

# A Socialist ACTION



Photo: MARK SALMON



**THIS WAS** a crucial week for the NUM.

Everything was thrown at the miners. Bribes by the NCB, a police riot in the coalfields, a naked attempt to crush the strike by hard-ship, and by demoralising families worried about their children for Xmas — that was just part of the package put together by Thatcher and MacGregor.

Despite that onslaught the miners have fought back against everything thrown at them. There has been real progress for the NCB, and the scabs in North Derbyshire, but the core of the strike remains solid. Still more important it maintains its ability to win.

Over 120,000 miners are on strike. Ninety five per cent of those who went on strike in March are still out. Three quarters of pits are producing no significant amount of coal at all. And the blockade of the power stations is beginning to bite.

But *now* is the time the rest of labour movement must come to the support of the NUM. The miners need political and material solidarity like never before.

Every Labour MP, every Labour Party leader, every Labour Party branch, every trade union, every trade union leader, needs to be on the picket line this week. The Labour Party urgently needs to call a national demonstration of support — the TUC to announce it will permit no movement of coal from the pitheads.

A national day of industrial action is needed in support of the NUM regionally and nationally.

As the NUM gets through the next difficult weeks its ability to win will again dominate the situation. When the back to work movement doesn't deliver the goods the initiative will pass back to the miners. But *now* is the moment everything must be put in the balance on the miners side.

Whatever you have been doing for the miners in the last months — whether it's blockading coal, demonstrating, picketing, collecting money — redouble it today. The entire labour movement must adopt one single slogan

**DON'T LET THE MINERS FIGHT ALONE!**

## The magnificent miners



Photo: MARK SALMON

# DON'T LET THEM FIGHT ALONE



# Socialist ACTION

## All out for the miners

THE MUCH-vaunted back-to-work movement in the coal fields has fallen far short of what the NCB and the Tories hoped for. Even if the numbers returning reached their target of 10,000 by Monday 19 November there would still be 120,000 miners on strike.

The core areas of the strike remain essentially solid as far as an effective strike is concerned. The North East, Scotland, South Wales, Kent and Yorkshire are producing no significant amount of coal. Even in most of the so-called 'working pits' in these areas, the return to work has not bribed enough miners to put viable teams together to produce coal. Their main value has been to produce propaganda for the NCB. North Derbyshire, where about 25 per cent are working is the only area where there has been a significant change.

After eight months of hardship, and with bribes of £1,400 dangled before them, the limits of the back to work movement is an incredible tribute to the courage and determination of the miners. There is, however, no denying that the Tories and the NCB have seized the initiative. They will exploit that to the full.

The government knows that the strike will not be broken in the short term by the back to work movement. The miners can continue until the new year. If the strike is not cracked by 19 November — and there is no prospect of that — the government will have to take steps to get coal stocks from pit heads to power stations.

Reports from power stations in Yorkshire, the North East, and Oxford indicate serious possibilities of cuts before Christmas — and virtual certainty afterwards. Many power stations are scraping the bottom of the pile, and equipment is suffering damage as a result. Even during the present spell of mild weather there have been alerts due to threats of voltage reduction.

The rail unions have cut supplies to the power stations by two thirds. Power workers in most areas are following the TUC guidelines. These actions need to be intensified.

The back to work campaign was designed to weaken and isolate the NUM to prepare the next step. This is to try to break the strike by moving coal stocks to the power stations. That will have to be done by road, and will be a massive operation.

The vital task now is that the labour movement must rally round the miners, tighten the blockade on the power stations, and take the political initiative back from the government. This will not be done by pleading for talks in the manner of Kinnock, Orme and co. It will be done by backing the miners in every possible way.

The TUC should declare at once that any attempt to move the coal from striking pits will be met by solidarity action across the whole movement.

That power workers will refuse the scab coal. Oil refinery workers will blockade substitute fuel. The rail boycott will be tightened. Mass pickets and days of action will be built. A single statement to this effect backed by actions by the TUC will help to take the initiative from the Tories, and overcome any weakening of morale in the coalfields.

The Labour Party should now openly throw its weight behind the NUM regardless of what Kinnock wants. Every Labour MP — including Kinnock — should be instructed to get down to Yorkshire and North Derbyshire and join the miners picket lines. The NEC should call a national demonstration in support of the miners.

This week the miners have faced their stiffest test so far. They are passing it with flying colours. Now they must not be left to fight alone.

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Photo: JOHN HARRIS

# No t

OVER 5,000 MINERS piled into Sheffield City Hall last Thursday evening to listen to Arthur Scargill at the second of the five NUM rallies. It was 'King Arthur's home ground' — and it was an unforgettable rally. Every speech made was applauded most with standing ovations, songs and chants of 'the miners

united will never be defeated'.

But the rally was not simply jubilant. The problems of the strike were addressed. Socialist Action decided to give you a flavour of the event by printing a series of extracts from the major speeches below.

THIS INDUSTRIAL dispute is now the longest in the history of British trade unionism, and over the past months we have seen in the media time and time again suggestions that miners are drifting back to work.

It must be right! It's in the *Daily Express*! It's a good drift back according to the press.

Listen to this. 'The National Coal Board said today that 53,000 miners are back at work.' That is dated 6 November. They were referring to the 7 November — a day in advance!

On 25 June, the National Coal Board announced 'Miners drift back to work. Sixty thousands have now gone back!'

If there's anyone in our movement, if there's anyone in this union, thinks for one moment the media is going to paint a picture in support of miners who are on strike fighting for jobs — they're living in the proverbial cloud cuckoo land.

On 6 March MacGregor announced the pit closure plan. That plan they said was designed to bring supply and demand into balance.

Now that's sound and economic phraseology. Bringing supply into balance with demand means the closure of 20 pits. It means the loss of 20,000 jobs. It means the destruction of mining communities, of a culture, of a way of life.

But that's not the end of the story. It's simply the beginning. Because this government's policy and Ian MacGregor's tactics are to close 70 pits and destroy 70,000 jobs.

And I say to those who are scabbing in Notts: they'll be your jobs that'll go as well as ours.

One of those ITN news broadcasters came up to me and said: 'Don't you think that your members have suffered enough and that by now they're very poor? Don't you think they'll drift back to work?'

My response was this. My members have suffered and endured hardship that you can't begin to comprehend. But there's one thing that they know, that you'll never know: that they'll not always be poor. But those that have scabbed will forever be a scab.

And let's go back to what Peter Heathfield said in an excellent speech. Even those who have scabbed would be treated like lepers by the Coal Board if we went back to work defeated. Let's make our position clear in this hall. Not only will the Coal Board treat them like lepers. We'll treat scabs like lepers!

Our demands are not too much. In fact our demands are far too modest. The only people demanding in this dispute are the Coal Board. They're demanding that this union become signatories to the closure programme. They're demanding that we decimate



Photo: RAISSA PAGE (Format)

the north east coalfield, from 17 pits to 4. They're asking us to make an agreement that wipes out 60 per cent of the Scottish coalfield.

We refuse to become partners to an agreement to destroy 70 per cent of the South Wales coalfield, 25 per cent of the Yorkshire coalfield, and 50 per cent of the Derbyshire coalfield. And I think I'm speaking on behalf of every miner in this magnificent rally when I say not only will we not become partners to an agreement of that kind but we will not sign away one pit or one single job.

## Betty Heathfield

“Of all the meetings I've been to this must be the most important meeting of my whole life.

It's obvious that Thatcher, like her friend Reagan, feels that she's on to a winning streak. But I'm telling her she's gonna have another thing coming because come 19 November and we're still there she won't have very emotive hold on those who think they're going to get an extra bit of money for Christmas. Because we still be there when the 19th's gone and she'll have to think of another thing to put up against us.

When they try to bribe us and they try to demoralise you — you get off your knees and fight back w

The Coal Board have got to understand what our terms are for the settlement of their dispute. Our terms are firstly withdrawal of the pit closure plan. Secondly, the keeping open, not the short term reprieve, of the five pits currently facing closure. I don't want to keep Cortonwood open for three to six months. I want Cortonwood kept open to the point of exhaustion.

What would this government and the media have to say if we were seeking to break a signed agreement? It's the Coal Board and the government that are seeking to break the Plan for Coal agreement. As far as we're concerned we're sticking firmly with the plan.

But there's another important principle at stake. Because I know speak for every miner in this strike when I say to MacGregor that there will be no return to work until every miner who's been sacked is reinstated.

MacGregor came here from America with his trade union busting tactics. He went first of all to British Leyland, where they dismissed senior shop steward whose only crime was writing a pamphlet on the survival of British Leyland. This movement, to its eternal shame, stood by and saw Derek Robinson dismissed from his position.

# turning back'



Photo: JOHN HARRIS (JFL)

everything you've got. We told the police on the picket lines on Monday 'you'll still be here at Christmas, because we'll still be here at Christmas.'

And I want to make a special appeal tonight to the women to come onto the picket lines now. Just a few women have a very electrifying effect on the pickets and the police, I can assure you.

The police don't like us there. Mrs Thatcher doesn't like us there. They don't know what to do with women who sing songs and chant slogans and sound very happy and positive. They just don't know what to do with us.

It only takes about a dozen of you. You'll have a marvellous impact. So I'm telling all the women. Join in now. Get up a bit early. You can always go to bed again later!

MacGregor then went to British Steel. In three years in steel he destroyed 100,000 jobs, wiping out whole communities. And I want to make it clear that if Bill Sirs had spent one tenth of the time fighting MacGregor that he has attacking me and this union, then he would have saved many more of those jobs.

How many times have we heard the saying 'young people today aren't like their forefathers. They're too busy making mortgage repayments.' But now we are sick and tired of listening to the Jeremiahs of the movement saying young people will never fight as well as the older generation that built the movement. I say, without fear of contradiction, that if those who built our trade union movement could look on this scene today, they would salute our young miners.

For the first time in an industrial dispute we've also seen women take their place — not merely in soup kitchens, not merely giving moral support, but in those magnificent women's support groups, fighting shoulder to shoulder for their jobs, their communities, their families.

Anybody who is under any illusions about the government's involvement in this dispute has only got to listen to the revelations of the public

relations chief of the National Coal Board.

I once had a debate with Ian MacGregor on television. They were holding cue cards up when he spoke. It was unbelievable for the chairman of the NCB.

Do you know who was doing it? Do you know who was holding the cue cards up? No, not Margaret Thatcher. One of Margaret Thatcher's former advisors, a chap called Hart, who's advising the so-called working miners — the scabs organised against this union. That's who it was.

And Mrs Thatcher's personal advisor was there — apparently they were advising MacGregor how to smile at the right time. This man has done more damage to the whole concept of industrial relations inside a year than any single individual we can think of in the history of trade unionism.

For twelve solid months this union has fought to maintain our industry. But we've also been fighting on other arguments. There are other principles at stake as far as this union is concerned: the very basis of our trade union itself, which MacGregor and Thatcher are trying to destroy.

Like Peter Heathfield, I want to ask you this question. Imagine what

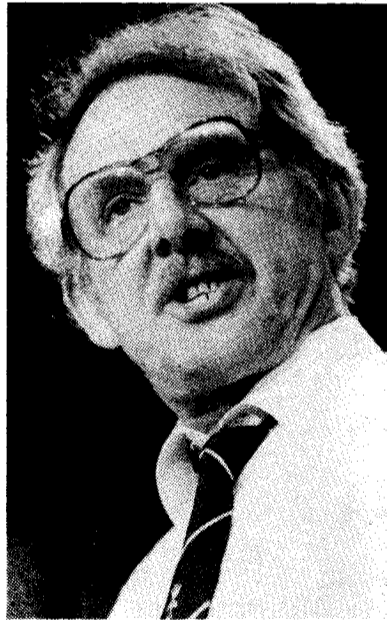


Photo: GM COOKSON

On the very last day of our last negotiations we put forward two points that ACAS were willing to ac-

## Jim Mortimer Labour general sec

Carefully introducing himself as speaking at all five rallies, Jim Mortimer received a large amount of cat-calls in the early part of his speech because of Neil Kinnock's refusal to speak at the NUM rallies.

**"I am conscious that our party owes more to the miners in its history than to any other section of**

cept. The Board turned them down flat. They turned them down flat because the government had been instructing them not to negotiate.

I want to go further than Peter (Heathfield) or Mick (McGahey) in turning to the TUC. I don't want merely a redemption in words of some of the IOUs. I want to see the same commitment to this union by rank and file unionists in power, in steel, and in transport that we've given to them when they've been involved in disputes.

I want all trade unionists to examine their conscience. I want to ask our brothers and sisters in the power industry, and in steel, how much longer can you stand on one side and see this union butchered by a galaxy of the Tories, the Coal Board, the CBI and the Institute of Directors? Come and take industrial action now, and stop accepting scab coal, scab oil, and scab iron ore. Practice what you preach and stop crossing picket lines!

There also comes a time when trade union leaders have to take a stand on the basis of principle. We have to reply to those who we feel are injuring the movement.

I received a letter from the Polish Federation of Trade Unions, offering their support they said to the NUM — inviting families to go to Poland for a holiday. I'm going to read you my reply and I hope you're in accord:

'My advice to the Polish government and to you is to stop behaving hypocritically and in a way that can

back, or any compromise as far as basic principle is concerned. This union has been willing to negotiate. But I'm not prepared to negotiate on what I term a sell-out by NACODS, when they accepted pit closures.

We're now told we've been sequestered as a national union and as

## Mick McGahey NUM v-president

**"In October we had the Labour Party conference and they also affirmed their total support for the miners. And I want to say that it's not just a resolutions party I hope, in passing resolutions. It's the implementation of those resolutions that counts.**

**And I want to say to Neil Kinnock, get your eyes off the opinion**

your life would be like if you had to go back to work on terms and conditions set by the NCB and the government. Imagine that you were told that you wouldn't have the right to raise any protest against the employer.

Make no mistake, after eight months of struggle this trade union has gone too far and suffered too much for there to be any turning

polls in the *Mirror* and the *Sun*. I say to him come and meet the opinion moulders.

**Here is a victory for the labour movement. Here is the opportunity of mobilising the whole of the labour and trade union movement that can win the victory for the miners, defeat the Tories and ensure victory for the whole working class.**

national officials. We've found ourselves in conflict with the law.

I wonder if Thatcher understands. She can probably sequester our funds. She can probably freeze on a day by day basis the operations of our organisation. But she can't sequester our minds. She can't imprison our principles. And she can't freeze our will to win!

only be described as anti-socialist. The Polish government has dramatically increased the amount of coal being imported into Britain. And you've ignored repeated requests from the NUM to stop exporting coal to Britain in view of the British miners' strike.

'In so doing the Polish government is giving direct assistance to Mrs Thatcher's government as it tries to defeat the miners' union. The NUM has no intention of considering the offer to receive 100 striking miners' children on a holiday in Poland, because we are aware that at the same time the offer is made the actions of the Polish government are directly assisting the Tory government in Britain to do all in their power to smash the NUM and the miners' strike.

'Please convey to your government, and to your trade union movement, our absolute disgust and even at this late stage convey to them our request to stop exporting coal to Britain and wrecking the outcome of this dispute.'

I've never felt as proud or as privileged to be in a leadership position as I do today. Members of this union, their wives and their families, have displayed a solidarity, have displayed a commitment, that has inspired not only workers in Britain but workers throughout the world.

During the course of this struggle we have once again begun to discover ourselves. We are once again beginning to understand the meaning of real trade unionism. Never again will this union be the same, because of what we've learned and what we've

the working people of Britain. And when I think of the figures in the history of the miners union and the present generation I am conscious that they have drawn their strength and they continue to draw their strength from the rank and file of your union.

**The National Executive of the party in the very last statement that it issued on the mining dispute said that we 'reaffirm our total support for the National Union of Mineworkers in its historic struggle to fight against continuing further unemployment in the mining industry.'**

discovered during the course of this eight month strike.

When people ask you 'why should we go on', we say that David Jones and Joe Green were killed fighting for this union. We owe it to them to carry on and win this battle.

You're fighting to preserve the right to work — and not the right to work of a scab backed up by two thousand police. You are determined as a result of this action to convey to this government and employers that we too have rights.

And when they talk about investment, we're not talking about financial investment alone — we're talking about the greatest investment of all: the investment of our lives in this industry. It's the only thing we have to invest and it is something that none of us can ever compromise.

Time and time again the leaders of this union have asked the members to respond. Never in our wildest dreams could we have expected such a magnificent response. Time and time again members of the union movement have demanded leadership. I say to you without fear of contradiction that you have not got in the leadership on this platform — three members of the national executive — leaders who will finish up in the House of Lords.

But what you have got is leaders who are determined to take this union side by side with you to the most fantastic, historic victory.

Miners, I salute you, you are magnificent.



# South Yorks erupts

'THE MOST SEVERE violence yet seen' in the miner's strike was how the police described the revolt in the Yorkshire coalfields over the last few days.

'The chief constable should be an expert on violence,' was Arthur Scargill's immediate response on Radio 4, 'his police force and that of others have intimidated my members throughout the last 8 months in an almost unbelievable way. The very presence of police in massive numbers in villages, not only in Yorkshire, but throughout Britain has caused the problem'.

And indeed, the sheer scale of the police operation mounted in South Yorkshire over the last few days to protect a tiny number of scabs, was enough to provoke any section of trade unionists after months of hardship and hunger. To do so in South Yorkshire was a declaration of war.

ed. A roller was pushed down the road into police lines.

At Maltby pit two barricades were built and wire was stretched across the road when 13 scabs crossed picket lines. The majority of them were contractors to cementation who had been brought into work at the pit from all over the country. They had been laid off when the strike had started to cross picket lines two months ago when the first clash broke out. The local police station was laid siege to and lamp posts were torn down.

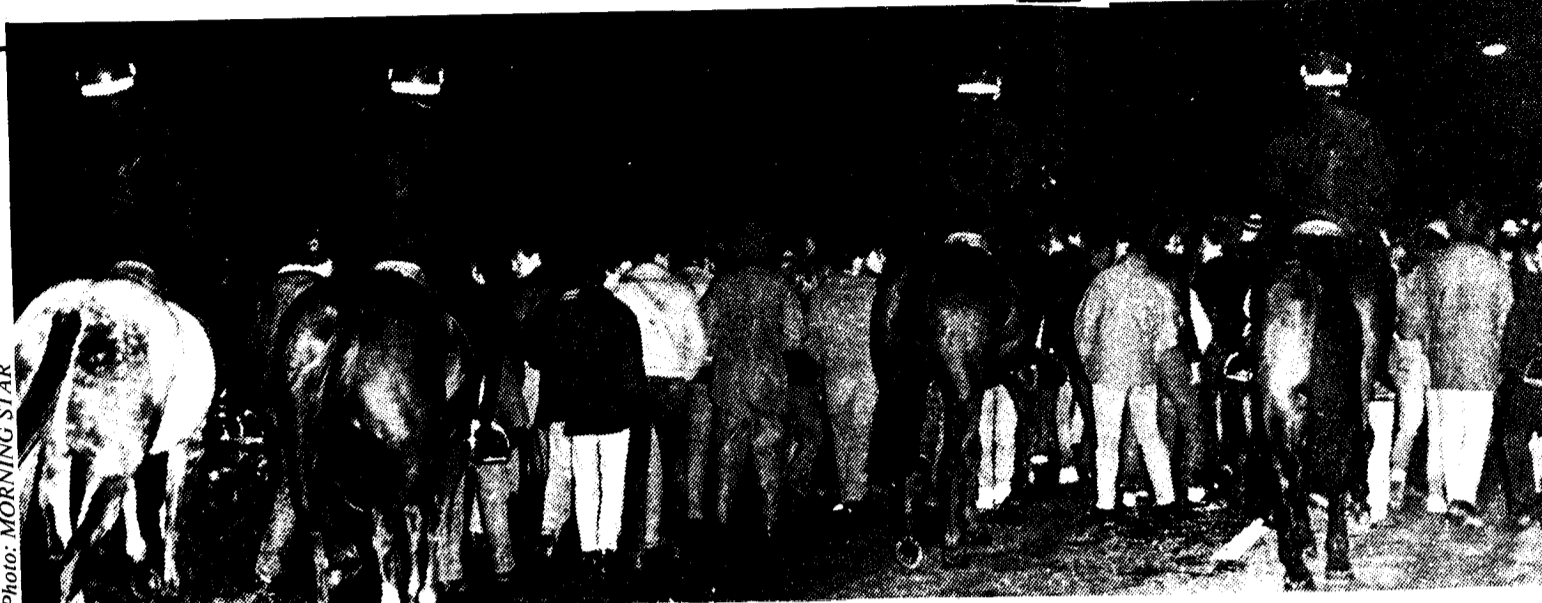


Photo: MORNING STAR

## Scabs

So war broke out. In Dinnington 14 miners went through the picket lines for the first time on Monday. Police sealed off the village. Pickets were attacked by police who tried to stop them getting to the gates. Dinnington police station was petrol bombed and police were forced to flee. Police were claiming that it was the work of unemployed youth in the area.

At Cortonwood the one scab from last Friday, Uae Lingard, 23, was joined by three others on Monday morning protected by a huge police operation. Range rovers drove straight into picket lines. When police charged again and again into picket lines a barn was set on fire and the riot police were us-

## Picket

At Dodworth an unmanned police station was attacked on Sunday night. At Barrow trees were cut down and steel wire stretched across the road. At Redbrook the road was blocked. In South Kirby some 500 pickets outside the pit built barricades and bulldozers were moved on to the road. The Dearn Valley colliery had the electricity pylons surrounding it torn down. There were also clashes in Rossington and a large picket was attacked by police.

## State of siege in Yorks

**A STATE of siege exists in South Yorkshire's mining communities. Massive police operations are being carried out to escort scabs into work. Police are swamping villages to intimidate miners and their families.**

On Wednesday 7 November it was the turn of Sunnyside, Rotherham where many Silverwood miners live. Philip Wainwright joined three other scabs who have betrayed their workmates by going into the pit. He returned home escorted by five vanloads of police.

Another van full of police patrolled the estate. Five or six more vans were in reserve. A further 20-30 police marched through the streets to protect Wainwright, his wife and

three children, as they were moved out in a police van. A 19 year old was grabbed by the throat for shouting 'Maggie Thatcher's bootboys' at a line of 14 police. Fighting broke out and four arrests were made.

By Clive Turnbull

In the flare up, Mrs Edith Martin was pushed over an 18-inch high wall. As fighting spilled over on to the gardens police vans took those arrested away to jeers from the crowd.

Senior police officers denied any intimidation or provocation against miner's families. But miners' wife, Chris Wigglesworth had a different view. 'We were stood around and a young lad walked past and one copper shouted "go and fuck your mother"'. Well, his mother was stood there and didn't like them saying that so he asked one copper to come over one to one, but he wouldn't. That's what we have to put up with.

'Another woman, who is under the doctor for her heart, was knocked over a wall. The police two fingered her and made obscene gestures. They say

things like "how much do you charge?" and shout at us women calling us sluts and whores. What are we supposed to do?'

Shortly after midnight that same day there was a second flare up when the windows of the Wainwrights's house had bricks thrown through them.

Seven miners were arrested, four of whom were brothers, David, Robert, Michael, and Paul Boyle. All were charged with 'besetting the house of a working miner'.

Other charges included assaulting a police officer,

obstructing the highway, and breach of the peace. David Boyle was also charged with 'possessing an offensive weapon', a dog lead which he had been carrying as he was accompanied by his dog.

When the young miners appeared in court the following day their black eyes and swollen faces clearly showed they had been beaten. Six were remanded in custody in Armley prison for a week.

On the picket line at Silverwood on Friday teams were being organised to go out on the knocker to mobilise more miners. Police intimidation does not pay. The picket line is still growing.

# Coalville: NUR threatens strike

**THE RAILWORKERS at Mantle Lane depot in the small Leicestershire town of Coalville have been refusing to move coal for over seven months. They got a bit of a leg up from their NUR national executive last week following their open meeting which mobilised over 100 rank and file unionists.**

Immediately following this unprecedented gathering, the NEC contacted their representatives (LDC) and asked for documentary proof of their case against local management.

The NEC informed the Coalville workers that they have sought a meeting with the General Manager of the London Midland region of the British Rail to demand that if the harassment and intimidation of railworkers is not stopped there would be industrial action taken throughout the region.

Roy Butlin, local railworkers leader said of the new development, 'I hope that the threat of industrial action will have the effect of stopping the area manager from worrying my members.'

'We welcome the move by the NEC to more directly take up our case. If I were able to attend this meeting I would be demanding that the general manager accepts our position on not moving coal, that he discuss only with the elected LDC,

that he withdraws the charges against the three railmen who've been sacked on spurious grounds, that there be no more police visits and that we be allowed to do useful work instead of being sent home.

By Antonio Gorton

'The trouble is that the NEC called for industrial action in support of Shirebrook depot where there are similar problems and then called it off with no real agreement or cast iron guarantees. The principles of the thing got lost. For example the Shirebrook people were being coded on their pay slips as 'on strike' for refusing to move coal and after the NEC intervened management simply recoded to 'absent without

leave'. It comes to the same thing — no pay or other benefits. There was no real solution and yet the action was called off.

'It is important that the NEC have taken this in-

itiative after seven months of relative inactivity and this is being felt at national level. I understand that London guards who were out on strike on Tuesday 8 November over Sunday working and descended on the NEC in a mass lobby used Coalville as an example of the closure threat which they were also experiencing locally in their depot and which they wouldn't tolerate.

'We've had a tremendous response everywhere and this is being felt at national level. I understand that London guards who were out on strike on Tuesday 8 November over Sunday working and descended on the NEC in a mass lobby used Coalville as an example of the closure threat which they were also experiencing locally in their depot and which they wouldn't tolerate.'

'The NEC is elected to

defend our interests. But we're not leaving it there.

We intend to keep up the campaign, to keep it rolling. The only guarantee of success is that all members of the rail unions understand the issues involved and are prepared to give us total backing. We've now got more invitations as a result of the Rail Broad Left meeting this weekend; in Brent, some LT depots, Polmadie depot in Glasgow and

freight depot in Wales.

'We feel absolutely vindicated in what we're doing. The day after the open meeting in Coalville, the NEC contacted the Sheffield and Chesterfield District Council and the Midland District Council to organise a similar meeting of the whole coalfield area — Nottingham, Derby and Leicestershire for Sunday 25 November.

'The NEC has assigned

two assistant general secretaries and a number of NEC members to address the meeting. We're on the move and we're going to keep it going. Thatcher is prepared to go all the way to break the miners' strike and we should go all the way in resisting her attempts. The no movement of coal campaign must spread and supporting the railworkers at Coalville, Shirebrook, Tynsley and Immingham is central to this fight.'



Photo: GM COOKSON

After the Coalville mass meeting

### Women's Benefit Concert

Organised by London Labour Women

**HERE WE GO!** The soccer chant adopted by women and men alike on picket lines and at rallies during the miners' strike, has now become the title of a major Women's Benefit Concert at the Piccadilly Theatre in London's West End on 25 November, organised by London Labour Women.

The performers, all of whom are providing their services free, include Carol Grimes and Iguanas, Peggy Seeger, Beverley, the Annie Whitehead Band, Mitzi Wildebeest and a host of famous TV and stage actresses.

Tickets are available in advance from the Box Office, Piccadilly Theatre, Denman Street, W1 -01-437 4506 (by phone or post) at £5 and £2 concessions (unwaged, OAPs, students, etc).

For more information contact Joan Twelves on 582 2955 or 283 1030 ext 349. (w).



# Mineworkers Defence Committee Conference

## A national solidarity forum

NEIL KINNOCK'S snub to the NUM over the five rallies has caused dissension throughout the labour movement. It shows how vital it is that pressure is applied to Labour leaders to put the words of solidarity with the miners into action. It makes attendance at the Mineworkers' Defence Committee solidarity conference in Camden Town Hall on 2 December a number one priority.

Last Wednesday's Parliamentary Labour Party meeting saw an open clash over the miners' dispute between Dennis Skinner and Neil Kinnock. Dennis told Neil that his place was in the 'front line', on platforms with the NUM. Neil rounded on Dennis with the now famous remark that he 'wasn't interested in achieving a Gallipoli', a reference to the defeat in the First World War when Commonwealth troops were slaughtered in their thousands by Turks.

By Valerie Coultas

of the seamen's union are all being approached to speak.

The priority for the conference is to provide as broad and representative a forum as possible, to push forward the work of the solidarity movement and help deliver the IOUs pledged at TUC and Labour Party conferences.

Coming two days after the face-saving Labour Party rally that Kinnock has announced for Friday 30 November, the solidarity conference will be an excellent opportunity for party members to

push forward the demand for a Labour Party demonstration in support of the miners.

A statement is being drawn up by the conference organising committee for discussion at an open forum to take place on Wednesday 14 November, 5.30pm at County Hall.

These Wednesday meetings will be regular leading up to the conference. Solidarity committees and other bodies are urged to come along and join in the Mineworkers' Defence Committee in ensuring this conference is a massive expression of solidarity with the NUM.

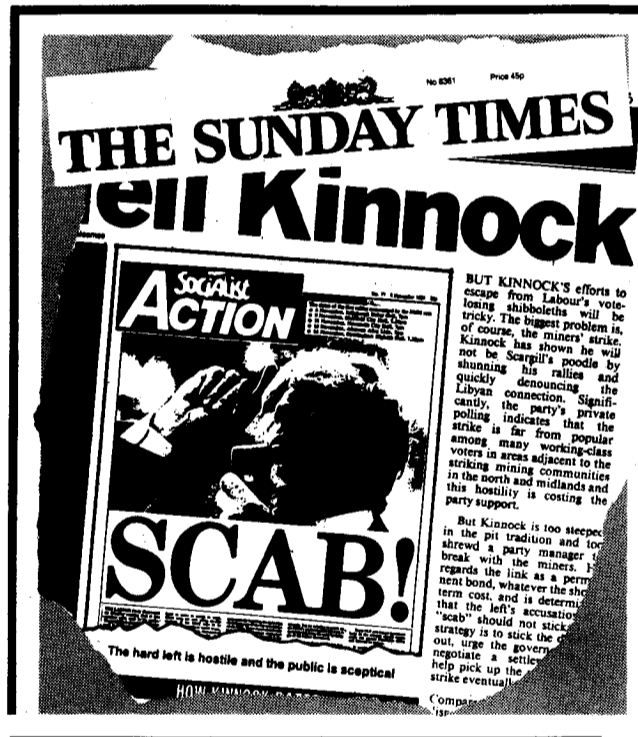
● Credentials are available from Jane Stockton, 31 Cranwich Road, London N16, or contact the committee on 01-981 3289.



Kinnock's disgraceful refusal to find time to speak with the miners has outraged all those in the Labour Party who have been working like the clappers to win support for the NUM over the last eight months.

Rank and file activists made their views crystal clear at party conference in the overwhelming support they gave to the NUM and in their sharp attack on the police handling of the dispute. Neil Kinnock has no excuse for his behaviour and it is high time the party as a whole, and the left in particular, put him in his place.

One forum that can help achieve this is the Mineworkers' Defence Committee conference. Arthur Scargill and Tony Benn have already agreed to speak. Ray Buckton of ASLEF, Jimmy Knapp of the NUR, and Jim Slater



## Socialist Action goes respectable!

Last week Labour leader Neil Kinnock addressed a Fabian Society meeting. He denounced the left as 'gushing enthusiasts' and proclaimed his support for the early Fabians who 'worked to make it easy for respectable people to become socialists'. Clearly, Mr Kinnock doesn't include Arthur Scargill and the striking miners among the 'respectable' — hence his refusal to speak on NUM platforms.

Last week's Sunday Times carried a Micheal Jones' analysis of Kinnock one year on. Mr Jones thinks Neil Kinnock's refusal to make 'a clean break with Scargill' is a 'major error', which will lead to renewed hostilities within the party. 'Lurid evidence' is quoted for this: Socialist Action's front page and editorial last week!

Mr Jones believes that whether or not Neil Kinnock ever becomes prime minister will depend on what happens in the next year. Quite right. Socialist Action will be doing its bit to ensure Labour gets to office — riding the crest of a miners' victory. We will leave the 'respectable people' for Mr Kinnock.

## Stand by the miners!

AT THE END of October, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy mailed its supporters expressing concern with the lack of support for the miners from Labour's leaders. CLPD are suggesting an emergency resolution to the national executive and the parliamentary leadership.

In view of Neil Kinnock's refusal last week to appear on the NUM rallies, CLPD's resolution is more important than ever. We reprint below extracts from the letter together with the resolution.

We suggest it be amended to include: 'The first step in that national campaign should be to call a Labour Party demonstration, in conjunction with the NUM, against pit closures and to publicise the case for coal.'

For the past eight months the NUM has been waging probably the most determined and inspiring trade union struggle this country has seen in over half a century.

The industrial reasons for the NUM's action are compelling enough in themselves. But the real significance of the dispute is political.

The government is out to break the organisations of the working class, and has deliberately created a confrontation with the miners in order to do so. If

this strike is broken, the Tories calculate that no other trade union will seriously resist their will.

That is why the whole labour and trade union movement has a responsibility to stand by the miners. But although the TUC and the Labour Party conference have declared full support, Labour's parliamentary leadership has distanced itself.

Please do your utmost to get a resolution sent in by every organisation with which you are connected — if necessary on the basis of officers' action. Also, you might wish to consider it as a possible resolution to your regional conference, though clearly the urgency of the issue must make the NEC, PLP and the new shadow cabinet the first priority.

CLPD supporters owe a special loyalty to the NUM. At the recent party conference, at the height of their efforts to win backing for their own battle, the miners nonetheless also took it on themselves to play a leading part in the defence of mandatory reselection. They know only too well that the performance of the Parliamentary Labour Party depends on its accountability to the wider party.

In the same way CLPD recognises that the miners are fighting for us all. We cannot afford to let them down.

## Make time for the miners

Socialist Action asked Sunderland MP BOB CLAY for his comments following Neil Kinnock's refusal to speak at the five national rallies called by the NUM.

WEEK BY week we are seeing the repressive apparatus of the state used as a naked class instrument against the miners' strike. That's the first thing the Labour Party, and especially its leadership, has to clearly understand.

The government is prepared to deploy any means whatsoever to defeat the NUM. In those circumstances, an opposition party that fails to grasp the nettle without faltering cannot be an effective opposition. We should be supporting the NUM without conditions and without equivocation.

Labour MPs should be on NUM picket lines and NUM public platforms at every possibly opportunity, and statements expressing solidarity with the NUM's — so-called — con-

tempt of court should be stepped up. There must be a massive demonstration that the whole labour movement has contempt for the Tory courts.

And the Labour Party must take an even bigger lead in raising funds for the strike.

Neil Kinnock's refusal to appear on the platform of one of the NUM's five big-city rallies is to be very much regretted. Once again he has shown weakness on the miners' dispute.

I really can't understand the statement that he has no time. He found time, at short notice, to attend Mrs Gandhi's funeral in India, which is purely a ceremonial matter. And that was the funeral of someone who had exercised repression over large sections of her own population and refused to hold democratic elections. Why is this more im-



Bob Clay MP

portant than speaking at NUM rallies? It would seem that what the media say is true: Kinnock is fudging the issue and refusing to be identified with the strike.

What would the parliamentary leadership say if those Labour MPs from the mining areas who have a day to day commitment to the strike — attending NUM picket lines, taking up cases of wrongful arrest, doing supportive local radio and press interviews, and so on — announced they didn't have time to attend the Commons to go through a charade of trooping through lobbies when the Tories have a built-in ma-

majority of 140 each time?

The original decision that Kinnock should speak at the NUM rallies was taken by a special meeting of the national executive. Once again, we have the party leader openly ignoring decisions of the party.

Members should ask themselves how many other issues will it happen on? We are going through the same business we did with the Wilson and Callaghan leaderships.

If we want to correct that historical tendency, then there's no more important issue to correct it on than the miners' strike. The overwhelming majority of Labour Party members not only feel total commitment to the NUM dispute, but understand that it is a matter of fundamental importance to the future of the labour movement.

They have made their views clear, now they must insist that the leadership reflect them.

### EMERGENCY RESOLUTION

'This CLP/Organisation is greatly concerned at the lack of support given by leading party members to the miners in their present struggle. This is all the more surprising because the delay in settling the dispute is wholly due to the Tory government's determination to crush the NUM, as an essential step towards destroying the power of the trade union and labour movement. We believe that the continued isolation of the miners is largely due to the failure of the party leadership to use their access to the mass media to put this case across. Nobody else has sufficient authority to do so effectively, and we regret that instead the party's representatives have allowed the media to sidetrack the debate onto violence on the picket lines, the voting procedures of the NUM, and such red herrings as the Gadafi incident. We therefore call on the party leader and deputy leader to counteract the propaganda of the media by campaigning to focus public attention on the real issues, and to do so on the basis of unconditional support for the NUM.'



THE RE-ELECTION of Ronald Reagan was not exactly a surprise. It is a taste of what is to come has already been seen in Reagan's 'Mig threat' invasion scare against Nicaragua.

And that raises a big question of strategy for socialists. How can the most reactionary US president for fifty years be fought against? How can the international policy of the United States and its allies be defeated?

JOHN ROSS looks at the state of international politics for the left today and the lessons of the last great international struggle against the United States — the Vietnam war.

THE ELECTION of Ronald Reagan in 1980 coincided with a massive re-emergence of discussion on world politics within the left wing of the labour movement. The two developments were intimately connected.

During the period of relaxation of East-West tensions in the 1970s — the years of detente — many of the most fundamental features of world politics seemed to recede. A fashion developed for discussing politics in terms of 'national specificities'. Discussion of politics as a world system, and therefore of international strategy, was relatively absent.

But the reality of Ronald Reagan soon reminded socialists rather harshly of the fact that the fundamental forces of politics are international in character. The world is not simply, or even primarily, composed of separate nation states.

On the contrary, each basic force which confronts the working class — Reaganism, the Soviet bureaucracy, the power of the United States, the imperialist system, the capitalist economic crisis — operates on a world scale.

As Trotsky put it, ours is: 'the epoch of imperialism, ie, of world economy and world politics under the hegemony of finance capital.' Therefore, 'not a single...party can establish its programme solely or mainly from conditions and tendencies of development in its own country...the national orientation of the proletariat must and can only flow from a world orientation and not vice versa.'

This truth, which applies to every country, is true with redoubled force in an imperialist country — and above all in regard to the United States. For the strength of the ruling class of an imperialist country does not come solely from the exploitation of the working class of its own country. It comes from the exploitation of the working class of the entire world.

It flows from this that the struggle

against the ruling class of an imperialist state cannot be conceived of solely, or primarily, as one taking place on a national terrain — and this is particularly true as regards the United States, the most powerful capitalist power of the world. A strategy for confronting Ronald Reagan is necessarily, in its essence, an international strategy.

Lenin formulated his problem of struggle in an imperialist country seventy years ago, with great precision: 'the socialist revolution will not be solely, or chiefly, a struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against their own bourgeoisie — no, it will be a struggle of all the imperialist-oppressed colonies and countries, of all dependent countries, against international imperialism.'

'Characterising the approach of the world social revolution...we said that the civil war of the working people against the imperialists and exploiters in all the advanced countries is beginning to be combined with national wars against international imperialism. This is confirmed by the course of the revolution and will be more and more confirmed as time goes on.'

In one of the famous articles written at the end of his life, *Fewer Better, But Better*, Lenin outlined the perspectives which flowed from this reality still more clearly: 'as a result of the last imperialist war (the First World War — JR) a number of countries of the East, India, China, etc have been completely jolted out of the rut....It is now clear to the whole world that they have been drawn into a process of development that must lead to a crisis in the whole of world capitalism...'

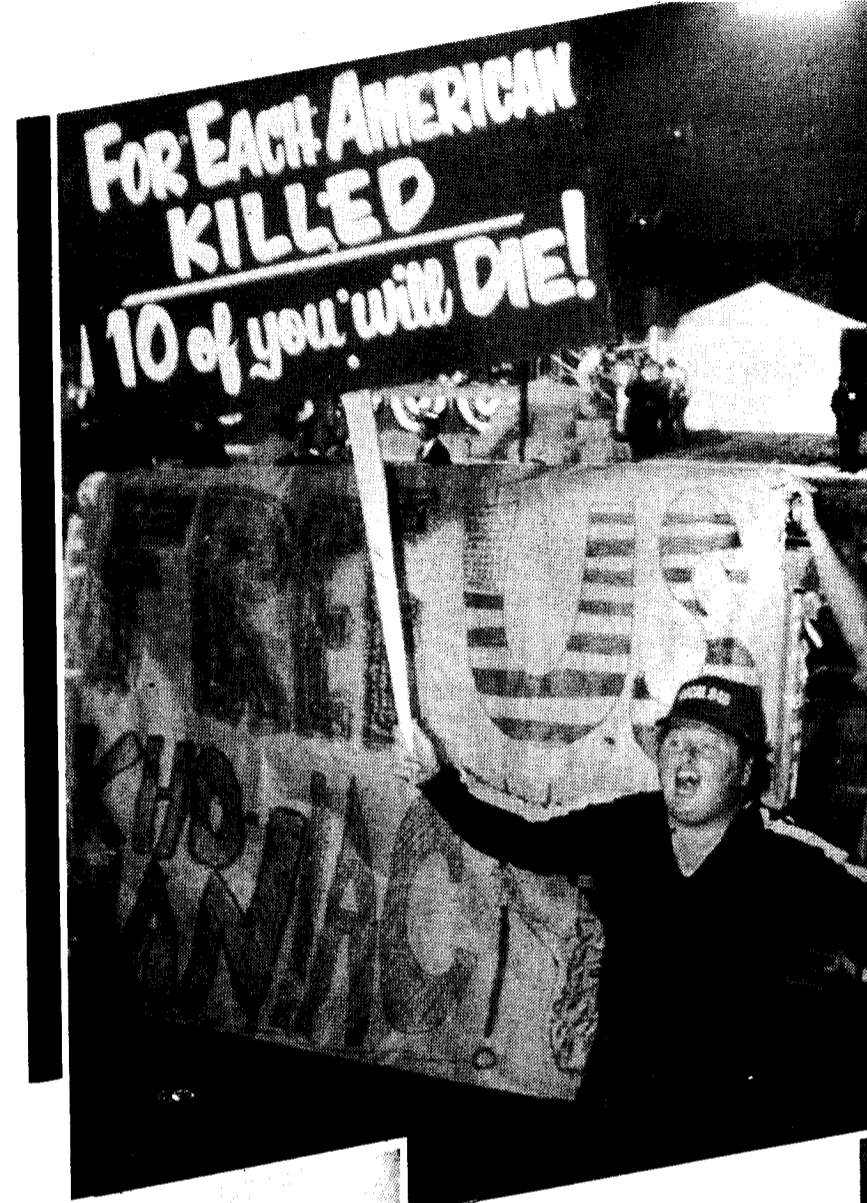
'Precisely as a result of the first imperialist war, the East has been definitively drawn into the revolutionary movement, has been drawn into the general maelstrom of the world revolutionary movement.'

In the final analysis it was this revolution in the 'East' which, in Lenin's analysis, would drive forward the victory of world socialist revolution. In Lenin's words: 'In the last analysis, the outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China, etc account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe. And during the past few years it is this majority that has been drawn into the struggle for emancipation with extraordinary rapidity, so that in this respect there cannot be the slightest doubt what the final outcome of the world struggle will be. In this sense, the complete victory of socialism is fully and absolutely assured.'

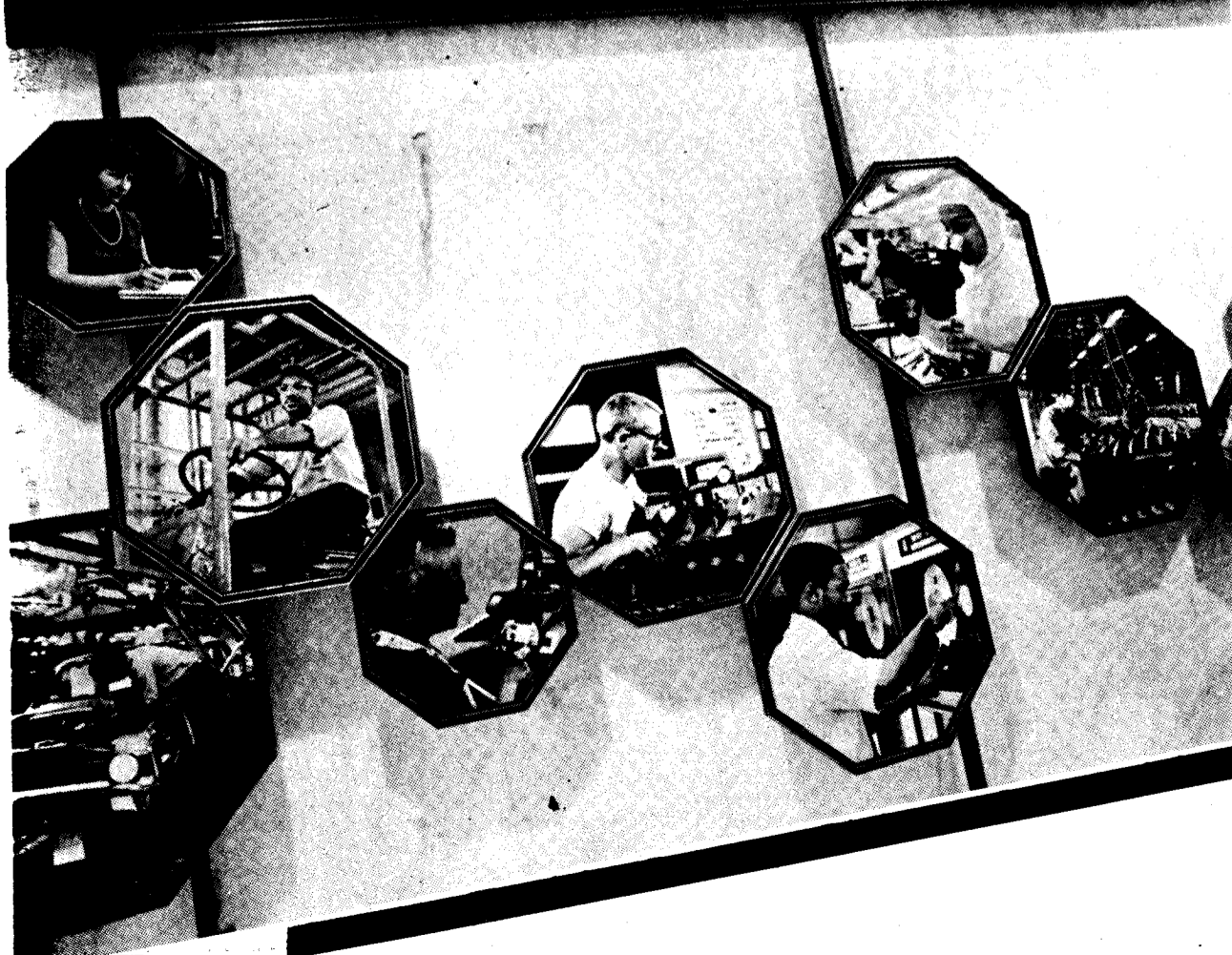
The fact that the great reserves of world socialist revolution were not seen

# How Reagan will

# be defeated



## General Motors is people



by Lenin as the 'white' proletariat of Western Europe or the United States, but the thousands of millions of Russia, Asia, and the semi-colonial countries, was and is, of course, deeply offensive to those educated in the school of European socialist parties — the 'international of the white race' as Lenin put it. Nevertheless, history confirmed Lenin's analysis, and not those of his opponents whose political analyses remained fixated on Europe.

It was the military power of the Soviet Union, not the working class of Western Europe, which proved capable of smashing Hitler's Germany — despite the policies of Stalin. In Asia it was the long struggle of the Chinese Communist Party which prevented Japan opening a 'second front' in the East against the USSR during the Second World War, and which, in 1949, took China out of the world capitalist system.

### Three

Since 1945 three enormous events, three gigantic trials of strength between the United States and the peoples of Asia, have shaped the fundamental course of post-war history. The first was the revolution in China itself. The second was the defeat by the Chinese workers state of the US invasion of Korea. The third was the victory of the Vietnamese over first the French and then the United States in Indochina.

It is these events, whose consequences flow out into the entire world, that have provided the political framework of every other struggle.

The consequences of these struggles in Asia, and their effect in defeating the United States and its allies, equally proceeded according to the framework Lenin outlined. Whereas in the United

States itself, in Western Europe, and in Japan, the US and its allies were able to utilise the role played by the reformist social democratic and communist parties to contain the working class, equivalent success was not possible in Asia or other parts of the semi-colonial world.

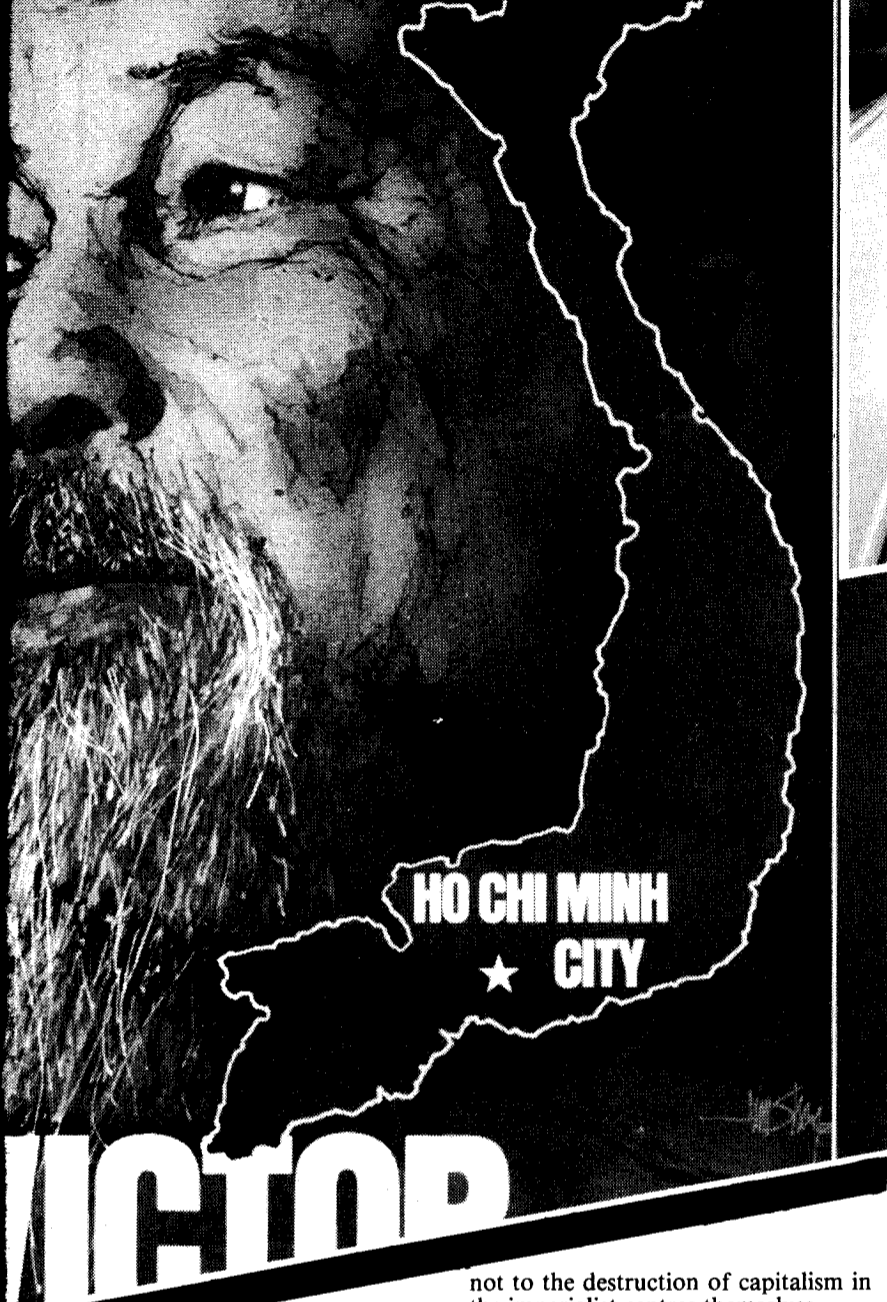
Revolutionary victories in Cuba and Central America, as well as the whole post-war decolonisation of Africa and Asia, developed within a framework created by the military victory of the USSR in World War II and of the three huge wars fought against the United States and its allies in Asia.

Considered historically it is clear that throughout the post-war world the working class of the advanced capitalist countries found itself essentially situated within the framework of world politics created by the clash of United States imperialism and the colonial revolution. The major working class struggles which developed from 1968 to 1975 in Western Europe were not, as many on the left believed at the time, the harbinger of the 'European revolution.' Their outbreak and initial rise, and then immediate decline after 1975, was closely tied to the economic consequences of the rise and fall of the United States war effort against Indochina.

The centre the crisis of world imperialism was the economic and political contradictions of the imperialist states themselves. But its most violent convulsions and manifestations, the places where the actual overthrow of capitalism took place, were in the 'periphery' of the system. The storm which developed in the world was created by the situation in Detroit,



# TIME



HO CHI MINH  
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the Ruhr, and Japan, but the most violent effects took place in Nicaragua, Grenada and Iran.

In this development capitalism followed the entire logic it has displayed in the twentieth century — a logic which flows from the nature of the imperialist system itself.

Enormous class struggles have taken place in the imperialist centres during the course of the twentieth century — 1919 and 1923 in Germany, 1920 in Italy, 1926 in Britain, 1936 in Spain, 1944-45 in France and Italy, 1968 in France, 1974-75 in Portugal to take only a few. Twice, following the First and Second World Wars, authentically *revolutionary* crises developed in a number of imperialist countries.

But within the imperialist countries exist not simply the most powerful working classes in the world but *still more powerful* ruling classes — ruling classes which, in particular, are able to create powerful reformist bureaucracies as a defence of their interests. The conquest of power by the working class in an advanced imperialist country is far harder, and further away in time, than the conquest of power by the working class in a whole series of semi-colonial countries — and still more difficult even than was the conquest of power in a backward imperialist state such as Russia in 1917.

The result of this situation is that while two great cataclysms, the First and Second World Wars, have shaken to their foundations the power of the imperialists in their own states (with the exception of the USA) no successful overthrow of capitalism has taken place in an advanced imperialist country. The First and Second World Wars, and their aftermaths, led to the destruction of capitalism in Eastern Europe and a series of semi-colonial countries, but

not to the destruction of capitalism in the imperialist centres themselves.

Reformist parties which were able to save capitalism in West Europe, and/or remained subordinated to Moscow, were able, in the semi-colonial countries, confronted with profound economic and social contradictions and much weaker ruling classes, to break with Moscow and lead victorious struggles for power.

However while since the Second World War, with the arguable exception of Portugal in 1974-75, the objective conditions for a working class socialist revolution have not existed in any imperialist country, nor are they going to in the immediate years to come, nevertheless this *does not* mean that the working class in the imperialist countries is relegated to a secondary role in the international class struggle or the clashes that will defeat Reagan.

Firstly the working class of the imperialist countries will strike the final decisive blows against world capitalism. Secondly if we consider how the United States was defeated in Vietnam we can see both the role of the working class of the imperialist countries within the international class struggle, and gain an understanding of how Ronald Reagan can and will be defeated.

Purely militarily the United States could have won the war in Vietnam. If even its massive superiority in conventional armaments would not have sufficed then, in the final analysis, the United States possessed nuclear weapons which could have decided the conflict.

The problem for the United States however was firstly the problem confronting it could never be considered purely military and secondly, linked to this, the US could never separate the situation in Vietnam from the overall international relation of forces which confronted it.

While it was military struggle

against the United States in Indochina itself which was the indispensable element without which victory would have been impossible, nevertheless it was the *overall* relation of forces internationally which finally brought the US to its knees. Vietnam became inextricably linked to every other problem which the United States faced in the world. The US was never able to disentangle Vietnam from its overall international position.

The first problem was that the United States was itself unable to invade North Vietnam, and cut off the supplies and bases of the liberation forces of the National Liberation Front (NLF), because the Chinese workers state made it clear it would send its army into North Vietnam, as it had into Korea, if the US made any such move.

## Arsenal

Secondly the nuclear arsenal, and military strength of the USSR acted as one crucial deterrent to the United States embarking on any atomic adventure in Indochina. The Soviet Union also acted as the chief military supplier of North Vietnam and the NLF. While the USSR militarily gave far less aid to Vietnam than it should have, and far less than to some other states, nevertheless the supplies it did give were decisive in maintaining the war in the South. They particularly prepared the final offensive of the NLF which brought victory in 1975.

Despite the Sino-Soviet split of the period China allowed Soviet military supplies to reach Vietnam in an uninterrupted fashion throughout the war.

In addition to the role of the workers states the Vietnam war stimulated and was accompanied by, a major rising series of class struggles within the colonial world. The guerilla wars against the Portuguese occupation of Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola rapidly gained momentum throughout the late 1960s before finally achieving liberation in 1974-75. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) underwent a rapid development after the debacle of the Arab regimes in the 1967 war with Israel. A series of major class struggles developed in Latin America centred in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and Bolivia.

In short, throughout the Vietnam war the United States found itself confronting almost continuously increasing tension and struggle in the colonial world — struggles which built up the momentum which finally in 1975-79, resulted in a whole series of defeats of United States backed regimes in Angola, Nicaragua, Grenada, Iran, Afghanistan, and elsewhere.

In addition to its impact in the colonial world, in Western Europe the consequences of the Vietnam war spread both direct opposition to the war among wide layers of students and young people and provided the economic background to the major



series of working class struggles which developed from 1968 to 1975.

Unable to take the domestic political risk of taxing the American working class to finance the war the United States in effect exported a large part of its cost to Europe. Huge American balance of payments deficits were run which were financed simply by printing and 'exporting' dollars — this process creating the rapid worldwide inflation of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

As US economic policy both placed the West European working class in a strong bargaining position — because exports to the US spurred increases in output, while simultaneously the West European working class found its real income threatened by inflation, this mixture provided a perfect economic background to the explosion which took place after 1968.

Confronted with these rapidly rising class struggles in their own countries the West European bourgeoisies, in turn, were unable to take the tolerant attitude to American economic policy they had pursued during the 1960s. They instead began withdrawing gold from the United States to cover their dollar holdings. In a single week in May 1971 West European central banks withdrew 422 million dollars in gold from the United States — almost five per cent of the entire US gold stock. These moves directly precipitated Nixon's announcement, in August 1971, that the US was suspending the post-war international monetary system. Coupled with internal wage controls Nixon's statement announced the open beginning of the post-war US economic crisis.

## Long

Finally in the United States itself, long before the imposition of wage controls, the Vietnam conflict was provoking not only direct opposition to the war but also creating increasing economic strain. Che Guevara, in his famous letter known under the title *Create two, three, many Vietnams* summarised the situation perfectly: 'Not for a long time shall we be able to know if President Johnson ever seriously thought of bringing about some of the reforms needed by his people — to iron out the barbed class contradictions that grow each day with explosive power. The truth is that the improvements announced under the pompous title of the 'Great Society' have dropped into the cesspool of Vietnam.'

'The largest of all imperialist powers feel in its own guts the bleeding inflicted by a poor and underdeveloped country; its fabulous economy feels the strain of the war effort.'

It was this enormous international combination of class forces — the military struggle in Vietnam, the military power of the USSR and China, the rising colonial struggle, the working class conflict in Western Europe, the economic strain and anti-war movement in the United States itself — which forced the United States to end the Vietnam war. As Henry Kissinger openly explained, if the US had not got

out of Indochina, it faced a disaster to its position on an international scale. The US was forced to accept defeat in Vietnam in order to avoid an even greater disaster on a world level.

The fact that the US was able to extricate itself from Indochina with the minimum possible loss by a turn to a policy of 'detente' with the USSR constitutes another story.

The lessons of this defeat in Indochina are in fact exactly summed up in the title of Che Guevara's famous letter of *Create Two, Three, Many Vietnams*. The United States was *unable* to concentrate its forces against Vietnam. It was bogged down, and stretched beyond its resources not simply by the international movement against the war itself but by the whole series of class struggles which were rising against it on a world scale. Palestine, the struggle against Portuguese colonialism, the general strike of May 1968 in France and its consequences, the anti-war movement in the United States itself were just some of the other 'Vietnams' which helped secure victory in Indochina itself.

## Vietnam

The lessons of this struggle against the Vietnam war for the fight against Reagan are evident. To defeat the United States it must be overstretched. Not 'detente' but international class struggle, international solidarity and pushing forward to the maximum every struggle that erupts internationally, is the way forward in the international struggle against the United States government.

The people of Nicaragua and Central America, to take just the most pressing example of the need for support, require for their victory both a massive direct solidarity movement on a world scale *and* the pressing forward of every class struggle which develops throughout the world. The anti-missile movement in Europe, the mounting class struggle in the Philippines, the rising black movement in South Africa, the struggle against austerity wherever it develops, are the 'Vietnams' which can overstrain the American colossus and help ensure victory in Central America.

For Che Guevara posed the problem perfectly. The power of the United States is so great that it can destroy *any* of its opponents individually. The US economy is two and a half times the size of that of the USSR — and far more technologically advanced. The United States military budget alone, let alone its potential expenditure on arms, exceeds the *entire* industrial output of China. The direct and indirect military personnel of the United States are larger than the whole population of Nicaragua.

The *only* way in which the United States can be defeated is if it can be prevented from concentrating its resources against a single enemy, if it can be defeated by the whole range of class struggles it faces on an international scale.

Building both a solidarity movement with Central America and these international struggles is the task facing socialists.

To coin a phrase: Workers of the world unite. You have nothing to lose but Ronald Reagan.



# Nicaragua after the elections

ON 4 NOVEMBER, Nicaraguans flocked to the polls for their first free election. The result was a victory for the FSLN.

Western socialists heaved a collective sigh of relief, tempered by fears of a US invasion. JOHN HARRISON argues that this response, whilst correct, is rather too simple.

The *Financial Times* began its main article on the Nicaraguan elections on 7 November with the following observation: 'Perhaps the most remarkable thing about last Sunday's Nicaraguan elections was not the result — a widely predicted victory for the ruling Sandinistas — but that they took place at all. In modern times, no other revolutionary movement which has seized power by force of arms has gone on to hold serious elections.'

This statement was partly a sop to Reagan's absurd idea that freedom, democracy and the whole gamut of abstract ideals are uniquely correlated with the ballot box. But it also contains a kernel of truth.

Elections in the Soviet Union for example are revealed in their meaninglessness only by those in Japanese trade unions. The Nicaraguan elections in contrast had a significance well beyond that country's beleaguered borders.

The electoral process was exemplary — as many of its critics have been forced to recognise. Everyone over 16 was encouraged to register — and over 90 per cent did so. This entitled them to vote for a president, vice-president and a 90 seat constituent assembly elected by proportional representation.

Any party which did not advocate the armed overthrow of the state would stand. The closing date for registration was extended to encourage voters. All censorship relating to military intelligence was lifted for the three months campaign.

Every party standing received £700,000 expenses. The TV carried an hour of party

political broadcasts every day. The radio carried three-quarters of an hour. Political graffiti decorated every wall and telegraph post in the country.

Some 4,000 polling stations were set up — one for every 380 or so electors. All parties were entitled to observers at the booths. Fifty official foreign observers were provided by foreign governments and such bodies as the Socialist International.

Whilst Thatcher refused to send observers, five British parliamentarians did attend, including one Tory. All agreed that no electoral infringements occurred.

So Reagan's claim that the elections were a sham is simply a lie. The 82 per cent turnout was some 25 percentage points higher than in the US presidential elections. The political differences between the Conservative Democratic Party and the FSLN is greater than that between the Republicans and the Democrats — and the Nicaraguan election was fought more on policies, and less on personalities than was the American.

While neither the US nor the Nicaraguan elections was a sham, of the two the Nicaraguan was by far the more democratic.

The armed counter-revolutionaries also largely failed in their attempt to disrupt the proceedings. They tried to cut off the northern town of Esteli but were driven back into the mountains. The Sandinista moved tanks even into isolated villages to protect the polling booths.

The contras remain deeply divided amongst themselves. The US backed FDN, whose leadership consists of ex-National Guards from the Somoza

era, is uneasily allied with a faction of the ARDE led by Frenando 'El Negro' Chamorro. Chamorro is fighting to wrest control of the organisation from Eden Pastora — an ex-FSLN commandante who opposes alliances with the FDN.

A bomb which ripped through an ARDE jungle press conference last May, injuring Pastora, is believed to have been planted by members of the FDN.

But despite the divisions the contras remain a serious problem. The 10,000 or so members of the FDN are well supplied by the CIA. They have killed over 7,300 people since Somoza's overthrow in 1979, caused some £400 million worth of damage and spread the war to 11 of the country's 16 departments. During the election the contras succeeded in killing Enrique Schmidt, head of the Sandinista's counter-insurgency forces and minister for telecommunications.

The three main parties which boycotted the election are the Social Democrats, the Social Christians and the Liberal Constitutionals, who together make up the Coordinadora Democratica (Democratic Coordination). They are all small Christian Democrat type parties rooted in the Managua bourgeoisie.

The Coordinadora had demanded negotiations with the contras as a precondition for standing in the elections. The FSLN's response was to suggest they stood on that platform and let the electorate decide. They declined.

It is hard to assess the Coordinadora's real support. They called for people to spoil their ballot papers and some seven per cent of voters did so. But in a country with no history of free elections, and in which over half the population was illiterate five years ago, many probably did so by accident.

Three parties stood on programme's to the right of the FSLN's: the Con-

servatives, the Liberals and the (other) Social Christians — splinter groups from the Liberals and Conservatives boycotted the elections. They sought encouragement to foreign investment, more freedom for the public sector and rights to land ownership. In company with parties to the 'left' of the FSLN they also sought a greater separation between party and state — a 'de-Sandinisation' of the army and the revolutionary defence committees. Between them the right wing parties picked up not far off one third of the vote.

The Socialists, a Moscow oriented Communist Party and two splinter groups, the Communist Party and the MAP, stood on platforms to the 'left' of the FSLN. They opposed the Sandinista's plan to introduce a foreign investment code and argued for tighter controls on private capital and a redistribution of income in favour of waged workers. Between them they polled a paltry four per cent of the vote.

There is clearly no significant support within Nicaragua for a 'harder' line the FSLN — although the Socialists' influence in the unions is greater than their electoral performance suggests.

The FSLN stood largely on its achievements since 1979 (see Socialist Action, 19 October). One commentator summarised the new president Daniel Ortega's speech at a 150,000 strong election rally in Managua as 'sovereignty and gallo pinto (rice and beans), national dignity and austerity.' The crowd reportedly loved it.

The Sandinistas won 68 per cent of the valid vote — about 63 per cent if spoiled papers are included. About half the adult population voted for them.

Three issues will dominate the coming months. One is the stance of the parties to the right of the FSLN — which manifestly

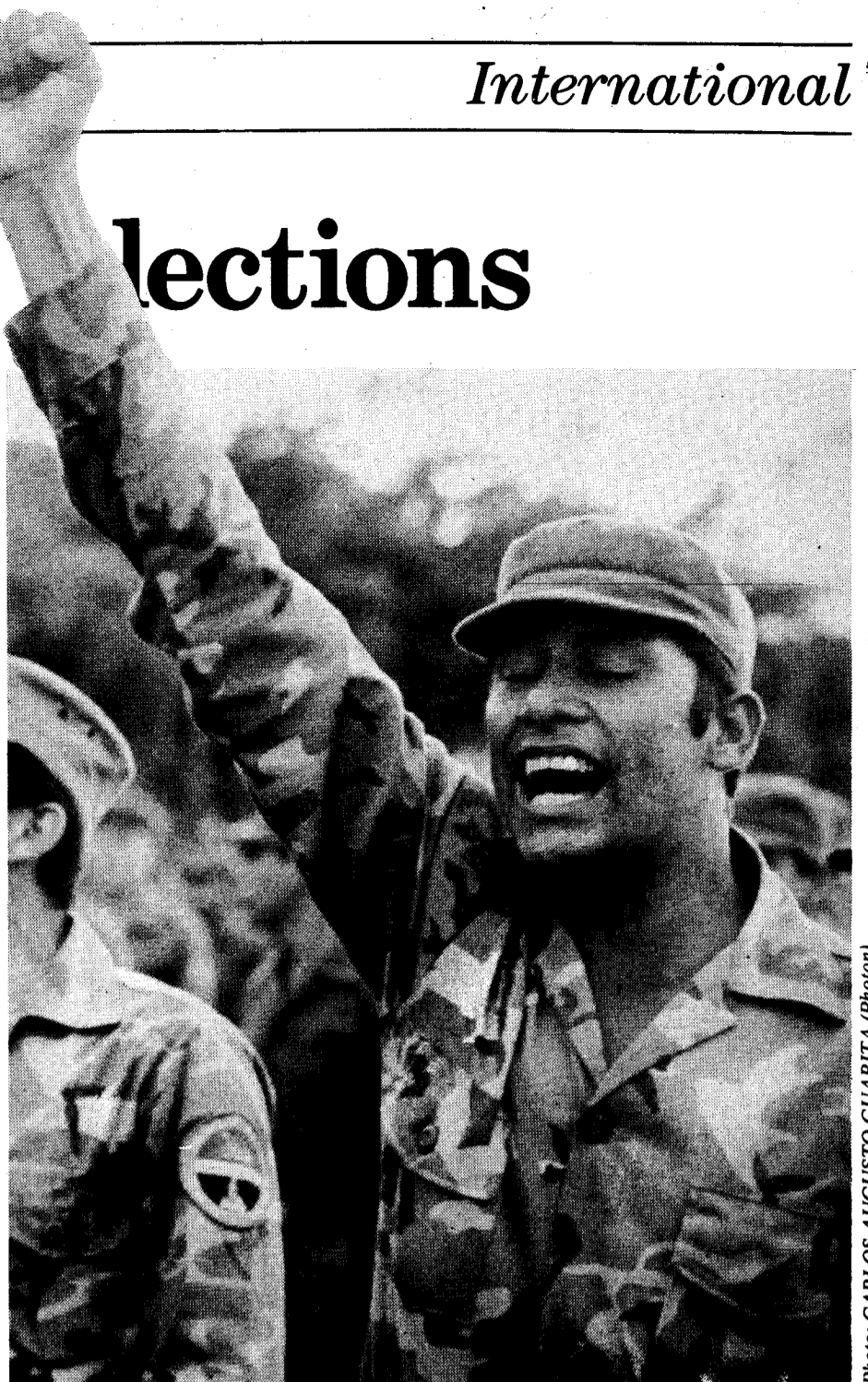


Photo: CARLOS AUGUSTO GUARITA (Photom)

command substantial minority support. FSLN candidate Rosario Antunez's assessment that as the Sandinistas faced no serious opposition only the turnout would matter (quoted in Socialist Action, 11 November) has been shown to be far too optimistic.

The FSLN has invited all parties, including those boycotting the elections, to participate in a 'national dialogue' to draw up a draft constitution to put to the constituent assembly. This will obviously be a major political process.

The economy will also

be extremely crucial. No one yet can be sure how the private sector is going to respond to the newly visible balance of forces, nor how the proposed foreign investment code will work out.

Finally there hangs over the entire country the war and the threat of US invasion. Whilst the contras are a constant harassment not even the CIA now believes they can overthrow the government. This leaves the US with three basic options: a negotiated settlement, increased efforts at economic and military destabilisation, and an outright invasion.

A negotiated settlement is scarcely to Reagan's taste even if it were possible. Continued destabilisation would be more acceptable to 'world opinion' than outright invasion and seems the most likely immediate course of action. But with the United States, particularly with Reagan at the helm, anything is always possible — as the immediate post-election invasion threats showed.

Socialists must have right at the top of their list of priorities stepping up solidarity with Nicaraguan not only against invasion by the United States but against every other threat it faces.

# Spain votes on NATO



UNDER PRESSURE from the popular anti-NATO movement, Spanish president Felipe Gonzalez has now set a date — February 1986 — for a referendum on NATO membership. Thirteen criteria are given to shape this, including that the date must be 'opportune for the government, in the light of national and international circumstances'.

Meanwhile the executive of Gonzalez' Socialist Party (PSOE) has approved a foreign policy statement to the forthcoming national congress which ties together membership of NATO and the Common Market. The intention is to deepen involvement in the Atlantic military alliance, and explicitly link it to the longed-for membership of the EEC.

The policy statement presents Spain as being part of 'the Western European democratic world', and contributing to 'collective Western

security'. It highlights the connection between 'joint responsibility in matters of security' and 'economic and political cooperation in the European context'.

By Carol Turner

According to the document, within both NATO and the EEC it is possible to support initiatives 'which favour European responsibility in matters of security'. Like the British Labour Party's own defence policy, the PSOE document holds out the hope of winning some independence from the

United States within NATO.

The PSOE state their intentions of prohibiting the 'deployment, stockpiling and transportation of nuclear armaments' on Spanish territory. But the Socialist Party leadership have not moved to sign the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, and have blocked resolutions from local councils calling for nuclear free zones.

When it was in opposition, in 1982, the PSOE said: 'NATO is a fundamentally military organisation. The Common Market is basically commercial and economic. If we joined NATO we would be subject to the decisions of the bodies of the organisation, to the directives of its authorities...If, as is probable, the tendency towards nuclearisation of

NATO continues, in the medium term in Europe it would be almost impossible for Spain to remain an exception if it joined.'

In office, the PSOE has now revised its position.

The Spanish peace movement is already opposing these moves by the Gonzalez government — and is finding support from many PSOE members, trade unionists, and from the socialist youth organisation.

The attempts by the Spanish peace movement to stop the Socialist government pursuing a pro-NATO policy will be immeasurably strengthened if the peace movement throughout Europe steps up the campaign against the North Atlantic nuclear alliance.

Activists in the Labour Party please take note!



CND conference

# Action on cruise!

PREPARATIONS FOR CND's annual conference are well underway. And what preparations they are!

For months now there has been much behind-the-scenes activity to ensure that the leadership get the sort of conference they want. Whether it will be the sort of conference the membership wants is quite another matter!

First off, the Sheffield agenda does *not* represent the priorities for next year: namely, stepping up the campaign against the missiles.

Following a decision by national council to hold a mass lobby of the Warsaw Pact embassies on 8 December — instead of marking the fifth anniversary of cruise deployment! — Student CND have now called a mass sit-down in Trafalgar Square.

By Carol Turner

Conference must demand that the 8 December action is ditched and that CND nationally throws its full weight behind the Student CND initiative.

But CND must do more than that. It must give its full backing — financially and by publicity through its national network — to any mass women-only action called by Greenham.

Traditionally, December has been the time when the women at the peace camp have mobilised thousands of women to protest against the missiles. This year, given the government is trying hard to evict the camp, it's vital that CND joins the women in calling a day of protest.

## Briefing changes on Ireland

A REVOLT took place at the 21 October editorial board of *Labour Briefing* over the November editorial on the Brighton bombings.

By Valerie Coultas

The meeting voted to disassociate itself from the article as a capitulation to press hysteria and went on to adopt a position of troops out and unconditional but not unconditional support for the IRA. Ironically, however, the meeting re-elected all those responsible onto an emergency editorial board.

At the upcoming EB meeting Sheila Heeley, from the Labour Committee on Ireland, will lead off a discussion on Ireland to avoid a similar error occurring again. There will also be a discussion on the 'defence of the cities'. London Labour Briefing has adopted a position

A mass action in December to mark the anniversary of the announcement of cruise deployment is just what is needed to revitalise the camp and restore the confidence and morale of the women there. And such an action will help take the whole peace movement well on its way to continued action against the missiles in 1985.

Emergency resolutions on cruise action this December must flood the conference. Activists should leave the CND leadership in no doubt about what the priorities for after conference really are.

Labour CND has already submitted an emergency resolution to this effect. And — as news about the national council's decision gets around — many CND groups are beginning to do likewise.

Emergency resolutions must be at Goodwin Street by next Thursday and (by the beginning of conference) must be supported by 24 other groups. There will be an opportunity to composite when conference opens on Friday 23 November. Get your resolution in now!

of support for the three nos and an illegal budget as a way of fighting rate-capping.

But, apart from *Briefing* giving full backing to the Liverpool councillors and allowing the debate to be aired in its columns, there has been no national discussion about what stance *Briefing* should take over rate-capping.

At the last EB a comrade from Merseyside raised problems with the cost of the national supplement. At this meeting local reports are to be taken to see what the view of other areas is on this. Reports will also be taken from the International Commission and the newly established Trade Union Commission.

● The Labour Briefing EB takes place at Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham at 12 noon on 25 November. London Labour Briefing meets at 6.30pm, room 156 in County Hall on 26 November, to be followed by a discussion at 8pm on reselection.



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

## Labour CND emergency resolution

Cruise missiles have now been deployed in this country at Greenham Common with a second flight expected at any time. The US government has agreed to a massive military budget for the development of the cruise base at Molesworth.

Opinion surveys show a majority of the public are opposed to cruise and therefore it is vital that we continue to highlight our opposition to their deployment. Conference therefore regrets that the October national council voted not to hold a national demonstration against cruise on 12 December, despite the importance of this the anniversary of the government's announcement of their arrival.

Conference therefore calls on all groups to support the demonstration in Trafalgar Square called by Student CND and Greater London Region CND to commemorate this date, and instructs CND to give maximum publicity to this event.

## Refuse Cruise

12 December  
Assemble 6pm in Trafalgar Sq.

Student CND says:

National CND has decided not to mark the anniversary of the cruise decision in any way. Students and other groups believe that this decision is wrong, that the national organisation is out of touch with the membership, and that there is a big feeling for anti-cruise demo at this time.

Student CND has decided to call a demonstration on 12 December and appeals to all groups to support this so that we may truly speak for the 55 per cent of people in this country who oppose cruise. The demonstration will take the form of civil disobedience in central London, a symbolic protest to make our voices heard.

● Further details contact: Martin Butcher, c/o Student CND, 11 Goodwin Street, London N4 (phone 01-263 0977).

# Labour women in '85

THE LABOUR Women's Action Committee will hold its AGM in Birmingham on Saturday 8 December. This is the main opportunity for women who support WAC to discuss campaigning priorities for the coming year.

At this year's AGM discussion is bound to centre on a balance sheet of this year's campaign around the women's section of the NEC.

Last year WAC's campaigning centred on the issue of the slate for the national executive. This was always understood to be chiefly a propaganda campaign to build support for WAC's demand that the women's section of the NEC should be elected by women in the party.

At present the women are elected by the, mainly male, trade union bloc votes.

Nonetheless WAC made important advances in the last year around the NEC slate. A number of unions did support the WAC slate and the principle that women should decide the slate.

Progress was also made with the 'slate-making' process on the left itself with the LCC, Briefing and the Campaign Group accepting that women should decide the slate.

However the LCC is already reneging on this position. A resolution to its next meeting will propose that next year the LCC should put forward its own slate for the entire executive and not engage in any 'slate-making' process on the left — including with women.

including with women.

One proposal for next year's campaign that will go to the WAC AGM is that 'mock' elections should be held at the Labour women's conference to determine the slate for the coming year, with WAC committing itself to support whatever slate is elected.

This would underline the point that the women's section of the NEC should be actually elected by women. It would also give the slate considerably more authority in the party as a whole.

By Jude Woodward

Other issues likely to come up include a proposal to make WAC's bulletin more regular, possibly quarterly, with a

format making it suitable for regular sale in women's sections, not simply to WAC supporters. This would probably mean broadening the issues covered to include other aspects of policy of concern to women.

Resolutions for the AGM have to be submitted to the secretary by 26 November. To be eligible to attend the AGM 1984 membership subscriptions also have to be received by first post on that date.

If you want to influence what WAC does over the coming year, simply want to get involved then the AGM is the best time to start. Make sure you are there.

● Resolutions and AGM registration (£2 and £1 unwaged) and 1984 membership subs (£5 individuals £6 organisations, £2.50 unwaged) to: Ann Pettifor, 39 Caldervale Rd, London SW9 9LY.



Jo Richardson, a campaigner for Labour women's rights.

Photo: JOANNE O'BRIEN

## WOMEN FOR MINES NOT MISSILES

AS PART OF FASLANE PEACE CAMP'S MONTH OF ANTI-TRIDENT EVENTS.

Demonstration & vigil at Faslane  
SUNDAY 25th NOVEMBER

ALL WOMEN ARE WELCOME. BRING A BANNER IF YOU ARE IN WOMEN FOR PEACE/WOMEN AGAINST PIT CLOSURES OR ANY OTHER GROUP. WE PLAN TO PROVIDE A CRÉCHIE - FEEL FREE TO BRING CHILDREN TO JOIN IN. WE HOPE IT WILL BE A FESTIVE DAY.

PLEASE PUBLICISE THIS AS WIDELY AS POSSIBLE - WE NEED A GOOD TURN OUT



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR IF YOU CAN HELP IN ANY WAY TELEPHONE 0849-56228 OR 041-332-6817/423 1485



## Democracy for London and London Bridge

Open Letter to Labour Groups:

Dear Comrade.

We welcome the position you have taken against rate-capping. We believe that your willingness to stand up and be counted provides the basis for a real working-class alliance against the Tories. A united front of councils, workers and tenants will have the most powerful mobilising effect within the working class. Such a movement, we are confident will give us victory against rate-capping.

We are, however, faced with a problem which needs to be resolved rapidly. Quite simply it is this — will individuals stand by the Labour Group's commitment to fight? For our part, along with the tenants, there is no alternative but to wage an uncompromising fight against Thatcher. If we are defeated our fates is quite clear — the dole queues, and the impoverishment of our communities.

As individuals you have a number of options. You can, in one form or another, attempt to carry out Tory policy — unthinkable, of course for any one considering themselves to be a part of the Labour movement. This option of resigning also remains open to you.

The third option is to carry out what Labour Groups have publicly stated — to make a fight of it, to take on the Tories. It will put considerable strain on the individual and the consequences are potentially extremely unpleasant, for example surcharge, banning from office and even imprisonment. As trade unionists our history is scattered with examples of workers being penalised and even jailed for their principles. We don't look to such a confrontation with any relish but simply as something that may be necessary.

We realise that for a whole series of personal reasons you may not be able to go down such a road. Under such circumstances we can fully understand that you should need to resign now before the battle really starts, and we can respect such a position. Of course resignations should be carried out in a disciplined fashion (we have put forward our views in the enclosed resolution) which, if co-ordinated, on a London-wide basis by the A.L.A., will provide an important boost for our campaign.

Such a disciplined working class approach will be as important for us as for the comrades on the Labour Group who are able to see the struggle through to its conclusion.



Photo: GM COOKSON

Resolution to Labour Parties, LGCs and Labour groups:

This ..... supports the Council's stand of non-compliance with rate-capping. We note that this could mean surcharge, banning from municipal office and even imprisonment. We pledge our support as a party to mobilise the maximum forces to defend the Council's stand on socialist principles.

We realise that personal reasons may impede individuals ability to carry out the Labour Group stand. In support of the London Trade Unions organised in London Bridge we instruct the Labour Group to identify those unable to carry out the policy of non-compliance. For the Labour Group in conjunction with the ALA to set a London wide date for resignations and new elections. Those elections to be fought on a common London wide platform of non-compliance, defense of jobs and services, to be seen as a rallying and mobilising point for the fight against rate-capping.

Re-election will be based on the following criteria:

- a. Support for the policy of non co-operation.
- b. Preference to be given to workers and tenants, in particular women and members of ethnic minority groups.

# Labour groups must lead

JIM FITZPATRICK is acting secretary of the Democracy for London campaign. He told Socialist Action what options are facing Labour councils in preparing next year's budgets.

THERE ARE three options. You either go along with the government, or you set no rate, or you set a deficit budget. Obviously, we don't accept going along with the government without a challenge. That means non-compliance — either not setting a rate or a deficit budget.

The Liverpool situation. They went to the community, and the trade unions and said: this is a budget for need, the one we should be promoting, and we think you should be supporting. That position was won. The government was forced to do a U-turn.

The problem with London, very simply, is that you have nine London boroughs, you have ILEA, and you have the GLC. The deficit budget strategy is a far stronger tactic to convince the workers and the community that it is a budget for need.

But there is a danger. Because what will happen is that boroughs, the GLC and ILEA will run out of money independently. One may run out in three weeks, the last in nine months.

But effectively that will isolate one borough, and it will be very difficult to get solidarity action, unless the union organisation is so sophisticated that we can turn on the tap of strike action in every borough when the first worker is sacked.

The beauty of a no-rate budget is that each



Photo: STEFANO CAGONI (Report)

THE 7 NOVEMBER day of action in London, against rate-capping and abolition was an outstanding success. Despite the TUC's local government committee failing to back the action, over 100,000 took strike action and 30,000 demonstrated. This success provides a solid basis on which to build for the fight ahead.

The next stage in the campaign will be welding the authority in London will run out within three weeks. If that happens, then it means nobody is going to get paid, and the services will disappear.

The boroughs, the GLC and ILEA will all be going at the same time. This will be much more effective in terms of solidarity action and mass support.

The only way either strategy can win, however, is if the Labour groups, in conjunction with the trade unions, campaign in the rank and file of the unions and in the community. They must say, this is what we're going to do, and this will be the result, and pass the responsibility for no wages and no services on to the Tory government.

They're the people

who are cutting back on the Rate Support Grant (RSG), and they've got to be held responsible. That campaign has to be joined after 7 November, and the Labour groups are responsible for initiating it. We have already passed a policy decision that we will not accept any Labour authority using the rates as they did in the 70s as a way of

labour groups and the trade unions into a fighting united front against the Tory proposals. Democracy For London (the umbrella body for GLC unions) and London Bridge (unions in the hit-list boroughs) are circulating the open letter and resolution (see below) to Labour Parties, local government committees, and Labour groups. We urge all Socialist Action supporters in London, to support this initiative.

The danger of the no-rate policy is that Labour authorities are demanding the right to set their own rate, and what we're saying as the trade union arm of that campaign is that we recognise their right to set a rate, but we do not recognise their right to set a rate on working people to solve the withdrawal of RSG by central government.

## Hackney: taking the Liverpool road

ONE HUNDRED and fifty delegates to Hackney's special borough conference on Saturday 10 November gave full backing to the Labour council's policy of maintaining jobs and services, no rent rises, and rate increases no higher than the rate of inflation.

By Frank Gorton

A well argued debate found a clear majority in favour of setting a rate and a deficit budget. By accepting that Hackney's material needs should be met on the basis of present income, and consequently presenting central government with the choice of paying up or closing Hackney down, conference accepted the challenge offered by the Tories.

The position of the council unions present was



Photo: TIM RIGBY

against setting a rate, and this position had support from a majority of councillors.

The preponderant view was that those who argued against setting a rate now, would succumb to setting a rate later, and that in any event, it would focus attention on the rates question, at the expense of jobs and services. A campaign based on the council's right to raise rates would not gain much support from the working people of Hackney.

The real focus of the campaign should be to make the Tories pay.

What becomes clearer and clearer is that only when the mass of council tenants and organised labour recognise that this is a fight to the finish, and that they, like the mining communities, have no choice but to take a role in leading the fight, will Labour councils find the necessary basis from which to prosecute the struggle.

## Rugby tackled

RUGBY'S Tory council has decided that lesbians and gay men have no right to council employment. Last Saturday the small town witnessed a magnificent response to this outrage.

NALGO nationally, along with many local branches, joined local Labour Parties, the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights, other lesbian and gay organisations, and student unions in a spirited 1000 strong demonstration — organised in only two weeks.

The militant rally which followed heard messages of solidarity from Women Against Pit Closures, Tony Benn and other labour movement figures.

The rally affirmed that Rugby (where the Tories

have a council majority of only one), is the front line of the resistance to Tory attempts to stop the big advances being made for lesbian and gay employment rights through the work of activists and the growing support of local government unions.

By Peter Purton

Unfortunately, Rugby's police decided to turn the logic of the council's ban into reality. Right at the end, they launched an unprovoked attack on the Gay Youth Movement and arrested 18 people. Their defence is now part of the activities of the campaign against the ban.

Resolutions of support, donations to: SLGB, c/o 241 Clifton Rd, Rugby, Warwickshire.



# Jaguar sold out



**THE PAY strike at Jaguar cars has ended. The strike remained totally solid throughout the nine days' stoppage. No cars were moved and not one worker tried to cross the picket line.**

At the Browns Lane assembly plant (where a majority voted against the strike) pickets stood shifts around the clock. Many workers opposed to the strike reported day and night to do their turn on picket duty. The solidarity and discipline of the workforce was tremendous.

Jaguar management were clearly shaken by our unity and will to win. Their early attempts to buy off the strike had failed badly and efforts to break our solidarity only hardened attitudes.

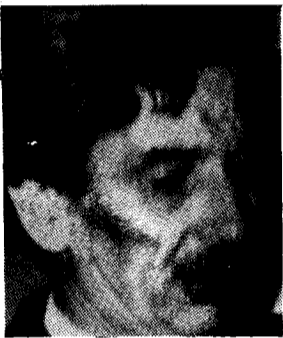
Talk of holding a ballot or taking legal action was soon shelved — and not only because they were content to let Austin Rover make the running.

Meanwhile, Jaguar was losing at least a quarter of a million pounds a day, and dealers

show rooms were emptying. (Most cars are sold before they leave the factory.) Management was under pressure while the workers were confident and united behind the claim for 'new money' on the basic pay.

The Jaguar board of directors (including Austin Rover boss Ray Horrocks) confronted this situation when they met on Wednesday 7 November. What could they do?

They telephoned Grenville Hawley, the union chief negotiator, and an emergency joint negotiating committee (JNC) was called that afternoon. In talks lasting



Grenville Hawley

into the early hours of Thursday morning the union side went over the details of our claim. Management said they would not make any more money available for wages and refused to change any other part of their two-year offer.

### By a Jaguar shop steward

Finally, they offered to bring forward £1.20 per week out of the November '85 rise, and to pay this on the rate from November 1984. (In effect £62 in 'new money' over the year.) They also agreed to investigate the 'achievability of bonus' where this was requested.

On the controversial issue of shares, management confirmed their position to hand out over £400 worth next year and an unspecified amount in 1986.

As an individual option in January 1985 and January 1986, workers could take half this share issue either as a cash lump-sum or as a weekly supplement to wages. New starters, previously ex-

cluded from the share issue, will be offered £23 for each month of employment up to January 1985.

The JNC decided to accept this offer and to recommend a return to work. A majority was convinced that they could not get any more 'at this time', and they felt a longer strike would not force a big enough increase to make it worthwhile. This position was reported to shop stewards on Friday morning.

Mass meetings had already been called for 10am to vote on the JNC recommendation to end the strike. At Browns Lane shop stewards opposed the JNC recommendation and decided to recommend to the membership to reject the company offer and continue the strike.

A majority argued that a major victory lay within our grasp. The strike was solid and the company under pressure. Our claim was just and management had the money to pay.

At our mass meeting the JNC report was heard in silence, with occasional cries of 'sell-out'. There was loud cheering and ap-

plause as shop stewards presenting the alternative recommendation urged 'don't give up now, stand firm and we will win!'

Inevitably, most workers backed the JNC and voted to accept the offer by 3612 to 1980. At the body plant the majority to accept was only 121. The substantial vote against ending the strike will probably stop management getting tough as soon as we return to work.

This settlement cannot be called a victory. But clearly an opportunity was missed to make real progress in restoring wage rates eroded over the last five years.

Many workers — including those who backed the JNC — are unhappy with the deal. They will continue to ask the question raised at the mass meeting: if this JNC can't do better than this, who can we get to replace them?

The search for a new leadership will be strongly influenced by the experiences of this pay review.

# Austin Rover stand firm



**STRIKERS AT Austin Rover's Longbridge and Cowley plants resisted management's attempts to break the strike through threats and intimidation. Over 20,000 of the 28,000 workers are on strike.**

On Monday, workers received a letter from the company threatening to cut the wage offer and close plants if there was not an immediate return to work. AUEW national official Ken Cure ran true to form with the statement that: 'A strike would not improve the offer, and could lead to some concessions made on Friday being taken away.'

By Pat Hickey

At Drews Lane, AUEW members voted to return, but elsewhere the unions are standing firm, and picket lines are being repeated.

The company's main

hope of breaking the strike now rests with the union officials. The aim of the court action under the

1984 Trade Union Act is to get the strike called off by the union leaders.

Three of the nine unions have already backed off in the face of the court action. The EETPU called on its members to

return to work to allow a secret ballot to be held. At Longbridge, the electricians returned, held a meeting and promptly walked out again.

For the past five years the company has relied on

officials like Grenville Hawley to sell out every strike that has happened. The threat of fines for contempt, and civil actions is intended to pressure the officials into once again acting against the members.

So far the TGWU has not responded to the court order, but conference policy is clearly opposed to compliance with the anti-union legislation. Hawley and the executive must be tied to this policy.

The TGWU should follow the example of the NUM, and defy the legal attack on the right to strike. If the union is fined it has more than enough muscle to defeat the courts.

The first national dock strike proved that. This is the first major use of the 1984 Act, and it must be defeated.



# Anger growing at Fords



**ANGER IS GROWING among Ford's 41,500 shop floor workers at the company's derisory 5 per cent pay offer. With only a few days left to the end of the annual wages and conditions contract, the company has failed to meet the unions' claim for 14 per cent for all grades or even to respond to demands for shorter working time, a special payment for line workers, and equality with staff on sick pay.**

The last round of talks were met with widespread stoppages in the Dagenham body plant, which disrupted production all week, and a militant lobby by women sewing machinists furious at the company's 16 years refusal to grant them the same pay grading as other production workers.

But while everyone is agreed the offer is rubbish, the antics of some union officials and convenors in trying to overturn the decision of a national shop stewards conference on

how any offer will be voted on is not inspiring confidence.

By Mick Drake, Fords Dagenham

In past years, whether they employ 200 or 4000 workers, all Ford plants have had a single vote at national level in deciding acceptance or rejection of an offer. The stewards agreed that from now on mass meetings in the plants would decide by majority vote which way the vote of the total workforce of a plant would be cast, and

these would then be added up nationally.

On 2 November an ill-tempered meeting of the Ford National Joint Negotiating Committee trade union side defeated the first attempt to overturn this decision — but only at the price of a recall meeting of all senior stewards to decide on the matter.

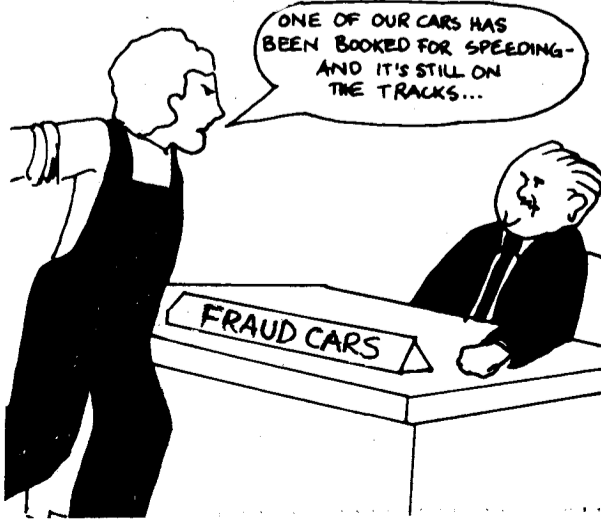
This will be weighed against larger plants and, with officials from the electricians pushing for secret ballots and other unions panicking in the face of the use of Tory anti-union laws, the likelihood is that the old voting system will be reinstated as a 'compromise'.

Militant action now by those sections and plants prepared to fight is the only way to win the claim and

prevent a stitch-up on the voting system. Already several plants are committed to a mass lobby of the final negotiations.

If the company does

not meet our claim now, the national trade union side must come back to the plant with a recommendation for immediate national strike action.



ONE OF OUR CARS HAS BEEN BOOKED FOR SPEEDING — AND IT'S STILL ON THE TRACKS...



# Harrington: call a mass picket

**NON-VIOLENT direct action by the PNL (Polytechnic of North London) Women's Group, a blockade from students inside the Holloway Road site, and a picket of 300 students, stopped fascist Patrick Harrington getting into PNL last Friday (9 November).**

By Grant Keir, Kingsway Princeton CFE

The campaign to get rid of Harrington has thus received a big boost, and continues in defiance of the High Court's injunction against the weekly pickets.

Numerous arrests and the misinformation campaign, (being waged by certain NOLS NUS Executive members), have not stopped the pickets going ahead. Instead, this latest success puts the ball firmly back in the NUS leadership's court.

The PNL Annual General Meeting of over 500 students voted again this term to continue the pickets and the campaign to rid PNL of this Nazi. Harrington is a National Front organiser, not just some student with a few racist ideas and a dubious 'flare' for philosophy. He has no 'rights' to an education. His very presence is intimidatory to other students, members of staff and auxiliary workers in PNL. The stand of the students at PNL is a principled and correct one.

Yet the NUS Executive has voted down resolutions to back the struggle at PNL. They have refused to call mass pickets organised and built for by NUS at the National level. In fact, they have only reluctantly agreed to allow the legal facilities of NUS to be used to defend NUS members arrested on the pickets!

This situation is a disgrace and cannot be allowed to continue. Resolutions of support for the PNL actions should be passed through every Student Union possible. Weekly delegations and messages of support should be sent to the pickets from Students Unions around the country. At the December NUS Conference the NUS Executive should be made to pay for their scabbing role.

There are other avenues which should be followed up. It is the GLC's anti-racist year at the moment, and the GLC and ILEA should be called upon to support the stand of the PNL students.

But the main demand at the moment should be directed towards the NUS leadership to call and organise a mass picket to stop Harrington going in. Only this sort of response is capable of forcing the College Authorities to throw Harrington out. It is the only way to force the Courts to back off from their threats to imprison students arrested on the pickets.

The pickets and the campaign go on and should be built in all the Colleges around the country.

**HARRINGTON OUT!  
NO NAZIS IN OUR COLLEGES!**

# ACTIVISTS DIARY

First London Socialist Action student forum: 'Women in the Miners' Strike'.

Kent Miners' Wife and Steph Grant. City London Poly, Wednesday 14 November. 2.00 pm. All London Supporters to attend.

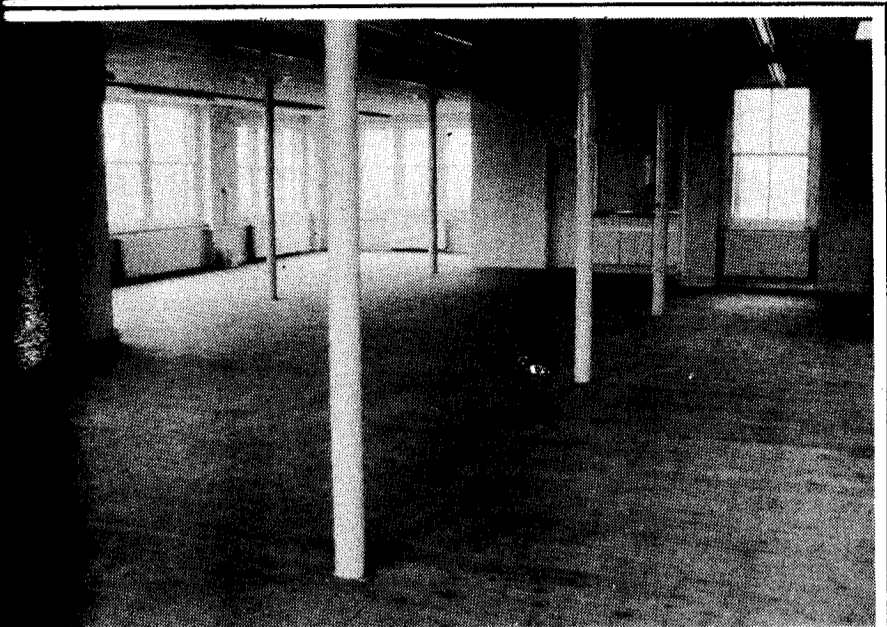
Next week: 'Ireland and the Struggle for Socialism', Martin Collins, London School of Economics, Wednesday 21 November. 2.00 pm. All London supporters to attend.

Every Friday, picket the racist Harrington, PNL, Holloway Road site, 8.30 am.

Want to advertise meetings or events in the activists diary? Write to Activists Diary, 328 Upper St, London N1 2XP.



# Socialist ACTION



## FUND DRIVE: Now we really need your money

AT LAST we are on the brink of signing a lease for new premises. This building is in east London.

It is light and airy which means it will provide excellent facilities for typesetting and design and is guaranteed to increase the efficiency of our printshop. Because it is open-plan we can design it to suit our needs, thus providing good offices for the newspaper too.

Of course all this will cost money. We need to put up partitioning; we will have to fix the plumbing; and to make the move we will need to hire a crane to shift our printing equipment.

That, dear reader, is where you can help. We

reckon £50,000 will cover our legal costs, pay for the removal, finance the building work, and provide a cash injection for our print shop. We are in need of a new guillotine, and a new camera and typesetting machine.

With £21,700 already raised we still need £28,300. What's more we need £4,000 within the next ten days!

A brand new typesetting machine now on the market is going for £2,000 less than its

market price, to firms who buy it before the ten days are up.

Every readers' group should have an emergency item to discuss how it can raise its share of the £4,000.

And we ask our individual readers to start the ball rolling now by sending in a donation — big ones are best but small ones will do.

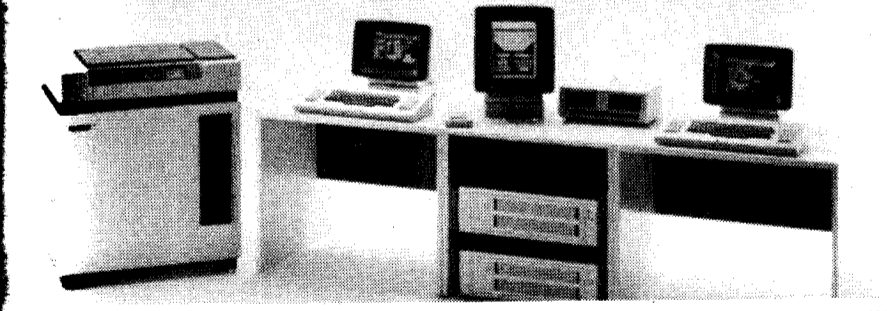
So please complete the form below and post it as quickly as possible.

I enclose a donation of £..... to the building fund.

Name .....

Address .....

Post to Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP.



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# Nicaragua: Reagan threatens war

LAST WEEK'S international crisis over Nicaragua's non-existent MIGs was carefully stage-managed by the Reagan within a few hours of his election victory. It gave a bitter taste of what is in store for the Central American revolution.

Reagan's threats served as a pretext for bringing the US war machine closer to a full-blown invasion of Nicaragua than at any time in the last five years. All leave was cancelled for 15,000 airborne troops at Fort Stewart in Georgia. Forty US warships were sent steaming towards Nicaraguan waters. Repeated intrusions in Nicaraguan airspace were carried out.

Joint manoeuvres by the Honduran and Salvadorean navies, and a major naval exercise off Puerto Rica involving British, Dutch, West German, Canadian and US vessels, were combined to fuel the elaborate media 'war scare'.

It is unlikely that Reagan ever intended to invade Nicaragua at this stage. But the invasion scare gave Reagan the opportunity to test the response to the 'military option' which is increasingly the only one left to him in Nicaragua. His move also helped to

threaten harvesting the country's vital coffee crop.

By Stuart Piper

The Sandinistas responded by basing itself on its mass support. The defences built after last year's invasion of Grenada were reactivated. Twenty thousand students who were heading for the coffee harvest were put on immediate alert. FSLN Commandante Jaime Wheelock announced that the entire 500,000 population of Managua would be

given arms to fight an invasion.

Reagan's moves confirm a dangerous new phase for the Central American revolution. The US cannot break Nicaragua internally. The 15,000 contras to the north and south cannot do more than put severe strain on the country's resources. Reagan is therefore stepping up the military pressure with Defence Secretary Weinberger already floating the idea of a naval blockade.

The only factor that remains unclear for the United States is international reaction. Last week's lethal pantomime was therefore aimed at softening up any qualms that may exist among the United States international allies.

In Britain, the lines are already drawn. On the *World At One* Julian Amery stated that MIGs in Nicaragua were a threat to Western security equal to

any missiles targetted on the US from Cuba in 1962. Stuart Holland, just back from Managua for the Labour Party in contrast made it clear that there were no MIGs, but even if there were then Nicaragua as a sovereign country had the right to buy weapons from wherever it liked.

Denis Healey's television opposition to the US aggression might have appeared welcome, but just to dash any hopes, he made it clear he was more concerned that an invasion might raise feelings that 'could bring down banks and bring down governments'.

Solidarity with Nicaragua must urgently become a concern for every socialist activist in Britain. The solidarity movement is still far from strong enough for the needs of the moment.

A good start will be to build on Norwood Labour Party's call for a London Labour activists conference in the New Year.



Photo: STEFANO CAGNONI (Report)

'OVER 500 trade unionists and members of miners support groups from all over London responded to a call from SERTUC to rally outside West Thurrock power station at 5am last Tuesday.

'The picket was called in support of workers at the power station who have taken action to implement TUC guidelines in support of

the miners. They have refused to handle any new coal or any substitute fuels. A ship full of coal lies untouched in the Thames and West Thurrock is the first power station to have to be taken out of the national grid.

'Miners from Kent and South Staffs NUM leafletted the workers driving into power station, the majority of

whom stopped to take a leaflet. The convenor of the joint shop stewards committee at West Thurrock brought a message of support for the miners from its workers. More pickets are being called at power stations in London over the next few weeks. Further information can be obtained from Mike Connolly at SERTUC phone: 01-403 0300,' writes Dave Palmer.

'In the North West engineers at Carrington power station have recently voted to boycott work with scab coal or coal substitutes. Round-the-clock picketing by striking miners is having its effects as all but one of the North West's power stations is taking action in support of the NUM', adds Jon Silberman, AUEW convenor, Colman Fastners.