

Join the
Labour
Party

Socialist ORGANISER

Fight the
witch-
hunt

Paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance No.126 April 7 1983 25p Claimants and strikers 10p

Steelworkers, carworkers walk out against bosses' offensive

Fighting back!

IN THE biggest wave of spontaneous, initially unofficial, industrial action covering a number of basic industries since the Tories took power in 1979, car workers at Ford and BL, steelworkers in South Yorkshire, and dockers at Tilbury are fighting back against the Thatcher/Edwardes/MacGregor attacks which have decimated those industries.

The strikes come hard on the heels of the water workers' strike which forced significant concessions from the government — and only a few weeks after the South Wales miners' strike, which was rapidly spreading to other coalfields when it was stopped by the retreat of the left leadership of Arthur Scargill in face of the right wing in the

They represent the beginnings of a powerful fightback against policies which have already destroyed 90,000 jobs in BL and over 100,000 in steel, with MacGregor preparing to move to the NCB to do the same job there.

After Japan

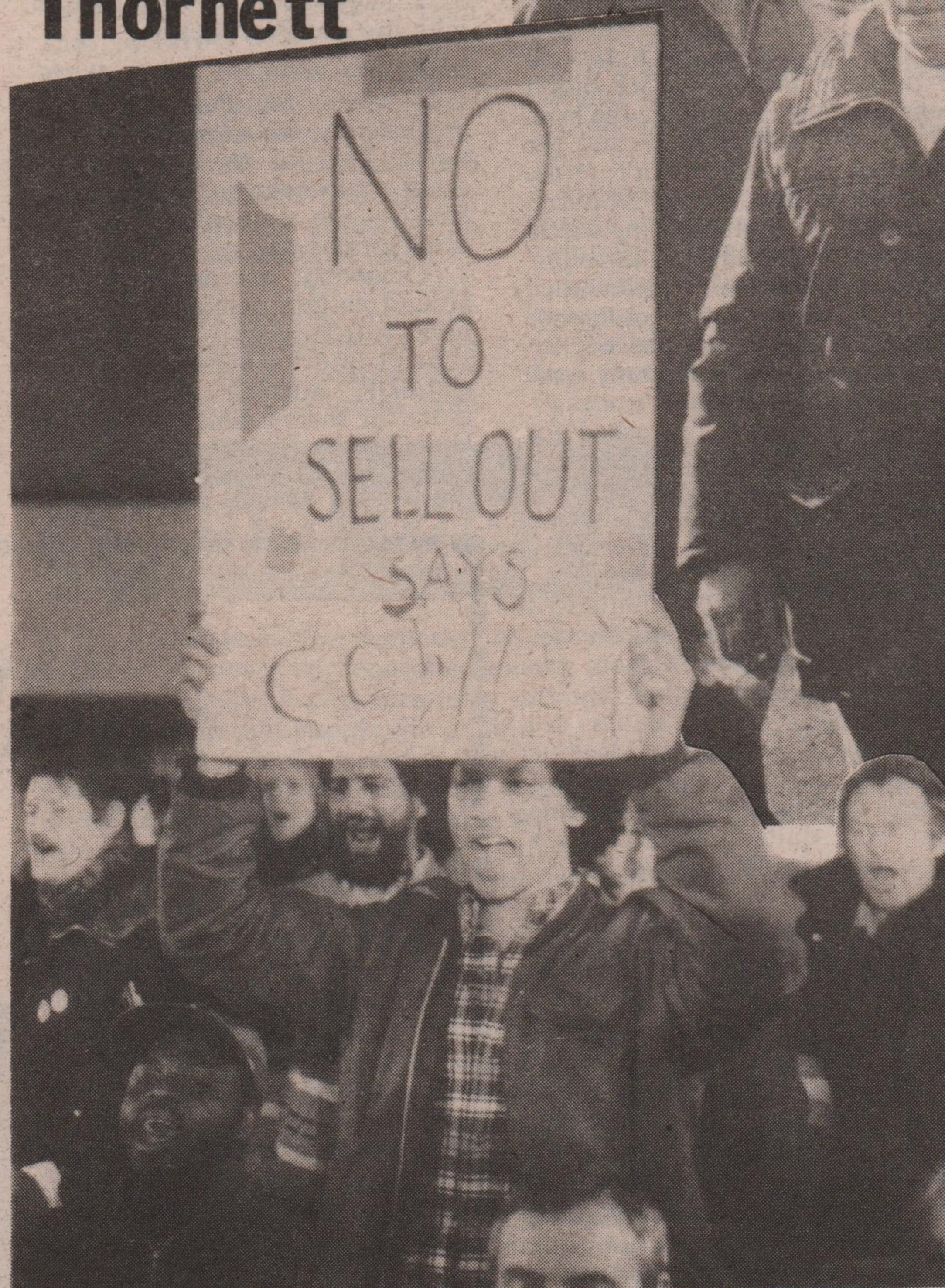
These strikes make the first few months of 1983 a significant period in the struggles of the working class against the Tory government, particularly since they follow the remarkable record of struggle which the working class has established, despite the betrayals of its leaders, throughout the Thatcher period — the 1980 steel strike, the 1981 BL strike, the 1982 ASLEF strike and NHS action.

The 5000-strong Ford Halewood strike is in its fifth week as we go to press. Although nominally over the victimisation of an assembly worker for alleged 'vandalism', the conflict is plainly part of the introduction of hard-line management on the BL model, designed to prepare the ground to push through Ford's so-called 'After Japan' (AJ) plan. If successful, AJ will eventually abolish thousands of jobs in the Ford plants.

Halewood

It is likely that the Halewood strike will be over on Thursday 7th, since after meeting TGWU official Ron Todd the stewards are recommending for acceptance a very weak compromise of binding arbitration, while the worker involved remains sacked. But Ford workers are likely to be quickly back in confrontation, since sweeping changes are required by the AJ plan just eight days

By Alan
Thornett



JOHN HARRIS

after the return to work.

The BL strike at the Cowley Assembly Plant is now in its second week, and although it arose as a reaction against the introduction of bell-to-bell running (or the abolition of the three minute hand-washing time at the end of each shift), it is in reality a backlash against increasingly harsh management, which has successfully forced through very much more far-reaching changes

with the help of the top union leadership.

The issue is not insignificant in itself: personnel director Geoff Armstrong says it would be worth 100 cars a week. But it is not as big as the virtual abolition of seniority (possibly the most important single condition in a big factory), or the victimisations of militants and attacks on shop stewards which have been successfully carried through.

On this issue workers have said 'enough is enough'. Ten days ago the 5,000 Assembly Plant workers voted almost unanimously to strike, and today they voted overwhelmingly to reject a 'formula' which was actually worse than the original terms.

BL management is in a very difficult position. They now have four important models at a standstill, including the new Maestro, launched only a few weeks ago. Their harsh tactics are now on the line. The strike remains strong, and the usual sacking threats are difficult.

The issues are similar in the steel industry, where the strike has spread rapidly through South Yorkshire. It began at the Templeworth and Aldwarke plants in Rotherham, when two workers refused to accept redundancy, and spread quickly to all eight plants in the area, with pickets on the gates at Stocksbridge, just to the north.

Despite statements by steel union leader Bill Sirs that he had no intention of spreading the strike beyond South Yorkshire, moves were being made by the strikers on Tuesday to contact other plants, particularly Scunthorpe and Teesside.

Redundancies

The strike has come after BSC's massive redundancy programme reached South Yorkshire, one of the most militant areas. 1700 redundancies are called for, and a strong action committee has been set up in opposition.

But, as in BL, the reaction of the workers is determined more by the general situation in the industry — the hard-line management introduced by MacGregor since he moved from BL.

In this year's pay round BSC has refused national negotiations, and is insisting on local deals,

which must be tied to job losses. No serious resistance to this has come from the ISTC or any of the 13 other unions. They have instructed their members not to negotiate locally and taken the matter to ACAS.

These strikes, and other actions in other sections of workers, are plainly the tip of an iceberg of resentment and resistance to the relentless attacks of the Tory government (and the Labour government before it).

These spontaneous actions, the strength of which is said in each case to "surprise employers and union leaders alike", demonstrate once again what has been demonstrated numerous times since Thatcher came to power — that despite mass unemployment deliberately created to intimidate it, the working class is prepared to take on and able to defeat the Tory government — if it can begin to resolve the crisis of leadership it faces at every level within the labour movement.

" the tip of the iceberg of anger "

EDITORIAL

Hand in hand with the bosses?

'OUR PROGRAMME', says the Campaign Document, 'is heavily dependent upon the achievement of our basic objectives: namely, a large and sustained increase in the nation's output and income and a matching decline in the numbers out of work. It is this that will make the resources available...'

On certain issues this is not true. Scrapping nuclear weapons, the House of Lords, and the SPG will save money. Repealing Tory anti-union laws, the immigration and nationality acts, and the Police Bill, will cost nothing.

But many central objectives do depend on an answer to the economic crisis. And the inadequacies of the Campaign Document on that score are likely to make many of its promises just promises.

Those inadequacies flow as much from the confusions of Labour conference policy as from the document's fudging of conference policy on issues like the nationalisation of the top 25 monopolies and incomes policy.

Michael Foot's introduction to the document denounces 'the readiness of the Conservative Party to act in a crisis to protect the interests of a small privileged class'. But it also insists: 'More than ever we must think of our country, the whole British community'. And it means just that: the document is an attempt to square the circle, with a policy that serves the interests both of the working class and of the 'small privileged class' that Thatcher serves.

If only the majority of the population, the working class, had a leadership so clear-headed and ruthlessly dedicated to its interests!

Instead Foot promises 'a Labour government working together with unions and managers to plan Britain's industrial development'.

The core idea is to bribe the capitalists into expanding production, and to hope that the working class will pick up beneficial side-effects. Increased public spending will give contractors more contracts. A National Investment Bank will dole out money to industry.

Now sometimes this sort of project works to some extent. Economists have long discussed when and how. But all the evidence — including, most recently, the experience of France — is that it doesn't work for modern capitalist states today.

The expansion is very limited. Instead the increased state spending mainly fuels inflation, increased trade deficits, and consequent monetary crises.

The document includes proposals for price controls and import controls. But again we can look at experience and see that these do not work. Capitalism depends on free movement of prices and international trade. Serious restrictions on these — outside the special circumstances of a war economy — stifle and cripple the system without replacing it.

However much money the state throws at the capitalists, there is no guarantee that they will expand production — or, if they do expand production, that they will not just pile in new technology and leave everyone no better off except themselves.

The document proposes some gestures towards planning — 'agreed development plans with leading companies', 'a new, tripartite National Planning Council'. But the only way of enforcing these plans would be easier credit for compliant companies, and stricter price controls on uncooperative ones.

This is not a battle plan for storming the commanding heights of the economy, but a scheme for co-opting the trade unions into taking responsibility for the sickness of capitalism.

When the system of production for profit has brought us to today's crisis, why is Labour begging and bribing the profiteers to expand business? Shouldn't Labour be fighting to take over the major banks and enterprises, putting them under common ownership and workers' democratic control? Isn't that the only way to have rational planning and jobs for all, rather than vague hopes of unemployment being brought below one million within five years?

Such a fight would raise many other issues. The millionaires would not submit passively to being stripped of their millions: the top civil service chiefs, the courts, the monarchy, and the police and army hierarchies could all be expected to swing into action to support them. The labour movement would have to mobilise the working class to meet sabotage by direct action: counter-revolutionary violence by armed workers' defence.

Yet that is the consistent class-struggle alternative to the Campaign Document's new social contract. And to build towards it now, we must fight for Labour to break with its projected unity with the bosses and the bankers — to support workers in struggle, rather than spinning schemes to persuade the capitalists to hand down some crumbs.



Now an Anti-Tory League?

An interview with Peter Tatchell

A BALANCE SHEET ON BERMONDSEY



What was lost and what was won in Bermondsey?

Well, obviously, the Labour Party lost the election, but perhaps we recaptured a bit of Labour's socialist soul. Despite all the odds we stuck at it, in the face of threats, abuse, even violence, and didn't scatter when the going got tough.

In a sense, that's what comradeship and socialism's all about. It's about people sticking together, standing up for what they believe in, being prepared to remain firm in their socialist convictions, despite overwhelming pressures to the contrary.

Obviously, Bermondsey was special — but some comrades have argued that there is a parallel with other rundown working class areas where for decades the Labour vote has been taken for granted. With British society in crisis, with politics being shaken up considerably, it can't be taken for granted any longer.

One of our oldest party members, aged 84, whose lifetime spans the entire history of the Bermondsey Labour Party, said to me after the election, 'It's terrible we lost the election, but it's not surprising, because it's the first time in nearly forty years that people in Bermondsey have been offered socialism.'

That's pretty much true. Until recently, the local Party was moribund and decaying, the membership was minuscule.

We've picked up the tab for that neglect.

There were many reasons why people said they didn't vote Labour, but the strongest was a reaction against the local Council.

Waiting months to get repairs done, housing transfers virtually impossible, support for new office development instead of housing, support for rent increases and rate increases even before Heseltine had put them on the statute books.

The right wing argument is that the comparison of Darlington and Bermondsey shows that what Labour needs to win the election is sensible, middle of the road, centre-right candidates.

Effectively they're saying that we should have Fleet Street to choose our candidates. That's only one step away from allowing Fleet Street to choose our policies as well.

And that would mean that every Labour candidate would be moderate, middle-aged, married, macho and male. Heaven forbid that we should go any further down that road. There are already precious few women, and there isn't a single black MP. We have got to change that, not reinforce it.

The big difference is that in Darlington, the sitting MP didn't denounce the candidate, the leader of the Labour Party and the National Executive didn't refuse to endorse him, the press didn't undertake a 15 month long witch-hunt, the candidate's introductory leaflets weren't impounded and the opening press conference cancelled, and there was no further action on the Militant issue on the eve of the poll.

In Bermondsey, we asked for the discussion of the Militant expulsions to be postponed from the eve of the poll, and we were told that this was absolutely impossible.

When Darlington requested that further discussion on the Militant be postponed from the eve of their election, that request was granted. That shows the difference in attitude of leading members of the Party, and I believe it shows there were some who were quite prepared to see Labour lose in Bermondsey.

In the light of those experiences, how do you see the 'Socialists for a Labour Victory'?

I think it's very important that we start the election campaign now. Traditionally, the Labour Party leaves everything till the last few weeks when the campaign's officially declared, and by then it's too late. People have already made up their minds.

We've got to use the intervening period to go out and win the arguments. We must argue for the policies of our Conference on the doorsteps, in the workplaces, on the housing estates.

We can see quite clearly there are sections of the Labour leadership who are not going to be out campaigning. We saw the way they tried to scupper the People's March for Jobs. They saw it as a diversion in a possible election year.

As far as I'm concerned, a People's March for Jobs is precisely the kind of activity we need. Not just on jobs, but on nuclear weapons, on racism, on women's rights: we've got to have forms of

popular mobilisation — such as Greenham Common — which show the country at large that there are people in their thousands and tens of thousands who do not accept either the desirability or the inevitability of another five years of Tory rule.

You have made the comparison with the Anti-Nazi League.

While we need to unite all the Left within the Party to begin campaigning for a Labour victory, we've also got to link up with other movements outside the Party — the women's movement, black groups, the gay movement.

Obviously it needs to be around certain demands, not just blind anti-Toryism — which plays straight into the hands of the Liberal/SDP Alliance. We should unite for shared aims such as unilateralism, withdrawal from the Common Market, Irish unification, rights for black people and

gays, and so on.

It can't just be a matter of us winning them as voting fodder for Labour, but of us working in a spirit of genuine comradeship to support their struggles — and learn from them.

The analogy with the Anti-Nazi League is a loose one, but ANL was a means by which many, many people who before then had not been involved in politics, but who felt deeply angry at racism, got involved for the first time. We need a similar movement against this Tory government.

Last question: what has Bermondsey Labour Party been doing since the election?

We're carrying on as normal, campaigning. It's just that now the road to socialism for us in Bermondsey is a little longer and tougher — but those who dare to travel it, in the end will overcome.

Socialists for a Labour Victory

- Unilateral nuclear disarmament and removal of all nuclear bases in Britain
- Nationalise the top 25 companies, return social spending to 1977 levels in real terms. 35 hour week, withdrawal from the EEC, expansion of NHS, education, house-building. Renationalisation with compensation only on grounds of proven need and without gain to the recipients
- No incomes policy. Repeal of Tory anti-union laws
- Women's rights, including the right to control their own fertility
- Repeal the Nationality Act and Immigration Acts

- Police accountability, repeal of the Police Bill
- A united Ireland. Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act, ban plastic bullets
- A socialist foreign policy supporting liberation movements abroad
- No formal coalition, no informal deals. End the witch-hunt
- A Labour government that carries out Labour conference decisions.

Contact: Mandy Moore / Andy Harris (joint secretaries), c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8. Affiliation fee: £3 individuals, £5 organisations.

A closer look at the Labour Campaign Document

Watch

these

policies!

MANY radical commitments are in the Campaign Document despite a probable majority against them on the National Executive Committee and the Shadow Cabinet. But the Sunday Times (April 3) reports that "Labour's right wing is preparing for a sharp battle with the left over the final shape of the party's general election manifesto".

The left needs to start campaigning on these policies now — and building pressure to make sure they aren't cut out of the manifesto.

- Watch these policies:
- Repeal Tory legislation on industrial relations.
 - Raise child benefits to £8.
 - Provide more resources for the Health Service with an increase of at least 3% a year in real terms.
 - Improve the personal social services, such as meals on wheels and home helps, with an increase of at least 4% a year in real terms.
 - Freeze all rents for the first full year.

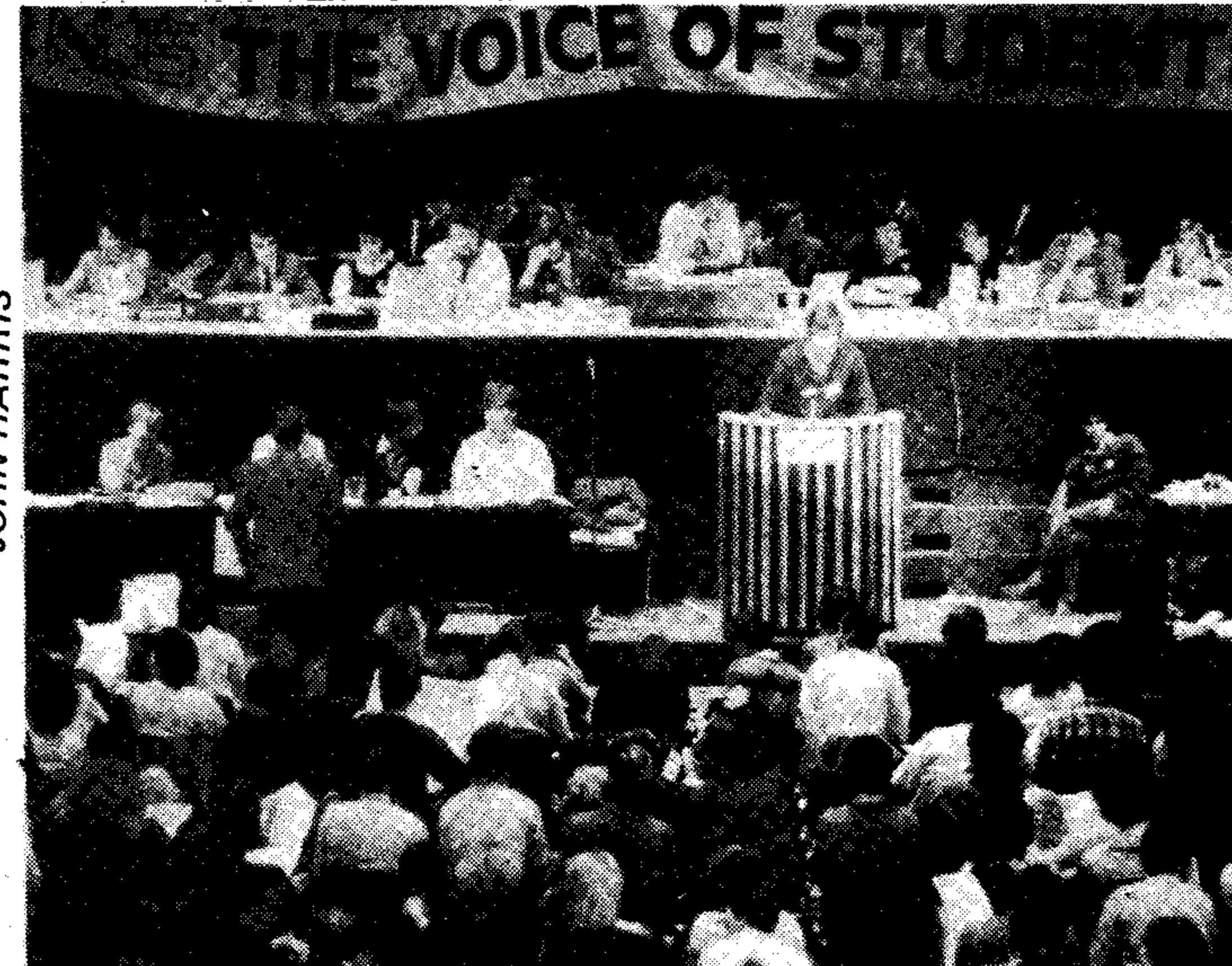
Trident

- Cancel the Trident programme, refuse to deploy Cruise missiles and begin discussions for the removal of nuclear bases from Britain, which is to be completed within the lifetime of the Labour government.
- We will not permit the siting of Cruise missiles in this country and will remove any that are already in place. The next Labour government will cancel the Trident programme. We will propose that Britain's Polaris force be included in the

By Martin Thomas

nuclear disarmament negotiations in which Britain must take part. We will, after consultation, carry through in the lifetime of the next parliament our non-nuclear defence policy.

- Britain's withdrawal from the EEC to be completed well within the lifetime of the Labour government.
- Return to public ownership the public assets and rights hived off by the Tories, with compensation of no more than that received when the assets were denationalised. We will establish a significant public stake in electronics, pharmaceuticals, health equipment and building materials; and also in other important sectors, as required in the national interest.
- Strengthen the Sex Discrimination Act to include direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of family status, and shift the burden of proof from



At the National Union of Students' conference before Easter, policies for gay and lesbian liberation were passed despite Tory opposition. At the National Organisation of Labour Students conference after Easter, the dominant Clause 4 faction called in the witch-hunters. Clive Bradley reports.

What they say...

We will expand the economy, by providing a strong and measured increase in spending. Spending money creates jobs. Money spent on railway electrification means jobs, not only in construction, but also in the industries that supply the equipment — as well as faster and better trains. More spending means that the economy will begin to expand: and growth will provide the new wealth for higher wages and better living standards, the right climate for industry to invest, and more resources for the public services.

Our central aim will be to reduce unemployment to below a million within five years of taking office.

Our starting point in government will be to discuss and agree with the trade unions a national economic assessment, as described in our joint statement with the TUC, Partners in Rebuilding Britain. This will set out the likely growth in the national output and how it could be shared. It will cover the allocation of resources, and the distribution of income between profits, earnings from employment, rents, social benefits and other incomes. It will also take into account our policies on the redistribution of income and wealth, not least through the reform of taxation. It will take a view on what changes in costs and prices would be compatible with our economic and social objectives, and help to ensure that our plan for expansion is not undermined by inflation. We will not, however, return to the old policies of government-imposed wage restraint. The assessment will thus play a crucial part in our national plan.

Increased spending will not be enough to ensure sustained economic growth... exchange controls... will be reintroduced... maintaining the pound at a realistic and competitive rate. We will... (agree) development plans, which we shall negotiate with the large companies that dominate our economy... (and) back up import controls, using tariffs and quotas.

We will: Use direct measures of price restraint, such as cutting VAT, and subsidies on basic products...; Stop using public sector charges...; (and) give powers to a new Price Commission.

We will... involve the Trade Unions and management in planning at every level with a new, tripartite National Planning Council. New statutory rights will enable workers to draw up plans for their own enterprises and sectors of industry, which we will seek to incorporate into our strategy. (We will) negotiate agreed development plans with all leading companies... (and) establish a National Investment Bank to put new resources from private institutions and from the government — including North sea oil revenues — on a large scale into our industrial priorities.

the complainant to the alleged discriminator.

- As soon as possible, a statutory duty on local authorities to provide nursery education for all pre-school children whose parents wish it.
- End VAT on sanitary protection.
- Support the provision of family crisis centres and more refuges for battered women.
- Labour will phase out health charges.
- Abolish the special charges for overseas visitors, and end passport checks.

Remove private practice from the NHS and... stop public subsidies to the private sector.

- Establish a common system of assessment for all 16 year olds.
- Abolish corporal punishment.
- Provide student-trainees, in full-time education, with an educational maintenance allowance of £25 a week, at 1983 prices, covering 52 weeks in a year. Accredited trade union representatives should be involved with secondary school students, ... with full facilities for such representatives at all career days.
- Abolish the so-called Young Workers' Scheme.
- Offer all young people without work a place on a new youth training scheme, ... and give them an allowance of at least £30 per week — the level of which will be agreed annually with the TUC — with trade unions being free to negotiate better terms.

Labour will immediately increase by half the total housing investment programmes for local authorities.

- End enforced council house sales.
- We aim to create elected police authorities in all parts of the country, including London, with statutory responsibility for the determination of police policy within their areas.
- Replace the present police complaints procedure with an independent system accountable to local communities, with minority police representation.
- Introduce strict limits on searches of people in the street, searches of premises, the use of the power of arrest, and on the time a prisoner can be held in custody before being charged.
- Repeal the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill.
- Disband the London Special Patrol Groups and local SPGs.
- We will repeal the 1971 Immigration Act and the 1981 British Nationality Act.
- A Freedom of Information Bill.
- Labour will reverse the Tory government's attacks on local

THE ANNUAL conference of the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) was suspended during its first session on Tuesday April 5.

John Dennis, Labour Party student organiser, decided to call a halt to the proceedings following a vote that he should not be able to introduce his credentials report and to reply to appeals from delegates from Labour Clubs ruled out of order by this report.

Dennis, in alliance with the 'Clause Four' leadership of NOLS, spent the last few months doing his utmost to guarantee a Clause Four majority at conference. Between 20 and 30 elected delegates have been declared illegitimate for various reasons. All of these were opponents of Clause Four, either supporters of Militant, or Socialist Students (NOLS) (SSIN), or independent.

If all of these delegates had been recognised when the issue was put to the vote at conference, Clause Four would have lost the majority. Consequently, Dennis wanted to keep a firm grip on this issue.

Saying nothing before the vote on his 'right of reply', he announced after the vote had gone against him that he would not allow the conference to continue. Dennis appealed to the authority of the right wing NEC of the Labour Party.

To back up his bureaucratic infringement on the sovereignty of the conference, he has brought in the witch-hunters, notably Jim Mather.

The issue is simply: who has sovereignty at the conference, a Labour Party official or the conference itself. Dennis's decision, fully supported, of course, by Clause 4 — is in a long tradition of bureaucratic interference in the autonomy of Labour student and youth organisations.

Labour students need to fight this disgusting manipulation tooth and nail.

- authority services. ... provide finance, ... repeal the Tory legislation which allows the government to impose ceilings on local authority spending.
- Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act.
- Financial and material assistance to the liberation move-

ments in South Africa and SWAPO of Namibia.

- Labour will do everything in its power to weaken Latin America's repressive governments by, for example, withdrawing diplomatic representation, opposing multilateral loans, banning arms sales.

and what they don't!

The Campaign Document on unilateral nuclear disarmament looks good: 'the removal of nuclear bases from Britain is to be completed within the lifetime of the Labour government'.

However, it is laced with ambiguities. 'We will propose that Britain's Polaris force be included in the nuclear disarmament negotiations in which Britain must take part'. What is there to negotiate about Polaris if it is to be scrapped anyway?

The Campaign Document stresses that nuclear disarmament 'cannot be done at once' (why not?) and talks about 'consultation' with NATO.

On the House of Lords, the Campaign Document promises to 'take action to abolish (it) as quickly as possible, and, as an interim measure, introduce a Bill in the first session of parliament to remove their legislative powers...'. Why not immediate steps for abolition?

Labour Party Conference has voted for free abortion on demand. Programme '82

Our coverage on the Campaign Document, in SO 125, based on first reports, did it an injustice on some important points.

The document does include disbandment of the SPG. It does promise an elected police authority for London. The commitment to a 3% per year real increase in NHS spending is there. And it is unambiguous that Labour 'will remove any Cruise missiles that are already in place.'

modified that to: 'to ensure that all women have a right of choice in the termination of a pregnancy'. In the Campaign Document the formula is substituted again: 'remove barriers to the implementation of the existing right of choice'.

The Labour conference proposal to ban plastic bullets is missing. Where Labour conference voted for a democratic, secure Palestine, the Campaign Document proposes 'a Palestinian state' alongside the existing state of Israel.

On gay rights, the document does not even contain the Labour Programme '82 commitment to reduce the age of consent for gays to 18. It declares only: 'We are concerned that homosexuals are unfairly treated. We will take steps to ensure that they are not unfairly discriminated against...'

New issue out now!

Get a CLASS FIGHTER

10p per copy plus postage from 13 Buxton Rd, N19.

TROOPS OUT NOW!

Labour Committee on Ireland, BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX.

LPYS conference

Leading the left against Militant

In this year of the witch-hunt, the Labour Party Young Socialists conference opened with a debate on a 'Youth for Labour' campaign for the general election.

The conference rejected any ideas of a Labour/Alliance coalition, and called for the LPYS to start campaigning now to win youth, not just to vote Labour, but to join the LPYS and the trade unions. It called for half a million leaflets to publicise the Labour campaign document commitment to £25 a week for all students over 16; for an appeal to Further Education college student unions to organise meetings around this commitment; and for CLPs to have an LPYS speaker on every election platform.

Unanimously, the LPYS replied to the witch-hunters by declaring that the socialist youth would be the best fighters against the Tories. As speaker after speaker pointed out from the platform, many of those who have denounced the LPYS in the past as 'alien to the Labour Party' are now themselves in the SDP!

The conference also unanimously resolved to throw the LPYS's full weight behind campaigning for industrial struggles. There was strong support for speakers from the Halewood, Cowley, and Grosvenor House disputes. An emergency resolution on the 1500 redundancies announced at Cammell Lairds was ruled out for proce-

By Martin Thomas

dural reasons (and perhaps also because it came from a branch in political opposition to the LPYS leadership, Wallasey), but the NC eventually issued a statement of support for the fight to save these jobs.

But the LPYS refused to support the 'Socialists for a Labour Victory' campaign. And the Militant leadership of the LPYS reaffirmed their narrow, economic view of the struggle for socialism by successfully opposing support for many important struggles 'not dreamt of in their philosophy'.

They opposed an emergency resolution, moved by Carolyn Lord from York LPYS, to support the women's general strike against nuclear weapons on May 24 — arguing dishonestly that it would mean men crossing women's picket lines. They pushed through a resolution on women opposing positive discrimination in the labour movement, with a programme for women's liberation confined almost exclusively to economic demands. They re-

fused for the 8th year running even to discuss gay rights.

They made it clear that troops out (though formal LPYS policy) would be no part of LPYS campaigning, backing a resolution which dismissed capitalist reunification of Ireland equally with partition, and looked exclusively to working class unity in Northern Ireland on the basis of economic struggle.

All this did not go without opposition. As well as the Gay LPYS meeting — the highlight of the weekend for many (see inset) — there were almost equally packed fringe meetings for SLV, for Youth CND, and for the Labour Committee on Ireland.

Inside the conference, there were resolutions pushed by Class Fighter supporters challenging the Militant line on Ireland, on women, on YTS, on the armed forces, on the Middle East, and many other issues.

The Fleet Street press has picked up a couple of phrases from the Ireland debate — but without explaining the resolution that was being moved by Richard Emmett from Accrington LPYS. It argued for: "Solidarity with Irish Republicans fighting for a united Irish Republic — especially with Irish socialists fighting for a workers' republic; troops out of Ireland now; self-determination for the Irish people as a whole, with all legitimate minority rights for the Protestants".

Militant's whole static, parliamentarist view of the struggle for socialism — first win a majority in the Labour Party for nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies, then win an election, and we're there! — was challenged, too. Ian McConach from Sowerby Bridge argued:

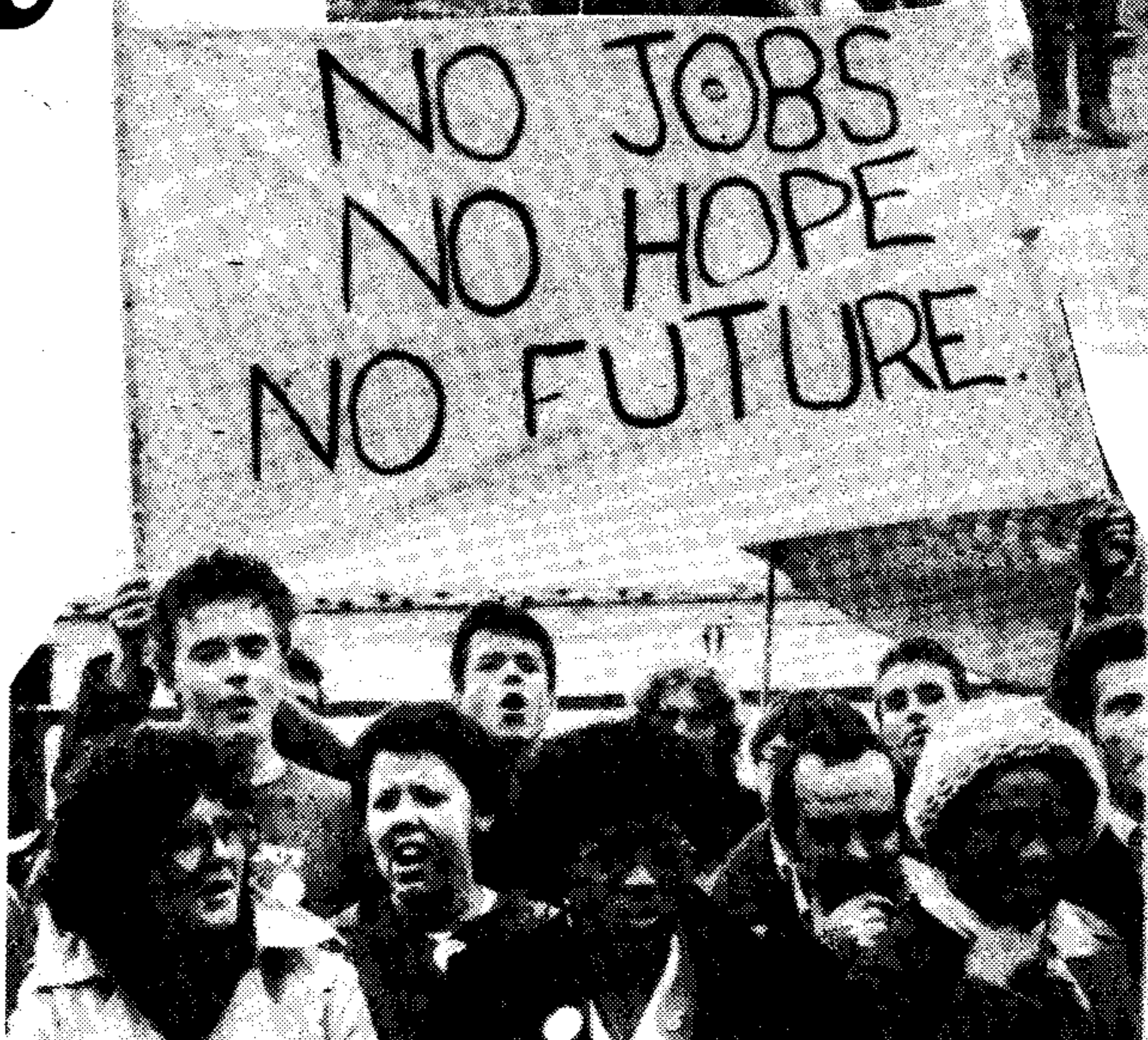
"Socialism can only be won by the workers. It cannot be handed down from the top by a left Labour government. It's only by the strength of the working class itself that workers can win socialism. We've got to use our power to take the power from the state".

Class Fighter supporters worked hard to build the Gay LPYS, LCI, SLV and YCND fringe meetings, as well as a meeting on the politics of women's liberation. And well over 150 attended the CF fringe meeting on Sunday evening.

Terri McDermott from Nottingham North LPYS explained Class Fighter's political platform; victimised BL shop steward Alan Thornett spoke on the industrial struggle and the need to build a new, revolu-



Militant opposed the May 24 action call



'Black the YTS', said Class Fighter

Revolution thinks again on gays

SUPPORTERS of 'Revolution' (linked to Socialist Action) were present at the LPYS conference in greater numbers than before, and Class Fighter tried to establish joint work with them on the many issues on which CF and Revo broadly agree as against Militant.

There were of course some issues — like Central America — on which Class Fighter would consider Militant's policy better than Revo's. But the real problems were elsewhere.

The whole record of the political current to which Revo/Socialist Action belong is one of repeatedly subordinating, the

immediate struggle for revolutionary ideas, and Marxist confidence in the development of the working class, to faith in an historic process 'moving in a mysterious way, its wonders to perform', through Stalinist and nationalist formations, for example.

This trait is already very visible in Revo's new orientation to the LPYS. Although the Revo comrades eventually supported the Gay LPYS meeting, they had originally condemned this group as 'sectarian towards Militant'. 'Ys for YCND' has been similarly condemned.

At the 'Socialists for a Labour Victory' meeting, Socialist Action editor Alan Freeman and other Revo/SA supporters stressed that the SLV must be 'not an alternative campaign, but a drive to influence the official campaign'. John O'Mahony of Socialist Organiser responded: 'Through the official campaign — as far as possible. But also unofficially — where necessary'.

There were a number of other conflicts: but at the Class Fighter meeting Revo capped it all with sugary appeals for unity, spiked with criticisms of CF for not accepting their proposal to withdraw the CF candidate for the LPYS place on Labour's NEC, in favour of a joint candidate (theirs) under the 'SLV' label.

In the event the Revo candidate had declared herself at the hustings, not as Revo, but as YCND/SLV. She got more votes than CF's Pete Cashman — 29 as against 18 — apparently through securing the Tribune vote.

Revo certainly seem to have modified their attitude on the Gay LPYS group. Let's hope that leads them to a wider rethink.

FOR many years the Militant tendency has had a monolithic domination in the LPYS. This year the monolith cracked, on the question of gay rights.

At a fringe meeting called by the recently formed Gay LPYS group, Ellen Coady from Kirkby LPYS declared, 'I've come here as a Militant supporter to apologise for the attitude of the National Committee and to say that we'll be taking up the fight among Militant supporters'. Two other Militant comrades also spoke, supporting the gay rights campaign.

The meeting was packed. Over 250 must have been there, and many could not squeeze in to hear Peter Tatchell argue that gay rights are **not** irrelevant to the working class — that anti-gay bigotry is used above all against the left and against working class gays.

As Brian West from Islington pointed out, it's difficult enough for working class gay youth to come out without **socialists** adding their voice to the bigots' chorus.

Gay LPYS was one of the most active groups around the conference. There were 'Gay 16 OK' badges everywhere — even on some Militant supporters.

It is clear, though, that there is a long fight still ahead. Many comrades had to suffer jibes and outright bigotry, even from **leading** LPYS members, especially at the fringe social events.

Contact: Gay LPYS, c/o 13 Buxton Road, London N19.

GLADYS MEETS THE POLICE BILL



by Angela Fraser

SAVE SELIM DUZGUN FROM TURKEY'S MILITARY JUNTA



Published by Friends of Selim Duzgun, c/o North Islington Law Centre, 161 Hornsey Road, London N7 6DU (tel: 01 607 2461)

A man who is known by the Turkish military dictatorship to be a supporter of national rights for the 11 million Kurdish people who live in Turkey, and who is a member of the banned socialist organisation 'Dev-Yol', is being refused political asylum by the British Home Office.

We say that if Selim Duzgun is returned to Turkey under the Generals he would face persecution, imprisonment, torture and the threat of death.

What you can do

1. Write a letter to the Home Secretary, Rt. Hon. William Whitelaw, MP, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1, requesting that he reconsiders his decision to refuse political asylum to Selim Duzgun.

2. Write to your Member of Parliament, c/o House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA, and urge him or her to take up the matter in Parliament.

3. If you are a member of a trade union, political party or professional association, pass a resolution through your branch along the following lines:

'This Branch supports the Kurdish democrat and socialist Selim Duzgun in his request for political asylum in Britain. We urge the Home Office to reconsider its decision to refuse him asylum, in the interests of democracy, as we understand he will suffer persecution and imprisonment if forced to return to Turkey.'

After massive success of 'human chain' Make May 24 a day of strike action against the missiles

by Mary Corbishley and
Colleen Molloy

OVER 100,000 people linked up in a 14 mile human chain through Berkshire's nuclear valley on Thursday. Thousands of women blockaded Greenham Common base, and in Scotland 20,000 marched through Glasgow on Saturday.

In Britain the action of a handful of women who set up the peace camp in Greenham Common two years ago has generated a mass movement against nuclear bases in Britain and internationally.

Trade unionists and Labour party members have been inspired by the Greenham Common women to join them in their action.

Cheques from trade union bodies have come pouring in. The women have shown that they can organise and take a lead in the anti-nuclear movement, and they are now asking those unions which have supported them to take action, using their industrial weapon - strike action.

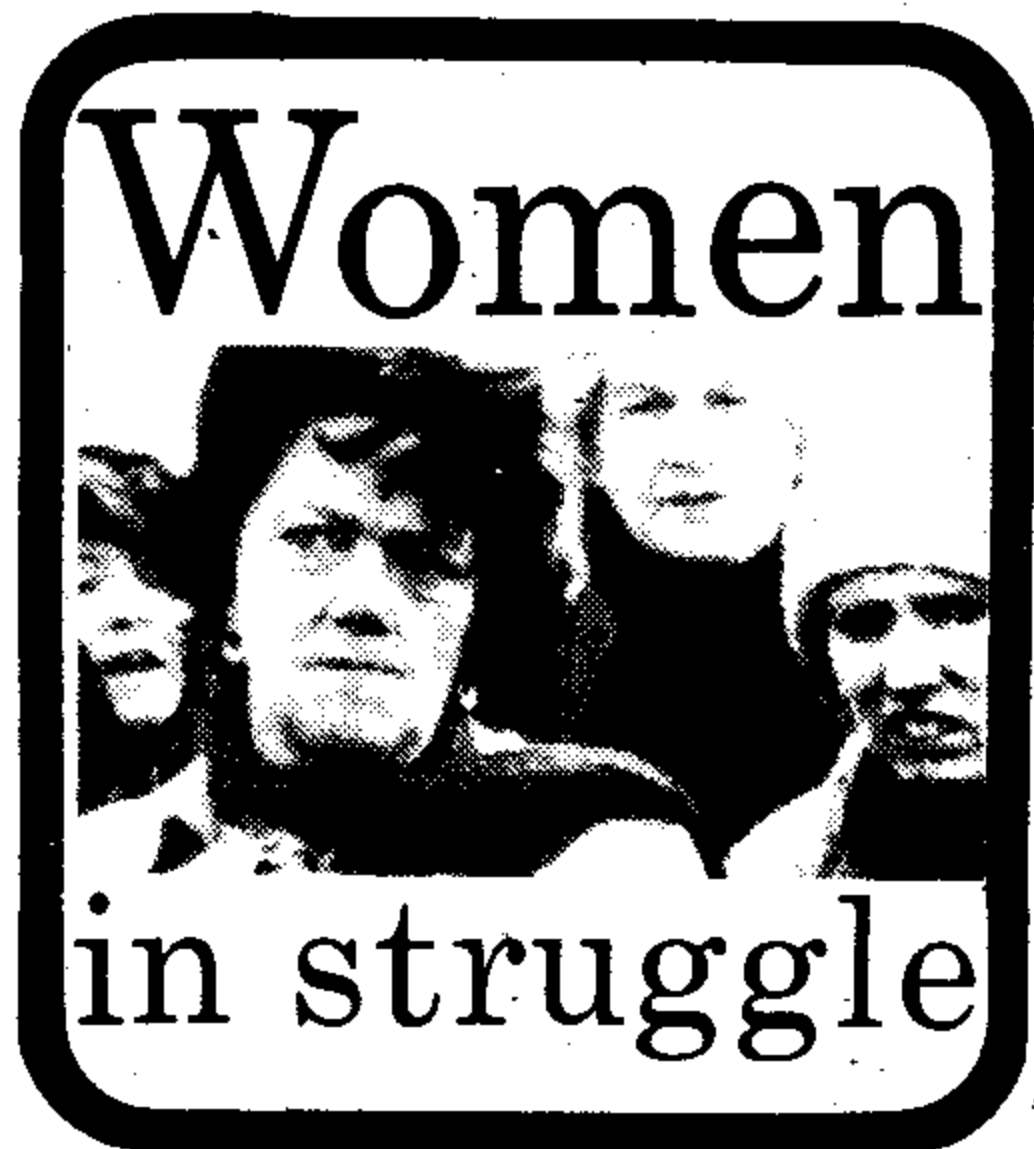
From Greenham over the Easter weekend, the union must now move forward to take up the call for the May 24 International Women's Day for Disarmament.

The struggle must not be taken back into trade union and Labour Party branches to organise action in every locality.

It is a major opportunity to draw the contrast between Tory unemployment and public spending cuts and the massive amounts of money being spent on nuclear weapons.

The link between the Labour movement and the Greenham-inspired women's peace movement will be strengthened by May 24.

Many national unions and the Labour Party have passed resolutions supporting nuclear disarmament, so there can be no excuse for failing to support May 24, which continues the



theme of Greenham Common by asking women to take strike action and to organise with women in the community.

The trade unions are a traditionally male arena, and asking women to come forward and take the lead could give a tremendous boost to the fight to make the labour movement an arena for all members.

The women coming forward are for once asking men to take a secondary supportive role; but by doing so, far from 'dividing the trade union movement', as some would argue, they are taking a major step towards creating a more equal, united and more powerful movement.

There is not much time between now and May 24, so get organised now.

The plan is for all women everywhere - women working in the home; women in paid employment; unemployed women - to leave their usual occupations for the day and to take creative and imaginative actions to stop the siting of nuclear weapons throughout the world.

There are now women working on May 24 in 25 countries, including India, Yugoslavia, Australasia, the USA, and Europe.

In Britain, local organising committees are getting off the ground. In some areas the plans



After sitting - now striking

are already well advanced.

In Leicester the Women's Peace Action Group will be moving into an office provided for them by the City Council. pressure from women in the Labour Party, letters and phone calls to Councillors stressing the urgency for office space in Leicester's 'nuclear free zone' to build for the May 24 women's strike has finally forced the Labour Council to put their money where their mouth is.

The group has large office space in the city centre; rent and heating is free, and a phone has been provided.

The Trades Council Women's Sub-Committee are contacting women shop stewards and trade unionists to develop the May 24 Committee into a trade union

liaison committee.

Support from the Trades Council has led to the POEU and CPSA installing the phone in the office immediately.

Twelve smaller groups of women in Leicester are meeting in their localities and estates to plan and prepare for actions on the day.

In Britain 109 district authorities and 27 County Authorities have declared themselves 'nuclear free zones'. Each one should be called on to provide similar office space, support and publicity for May 24 local organising committees.

In London an all-London Organising Committee is planning an event in Trafalgar Square in the evening as a culminating point for actions in the London Boroughs during the day. Already there are committees in Islington, Haringey, Hackney, and in South London Boroughs.

On the trade union front, NALGO's Equal Opportunities Committee has supported the May 24 initiative and are calling on the Emergency Committee of the NEC to authorise strike action by women members. Motions of support have gone through a number of NALGO branches.

The more motions that go up to the NEC requesting support, the more likely NALGO will support strike action.

ACTT is recommending strike actions, and ACTT & NALGO will try to get a motion on the agenda of the April TUC.

The London Committee are planning to lobby the Labour Party NEC meeting in April.

Women from Greenham Common are planning to contact as many unions as possible to get their support and regular trade union organising meetings have now been set up.

So far the women's peace movement has been dominated by white middle class women. The Greenham Common women are stressing the importance of

involving working class women, and black and Asian women. Local groups are urged to issue translated material, and to stress this is part of an international women's movement.

The Organising Committee are based at 16, Arundel Road, Brighton. Local groups are asked to contact Laura or Carmel on 0273 553466 to let them know what's happening in their area and to feed in ideas which can then be passed on to other groups.

The official view

IT will be no surprise if - whatever the formal policies of their unions - General Secretaries and union officials are hostile to the idea of a strike on May 24.

Of course, they routinely view with suspicion strike action arising from the ranks outside their control - and worst of all if the members concerned are women, the most oppressed section of the unions.

But the May 24 strike call faces union leaders with another problem: it is an openly political strike, to demand a radical change of policy. As such it is illegal under the Tebbit Act and also runs contrary to all the efforts of union leaders to prevent mass action against the Tory government.

And, whatever the illusions of CND leaders and some activists that the fight is not 'party political' it is obvious that on the fight against Cruise and Trident it is necessary to remove the Thatcher government, and then wage a fight for the implementation of Labour conference policy.

No union leader has so far been prepared to advocate such a policy. Rather, they have attempted to defuse struggles that have broken out.

The fight for strike action on May 24 must therefore be a fight within the unions, for the most part against the official hierarchy.

There will be some setbacks and some victories in that struggle, but one thing is clear: unless we wage the fight, the union leaders can continue to sound off with speeches and resolutions against nuclear weapons while doing nothing to get rid of them.

May 24: what to do



The cops won't be able to cart away May 24's protest.

What you can do:

- Find out from your Regional Contact what has already been planned, offer your services and suggestions. Phone Brighton (Carmel or Laura) 0273 553466 for your regional contact.
- Raise support for the day of strike action in your union, workplace, estate, shopping centre, school college, nursery, just anywhere you go.
- If your local council has a nuclear free zone policy, and many do, demand that the council gives over office space for organising for the 24th. Sheffield and Leicester City Councils have already done so.
- Plan action for the day itself - we can do ANYTHING, occupy, encircle, decorate, die-in, blockade at military bases, banks, armaments factories and supporting industries, nuclear bunkers, Ministry of Defence Offices.
- Leaflet everywhere, so there can be no excuse for not knowing what's happening on May 24. If you don't have local leaflets, they can be obtained nationally from the London Greenham office.
- Demand the support of men. Ask them to take supportive strike action as well, and to help organise creches so children can be looked after and the women are free to take the main action on the day.
- Pressure to get unions to support May 24 must now be generated in local branches. Trades Councils can arrange for every delegate to take support for May 24 into their branches and arrange for speakers from Greenham Common to address meetings.
- Help set up local organising meetings, including women's centres, women's groups, minority ethnic women's groups, trade union women's groups, anti-cuts campaigns, etc.
- Labour Party Women's sections can take up the call and show that there are Labour Party rank and file members who are determined to commit the Labour Party to campaign on conference resolutions. Let's make May 24 the biggest, most successful action yet!

No. 25 April 1983

Page of the women's Labour Fightback Women's Fightback

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

MAY 24 LET'S STRIKE OUT THE MISSILES

TAKE THE TOOLS FROM THE FOOLS

April issue out now!

FROM: 10b Landseer Rd, London N19

International news

Labour councils set examples of solidarity

Hackney "adopts" a rebel Turkish town

Junta unveils union law

THE ruling Labour group on Hackney council has decided in favour of the council 'adopting' the people of the small Turkish town of Fatsa, and campaigning to publicise their plight.

Fatsa, lying on the shores of the Black Sea, has only 23,000 inhabitants. 759 (3 per cent) are currently on trial, charged with turning the town into a 'commune'; 261 (1%) could face execution if found guilty. Many have already been murdered by the army and fascists.

This repression is the answer of the military junta now in power in Turkey to the experiment in self-administration carried out in Fatsa after the election of the revolutionary socialist Fikri Sönmez as mayor in October 1979.

The politicisation of the town had begun in the mid-60s, with the 'Cultural Association of Fatsa' and the 'Workers' Party of Turkey'. There were demonstrations against the local bank and cooperative, which were cheating the area's hazelnut growers. 'Committees against exploitation' were set up in the villages around Fatsa.

Fascists and the army intervened to break up demonstrations, and fascists murdered many in an attempt to terrorise the population. The nearby village of Kizildere was razed to the ground by the Turkish air force in 1972, after members of the 'Popular Liberation Army of Turkey' who had kidnapped some American army officers took refuge there. But the workers and peasants in and around Fatsa refused to yield.

By Stan Crooke

Trade union organisation continued to grow, 'People's Houses' were set up, and resistance committees were established in each area of the town. In 1979 these resistance committees put forward Fikri Sönmez as their candidate for mayor.

He declared: "Our goal is the liberation and rule of the working class... I am not a candidate for myself alone. I am the candidate put forward by the revolutionary movement of Turkey... Whoever becomes mayor, we will lead the town's administration. The people will lead it. We will organise and carry this out together".

Despite legal manoeuvres and fascist terror, Sönmez won with 62% of the vote. The town's administration was completely restructured. It became a mere



Then: on the streets. Now: under the boot

executive body, with all decisions being discussed and made by the working people of Fatsa themselves.

The main outlet for the sale of flour was taken out of private ownership and became the property of the town, leading to lower prices for flour and bread. Car parks also became the town's property. The attendants became the town's employees and received a decent wage. The bus company no longer needed to pay extortionate amounts for parking space. Fares were reduced and drivers' wages increased.

To celebrate such developments, a huge People's Festival was staged in April 1980. 70,000 people attended — three times the population of Fatsa.

The army moved in in July 1980. It was a rehearsal for the coup in which they seized state power two months later.

On July 11 troops converged on Fatsa. Ten masked men, five of whom turned out later to be known fascist criminals, pointed out the leading militants. A total curfew was imposed, and 390 people were arrested in the first

two days of the operation. Many were tortured, including Sönmez.

The military operation was extended to the villages around Fatsa. Armed clashes occurred, with many casualties. The number of arrests soon passed 1,000. Fascists joined the military in their work.

Now those arrested are being brought to trial, and are appealing for international solidarity. The Turkey Solidarity Campaign is discussing further action with Hackney, and also with councillors in Islington.

Tower Hamlets boycott Plessey

Tower Hamlets Labour council has rejected a contract for a new telephone exchange with Plessey, because of the company's heavy involvement with South Africa.

This act of solidarity with black resistance to apartheid was spearheaded by Cosmos Desmond, a Labour councillor and ex-director of Amnesty International, and supported by eight left wing Labour councillors (who have now been expelled from the Labour group) and the Liberals.

Opposition came from the right wing leader of the council, Paul Beasley, and a number of trade unionists, especially from the EETPU, who claimed to represent Plessey workers.

Why Plessey? They have large investments in South Africa, through two subsidiaries, Plessey (SA) and TMSA (Telephone Manufacturers). They have supplied military equipment to South Africa in violation of the 1977 UN mandatory arms embargo. In 1979 they were found to be training South African army personnel on military radar, and in 1981 to be exporting military radar to South Africa.

Most importantly, the TMSA (which Plessey owns jointly with GEC) is a union-bashing company which has managed to enlist the (perhaps unwitting) cooperation of the leadership of British unions in their suppression of black workers.

In 1980 Plessey and GEC management invited representatives from the EETPU and ASTMS to visit South Africa, all expenses paid, to see their 'fair' treatment of black workers. The unions accepted this offer after consulting the TUC International Committee.

When the non-racial independent unions in South Africa heard about this company-sponsored visit, they would have nothing to do with it. They only favour links formed by and with the unions themselves.

The British deputation was introduced instead to the 'Radio and Television Union', a stooge organisation set up by the com-

by Bob Fine

pany to try to forestall the growth of the real union, MAWU (Metal & Allied Workers' Union, an affiliate of FOSATU).

Soon after a bitter dispute broke out between MAWU and the company, and the British affiliates of the International Metal Workers' Federation, presumably influenced by the meeting with the stooge 'union', refused to respond to a request for assistance from MAWU.

The grievances of the black workers were numerous. They objected to the company's deduction from their wages of dues to the stooge union: to a 150% increase in production targets: to abusive and racially insulting treatment by management: to arbitrary dismissals: to a pension scheme in which workers could not withdraw contributions until retirement at age 65; to the employment of well-educated blacks in menial jobs; and to an arbitrary bonus scheme. Dismissal by a foreman of two black workers led to an all-out strike.

One MAWU official was arrested, and a FOSATU official banned. Many pickets were arrested as the company tried to introduce scab labour. Workers who sat in after the company closed the plant were beaten up by the security police. The company refused to negotiate with MAWU, claiming to recognise only their stooge 'union'.

The police prevented workers from meeting in the township and under this pressure the strike

began to collapse. 60 per cent of the African workforce lost their jobs and were replaced by Coloured workers — a deliberate attempt to exploit racial divisions.

MAWU has begun to organise afresh, and FOSATU are calling for the expulsion from the International Metal Workers' Federation of unions which collaborate so closely with the bosses and the apartheid state.

The right wing councillors and union leaders argued that Tower Hamlets' decision not to do business with Plessey will cost British workers jobs.

This is false. Plessey's labour force in Britain fell from 61,778 in 1972 to 35,922 in 1981, with further reductions planned at a rate of 5 to 10 per cent per year. This has nothing whatever to do with Tower Hamlets' rejection of their £½ million deal.

But it has everything to do with Plessey's exploitation of black labour in South Africa.

Tower Hamlets' decision has highlighted the need for workers there and here to show each mutual solidarity against a common boss. Otherwise Plessey will continue to play off one group against the other.

We should ask workers in Plessey to complement Tower Hamlets' gesture by forging links with MAWU (c/o FOSATU, 2 Goodhope St, Bellville South, 7530 Cape, 021 951412) and to demand that their union leaders support rather than impede the struggles of black workers.

International solidarity is not a luxury, but a necessity.

A QUESTION OF SOLIDARITY
Independent Trade Unions in South Africa

Published by Socialist Forum for Southern Africa Solidarity. Available at 90p plus 20p post c/o SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

90p
Bob Fine
Lawrence Welch

STOP THE EXECUTIONS AND TORTURES

TURKEY SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

Turkey Solidarity Campaign: BM Box 5965, London WC1 3XX. Affiliation fee: national organisations £25, district organisations/TCs £10, local organisations/TU branches £5, individuals £3.

International news

Reagan's gunmen step up sabotage

While many eyes have been focused on the missiles controversy in Europe, Reagan's main actual battle-front — Central America — has seen an escalation of armed action and bloodshed.

CIA-backed counter-revolutionary troops (known as 'contras') have struck into Nicaragua from bases in Honduras in the North and Costa Rica in the South, attempting to destabilise the Sandinista leadership which toppled the Somoza dictatorship in 1979.

The American-sponsored raiding parties have built up an elaborate — and expensive — three-tier command structure, designed to give Washington practical overall direction, while ensuring that Reagan can argue that he has honoured legislation passed unanimously last December.

The legislation, including in a rider to the Defence Department's appropriations bill, forbids the administration to use funds for:

"military equipment, military training or advice, or other support for military activities, to any group or individual, not part of a country's armed forces, for the purpose of overthrowing the government of Nicaragua or provoking a military exchange between Nicaragua and Honduras".

The fact is, however, as 'Time' and 'Newsweek' magazines have revealed, that the CIA has backed the 'contras' to the tune now of \$30 million — \$11 million more than the figure revealed by Newsweek last November.

The CIA operation in Honduras involves the training and arming of upwards of 2,000 gunmen, including former Somoza National Guards together with a handful of disgruntled Miskito Indians from the North of Nicaragua and would-be gangsters.

The operation is run by a complex hierarchy of leadership — at the head of which, according to Time magazine, is an all-American body of CIA experts and representatives of the US

By Harry Sloan

Army's Southern Command.

This body gives orders to a second 'tier', which embraces members of the Honduran army, a military representative of the Argentine junta, the CIA station chief in the Honduran capital, and Colonel Bermudez, a former National Guard officer under Somoza.

From this intermediate body, the orders from the US war chiefs are filtered down to the 'contra' commanders, and translated into low-risk night-time guerilla raids, acts of sabotage and murder.

The objective appears not to be any attempt at a short term overthrow of the Sandinistas — whose armed forces and militia appear to be too strong for a mercenary force with little if any popular support among Nicaragua's workers and peasants. Rather, by harassing and disrupting the Nicaraguan economy and the regime, the US imperialists hope to weaken the Sandinistas and strike a blow at the liberation struggle in nearby El Salvador.

As one cynical Washington official told Newsweek reporters:

"If the leftists win in El Salvador, with help from Nicaragua, there is a danger that others will perceive the inevitability of leftist victory throughout Central



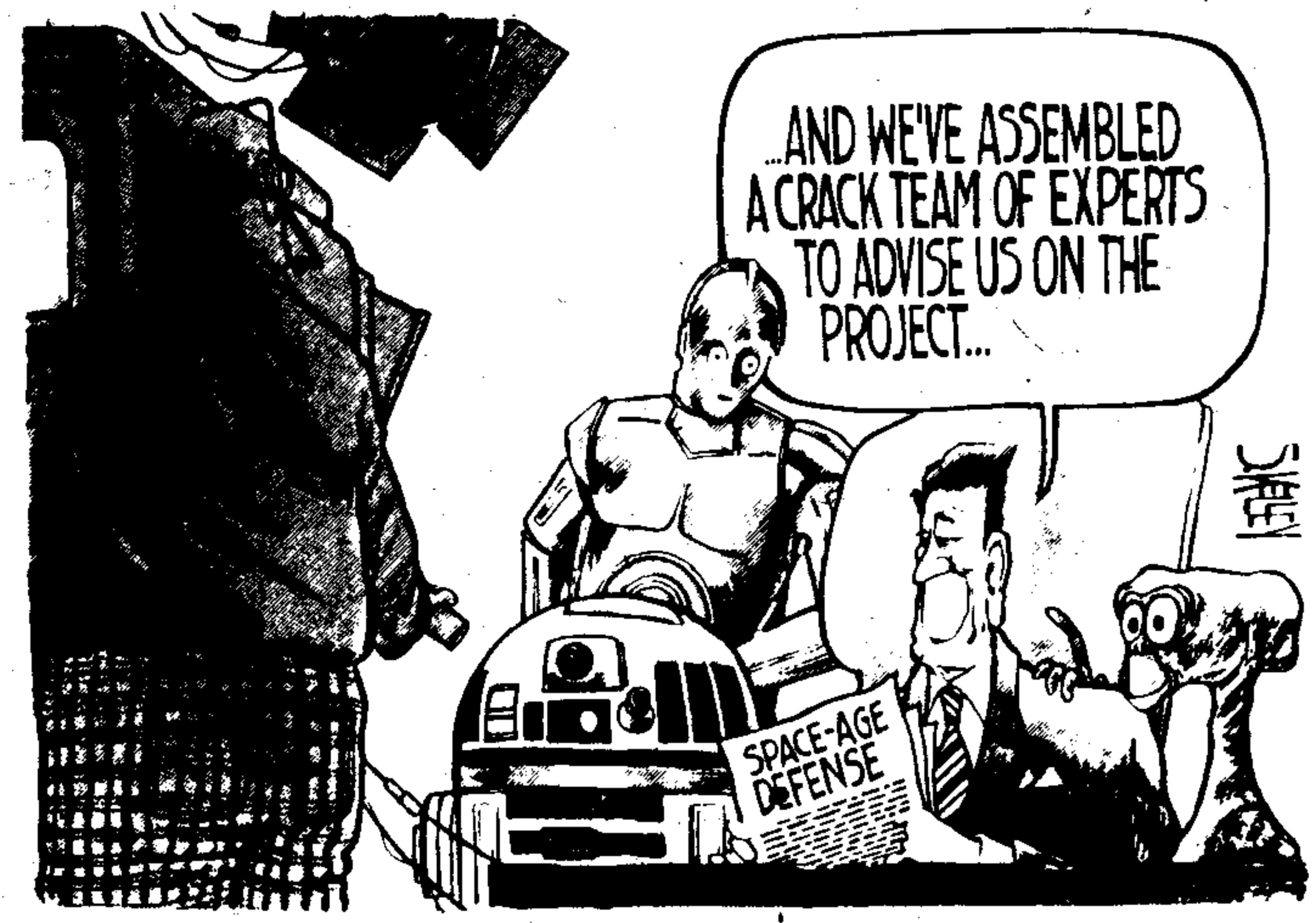
Another victim of the 'contras'

America. But if the Sandinistas themselves are fighting to survive, then the pressure is on them"

Meanwhile in El Salvador itself three US Congressmen have reported that contrary to President Reagan's assurances there has been a worsening of human rights violations by the military regime. As if to prove their case, the press conference in

San Salvador at which they announced this view was broken up by the Defence Minister, General Garcia.

Meanwhile guerilla fighters of the FMLN reported a major victory in which they claim to have virtually wiped out a whole company of the crack Ramon Belloso battalion in a single day's fighting.



Argentine workers defy the junta

by Terry Smith

Millions of Argentine workers showed their defiance of the ruling military junta and their opposition to its economic policies in a massive general strike on March 28.

The stoppage, called by both wings of the divided CGT trade union confederation, was in pursuit of wage increases to compensate for runaway 212% inflation. A last-minute offer by the junta of a 12% increase and a 29% rise in the minimum wage failed to defuse the strike movement — as did the official declaration that the stoppage was 'illegal'.

In the event the strikes were backed by at least 85% of CGT members, and paralysed industry, transport, catering, provincial newspapers, much of the banking system and administration. Even the state-run television and radio — which had been ordered not to report on the general strike — were interrupted by stoppages for five minutes every hour.

Under these conditions, Minister of Labour Hector Villaveran admitted he had sought no warrants for the arrest of the leaders of the 'illegal' strike. This is in stark contrast to the arrest of those who led the first strike against the military regime in April 1979, and is a further symptom of the flagging confidence and credibility of the junta, which has promised to hold elections in October.

The 'Malvinas Day' ceremony staged by the Bignone junta as the official commemoration of the invasion of the islands proved to be an unmitigated flop. It was attended almost exclusively by uniformed officers and commanders, with little popular support.

Two days earlier an unofficial march led by war veterans had turned into an anti-government demonstration in the centre of the nation's capital.

It was the rising tide of workers' struggles and the looming threat of a general strike to protest at the shooting of demonstrators which a year ago pressurised then President Galtieri into his disastrous diversionary tactic of an invasion of the Malvinas islands.

The defeat of the Argentine armed forces dealt a major blow to the credibility of the junta and its ability to repress the workers' movement: and the tide of patriotism unleashed by the war soon ebbed as a basis for the military rulers. As Galtieri was replaced and other military leaders attempted to restore some semblance of unity, the various bourgeois political leaders have increasingly staked their claim to a decisive voice in the run-

ning of the country.

A key component in their bids for power and influence is their ability to control the trade union movement, which has traditionally been tied to bourgeois parties since the climb to power of the former Labour Minister and President General Peron.

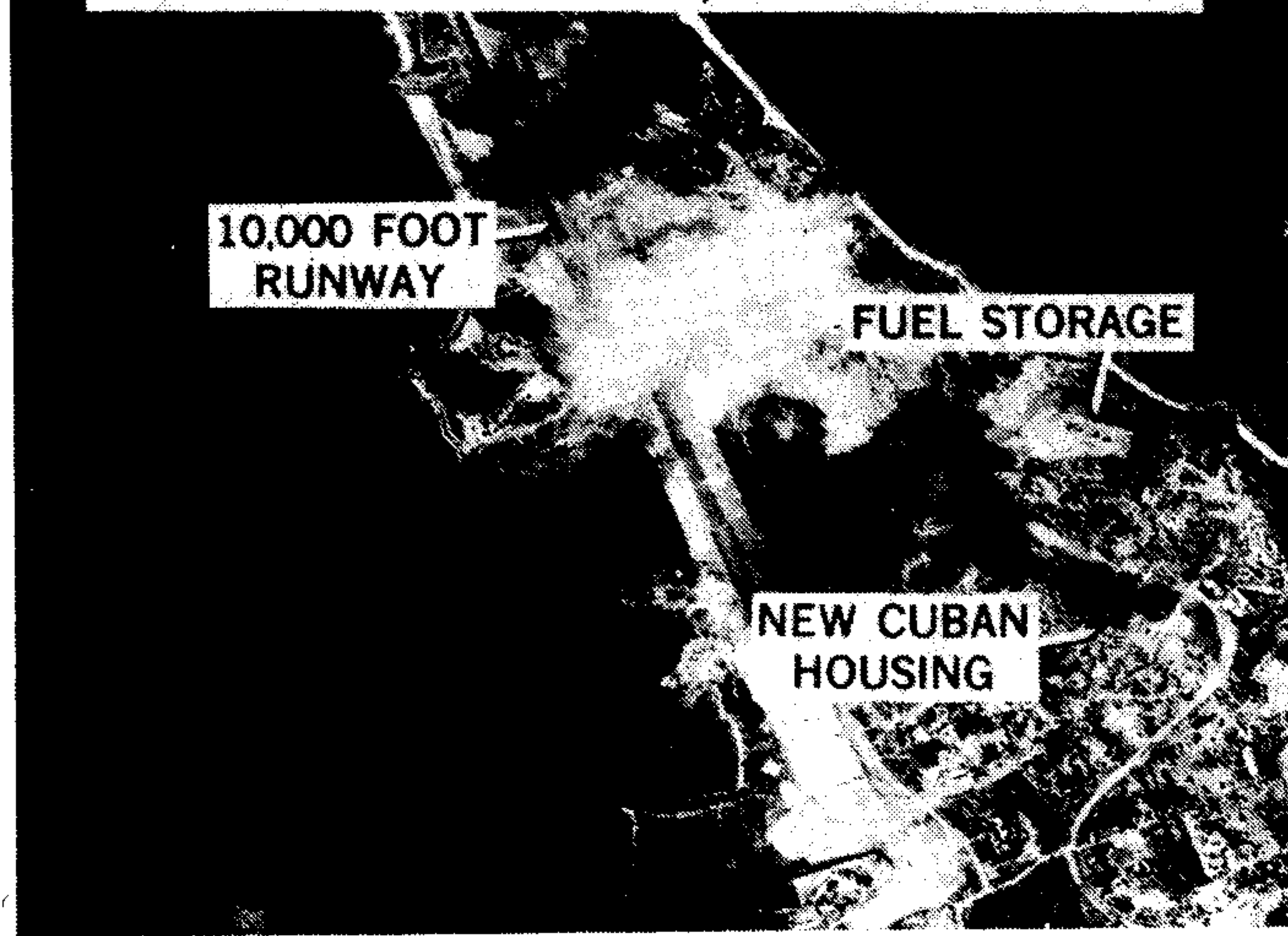
While most workers who supported the March 28 strike — and the previous General Strike last December — plainly did so in pursuance of their demands for increased wages and in opposition to military rule, the unaccustomed intransigence of the bureaucratic CGT leaderships has far more to do with seeking a secure place for themselves in any future 'democratic' structure following the October elections.

It is crucial for the Argentine workers to break their link with the bourgeois politics of Peronism and to build a political leadership capable of championing their own independent interests against the Argentine ruling class.

An indication of the kind of political progress that can be made in this direction can be seen in the rapid emergence over recent years of the Workers Party in Brazil, on a platform of radical democratic and transitional demands, and standing clearly in opposition to the various parties of the capitalist class.

Argentine workers, who have shown their willingness to fight against imperialist exploitation and against their military rulers, must make the same kind of political break if they are to wage the necessary revolutionary struggle to defend their living standards and secure their democratic rights, which requires the overturn not only of the rule of the military junta but also of the self-proclaimed 'progressive' sections of the Argentine bourgeoisie.

AIRFIELD UNDER CONSTRUCTION POINT SALINES, GRENADA



Part of the 'evidence' wheeled out by Reagan to support his claim of a growing 'Soviet threat' to the USA was a set of three aerial photographs — one of a new Cuban base, one of helicopters at Managua airport, and one of the new international airport under construction in the Caribbean island of Grenada. "Grenada doesn't even have an air force. Who is it intended for?", he asked.

The question came as Grenada's Foreign Minister complained of regular incursions by US fighter jets into Grenadan air space, which have become a hazard to civil aviation. The government has warned of the danger of a US-backed attack on the island, and the militia is on full alert.

LABOUR MOVEMENT CONFERENCE ON EL SALVADOR

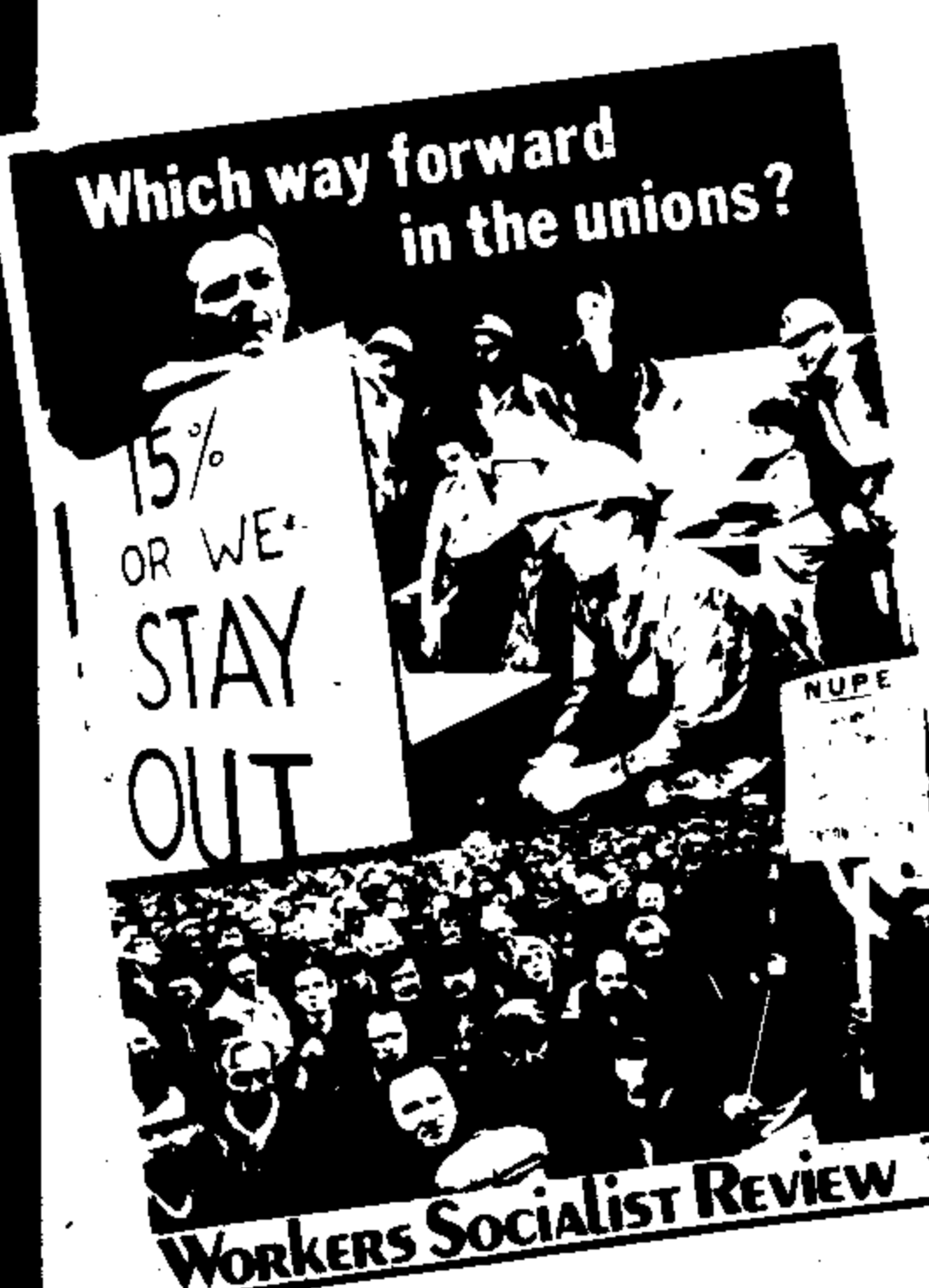
COUNTY HALL LONDON MAY 14

SPEAKERS **Judith Hart** (author of 'Under the Eagle')
Jenny Pearce (FDR Representative)
Salvador Moncada (FDR Representative)
Salvadorian Trade Unionists

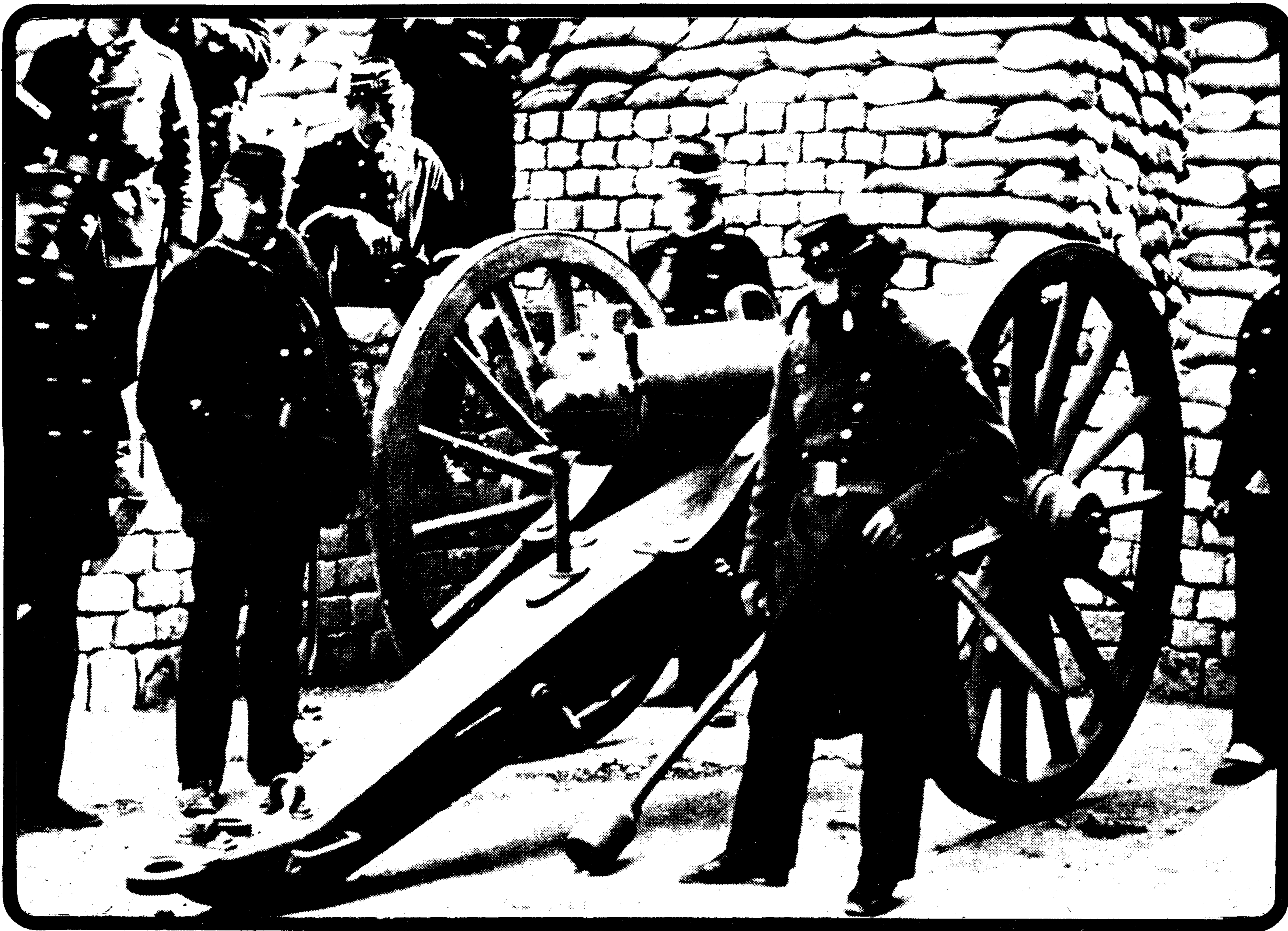
DELEGATES invited from Trade Union & Political Party branches

FURTHER INFORMATION from:
El Salvador Solidarity Campaign
29 Islington Park Street
London N1 Tel: 01-359 2270

Advertisement



70p plus postage from WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

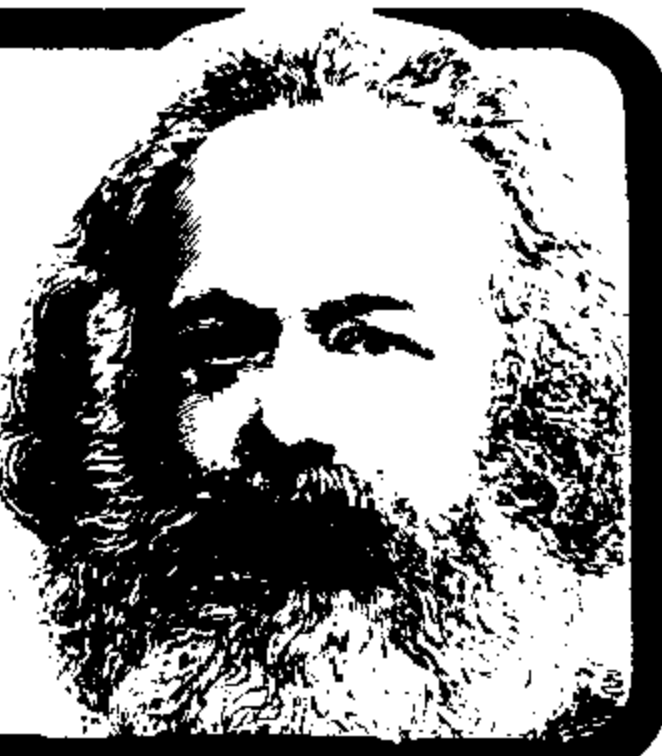


Paris Commune: a glorious harbinger

Welding the workers of the

by Alan Clinton

**Marx Centenary
Socialist
Organiser
Special**



MARX lived most of his life in London. He came as a political refugee to England in August 1849, when he was 31 years old, and remained here more or less continuously until his death 33 years later in Hampstead, on March 14 1883.

Although he achieved an excellent mastery of the English language and was certainly well acquainted with English life and politics, Marx probably retained his German accent, and certainly his somewhat eccentric behaviour and life-style. Yet he took part in the workers' movement; and as Wilhelm Liebknecht later wrote, "Marx could only become what he has become in England".

This was not only because of the economic writings and the Blue Books that he found in the British Museum, but also his contact with the socialist and working class movement in this country. Even when not actively participating, Marx followed the main movements closely.

He arrived in Britain at the time of the decline of the Chartists. However, he met the leaders who were still trying to hold the movement together.

He argued with George Harney, who wanted to revive the movement through closer association with bourgeois radicals. Harney nevertheless found Marx "one of the most warm-hearted, genial and attractive of men".

Marx got on better politically with Ernest Jones, who was closer to the Chartists' traditions of independent class politics.

Even after the decline of the Chartist organisations and the defeat of the great strike movements of the early 1850s, Marx

constantly watched for signs of the resurgence of the workers' movement. Thus he was excited to see old Chartists giving out leaflets at a massive demonstration in Hyde Park in 1855 against proposed laws to restrict Sunday leisure.

He noticed the "hatred that could be read on the faces of the workers" as some of them attacked the carriages of the rich wasters who happened to be about and broke windows on Park Lane. He even wrote that: "Yesterday in Hyde Park the English revolution began". Not for the last time, his expectations were not realised.

As is well known, Marx regarded his theoretical writings as his most important task in this period. However, as is also well known, he never published more than a small part of Capital in his lifetime, and never got to the end of the writing.

One reason for this was the political work he carried out, especially in the International Working Men's Association, the First International.

With the resurgence of the workers' movement in the mid 1860s, Marx got involved in activities in support of popular resistance in Poland against foreign rule. The setting up of the International Working

Men's Association (IWMA) at a massive public meeting close to Trafalgar Square in September 1864 brought Marx into his most feverish period of political activity.

George Odger, secretary of the London Trades Council at the time and no revolutionary, argued that for drafting the statements of the International, "the right man in the right place would be Dr Marx".

Thus Marx drew up the Inaugural Address and Rules of the Association.

These showed very clearly the extent to which he was prepared to work with varied political tendencies, including the most rank reformists. He wrote privately to Engels of the need "to arrange the thing in such a way that our view appeared in a form that made it acceptable to the present standpoint of the workers' movement". As he later explained, "The International was founded in order to replace the socialist or semi-socialist sects by a real organisation of

the working class for struggle".

"Its aim was to weld together into one huge army the whole militant working class of Europe and America. Therefore it could not set out from the principles laid down in the [Communist] Manifesto", wrote Engels in 1890. "It was bound to have a programme which would not shut the door on the English trade unionists, the French, Belgian, Italian and Spanish Proudhonists (socialists who favoured a system of small cooperatives linked by 'fair exchange') and the German Lassalleans [who also favoured cooperatives, but with state aid]... For the ultimate triumph of the ideas set forth in the Manifesto Marx relied solely and exclusively upon the intellectual development of the working class, as it necessarily had to ensue from united action and discussion. The events and vicissitudes in the struggle against capital, the defeats even more than the successes, could not but demonstrate to the fighters the inadequacy hitherto of their universal panaceas and make their minds more receptive to a thorough understanding of the true conditions for the emancipation of the workers".

On this basis, in the public statements that Marx drafted he emphasised, for example, the great value of the victory of "the political economy of the working class" represented by the legal ten hour working day.

Marx worked closely with



Against imports of scabs: the export of class solidarity

workers' leaders with whose political views he had little sympathy. One of the worst of them, George Howell, later a leading Liberal, nevertheless wrote of Marx as "simple, confiding, yearning for the redemption of humanity".

There were at least two major political issues of the period which Marx insisted on taking up whatever the problems. The first was the Irish movement for national independence.

He supported the political rights, though not necessarily the methods, of the Fenian arm-

ed conspiracy. He actively campaigned on behalf of Fenian prisoners, and in 1868 wrote to Engels that, "The English proletariat will never achieve anything until they have got rid of Ireland".

Two years later, arguing against the anarchists within the International, he wrote:

"It is a precondition to the emancipation of the English working class to transform the present enforced union (i.e. the enslavement of Ireland) into equal and full confederation if

Marx campaigned for Fenian pr



United for action — and for learning

world into one huge army

possible, into complete separation if need be".

The other issue that Marx took up through the International was the defence of the Paris Commune — the workers' government established in Paris in March/May 1871 following the defeat of France in war with Prussia.

Marx was privately critical of the opinions and political errors of the Communards, but he nevertheless persuaded the International to defend their attempt at "storming heaven".

In the face of attacks in the press of this country not very different from any lying garbage to be found in a capitalist paper today, Marx argued:

"Working men's Paris, with its Commune, will be forever celebrated as the glorious harbinger of a new society. Its martyrs are enshrined in the great heart of the working class. Its exterminators history has already nailed to that eternal pillory from which all the prayers of their priests will not avail to redeem them".

It is sometimes said that Marx lost support from British trade unionists for expressing views such as these. However, there is only limited evidence of this. The collapse of the International after 1872 had much more to do with the downturn of the workers' movement and the strength within its ranks of anarchists and others.

During his last decade, Marx

was less active. No doubt he agreed with Engels, who argued in 1874 that the need was "to form anew a strong workers' party with a definite programme, and the best political programme they could wish for was the People's Charter" [the radical-democratic programme of the Chartists, centred round the demand for workers to have the vote].

Marx took an interest in early

efforts to popularise his ideas, though he did not agree with the philistine version — 'England for All' — published by Henry Hyndman, the maverick ex-Tory businessman who founded the first would-be Marxist organisation in Britain, the Social Democratic Federation.

However, Marx was increasingly preoccupied by his failing health and domestic tragedy, especially the death of his beloved

eldest daughter Jenny in the January before he himself died in 1883.

Marx's grave in Highgate Cemetery has been often visited since then. On the first anniversary in 1884, the socialist William Morris "trudged all the way from Tottenham Court Road", "with a red ribbon in my button hole", accompanied by "a very bad band, to do honour to the memory of Karl Marx and the

Commune".

It is much to be wondered what Marx might have made of the many visitors since then and the ugly marble block that was erected above his bones in 1956.

It cannot be thought that Marx would be very keen on the fat bureaucrats who hold state power today with a hypocritical nod towards his teachings. However, there can be no doubt that Marx would devote

particular attention to the fighting, breathing workers' movement.

He would no doubt see that he would not have been the same without the workers' movement of his day. But he would see also that we would not be the same, either, without his understanding of our struggles, or his vision — transmitted down the generations, — of our historic destiny.

An old campaigner recalls

F.A. RIDLEY was 86 on February 22 this year. One of the grand survivors of the Independent Labour Party, leader writer for the 'Socialist Leader', and former President of the National Secular Society, he has contributed at least 40 books and pamphlets to the catalogue of the British Library.

What do you recall of the events leading up to the First World War and the Russian Revolution?

As far back as 1907, I listened to people talking at the table about the date of 'the next war'. 1912 was the favourite date. These people were Tories and members of the Church of England when the Church of England could truthfully be described as 'the Tory party at prayer! I was called up four or five times, but was rejected on the grounds of the injury to my head which I received as a child.

I enrolled for New College, Oxford, but failed on the sausage machine of the examination system. I then studied theology for three years. I have always

been interested in theology. The less I believed in it, the greater my interest became.

I came up to London in the early '20s, and started public speaking in Hyde Park in 1925. I spoke on several occasions during the General Strike (1926), on Labour Party and ILP platforms.

At that time I was a strong supporter of the CP (I was particularly impressed by Leon Trotsky's book 'Whither England').

In the early '30s, I helped to found the Marxist Group, which became one of the starting points of the British Trotskyist movement. I urged Trotsky to start a Fourth International, but my views were fiercely resisted [at the time] by the Old Man. Our view was that the trade unions were going to become a 'ruling class', and would never introduce egalitarian socialism.

This year we are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the death of Karl Marx. What sort of comment might he have made were he to view the contemporary scene?

Marx would have been extremely grieved at the failure of the Russian Revolution to spread over Europe. He would have been very surprised that it started in Russia, and not in Germany. While he might not have been surprised at the downfall of the English colonial empire, he would have been very surprised to find so many ex-colonial regimes describing themselves as socialist.

What message do you have for the new left generation?

Clarify your ideas and develop a more concrete presentation of the socialist case, otherwise the Labour Party will degenerate into a reformist trade union movement, and we would see a concerted move to the right on the part of the Tory party parallel with the decline of British capitalism. It would be desirable in my opinion if the ILP and NCLC [National Council of Labour Colleges] could be revived in a more modern form.

Interview by Ellis Hillman.



Trotsky fiercely resisted my arguments'

soners

Debate on the downturn in mass struggle

Our task: to revolutionise the unions

Second (and concluding) part of a response to John McIlroy's recent Socialist Organiser series on the state of the industrial struggle

By Tony Richards

It is an artificial and false method to look at sections who have struggled in the past and simply counterpose to that their inaction today.

Prior to 1972 the miners had not fought for many years. The huge gains — and favourable relationship of forces in negotiations — which they secured in 1972 and 1974 are significant factors in shaping their decisions today.

What were the water workers doing in 1974? If we picked them as an example, we could even argue that workers are more militant than they were then!

The struggle does not erupt at the same points all the time. New sections emerge in sudden struggles which change the face of the labour movement — such as the FBU struggle against Labour's pay limits in 1977-8.

But the reality in recent years is that where leadership has been given, in most instances workers have responded.

The health workers — and those who supported them — were an example. The rail workers as a whole, and then ASLEF, were another.

Leadership is the key issue. Certainly lack of leadership or misleadership does demoralise sections of the working class, and affect its consciousness. But to focus simply on the lack of consciousness of the vast majority of the working class is not only to see things upside down: it is also to turn away from the only available solution to the problem.

We cannot hope to reach the mass of workers individually with propaganda that will raise their consciousness. We can only hope to raise a fight through the organised labour movement for the construction

of a new, revolutionary leadership, and, by involving ourselves in the process of the struggles that emerge, to make workers aware of the role of leadership. This is why we need to build a revolutionary party.

To come — as John McIlroy does — close to equating the consciousness of the working class to that of the bureaucracy — is a long way from the Marxist method.

Certainly there exist backwardness, confusion, illusions and elements of demoralisation in the working class — each of which is reinforced by the labour bureaucracy; but when Trotsky tells us that the forces of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus, he means that the consciousness of the working class is driven by history into conflict with the bureaucracy.

Confronted by the employers' attacks on their jobs, wages, public services and trade union rights, workers must seek means of struggle which are opposed by the bureaucrats: and in so doing they come face to face with the need for a new leadership.

The problem is to make the working class conscious of its strength, which is covered over and defused by the bureaucracy.

What kind of leadership?

In his final article John McIlroy says: "Not millions, but thousands of workers are looking for wider solutions and turning towards the Labour Party.

HARD TIMES

Just out from Pluto Press: an analysis of capitalism in crisis from regular Socialist Organiser contributor Bob Sutcliffe £2.50 from Pluto Press, 27, The Arcade, Torriano Avenue, London NWS.



Water workers: new militants

Whilst this can never be a substitute for the industrial struggle, it has important implications for the struggle. Workers' willingness to go forward on the industrial front depends to some extent on what possibilities they can see for a real alternative to Thatcher. Moreover it raises the questions in a stark fashion of union democracy and the creation of a new leadership".

This approach tends to direct away from the task which Trotsky termed as "revolutionising the unions".

The fight against the right wing and the left fakers in the Labour Party is correct: but it does not necessarily represent a development if workers turn towards that sphere of struggle. It can represent a retreat from the necessary struggle inside the unions.

John McIlroy tells us: "...there has been a limited but substantial politicisation as many other workers, faced with the impasse on the industrial front, are turning to wider solutions, solutions which focus initially on the election of a Labour government".

The 'impasse' is caused by the activities of the trade union bureaucracy — and can only be broken by a political fight inside the unions. To seek to go round the impasse through the 'wider solution' of a re-elected Labour government while the union bureaucracy remains in place is to run the risk of a repetition of the betrayals of the Wilson-Callaghan governments. Indeed even the problems of Labour democracy cannot be resolved without taking the fight into the heart of the right wing's power base in the unions.

Of course it is right that trade union activists should take up the same demands and struggles as the Labour Party but

mands which Trotsky saw as central to the fight in the unions.

Certainly 'socialist policies' are mentioned, as are democracy in the unions and the 'manifesto and programme of a Labour government'.

Even reformist leaders talk of socialism and others talk about the 'crisis of ideas' amongst the rank and file.

As Trotskyists we need to link the daily struggle for reforms to the necessity for revolution. To do this we raise demands that are transitional in that they connect with the needs and consciousness of workers today, but point to the necessity of revolutionary solutions.

In defence of jobs, for example, we should link occupation and supporting strike action to the fight for the 'opening of the books' of the threatened firm, plant, or industry, to show the connections that link it to other sections of workers and the way the capitalist class as a whole profits even from the 'loss-making' firms. In the pits, we must connect the fight against closures to the demand for a shorter working week — work-sharing — on full pay. In defence of living standards we argue for cost-of-living clauses in all wage agreements, on a price index worked out by elected trade union committees.

Through such demands we offer workers an independent road, refusing to pay for the crisis of capitalism.

But John McIlroy not only fails to point in this direction, he points the other way, using the hoary old SWP claim that if employers "show they can't pay", this can stop redundancy fights.

Since he uses the word 'show' rather than 'claim', this can only be read as an acceptance of those figures and an implicit attack upon the 'open the books' demand.

I know of no recent example of 'bankrupt' employers opening their books to an elected committee. But even if they did, this is only an aspect of the programme we fight for: it is tied into the fight for the spreading of action and agitation, the fight for workers' control and the demand for nationalisation without compensation.

The programme is necessary for work amongst the shop floor membership and in the union apparatus. In this respect John McIlroy is wrong to claim that the bureaucratisation of the shop stewards' movement is 'double-sided' in that it "has the potential for focusing a fight for control of the machine".

If people have been bureaucratized, they may seek personal

advantage, but will not seek to revolutionise the machine. Bureaucratization weakens the possibility of developing revolutionaries in struggle. We need revolutionary fighters, not apparatchiks.

The demands of the Transitional Programme are not intended for decoration or propaganda. As Trotsky pointed out:

"In the epoch of imperialist decay, the trade unions can be really independent only to the extent that they are conscious of being, in action, the organs of the proletarian revolution. In this sense the programme of transitional demands... is not only the programme for the activity of the (revolutionary) party but in its fundamental features it is the programme for the activity of the trade unions".

Soft targets

In arguing his case, John McIlroy has attacked some easy targets. The SWP have given up on the struggle in the unions, and wound up their 'rank and file' organisations. The WRP talk of leadership in abstraction from the arena in which a new leadership must be built — the conflict with the bureaucracy in the trade unions. As for the RCP sectarians, no comment is needed.

But what ideas is McIlroy defending? He is directing attention away from problems of leadership and towards the consciousness of the rank and file.

Capitalism of course would have been overthrown long ago if the consciousness of the working class were adequate to the situation. Then there would be no need for a revolutionary party.

But workers are continually driven into revolutionary situations on a world scale. The reason they do not overthrow capitalism is the absence of a revolutionary leadership.

The present downturn in struggles (rather than militancy) is due to the actions of the bureaucracy, carrying through ever-bigger betrayals as the crisis deepens.

The next 12 months in the unions will see the necessity for redundancy struggles to be raised within the People's March campaign; the need to raise CND; and of course the socialist campaign for the return of a Labour government.

But this general propaganda work is secondary to the fight to expose the union leadership's betrayals, and to convince workers of the need for a new revolutionary leadership on a programme of transitional demands which point the way forward for the working class as a whole.



Miners: remembering the gains of 1972-4

without the work in the union rank and file any 'victories' achieved in the Labour Party will be paper-thin.

The fight to 'revolutionise' the unions seems to be in contradiction to John McIlroy's orthodox insistence that the unions are simply defence organs of the working class in capitalist society.

Unions

It is true that simply through trade union activity the working class will not overthrow capitalism. It is vital that a revolutionary party is developed, capable of giving leadership in the unions and the class as a whole.

But the trade unions will play a particular role in the revolution. The development of a revolutionary party is in large measure the struggle for the unions. As Trotsky pointed out, the unions:

"...can no longer be reformist, because the objective conditions leave no room for any serious or lasting reforms. The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat..."

"The matter at issue is essentially the struggle for influence over the working class" (The Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay).

A Programme of Struggle

In four lengthy articles which presumably John McIlroy intended as education for workers, he fails even once to refer to the programme of transitional de-

"We need revolutionaries not apparatchiks"

Was Scargill right?

I WOULD like to take issue with some of the points Alan Thornett makes on the NUM in SO 123.

For most rank and file miners the national ballot has been in the last decade a basic democratic guarantee and an affirmation of their union as a national entity.

This is a strong tradition in the NUM.

We also have to see the decision of the NUM executive to go for a national ballot against the background of a failed national ballot on closure and a failure to get action on a regional basis over Kinneil in late 1982; and a situation where it was clear that tensions existed between formal policy and the position of national, regional and local leadership and their ability to pull their members along with them.

We do not know what exactly happened in the crucial executive meeting where Scargill is alleged to have been wrong to retreat before the right wing. But surely if Scargill had stood out for a strike without a ballot, he would have been in danger of putting down a marker in the eyes of thousands of miners as a manipulator who flouts union democracy for his own purposes.

Moreover even if Scargill had stood firm and won a vote for no national ballot, there is no guarantee that the executive's decision would have been acted upon by many pits.

It is a basic mistake of strike strategy to believe that you need everybody out all at once, 100% from the start. But in the specific circumstances there may well have been widespread defiance.

It would have been different had a rolling strike movement developed with thousands walking out.

It didn't. The two Derbyshire pits that did come out illustrated the theoretical possibilities — and the practical limitations.

To go forward without a ballot would have risked chaos and the further undermining of the national unity so dearly bought in the 1970s. National unity, national ballots, national bargaining are not sacrosanct. But in the concrete circumstances I think it is strongly arguable that Scargill was correct to accept the position of those on the executive calling for a national ballot — a position which had strong

resonance in the coalfields.

Given the overwhelming balance of static forces against a successful strike in terms of coal stocks, would it not be wrong to enter upon it on a basis of division and rank and file rebellion within the NUM itself.

Fact

I think we have to face up to the fact that the situation was lost not because Scargill did not stand firm against the right but because the majority of miners were not prepared to strike in the specific conditions of March 1983.

It is wrong to lump Scargill's

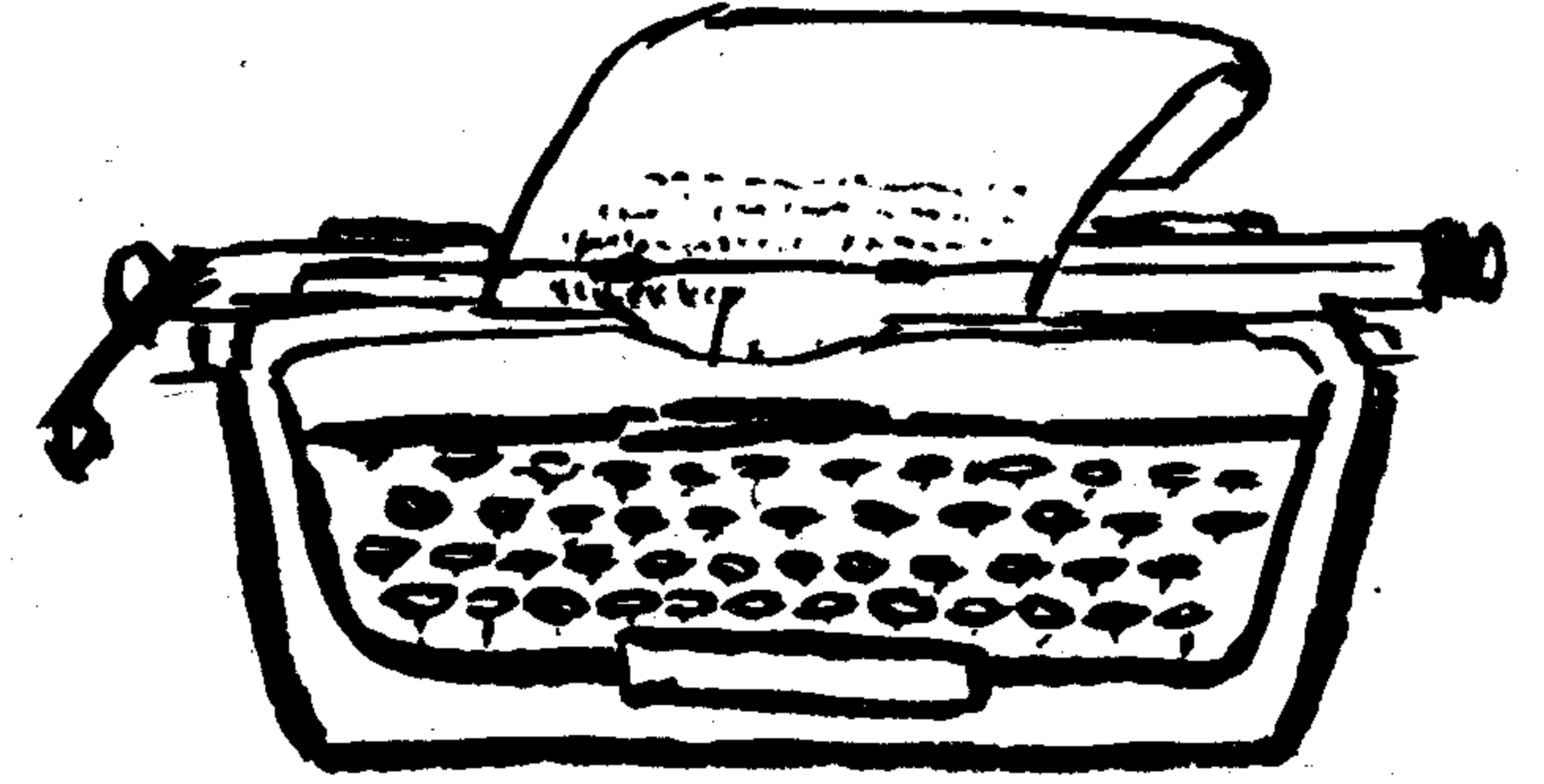
leadership together with that of Bill Sirs in 1980 or with that of the TUC General Council members who betrayed ASLEF last year — or even with McGahey, leading his men like the Duke of Plaza Toro over Kinneil.

The ballot reaffirms November's vote and gives a reasonably fair picture of the limitations of miners' present consciousness. This may be an unpalatable state of affairs. We have to recognise it if we are to change it.

We cannot try to change miners' minds if we don't really believe they need changing in the first place.

MARK STARR, Oldham

Writeback



Send letters to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8. No longer than 400 words, please: longer letters are liable to be cut.

Sectarianism and the left

YOU ASK John Lister in your interview with him in Socialist Organiser no.120 why the Socialist League have proposed fusion with the Workers' Socialist League. May I answer on behalf of the SL?

John explains that calls for unity 'can be very popular with sections of the British left who are understandably irritated by the divisions among those fighting the right wing'.

He goes on to say: 'It is unfortunately the case that these divisions for the most part reflect genuine political disagreements which must be resolved rather than ignored'.

But in our view some of the divisions on the left in Britain

are precisely unjustified. For example, we have long been of the view that the differences between ourselves and the WSL are not sufficient to justify the existence of separate organisations.

No revolutionary socialist organisation can be monolithic. Inevitably there will be political differences and debates which arise within its ranks reflecting different experiences and assessments of the class struggle.

Unfortunately the British far left is rife with sectarian notions that any major tactical difference must inevitably lead to a split. This does not reflect 'revolutionary intransigence', but on the

contrary, the relatively low level of political class struggle in this imperialist country in the twentieth century.

The ability of both of our organisations to conduct lively internal debates without resorting to splits is a healthy antidote to this dead-end tradition. It begins to show the kind of combination of internal democracy and revolutionary united action that is necessary to build a party rather than a tinpot British sect.

Today the necessity of constructing the strongest possible revolutionary socialist organisation is pressing. This is why the notion of revolutionary unity is so popular — and deservedly so.

The SL's December conference adopted the proposal for fusion with the WSL because the WSL is the organisation of revolutionary socialists in Britain that is closest to ourselves.

This was underlined by the fact that our organisations eventually adopted identical positions with respect to the Malvinas war — the acid test for British revolutionaries in the past year.

Tactical

Our common tactical line today makes fusion a pressing practical question for supporters of our organisations.

It is because we respect the work of the WSL that we are convinced that uniting our forces would result in a revolutionary organisation qualitatively stronger than the simple addition of our numbers. In fact a united organisation would be in a real position to rebut the media fabrication that it is the Militant tendency which represents Trotskyism in the British labour movement and prove that there is a genuinely internationalist Marxist alternative.

Such a united organisation would, of course, attract many militants to its ranks who today are sceptical of revolutionary Marxist ideas — precisely because of the seemingly endless list of organisations and groups claiming that title.

It would be able to play an increasingly powerful role in ending the retreat of sections of

the trade union and Labour Party left, and in uniting militants across the Labour Party, the unions and mass movements like CND, in struggle against the Tories and right-wing bureaucracy.

To not take such an advance would be criminally irresponsible. Rather than competing our organisations should combine against the right wing and the waverers on the left.

To not take such an advance would be criminally irresponsible. Rather than competing our organisations should combine against the right wing and the waverers on the left.

So our proposal is designed to attract the uncommitted to take a step forward against British sectarian fragmentation, through fusion between the WSL and SL.

This is not to minimise the political differences between the organisations, nor the practical disagreements that inevitably come up in various areas of work. But, as we explained at our recent meeting with the WSL, it is to say that the best framework for clarifying and resolving those differences is principled agreement on the objective of fusion.

The first step along this path will be regular meetings nationally and locally to both coordinate joint work and begin the process of political discussion towards that aim.

D. BIGGS, SL National Secretary

CHORLTON WOBBLY SONG

Khrushchev's kisses no-one misses
Pie in the sky won't feed his heirs
Joe his great teacher taught him that classes
Are to be ignored when the state is theirs.

Workers of the world rest on your backs
Bosses and bureaucrats in bloody matrimony
You've nothing to gain, papering over the cracks
In their edifice to inhumanity.

Their common cause is a nation's glory
Differences between them, tend to emphasise
That change is sown in the bag of diplomacy —
The class struggle, a push button war from the skies.

This isn't really a song, as you can tell from the style
And the Wobblies were wrong about how to organise
Even Chorlton won't escape its atomic pile
Unless workers' action wins back our skies.

John Douglas, USDAW CWS Packing Factory branch and Barlow Moor Ward Labour Party, Chorlton



Lenin, Anticipating His Arrival At The Finland Station, Sees His Baggage Taken Off At Beloostrov

SCIENCE

By Les Hearn

As the general election approaches, scientific issues already look like being fairly prominent in Labour's campaign.

For example, a row is brewing over nuclear energy, with the right wing-dominated Labour Party Energy Committee ranged against the Environment Study Group.

Meanwhile, Foot is making a play for the 'Green' vote, and the Labour Party Science and Technology Study Group (STSG), which has been quietly discussing with itself over the last 6 months, is about to bring out a report.

Unfortunately, despite some correct positions on single issues (such as abolishing lead in petrol, stopping Sizewell) and various vague statements of good intention, Labour's overall policy on science and technology (S&T) is no different from that of radical sections of the capitalist class. It still see S&T as basically progressive, merely needing

a change of management.

But it will take more than a change of management before capitalist S&T ceases to injure and poison, squander, pollute and oppress, not to mention putting millions out of work.

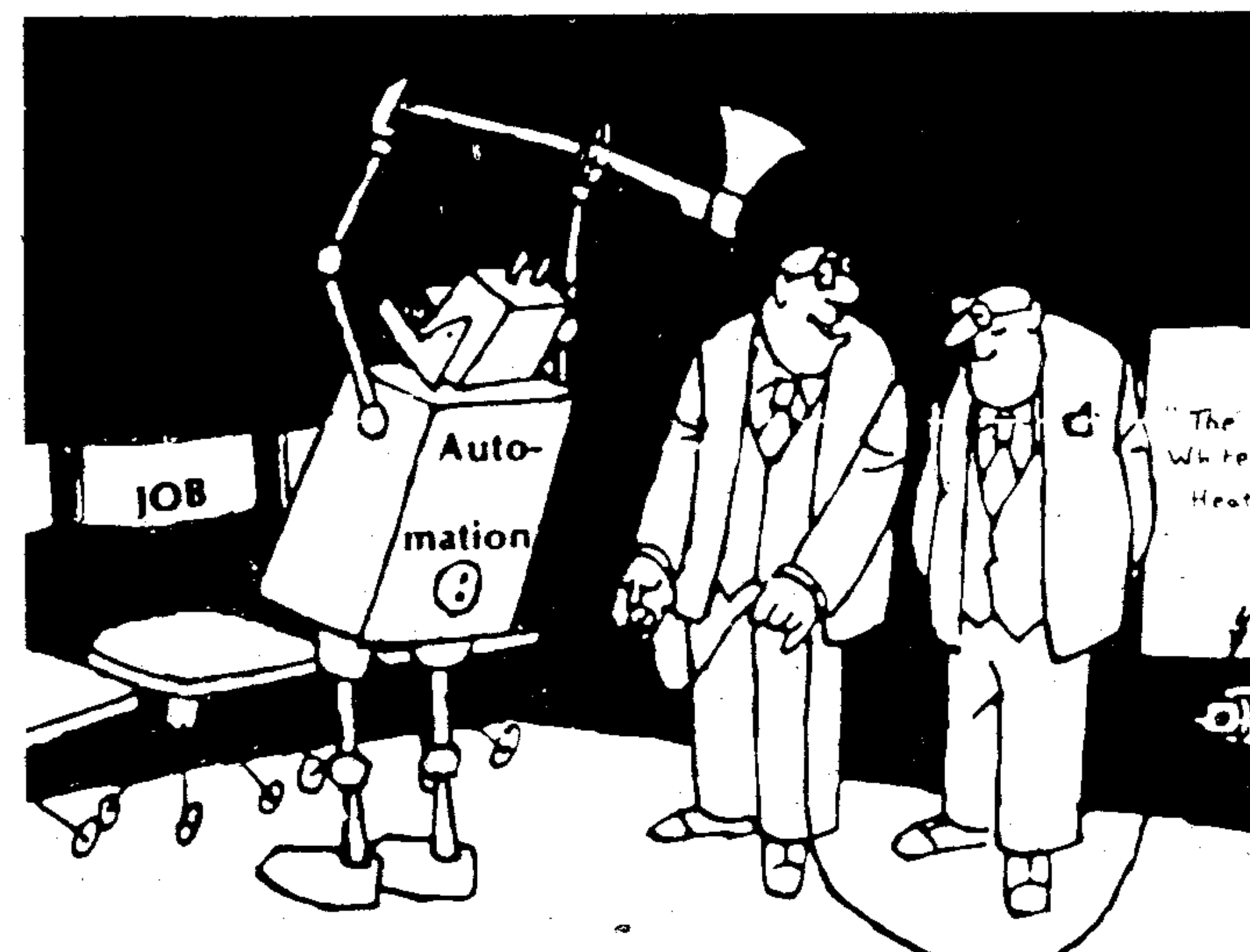
Policy

The left still needs to develop a socialist S&T policy and as an aid to this, I am attempting to approach a wider audience, with articles in the forthcoming issues of London Labour Briefing and Science for People.

I am asking for readers of London Labour Briefing, Science for People and Socialist Organiser who are interested in developing such a policy to contact me, so that we can arrange a preliminary meeting.

A few ideas for a socialist science policy:

1. What is a socialist energy policy? Most socialists would probably want to scrap the present nuclear energy programme, but should we go all out for coal? Can we cope with the inevitable pollution from



'And now watch when I plug this thing in'

this? What about 'alternative' sources of energy — sun, wind, tide, etc.?

2. What is a socialist health policy? Should we just fight to preserve the NHS as it is, based

on drugs, machines and surgery, or should we look at alternative types of medicine that treat the human as a whole individual (homeopathy, acupuncture) and as a social being

(looking at the structure of society as a cause of physical and mental illness)?

And while capitalists spend millions pushing booze and fags, why do socialists have nothing to say on the slow-motion slaughter caused by these drugs?

3. What is a socialist food policy? Should we waste food by turning it into milk and meat so that some die of cancer and heart disease while others die of malnutrition?

4. What sort of research should a socialist society carry out? Is there a place for space science? How can we make science serve the people?

Shops

My own hobby-horse at the moment is 'science shops' (see SO 122 & 123 in March). I feel that Labour Councils (and a future government) should fund science shops so that trade unionists, tenants groups, women's groups, groups of gays and black people, environmental groups, etc., can have access to scientific research to help them in their struggles against the

effects of capitalism on their lives.

I shall be moving the following resolution at my next ward meeting:

This [organisation] believes that science must be made more accessible and useful to the labour movement and oppressed groups. We therefore request that the Labour Party, at local and national level, look into the possibility of providing access to scientific research for ordinary people along the lines of the Dutch 'science shops'.

If readers would like to move similar resolutions, then they might like to use my recent articles on science shops as information. I will supply copies of these on receipt of a stamped, addressed envelope.

Resolutions passed should be forwarded to Council Labour Groups and to the STSG at 150, Walworth Rd., London SE1 (details to me, as well, please).

Readers interested in discussing a socialist science policy should write to Science Desk, Socialist Organiser, 28, Middle Lane, London N8.

	April						
Monday	4	11	18	25			
Tuesday	5	12	19	26			
Wednesday	6	13	20	27			
Thursday	7	14	21	28			
Friday	1	8	15	22	29		
Saturday	2	9	16	23	30		
Sunday	3	10	17	24			

WHAT'S ON

PAID ads 5p per word, £4 per column inch. Send copy to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8, to arrive by Saturday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

EL SALVADOR Solidarity Campaign: Labour Movement conference, Saturday May 14, 10am to 5pm, County Hall, London SE1. Credentials £2 from ESSC, 29 Islington Park St, London N1.

LABOUR Committee on Ireland Annual General Meeting: Saturday April 23, 10am to 5pm at County Hall, London SE1. Resolutions to be submitted by April 8. Contact: LCI, BM Box 5355, London WC1N 3XX.

HARINGEY Labour Committee on Ireland. Public meeting 'Why Labour needs to speak to Sinn Fein': Speaker: Steve Bundred [GLC] and Geoff Bell [LCI]. 7.30pm on Thursday 14 April at Brabant Road Trade Union and Community Centre, off Station Rd., N22.

TROTSKYISM or Castroism: a pamphlet analysing the move away from the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution by the Socialist Workers' Party of the USA. Published by the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee: 40p plus postage from PO Box 135, London N10DD.

Labour Campaign for Gay Rights, National Conference on 'The Fight in the Labour Movement for Lesbian and Gay Male Rights': Saturday 9 April, 11-5, Shepherd's Hall, Old Market Street, Bristol. Creche. Details: phone Bristol 634203

Bermundsey workers' social: with our comrades who worked so hard for Labour in the by-election. Railway Club, Dunton Rd, SE16. Friday April 15, 8pm.

Chile Solidarity Campaign presents: In Concert for Chile, 'Quilapayun' and 'The Boys of the Lough': Sunday May 1, 7pm, Dominion Theatre, Tottenham Court Rd. Tickets from Chile Solidarity Campaign [272 4298], £6, £5, £4 and £2 unwaged.

Rock against Cruise, organised by YCND. Saturday April 9, 7.30pm, Clarendon College, opp. Savoy Hotel, Mansfield Rd, Nottingham. £1, 50p unwaged.



Youth CND Festival Saturday May 7

ASSEMBLE 11am at the Embankment. March to Brockwell Park for Rock the Bomb Festival with Paul Weller and more



Where to find Socialist Organiser

• SCOTLAND

Glasgow. For details of meetings contact paper sellers or Stan Crooke, 114 Dixon Avenue, Glasgow G42. SO is sold at Maryhill dole (Tuesday mornings) and Rutherglen shopping arcade (Friday lunchtime).

Edinburgh. For details of meetings ring Dave, 229 4591. SO is sold at Muirhouse (Saturday 10.30-12) and the First of May bookshop, Candlemaker Row.

• NORTH-WEST

Wirral. Contact Colin Johnstone, 1 Wellington Road, Wallasey. Next meeting: Thursday April 14, 8pm, at the Labour Club, Church Rd, Seacombe: 'SO's role in the local and general elections'.

Liverpool. Contact 733 6663. SO is sold at Progressive Books, Berry St, and at News from Nowhere, Whitechapel.

Manchester. SO is sold at Grass Roots Books, Newton St., Piccadilly. Contact: 273 6654.

Stockport. Contact c/o 38 Broadhurst St. Meetings every Sunday, 7.30pm: phone 429 6359 for details. SO is sold at Stockport market every Saturday, 11 to 12.30.

Rochdale. Meets on second Monday of the month, 7.30 at Castle Inn. April 11: open meeting on privatisation, with speaker from Campaign to Save Bury's Bins.

Hyndburn. Contact Accrington 395753. Meetings weekly — see SO sellers for details. SO is sold at Broadway, Accrington, Saturdays 11.30 to 1pm.

Stoke. Contact Arthur Bough, 23 Russell Road, Sandyford (84170).

• YORKSHIRE AND NORTH-EAST

Durham. SO is sold at the Community Co-op, New Elvet.

York. Contact: 796027. SO is sold at Coney St on Saturday mornings, at the Community Bookshop, and outside the dole office most mornings.

Leeds. Contact Garth Frankland 623322. SO is sold at Books and Corner Books, Woodhouse Lane.

Bradford. Contact Barry Turner 636994. SO is sold at the Starry Plough bookshop.

Sheffield. Meets every other Wednesday, 7.30pm at the Brown Cow, The Wick. SO is sold outside

Boots, Foregate (Saturday 12 to 1) and at the Independent Bookshop, Glossop Rd. Contact: Rob, 589307.

Hull. Meets every Wednesday, 8pm: details from SO sellers. Childcare available. SO is sold at the Prospect Centre (Saturday 11-12).

Halifax. Contact 52156. SO is sold at Halifax Wholefood, Gibbet St, and at Tower Books, Hebden Bridge.

York. Contact: 796027. SO is sold at Coney St on Saturday mornings, at the Community Bookshop, outside the dole office most mornings, and at the University on Friday mornings.

• WALES

Cardiff. Contact 492988.

• MIDLANDS

Birmingham. Meets alter-

Where we stand

* Organise the left to beat back the Tories' attacks! No to attacks on union rights; defend the picket-line; no state interference in our unions! No to any wage curbs. Labour must support all struggles for better living standards and conditions.

* Wage rises should at the very least keep up with price increases. For a price index calculated by working class organisations, as the basis for clauses in all wage agreements to provide automatic monthly rises in line with the true cost of living for the working class. The same inflation-proofing should apply to state benefits, grants and pensions.

* Fight for improvements in the social services, and against cuts. Protection for those services against inflation by automatic inflation-proofing of expenditure. For occupations and supporting strike action to defend jobs and services.

* End unemployment. Cut hours, not jobs. Fight for a 35 hour week and an end to overtime. Demand work-sharing without loss of pay. Organise the unemployed — campaign for a programme of useful public works to create new jobs for the unemployed.

* Defend all jobs! Open the books of those firms that threaten closure or redundancies, along with those of their suppliers and bankers, to elected trade union committees. For occupation and blacking action to halt the closures. For nationalisation without compensation under workers' management.

* Make the bosses pay, not the working class. Millions for hospitals, not a penny for 'defence'! Nationalise the banks and financial institutions, without compensation. End the interest burden on council housing and other public services.

* Freeze rents and rates.

* Scrap all immigration controls. Race is not a problem; racism is. The labour movement must mobilise to drive the fascists off the streets. Purge racists from positions in the labour movement. Organise full support for black self-defence. Build workers' defence squads.

* The capitalist police are an enemy for the working class. Support all demands to weaken them as a bosses' striking force: dissolution of special squads (SPG, Special Branch, M15, etc.), public accountability, etc.

* Free abortion on demand. Women's equal right to work and full equality for women. Defend and extend free state nursery and childcare provision.

* Against attacks on gays by the state: abolish all laws which discriminate against lesbians and gay men; for the right of the gay community to organise and affirm their stand publicly.

* The Irish people — as a whole — should have the right to determine their own future. Get the British troops out now! Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Political status for Irish Republican prisoners as a matter of urgency.

* The black working people of South Africa should get full support from the British labour movement for their strikes, struggles and armed combat against the white supremacist regime. South African goods and services should be blacked.

* It is essential to achieve the fullest democracy in the labour movement. Automatic reselection of MPs during each parliament and the election by annual conference of party leaders. Annual election of all trade union officials, who should be paid the average for the trade.

* The chaos, waste, human suffering and misery of capitalism now — in Britain and throughout the world — show the urgent need to establish rational, democratic, human control over the economy, to make the decisive sectors of industry social property, under workers' control. The strength of the labour movement lies in the rank and file. Our perspective must be working class action to raze the capitalist system down to its foundations, and to put a working class socialist alternative in its place — rather than having our representatives run the system and waiting for crumbs from the tables of the bankers and the bosses.

Subscribe!

Rates: £5 for three months, £8.75 for six months, and £16 for a year.

Bundle of five each week: £12 for three months.

Bundle of 10 £21 for three months.

Name

Address

I enclose £
To: Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.



Socialist Organiser Alliance

Get Organised!

Socialist Organiser is not just a paper. We fight to organise workers in the struggle for a new leadership in the labour movement.

If you agree with what we have to say, you can help. Become a supporter of the Socialist Organiser Alliance — groups are established in most large towns.

To 'Get Organised' in the fight, or for more information, write at once to us at 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Name

Address



John O'Mahony and Jonathan Hammond reply to Clive Soley

A division of Labour on the Irish question



CLIVE Soley, deputy Labour spokesperson on Northern Ireland, has been an outspoken advocate of the view that a united Ireland is the only real solution to the war in Ireland. This is now official Labour policy.

Soley's chief, Labour's Secretary-of-State-for-Northern-Ireland-in-waiting, is Don Concannon: Concannon who, like the man in the Christian myth who offered the ailing and parched Jews a drink of vinegar, visited dying hunger striker Bobby Sands to tell him that the British Labour Party was supporting Margaret Thatcher's refusal to make concessions to the IRA prisoners; Concannon who helped organise a wild mob of chauvinists, racists and reactionaries in Mansfield to counter a peaceful Troops Out demonstration during the hunger strike; Concannon, who was Roy Mason's deputy in Northern Ireland during the last Labour government, when the policy was one of heavy repression of the Catholic community.

Concannon would not carry much conviction as advocate of the united Ireland policy of Labour conference. So there is a division of labour — with Soley acting as spokesperson for the Labour Party on Northern Ireland, while Concannon preserves himself to do business as before if Labour wins the next election.

After all, talk about a united Ireland is not all that new. Back in 1971 Labour leader Harold Wilson put forward a 15-year plan for movement to a united Ireland. Even Tory prime minister Edward Heath was reliably reported (by the Irish Times) to have told 26 Counties prime minister Jack Lynch in late 1970 that if a sufficient number of Northern Ireland people wanted a united Ireland, Britain would do everything it could to help the process along.

And of course it was the British state in the mid '60s which triggered the (mainly) Catholic civil rights movement and, indirectly, the Orange backlash which — destabilising the Six County state, destroying the 50 year old Protestant government in Belfast, and leading to British direct rule.

All 'initiatives', professed good intentions, attempts to

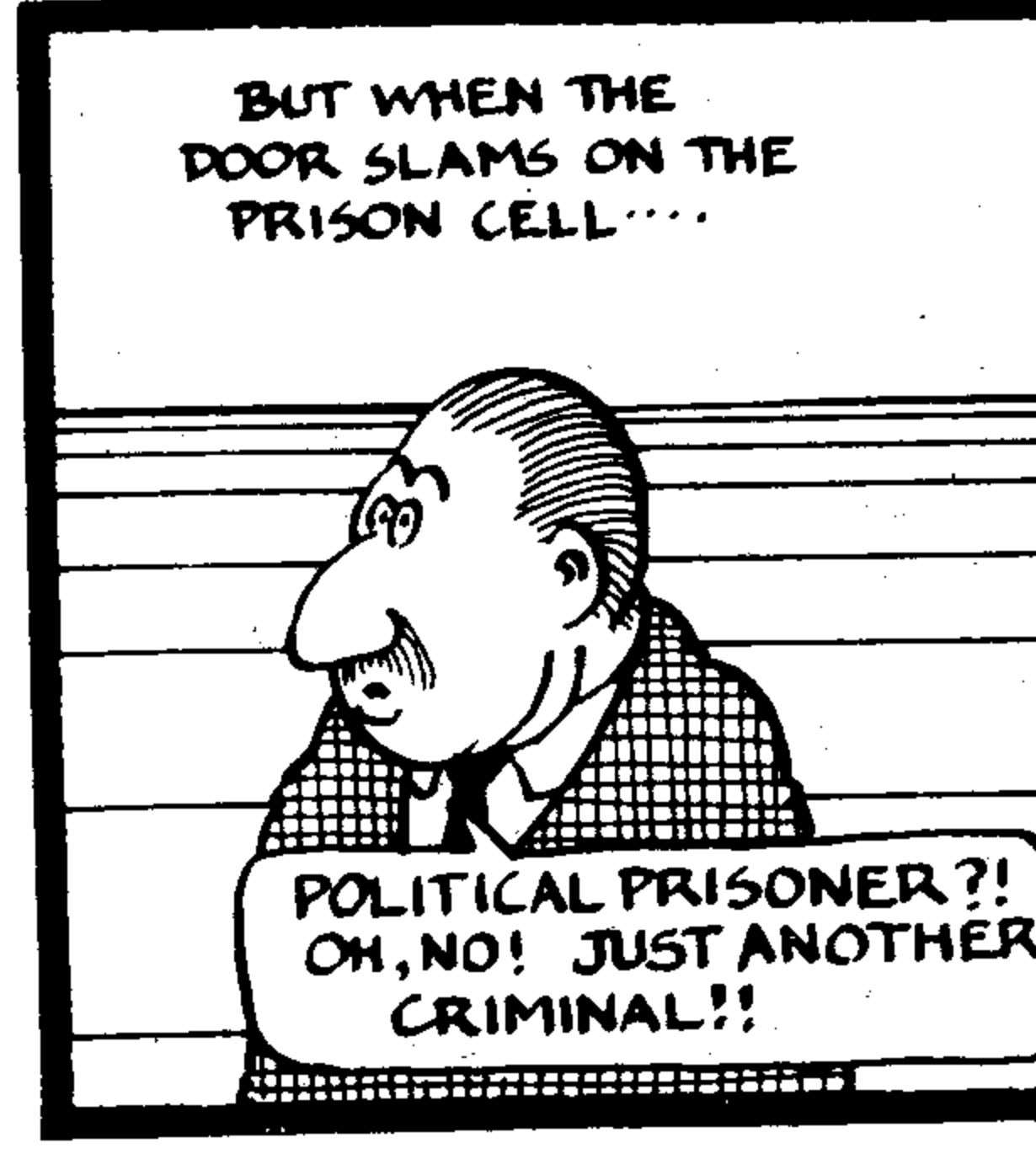
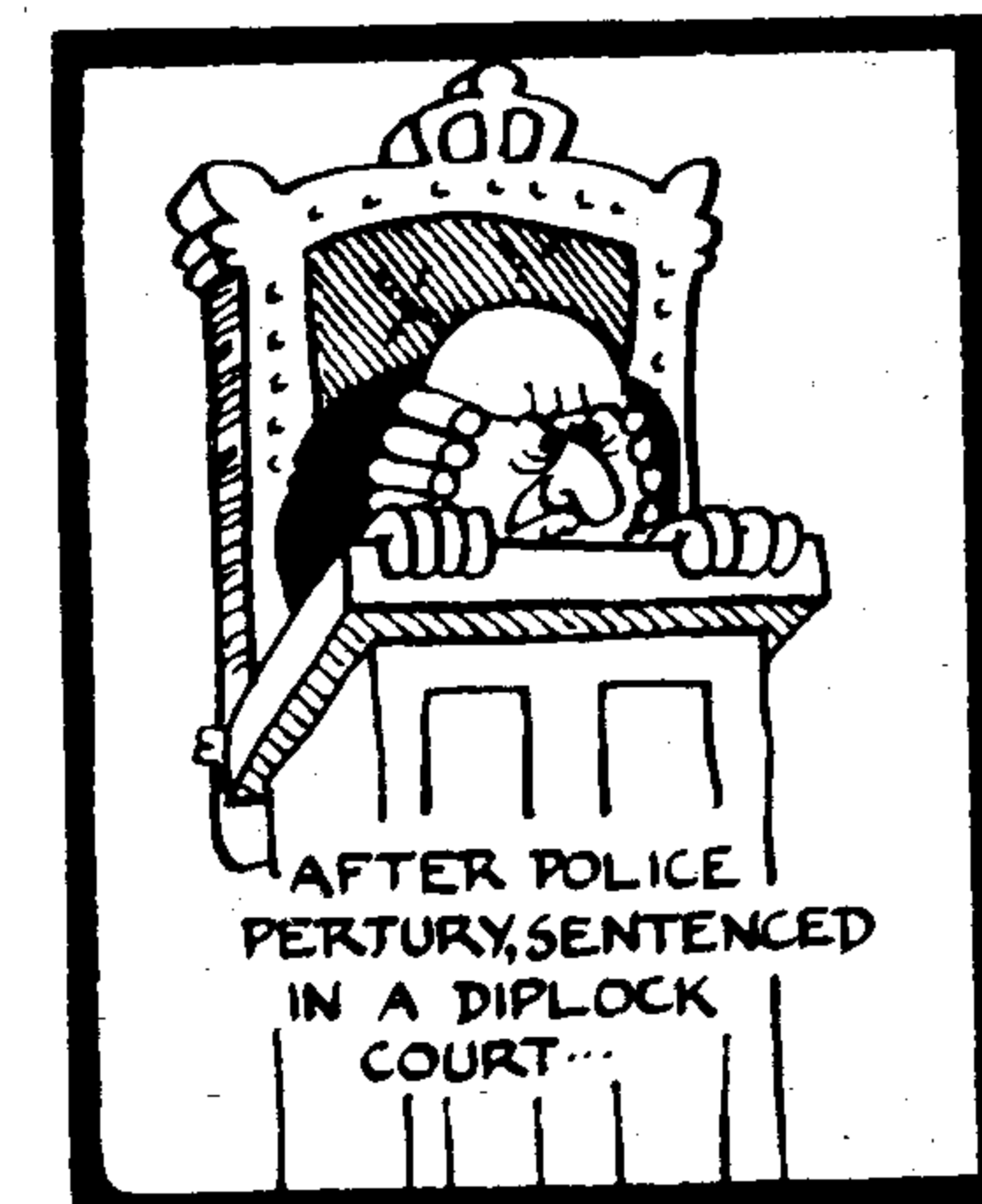
In Socialist Organiser nos.123-4 we carried an interview with Labour Northern Ireland spokesperson Clive Soley. Here the interviewers comment on Soley's arguments.

reform the Six County state or, in collaboration with 26 County governments, to restructure the Irish state system (by the Council of Ireland of the mid-'70s) have foundered on rocky Protestant unmoveability. Commitment — even if only 'for now' — to maintain the partition of Ireland and to seek solutions within the artificial Six County entity has left only one option open to British governments, Labour or Tory, once the attempts at reform had been smashed or neutralised by the opposition of the Protestant community and its built-in majority — to beat down the Catholics and try to defeat their drive to break the Six County framework.

Commitment to the Six Counties, and options within it, and all that inexorably flowed from that commitment, turned the Labour government in the mid-1970s into a government of jailers of the Catholics. It gave the army — which was reluctant, if it did not refuse outright, to act against the Protestant general strike — its head in conducting mass terror against the Catholics. House-wrecking was one of the mildest techniques.

Under Rees and Mason, in the three years after the Orange general strike brought down the power-sharing executive in May 1974, about 70,000 Catholic homes were raided by the Army. There are 400,000 households in the whole of the Six Counties.

The Labour government also did dirty deals in the House of Commons with the Orange Unionist bigots there. Michael Foot was the wheeler-dealer and



FROM 'CORMAC STRIKES BACK'

go-between.

All in all, the last Labour government had a worse record on its treatment of the Catholics than Heath's Tory government, even counting Bloody Sunday (when 13 unarmed Catholics were shot down in Derry on January 30 1972). By removing political status, it set in motion the H-Block protest movement which culminated in the tragedy of ten dead hunger-strikers, presided over by Mrs Thatcher.

There is no reason why we should trust the Labour Party establishment one inch where Ireland is concerned.

Consent

Nevertheless Soley said some important things when we interviewed him. He talked of a 'clear commitment to a united Ireland' (by consent). "Consent", he said, "must not mean a veto on political progress. We would legislate in a way that would lead people to the conclusion that a united Ireland was in their best interests".

Labour's policy would mean: "... saying something you've never said before to the Unionists: it's not just that we want to

get things better in Northern Ireland. We are saying to you that we don't want you in the UK any more, we want you in a united Ireland. That is a very different message going out to the Unionists than has gone out before".

Dublin

"What we'll do is first have talks with the Dublin government... to set up new economic and social institutions, and we do not allow the Protestants to veto that".

"In effect what I'm saying is: Yes, we are giving a strong commitment to get out. We are not setting a date". To the question, on what definition are the IRA straightforward criminals, he said: "They're not. Of course they're political. I'm not disputing that for a moment". ("But if we lock them up", he added, "that doesn't mean they should be treated differently...").

On talks with Sinn Fein, he said: "People who have not broken the law are people who, at the end of the day, you can't refuse to talk to".

"What I'm after is the vast majority of the people prepared

to enter into a united Ireland". "I don't blame [the N.I. Catholics] for being alienated... it's very difficult to reverse that... quickly... but in the meantime we must stick with the main objective of a united Ireland because all of these things are symptoms of the problem. The problem is the Border".

While counterposing a united Ireland to immediate self-determination ("Troops Out"), Soley concedes almost the whole moral and political case for it. But, he says, a certain economic and political framework must be created first. He pledges Labour to create it.

Logical

Though he refuses to accept it, he concedes the entire case for political status — "of course they're political". He needs to find other grounds for refusing to face the logical conclusion: spurious and far-fetched grounds, we suggest.

These points would be a great step forward if they came to be accepted in the broad labour movement: those who accepted them would not be likely to take refuge, as Soley does, in

evasions.

One might question the realism of this or that aspect of Soley's belief that the framework to usher the Protestants towards a united Ireland can be legislated piecemeal. No socialist can have any confidence in a policy to be supervised by the wretched Concannon. But if we assume both the practicality and the sincerity of the approach, and a will to carry out the policy Soley advocates, it is still a certainty that it would fail.

Soley says in effect that a Labour government would have to scrap its plans if Orange opposition became powerful enough. But opposition will be extremely powerful. Ian Paisley's claim that he has now become "the leader of the Protestant people" is a long way from being just bombast.

Soley stakes everything on 'political skill' to avoid a confrontation. That is to rely on 'political skill' to square the circle.

Miracles

And if the skill fails to work miracles? The policy will have to be scrapped.

Given also Labour's commitment to wait on a majority within the Six Counties, which has a built-in majority hostile to any moves towards a united Ireland, what we have from Soley is not so much a serious commitment to a united Ireland, as a commitment in advance to surrender to those who are fanatically opposed to it.

Soley opposes himself in advance to bow before the Protestants if he cannot outmanoeuvre them. Like Martin Luther he says: 'Here I stand'. But he is careful to add: 'I can't be sure I won't have to move'.

With a policy like that, the one thing you can be sure of is that you probably will move. And the pressure will not come only from the Protestant community. It will come from sections of the British state apparatus — the sort of people whose reluctance to stand up to the Orange strike in 1974 was a factor in Harold Wilson's decision to surrender to it.

A policy based on commitment to, and relying mainly on, full-scale coercion of the Protestants into a united Ireland would be neither sensible nor practical: and it would not lead to a united Ireland. Commitment to stand up to the Orange bigots is not the same thing, and it is essential.

Soley is a big step forward for an official Labour spokesperson on Northern Ireland. Some of the things he says are important even should they prove no more than passing comments — they can help changing the climate in the labour movement.

It's plain, however, that we cannot rely on the official Labour Party. That's why it's important that we break away from the paralysis on Ireland that has gripped the Left in the last decade. We must build a powerful mass labour movement campaign in support of the Catholics of Northern Ireland, and for a united Ireland with as much autonomy for the Northern Ireland Protestant community within it as is compatible with the democratic rights of the Irish people.



MAY 7

Britain out of Ireland; self-determination for the Irish people. Demonstration sponsored by Labour Committee on Ireland and others, Saturday May 7, 1pm from Hyde Park (Speakers' Corner).

SOGAT fights Maxwell's surprise

by Stan Crooke

Millionaire 'socialist', Friend of the Soviet Union (i.e. of the Stalinist bureaucracy), and card-carrying Labour Party member Robert Maxwell had a special Easter surprise for workers in the Park Royal (London) and East Kilbride (Glasgow) plants in his British Print and Communications Corporation empire: the sack.

The dispute began when workers at the Park Royal plant struck in protest at the non-payment of back pay. Maxwell responded in his usual fashion, accusing the workers of 'bloody mindedness' and 'wildcat strikes', and sacking 400 out of the 600 workforce at the plant.

Maxwell planned to transfer production from Park Royal to the East Kilbride plant. But, despite the high level of local unemployment, the workforce there made it clear that they would not accept the jobs.

Maxwells also brought scab electricians, under police protection, into the Park Royal plant to produce the plates needed for the printing of the 'Radio Times' at the Scottish plant. But the workers in East Kilbride blacked the plates as well. So Maxwell sacked the lot of them.

In less than a week, therefore, Maxwell — who only recently had been feted by the Soviet Embassy in London — sacked 500 workers for refusing to go without back pay and for blacking work produced by scabs.

Expelled

Danny Beagan, chairperson of the SOGAT branch at the East Kilbride plant and a member of the local Constituency Labour Party, told Socialist Organiser: "He still comes out with the socialist line. But I think he should be expelled. We don't want his type in the Party".

The workers at the two plants have accepted Maxwell's dismissal notices just as little as they accept his 'socialist' credentials: while not doing any work, the workers have remained in the plants during working hours, thereby effectively occupying them.

Maxwell was quickly in deep water. The workforces had ignored the dismissal notices: production was at a standstill; and blacking of the distribution of his other publications had already been implemented in the London area. Not even his chums in the Kremlin could do anything to help him.

Hostile

Bill Keys, general secretary of SOGAT 82, could, though. Just as in a dispute between Maxwell and NUJ members in Oxford, Keys had blocked the blacking of Maxwell's publications, so too now Keys was clearly equally hostile to blacking.

While Maxwell disappeared off to the Soviet Union on a trade delegation, Keys ordered the blacking to be lifted, thus tamely falling into line with the ultimatum issued by Maxwell before his departure: "negotiations will resume only if the general secretary of SOGAT directs the London Central branch to lift blacking unconditionally and his directive is complied with".

With blacking called off, negotiations resumed, but with the unions now in a drastically

weakened position. Keys agreed to a return to work formula, involving withdrawal of the dismissal notices. Maxwell then returned from the Soviet Union and imposed a whole series of new conditions, relating to pay and manning levels, on a return to work.

This brought a return to square one. The Park Royal workers remained on strike; scab labour produced the plates for printing; the East Kilbride workers blacked the plates; and the dismissal notices still stand, with Maxwell threatening to shut both plants completely unless there is a return to work after Easter.

In reality, though, the dispute could have been won by now, were it not for Keys doing an encore of the role he played in the Oxford dispute and sabotaging the blacking of the distribution of Maxwell's publications. To bring Maxwell to his knees, this blacking must be immediately resumed.

And Labour Party members also need to take action against Maxwell. For a millionaire to be in the Labour Party is incongruous enough. To have as a member someone who alternates sacking workers for fighting for their rights with junketing with the Stalinist butchers in the Kremlin is out of the question.

Maxwell managed to remain in Oxford CLP despite his attacks on NUJ members in Oxford during the dispute at Pergamon Press. Hopefully he will not be able to hang on to his party card after this latest round of union-bashing.

FBU to strike on pay cut

THE government have announced that as from May, firefighters pension contributions are to rise from the present level of 6% to 10%. This will involve an average wage cut of around £6 per week in take-home pay.

The proposal for an increase in pension contributions was first raised by the government in the autumn of last year. The Fire Brigades Union (FBU), after being informed that no parallel increase in benefits was proposed, formally objected to the measure. The Home Office agreed at that time to a proposal from the union for the FBU to employ a firm of actuaries to carry out a survey of the pension scheme to see what level of contributions was appropriate.

Then, in the middle of March, the Home Office announced unilaterally, that the new level had been decided, and it was to be 10%, a massive 60% increase on the previous level of contributions. They stated that they were no longer interested in the FBU's actuaries' report, and that the new rate would be introduced from the beginning of May.

Taken together with the current increase in National Insurance Contributions, it virtually wipes out the 1982 wage increase, which itself barely kept pace with inflation.

Firefighters are aware that this is a straightforward attempt at a wage cut; the government are not even attempting to justify their move by saying they cannot afford to pay fire service pensioners. It is an attempt to shove down the living standards of those

Bed-pan deal will cost jobs

by Steve Good

WITH THE acceptance of decisions no.79 and 80 of the Railway Staff National Tribunal shortly after their publication on March 15, the three rail unions have paved the way for a massive attack by the British Rail Board (BRB) on railway jobs.

The effect of the 'award' will be to reduce the number of guards' jobs from the present 12,000 to maybe half that number within three to five years. With more extensive 'single manning' of trains, 6,000 drivers' assistants' jobs could also be in jeopardy.

RSNT 79 awards a £6 per shift payment for Driver Only Operation (DOO) — immediately on the Bedford/St Pancras service and freight trains. DOO is to be extended to all forms of traction within the next few years.

The saving to BR will be considerable. For a miserable few pounds, thousands of jobs have been sold.

The new agreement provides for no real protection of either guards' or footplate jobs. It remains for the NUR and ASLEF



Buckton: jobs sold for a pittance

to reach agreement between themselves on the 'Trainmen' concept, which will allow guards to enter into the footplate line of promotion. An internecine struggle is likely, each union trying to 'save' the jobs of its own member grades.

BR were anxious not to get into a wrangle on precise wording when ASLEF were prepared to accept a mere £6 per shift payment for DOO and to relax the manning agreement.

Apart from verbal assurances that BR will retain a job for all men displaced by these new agreements, neither ASLEF nor the NUR have obtained anything in writing that will protect jobs.

There is no question that the Serpell report, whichever of its options is chosen, represents an extensive attack on the industry. The verbal commitment of the union leaders to fight Serpell must be translated into a concrete programme of action.

But here and now tub-thumping speeches against the report are a smokescreen for the refusal of the executives of both ASLEF and NUR to defend jobs.

Single-manning is the most immediate threat to thousands of jobs on BR. If the jobs of guards and drivers' assistants are not defended with action, then the fight against Serpell will be immeasurably weakened.

Steel workers face mass victimisation

by George Peters

PRODUCTION workers in the GMBATU at Stanton Spun Plant of BSC will be meeting on Sunday April 10 to consider strike action in response to management's attempts to start mass victimisations at the works.

In the latest round of redundancies, management declared some three months ago that they would no longer be restricted to volunteers. In the list announced on March 30, only half of the 85 were volunteers. The others are alleged to have been chosen on grounds of, among other things, 'lack of discipline'.

They include a leading shop steward, Glyn Griffith, a former branch chair, Gordon West, and the chair of the recently formed dispute committee for fighting redundancies, Pete Radcliff.

Most of the other 40 named are clearly chosen because they have resisted speed up and manning reductions.

The local GMBATU branch decided at a meeting attended by 200 workers on March 20 that it would oppose any attempt at compulsory redundancies. An overtime ban was introduced, and all-out strike action would be the immediate response to any redundancy notices. A dispute committee was also established.

Overtime

The overtime ban was taken up enthusiastically by the workforce, much to the surprise of many union activists.

If successful, these victimisations would allow the management to hold the threat of the sack of any worker who either individually obstructs speed-up or organises through the union against it.

But though the workers have demonstrated a keen desire to fight, convenor Brian McGinley and leading shop stewards have shown the opposite.

To start with, they allowed the suspension from work of shop steward Glyn Griffith for distributing a leaflet from the dispute committee explaining the over-



Kings Cross victory

by Steve Good

AN ANTI-UNION drive against NUR and ASLEF members at Kings Cross depot has been broken by highly effective action involving both guards and drivers.

An agreement between management and traincrew union reps has placed both unions in an even stronger position than before the dispute.

As reported in a previous issue of SO, a strike by NUR and ASLEF members on February 11 marked the beginning of a campaign of industrial action to beat back management's offensive on discipline and against local union organisation. The dispute finally involved the General Management of the entire Eastern Region and full-time officials of both the unions concerned.

The management climbdown is explained by two major factors. Firstly, the offensive was

carried out in a way which provoked a very militant response from the rank and file. BR's new style managers are undoubtedly being encouraged to get tough by the BRB, but they lack the professional expertise that BL's hardliners have developed in coping with a strong section of the working class.

Secondly, the militancy of ASLEF and NUR members is by no means broken. The strength of the action demonstrated the capacity of workers to fight even under conditions of a sharp and quite conscious management attack.

All the indications are that the Area Manager responsible for the clampdown will be shipped out.

Management will undoubtedly be looking for a better candidate to solve their 'disciplinary' problems: but, judging by the recent industrial action, workers at Kings Cross are prepared for it.

time ban and strike call. Union activists were not even informed by the convenor.

Then, while this steward was suspended, they agreed, and engineered with management, from March 28 to 30, the calling off across the works of the overtime ban, merely on the promise that management would re-enter negotiations.

Management used this moment to notify the workforce of their hit list, on March 31.

The branch policy of immediate strike action was sabotaged by the shop stewards' seeming acceptance of the victimisations. A rolling strike from plant to

plant was hampered by management's refusal to allow plant meetings, and their threat to discipline stewards calling them.

After convenor McGinley's failure to defend Glyn Griffith, it is not surprising that plant walk-outs did not happen.

There is no doubt that had the overtime ban not been called off, a solid strike of the 800 Stanton Spun G&M workers would now be in progress. Instead, it is up to the branch meeting on the 10th — after the plant's Easter week holiday — to reaffirm the strike call, and for those firmly in favour of the strike to take control of the dispute.

ON THE MARCH



Details are now out of the People's March for Jobs 1983.

There will be seven legs — from Glasgow, starting April 23, Land's End (May 11), Liverpool (May 9), Newcastle on Tyne (April 30), Keighley (April 27), Hull (May 1), and Great Yarmouth (May 21) — all merging to enter London on June 4/5.

The 500 'core' marchers will be selected by the Regional TUCs, though the TUC organisers say they expect more to join sections of the march along the way.

Ron Todd, chair of the national organising committee, told a press conference on March 28 that he expected "at least a

quarter of a million" in London on June 5".

Get yourself sponsored as a marcher now, and write in to your regional TUC. Elect delegates to your town committee for the March, or form one if it doesn't exist.

Shipyard workers face the axe



1500 to go

AT A meeting between British Shipbuilders (BS) and the Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee (SNC) of the Confed on Thursday March 31, BS's already-announced 9,000 redundancies were broken down into areas.

It is proposed that 300 will make redundant at Scott Lithgow on the Clyde, and 1,400 at Cammell Lairds on the Mersey. We have not yet been informed where the others are.

The SNC was also told again that BS could not afford to pay a wage rise this year.

In Cammell Lairds, the redundancies are proposed to start with

500 going in September, followed by another 300 in December and the rest in May 1984.

The SNC is supposed to be drawing up proposals to be presented to the lay delegates' conference in April. There has to be a united resistance to these redundancies in British Shipbuilders and through the supply industries, which will also suffer if the redundancies go through.

The SNC's response to the closure of the Robb Caledon yard in Dundee last year was to call us out on strike every Monday. It had the effect of dissipating, rather than strengthening,

Every shop stewards' committee has seen the way the SNC acts. It is the stewards' committees, and mass meetings, that should propose the action to the delegate conference.

Mass meetings should be held in every yard. One thing has to be clear: if there is one enforced redundancy, every worker in BS must come out in support.

Cammell Lairds Confed stewards' committee has called on the shipbuilding combine committee to draw up plans for alternative socially-useful production in the yard.

Asbestos: go for zero!

OVER the last few months a number of important developments have given a major boost to the fight against asbestos.

In January the government published new safety levels for exposure, and new safety regulations come into force this month for the removal of asbestos. Spurred on by this, the Executive of UCATT has adopted a policy of zero exposure to all types of asbestos products.

However, the banning of new asbestos products is only a small, though very important, aspect of the problem. A bigger problem is the safe removal of asbestos in existing buildings.

In the London borough of Haringey, the Labour council, like many others, has become aware of the asbestos problem, and is moving towards a policy of the progressive removal of all asbestos. Major problems are posed by the sheer scope of the task, by lack of expertise, and by lack of money. Initial estimates

indicate that it will take ten years to remove all asbestos from the borough.

The stewards in the Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) have stopped work in areas where members come in contact with asbestos, and are demanding that the council adopt a working practice which has been tried and tested over the last three years in Lambeth and is regarded as the safest procedure in the country. For the DLO, it is quite straightforward: either the council adopt this, or we will refuse to work with any asbestos when we come across it in old buildings. Ranged against us are the council experts, the Health and Safety officers.

This local struggle in Haringey has wider implications. Between the government standards for asbestos removal and those in Lambeth, there can be a whole range of different practices, such as the one our safety officers are putting forward. If

we succeed in adopting Lambeth standards, it will be a marker for other local authority workers to fight for. Tenants and council workers will have the maximum possible protection.

It will apply not only to work carried out by the DLO, but also to the bulk of the removal, which will be done by contractors. Many such firms are cowboys, and any lapse in council regulations will give them loopholes to cut corners to save money.

Asbestos removal is going to become big business. If DLO workers stick to our union policy, and don't let the experts lead us by the nose, then we will begin the job from a firm footing, and not have a running battle on safety over the next ten years.

And if councils adopt a policy with the maximum involvement of tenants and workers, it will give that much more weight to the necessary demand on the government for money to carry out the work.

Newsline articles censured by NUJ

by Peter McIntyre

THE EDITOR and leading reporter of Newsline have been censured by the National Union of Journalists for a series of attacks they made on me following 'Operation Major', the police raid on the homeless in Oxford last year.

Alex Mitchell, who wrote the articles, and Paul Jennings, the Editor of the paper, have been found guilty of a breach of the NUJ Code of Conduct in that 'they presented conjecture as established fact and continued to do so after Mr. McIntyre had pointed out this error'.

The National Executive of the NUJ upheld a report from its Complaints Committee which found that a complaint I brought against the two Newsline journalists was 'well founded'.

The Newsline, paper of the Workers' Revolutionary Party, had accused me of being a copper's nark, a twister, and a liar. The article said I collaborated with the police in setting up the Oxford raid which arrested 286 homeless people and charged more than 170 of them.

In fact, as Newsline has known from the beginning, I had no advance knowledge that the police were to raid claimants, although I learned through my job they were investigating a number of landlords in Oxford.

Mitchell and Jennings simply relied for their attacks on two front pages of the Oxford Mail, the paper for which I work, and said that as a working class paper they were entitled to launch attacks in any form they thought best. They further accuse me of abusing the procedures of the union.

Both Newsline journalists have an opportunity to appeal, but the decision of the NUJ is a welcome vindication of my decision to use that avenue. It provided a forum to judge whether the allegations presented over a large number of Newsline articles could be substantiated. Patently they could not. Far from being an abuse of the NUJ system, it's a tribute to the NUJ Code of Conduct that members can seek redress through it in this manner.

Perhaps as an NUJ member

with some experience of the structure of the union I was in a better position to defend myself than many of the victims of Newsline character assassination jobs. But it is possible that Newsline may have to hesitate before setting out to blacken the names of other lefts from rival political tendencies.

Nor can Newsline claim that the NUJ have returned an adverse decision simply because the WRP claims to be revolutionary. Only last month the NUJ successfully and correctly defended Newsline against attempts by Scotland Yard to deny the paper press facilities.

At virtually the same time as the NUJ result was being announced, the trial of one of the agents for Oxford landlord Jeremiah Cronin was just concluding. The agent accused of conspiracy, James Carron, admitted taking money off claimants in Oxford, but claimed he was acting on behalf of the landlord.

Cronin, who has never been charged, said after the case that police never even put this allegation to him while he was held by them for two days. A number of lawyers have been left convinced by this and other evidence that a deal was struck between Thames Valley Police and some Oxford landlords either before or

just after they launched Operation Major. The Claimants Defence Campaign continues to call for enquiries into this and every other aspect of the raid.

The Newsline could have used its resources to research these questions. Instead, it simply cashed in on Operation Major by using the raid as an opportunity to attack me, and through me, Socialist Organiser.

Personally, one of the most nauseating aspects of the whole episode has been the Jekyll and Hyde face the WRP presents to the world. Meeting Mitchell at various hearings, I have become convinced he finds it possible to call someone a copper's nark, liar, twister, and a variety of other choice epithets, without considering it anything much out of the ordinary.

Dressed like a 1950s lounge lizard, and maintaining an air of urbane affability, he addresses the world as a scribbler trying to earn an honest penny.

Inwardly, meanwhile, the Healyite is busy spotting police agents, murderers of Trotsky, and other agents of imperialism, whose one aim is to deny the WRP its place in the sun. Thus is the Marxist dialectic contained within the same pinstripe frame. The NUJ Complaints Hearing has brought Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Jennings one small brush with reality.

For a labour movement inquiry!

READERS of Socialist Organiser will know that the WRP - specifically, Vanessa Redgrave - is suing us for saying some nasty but (we insist) true things about them. But they have not sued us for saying that they probably get money from the reactionary Islamic government of Libya.

It was said in the article which provoked the libel writs and repeated in a number of articles since. The circumstantial and political evidence for thinking this is overwhelming, and we have discussed it in Socialist Organiser.

The BBC 'Money Programme' said the same thing recently. The super-litigious WRP hasn't sued them either. They don't dare.

Instead they have mounted a political campaign against the BBC. Claiming to be part of the labour movement themselves, they use the courts against a labour movement paper like Socialist Organiser, and rely on a political campaign against the BBC!

Cashing in on the widespread hatred of the witch-hunting anti-left media, they are printing angry denunciations from supporters of the WRP, from those who take the WRP at face value, and from the odd ex-member now prominent in the mainstream labour movement.

The BBC programme did try to smear 'the left' in general by talking about the left press and the 'ethnic press' being financed by Libya, when in fact no case on this score was (or as far as I know can be) made against any organisation but the WRP.

The fact remain, however, that the BBC didn't invent the charge, and the WRP has no convincing answer to it. That they sue SO for - among other things - comparing them to a religious sect, and don't sue me for saying they are widely believed to be in the pay of a reactionary (though on its own ground somewhat reforming/paternalistic) bourgeois government, is itself an unmistakable

indicator of where the truth lies.

They don't dare sue me on this. But they are seizing the change to smear me by association with the BBC programme.

Though SO said it all many times before the BBC, they are spreading the lie that we 'repeat' the BBC 'slander' and 'jump on the bandwagon'. This is the Stalinist technique in politics that Trotsky called 'the amalgam' - disparate political tendencies, organisations and classes are falsely lumped together. Thus the Stalinists talked of the 'Trotsky-fascists'.

This is bluff and bluster, though. We didn't wait for the BBC to tell us about the WRP's probable links with Libya. The fact that the BBC now says it doesn't make it any less likely to be true.

A few years ago the WRP justified the shooting by the Iraqi regime of Iraqi Communist Party members in circumstances where there was reason to suspect that they then had golden links with Iraq too. If it is true now that the WRP is a pensioner of the Libyan government, then it does not deserve the support of the labour movement.

It would be a service to the labour movement to make the facts available. If the WRP has nothing to hide, let them agree to submit to the scrutiny of a bona fide labour movement inquiry.

Daily Mail

DAILY EXPRESS

FINANCIAL TIMES

The Daily Telegraph

THE Sun

Press

Gang

From Patrick Spilling - our man in the underground bunker.

PRESIDENT Reagan and his European allies have dismissed as 'mass hysteria' reports that millions of civilians have been killed or fatally injured in a series of nuclear incidents in Britain at the weekend.

The reports came after a swiftly moving sequence of events, which culminated in Defence Minister, Michael Heseltine, declaring that 'People who play into the hands of the Kremlin should be treated accordingly'.

Late last night, Mr. Heseltine issued a statement from 'somewhere well away from Berkshire' in which he said 'If any nuclear incidents have occurred, - and I'm not saying they have - they were designed to warn the vast majority of sensible people in this country what the Soviet response could be if we followed the naive and dangerous course advocated by CND. I am convinced that as a result of these actions membership of CND has dramatically declined.'

Earlier, CND had claimed that up to 100,000 people had taken part in anti-nuclear protests over the holiday weekend. But the organisation last night was unable to

provide a spokesperson to counter the government's claims - a point Mr. Heseltine was quick to seize on. 'I am not saying they are all Soviet agents,' he said. 'All I am saying is that Andropov and Ruddleock have three letters of their names in common.'

Mr. Heseltine said he was now willing to debate with the leaders of the Peace Movement, any time, any place - except Berkshire. 'I have a feeling in my bones they will turn this invitation down,' he said.

The government claimed a victory for its civil defence pamphlet 'Protect and Survive'. Reporters were picked up by military helicopter and flown to Berkshire, where, for reasons of national security, I am permitted to write only about one building.

We were led to a guest house where the windows had been whitewashed. A notice on the door said 'No Hobbies'. Inside, a rosy-cheeked woman, who told us she was making apple pie said they had noticed no inconvenience from any incidents that may or may not have occurred in the area. 'We followed the instructions in this pamphlet to the letter, and if there was any disturbance, it was drowned out by our video-recording of The Sound of Music,' she said.

In a completely unconnected announcement, the British government today said it had expelled 100,000 Soviet citizens for 'Activities Incompatible with their Status'. The government refused to name the people, three quarters of whom are understood to be women. They held British passports, until a late amendment to the Nationality Act was passed in an emergency session of Parliament last night, which made them honorary members of the Soviet Embassy.

The Soviet agents have been flown in the first instance to West Berlin, where they will be invited to 'escape' over the Wall. Foreign Secretary, Francis Pym, said:

'I am not saying all these Peace People are Soviet Agents. I'm just saying that people who choose the change their nationality to Russian at this short notice are highly dubious.'

Mrs. Thatcher last night awarded the newly minted Peace Medal to Mr. Heseltine for 'Successfully pacifying a small, but deeply misguided sector of the community.' She made the award whilst speaking at the inaugural meeting of a new women's Peace Group, SWALK - Sensible Women Advocate Liquidifying Kremlinities. 'These are the real Peace People,' said Mrs. That-

cher. 'I'm not saying that the Greenham Common Women are all in the pay of Moscow. I'm just saying that the difference between "troublemakers" and "rouble-makers" is pretty insignificant.'

Mr. Heseltine said he had no plans to visit his own constituency, which lies partly in Berkshire, 'for several generations.'

Meanwhile, police have issued a description of a woman they wish to interview in connection with an alleged Breach of the Peace offence.

The woman is understood to have made telephone calls to several national newspapers last night claiming she was 'the last person left alive in Berkshire' and that the county had been wiped out by a Cruise missile deployed from USAF Upper Heyford.

Police say these scare reports are Soviet-inspired attempts to undermine public confidence, and should be ignored. The woman is described as being between 4ft 6ins and 5ft 8ins tall, with white hair, rapidly balding, a blotchy complexion turning black, and several open sores. Police warn the public to stay well away from the woman. 'She is highly charged and very dangerous', a spokesman for Thames Valley Police said.

Help defend freedom of political comment in the labour movement press against the WRP's use of its money and of the capitalist legal system. A labour inquiry, not the courts!

Donations towards our defence costs to: Labour Movement Press Defence Fund Treasurer, Jonathan Hammond, c/o 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Socialist ORGANISER

With our March fund not even reaching half the target figure of £1,000, and a poor start to our April fund, things are looking desperate.
 Regular readers will know that Socialist Organiser has large debts, and that we need £1,000 on top of our paper sales to break even each month.
 We didn't have that money in March, and instead of reducing the debts, we've added to them. So it's even more important we reach the target of £1,000 for April.
 Each SO group should discuss fund-raising at its next meeting. In the meantime, each SO supporter should send a donation NOW to: The Treasurer, 214 Sicket Court, London N1 2SY.
 March total: £460.78.
 Thanks to: Mick Woods £5; Pete Firmin £1, John Macdonald £5; Two supporters in the NUJ in Farringdon, £10, Basingstoke supporter £1.
 April total: £116.00.
 Thanks to: Pete Firmin £100, Jeff Slee £15, Angela Fraser £1.

Reagan's phony "peace" offensive

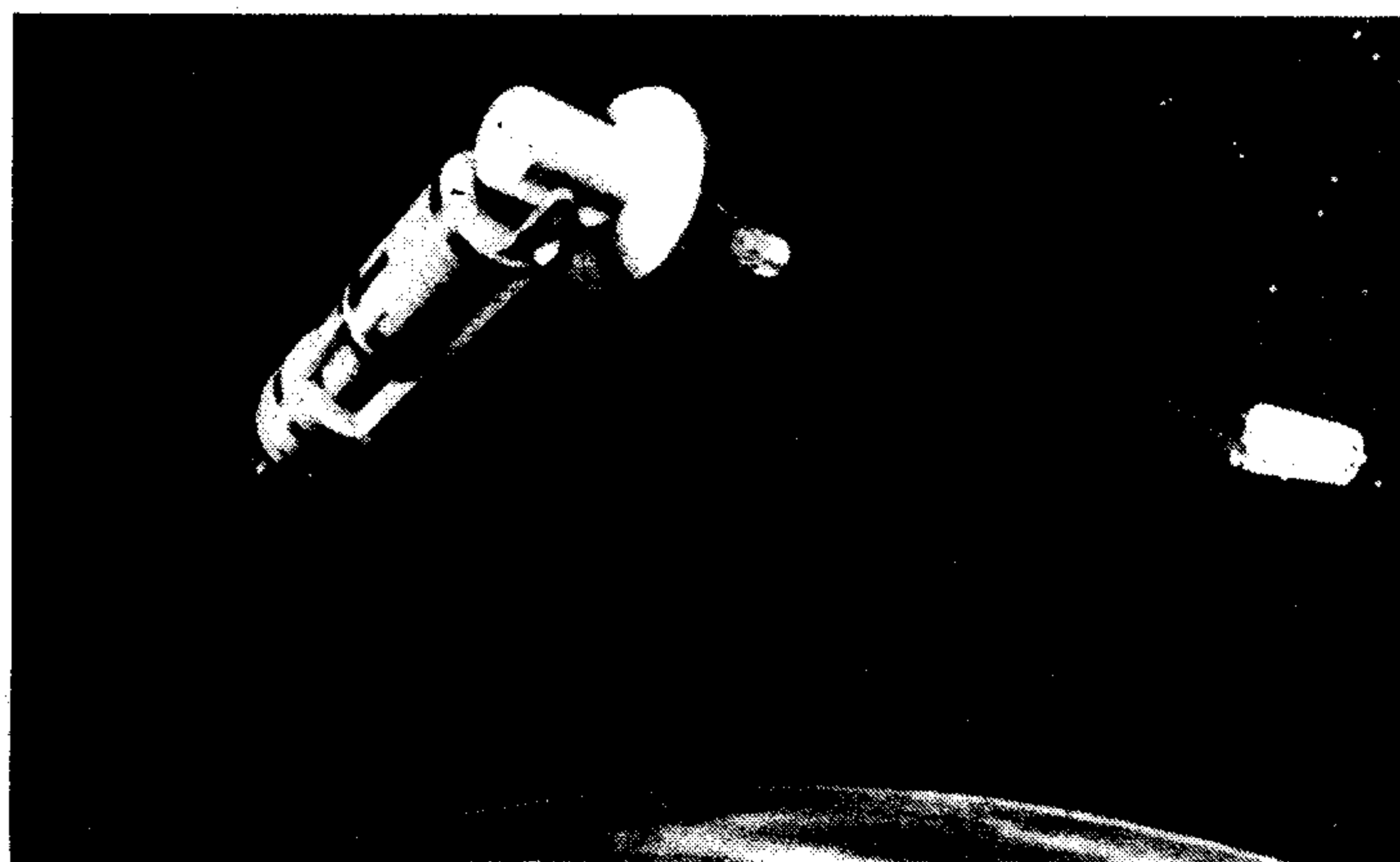
By Harry Sloan



HUNDREDS of thousands may have been marching in Britain and all over the world against the nuclear arms race during the holiday period — but Ronald Reagan is convinced that his latest 'arms reduction' proposals are a winner.

Seeming to concede a little to the anxieties of NATO governments hard-pressed by peace campaigners and to the alarm of millions of ordinary men and women, Reagan came up with a 'new' formula to replace his discredited so-called 'Zero Option'.

His proposals came in the midst of a new wave of Cold War hysteria, involving once again allegations of a 'Soviet build-up' in Cuba and the Caribbean, phony figures suggesting that the USSR has a nuclear super-



iority over the USA — and a spate of expulsions of Soviet diplomats in Britain and France.

First came the 'big stick' — the much-publicised 'Star Wars' scheme for space-based laser systems to protect the USA against nuclear missiles.

Then Reagan unveiled the 'carrot' — a plan for an interim

arrangement to 'balance' the number of warheads held by the USA and the USSR in Europe.

He claimed total backing of Western European governments for this scheme — which received the predictable rejection from the USSR, and thus enabled the USA to score a rare propaganda victory on the missiles issue.

Of course the reality of the American proposal is very different from a 'peace' plan. It is clearly a part of the overall drive towards unquestioned military superiority for the Pentagon and, if the laser gun scheme ever takes shape in reality, a plan which could leave the USA in a position to mount a 'first strike' on the Soviet Union.

Left out of Reagan's 'balance' in Europe are the other missiles and warheads under NATO control — those of Britain and France. Left out are the 240 nuclear capable US aircraft based on carriers in European waters; left out are the land-based US aircraft equipped with nuclear weapons in Europe; and the scheme, while posing as a plan for European arms reduction, insists on a limitation on Soviet missiles in the Asian as well as the European part of the USSR.

Meanwhile on a global scale the USA is embarked on a major build-up of nuclear weaponry. Reagan has ordered three times as many Pershing missiles as are planned for bases in Europe; others will be sited in the far west of the USA, targeted on the Soviet East. Cruise missiles will not only be housed at Greenham Common; others will be based in the apartheid state of South Africa.

The island of Diego Garcia in

the Indian Ocean is to be expanded as a nuclear base. And US bases in Japan and Korea hold nuclear weapons. At home, Reagan still hopes to build the giant MX missile system, each missile carrying 10 warheads.

We are opposed to nuclear weapons: but we are not neutral in the face of this military build-up by American imperialism. As socialists, we defend the Soviet Union, and the countries of Eastern Europe, Asia and Cuba where capitalism has been overthrown, against imperialist attack.

Our method of struggle is not nuclear war but class war — supporting and mobilising the struggles of workers and peasants against imperialism. Such a method is consistently opposed by the Stalinist rulers of the USSR and the deformed workers states — whose reactionary politics flow from their defence of their own power and privilege within the nationalised economies.

But so long as imperialism menaces the workers of the world with nuclear weapons, there is no serious option for the Soviet leadership but to defend itself against this threat. While we fight for the political overthrow of the Kremlin leaders and their hangers-on, this is a task for the working class, not

the imperialists — least of all by nuclear war.

Even now Reagan is attempting to undermine and reverse one major revolutionary gain of the recent period — and oust the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua.

A restoration of imperialist military superiority would encourage such intervention on a world scale and heighten the danger of a confrontation between imperialism and the Soviet Union.

All this means that the prime target of the campaign against nuclear weapons must be the imperialist governments of the NATO alliance — primarily those of Britain and the USA.

Action must be taken, politically, economically, and industrially to paralyse the war drive and build a movement capable of defeating the warmongering governments of the capitalist class.

In Britain this means building massive support for the one-day strike called by the Greenham Common women for May 24. And it means that the growing CND movement must recognise the political tasks ahead — and throw its weight in with those socialists fighting for a Labour victory in the coming election and for that Labour government to be compelled to carry out conference policies of unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Seamen face SAS tactics



Slater: whose war now?

DURING the South Atlantic war, the leadership of the National Union of Seamen (NUS) emphatically supported the government's efforts, and threw its weight against the union's port committee in Felixstowe, which had urged members not to go to war.

Now the 'national unity' between armed forces and seafarers has worn very thin indeed. Last Sunday some 55 Royal Navy men launched their own little 'invasion' — seizing a ship, the Keren, where the NUS crew was in dispute over management attempts to cut wages by £40 to £60 a week.

The specific issue on the Keren is that the crew, recruited when it was operated as a ferry, want to keep their old pay rates rather than going onto lower deep sea rates now the vessel is operated as a troopship (owned by the Ministry of Defence, but operated by a civilian company).

According to the Financial Times, "union leaders believe that the wider implications of the

issue are that the Government is using recession and industrial weakness to force through an 'SAS-style' approach to industrial relations, as a possible prelude to displacement of all NUS members [in Falklands operations] by regular naval crews".

It is a precedent for the use of troops in other industries, too.

As we go to press, the NUS leadership seems to be retreating from their initial call for a worldwide strike, and going instead for retaliatory occupations of other ships.

Meanwhile, an industrial tribunal ruling on Tuesday revealed another seamy side to the South Atlantic war. Employers operating a hospital ship during the war openly admitted that they had rejected two Somali men for the crew on racist grounds. The Morning Star reported that the bosses' representatives:

"told the tribunal that some crew members might have refused to sail for the Falklands if they were forced to share a cabin with

a member of a different race.

"A dispute caused by such a failure to segregate men of different races 'could have caused terrible delays, damaged the morale of the troops, and been a great publicity coup for the Argentines' he said."

And the employers won the tribunal.

Within the armed forces, too, and even after the grave, the sordid facts of capitalism keep pushing through. Two councillors in Aldershot have decided to boycott an army charity because they discovered that money from the £14 million South Atlantic Fund is being paid out unequally to officers' and to other ranks' widows.

One of the councillors said, "If people ask me what their money will be used for, I am not prepared to say that 75p will go to an officer's wife and 25p to a private's wife..." The Defence Ministry, however, blandly explained that officers' widows should get more because they have bigger expenses.

Cowley vote

Workers at BL's Cowley Assembly Plant voted on Wednesday 6th to stay out and meet again on Thursday 14th.

The mass meeting accepted a shop stewards' recommendation to reject BL's 'offer' of 'Audited Plant Status'. As a Leyland Action Committee bulletin point-

ed out, "Audited Plant Status is not a concession, it is a further imposition" — on top of the management's original attempt to impose three minutes' extra work at the beginning and end of each day.

The meeting also called for the strike to be made official.

Labour Against the Witch-hunt and the Labour Steering Committee against Witch-hunts are jointly appealing for signatures — of Constituency Labour Parties, trade union branches, and individuals — to an advertisement against expulsions.

The advertisement, due to appear in Tribune on May 13, reads: 'We are committed to a Labour victory at the next General Election on the basis of the policies agreed by Annual Conference. Any witch-hunt would endanger the party unity required to achieve such a victory. We therefore call on the right wing majority of the National Executive Committee to halt all disciplinary measures against Party members, groups of members, or Constituency Labour Parties. Should the NEC persist with disciplinary measures or disaffiliations, we give notice that we will not recognise any such action. We will not expel, nor recognise the expulsion of any Labour Party member or group of members arising from political disagreement with the NEC'.

Signatures should be sent in, with a payment of £3 per entry, to arrive by May 7 at 'Tribune Ad', c/o.11 Wilderton Road, London N16.