protecting themselves and each other.

The youths have also learned that they cannot sit back and rely on 'leaders' and traditional organisations. They are beginning to see the connections between themselves and the Colin Roach campaign and the opposition to racist and sexist immigration laws. This is why there will be a cohort of Newham 8 supporters to the CARL demonstration.

Young black people in Newham are on trial not just the 8.

We need a total unity on race, class and sex; a combined fight-back. So we want all anti-racists to join and establish supporters groups of our campaign; join pickets of the courts; and if possible, raise the Newham 8 at union conferences.

The fact that the conspiracy laws which are now being used against the Newham 8 have traditionally been used against other progressive forces, most famously the Shrewsbury pickets, must be used to gain the support of trade unionists.

The attack on the Newham 8 is part of state racism. The Labour Party has clear policy to repeal the Immigration Laws and the Police Bill — the Newham 8 is the place where this fight should start. The Labour Party should not and cannot afford to wait until it is in office.

Black people have traditionally supported the Labour Party. But unless it puts its anti-racist policy into practice and throws its full unconditional support behind people like the Newham 8 it will find that black people will abstain in the next election with the potential loss of 8-10 seats.

I call on the Shadow Home Secretary who has recently promised to repeal the Immigration Laws, all prospective parliamentary candidates and present MPs, plus all sections of the Labour Party to publicly support the Newham 8.

Repeal of the racist laws start here!



## Abortion attacks in Britain ...

ANTI-abortionists in Britain are planning rallies, demonstrations and door to door leafletting over Easter.

They are giving out two million leaflets showing that two million abortions will have taken place since the 1967 Abortion Act.

The National Abortion Campaign is printing a leaflet for a

woman's right to choose.

Stickers saying 'Beware! Anti-Abortion Agency' are also available from NAC to counter the posters put out by Life and other anti-abortion pregnancy counselling agencies.

Leaflets and stickers from the NAC office at 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1. (Spare Rib, April 1983).

## ... and Ireland

ALTHOUGH abortion is illegal in Ireland, this isn't enough for Irish anti-abortionists. They are pushing through an amendment to make it unconstitutional as well.

The so-called 'Pro-Life Amendment' reads as follows: 'The state acknowledges the right to life of the unborn, and with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and as far as practicable, by its laws, to defend and vindicate that right.'

The Catholic church, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael (the two major political parties) are united behind the Amendment which will

be the launching pad for a sustained attack on women's rights.

If the Amendment is adopted, it could be used in the courts to allow anyone to serve an injunction on a woman suspected of planning a trip to Britain to secure an abortion!

(The Anti-Amendment Campaign can be contacted at PO Box 1285, Dublin 7. Tel Dublin 308636.

'No more chains! Why you should oppose the Constitutional ban on abortion' is a thorough and well-argued pamphlet available from Peoples Democracy, 38 Clanawley Road, Killester, Dublin 5).



Photo: JOANNE O'BRIEN

INTERNATIONAL Women's Day was marked with a 300 strong picket of Armagh prison on Sunday 5 March in solidarity with women republican prisoners. Women from the Greenham Common peace camp were among a delegation of 100 women from Britain. Sinn Fein women's department intend to visit the peace camp at Easter.

## Celebrations

A PACKED County Hall on 8 March listened to a panel of women speakers from El Salvador, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Palestine and the Soviet Union.

On 5 March 1000 women marched through London and in the afternoon the same number of women piled into a conference to discuss around the theme 'Third World Women's Struggle is First World Women's Struggle'.

## Mother's Day

YES, 'Mothering Sunday' was last weekend. 'Oh my god, I forgot' I can hear you cry.

Or are you one of the principled brigade who thinks it's selling out to

The Tuesday events continued the international theme and linked it with disarmament with sessions on 'What nuclear war means to women in London' and 'Money for arms or peace?' addressed by Angela Birk from the Hamburg Parliament and the Green Party.

On Friday 4 March 150 people watched the Broadside Theatre Group perform 'Cinders Ignite' at a rally organised by Revolution, the socialist youth paper.

the bourgeoisie to send Mum a card?

Of course, Mother's Day is a sop to women, a rip-off by the greetings card and flower merchants — but what the hell! If your Mum's anything like mine, she won't appreciate your radical stand.

If it slipped your

They also heard Polly Vittorini, a 17-year old school student and Revolution supporter, describe her arrest at Greenham Common.

She explained how important it was for socialists to give active support to the Greenham women.

'We have a unique contribution to make to this struggle because we understand the important role the labour movement can play in supporting this movement of women.' (Valerie Coultas).

Compiled by HILARY DRIVER. Send contributions to 'Male Order' Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street London N1 2XP to arrive not later than Thursday a week prior to publication.

# DEMONSTRATE

Sunday 27 March

12 noon  
Assemble  
Jubilee  
Gardens  
near  
Waterloo  
Station

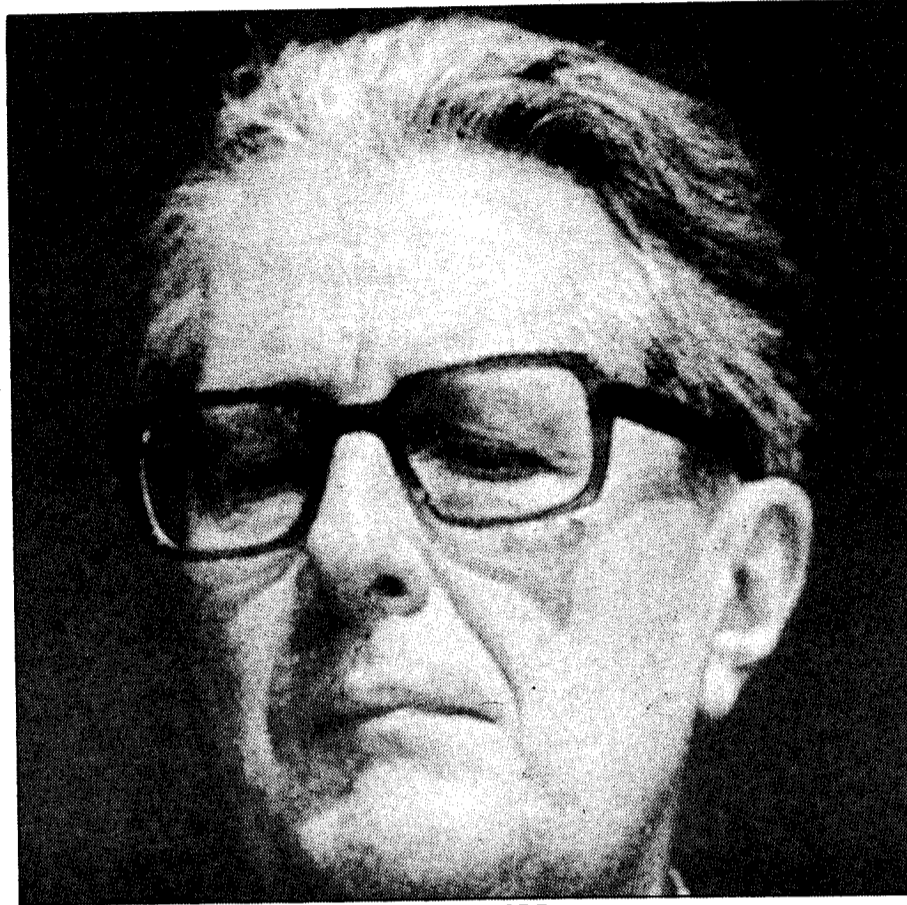
**CAMPAIGN AGAINST RACIST LAWS**  
 ■ Repeal the Immigration and Nationality Acts  
 ■ Stop race checks ■ Stop racist deportations  
 ■ Unite the divided families now





International

# The agony of Social Democracy



Hans-Jochen Vogel, defeated candidate of the SPD.

**BARELY A WEEK** after the new post-war record figure of 2.5 million registered unemployed had been announced, the German stock exchange exploded into a fit of euphoria.

Share prices went through the roof. The Kohl conservative-liberal alliance had won a decisive victory in the 6 March elections.

Never mind the worst economic crisis since the days of the Weimar Republic, the sharks of Düsseldorf and Frankfurt told themselves, at least we are rid of the dreaded socialists.

Similar relief was to be found in Washington where Ronald and Caspar Weinberger could hardly conceal their glee at the return of a government firmly committed to cruise and Pershing missiles.

On the evidence of the last thirteen years of right wing governments led by the Social Democrats (SDP), this reaction is hard to understand.

But the prospect this time, in the event of a defeat for Kohl's new conservative-liberal alliance, was that of an SDP majority government or minority government dependent on the support of the Greens.

Such a government would have been entirely different from those of 1969 to 1982.

Not that leadership figures such as Vogel — the SDP's prospective Chancellor — or Willie Brandt had suddenly changed their spots.

They would have attempted to continue the basic course chartered by Helmut Schmidt, with only minor adjustments.

The question mark was over their ability to do so.

The deteriorating economic situation of the federal government would soon have led them into conflict with their working-class and trade union base, and the pressure on them from the peace movement would have been enormous.

Two-thirds of the SDP's local organisations have already voted against Pershing II, and the Greens made their non-deployment the price for supporting a Vogel minority cabinet.

It was not the SPD as such that the financial markets and Pentagon feared, but the dynamic of a defeat for Kohl.

This would have been the signal for trade unionists to demand decisive measures in defence of the welfare state and against unemployment: boosted

the peace movement; and encouraged the party's left to challenge the leadership's policies. They no longer had the excuse of the liberal coalition partner.

Kohl now has a clear parliamentary majority of 50 and appears to have a

By Günter Minnerup

free hand to impose an economic programme to the liking of his capitalist backers and install the 108 Pershings allocated to the Federal Republic, while the SDP has suffered its worst defeat since 1961.

All this gives socialists little reason to rejoice, however critical they may have been of the SDP's right wing policies.

The election of 27 Greens to the Bundestag offers little compensation even if they enliven the proceedings in the new parliament.

And yet it is not whistling in the wind to see hopeful signs of a new era in West German politics.

The combined vote for the Greens and the SPD (43.8 percent) was only fractionally smaller than in 1980 (44.4 percent). This hardly amounts to a massive defeat for the workers and peace movement.

It is primarily a defeat for the policies of the social democratic leadership.

Vogel fought under the banners of 'social justice' and 'peace'. It was not his slogans, but their lack of credibility for decisive sections of the electorate that lost him the battle.

Less class-conscious workers, especially in the semi-rural and Catholic regions, had not forgotten that it was under the SPD

that unemployment started to rise. They decided to gamble on a Christian Democratic Union (CDU) still popularly associated with the years of the post-war 'economic miracle'. Disillusioned youth and the supporters of the peace movement did not trust the SPD to stand up to NATO and voted for the Greens.

In some respects the situation of the SPD today is broadly comparable to that of the Labour Party after the defeat of Callaghan in 1979.

Growing sections of both the party and the trade unions are beginning

to realise that the era of social peace and prosperity and of painless reformism financed out of the proceedings of uninterrupted economic growth, are irrevocably gone.

While the wave of redundancies and closures and the populist rhetoric of the conservative government will undoubtedly lead to a measure of demoralisation and disorientation, many activists will demand a more radical approach by the opposition and search for new political answers to replace the old, discredited ones.

The outlook is therefore one of intensified debate

within the SPD and the DGB (the West German TUC).

For the first time since the immediate post-war years there is the emergence of an anti-capitalist left wing in the West German labour movement.

So the 6 March was not only a defeat, it was also a watershed in West German politics. The years of paralysis, of the isolation of the left from the mainstream of working class politics are over.

The period of debate and regroupment now opening up will prepare the ground for future victories.

## Right wing gains show Mitterand's problems

**THE FRENCH** municipal elections on 6 March showed a strong swing to the right — not because of much increase in the right wing vote, but because of left wing abstentions.

but the Socialists also had some losses.

For example, the Socialists lost control of Grenoble, a town which has had a Socialist administration for 18 years.

In Paris, Lionel Jospin, secretary of the

By Paul Lawson

But in the second round on 11 March the Socialist and Communist Parties persuaded most of the abstainers to return to the fold, pushing up their vote up to nearly 50 percent, from a first round total of just 45 percent.

Municipal elections in France are an important test of general political opinion, with many ministers standing as candidates for local councils or as town mayors.

As a result of the right wing surge, the right wing parties of Chirac and Giscard won a number of major cities away from the left. The Communist Party did particularly badly,

and the Socialists also had some losses.

Without doubt this defeat is a judgement on the policies pursued by the government since it came to power two years ago.

The hopes of the left that Mitterand would implement a sweeping socialist change have been dashed.

The government imposed a wage freeze in 1982; savagely attacked

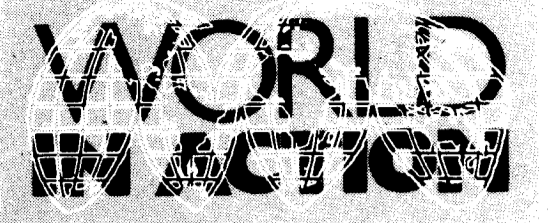
strikes amongst immigrant workers and in the car industry; abandoned the promise to reduce military service to 6 months and ploughed ahead with building up French nuclear weapons.

In this atmosphere of austerity, the government has become progressively less popular.

Mitterand is beginning to pay the price for administering the capitalist crisis rather than responding to it with radical socialist measures.

In the 80 or so towns where they stood, the far left slate — 'Voice of the Workers against Austerity and a slate supported by the ultra-sectarian PCI — received a total of around 4 percent of the vote (although this is a much lower percentage of the total national vote).

Given the rather large number of towns in which the far left was standing, this was a fairly good result. 8000 people attended a rally called by the far left campaign in Paris, addressed by leading figures on the slate — Alain Krivine and Arlette Laguiller.



## Jimmy with the wraps off

**FORMER US** Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski has just published his memoirs of the Carter presidency. In it he reveals Carter's candid opinions of Begin and the Israelis during the Camp David summit.

Begin — 'a psycho'. The Israelis? 'International bandits'.



## PCI wants 'unity'

**THE ITALIAN** Communist Party (PCI) held its four-day Congress at the beginning of March in Milan. In a sharp turn from the party's 'historic compromise' strategy of the 1970s — which involved an attempted compromise with the Christian Democrats — PCI leader Berlinguer proposed an alliance between Communists and the Socialist Party (PSI).

Such an alliance, he argued, could end Christian Democrat domination. 'Division between us' said Berlinguer 'can only aid the right wing'.

The very next day PSI leader Craxi appeared at the congress to turn down the proposal saying the 'time is not yet ripe'.

## Show trial starts

**THE TRIAL** started in Italy on 7 March of 71

people accused of being the 'ideological founders' of the Red Brigades.

The trial is a bizarre political show trial, with the 71 being charged purely on the basis of their ideas and writings.

Most prominent is Toni Negri, former professor of political science at Padua, who is in reality the foremost ideologue of the 'Autonomia' — a defunct ultra-left political movement which never engaged in armed struggle.

Negri has been in custody for four years. The original charges against Negri were brought by a Rome magistrate who supports the Communist Party.

CP leader Berlinguer describes the defendants as 'the plague'.

## Weapon after weapon

**THE PENTAGON** has attacked the Soviet Union for producing 'weapon after weapon' and wanting to dominate the world.

Meanwhile, the US military budget this year is \$9,200m (£6000m).

Main beneficiaries of US military largesse are well known bastions of freedom and justice — Israel, El Salvador, Honduras, Pakistan, Jordan and Egypt.

Military aid to Turkey is being doubled.

## Anna on trial

**ANNA** Walentynowicz, a founder of Solidarity from the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk, is due to go on trial any time now.

It was the sacking of Anna in August 1981 which led to the strike at the shipyards and the formation of Solidarity.

She is accused of trying to organise strikes after the imposition of martial law. Many readers will have seen her appear, with Lech Walensa, in the film 'Man of Iron'.

Socialist Action will give more details of the trial when we know them.

## Victory for Labour in Australia

**THE ELECTIONS** on 5 March in Australia gave a clear victory to Labour over the Liberal-National Party coalition, with a swing of around 5 percent.

Labour won sweeping gains in all states, with the exception of conservative Tasmania, and now has a 21 seat majority in the 125 seat House of Representatives. The vital issue in the campaign was the economy.

During the seven year term of Liberal prime minister Malcolm Fraser, unemployment has reached 700,000 — ten percent — the highest figure since the 1930 depression. Inflation is at 11 percent.

The employers have been on the offensive, cutting wages through a phoney indexation system, destroying social services, like health, education and public transport.

The Liberal-National Party coalition introduced a series of sweeping anti-union laws. The swing to Labour undoubtedly reflected the rejection of Fraser's right wing policies.

But Labour is firmly under the leadership of the right wing. Their main plank in the election campaign was a prices and incomes policy — wage restraint for short.

Labour's new 'charismatic' leader Bob Hawke was for ten years the right wing leader of the Australian trade unions, specialising in rapid settlement of strikes and 'work-

ing together with both sides of industry'.

This tradition is carried on in Labour's slogan of 'national reconciliation'. The defeat of Fraser undoubtedly represents a victory for the Australian workers and a blow to the bosses. The Labour movement will expect measures in their interest from Hawke.

Already one of the key building unions, the Builder's Labourer's Federation, has refused to call off its campaign of industrial action for increased wages and shorter hours.



# THE ACTION INTERVIEW

## KEN LIVINGSTONE

**KEN LIVINGSTONE'S** recent trip to Northern Ireland was a major blow against the media gag on the truth about British occupation of the six counties. **PHIL HEARSE** and **CAROL TURNER** spoke to him about his impressions of Belfast and the politics of Sinn Fein.

**The main line of attack of the right wing press and the media was that you didn't consult both sides. Why did you restrict your visit to the Republican community?**

Every political grouping except Sinn Fein and the IRA can come to London and put their case. I've heard the views of Paisley's Democratic Unionists, the Official Unionists, the Alliance Party and the Social Democratic and Labour Party at inordinate length in the press and on television.

That kind of coverage is just not afforded to Sinn Fein. You need to go there just to resolve some of your own ignorance and misconceptions.

But had some of the Protestant para-military organisations known that I was coming they would probably have arranged an event which would have put innocent lives at risk to gain publicity for themselves and smear the visit. We minimised the risk of that by letting only a few people know that we were coming.

What we want to do is to get Labour councillors, MPs, Labour candidates and trade unionists to go over and meet Sinn Fein for themselves. We're hoping that we'll get that ban on Sinn Fein lifted, so we can hold an open conference here at the Greater London Council at which all five parties can put their view.

**What were your impressions of the nationalist areas?**

The scale of poverty and unemployment is worse than anywhere else in Britain. Added to that is the systematic discrimination against the Catholics practised for centuries, particularly during the period when the Stormont parliament was run by the Unionists.

Many of the utopian groups on the British left make bland calls for uniting everyone behind some generally specious campaign. But no one can avoid the fact that if you are a Catholic you are two and a half times more likely to be unemployed than if you're a Protestant.

Although unemployment overall is 20 percent, within the male Catholic population it is over 50 percent. And on some of the estates in West Belfast 60-70 percent is not uncommon.



Ken Livingstone

So there is systematic discrimination and poverty. There are tracts of bad housing that make places like Bermondsey look like monuments to imaginative architecture. Nothing can prepare you for just how bad it all is.

The effect of the war has been that the area has been adapted to meet the needs of the military. Almost all the play areas and the lawns have been churned up by tanks and armoured cars travelling over them.

Each of the estates stands as if it is in the middle of a battleground. The British army have not, as we are told, stationed themselves between the two communities, but within the Catholic areas.

Their forts have been built generally next to schools or playgrounds or hospitals: Their observation posts are perched on top

### "You step out of your front door and you step into a gun"



Free Derry corner

of blocks of flats occupied by Catholics. You can't walk down the Falls Road for more than a few minutes without passing soldiers armed and ready to fire.

I came out of the house we were staying in one night and collided with one of the troops walking backwards.

It's an amazing situation — you just walk out of your door and you step into a gun. The nature of the patrolling is intimidatory — they move through the estates like cowboys from a film shoot-out.

This constant intimidation has mobilised the entire Catholic population against the presence of the troops there.

Anyone who says that there is support for the troops in the Catholic community is wrong. The only area of debate is whether they should be

doubting the enthusiasm as we walked around the streets. And it wasn't just for us, it was for the leaders of Sinn Fein, Danny Morrison and Gerry Adams.

The people we talked to were quite clear that what broke the hold of the SDLP in that area was their position on the hunger strike and Bobby Sands.

I think the SDLP is probably finished as the major electoral voice of the Catholic community in Northern Ireland. But it wasn't just that the SDLP took a mistaken position on the hunger strike.

People have seen the SDLP around for almost a decade and Gerry Fitt for a decade before that — and nothing has happened except it's got worse.

On top of that you've had the emergence of a younger, dynamic leadership within Sinn Fein with a

much clearer conception of socialist policies. That must be much more attractive to ordinary working class Catholics.

Sinn Fein are doing what I think is correct — not issuing ideologically pure tracts, but going onto the estates and the areas of bad housing; taking up the issues around the poverty; campaigning on behalf of the local people and drawing the political lesson from it.

That's the most valuable way of building support for socialist policies: taking up issues which face people on a day on day basis and drawing the political lessons, so that you agitate and educate at the same time

**How do you see political developments after a British withdrawal. Can things be moved in a leftward direction?**

My guess is that British withdrawal would see a major re-alignment in the North in a very short period of time, certainly within two or three years. That would also spill over into the South.

The political balance in the South is equally affected by British presence. I'm certain that the split between Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, and the monopoly that those two parties have on the bulk of the vote is a reflection of our continuing presence.

If we'd been out of Ireland for 50 years those two parties would have coalesced around a genuine Tory party and allowed the growth of a socialist alternative.

There are major elements within the Labour Party, the Workers Party, and Sinn Fein in the South which could form the basis of a new political grouping on the left. But that'll only come about when Britain is out, because now all those groups are divided among themselves on British withdrawal.

After Britain announced its decision to withdraw some working class Protestant opinion would become detached, not going into Sinn Fein but perhaps forming a parallel socialist party.

**How can we break the political logjam on Ireland in British politics?**

Our problem here is that there is a two-to-one majority among the British people for getting out of Ireland. The logjam is in the political establishment.

This is the result of Unionists work to ensure their own veto.

The Labour Party is moving very rapidly. The insertion of the word 'early' into the proposal for talks in the draft manifesto document reflects the pressure building up on the parliamentary party for a general withdrawal.

We may be nearer than people accept to getting the Labour Party committed to a withdrawal from Ireland.

On most of the issues we face, the pressure is built up in the constituencies, then the unions and then it is forced on the parliamentary leadership. This is one area where the major problem is the unions.

We may find that we can persuade the parliamentary leadership before we can persuade the TUC. This may reflect the fact that most of the trade unionists in Northern Ireland are Protestants in British trade unions. Catholics tend to be either unemployed or in Southern Ireland unions.

When the Labour Party talks about talking to the trade unions, they should also be talking to the Southern unions.

The pressure on the parliamentary leaders is a consequence of the prospect of a Labour government presiding over another five years of war and bloodshed.

**Surely the record of the Labour leaders shouldn't convince us that they're thinking of an early withdrawal from Ireland?**

They're talking about accelerating the process of consultation around the issue of British withdrawal. What seems likely in the manifesto is a statement that no grouping in the North can have a veto over the withdrawal process. That's the key.

There's a degree of war weariness — of exhaustion and a gradual realisation that we're not going to see a military solution. There's overwhelming public support for a British withdrawal admittedly on the basis of a 'get the troops home' position.

So I'm much more optimistic than I think a lot of other people are, because I do think there's a growing sense of despair among Labour MPs and not just them, plus realisation that we've got to get out



withdrawn immediately or phased out over a period of time.

**Is opposition to the troops translated into active support for Sinn Fein?**

There can be no doubt that Sinn Fein has won the allegiance of the Catholic working class in Belfast. Sinn Fein will be the largest voice of the Catholic community in Belfast after the general election.

During our visit there was no



# Socialists for a Labour Victory

By Jeremy Corbyn

**THE PURPOSE** of Socialists for a Labour Victory is to unite all active campaigning socialists in the party. Our aims are to fight the general election on the agreed socialist policies of conference, take the campaign out into the labour movement and not fudge the issues in the way that the party leadership is doing at the moment.

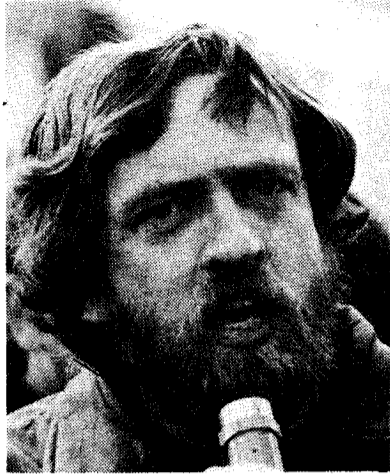
The inaugural meeting, on Monday 7 March at the House of Commons, considered a statement which laid out the aims of the campaign. That's now been redrafted in the light of that meeting, and will form the basis of the SLV campaign.

The statement will be circulated to all constituency parties, prospective parliamentary candidates, MPs, trade union branches, and other campaigning organisations — particularly black groups and women's groups. We are asking for their support and endorsement of the campaign.

Leaflets are being prepared. There will be public meetings and campaigning activities organised up and down the country. And there will be regional discussions of activists to see how the campaign can be taken forward.

The critical factor in our campaign is taking it outside, making it an out-going campaign. It won't be just an internal Labour Party affair. It must be a public campaign to regenerate the labour movement around the socialist policies of Labour.

The issues we'll be fighting on are: unilateral disarmament; a return to full employment including the nationalisation of the top 25 monopolies; a growth of living standards and no incomes policy; full campaigning and commitment to all Party



policies on women; the repeal of the Nationality Act.

There are several things Socialist Action readers can do to build SLV. First of all, get your wards and constituency parties to support the campaign. Take it up in your trade union branches and any other community organisations you're involved in, and get their support.

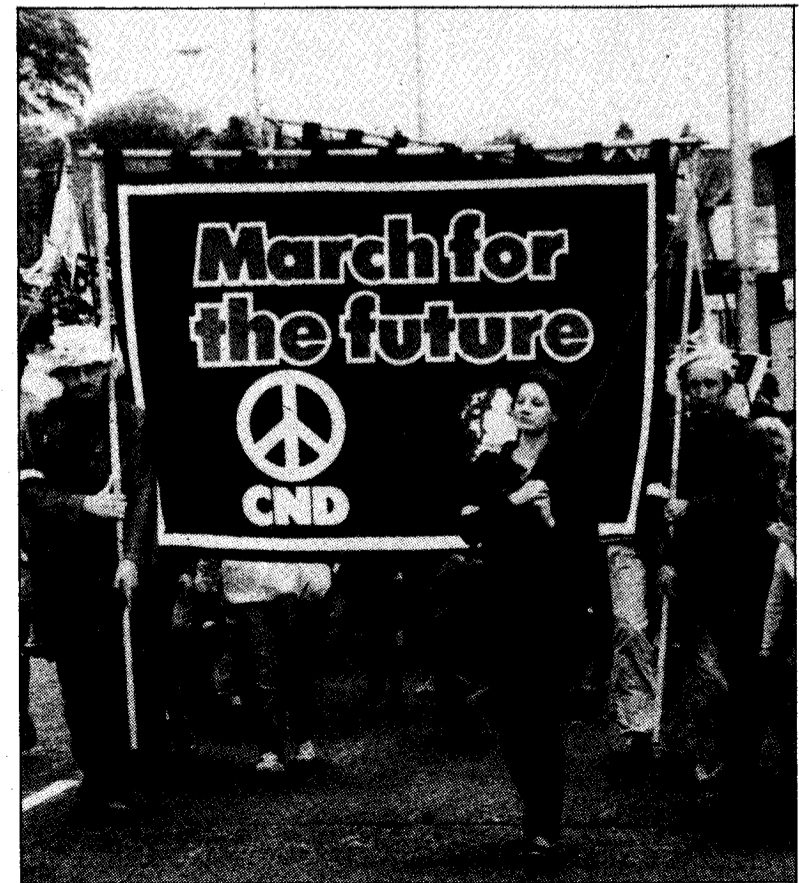
Ask these organisations to donate some money to the campaign, and to take part in local SLV activities.

We want SLV supporters to organise public meetings and activities in their area. We want to bring together all those hundreds of thousands of people in the community who will see any improvement in their position, any solution to their problems, by the election of a Labour majority in parliament.

These are the people we must convince that we're serious about carrying out our socialist demands. I believe this way we will rebuild the labour movement, rebuild that confidence and support for Labour that ought to be there.

**This way we'll build a real fight-back against this oppressive Tory government.**

*Jeremy Corbyn works as a full-time negotiator for the National Union of Public Employees. He is a Hornsey councillor, and a prospective parliamentary candidate for Islington North.*



To contact Socialists For a Labour Victory write to: Mandy Moore and Andy Harris, Joint Secretaries, c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

# SOCIALIST ACTION

**SOCIALIST ACTION** has been launched at a traumatic time for the British labour movement. The miners, in their majority, have decided to avoid a confrontation with the Tories.

Their caution is understandable given the currently remote prospect of a Labour government

replacing Thatcher in a general election.

The result of the Bermondsey by-election and the opinion polls before Darlington confirm that prospect.

Socialist Action editor **ALAN FREEMAN** argues that we are passing through a crisis of Labourism - the

dominant perspective of British working class for a century.

Such a crisis should be the moment to jettison the old approach and draw up a new strategy for the left for the labour movement, a whole which can begin to answer the grave problems we face today.

FOUR YEARS of Thatcherism have taken a tremendous toll. The 'resolute approach' has laid siege to the conquests of a hundred and fifty years of working class struggle.

The right to a job is no more. The spectre of war stalks the country. Living standards are among the lowest in Western Europe. Health care, education, housing and transport are threatened with privatisation and cuts. The inner cities are fast becoming wastelands.

Thatcher's assault is stunning enough. But even more frightening is the lack of effective response from the labour movement.

In 1945 the Labour Party was returned to government with a parliamentary majority of 150 — almost fifty per cent of the vote. That government presided over a new 'consensus'; bringing in a new age of prosperity; giving working people in Britain fundamental rights that they had fought for since the dawn of capitalism.

Access to jobs, freedom from want, health care and schooling came to be regarded as inalienable. The first challenge to these basic rights came from Ted Heath's attack on the right of the trade unions to organise independently.

## What alternative to Labourism?

But the trade union movement which crushed the Industrial Relations Act and turfed Heath out of office has failed on virtually every front to halt Thatcher's advance. And now with the Labour Party in total disarray, the danger of another term of Tory office looms.

Battle after battle has been surrendered by the TUC leaders; the health workers, the rail workers, ASLEF, the steel workers and BL. This is not to say, as some claim on the left, that the working class is solidly socialist and only held back by its leaders.

On the contrary these leaders are not imposed on the working class but are, in general, elected. The SDP/Liberal Alliance has made significant gains from the Labour vote. Previously a constant third of the working class voted Tory.

British capitalism, an era in which the old self-evident truths will have to be jettisoned.

The process by which new lessons will be learned will be a hard one. The defeats and set-backs of the last period have already begun to raise this debate amongst militants. Likewise the small victories that have been won have indicated the way ahead.

To start with the victories. Two years ago Tory MP John Corrie tried to introduce a bill to restrict women's abortion rights. A movement of protest and demonstrations began including protest industrial action, culminating in a massive protest march called by the TUC. The Bill fell.

A year ago the Pentagon decided to grace us with an unwelcome gift of 156 Cruise missiles. The idea was that the US war mongers would pay for the missiles — we would pay for the ensuing war with our lives.

A small group of women marched from South Wales to Greenham Common and decided to camp out at Greenham as a physical barrier to the delivery of the missiles. The camp became a focus for the hundreds and thousands of supporters built up by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarma-

ment over the last two years. Against the entire weight of the media and the Tory propaganda machine the camp and its supporters were instrumental in winning over 60 per cent of the population to oppose the siting of Cruise missiles. Even Tory voters were evenly divided on the issue. Of course the missiles have not yet been stopped, but a major victory has been won in the battle for hearts and minds.

The water workers won a victory against the government after years of being fobbed off with promises and arbitration. Drawing the lessons of the healthworkers dispute they organised for a national strike from the beginning and struck hard.

The divisions between the Tories and the employers, and within the government itself were sprung open.

**'Thatcher's assault is stunning enough. But even more frightening is the lack of effective response from the labour movement'**

These political weaknesses are not new. But in the past, in the battle against Heath and in the trade union struggles of fifties and sixties, they were not decisive for the outcome of the day-to-day battle against the capitalist class.

**This has changed under Thatcher. Thatcherism represents a new era for**

Through the resulting gap, the water workers won one of the few victories of a period of mounting trade union struggles.

**The lesson of the few victories we have won is this: that action is what gets results. Action is what changes opinions, action is what defeats governments.**



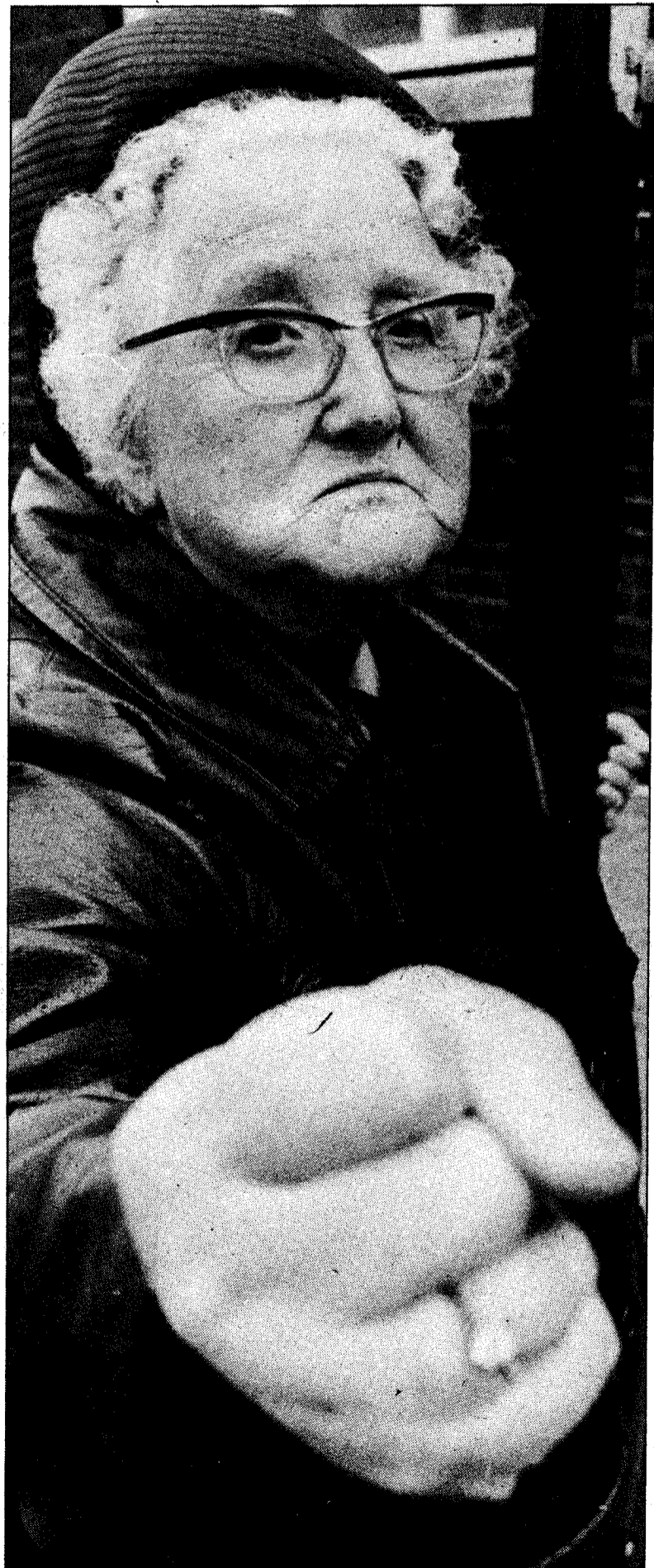
Yet is this enough? Clearly not. A balance sheet of victories must be accompanied by an account of the defeats of the last period. The starting point for the balance sheet must pre-date the Thatcher



# — A STRATEGY FOR THE LEFT



Photo: CARLOS AUGUSTO GUARITA



left who were building support for Grunwick and the mass movement that built the Anti-Nazi League were denounced as prophets of doom when they predicted that the Callaghan-Healey government was paving the way for the most right wing Tory government this century.

Action was not enough to stop this process. The 'Winter of Discontent' that started in 1978 had the effect of halting the decline in working class living standards.

But the failure of Callaghan to meet working class demands was not followed by the return of a government responsive to those demands but by the advent of Thatcher.

But the left was not prepared for these type of consequences. The building of a left wing across the labour movement that would launch coordinated action against the Tories was an urgent and indispensable part of preparing for any serious confrontation with them.

Such a left wing would inevitably play a full role in the battle inside the Labour Party to render the leadership of the Party accountable to the rank and file, and win it to socialist policies.

It would therefore simultaneously prepare for a battle with the Tories and fight for a government which would take the labour movement for-

## 'A left wing should simultaneously prepare for a battle with the Tories and fight for a government which would take the labour movement forward rather than backward'

Two alternative conclusions have been drawn from this experience. The first, espoused by the right-wing, is that the labour movement should not fight against a Labour government. This argument has been carried over into the Labour Party in opposition with some success. But concessions made to the right wing leaders have only resulted in a ferocious purge and the dropping of conference policies.

The second is that the struggle against the capitalist offensive must combine mass action with the political preparation for an alternative.

This means re-examining the old debate on the relation between direct action and political action. Ever since the death of Marx these two strands of socialist activity have been forced to run in separate tracks — symbolised by the confinement of economic activity to the trade unions and political activity to the Labour Party.

**The time has come to redefine the relationship between political activity and direct action and place direct action in the driving seat. It is time for the political representatives to become servants of the mass struggle and not the other way round as at present.**

So what form would such a perspective take in the light of the defeats encountered under the Tories? The decimation of the steel industry and of BL have been eclipsed in most militants' minds by the result of the miners' ballot.

If the miners won't fight over jobs, the reasoning goes, what chance have we got? An immediate qualification is necessary. The miners have not been defeated in battle. They have refused to fight on terms which they saw as stacked against them. But how could an adverse relation of forces have been converted into a favourable one? The answer lies in the political implications of any serious action by the miners.

In 1981 a similar movement won an immediate step-down by the government on pit closures. It was clear that Thatcher felt she was threatened by a movement that could sweep her from office.

ward rather than backward.

Support for such objectives at present only commands a minority view within the labour movement: judging by the votes for Tony Benn in the deputy leadership election between one and two million of the rank and file. But it is from this minority that an effective response can be built up and translated into a majority.

It is also argued that it is too late to effect the results of a general election. This may be so. But if the Tories or a coalitionist variant are elected at the upcoming general election then the type of preparation that will be necessary to fight such a government must begin now.

It will therefore be the first objective of this paper to actively support all those fighting against the Tory government with the objective of defeating Thatcher and winning a Labour government committed to socialist policies.

For this reason the paper will support and help to build a socialist campaign for a Labour victory. While we will put forward a definite editorial point of view our columns will be open to all those who agree with this objective. The editorial view point of the paper will be that of revolutionary socialism. In the words of the *Communist Manifesto* we will have no interests separate from the working class as a whole.

In particular we will act as a voice of the struggles of the oppressed from Poland to Central America inside the Labour Party and the trade unions.

We believe that the name of our paper expresses our guiding principle: that the mass action of the working class, the only force that can liberate humanity, must be informed by a socialist consciousness and direction.

For us that socialism is one which rejects Stalinism and bases itself on the principles of workers democracy — the ideals of Solidarnosc.

**It is this strategy which we believe represents the ultimate alternative to the crisis of Labourism which afflicts the labour movement today. The coming period will permit no other.**

cher government. In 1974 the working class threw out Ted Heath through extra-parliamentary action. Yet within a year the policies that the resulting Labour government had been elected on had been dropped

and after two years Denis Healey was imposing an austerity policy demanded by the International Monetary Fund and the Treasury.

The immediate effect was that living standards dropped faster than at

any time this century and unemployment shot up to over a million.

In the name of the Social Contract there was no resistance of any significant type from within the labour movement. Those on the far





Photo: ANGELA PHILLIPS (IFL)

TUC women's conference shouldn't stop at resolutions

## Women's TUC — positive action needed

**THIS WEEK, the 53rd TUC Women's Conference meets in Scarborough. A well researched report entitled Women in the Labour Market has been published by the Women's Advisory Committee to mark the event. It is a response to feminist criticisms of the Alternative Economic Strategy VALERIE COULTAS reviews it.**

The report brings together many points made by women's campaigns since the Tories were elected.

It takes account of the ideological offensive to drive women back into the home just at the time when women's demands for jobs are increasing.

Women need their jobs desperately. Today 62 percent of all married women have to work. Increasing numbers of women are single, divorced or widowed and are sole breadwinners.

But since 1980 the increase in the numbers of women working has stopped.

Women lucky enough to return to work or get jobs after school are forced into the lowest grades. Or they are forced to join the growing army of part time workers with little job security or pension rights.

'There is little doubt' the report explains 'that the high incidence of part-time work in Britain (4.4 out of 24 million) is a direct result of lack of childcare facilities'.

The report shows the different rates of employment in different ethnic groups. Among West Indians, 74 percent of women work. Only 9 percent of Pakistani women work outside the home. Religion plays a part here with 45 percent of non-Moslem asian women working away from home, while only 17 percent of Moslem asian women do so.

Many of these women are subjected to home working with long hours and disgusting rates of pay.

Black women are relegated to jobs in the declining manufacturing industry and rates of unemployment for these women have increased by 65 percent, compared to 55 percent for white women.

Most depressing of all is what the report tells about young women. Between 1980 and 1981 unemployment among school leavers rose by 138

words.

Women's complaints about union officials who stand in the way of action to change women's lot are not, however, looked at. And no mention is made of the Hoover women who battled against local AUEW leaders to defend their jobs.

You'd never know from reading the report that the predominantly female workforce in the NHS was misled for seven months by the TUC.

Instead the record of the TUC is dressed up. We are told that the TUC 'urged the government to amend the Equal Pay Act and Sex Discrimination Act' and ran a 'concerted campaign to reduce the working week'. Funny, we hadn't noticed these mass campaigns!

The report is weakest on what unions should do. The appendix on positive

action explains: 'In the first instance positive action is most likely to succeed in a workplace which is strongly organised and has a tradition of joint union-management committees'.

True, unions could achieve a lot through collaboration with Labour councils and nationalised industries.

But what about the 47 percent of full time women workers employed at firms with less than 100 people, and the part time workers in concerns of less than 25?

Can we rely on the 'good practices' of employers to do the right thing here, particularly in a recession?

The TUC has to come behind a massive campaign to change the law to force employers to create positive action programmes.

Penalties should be im-

posed on those who refuse. The TUC report fights shy of pushing the only measure that can dramatically change things for women and black workers in this country.

The gestures to feminism and facts in the pamphlet are not enough. We need action. If this disturbs the cosy relationship between the TUC Women's Advisory and the TUC then so be it.

Feminists in the Labour Party have not shied away and neither should they.

To start with the Women's TUC should back the Association of University Teachers resolution.

This proposal would guarantee that five resolutions go automatically to TUC Congress every year. This may only be the start of the disturbance but it is an assault long overdue.

## Longbridge or Long Kesh?

GRAFFITI has appeared on a wall inside BL's Longbridge plant in Birmingham. It asks: 'Is this Longbridge or Long Kesh?' This follows a series of police raids on BL workers' homes, some in the middle of the night, accompanied by physical violence by police.

BL's policy of demanding uncritical acceptance of anything has gone beyond even the victimisation of conveners and leading stewards like Derek Robinson and Alan Thornett. Now it extends to personal lives of the workforce.

On Wednesday 9 March three worker's houses were raided. One worker was suspended the following day on suspicion of stealing from BL Cars Ltd. The

police had found 'incriminating evidence' of a couple of car light bulbs!

The workforce response was immediate. Strike action by stores, stacker truck and transport workers brought nearly the whole of Longbridge to a halt by the weekend.

This is the first time this has happened since the rest allowance dispute in November 1981. A victory for the workforce will be a much needed shot in the arm, particularly for the stewards who have not been involved in a significant dispute for over a year.

It shows that union organisation in the plant may be down but it is not out. Given the right issues Longbridge workers will fight.

## Multinational fought

WORKERS at Hailwood and Ackroyd, a medium-sized engineering firm from Morley near Leeds, are now entering their eighth week of strike action with no sign of a breakthrough. They are fighting for parity with the sister-factory in Lincoln.

If successful, this would mean a massive wage rise of 40 percent and a boost for morale throughout the Leeds district.

It would also block plans by the parent multinational company, American Standards, to close subsidiaries elsewhere and move the work to Morley.

Aided by a new convener, the Hailwood and Ackroyd workers have built impressive links with other trade unionists.

● Messages of support and donations to: Strike Committee, 9 Anderson Street, Plumpton Rd, Wakefield, West Yorks.

## Nottingham lock out

ON 26 JANUARY, 63 workers at Daleside Hadden, a Nottingham dying and finishing firm, were sacked on the spot. Their crime? Refusal to accept the imposition of a 168-hour continental shift system and the tearing up of old agreements.

The scheme would mean compulsory weekend working, no overtime payments, effectively lower wages for hours worked and the destruction of the workers' social and family life.

for four years and employ 14 YOPs 'trainees' doing a full day's work for pocket money.

The victims of the lock out are maintaining a 24 hour picket of the works to get their jobs back and appealing for blacking of Daleside Hadden's suppliers and customers.

The dispute has the official backing of the workers' union, the National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers (NUHKW), Nottingham Trades Council and Nottingham's Unemployed Centre.

● Send donations and messages to: Daleside Hadden Strike Committee, Martin Lawson, 1 Eugene Gardens, The Meadows, Nottingham.

## Demanning and the miracle

THE LAUNCH of BL's new miracle Maestro was greeted by a walkout of nearly 4000 workers at the Pressed Steel Fisher plant in Cowley last week.

The dispute caused by management attempts to 'de-man' 14 people off the Rover and Ambassador line, resulted in an overwhelming vote to strike, without a lead from senior stewards.

Demanning is vital to management attempts to control and break the organisation of the shop floor.

A PSF worker explains;

'We arrived for work Monday night but everybody knew the day shift had walked out. Demanning will affect all of us. They want more work from less people.'

'So our section would not start work without a meeting.'

'Our steward recommended we go home as well as the day shift. We

voted on it and went home. No one voted against.

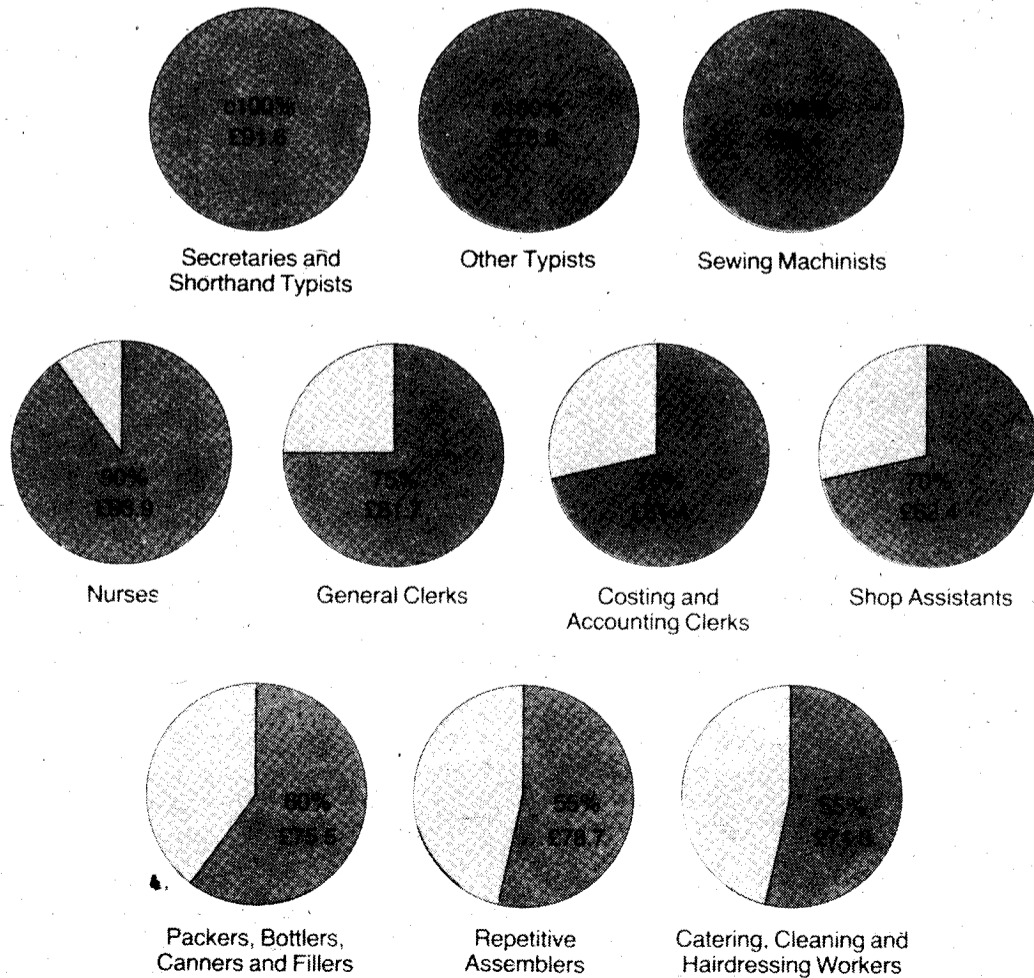
'A mass meeting on Wednesday morning decided to go back because the 14 blokes were put back on the line. This was a big victory.'

'Management were scared of the Maestro being stopped. But they tried it again on Thursday, nine blokes were taken out of the paint shop and again the day and night paint shop shift went home.'

'We had a mass meeting the following Monday at which the senior steward recommended a return to work on the agreement that talks would continue with management. The recommendation was accepted, but whatever the TGWU officials agree to, the mood of the workforce is definitely opposed to demanning.'

'The trouble is not over yet.'

Lower paid groups where women predominate  
Proportion of women in occupational groups with average earnings





# economic notebook



# Worse than the crash of 1929

Chancellor Geoffrey Howe is claiming his budget will 'revive British industry'.

This has been the Tory theme since 1979 when Thatcher boasted that British industry was going to get 'leaner and fitter'.

In October 1981 she was saying: 'Today we see British industry slowly but inexorably improving.' But the devastation and disaster that has hit manufacturing industry since 1979 is unprecedented.

The collapse of British manufacturing industry is far worse than anything that happened in the thirties and even worse than the great crash of 1929.

Between the peak of output in May 1979 and November 1982 manufacturing production fell by 20 per cent. At the end of 1982 production had declined to the level of 1967.

A collapse on that scale has no precedent in the entire history of capitalism outside the industrial collapse of the thirties.

In just over three years 21 per cent of the jobs in manufacturing have been wiped out. In iron and steel the output has fallen by 43 per cent. Motor vehicle output has dropped by 36 per cent and textiles production, metal goods production and manufacturing investment have declined by 32 per cent, 29 per cent and 32 per cent respectively.

In some major industries a third of the workers have lost their jobs. At firms like Talbot and Massey Ferguson, job losses total 70 per cent and over (see table).

Under Thatcher there has been a collapse of manufacturing industry that is far worse than

anything that has taken place since the Industrial Revolution.

The slumps of 1920, 1929 and the thirties are all eclipsed by what is taking place now.

By John Ross

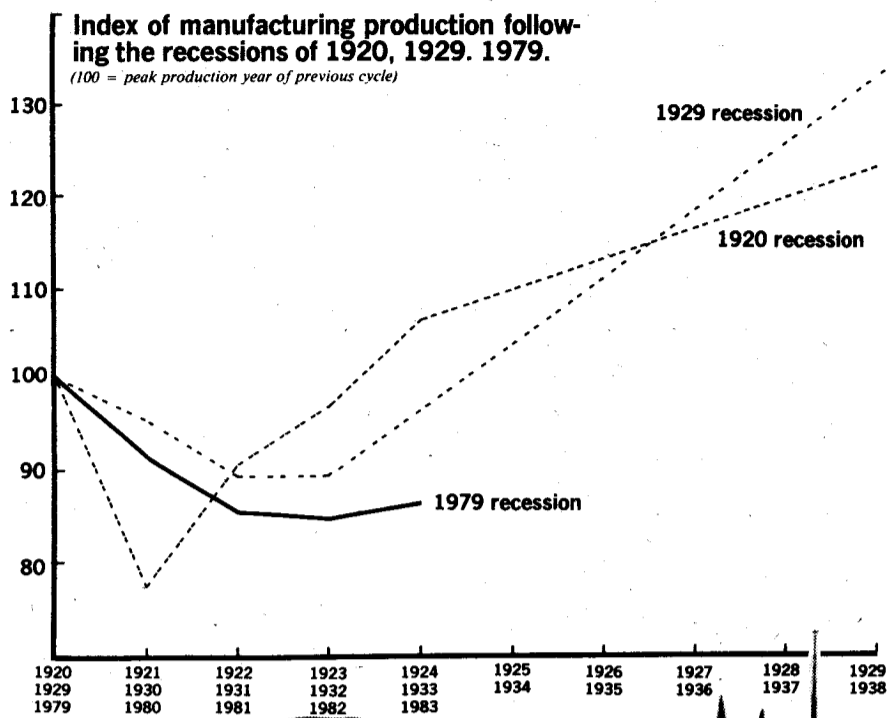
The 1921 slump was a violent readjustment to the economy after the Great War. Although the initial fall in production was the sharpest in British history, recovery began after only one year and then manufacturing output rose for the next eight years.

The 1929 slump lasted much longer and recovery did not get underway for three years. But from then on the rest of the thirties saw one of the most rapid increases of output ever recorded by manufacturing industry.

Unlike other sectors of the economy in the thirties manufacturing escaped the devastation of the recession.

Since 1979 manufacturing has slid rapidly down hill, and three years after the recession began it's still on the slide.

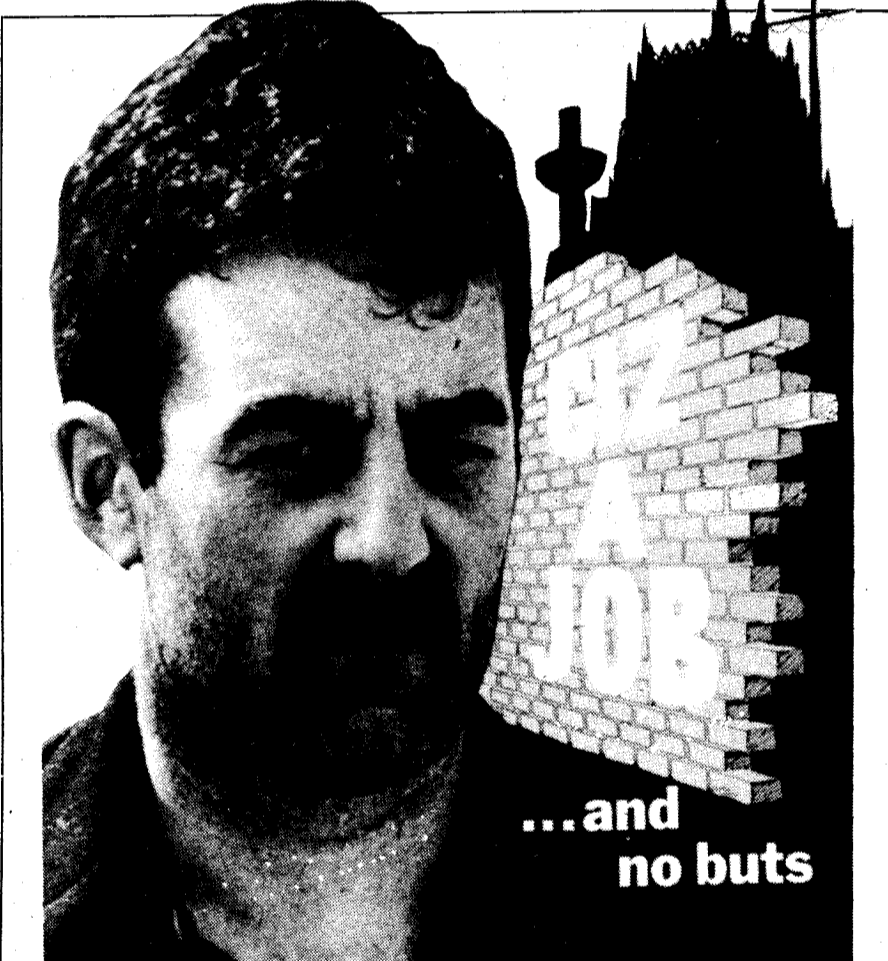
Thatcherism is not 'a return to the thirties'. She and her cabinet have presided over the biggest and the worst decline ever in manufacturing production. Sir Geoffrey Howe has got a lot on his plate if he is going to 'revive British industry'!



Percentage loss of jobs: 1977-82

Talbot	73%
Massey Ferguson	70%
British Leyland	53%
British Steel	50%
Dunlop	49%
Tube Investments	45%
GKN	45%
Philips	45%
Courtaulds	44%
Caterpillar	42%
Vauxhall	33%
Babcock International	33%
John Brown	32%

Source: Financial Times, 9 December 1982



...and no butts

Posters 50p each from Merseyside Trade Union, Community and Unemployed Resource Centre, Hardman Street, Liverpool.

## Helping the aged

Once the British copper was well known for taking old ladies across busy roads. Now they have taken solicitude further and started a home visit scheme.

One night 12 West Midland's plain clothes men decided to go and cheer up 77-year old Isabel Wilson. In their boyish enthusiasm they didn't knock but good humouredly broke her door down. The whole idea being to give her a surprise.

The police told her that they had been tipped off that her flat had a store of pot. One kindly fuzz is rumoured to have said: 'We just wanted to space out with her and put a little fun in her life.'

For some odd reason Mrs Wilson just did not appreciate being wakened up in the small hours by 12 boisterous coppers

and even expects them to apologise for trying to do her a good deed.

Some people are just never satisfied.

By Bob Pennington

Another group from the West Midlands decided to pop in and see two people in their sixties and a 90-year old lady. The cops decided a nice game of forfeits would be just the job for the old trio.

When the 64-year old man did not answer his question right the police spreadeagled him over a bed and poked a gun at his head.

After all if you don't get the answers fight you have to pay the forfeit, so he could hardly grumble!

Sir Philip Knights, the West Midlands' police boss has denied his lads against charges of 'running up and down



the country waving firearms like lollipops'.

He is right — they have only been doing it on their own patch.

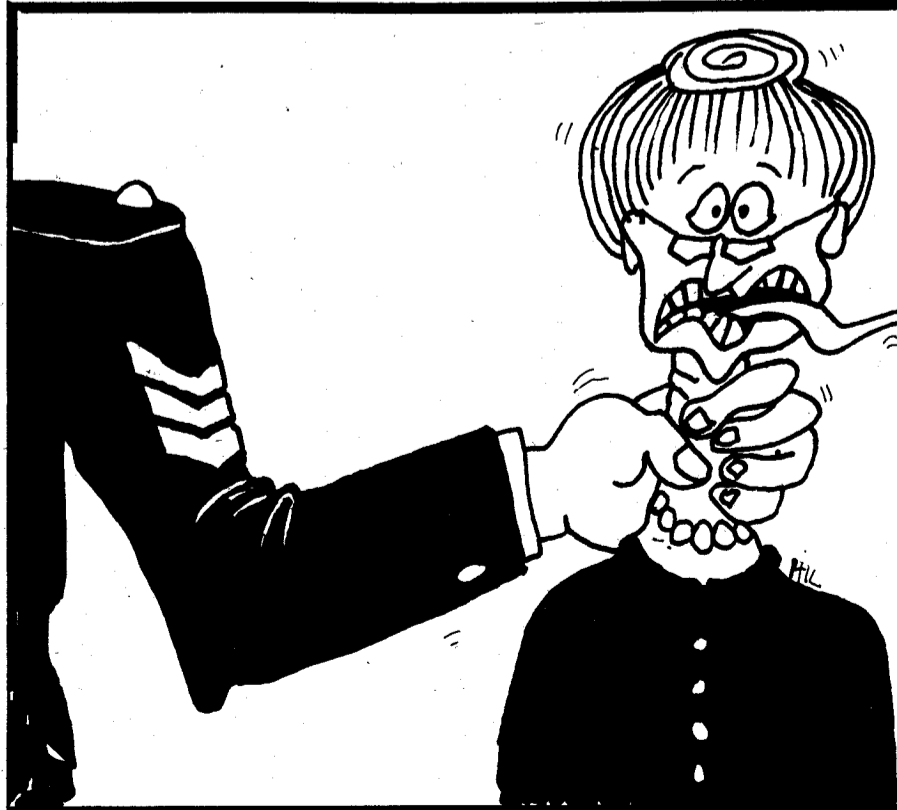
But their example is being taken up. Not to be outdone two of the Liverpool police slipped in to see 73-year old Harriet Mellor of Edge Hill.

Being loving types of lads they insisted on giving Harriet a few hugs and squeezes, which left her with bruises and cuts. Yes you've guessed it. Now people are moaning

when the police start showing a little affection.

All these moaners have a cheek. In none of these cases did the policemen play their favourite game of cops and robbers as the Met did with Steven Waldorf when they shot for real.

Compiled by BOB PENNINGTON. Send contributions to Worm's Eye, Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP to arrive not later than Thursday a week prior to publication.





# Socialist Action

## The miners — what went wrong?

THE VOTE in the mineworkers union against fighting pit closures is a major defeat for the whole labour movement. It has opened the door for the whole-scale 'rationalisation' of the mines on a similar scale to steel and BL.

It has closed the door on the possibility of a major industrial fightback to defeat the Tories before the general election.

So what went wrong? The South Wales miners did all they could to build on their militancy by spreading the dispute on an area-by-area basis. But the right wing worked against the strike from the beginning.

## WAVERED

The national executive wavered. After first declaring that a national ballot was unnecessary it decided to call off the strikes that were due to start and go for a ballot.

The left on the executive fought hard for a 'yes' vote. But even in Yorkshire and Scotland the necessary 55 per cent was not reached. The Welsh miners had 1,200 lobbyists campaigning throughout the coal fields for a 'yes' vote.

Whatever criticisms can be made of the tactics of the executive no one can claim that a lead was not given or that the issues were not clear. Indeed Thatcher went out of her way to raise the stakes by her lavish praise of steel boss McGregor as the best person to rationalise the coal industry.

In no other union and in no other industry has such a clear lead been given in the recent past. But they voted no.

The reasons why lie outside the NUM. Of course, there were particular reasons for not fighting now: it is not the best time of year. There are huge coal stocks.

But the NUM anticipated this by promising that '... we would not sit around waiting for coal stocks to dwindle. It would be a short sharp dispute straight to the relevant point. We would also call on the other unions.'

Nor was the issue confined to the future of one pit. The NUM made clear that the fight was about EEC plans for the re-structuring of the European coal industry, involving the closure of pits in peripheral areas including Wales and Scotland, concentration on 'super-pits' and eventual privatisation.

## EXPLANATION

It is at the level of the leadership of the labour movement as a whole that the explanation for the ballot defeat is to be found.

The problem is not what Arthur Scargill did or did not do inside the NUM.

The problem is that the left trade union leaders have failed to organise the forces at the base of the labour movement to deal with the right wing.

The NUM vote, the Tatchell vote in Bermondsey, Benn's vote for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party in the unions show that there is a large minority in the working class who will consistently support left policies, who will fight against the Tories and are prepared to confront the sell-out policies of the right wing.

Scargill and Benn have not so far organised this minority for a fight across sectoral lines.

Inside the NUM the left is regrouping for a fight around the strategy that puts the interests of miners and the working class before those of multi-national capital. This entails combatting the witch hunt, fighting for socialist policies in the manifesto.

It means controlling the block vote, mandating delegates to TUC and Labour Party conferences, fighting to remove the right wing.

Broad Lefts are beginning to be built in the unions which take up the main policy issues — campaigning Broad Lefts not electoral machines. The miners' vote has shown that sectoralism is dead; the relying on gut militancy is a thing of the past.

Understanding that the right wing leadership of the labour movement is a problem affecting every sector is a precondition for advance. This is the new challenge that the left, which is a strong and active minority in the class, must take up.

The future of the whole class depends on how we take up this challenge.



Photo: GM COOKSON

**Reg Race**  
(MP for Wood Green)

'Greetings to *Socialist Action*. I wish it a long life and success. It is crucial that the labour movement develops new methods of exercising leverage over the ideas prevailing within the working class, and I hope *Socialist Action* will enable the movement to be more successful in this respect.'

**George Hope**  
(Divisional Organiser, AUEW-TASS No. 16 Division)

'It gives me great pleasure to write in support of the launching of a new paper on the left of the labour movement pledged to fight for socialism, to fight for the return of a Labour government pledged to socialist policies and to fight for the defeat of the present Tory government of Margaret Thatcher.'

'Sometimes in the past, I have had differences with your policies and other times I have disagreed with your tactics, but I seriously believe that, if we are going to achieve socialism in Britain, all groups, factions and parties on the left have got to learn how to work together — our immediate aims should be as set out in your 'launch' publicity.'

'I wish you every success. Best wishes for the future! More power to your press!'

**Ron Brown**  
(MP for Leith)

'The Left can never have enough newspapers and I particularly welcome the addition of *Socialist Action* as another weapon for workers to use in the struggle against the Tories and for socialist policies.'

**Dennis Canavan**  
(MP for West Stirlingshire)

'I am delighted to hear about the launch of *Socialist Action*. The labour movement certainly requires an additional voice at this particular time to express the aspirations of working people and to counteract the bias of the mass media.'

'My hope is that *Socialist Action* will

make a valuable contribution to the fight for democratic socialism in this country and throughout the world.'

**Les Huckfield**  
(MP for Nuneaton)

'Socialist greetings and all good wishes to *Socialist Action*.'

**Allan Roberts**  
(MP for Bootle)

'I very much welcome your arrival and the emergence of another paper to express the opinions of the left of the labour movement, and I wish you well in your endeavour.'

**Robin Blackburn**  
(Editor, New Left Review)

'I very much welcome the appearance of *Socialist Action*. I believe it is of the utmost importance to advance bold socialist politics at the present time of savage capitalist offensive, renewed cold war and disarray in the labour movement.'

'I see a renewed socialist party struggling to be born out of the impasse of the left and I hope that *Socialist Action* will make a creative contribution to realising this.'



Photo: CARLOS AUGUSTO GUARITA

**Peter Tatchell**  
(Bermondsey Labour Party)

'I would like to take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to all those Labour Party and trade union members who came to support us in the Bermondsey by-election. We lost a battle, but not the war. I look forward to *Socialist Action* playing a campaigning role in order to win a Labour victory at the general election.'

# GREETINGS

## Peoples Democracy

(Irish section of the Fourth International)  
Meeting in conference 12-13 March we send greetings to *Socialist Action*. We hope you will build on Ken Livingstone's visit to Belfast and Owen Carron and John MacNulty's speeches to the LCI plastic bullets conference.

Links are being built between the anti-imperialist movement in both countries. That can only benefit both.

A nation that oppresses another can never itself be free.

## Joy Hurcombe

(Secretary, Labour CND and prospective parliamentary candidate for Worthing)

'I welcome a new paper that will fight for the policies of the Labour Party. In particular I look forward to the opportunity for wider coverage of our campaign for unilateral nuclear disarmament.'

## Bob Strother

(NEC NALGO)

'I am pleased to hear of the launch of a new paper on the left and wish you every success in spreading the message of socialism and encouraging working people to fight in these depressing times.'

## Andy Harris

(GLC Councillor for Putney. A member of the CLPD Executive, and joint secretary of Socialists for a Labour Victory)

'I welcome a new labour movement voice which will campaign in favour of taking forward further democratic changes within the party and within the trade unions.'

## Ken Jones and Bernard Reagan

(NUT Executive members — in personal capacity)

'Our best wishes to the new paper.'

## Walter Wolfgang

(Vice-chair, Labour CND)

'In one sense there can never be enough socialist papers. I therefore welcome *Socialist Action*. That is not to say I shall always agree with it!'

## Dave Ward

(Secretary of Horsham and Crawley Post Office Engineering Union, and a National Committee member of the POEU Broad Left. Vice-chair, Horsham Constituency Labour Party and a member of the South East Region TUC).

'It has never been more important to have a paper inside the labour movement which will unify the diverse currents there, and build a real fight-back against this Tory government.'

'The labour movement lacks an ideological

response to the Tory onslaught. *Socialist Action* will provide a popular and crusading forum in order to build a national, radical alternative to Thatcherism.'



Photo: GM COOKSON

workers into believing that the present state of affairs (unemployment, cuts in social services, the destruction of British industry) is not the fault of Tory government policies but the result of some world crisis.

'Socialists must understand the nature and structures of capitalist society, and point out the inevitability of such problems, as they are inherent in capitalist society. Socialism is the only solution for the working class.'

'I wish your paper well in trying to spread the message of socialism.'

**Nigel Williamson**  
(staff-writer Tribune)

'All Labour Party members should welcome the new *Socialist Action*. Following the behaviour of Fleet Street during the Bermondsey by-election, the Labour Party needs a diversity of papers putting left perspectives more than ever before.'

**Richard Chessum**  
(PPC for Warwick and Leamington)

'Best wishes on the launch of *Socialist Action*. As the right wing of our Party launches its attack on fundamental democratic rights of party members, and the Tories and the Alliance combine in their attempts to destroy the only mass party of the working class, papers like *Socialist Action* will become increasingly important.'

'The antiquated, parochial view of Anglo-Saxon labour leaders that Marxism represents a subversive alien philosophy must be challenged throughout the labour movement in Britain. The struggle for a democratic socialist society cannot be won without a theory of how capitalist society works and how a society based on workers power can be established.'

'I look forward to campaigns in your columns for unilateral nuclear disarmament; for socialism and common ownership and workers control; for withdrawal of British troops from the North of Ireland and the South Atlantic; for a massive re-distribution of wealth and power in this country; leading to the genuine democratisation of our society.'

'Doubtless I will not agree with all that you write, but you have a most valuable contribution to make.'

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# Karl Marx

## Revolutionary Politician

The real originality of Marx and Engels lies in the field of politics, not in economics or philosophy.

They were the first to discover the historical potential of the new class that capitalism had brought into existence — the modern proletariat, a class that could encompass a universal liberation from all prevailing forms of oppression and exploitation.

The modern workers' movement, capable of self-determination and self-emancipation, able to draw on the best of bourgeois culture and science, would have no need of utopias or religious exaltation.

The political capacity of the proletariat sprang from its objective position within bourgeois society.

The analysis of capitalism, and of its historical antecedents and consequences, to be found in the writings of Marx and Engels — however necessarily partial its initial formulations — was a necessary underpinning for their political theory.

But the decisive contribution made by the founders of historical materialism was the theory of proletarian revolution.

Unfortunately, there has been an increasing tendency in twentieth-century Marxism to identify the philosophical method or epistemology employed by Marx or Engels as their crucial contribution, and to represent these as the touchstone of Marxist orthodoxy.

In different ways this is done by the Lukács of *History and Class Consciousness*, the exponents of Soviet Diamat and Louis Althusser and his collaborators in *Reading Capital*.

There is little equivalent insistence on the originality of the political conceptions of Marx and Engels. Indeed, often attempts are made to suggest that their political ideas are essentially a continuation or development of those of Machiavelli or Montesquieu or Rousseau. This is especially curious since in no domain has Marxism been more original than in that of political theory.

Historical materialism either discovered or thoroughly reworked every important political concept: class, party, state, nation, revolution, bureaucracy, programme and so on. Such concepts have developed in conjunction with Marxist political practice and in the course of vigorous political polemics.

Moreover, it is evident that all the major divisions of Marxism have arisen over directly political questions, which have thereby furnished the critical determinants of Marxist 'orthodoxy'.

### Materialism

This does not mean that philosophical or epistemological disputes have had no significance for Marxism. It does mean that they have emerged as secondary by-products of conflicts over substantive political questions. Since Marxism adopts a completely consequent and complete materialism, this should not be so surprising.

No standpoint in philosophy can produce proletarian revolutionary politics — but in the long run only materialism is fully consistent with them.

Marxist politics could not possibly spring fully armed from the heads of

Marx and Engels, but required decades of participation in the workers' movement. The development of capitalism and of the class struggle was constantly presenting them with new problems and new solutions.

In those texts written by Marx or Engels as interventions in the workers' movement, it is possible to trace their increasing awareness of the great variety of tactics and instruments of struggle that the working class would need if it was to carry through a successful socialist revolution against such a powerful antagonist as the world capitalist system.

These works by Marx and Engels lack the brilliant paradoxes of their philosophy, the literary polish of their journalism or the intricate abstraction of their economics, but they are unsurpassed in clarity and vigour: they have proved to be the iron rations of revolutionary socialism.

Although the encounter with the workers' movement was to be decisive for Marx and Engels, they certainly did not simply adopt its politics.

Within the workers' movement at this time, it was held that the emancipation of the labouring classes would be accomplished essentially by some external agency. For the disciples of Proudhon or Robert Owen, co-operative schemes devised by enlightened reformers were to be the salvation of the workers: this was the resolution of the 'social' question.

### Followers

For the followers of Blanqui or Weitling, it was the revolutionary conspiracy that would deliver the proletarian masses from their bondage: this was the path of 'political' revolution.

None of these thinkers advanced the idea of the working class as the conscious, leading force in a revolution that would unite the 'social' and the 'political'. Indeed, they lacked a precise conception of the proletariat as a class: for Blanqui the term covered all those who worked, including the mass of the peasantry, while for Weitling the most revolutionary social category was the lumpen proletarians or 'dangerous classes'.

For Marx and Engels the emergence of the propertyless industrial working class opened up the possibility of a new type of politics no longer subordinated to conspiracy or utopia. The workers were organised into giant industrial armies by capitalism itself. They participated in a global system of production and exchange.

A conscious movement of this class could alone destroy capitalism and establish a new society, free from exploitation and oppression, because based on mastery of the new social forces of production. Marx and Engels first presented an integrated account of these ideas in the *Communist Manifesto*.

The class struggle could only be resolved by a victory for the working class and the suppression of capitalism.

The working class alone had the collective, co-operative character required to master the new forces of production and to ensure that they did not dominate those who had created them.

### Robin Blackburn

With the accentuation of the crisis of bourgeois order, the workers as a class would be joined by 'a portion of bourgeois ideologists who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole'. The working class would become the basis for a new type of political movement. 'All previous historical movements were movements of minorities or in the interests of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority.'

Without any stake in capitalist private property, the proletariat's historical mission is to destroy it. But to do this a revolutionary seizure of political power is necessary: 'the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the working class to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy'.

Once the workers had conquered political power, they would be forced to embark on a programme of 'despotic inroads on the rights of private property and the conditions of bourgeois production'.

### Framework

Because the bourgeois political framework was that of the nation state, 'the proletariat of each country must, of course, first settle matters with its own bourgeoisie'. But this was the 'form' not the 'substance' of the proletarian revolution. With the generalisation of the proletarian revolution, the global productive forces developed by capitalism would be brought under social ownership and regulation: 'In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.'

The directly political concepts contained in the *Manifesto* are spare and rudimentary. The advancing sweep of the bourgeois revolution was clearing away all the debris of pre-capitalist social relations and political forms. The bourgeoisie was creating a world in its own image. The state was 'but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie'.

The essential function of the state could be defined in a similarly peremptory fashion: 'Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another.'

The simplification of all social relations in the wake of the bourgeois revolution meant that the proletarian movement could develop in a straight line from economic combination to the socialist revolution. The programme of the Communists could be summed up in one slogan: 'The abolition of private property'.

Within the workers' movement, the Communists distinguish themselves only by the fact that they see the future development of the class struggle and bring to the fore the interests of the working class as a whole, 'independently of all nationality'.

The Communists are practically 'the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country' and theoretically 'they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions and the ultimate general results of the proletarian revolution'.

But since the forward development of the movement is prepared by the development of capitalism itself, the Communists will be cutting with the grain of bourgeois society in carrying through their tasks; hence, 'The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties.' There is little need to labour the point that the *Manifesto's* abrupt formulations on the bourgeois state or the proletarian movement were over-simplified.

Less evident, perhaps, is that each of these formulations retains a definite value on the basis of a more complex analysis of historical development and bourgeois society.

Some essential features of the capitalist mode of production were spelt out in the *Manifesto* itself, but a more thorough account of Marx's views at this time was given in *Wage Labour and Capital*. It is in this latter text that Marx defines the modern proletariat as a class of 'free labourers', in contradistinction to the slave or the serf.

'The slave, together with his labour power, is sold once and for all to his owner. He is a commodity that can pass from the hand of one owner to that of another... The serf belongs to the land and turns over to the owner of the land the fruits thereof. The free labourer, on the other hand, sells himself and, indeed, sells himself piecemeal...

'The worker belongs neither to an owner nor to the land, but eight, ten, twelve, fifteen hours of his daily life belong to him who buys them. The worker leaves the capitalist to whom he hires himself whenever he likes, and the capitalist discharges him whenever he thinks fit, as soon as he no longer gets any profit out of him, or not the anticipated profit. But the worker, whose sole source of livelihood is the sale of his labour power, cannot leave the whole class of purchasers, that is the capitalist class, without renouncing his existence.'

### Decisive

Given that the capitalist class owns the decisive means of production, they will always be able to exploit the mass of proletarians on the basis of a free and equal exchange of wages for labour power.

Marx was, of course, only to develop the concept of labour power, in all its implications, in his later writings. But already in *Wage Labour and Capital* Marx was stressing the vital distinctions quoted above between the position of the direct producer in capitalism and in previous modes of production. Marx's later insistence on the fact that the worker sold the capitalist, not a definite quantity and type of labour, but rather his general capacity to work during a given period, served to reinforce the analysis of the worker under capitalism as a free labourer.

A crucial feature of the labour process under developed capitalism was that surplus value was pumped out of the direct producer without the use of physical coercion by the im-

mediate exploiter.

This permits an increasing separation of the organisation of production from the organisation of violence — or, to put it in other terms, of economics from politics. The slave owner required teams of armed overseers, the feudal lord an armed retinue, if they were to extract surplus labour from the direct producer. All the capitalist needed, once the conditions of capitalist production had been established with private ownership of the decisive means of production, was a free and equal contract to exchange wages for labour power.

Under these conditions the worker would accumulate capital for the capitalist and reproduce the conditions of his own exploitation. Of course, capitalist private property would itself have to be defended from individual or collective attacks against it and a specialised body of armed men would be required for this purpose — but this specialised repressive force would not be at the command of the individual capitalist.

The essential function of the state was to guarantee the conditions of capitalist production. In this context, the original formulations of the *Manifesto* take on a precise significance. The state was indeed a mechanism for managing the common affairs of the whole ruling class — and first and foremost the organised power of this class for oppressing another.

### Uprising

The uprising of the Parisian masses in 1871 in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war was a decisive event in the development of Marx's political ideas.

In a foreword to the *Communist Manifesto* written in 1872 Marx wrote that, while the political principles contained by the *Manifesto* were generally correct, the experience of the Paris Commune — 'where the proletariat for the first time held political power' — had rendered it 'antiquated' in at least one important respect.

The *Manifesto* had given no detailed account of the political form of the proletarian revolution and its consequences for the existing state machinery. The Commune gave a vivid demonstration of what was meant by the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'.

Above all, it had shown that 'the working class cannot take hold of the ready-made state apparatus and wield it for its own purposes'.

Marx and Engels could not complete their theory of the proletarian revolution. This task fell to the revolutionary Marxists who learnt the lessons of 1905 and 1917.

However, those who came after Marx and Engels did not start from scratch when it came to formulating proletarian strategy and tactics.

They were equipped not simply with a philosophical standpoint, a method of social analysis or an economic doctrine, but also with the elements of a revolutionary political theory premised upon the capacities of the modern workers' movement.

● Robin Blackburn is the editor of *New Left Review*. This article is available in full in *Robin Blackburn (ed) Revolution and Class Struggle* (Fontana).



# DIARY

(These listings are free for all major labour movement and campaign activities. Semi-display advertisements cost 5p per word and must be paid in advance. Send to: Action Diary, Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP to arrive not later than Thursday one week prior to publication).

**Socialist Action Trade Union School: 16/17 April.** The school is open to all supporters of Socialist Action. It will examine the programmatic background to revolutionary work in the trade unions, and the links between this and work in the mass reformist parties. The school will discuss the trade union theses of the first four congresses of the Third International; the minority movement and the rise of the Labour Party; the united front; and the class struggle in Britain since '68; and steps towards a class struggle left wing.

Yorkshire region CND public meeting 'Sisters in Struggle'. Speakers Fran De'ath (Greenham Common); Terry Marsland (Tobacco Workers Union). Thursday 17 March, 1pm, Library Vernon Road, Scarborough.

GLC Nuclear Bunker Party: a peace cabaret. 17-19 March at the Drill Hall, 16 Chenies St, London WC1. Box Office: 01-637 8270.

Release N. Ison Mandela and all South African political prisoners! Join the 24 hour picket outside South Africa House, Trafalgar Sq. Starts Friday 18 March 5.30pm. Organised by City of London Anti-Apartheid Group.

Palestine Solidarity Campaign National Rally to demand the release of all Palestinian and Lebanese political prisoners. Friday 18 March, 7pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Details: PSC 01-737 4144.

'Iran's Revolution Four Years On ...' Conference organised by International Solidarity Front for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Iran. Saturday 19 March, County Hall, SE1. 10am-6pm. Creche available on request. Evening social at 7.30pm.

**Youth March to Greenham Common.** Oxford Youth CND sponsored march on weekend of 19/20 March with rallies en route in Oxford, Abingdon, Didcot and at Greenham. For details contact Cathie Brown, Secretary Oxford Youth CND, 10 Cunliffe Close, Oxford. Tel: Oxford 52590.

**Grenada Revolution:** fourth anniversary celebration dance organised by NJM London Support Group. Saturday 19 March, Harrow Leisure Centre, Christchurch Ave, Harrow. Bands, bar and food. Tickets at door £5 (£4.50 advance).

'Banda Tepeuani' — a Salvadorean band — will be touring Britain during March at the following venues: 23rd: Bristol Trinity theatre, Old Market, 8pm. 24th: Leeds Riley Smith Hall, Students Union, 8pm. 25th: London ULU, Malet Street, 7pm. 26th: Sheffield City Poly, Pond Street, 7.30pm. 27th: Newcastle St Thomas' Church, Haymarket, 6.30pm. Organised by CARILA Tel: 01-359 2270.

**Campaign Against Racist Laws national demonstration Sunday 27 March.** 'Repeal the Immigration and Nationality Acts/Stop race checks/Stop racist deportations/Unite the divided families now'. Assemble 12 noon, Peace Gardens (next to County Hall) near Waterloo station.

'Nicaragua — Defending the Revolution'. Hounslow Socialist Forum meeting, Sunday 27 March with speaker from Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign. George IV Pub, 185 Chiswick High Road, W4, 7pm.

'The Politics of the Family'. Socialist Society two-day conference with plenaries, workshops, films, videos and exhibits. Creche must be booked. 27/28 March at Sir William Collins School, Charrington St, London NW1. Details 01-734 8501.

**1983 Jose Marti International Work Brigade to Cuba: one months working holiday in Cuba from 1st-30th September.** For details contact the British-Cuba Resource Centre (Brigade), c/o CARILA 29 Islington Park St London N1.

'Towards a Police State?' Hounslow Socialist Forum meeting, Sunday 10 April with Brian Rose-Smith, a leading criminal lawyer, speaking on the new Police Bill. George IV Pub, 185 Chiswick High Road, W4, 7pm.

Labour Research Department AGM. Saturday 16 April, 2.30-5pm, Tudor Room, Caxton Hall, Caxton Street, SW1. Details: 01-928 3649.

'Plantation Workers of Sri Lanka'. An international conference on 23/24 April organised by the Sri Lanka Research and Information Group. Further details from SLRIG, 9 Grays Inn Buildings, Rosebury Ave, London EC1.

El Salvador Labour Movement Conference. 14 May, County Hall, SE1, 10am-5pm. Speakers include Judith Hart MP and Dr Salvador Moncada, senior FDR/FMLN London representative. TUs, LP and LPYS branches are invited to send two delegates. Details from El Salvador Solidarity Campaign 29 Islington Park St, London N1.

**International Women's Day for Disarmament — 24 May** For more information please contact 'May 24th', 16 Arundel Rd, Brighton, E. Sussex.

**Labour Campaign for Gay Rights Rally:** 'Gay Liberation and the Labour Movement'. Speakers: Andy Harris (GLC Councillor), Tom Sawyer (NUPE), Bob Cant (LGRC) and speakers from Lesbian Line, Visible Lesbian and Gay Young Socialists. Friday 18 March, 7.30pm, County Hall, London SE1.

'The Fight Against Racism and Imperialism'. Newcastle Socialist Action readers meeting with Chris Khamis and speaker from the Newham 8. Friday 18 March, 8pm, 2 Jesmond Road.

**OUT NOW: 'The Death Agony of the Fourth International and the Tasks of Trotskyists Today'.** A new book from Workers Power/Irish Workers Group. 120 pages, £1.85 including postage. From: Box 7750 BCM WC1N 3XX or left bookshops.

'Socialists for a Labour Victory' Brent public meeting called by supporters of Socialist Action, Socialist Organiser and London Labour Briefing. Speakers: Ken Livingstone (GLC), Tessa Van Gelderen (Brent South CLP) and Mick Woods (Brent East CLP). 7.30pm, Kensal Rise Primary School.

**Socialist Action Forums**

'Socialist Action — A New Labour Movement Paper'.

OLDHAM Speakers: Pat Hickey (SA) and Les Huckfield (MP). Thurs 17 March 7.30, Greaves Arms, Yorkshire Street.

PRESTON Speakers: Peter Tatchell, D. Green (Convenor Horwich Loco Works Action Committee),

Kay Bastin (CND/Greenham) and John Parkinson (Secretary Preston TUC). Sat 19 March, 7.30pm, Roper Hall.

NOTTINGHAM Tues 22 March, 8pm International Community Centre, Mansfield Rd.

HUDDERSFIELD Speaker Alan Freeman (SA Editor). Wed 23 March, 8pm, Friendly and Trades Club.

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YOU, will be the sole source of finance for Socialist Action. Each and every contribution will be acknowledged publicly.

Not so the Tory Party. Nine regional 'Industrialists Councils' received at least £140,000 in political donations from over 40 companies last year, according to the current issue of *Labour Research*.

Trade minister Gerald Vaughan asked in parliament whether he would consider legislation requiring these bodies to show the source and destination of their funds replied shortly, 'No'.

The reason is that these councils are little else but 'laundrettes' for Tory party funds. Vaughan, of course, is a member of the Tory cabinet which is about to legislate on the financing of the Labour Party from the unions.

minimum of £5 per month or £20 per annum) you'll get a quarterly bulletin offering invitations to all our local and national events; attendance at our educational schools; substantial reductions on best-selling books from the Other Bookshop and all our pamphlets free. We'll also put you in touch with other readers of the paper locally. Please don't delay in sending off your donation. For the paper to prosper and flourish we need a transfusion of funds now!

**By Martin Collins**

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# A real horror story

DAVE PACKER reviews the film *America — from Hitler to MX* by Joan Harvey, now showing at the Rio Cinema, Kingsland High Street, Dalston, London. Distribution by the Other Cinema, 79 Wardour Street, London W1 3TH. 01-734 8508/9.

Unlike *Atomic Cafe* this film is not trying to entertain people. Instead, as one reviewer says 'it wants to scare the hell out of them'. And it certainly does that.

It is the most powerful and persuasive anti-nuke documentary made.

In the first 45 minutes it shows the peace movement and trade union activists unravelling the connections between big business and the Bomb.

Interviews with retired NATO generals and senior diplomats lay bare Reagan's war drive.

The horror of the 'first strike' policy is shown to be nothing more than a rationale for starting a nuclear war.

A lot of the US leaders think it is possible to win a prolonged but limited — limited to Europe that is — nuclear war. That is the idea behind Cruise and Pershing.

The next part of the film shows how the Navajo Indians have been criminally exploited to mine uranium, becoming victims of cancer.

## Bonanza

Even the US GIs have been used as guinea pigs and deliberately exposed to radio-activity for testing out nuclear jobs.

We see how nuclear stockpiling is steadily

polluting the USA as the arms factories kill off the people who live near their dumps. Against this horror there is no safeguard.

Joan Harvey makes the point that; 'Civil defence in the context of an all-out nuclear war is about as effective as re-arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic'.

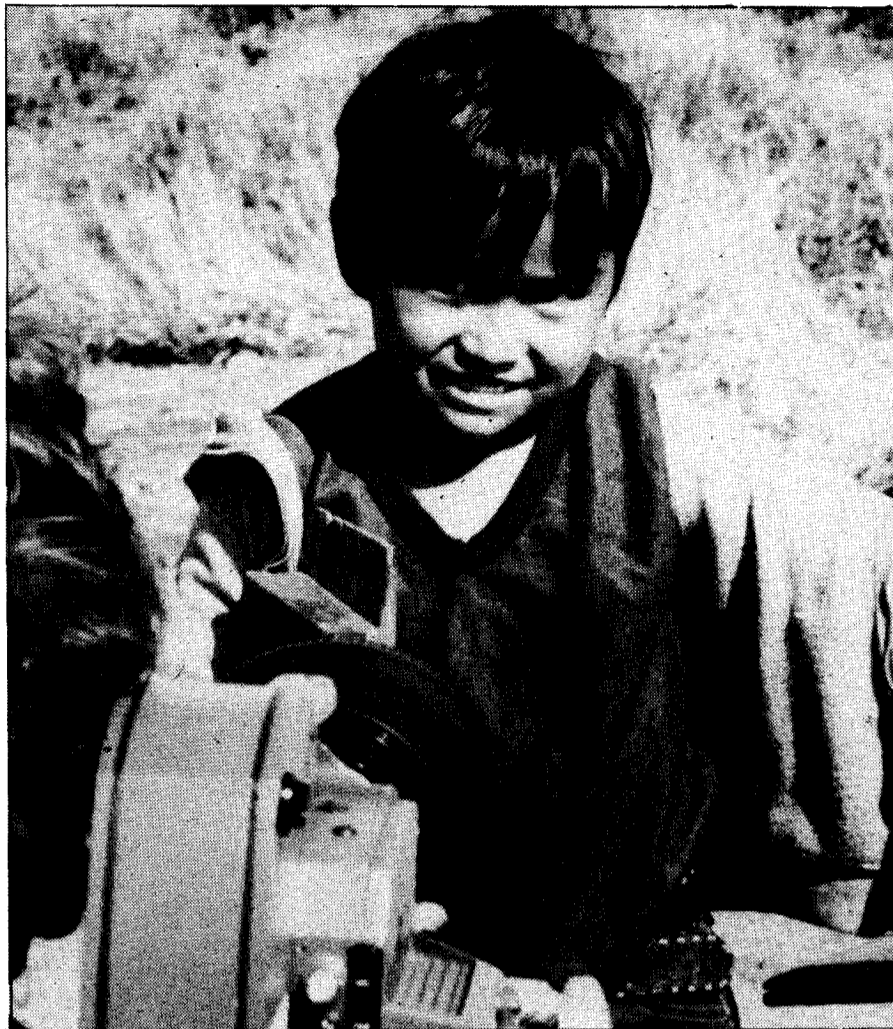
## Powerful

The film then gets to the heart of the matter as, in Julie Christie's words, it pins down nuclear weapons 'to their real economic roots — the multinational corporations'.

The Du Ponts, Standard Oil, General Motors, General Electric and others sold goods for the US effort in World War II and still invested in Hitler's war drive.

Standard Oil sold patents to Hitler's Germany. Pratt and Whitney made aircraft engines and reconnaissance plans for the Luftwaffe. Du Pont sold the Nazis poison gas which was used to exterminate the Jews in the camps.

The war was a bonanza for the big corporations who boosted their profits by 800 per cent in its first year. Now these same firms are riding the gravy train of the nuclear arms race.



The Navajo Indians got cancer when mining uranium

They are the roots of Reagan's America. In a world of economic recession government spending on arms makes good sense to the giant multinationals.

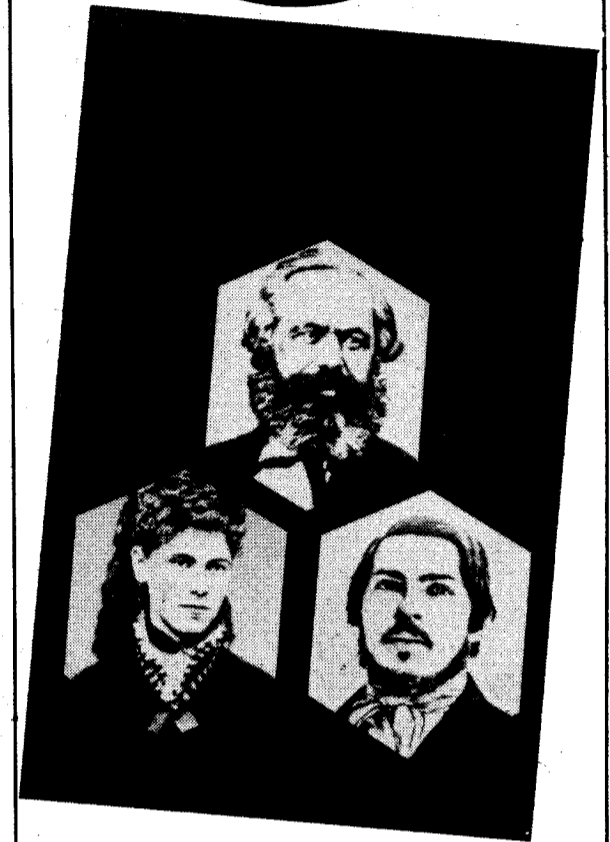
In showing that war is about profit and exploita-

tion — both of which are inherent in the system of imperialism — the film brings together the need for an alliance between the peace movement and organised labour.

*America — from Hitler to Mx* puts the

socialist case against war and nuclear weapons. It does it in a much more powerful way than any liberal, pacifist arguments.

Make sure this film does not suffer the same fate in the cinemas that the War Game did on TV.



## A Biography of Marx

'Karl Marx — The Story of his Life'  
Franz Mehring  
(Harvester Press, £7.95)

ON THE anniversary of his death there is no better book about Marx than Franz Mehring's *Karl Marx*.

As a political biography this is comparable with Deutscher's trilogy of Trotsky.

Mehring was a prominent member of the socialist movement and a contemporary and friend of both Marx and Engels.

He brings to this work all the advantages that went with being an active thinker and worker in German social democracy.

Added to that he was a genuine Marxist scholar who combined knowledge with clarity of thought, and lucidity of style.

At £7.95 it's not cheap but if you want to know about Marx as a man of ideas and a man of action you cannot do without it.

To buy it get your credit card out, empty your money box or borrow a few bob, but make sure you have this for permanent use on your bookshelf.



## The CND Story

'The CND Story'  
Edited by John Minnion & Phillip Bolsover  
(Allison & Busby, £1.95)

CND STARTED in the mid fifties when more and more people decided that they objected to being incinerated.

This book tells the story of CND, starting from those early years of Aldermaston when Easter was not about Jesus doing a Peter Cushing but was a festival when people marched for the right to live.

Short articles from people like EP Thompson, Joan Ruddock, Bruce Kent and Pat Arrowsmith tell the story of the demonstrations, music and literature and how it started rolling again in the eighties.

If you lived through the period it will jolt your memory and make you think about what happened. If you did not, then it's a good idea to find out what happened.

Both available from The Other Bookshops: 328 Upper Street London N1 and 137 Digbeth Birmingham 4.



## Karl Marx — the Legacy, Thursdays BBC2, begins 15 March

A SIX PART series from Prof. Asa Briggs, paragon of British liberalism. Promises to carry all the scars of that wretched ideology.

No doubt the good Prof. will tell us how Karl Marx 'was not a Marxist', how Engels was a capitalist, and how although the 'socialist' states bear little resemblance to Marx's vision of society they were inevitable weren't

they? On the other hand, if you really haven't got anything better to do on a Thursday night, why not tune in.

You could be surprised by what may turn out to be an entertaining glimpse of the life of the great revolutionary who (in his own words) 'spent so much time writing about money while seeing so little of it'.

## Widows Wednesdays at 9pm ITV

MIGHT BE better than the average thriller. Three women find themselves with the plans for a £1 million robbery when their husbands get blown up trying to rob a security van.

So the women decided what a man can do they can do just as

well so they recruit another female accomplice and get down to planning and training for the big heist.

On one side is a vengeful copper and on the other side is rival gang just bursting to get their hands on the plans.

## A Question of Power 8.30pm 20 March Channel 4

CAN YOU ever influence Public Inquiries or are they just whitewash.

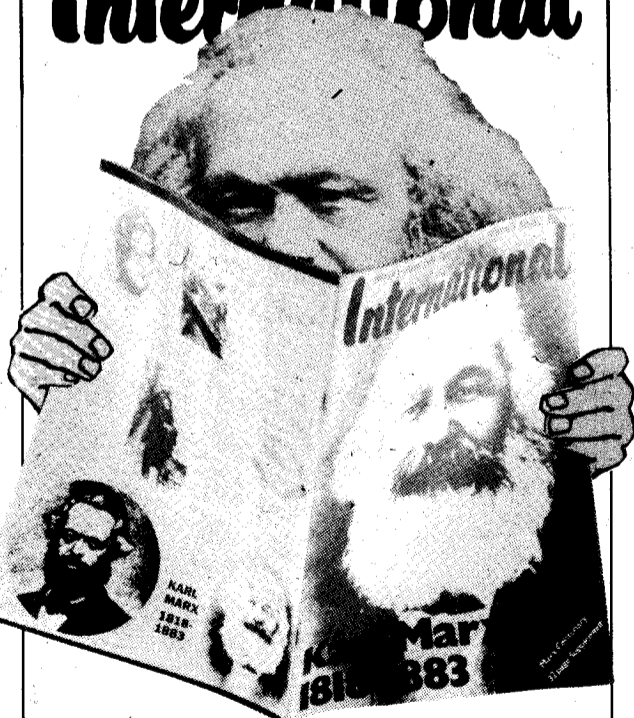
Among those taking part in a discussion on their use or otherwise are Tony Benn's former political advisor Frances Morrell, Graham Searle from Stop Sizewell 'B' Association and Peter Wilkinson, director of Greenpeace.

## Rising Damp Sunday's at 7.15 ITV

YORKSHIRE TV are doing all viewers a good turn with a re-run of Frank Chappell's deserved award winning comedy series. Leonard Rossiter as landlord Rigsby and Frances de la Tour as Miss Jones are streets ahead of all competition in situation comedy series.

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## International



DEFINITELY worth a read is the latest issue of *International*, theoretical journal of supporters of the Socialist League.

The centrepiece is a 32 page supplement on the Marx centenary.

This features articles by Ernest Mandel examining the centrality of the potential of the working class to Marx's thought, and Norman Geras arguing for a Marxist notion of human nature.

Marx's ideas on women, Ireland, the British bourgeois revolution, the Commune and on theory and practice are also discussed.

The supplement argues for the continuing relevance of Marxism for the struggle of the working class and the oppressed today.

Other articles cover a wide spectrum from Bob Sutcliffe's analysis of the capitalists' response to the economic crisis, to animal liberation, to Helen John and Valerie Coultas discussing Greenham Common.

At 95p this 56 page double issue is a snip.



# A Socialist ACTION

## CRISIS IN ZIMBABWE

WHAT is happening in Zimbabwe today is not, as the media would have it, simply a manifestation of tribal rivalry. The seeds of the present situation were sowed at Lancaster House in 1980, when Zimbabwe was 'given' political independence but tied very firmly into the coils of neo-colonialism economically.

Even given the will, the Mugabe government could not fulfil the expectations of those who fought in the liberation armies for freedom from the imperialist yoke and the domination of their country by a small white elite.

The largely peasant armies fought for land. Today millions are still landless while the big white capitalist farmers carry on much as before. In the urban areas, which saw massive strikes immediately after liberation, the trade unions have been tamed and structurally incorporated into the party machinery of ZANU or ZAPU. Smith's Industrial Conciliation Act, which made strikes illegal, is still in force.

It is this disaffection with the achievements of the Mugabe regime which is the main cause of the growth of political dissidence. This dissidence is by no means confined to

the Ndebele-speaking areas, although it is more manifest there.

By N. 'Ndabeni

The campaign against ZAPU, the reign of terror which has been unleashed in western Zimbabwe serves to distract the people from the real roots of the problems which cannot find a solution within the neo-colonialist context.

The end of the war, with the demobilisation of thousands of fighters, resulted in thousands of unemployed, many of them highly skilled in the use of weapons. In such circumstances, the rise of banditry is inevitable.

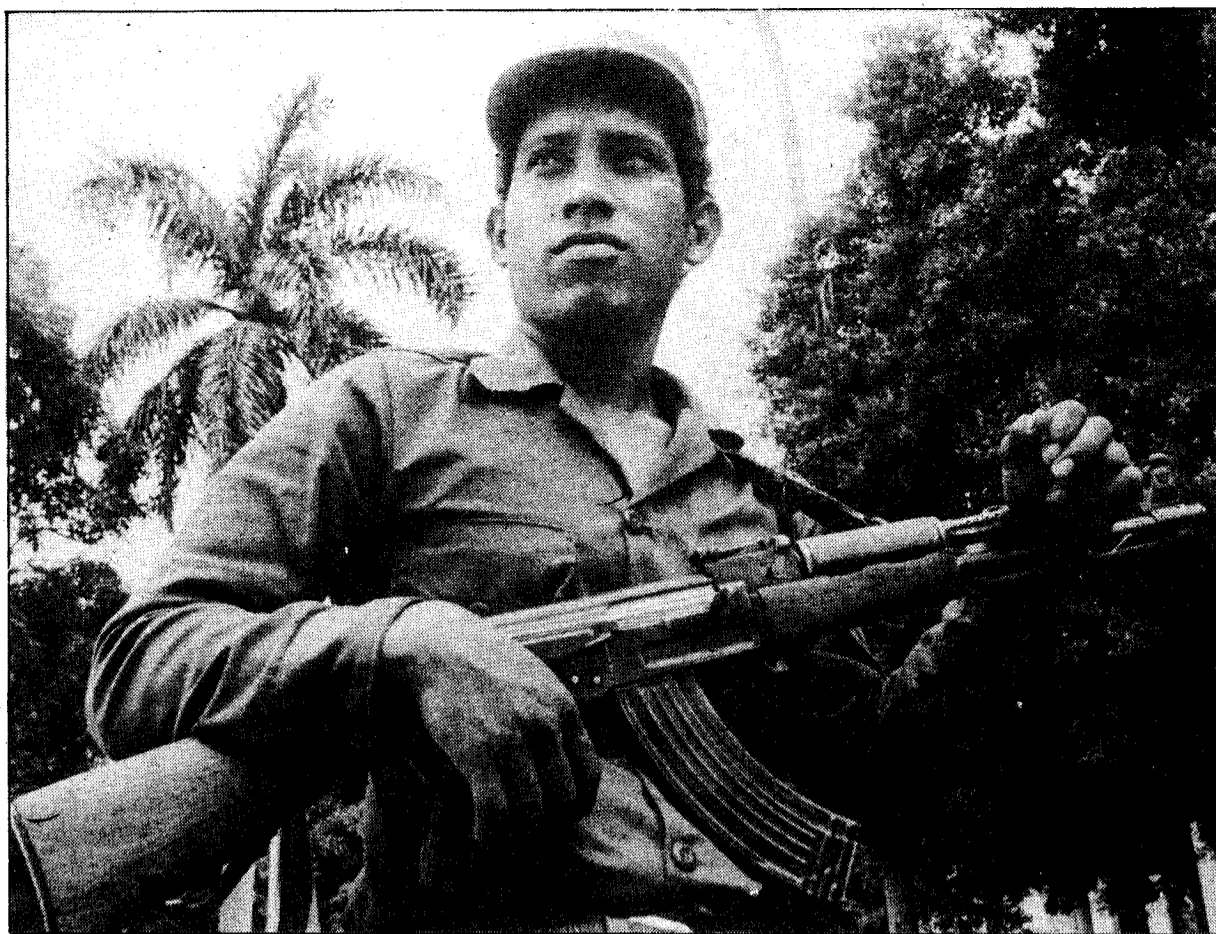
But by no means all the trouble is caused by bandits, although that is the impression which the government would like to convey. It is largely an expression of the very real

economic and political discontent felt by the masses. Brutal repression or the further violation of the people's democratic rights will not make these problems go away but only intensify the opposition.

Of course, as is to be expected, the white racist regime in South Africa is taking full advantage of the situation. Former Selous scouts and renegade Zimbabweans are being trained in the apartheid republic and sent back across the Limpopo to stir up trouble.

This is a heaven-sent gift for South Africa who is triumphantly shouting that this is one more proof that the black people are not capable of self-rule. By his actions, Mugabe is making this lying propaganda plausible.

While holding no brief for Nkomo, the labour movement in Britain, must give its support to those who fight for democratic rights in Zimbabwe. It must establish links with the organised labour movement in the urban and rural areas and oppose all attempts to suppress it.



Nicaraguan militiaman stands guard in Managua

Photo: CARLOS AUGUSTO GUARITA (Photon)

# US hands off Central America!

**TWO WEEKS ago President Reagan despatched his UN ambassador Jean Kirkpatrick on an urgent visit to El Salvador.**

**Her mission: to assure the right wing military dictatorship that the United States would not allow the government to be defeated by the revolutionary guerrillas of the FMLN.**

This winter the left wing forces have launched a sustained offensive, briefly capturing the towns of Berlin, Corinto and Meanguera, and inflicting heavy casualties on government troops.

The left wing victories have thrown the regime into crisis. A deep rift has broken out between the semi-fascist leader of the National Assembly, Roberto D'Aubuisson, and the more pro-American president Mangana and his military leader General Garcia.

At the same time the political front of the opposition — the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) — has launched a diplomatic offensive for unconditional talks.

## Thugs

As rumours spread that the United States would talk to the guerrilla leaders, the Magana regime was running scared.

Jean Kirkpatrick gave a gloomy report to Reagan after her 10-day stay. Without a massive injection of military aid — another \$60m and an increase in US military 'advisors' the regime would collapse.

Reagan immediately appealed to the Congress for the extra money, and hinted that if they refused the US would pay it anyway out of the 'emergency fund'.

The reason for Reagan's panic goes far beyond his concern for the military thugs who run El Salvador.

'We believe that the government of El Salvador is on the front line in battle that is really aimed at the very heart of the Western

Hemisphere, and eventually at us', he told an audience at the San Francisco Commonwealth Club. 'If El Salvador should fall I think Costa Rica, Honduras and Panama would follow'.

Reagan's domino theory is of course part of his 'Russian plot' theory. But there is a strong element of realism in his concern.

By Phil Hearse

The whole of Central America is being turned into a battlefield between the corrupt oligarchies and the revolutionary insurgents. In Nicaragua the revolution has been successful, while the Salvador and Guatemalan regimes are tottering.

Nothing better illustrated the turmoil in the region than the recent visit by the Pope. The Pope's line for 'peace and reconciliation' was everywhere rejected — and quite rightly. Peace and reconciliation with the death squads is not a feasible project.

While condemning the bloody outrages of the Rios Montt regime in Guatemala, the Pope reserved his main condemnation for the left.

## Pope

In revolutionary Nicaragua he told the left wing priests to leave the government and denounced the theology of liberation as 'dangerous nonsense'.

At a huge outdoor mass in Managua he refused to condemn the murders carried out by counter-revolutionary US-backed forces making incursions from Honduras.

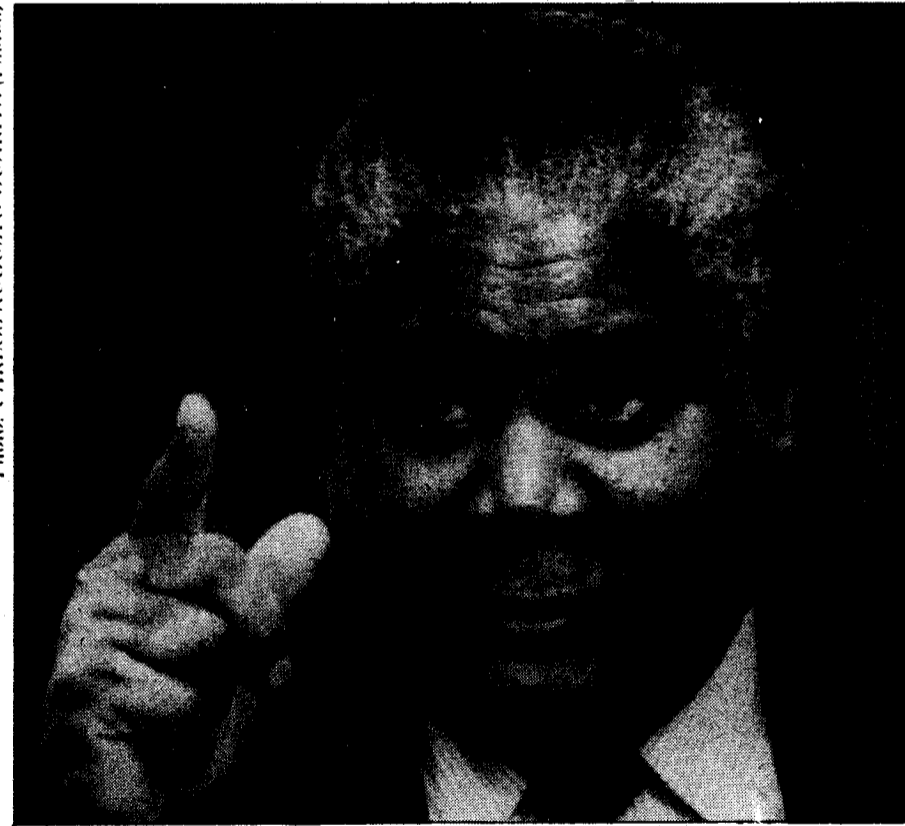
He was heckled by the crowd, something which caused him 'spiritual distress'. In San Salvador he had the affrontery to besmirch the name of Bishop Oscar Romero, murdered by the right wing death squads, by telling people that 'no ideological interest' (read: the left wing) 'should try to exploit his sacrifice'.

But Romero's sacrifice was made precisely because he, like many Catholic priests, sided with the poor and revolution.

What faces Central America, whatever the Pope thinks, is regional revolutionary war.

Last week in Washington government spokespeople were defining the precise conditions under which American troops might be sent to El Salvador.

The time has come for the international labour movement to step up its solidarity with Nicaragua and the revolutionary forces of El Salvador and Guatemala, to stay the hand of US imperialism.



ZAPU's Nkomo

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**Labour Movement Conference on El Salvador**

County Hall  
14 May 1983 10am-5pm

Speakers include: Judith Hart, Alan Sapper, Jenny Pearce, Salvador Moncada (FDR/FMLN representative in Britain).

Trade Union, Labour Party, and LPYS branches are invited to send two delegates each. Fee £2 per delegates: send to El Salvador conference, 29 Islington Park St., London N1 (359 2270).