

A SOCIALIST ACTION

No. 55 27 April 1984 30p

ACT NOW

'WE ARE IN a fight to the finish' declared Arthur Scargill after the national delegate conference last Thursday, which committed the NUM to an all-out national strike. In his speech, Scargill made it clear that the onus was now on the rest of the labour movement to give full backing to the miners. Now is the time for action to replace the anti-Tory rhetoric from the Labour leaders. He called on the TUC and the Labour Party to give maximum support to the NUM in this fight.

This call from the NUM must get the fullest support. The movement of coal and other fuel to the power stations should be stopped; the trade union movement should prepare for solidarity action; and above all, all unions should instruct members not to cross picket lines 'wherever they may be'.

The delegate conference has given a determined lead, and the actions of the striking miners have shown how the Tories can be defeated.

The leaders of the labour movement — Kinnock and Murray — must be pushed off the fence. They must back the miners, back the flying pickets, and build solidarity action.

The determination shown by the delegate conference has already rattled McGregor.

The Tories are not as confident as they pretend — they know that it is touch and go and they could easily lose. McGregor's 'offer' of

spreading the closures out over a longer time scale is an attempt to split the miners and pile up the pressure against Kinnock and Murray to force the miners into conceding a compromise which would be the equivalent of a defeat. The duty of the whole labour movement is to push forward the solidarity action which can alone ensure that it is Thatcher and McGregor who have to capitulate.

- At every level of the movement we must fight now for money for the miners. The Tories hope to starve the miners back to work. This must not happen. Every union should call now for a £1 a week levy of all their members to help the miners.

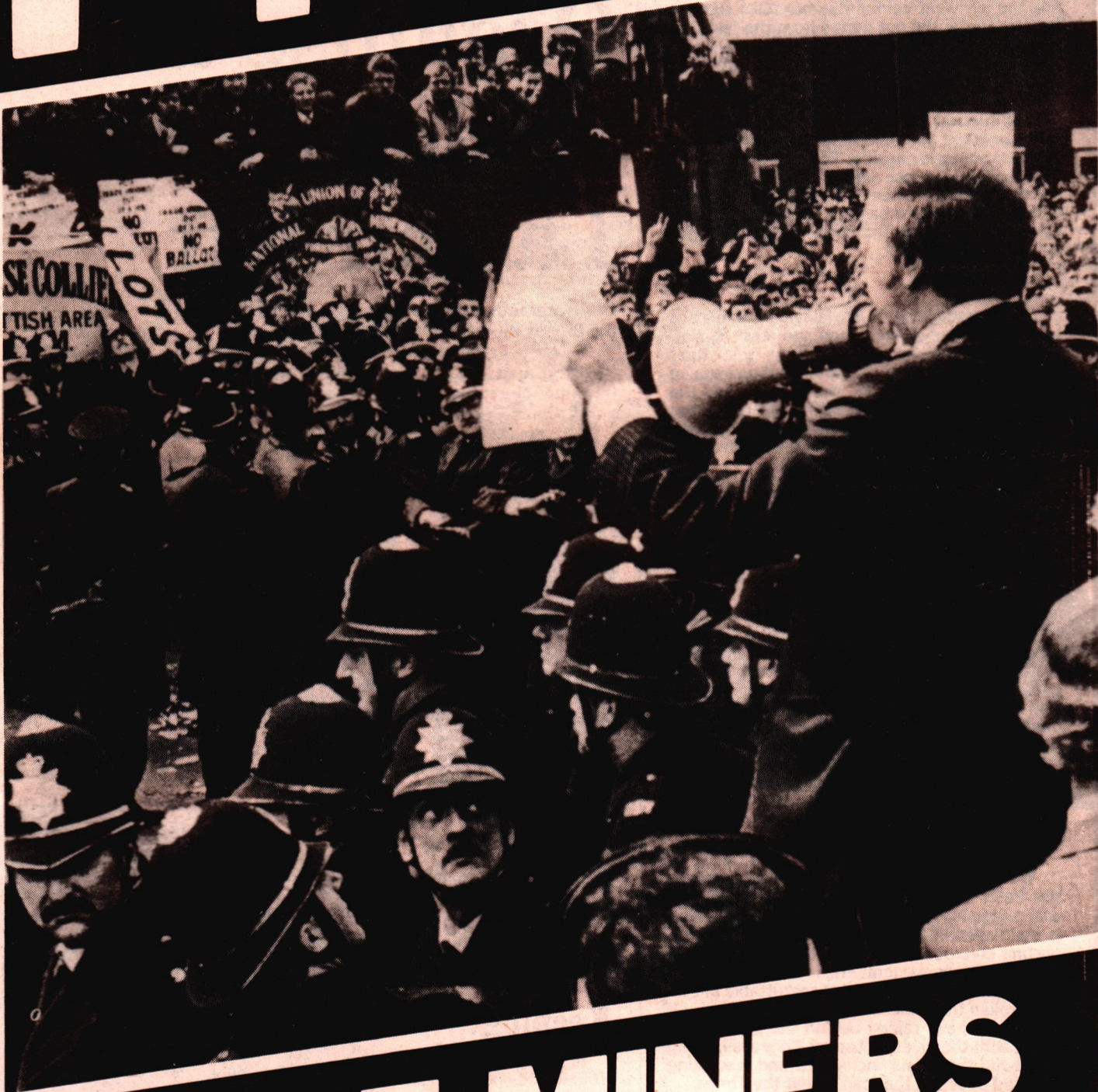
- No crossing of picket lines. This must be made an official instruction from all unions to their members.

- Stop all coal and other fuel to the power stations. The power stations must be shut.

- Build support for the picket lines. Stop the movement of coal and other supplies to the power stations, and strengthen the pickets against the police state actions of the Tories. Make the anti-union laws powerless.

- Prepare for solidarity action. The Tories are planning now to use police and scab drivers to move coal to the power stations. The answer is solidarity action from all sections of the movement.

- The TUC must be forced to name the day for national solidarity action now to prepare the movement for all-out action to defeat Tory police state repression.



TO BACK THE MINERS

Socialist ACTION

Kinnock breaks ranks

ONLY SIX SHORT months ago there was a contest for the Labour leadership. As far as the left candidates were concerned it turned out to be pretty one-sided. Neil Kinnock clocked up some 70 per cent of the vote, while Eric Heffer, who was supported by Socialist Action among others, only got three per cent.

We know that a lot of people on the left thought it was sectarian to back Heffer against Kinnock and there is no doubt that many constituencies who have a long-time record of supporting the left went behind Kinnock. Our support for Eric Heffer did not derive from the fact that we endorse his every position. We disagree with him strongly on matters like abortion and black sections in the party, and we will continue to disagree with him on these issues.

Our support was based on the fact that we were confident he would support the mass working class struggles against Thatcher. We did not believe that Kinnock would readily give such backing to those types of struggle. Six months later we can draw a balance sheet. On the two big revolts against Thatcherism, Kinnock has failed to pass the test.

On Thursday the NUM delegate conference called for all-out strike action and now the Nottinghamshire NUM leaders have told their members to come out. So Kinnock then joins up with the Tories, the SDP, the Liberals and the media in calling for a ballot. On Liverpool he has expressed his concern for that city, but then comes down on the wrong side by telling the council not to break the law.

Compare this with people like Eric Heffer, Tony Benn, Joan Maynard and Dennis Skinner. On both the miners' strike, and on the stand of the Labour councillors in Liverpool there is no doubt whatsoever where they stand. They have given their unstinted backing and support to these two struggles.

They have shown by their actions that the real dividing line in the Labour Party is between those who stand on the sidelines when the chips are down, and those who wholeheartedly support a real fightback against the Tories. We are glad to say this is the conclusion being drawn by thousands of people in the ranks. As Peter Heathfield, the general secretary of the NUM, told this paper last week his union has 'had a tremendous response from constituency parties and considerable support from the Campaign Group of MPs'.

We are fairly confident that among those parties Peter Heathfield refers to were many who cast a vote for Kinnock last year. Everyone who is building solidarity with the miners and supporting Liverpool is acting in the best interests of the labour movement. The fact that they have had to act without Kinnock is regrettable but he has broken the ranks of solidarity, not them. All those who have rallied behind the miners and stand with the Liverpool councillors are helping to rebuild the labour movement and are taking the kind of action that can defeat the Tories.

They are right and Kinnock is wrong.

Whenever Kinnock does give his support to these struggles, that's good. But we must never let his support or otherwise determine what we do. Our actions must always start from what serves and helps the interests of all working people.



A real working class united front has emerged in defence of the NUM — an unorganised model of a class struggle left wing

Organise the trade union and Labour left

In Britain today the divide between right and left in the labour movement is being drawn.

It isn't being decided by resolutions. Or by theories. And still less in the 'new realism' and 'old thinking' emerging from the right wing of the TUC and Labour Coordinating Committee.

The divide is symbolised by three names — the miners' strike, Liverpool and Greenham. What position and activity is taken on these issues decides who is on the left and who is on the right in the labour movement.

The biggest test of course, dwarfing all else today, is the miners' strike. But who is backing the NUM today and who is opposing its strike?

At first sight those supporting the miners are extremely mixed forces.

First and foremost there is a tremendous mobilisation at the base of the labour movement.

A whole series of NUR and ASLEF branches in London, Nottinghamshire and other areas have been engaged in bitter struggles to impose union policy by boycotting the movement of coal. In other areas — the North west of England and Scotland support in the transport unions has been total.

Keeping

In Nottinghamshire around 7-10,000 rank and file miners have been keeping up what is probably the most heroic of all the minority miners strikes against massive press and official union hostility. In Yorkshire, Scotland, Kent, and South Wales it is the area leaderships, supported by the National Executive, who are leading the strikes.

In the Labour Party many CLPs have found a quite new level of activity in supporting the strike. Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, Bob Clay, Eric Heffer and the Campaign group as a whole have given solid backing to the strike. Neil Kinnock has been doing his famous ostrich act.

In the trade union leadership, Jimmy Knapp, Ray Buckton and Jim Slater have had a line in

support of the strike — no matter what their views on other things. The STUC backed the strike. In contrast Terry Duffy has attacked it. Bill Sirs has done a scab act — making it clear his chief aim in life is to have a seat in the House of Lords. And the NUM has been keeping Len Murray away from doing his job on the strike.

Divisions

These divisions do not correspond to any of the general and simple theories of the British left. It is not a simple 'leadership versus rank and file' divisions. The trade unions are not separated from the Labour Party.

What has happened is that an entire wing of the labour movement, both trade unions and the Labour Party, has put itself into supporting the miners strike. A real working class united front in defence of the NUM has emerged.

It is a real model in an unorganised way of what Marxists call a *class struggle left wing* in the labour movement. A left wing not defined above all by resolutions or ideas but by its attitude to the real events taking place in the class struggle.

The forces defending the miners also contain a tremendous series of political views.

Tony Benn and Arthur Scargill are leaders of the Labour left. Mick McGahey is a leader of the Communist Party. A number of rank and file militants and local leaders are from the 'far left'.

Political differences and arguments are not overcome by the common action. But what unites these forces in action today is simply that they are waging the most important class struggle which is taking place.

History shows such a left wing developed in the 1920s in the Minority Movement and the National Left Wing Movement in the Labour Party. But its nature is still misunderstood — which is why the type of united front which is developing around the miners strike is now misunderstood.

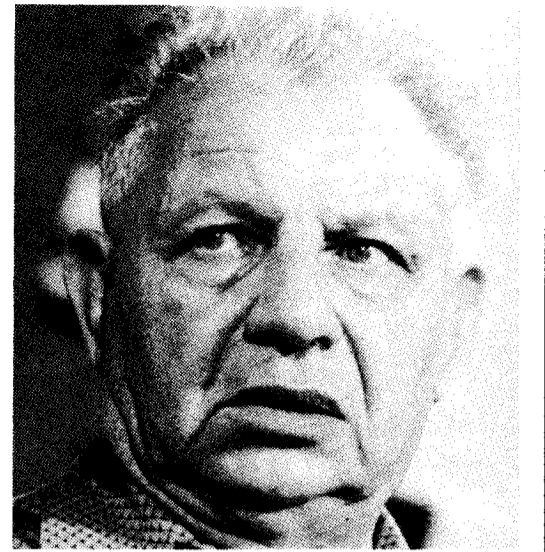
It is to this type of development which the small currents which are organised in the trade unions and the Labour Party have to look. The Broad Left Organising Committee, *Labour Briefing*, *Tribune*, the Campaign group, *Militant*, the oppositions or Broad Lefts in particular unions are all united front bodies or particular currents.

Powerful

Some are powerful. Some very weak. But none can, or should, attempt to organise the entire left through itself. This will unfortunately make any current simply a front organisation. The recent BLOC conference for example organised large forces but gave them no orientation which allowed a real role to be played in the class struggle.

It is the type of united front action around the miners that shows the real way forward for the trade union and labour left. A whole series of organisations, at every level of the movement, acting together around the key issue of the class struggle today. A movement based totally on and within the organised labour movement.

What is happening in defence of the miners shows the way forward for the left of the labour movement right now.



Pierre Frank — a tribute

By Bob Pennington

IT IS a sad duty to inform our readers of the death of the French socialist and Marxist, Pierre Frank. His death leaves the ranks of international socialism just that bit poorer, and is one more rupture of the few remaining links with those socialists who rallied to the banner of the Russian revolution in its heroic early days.

Pierre was born in 1905, the year that the Russian workers were staging their dress rehearsal for 1917. In 1925 he joined the French Communist Party and worked as an activist in both the Party and in its trade union wing, the CGT. By 1927 Stalin was tightening his grip on the 3rd International and 'socialism in one country' was becoming the official gospel of the Communist Parties. It was a doctrine Pierre soon rejected and by 1927 he had read the programme and become a supporter of the Left Opposition led by Trotsky.

In 1929 he started *La Verité*, which was the first Trotskyist journal in France and was a founding member in 1930 of the Trotskyist Ligue Communiste. In 1932 he joined Trotsky in exile in Prinkipo, and for the next year worked as his secretary. Throughout the dark days of the rise of fascism and the defeats of the German and Spanish working class, he remained committed to the cause of socialism and workers' democracy.

In 1939, to avoid a warrant for his arrest, issued by the very people in the French government who in two years time were to capitulate to Hitler, he fled to Britain. But in 1940 his opposition to the imperialist war earned him the hostility of the British government and they shipped him to the Isle of Man where he was interned for nearly five years.

At the same time his companion, Marguerite, who had stayed in France, was sent by the Nazis to Ravensbruck concentration camp. At the end of the war and their release, both were involved in the political struggle again, building the French Trotskyist movement, the Parti Communiste Internationaliste.

In the late 1940s, Pierre was elected to the leadership of the Fourth International, and remained a member of its Secretariat until his death. He was one of the main organisers of the Trotskyists work in the Communist student movement, which led to the creation of the Jeunesses Communistes Revolutionnaires which played a vital role in the 'May events' of 1968, and a decisive breakthrough for the whole of the European Trotskyist movement.

In the 1950s Pierre was back behind bars again — this time for his support for the Algerian FLN engaged in its liberation war against French imperialism. After his release he carried on his work of solidarity with the Algerian peoples and later was active in the Vietnam solidarity movement. In May 1968 he welcomed and gave active support to the youth who took to the streets and barricades against the regime of Charles De Gaulle. Despite advancing years and, in later life, failing health, he remained a political activist and thinker.

In his last years he wrote a book on *The History of the Communist International*. Right up until his death his belief in international socialism remained as firm as it did in his youth. It is therefore very appropriate that when he is cremated on Friday 27 April the ceremony will take place in the Cemetery of the Père Lachaise. Like the martyrs of the Commune who made their last stand in that very cemetery, Pierre Frank never made his peace with capitalism and its exploiters.

And surely no socialist can leave a better legacy than that.

● Messages for the cremation service can be sent to: LCR c/o Rouge, Rue Richard Lenoir, 93100 Montreux, France.

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Scotland leads the way



Scottish TUC calls day of action

BUSLOADS OF Scottish miners lobbied the Scottish TUC conference in Aberdeen last week. Mick McGahey, president of the NUM in Scotland, received a standing ovation from the 600 delegates before speaking to an emergency resolution. 'The crisis in the mines is a crisis of the nation. This struggle is not just the miners' struggle'.

Jim Henry, AUEW, said 'If we put this resolution into practise we'll knock the door off the hinges of Thatcher's policies over the past five years.'

By Ann Shirley, STUC delegate from Aberdeen Trades Council

John Walker, ASLEF, called for a May Day stoppage. 'We pledge to bring workers out in every workplace' he said. Ken Campbell of the FBU reckoned: 'It's about time the leaders of our movement woke up and realised this is a class war we're involved in, designed to destroy the trade union movement.'

The resolution was passed unanimously and the miners left amid cheers and chants of 'here we go, here we go, here we go'.

Although calls were made for a May Day ac-

tion, a meeting between the Scots executive of the NUM and the STUC general council takes place this Wednesday to set the date. A date must be set immediately so the Scottish labour movement can start building maximum support now.

Options

In his first speech to the STUC Neil Kinnock backed the miners' action, saying they had no alternative. He attacked the Tories and MacGregor for wanting to 'starve the miners into submission. With up to 20 per cent unemployment in the Scottish coalfield miners know that they will never work again if they don't fight now.'

The fight against the Employment Act was discussed, and criticism made of the British TUC general council failing to



Mick McGahey received a standing ovation

support the NGA at Warrington. Tony Young of NUPE pointed out that the Warrington defeat gave a green light to the ban on trade unions at GCHQ.

The NUR delegate said the only way to fight anti-trade union legislation is through struggle. 'Why

are TGWU members not in prison for supporting the miners? Because thousands of workers are in struggle and proving to the Tories they cannot implement the laws.'

A motion was overwhelmingly passed which states that 'keeping within the law is a recipe for further retreat by the

THE DECISION BY the Scottish Trades Union Congress to call a day of action in support of the miners is an important step in building the all-union support needed to win the dispute and decisively defeat the Tory government. The day should be named immediately so that Scottish trade unionists can begin now to build the solidarity which will ensure a complete stoppage across the whole of Scotland on that day. That day should be 1 May — May Day, the traditional celebration of working class solidarity throughout the world. This initiative will inspire English and Welsh trade unionists to strengthen their solidarity action and demand that the whole TUC takes similar action.

By Ron Brown MP

THE SCOTTISH TUC has the reputation of being more left wing than its British counterpart. Whatever the reason for this, it was good to see that delegates backed the miners in their struggle against MacGregor and the Tories. After all, the NUM needs the help of other unions in a dispute which is political, despite the assertions to the contrary of some right wing leaders.

But expressing support for the miners is not enough. I am glad the STUC has agreed to call a day of action. This is a big step forward, but much more must be done to link all sections of the working class in this vital struggle.

It is not premature to talk of action committees, to bring together all sections of the working class, across the unions, employ-

ed and unemployed. The ruling class have planned this confrontation to smash the unions, particularly the mine workers. We should plan likewise to defend our unions.

The problem is a lack of leadership. Many want Thatcher to intervene and act as an umpire. As Ken Cameron of the Fire Brigades Union rightly pointed out, doing deals

with the Tory hangman — or should it be hangwoman? — is not on.

It would only change the shape of the coffin at the end of the day. Reason, moderation, compromise — call it what you will — have all gone out the ruling class window a long time ago, in the search for a solution to the crisis of British capitalism.

The STUC deliberations have raised the level of political debate. Scottish trade unionists have again made it clear that unity in struggle is the key to defeating the Tories. I am sure Welsh and English workers will say the same in the course of this dispute.



movement'. A further motion committing the STUC to free collective bargaining and rejecting wage restraint discussions with any government was passed, as well as one calling for the introduction of a statutory minimum wage of two-thirds average earnings.

Congress

Congress reaffirmed its support for a Scottish Assembly and for CND. And a Trade Union Committee for Aid to Central America was launched at a fringe meeting. Congress sent a telegram to the US embassy condemning their role in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

The Scottish TUC conference is of national importance. It sets the tone over the next year. Let's see the British TUC following their example by calling for strike action in support of the miners.

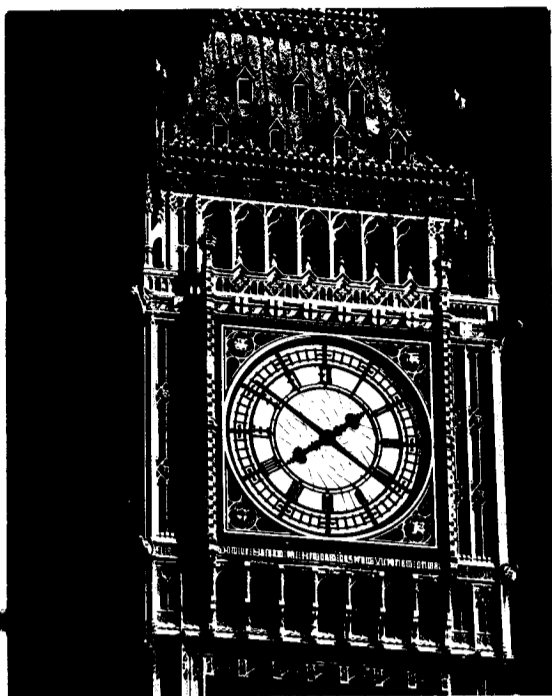
Delegates left with a sense of realism and optimism. Now work has to continue in the workplaces building support for the miners and especially making levies to ensure the miners' day of action is a big success.

SUPPORT THE MINERS! LEVY YOUR MEMBERS!

JUST AS the Scottish TUC is leading the way on all-out action in support of the miners, so Scottish trade unionists are quick to put their money where their mouth is when it comes to material aid for the strike. Scottish trade union branches are among the first to impose a regular, weekly levy of their memberships to make sure the miners don't go without funds vital to the success of the dispute.

Socialist Action has already reported that Scott Lithgow shipbuilding workers are collecting over £1000 each week for the miners, and that Kestral Marine in Dundee have raised more than £9000 this way. The levy is catching on in Scotland, as it is throughout Britain. We will continue coverage of how much is levied by whom in the weeks to come. Make sure you send us details of levies in your area.

The view from Westminster



Labour: come clean on the miners

By Jeremy Corbyn

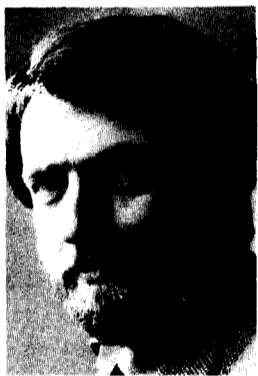
We are in the midst of a struggle for the labour movement's abilities to fight for itself. Ever since 1979, Thatcher and her government have been trying to divide and destroy organised labour, and then to destroy the welfare state that we built.

The list of oppressive and divisive measures are endless — trade union laws, health service cuts, local government controls, bans on trade union membership at GCHQ, imprisonment of Sarah Tisdall and eviction at Greenham.

And at the back of all this, sapping the morale and strength of the working class, is an economic policy that deliberately creates a dole queue of (officially) over three million, as a warning to the rest.

It is obvious that since she came to power, Thatcher has wanted to divide trade unions and then destroy them. In the case of the coal industry, it is the most clear. That the NUM is powerful, we would all agree, that coal is crucial to the economy we would also agree. It is precisely because of this that the government is promoting nuclear energy at the expense of coal and now using the brutal tactics that they are against the striking miners.

The issue is really very clear; whole areas are fighting for their future. In the area of Kent, two of the three pits would close under McGregor's plan and in most areas there would be equal or greater devastation. It surely is the job of the Labour Party to support the NUM at this time, and to recognise that this dispute can only be won



by solidarity action at all levels.

So far there has been insufficient support at national level for the action and consequently, the media, who are almost uniformly hostile, have been able to dictate the terms of the dispute.

In parliament, the 'dispute' has been a series of public school chants from the Tories and a refusal of the Labour frontbench to face up to the issue. When a debate was finally held it was on the terms of the policing methods in the dispute and the effects on civil liberties. Vital as this aspect is, the party has still not come clean on the need for outright support for the industry.

The Campaign Group has consistently supported the miners and visited the picket lines; we have also levied members to purchase food and kitchen supplies for the pickets and have made a number of statements of support.

Locally the collections and the political support have been valuable. The delegation to Kent two weeks ago was well received and ought to be reciprocated, so that the mining communities would be welcomed in London.

Notts strikers organise

Following the lead given last Thursday by the national delegate conference, Notts area council met on Friday and issued a call to miners not to cross picket lines. This, together with the development of rank and file organisation for the strike in Notts, is a clear indication of growing support for this dispute in the Notts area. Despite media applause for the pits still working, between 10-15,000 miners are already out in Nottinghamshire. The determination of the Notts strikers strengthens the action nationally.

'We are not the jewel in Maggie's crown'

THE MEDIA have virtually embargoed reporting progress of the miners' strike in Nottinghamshire. Despite this, support is growing. JIM DOWEN, treasurer of the recently-established rank and file strike committee in Notts, told Socialist Action what's happening there.

Between 7-10,000 miners are on strike in Nottinghamshire. Some pits such as Blidworth, Bolsover, Ollerton and Creswell have alternated between no production and very limited production for the past five weeks. At other pits, substantial numbers have not been crossing the picket lines.

On Monday 16 April, at a meeting in Ollerton, attended by over 400 delegates from 17 collieries in north and south Nottinghamshire, a Notts miners rank and file strike committee was elected. A number of Notts miners were turned away by the police and could not get through to the meeting.

Stopped

Those from Bolsover were stopped six times by police, and were only allowed to pass because they had a letter from their branch secretary. In spite of this, they were warned that they would be arrested if they were found on picket lines.

It was a very emotional meeting for those of us who love our union. One young lad from Thorsby was in tears when he told us of the problems of his family, in particular his wife who is seven months pregnant.

We then put a picket on Thorsby. We were being mistreated by the police and word of this got underground. The workers walked out and drove past us honking their horns.

We tried to get this in

the paper and on the radio and TV. But, as is the rule with Notts strikers, nothing was reported. Notts miners are presented as the jewel in Maggie's crown — and nothing must be allowed to contradict that image.

As you can imagine funds are of the utmost importance to enable us to carry on the struggle. Many of us have been out of work for five weeks, and it is getting difficult to keep our cars on the road which are needed for picketing.

Until, and even after, the Notts area NUM decides to get off its knees, we desperately need help.

MONEY IS NEEDED for the 10,000 striking Notts miners to continue their stand.

These miners' action is particularly important to the morale and success of the strike. Special collections should be taken in all labour movement meetings to support this important aspect of the strike the media refuses to publicise.

Cheques should be made payable to 'Notts Miners Forum', and sent to: the secretary, Paul Whetton, 10 Nicholas Place, Tuxford, Newark, Notts.



Henry Richardson with striking miners

'Stand united, don't cross the picket lines'

AT THE BEGINNING of last week, Nottinghamshire miners' leaders, Ray Chadburn and Henry Richardson issued an appeal to their members not to cross picket lines. Following last Thursday's national executive decision to deepen the action of the rolling-strike, Notts council met and called on their members not to cross picket lines. Chadburn and Richardson said:

The strike over pit closures is not just a fight on behalf of Scotland, Yorkshire, the North East, South Wales, Kent or any other areas. It is our fight too. For as sure as night follows day, once the Coal Board have wrecked those areas they will start the wholesale butchery of our own coalfield. And when that day dawns who will be around to fight for us?

Already 2000 jobs are being cut in South Notts this year alone, and a further reduction of half a million tonnes capacity is planned. The knock-on effect in the workshops, administration, garages etc will be devastating. We appeal to our members to get off their knees and fight before it's too late. Not just for today's jobs, but for our future generations.

We are all miners and we are in the same battle. Stand united and don't cross picket lines and we shall win the human right to a decent and secure future.

A PIECE of the ACTION



As hardship mounts ...

Solidarity is growing

SOUTH WALES

AS IT becomes clearer that this could be a very long strike, committees are being set up across the coalfield to organise hardship relief and soup kitchens.

In an act of material solidarity Mid Glamorgan and Gwent County Councils are keeping schools open six days a week during the holidays to provide free meals for strikers' children.

Ferndale councillor Len Jones an NUM official at Maerdy colliery said:

'The strike is beginning to bite and many families are coming to me unable to meet mortgage and hire purchase repayments because their savings are gone. It's beginning to get to the stage where some miners and their families are feeling real hardship'.

Over a thousand supporters marched through Port Talbot last Friday, with NUR and AUEW delegations prominent.

At the rally Ray Powell MP for Ogmore pledged the support of the local Labour Party. But NUM leader Terry Thomas asked Ray Powell and Shadow Welsh Minister,

Ted Rowlands, to take back a message to the Parliamentary Labour Party asking the shadow cabinet and backbench MPs to bring their support behind the strike.

Derek Gregory of NUPE attacked some members of the Wales TUC who have their heads in the sand over the strike. NUPE is proposing an emergency resolution to the Wales TUC conference calling for them to organise solidarity industrial action with the NUM.

Anger at police activities continues. Last week five miners from Cwm colliery were arrested for distributing 'obscene, seditious or inciting literature' on a Nottingham housing estate. The leaflet in question consists of a quote about scabs from Jack London's book *Revolution*.

Wales TUC demonstration
Support the miners

Saturday 28 April
10am City Hall Cardiff
March to Sophia Gardens
for rally
Speakers include Arthur Scargill

SWANSEA

ON THURSDAY 20 April, David Steadman, a coal face miner at Abernant colliery, and his wife Rhona, were evicted from their home in Pontardawe by the Abbey National Building Society.

Partly due to the overtime ban they had been in financial difficulty for some time, and the Abbey National took out a possession order earlier in the year. This was suspended as long as they paid £100 a month.

With the strike David Steadman now gets only £7 a week. As he was unable to pay the £100 this month the Abbey National brought in the County

Sheriff and evicted them despite knowing he was on strike, and knowing that he gets no strike pay.

By Sylvia Gilbert,
Swansea CLP

The money that the Steadmans get from the DHSS means that they cannot afford bed and breakfast, and they are now living at the Swansea Association for the Single Homeless night shelter, with £3.60 to live on each week.

Val Feld from Welsh Housing Aid who has been acting for the Steadmans, said that this was the first of a number of cases of eviction of miners that has come up.

HACKNEY

Hackney supports Kent miners

By Chris Morris

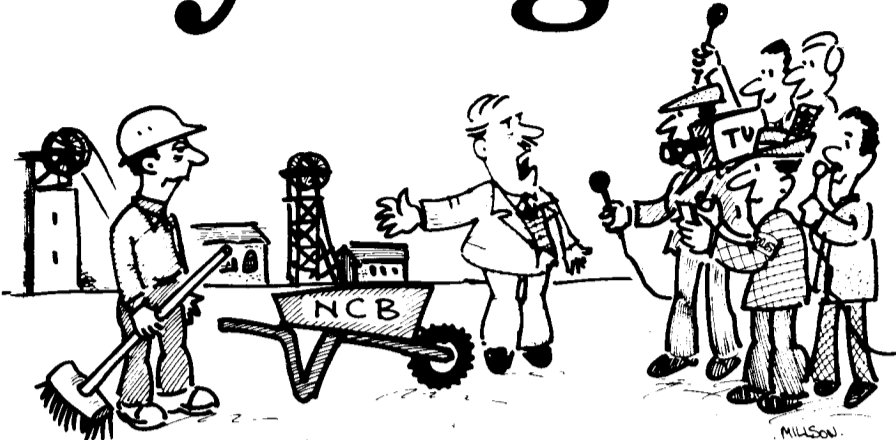
ON SUNDAY 29 April, Hackney Labour Parties will be entertaining Kent miners and their families in an afternoon of solidarity. The council has laid on coaches to bring the families to a midday lunch with Hackney council, followed by a public film show organised by Hackney South Labour Party and Hackney North Young Socialists.

Two films will be shown: *Harlan County*, about the Kentucky miners strike in the States, followed by film of the 1972-74 British miners' disputes.

Party speakers, as well as a representative from the Waterlow Print Works oc-

cupation in East London.

• The films begin at 2pm at the Rio Cinema, Dalston, on Sunday 29 April. Tickets at £2/£4 unwaged are available in advance from Chris Morris on 01-254 0833 or from the Rio Cinema on 01-249 2722.



LONDON

Picketing build up

MINERS from Kent picketed the NCB headquarters this week. COSA, the white collar section of the NUM, voted a month ago not to cross official Kent picket lines, but inside the NCB a smaller group met and voted to scab.

Other workers are not being asked out as they deal with miners' pensions and so on. It is up to the miners to allow such exemptions on the picket lines.

The pickets at the NCB successfully turned back the food and drink, but

most importantly the van carrying the HQ wages refused to cross!

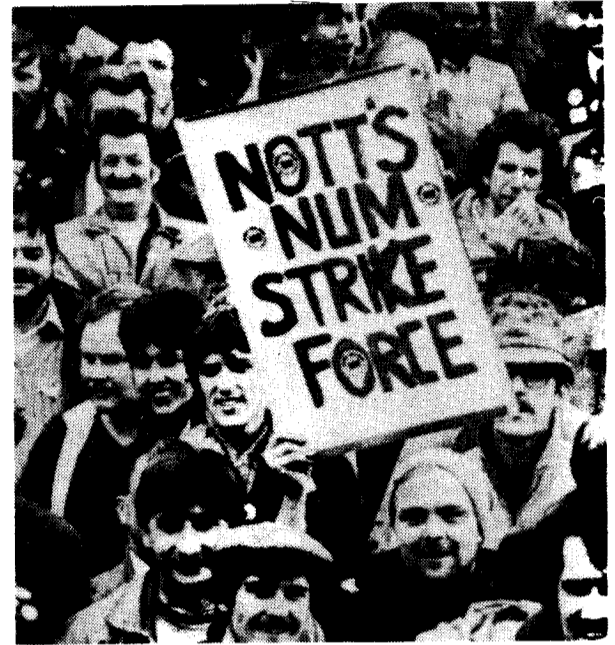
The pickets at Charrington's coal depot has been going for as long as the strike. The Kent miners have settled in for a long dispute by building their own house!

Small numbers of lorries are turned back, but the chief problem is non-union trucks. Last week the pickets got a boost when the Mayor of Brent and some local councillors came down to visit.

Kent miners have also been picketing the West

Drayton coal depot in Middlesex. They have also been plagued by non-union drivers and non-union workers inside the depot which is owned by a subsidiary of the NCB.

The pickets at West Drayton are demanding to speak to the men who work inside and for official delivery dockets so they can check whether coal is going to essential services such as hospitals. The pickets have said that if these demands aren't met satisfactorily they will be calling on labour movement support for a mass picket.



HUDDERSFIELD

HUDDERSFIELD miners solidarity committee,

comprising local Labour Party and trade union delegates, held a public meeting last Thursday at which over 300 people heard Jack Taylor of the Yorkshire NUM declare that the fight would go on until it was successful. He linked the miners' struggle to that of the Greenham

Common women.

A special collection raised over £500, and the meeting heard nurses from Thornton View Hospital, Bradford, currently in occupation against closure, pledge their full support for the miners. The next solidarity event organised in Huddersfield will be a rally on Saturday 28 April.

BIRMINGHAM

A MINERS' support committee, established by Birmingham Trades Council, held its first meeting on Thursday 19 April. Made up of delegates from trade union and Labour Party bodies, it aims to promote and coordinate solidarity activity throughout Birmingham.

The committee will produce a regular campaign bulletin for distribution in the local labour movement. It also decided

to make every effort to build this year's May Day march, on Monday 7 May, as a mass demonstration of support for the miners.

Future meetings of the committee will take place every Wednesday at 7.30pm at the Trade Union Resource Centre, 7 Frederick St, Hockley. Delegates are welcome. May Day march assemblies in Milk St, at the side of Digbeth Civic Hall, at 11.30am

SHEFFIELD

MORE THAN 40 people from Heeley Labour Party, Sheffield, spent last Friday in an evening of solidarity with South Yorkshire miners and their families, from Thurcroft pit in the Rother Valley.

This is one of two pits Heeley party has twinned for the duration of the dispute. Over 150 people were there, and party

members took £400 worth of solidarity in the form of food for strikers families.

By Paul Davidson

All in all the evening was a great success, in the words of one striker: 'This is a great boost to our morale, the most important thing that's happened in the village since the strike began.'



LANCASHIRE

Bold pickets and the peace camp

STRIKING miners from Bold colliery near Warrington are among the most enthusiastic supporters of the newly set-up peace camp outside the nearby Burtonwood US airbase.

Pickets visit the camp several times a day bringing supplies of coal for the fire and taking peace-campers for baths at the pithead showers. Many peace campers now regularly join the miners' pickets where CND badges are in high demand.

On the picket lines and round the campfire there's

much discussion about the issues facing the miners and the peace movement, and the links between them. Over a cup of tea one of the pickets told me:

By Linda Balfe

'I don't see this strike as being just about coal and miners' jobs. It's about what this government is doing to working people. Bringing these American missiles in here is all part of that and I won't have finished what I set out to do until we bring

down this government.

'You've got to work together. We support you at the peace camp and you support us on the pickets. That's the way we're going to do it'.

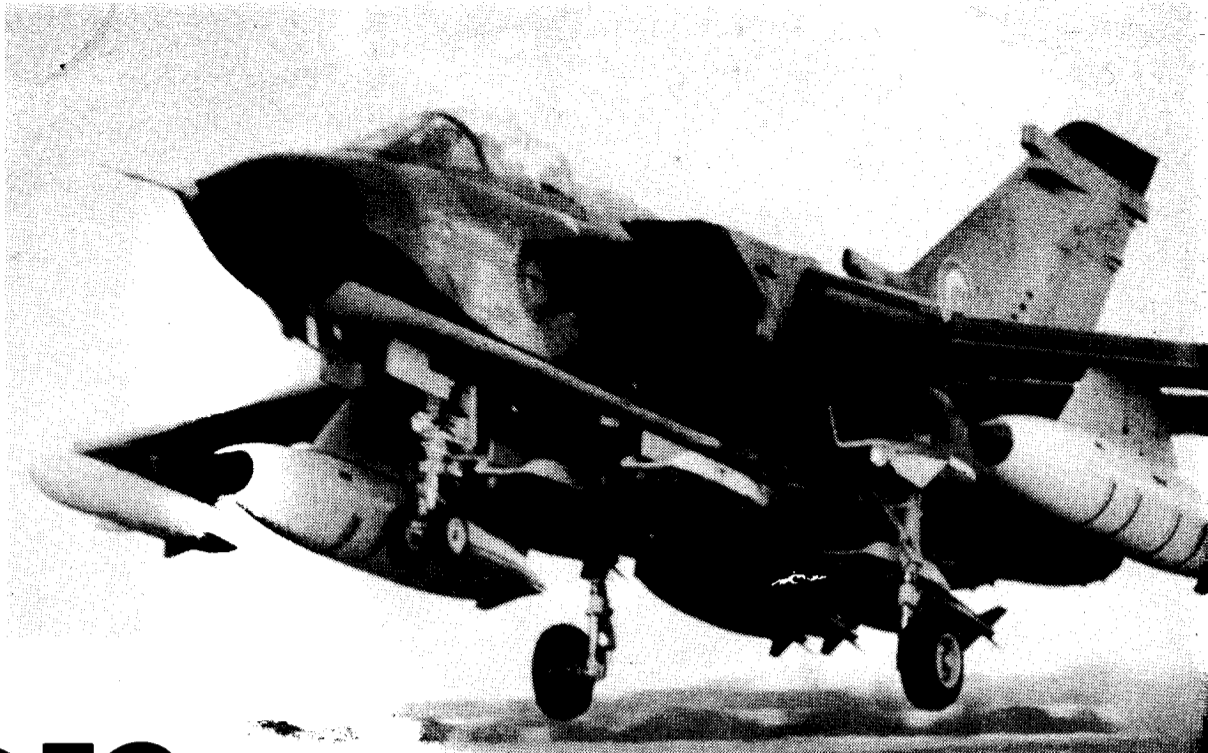
The peace camp was set up on 8 April. The camp can be easily reached from Warrington and Burtonwood service station. Visitors, donations and letters of support to: *Burtonwood Peace Camp, New Roundabout, Burtonwood Rd, Nr Warrington, Cheshire.*

LATEST ISSUE of *National Labour Briefing* is now out with articles on the miners' strike by Jack Collins Kent NUM, Kay Sutcliffe Kent miners' wives organiser, Alan Thornett, and activists in unions involved in support actions. Articles on Greenham, Liverpool and Sarah Tisdall. Geoff Sheridan reports back from the New Socialist tour of Nicaragua.

LABOUR BRIEFING

National Briefing supplement will be on sale with your local Briefing or can be ordered direct from: Graham Bash, 23 Leghorn Rd, London NW10. 20p each plus postage.

The left and European defence



The French, Italian, British and German Tornado aircraft. An example of European military cooperation

'allies'. Dollars were run off the US printing presses resulting in the great international inflation of the late 60s and early 70s. The US paid in dollars which rapidly lost their value — a form of well organised but legal robbery.

De Gaulle led the counter-attack by exchanging French dollar reserves for gold from US stocks.

When France persuaded the rest of Western Europe to follow the same path the US suffered a rapid decline in its gold reserves.

Alongside this De Gaulle began to distance France from the US on the military field. In 1966 France formally withdrew from NATO — although the real links were maintained — and began to build up its own nuclear weapons, the *force de frappe*.

European cooperation in conventional armaments production increased from this time. The Jaguar and Tornado fighters were the most spectacular expression of this — built by consortiums of British, French, West German and Italian firms. Behind British and French finance for Concorde lay the importance of advanced aviation technology research for other military uses.

These projects had to be West European in character as no individual European state has the resources for such high technological development on its own.

Bluntly

For West European defence cooperation to extend beyond this it has to deal with two inter-related questions — that of nuclear weapons, and that of Germany. Or, put bluntly, should West Germany have nuclear weapons.

West Germany is the third ranking economic power in the capitalist world, and has the strongest conventional armed forces of any capitalist state bar the US. But it has no nuclear weapons due to both the ultimatum of the Soviet Union, and the post-war policy of France and Britain. West Germany has the technical capacity to produce the bomb whenever it wants, but the big question of West European defence is whether it *should*.

Britain and France historically opposed the West German bomb because that country was the traditional capitalist enemy of both those countries.

But this policy has to be changed to develop a serious West European military defence. West Germany is the strongest West European capitalist state and its access to every form of modern weaponry is crucial to future European defence independent of the US.

As yet such an option is not yet practically discussed in Europe. Only a few hardy souls are prepared to openly grasp that nettle today, but it will be returned to.

Today Western Europe is putting its energies into building up its own conventional armaments industries. This not only increases its independence

from the US, but helps cut the drain of resources to the American arms industry. Europe is not trying to break with the US, but to increase its weight *within* NATO. Nor are the West European states really capable of building the type of military forces that could be a complete alternative to the link with the US.

But this policy, of increasing West European military room for manoeuvre, is why some of the most determined defenders of the EEC — for example David Owen — are attacking Thatcher from the right on military policy. Owen has accused Thatcher of not increasing British military spending rapidly enough, and abandoning the pledge to increase defence spending by 3 per cent in real terms per year.

Pledge

As part of his reorientation of the Labour Party toward 'Eurosocialism' Neil Kinnock has come out in favour of dropping Labour's pledge to cut arms spending.

These moves have vital consequences for the European left. The left of the labour movement across Europe has developed a deep struggle against *United States* imperialism, particularly against cruise and Pershing, but also against US policy in Central America.

THE LAST few months have seen a sudden rush of moves to step up West European military cooperation. The West European Union, a previously obscure organisation, has become the vehicle for the first West European military discussions to exclude the United States since the Second World War.

The West European powers are attempting to significantly increase their room for manoeuvre on defence questions by creating stronger military

forces to bolster NATO, increase West European weight within it, and to prepare, in the worst case, for future greater clashes of interest with the US.

Across Europe movements exist opposing American rearmament, but the response to the military policy of the European imperialist powers has been far weaker.

JOHN ROSS looks at the new wave of enthusiasm for West European military cooperation and the issues it poses for the left in Europe.

ATTEMPTS TO form a West European defence pact and mutual defence force go back to the 1950s. In 1954 all the original members of the EEC drew up a treaty for a European Defence Community, but the project floundered.

Britain was at the height of its 'special relationship' with the US and refused to join. And a combination of the Gaullists and the Communist Party in France blocked the treaty being ratified. The West European Union, the body now being revived for the present discussions, was the only outcome.

Such discussion declined from the late 50s, until, in the late '60s, increased economic tensions with the US began to pose the issue anew.

The US used its control of the international money system through the dollar to shift a large part of the cost of the Vietnam war onto its European



German Leopard tanks



De Gaulle launching the first French nuclear

Nicaragua: buildup to invasion

LAST FRIDAY Sandinista troops recaptured the town of San Juan del Norte which had for several days been occupied by 'contra' guerrillas based in Costa Rica. The town was of little military significance — its 1500 population was evacuated several weeks ago — but if it had been occupied for any length of time it could have been used as the base for a contra 'provisional government'. For 18 months the contras have been trying to capture and hold a Nicaraguan town, precisely for this purpose.

The capture of San Juan del Norte was part of a long buildup of contra activity (see map). This offensive is designed to pin down and exhaust the Sandinistas and to damage the economy, as a holding operation until the US elections this coming November. Once the elections are out of the way, the scene is set for the full-scale US invasion, which is the only way that the Sandinistas can be brought down.

By Paul Lawson

The attack on San Juan del Norte was accompanied by a simultaneous foray across Nicaragua's northern border by hundreds of contra rebels of the FDN (Nicaraguan Democratic Front). The fact that operations are being coordinated in the north and south of the country demonstrates that the CIA now has firm control over the activities of the Costa Rica-based ARDE movement, led by Eden Pastora.

While the FDN has always been a simple tool of the CIA, Pastora has attempted to posture as being both anti-Sandinista and anti-American. Last autumn the CIA engineered a coup in his movement which removed him as leader. Now Pastora is back, but all pretence at political independence has gone.

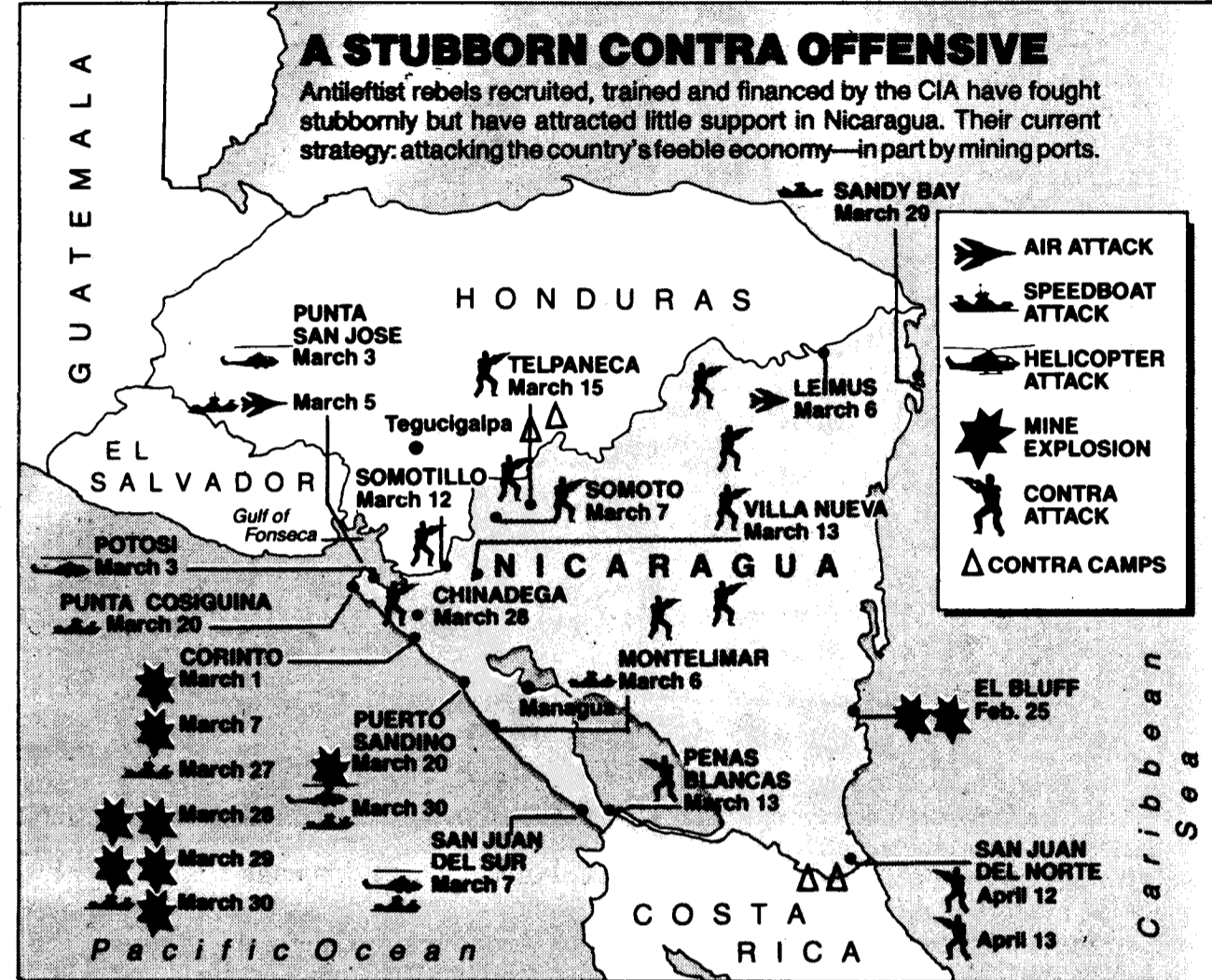
The current offensive of the contras comes hard on the heels of the mining of the Nicaraguan ports, organised by the CIA and condemned by the US Senate. For weeks the US administration pretended that the mining was solely the work of the contras, using their US-supplied speed boats. The news that the CIA was actually providing the mines from a boat just outside Nicaraguan territorial waters, was followed by the revelation that last October's contra attack on the oil storage facilities at Corinto was also supervised by the CIA's control boat outside Nicaraguan waters.

Strategy

In the present phase of the war, there is little danger of the Sandinista revolution being brought down. Last week press reports talked of life going on as normal in Managua, and of Soviet and West German boats being unloaded at Corinto. The Sandinistas claim that now most of the mines have been cleared from its waters. The major battles in the Central American war have yet to be fought.

The determination of the Reagan regime to overthrow the Sandinistas stems essentially from the failure of US policy in El Salvador. In February 1983 the US Ambassador to the United Nations, Jean Kirkpatrick, was sent on a 'fact finding' mission to El Salvador. Her report to the President was a sombre one — that the Salvadorean regime was in dire military danger from the left wing rebels of the FMLN. The response of the regime was to elaborate a new, co-ordinated Central American strategy, of which the centre-piece was the decision to bring down the Sandinistas as a means of striking a devastating blow to the Central American revolution as a whole. The first large scale incursion into Nicaragua from Honduras followed just weeks later.

Other elements of the new strategy were a huge build-up in arms supplies to El Salvador, the beginning of a US troop build-up in Honduras and the 'pacification' project in the Salvadorean province of San Vicente. This scheme, based on the experience of Vietnam, attempted to concentrate military firepower to drive the guer-



rillas out of the province; to win the 'hearts and minds' of the population through economic aid and public works projects; and to construct fortified villages and a local militia, again on the Vietnamese model.

The San Vicente project was a total flop. Since the autumn of 1983, the FMLN have returned to San Vicente in force and launched two highly successful military offensives. The disasters in El Salvador have increased US determination to destabilise the FSLN government in Nicaragua.

There is now growing direct US involvement in the Central American

war. US pilots have been used for overflying Nicaragua. There is considerable evidence that contra attacks deep inside the country have been carried out by troops parachuted in from Honduras. The pilots could well be American. In El Salvador it has recently been admitted that US pilots flying training missions over guerrilla-held territory 'might from time to time have been drawn into combat'. In addition reconnaissance flights over El Salvador have been organised from Honduras.

By far the most significant US military action however is the continuous build-up of troops in Honduras. Currently at least 5000 US

troops are participating in their third major exercise in two years — *Grenadero 1*. Whether the United States will first decide to use troops in El Salvador or to invade Nicaragua is far from certain. What is certain is that the escalating military build-up in the region is not just for show or for unexpected contingency.

The decision to overthrow the Sandinistas has been taken. The US does not intend to 'lose' Central America. The invasion of Grenada shows that this US government is determined to use whatever force is necessary. Only the timing is in doubt.

Labour must act

AT THE LAST Labour conference Denis Healey, summing up on the Central America motion moved by David Blunkett, made a blistering attack on US policy over Nicaragua. He said that Labour should be 'proud to stand with our Nicaraguan comrades'. Neil Kinnock has associated himself with such sentiments, through writing the introduction to the book *Kissinger's Kingdom* by Donald Anderson and Stuart Holland, and by having his very public argument on Central America with US Secretary of State George Schultz during his visit to Washington.

These statements are a very welcome step forward — it is difficult to imagine them being uttered by a Harold Wilson or a James Callaghan. But they are of limited value so long as they remain at the level of worthy sentiment.

As we detail on these pages, US policy towards Nicaragua is not just a matter of brutal and unjust policies. There is a very definite plan to overthrow the Nicaraguan government. It is

unfolding slowly, like a slow-motion movie, before our eyes.

The point is not to make outraged statements after the event, as occurred over Grenada, but to provide the maximum solidarity here and now to prevent a repetition of the Grenada invasion.

How can Labour maximise its impact on this terrain? First, a delegation of Labour MPs, including Denis Healey and Neil Kinnock must go to Nicaragua.

Next November the first elections since the Sandinistas came to power are being held. The US and reactionary opponents of the Sandinistas inside Nicaragua are challenging the legitimacy of these elections. The Labour leadership should go to Nicaragua and investigate the fairness of the arrangements of the elections themselves.

The Labour Party should run a campaign explaining the elections and the support of the Nicaraguan people

for the Sandinista government. The Parliamentary Labour Party should invite leaders of the FSLN to visit Britain on a tour organised by the Labour Party.

The FSLN is formally part of the Socialist International, as is the Labour Party. So far the European Socialist parties have expressed their opposition to US policy in Central America, but made few concrete gestures of solidarity. The Labour Party can use its strategic position in the Socialist International to step up the pressure for material aid for the Sandinista revolution. In countries where the socialists are in power — for example Spain and France — the governments are in an excellent position to make their aid meaningful — sending aid in the form of arms, technology and if necessary food.

Meaningful solidarity is not the solidarity of tears when a counter-revolution has been victorious, but solidarity with a revolution in progress



near submarine

IF YOU ever fancy an after-hours drink in Manhattan, give Wall Street a miss. It is usually deserted by midnight.

But on 1 April, the 3am silence was pierced by the shrill tones of bankers, desperate to whistle down cabs before anyone could make an unauthorised withdrawal from their wallets.

They had been working late, rescheduling some Argentine loans — one more episode in the International Debt Saga.

Economic commentators agonise over possible defaults and the *Financial Times* — whose subs diligently replace any reference to 'slump' with the innocuous sounding 'recession' — chucks the word crisis around like confetti when it comes to international debt. Why the panic?

JOHN HARRISON and BOB MORGAN explain.

The South owes the North a hell of a lot of money which it may never repay. And bad debts brighten people. About 800 billion dollars are owed. Enough money to buy everything produced on our planet in the last three weeks or so. The main debtors are in Southern and Central America. Brazil owes around \$90 billion and Mexico, Venezuela and Argentina are in mega-hock.

Last year, the world's largest one hundred banks had a combined capital backing of some \$160 billion. If they were forced to write off only half of Latin American debt, they could go bust.

The story begins a decade ago when OPEC quadrupled the price of Arab oil producers gained an extra \$54 billion a year — enough to buy one and a half per cent of world capitalist output in those days. They got much of it to Western banks.

Since banks make money by lending at interest, they went after new customers. Third world governments seemed perfect. They were keen to borrow to pay for their massively inflated fuel bills. They also looked for the prices of primary commodities — the bulk of Southern exports — had doubled over the previous couple of years. Anyway, when did a sovereign state last go bust?

Banking whizz kids signed up for evening classes in Spanish and bad Mexican restaurants became chic. Third world governments increased their borrowing from Western banks five-fold between 1973 and 1981. Then the bankers began to have second thoughts. Things were turning sour.

Generals, politicians and cocaine dealers had stolen a fair amount of the money, diverting billions of dollars into Swiss bank accounts. Nobody knows just how many billions. The tabloid nasties lap up these swindles, as does the *Economist*. But the corruption was a secondary problem.

Far more important was the fact that all major governments (except Labour in the UK) went for harsh monetary deflation in the wake of the price rise. Interest rates soared, making it harder for borrowers to meet repayments.

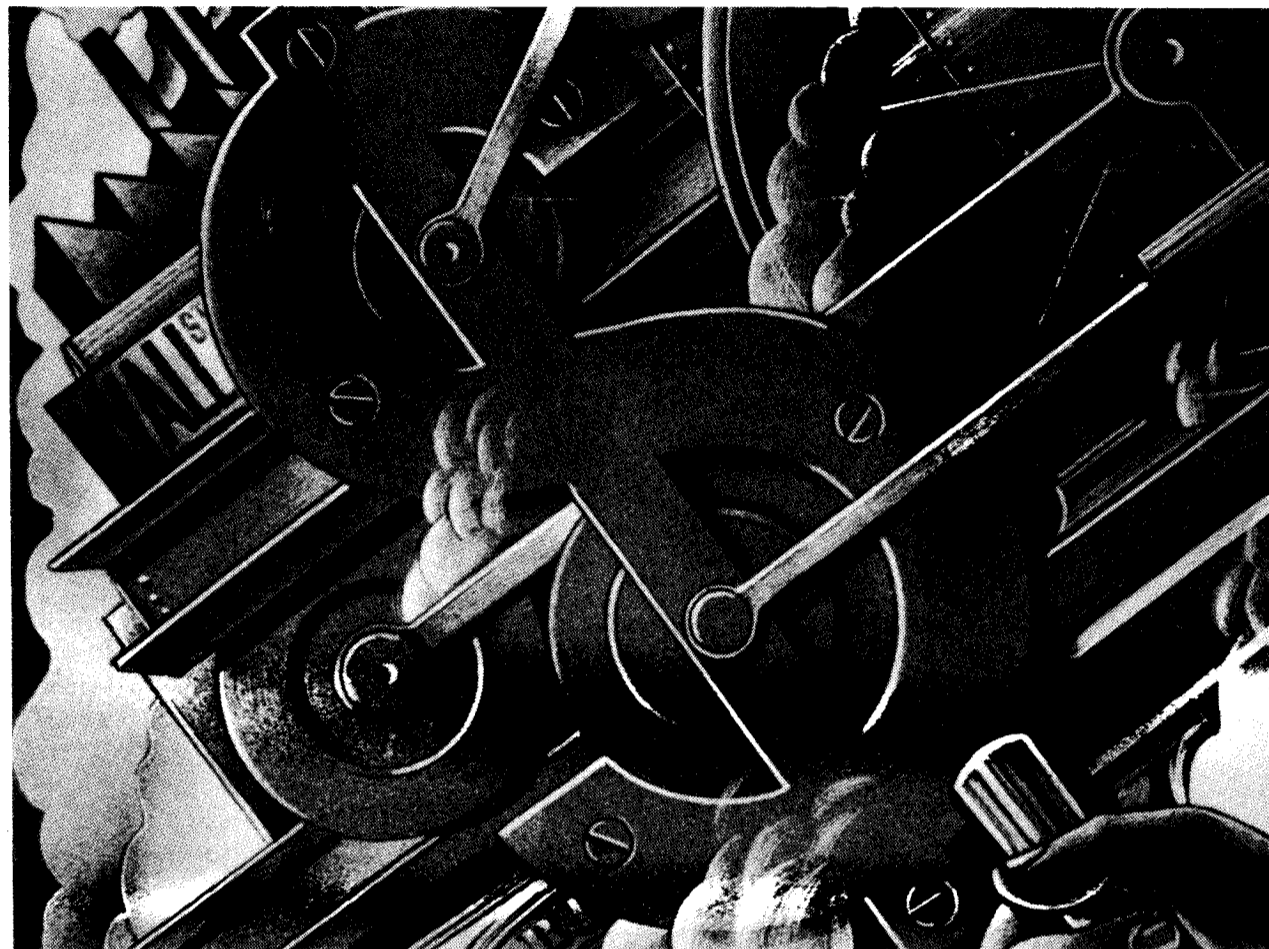
High interest rates also discouraged speculators, who had been buying a year's coffee crop ('commodities futures') with money borrowed dirt cheap. Once the bubble burst, commodity prices halved. The South now needed to sell twice as many coffee beans to make each dollar due for repayment.

At the same time, the savage deflation hit the advanced economies like an exocet. Industrial production fell by a tenth in just nine months — a crash unprecedented since the thirties. Firms saw markets shrink and excess capacity pile up.

This collapse rebounded on the Third World. Even well judged investments now failed to show a return because the surplus was virtually unobtainable. A large number of plants in Brazil will still become a loss maker. Detroit decided to practically give away and first world govern-

International debt

The crisis that won't go away



ments erect barriers to repel imports from the South.

The end of the seventies brought further turns of the screw. In 1978-79 OPEC redoubled oil prices, again raising fuel import costs. After his 1980 presidential victory, Reagan clamped down on monetary policy further, sending dollar interest rates through the roof. The crunch had come.

Soaring interest rates jacked up the South's debt servicing costs by \$20-25 billion between 1979 and 1981. The proportion of Latin America's export earnings diverted into Western bank vaults rose from 18 per cent in 1974 to 25 per cent in 1981. In that year the South was due to repay \$129 billion, almost twice its total foreign exchange reserves. Mexico, with reserves of \$4 billion, was supposed to cough up \$26 billion.

The banks, terrified of major defaults, opted to reschedule much

debt. Rescheduling amounts to extending the period of a loan, thereby reducing the debtor's annual repayments. It can be highly profitable for the banks, who charge fees for the exercise.

In 1981-2, ten countries rescheduled debts for the first time, more than in the fifteen years of 1956-70. Some \$250 billion were involved. The crisis hit the headlines in the summer of 1982. Brazil announced that it could no longer service (i.e. pay the interest on and the proportion due for repayment of) its debts. Mexico and Argentina took the same line. Debt has seldom been out of the news since.

Much of the left seems to think that the international banking system is so fragile that it could collapse any day, triggering a crash that would make 1929 seem like a minor cyclical downturn.

That scenario is just about con-

ceivable, though in our view highly unlikely (for reasons that will become clear). But the crisis is real enough. Dubious debts cause problems because someone stands to lose money and nobody wants to. The front-line candidate for the loss is the person who owns the money, and they know it. That is why credit companies employ collection agencies and loan sharks break arms.

The banks could handle writing off some debts by digging into their capital and reserve. Most expect to have to do so soon, and have been taking precautions. Citicorp has increased its capital by 19 per cent since 1982. Bank reserves are up by about 20 per cent worldwide. When banks absorb defaults in this way, their shareholders are the losers.

If the banks were forced to absorb bad debt in excess of their capital and reserves then depositors would also lose out, since the banks would be unable to repay borrowing in full.

Back-of-envelope calculations suggest that if all Latin American debt was written off in this way, the average depositor would lose about 5 per cent of their money.

But would governments really allow the world's major banks to go bust? Surely not. They would bail them out, just as the Bank of England rescued the so-called fringe banks in the property crisis of the early seventies.

Such a bail-out would cost the Northern working class. Governments could finance it only by raising taxes or by creating additional money. The first option would cut pay packets directly. The second would reduce their value by pushing up inflation.

Since neither banks nor governments want to foot the bill, they are trying to make the South pay up. Their main weapon is the world's heaviest debt collection agency — the International Monetary Fund. The Fund arranges rescheduling, but only on certain terms. These invariably include severe deflation to cut imports, thereby freeing foreign exchange for interest payments. It has been spectacularly successful to date.

Imports into Latin America fell from \$98.4 billion to \$56.3 billion in 1983. The net inflow of loans and investment fell from \$38 billion to \$4.5 billion. Payments of interest and profits abroad rose from \$29.1 billion to \$34 billion.

Periphery

The masses of the region have paid an appalling price for this turnaround. Output per person fell by 5.6 per cent last year.

'The Mexican economic and social landscape meanwhile looks as though a hurricane had swept through it. Hundreds of firms are going bankrupt every month... Unemployment is reckoned to have jumped from 8 per cent to around 13 per cent in the space of 3 months, in an economy in which underemployment anyway probably stands at around 45 per cent. This in a country where a motor mechanic earning \$12 a month is considered employed'. (*Economist*, 3 April 1983).

The IMF may not break peoples' arms or measure them up for concrete legwarmers. But its policies are literally deadly: deflating an underdeveloped economy kills people.

It is too early to say whether Northern capital will succeed in making the Southern masses foot the bill. But its attempts have already imparted a further deflationary twist to the world economy and exacerbated political tensions in Latin America. And they will continue to do so.

That last point is really what this piece is about. The international debt crisis is best seen as an example of how problems in the metropolitan heartlands of capitalism can have their most politically explosive effects in the periphery.

● John Harrison will be writing regular articles for Socialist Action.

MI5 — organiser of frame-ups and murders

MICHAEL BETTANEY landed a job with MI5 because his credentials seemed perfect. He was a very conventional, patriotic Oxford graduate who had been brought up a Roman Catholic.

To his recruiters he seemed to be the type of educated snide they were looking for. More often than not, like is good at recognising like.

But somehow it all went wrong. After three years in Ireland where he got a front-line seat and could watch Britain's thugs run riot in an orgy of lies, frameup and murder he got a little sour with his masters. But MI5 is not the sort of institution where you can query what the boss is doing.

As one of its former members says: 'The atmosphere of the ser-

vice is right wing and reactionary... Its exclusiveness and secrecy gives it a shared ethos that abhors all criticisms of authority and tradition. Its hidden and secret power invests its members with an arrogance that makes them act like a judge and jury over other peoples' lives. It is in fact a sinister conspiracy against the rights of millions of ordinary people and is accountable to no one — not even the prime minister, never mind parliament.

By Bob Pennington

It spies on trade unions, CND, political organisation and 'subversives' like the animal liberation league. It bugs trade union headquarters and peoples' homes. When solicitors defend civil liberties victims, in Watergate style, it



organises break-ins of their offices. Frame-up and murder are part of its repertoire. And as the Bettaney case showed, it manipulates the courts and the juries.

His solicitors could not challenge the views expressed by the prosecution that the

documents he was supposed to have collected were of top rate importance. This was alleged to be a breach of national security. They couldn't call their own witnesses to dispute any claim by the crown. The hearing was in camera. The jurors were vetted by MI5 and the Special Branch, which guaranteed a guilty verdict. This monstrous outfit is not just there to spy on the KGB. It is there to spy on and conspire against anyone who dares question the right of capital to rule.

If Bettaney had been successful like Philby and Blake, and 'fingered' some of these Oxbridge hooligans to the KGB we should weep no tears. None of its agents have anything to commend them to working people. The only ones who save their honour are those that betray it.

£50 000 building fund drive

THIS ISSUE of the paper launches the £50,000 fund drive because we need a new building for the paper. We know this is a tough target but if we are to do our job properly it's a project we have to take on. If we are going to go back to 16 pages we have to save money and that means moving to a more economical building. Once we get there we can start reorganising, improving and extending the paper.

Why Socialist Action?

The labour movement needs a paper that is written by, and for, activists in its ranks. It needs a paper that will work flat out to build the united action of all those in the anti-capitalist struggle. This is the job of Socialist Action and this is why we have been pleased in the past few months to open our columns to people like **Tony Benn, Peter Heathfield, Helen John, Joy Hurcombe, Ken Livingstone, David Blunkett, Eric Heffer, Joan Maynard, Anne Pettifor, Kay Sutcliffe, Peter Hain, Jack Collins, Ernest Mandel, John Harrison and Bernadette McAliskey.**

Just as we have covered the international anti-capitalist struggle by carrying regular material on Central America, so on Ireland we have given a voice to those in the Republican movement who are fighting the occupation of their country by British imperialism.

On Europe we have carried in-depth articles on the rise of workers' struggles across that continent and have shown how the growing peace movement is beginning to restructure

European politics. Articles by Oliver MacDonald have analysed what's happening in Eastern Europe and Ernest Mandel recently wrote on the division of Germany.

Closer to home we are quickly getting a reputation for giving maximum solidarity to all those fighting the Tories. We have carried extensive articles on Liverpool, the NGA and of course the miners — where we have given four to five pages coverage each week. We can say quite confidently that we have unhesitatingly supported the anti-nuclear movement and the heroic stand of the women at Greenham Common and our paper has been proud to open its columns to these women.

Our newly started page on sexual politics will be a forum for discussion on the women's movement, women's history, on lesbian and gay politics and on all matters of sexuality.

Nor have we kept silent on the Labour Party. We have started out from the notion that maximum unity is needed to defeat the Tories and that every leader should be judged solely on how they do that,

and how vigorously they fight for agreed policies like unilateralism.

Thus we have opened our pages to the Labour left for a debate on policy and strategy. This is why next week we will be carrying a special eight-page interview with Tony Benn on these two matters.

Fund Drive

This is not just an extra. It's desperately needed if we are to stay in business. That's why we ask you to either make a one-off donation or pledge a regular amount each week or month. The latter is best done by filling in the standing order form on this page. Sellers of the paper should ask their readers to add a bit of money to the 30p they pay when they buy it. Another way you can help financially is by taking out a subscription because that makes sure you get it regularly and it makes sure we get a

guaranteed income.

Big prizes on offer

We intend to run fund raising activities nationally and locally. These will range from socials, parties, jumble sales to more ambitious schemes like sponsored runs, draws for cash prizes — and the jewel in the crown — a first prize which gives you a holiday in one of the world's hot spots like Cuba.

Then there are all those schemes that our readers will come up with that we want to know about. So write in and give us your fund-raising ideas as well as some of your money.

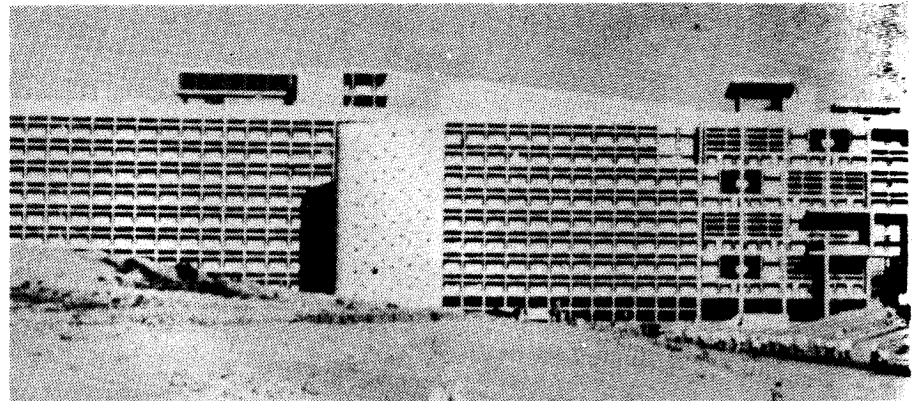
Target

There's our target. £50,000. Let's go out and smash it. Start now to take us over the top of that amount and on to a new building and a bigger and even better paper.

'Labour's Alliance for Socialism' — an interview with Tony Benn.

The May Day issue will carry a special 8 page interview with Tony Benn carried out for Socialist Action by John Ross.

Order your copy now!



Which type of building will we have? It's up to you.



Libyan seige - reactionary theatre

HOME SECRETARY Leon Brittan and his government colleagues are turning the siege of the Libyan People's Bureau into a piece of stage-managed, reactionary theatre. While the media hurls every conceivable insult at Qadhafi and his regime — 'unstable', 'dangerous', 'madman' — the police ostentatiously display a huge array of weaponry on the streets.

The ideological function of such a show is not difficult to discern. Sympathy for the police is especially useful in the middle of a miners' strike. Justification for the police being heavily armed is useful at any time. Patriotic hatred of 'Arabs' is an added bonus.

The tactics used in the siege of the Iranian embassy were carefully calculated to have just such an ideological impact. The final murder of the Arab guerrillas by the SAS, when they were trying to surrender, was carefully calculated as a warning about the fate of anyone trying 'dirty tricks' in London.

The seige in London has to be put against the background of universal Western hostility to Qadhafi. Since Reagan was elected the US has regarded Qadhafi as 'enemy number one', and is determined to bring him down. In August 1981 two Libyan jets were shot down in Libya's territorial waters by US planes as a huge flotilla of US ships patrolled off Libya's coast.

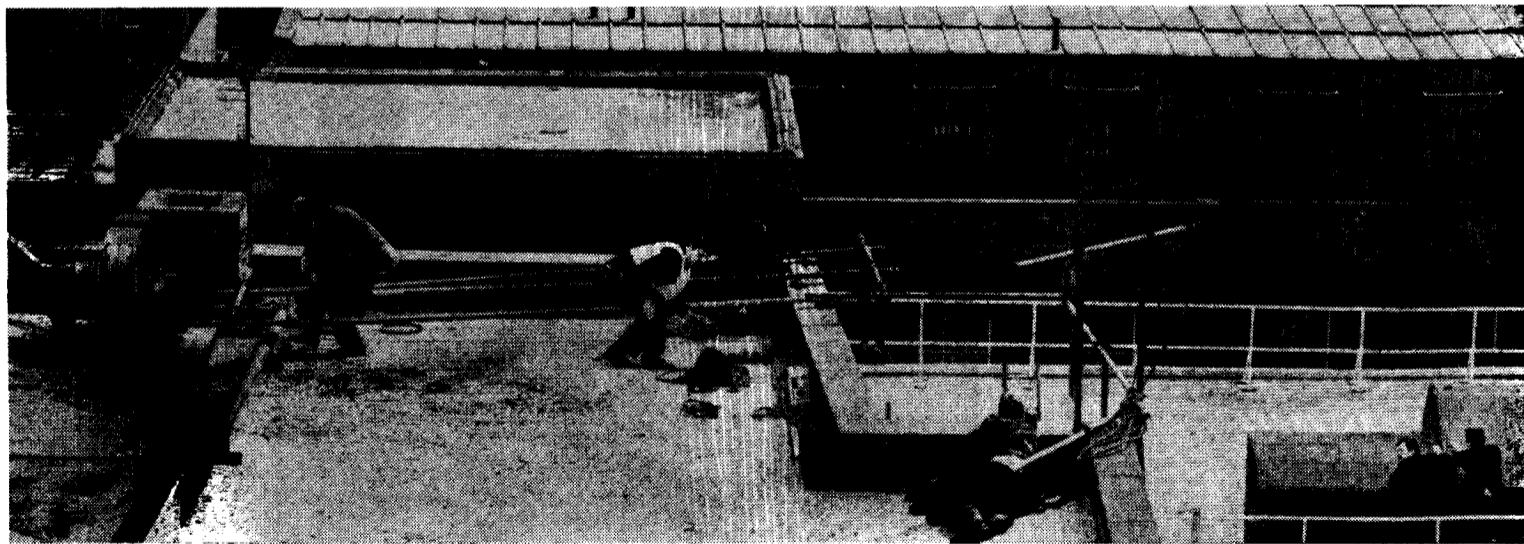
What angers the United States and its allies is that Qadhafi backs many of the movements and governments which the US is opposed to.

By Paul Lawson

In Chad Libyan troops have backed up an anti-imperialist movement. Libyan military might is seen as threatening the reactionary states in the region — Egypt, Tunisia and the Sudan. Qadhafi has given loans totalling hundreds of millions of dollars to Nicaragua, and sent plane-loads of arms. For a long period Libya was a champion of the 'rejection front' of Arab states and movements which opposed moves towards peace with Israel at the expense of the Palestinians.

US hostility to Qadhafi is therefore hardly surprising. Neither is the concerted attempt by the Western media to present him as an international gangster who is mentally unstable.

In the conflict between Western imperialism and Qadhafi, the basic ques-



Police marksmen take aim on Libyan Embassy

tion at issue is Libya's self-determination and national independence — its right to conduct its own affairs and give aid to radical movements whatever the imperialists may think. Nonetheless this basic issue should blind nobody to the realities of Qadhafi's rule in Libya itself.

Qadhafi came to power in a military coup in 1969. Since that time a number of very radical measures have been taken, including the nationalisation of the majority of foreign oil holdings, irrigation projects for agriculture and a system of generous loans for peasant farmers.

Libya's very small population of only 3 million has seen a dramatic rise in its standard of living, based on the utilisation of large oil revenues to finance state projects.

Politically, despite Qadhafi's eccentric political theories, which claim to have resolved the contradiction between capitalism and communism in the 'Universal Third Theory', the regime is a radical nationalist one. Qadhafi sees himself the political descendent of Abdul Nasser, Egyptian president when Arab nationalism was at its height. His regime, despite the claim that all power has

been handed over to 'people's committees' is in fact a tightly controlled military dictatorship, with real power concentrated in the Bonapartist figure of Qadhafi himself.

There is no doubt that political opposition is ruthlessly dealt with, or that as the oil revenues have declined opposition to Qadhafi has been on the increase.

The seige of the embassy can play a useful function for Qadhafi, not just for the Thatcher government. A prolonged conflict with Britain could easily play the role of whipping up support for the Tripoli government at

a time of growing internal dissent.

If Qadhafi did order the shooting he handed the Tories a gift on a plate — glorification of the police and the SAS at the expense of democratic rights in general and the miners in particular.

Socialist defence of Libya against imperialist attack should not involve any ambiguity towards the terroristic methods which Qadhafi uses against his opponents, which should be unequivocally condemned. The shooting in St James' Square was a reactionary act, which can only serve the interests of reaction in Britain — Libya.

If the police and the SAS do storm the People's Bureau it will be a clear demonstration not of a desire to administer justice in an even-handed way, but rather of a desire to 'teach the Arabs a lesson'.

If this event had occurred at the embassy of the United States (an embassy, incidentally, which does have a huge arsenal on the premises) or any other Western power, there would be no question of a seige or violation of diplomatic immunity. The seige at St James' Square is political from beginning to end. The losers will not be Thatcher or Qadhafi, but democratic rights.

Labour Women's conference

'We won't be held back forever'

THE DEMANDS of the Women's Action Committee for constitutional reform to increase women's power in the Labour Party will dominate this year's Labour Women's Conference, as they have done for the past few years.

Forty per cent of all resolutions submitted to the conference, to be held in Swansea on 12-13 May, are resolutions sponsored by WAC on the question of constitutional change. JUDE WOODWARD looks at the issues involved.

The role of miners' wives in supporting the miners' strike has received widespread comment,

breaking the myth that women's role in strikes is as strike breakers. Recently the Labour

Women's conference has dispelled the similar myth that women constitute the right wing of the labour movement, by adopting a series of left policies. It was the only major section of the Labour Party to oppose the Malvinas war, for example.

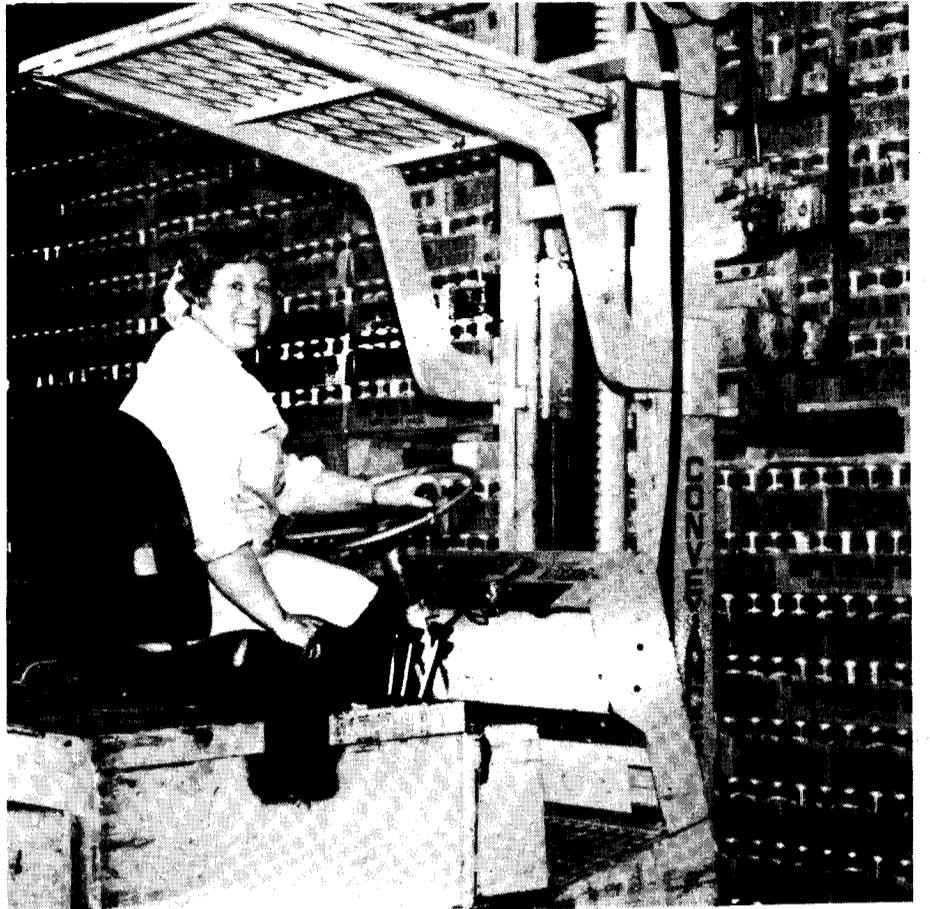
This reflects an important change in the way that women see their own role in society. Today only one in five men are the 'bread-

winners' of families, and millions of women work, and expect to work throughout their lives. This has already transformed the membership of many unions and is beginning to change the whole face of the labour movement.

This changing role of women has been shown not only in the policy adopted by the Labour Women's organisation, but in the rising support for the proposed structural changes in the Party.

The question that confronts the labour movement is whether it can rise to the challenge of this new consciousness among women and create a powerful alliance between the traditional organisations of the working class and this new force of women. This is not guaranteed.

There is another lesson to be learned from women's support for the miners' strike — if you want women to support you, you have to support women. The NUM may be male-dominated (which it is), but it has taken some important steps on women's policy before many unions with a higher female membership.



Women are surging through — like this woman fork-lift driver at McEwans in Edinburgh

Poppie Nongena: not a 'surplus' woman



4 April - 6 May

Riverside Studios

THIS TWO-ACT play, showing at the Riverside Studios will do more to bring home the actuality of what it is like to be black in apartheid South Africa than many a tract published by the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

The seven black actors who form the cast are not only competent actors but because they have lived what they are portraying on the stage, they are able to transmit some of the trauma of their lives to the audience.

At the end of the performance, the audience spontaneously rose to their feet and the applause almost brought the house down. Many, including this reviewer, were openly crying. The emotional atmosphere could literally be felt.

Poppie Nongena is the life story of a Black woman living in South Africa today. Only her name is invented, and is based on a book originally written in Afrikaans, the language of South Africa's *Homelands* by Elsa Joubert, a South African

South African

multi-racial Market Theatre, three-quarters of the audience were white.

Reviewed by Charlie van Gelderen

It must have come as a revelation to many of the audience that the black women in their kitchens who did their household chores, looked after their children, cooked and served their food were actually

Poppie is a third-generation black, born and brought up in the Western Cape. When the edict comes that all 'surplus' women must return to their 'homelands' she is dumped in the

turns out to be a corrugated shed with no ceiling and no running water. Her children have to walk miles to school.

The play takes us through Sharpsville in March 1960 when 60 people died and 180 were wounded simply because they wanted to get rid of the hated pass system. The climax comes with the great Soweto uprising in 1976 and it's echoes in the Black townships of the Western Cape to which Poppie has illegally returned after her husband's death so she can earn enough money to keep her children in school.

The glorious traditionally-based music by Sophie McGina, who plays Poppie's grandmother in the play will make you want to buy the record on your way out of the theatre. It is, of course, impossible for any 'white' person to feel what it is like to be Black under apartheid but this play comes very close to doing just

Sexism

The NUM supported most WAC demands at Labour Party conference, one of the few unions that did. Eric Clarke, secretary of the Scottish NUM, is a WAC supporter and helped organise the NUM's Labour Party delegation behind the women's organisation resolutions.

Of course, sexism still exists in the NUM, even among the most militant of the striking miners. There was a problem of sexist comments at Labour Party conference. But the Scottish NUM is organising a weekend school on women's rights later this year, at which Jo Richardson has been invited to

tion of women combined with the support of key unions will actually win WAC's demands, then the policy of the women's organisation becomes very important. Thus combined with the opposition to the constitutional changes a more serious attempt is being made this year to confuse and fudge the women's conference on many policy questions.

The NUM's support for WAC is a tremendous lever to use in winning other unions to a similar position. But as in previous years all WAC's resolutions will probably be opposed by the platform. But these demands cannot be resisted forever.

Neil Kinnock opposes WAC's demands, but it would not be too surprising to see him change his mind if enough of a row is kicked up inside the party. 'Progressive' Eurosocialist Kinnock would dearly like to be seen as the champion of women's causes — as long as he remains in control.

But if there is a real threat that the radicalisa-

Policy

While all allies must be sought for constitutional reforms, no concessions must be made on other policy questions.

The fact that *Militant* has the only resolution (out of 12) opposing the EEC, the fact that unilateralism may be push-

ed off the agenda (with only four resolutions in), and the absence of any resolution defending Liverpool council, all indicate the danger of policy concessions and the pressure from Kinnock and his LCC supporters.

On the other hand, nine resolutions on Ireland are a sign that women's conference is not about to become a tool of the Kinnock leadership. And doubtless an emergency resolution on the miners' strike will get widespread support.

For a few more years yet, the main battle at women's conference will continue to be the WAC resolutions. But the NUM's fight reveals again a deep divide in the labour movement, and the women's conference will show where it stands.

LPYS should discuss gay rights

'WHAT HAS TO happen before the daily infringement of human rights is considered urgent enough to merit action?' asked Richard Sandells, Lesbian and Gay Young Socialists member, at the recent London Labour Party conference. Quite a lot within the LPYS!

Lesbian and gay youth spend at least the first 16 years of their lives in an entirely heterosexual environment. Most of us grow up thinking we're the only one in the world.

The media rave about awful homosexuals who, when they aren't betraying their country, are drag queens or pathetic, suicidal figures. All in all, not very inviting. We grasp anything we can get hold of to get out of a help-

chboard, the London help and advice line, gets massive numbers of calls from lesbian and gay teenagers, making the 'forbidden' call in the early hours of the morning.

By Paul Canning

Those of us who break the mould face big problems. Our phones are tapped, our bookshops raided, our children taken into care. We can be sacked, harassed, persecuted — discriminated against in every area. It's legal to be gay, but it's not legal to be gay and a socialist.

The LPYS should take up this issue. First of all, it directly affects a lot of people, and a hell of a lot more indirectly. In fact, repression of homosexuals means oppression of all people's sexuality.

It is rather naive to believe lesbians and gays will automatically benefit from a socialist society. We do not think our rights will be given to us, by anyone. This is why we organise autonomously,

within the LPYS, but the hostility this creates is unbelievable.

Lesbian and Gay Young Socialists will continue to campaign in the LPYS, alongside the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights and Labour Movement Lesbians. We are a national organisation with active branches in Leeds, Manchester, Glasgow and London.

Young Socialists branches can support us by — affiliating (at £2), — inviting a speaker from LGYS, — supporting our conference on 7-8 July in County Hall, London.

● Lesbian and Gay Young Socialist can be contacted c/o 39 Chippenham Road, London W9 2AH, or by phoning Martin on 01-263 2444 (evenings) or Paul on 01-286 9692 (days)

LPYS conference

Mass campaigns can build Labour's youth

OVER TWO thousand youth attended the Labour Party Young Socialists annual conference in Bridlington over Easter. Two issues stood out from the conference: the decision to turn massive support behind the miners and the decision to campaign against Reagan's visit to Britain in June.

Young miners addressing the conference won overwhelming support. Tom Sawyer, speaking for the Labour Party NEC, summed up the views of most delegates when he said:

'We all want the miners to unite around the Sheffield conference decision. My trade union, NUPE, will be one that supports the miners, we have given £50,000. All trade unions have got to respond to the call from Arthur Scargill for solidarity. When it comes to the TUC we have to clearly say to Len Murray that there must not be another NGA or GCHQ.'

On Reagan's visit the YS has already produced 200,000 leaflets and 5,000 posters to build for the demonstration on 9 June.

But by far the most inspiring part of the conference was on Saturday when a delegation of San-

dinista youth spoke to the conference from the platform. Introduced by YS chair Willie Griffin, their speech was met with a tremendous standing ovation. No one could remember the YS conference giving such an enthusiastic response to any previous speaker.

By Redmond O'Neill

This year's YS conference took place after Labour had the lowest vote from young people since at least the Second World War. Its chief task therefore was to set the YS on a course to overcome this. As the platform pointed out a key obstacle to this is the niggardly funds the YS is given by the Labour Party.

But this is not the only problem. Many of the debates had an unreal feel to them. *Militant*, the overwhelmingly dominant force in the YS, brought

across clearly how bad the Tories are, but discussion on how to rebuild Labour among youth was almost entirely absent.

We heard repeated anecdotes, like: 'Driving to YS conference we met a youth wandering down the middle of the road. We asked what he was doing. He was out of work and wanted to end it all. We brought him to YS conference and now he's fighting for a future.'

But this is not a strategy for building a mass YS, and *Militant* couldn't explain how this would be done.

Politics

While supporting 9 June, CND's march on that day was not endorsed; proposals for systematic work with YCND were defeated; and on defence policy explanations of why CND, Greenham and withdrawal from NATO were wrong, and how socialism alone can bring peace, were substituted for participation in the peace movement.

On women's rights the YS took a big step forward in calling a national young



women's conference, but the policy adopted largely consisted of explaining why positive action is wrong. Moreover the YS has refused to discuss the conference set for 16 June, nor has it produced leaflets to build it.

The same was true on gays and blacks, discrimination was opposed but so was support for any of the movements that actually fight it.

On international policy many positions taken were

verging on reactionary. The hallmark of *Militant*'s policy is refusal to support any significant struggle against British imperialism. In Ireland the *Militant* candidate in East Belfast explained: 'We are fighting for a socialist Ireland and a socialist federation of Britain and Ireland.' A pseudo-socialist version of loyalism!

This approach not only takes the YS away from international solidarity movements, but paves the

Stunning Support for Sandinistas

By Anne Kane, Pollock LPYS

THE FIRST day of this year's LPYS conference showed how far the YS has come in adopting policies that mean something to youth in struggle and how far it still has to go. Unfortunately most of the debates consisted of fierce speeches repeating old policy and suggesting no real action now.

But Saturday's conference was brought alive by two issues: the response to the miners' strike and defence of the Nicaraguan revolution. But the absolute solidarity of the delegates with both of these struggles was held back by the way conference was organised to be more like a rally.

Precious time was lost on ritual repetitive denunciations of the Tories, which could have been used by delegates to explain what they have done in their branches to support the miners and to discuss what should be done in the future to build the YS.

But the most stunning show of solidarity for a long time was reserved for the Sandinista youth who urged the conference to mobilise against Reagan's visit in June. Winning the fight to have the Sandinistas address conference must be seen as a great victory in itself. It means the LPYS leadership have been pushed off their previous denunciations of what they called petit-bourgeois terrorism in Central America.

Hopefully the LPYS will go ahead and adopt similarly progressive attitudes to the struggle for national liberation and socialism in Ireland. Maybe next year we'll see Gerry Adams receiving a standing ovation at LPYS conference!

way for the right-wing on issues like Ireland and Malvinas.

The chief root of the YS's current weakness lies precisely in *Militant*'s combination of 19th century rhetoric and opposition to real movements of liberation. Most young people are repelled by this particular brand of British nationalistic socialistic talk. This is why most of the new recruits to the YS each year are then lost.

Since 1968 there have been waves of youth radicalisation, but each one has tended in the polar opposite direction to the present YS leadership: against the Vietnam war; against fascism and Labour's racism in the ANL; against the bomb in CND; in the women's liberation movement. As a result they have bypassed the YS leaving it a rump, cut off from reality.

Period

But this period of YS history is coming to an end. Despite the platform's attempts to make 'drug abuse' the theme of this year's conference, it was actually dominated by the really important issues. *Militant* can no longer denounce these movements as petit-bourgeois side-shows which endanger the pure, undiluted socialist consciousness of the British proletariat.

Despite *Militant*, the YS is being forced to come to terms with these real mass movements, which are at their strongest among youth. That's why the platform had to have a Sandinista on the platform, recognise lesbians and gays exist and support 9 June. The left-wing independent of *Militant* is growing faster than the YS

itself. The votes in the NEC elections show this clearly. In 1982 the left independent of *Militant* won a mere 9 per cent of the votes, this rose in 1983 to 18 per cent, and this year went over 23 per cent — 69 out of 299 votes.

Voice

This growing voice to the left of *Militant* is the expression of movements like CND and the rise of the Bennite left through the YS itself. The weakness of this force is that it is not yet organised around a coherent project for replacing the *Militant* leadership with one committed to mass campaigning in alliance with the Bennite left.

At this year's conference the left opposition was again divided, in the election for the NEC member, Judith Bonner won 39 votes, Bernie Wilde won 30.

It is clear that a united left-wing movement — a class struggle movement for a campaigning YS — could win increasing support on conference floor and offer a means for YS branches to continue to build the YS on this basis between conferences. At present all that the YS branches have available to build themselves is the *Socialist Youth* paper run by *Militant* supporters.

In many areas, notably Scotland and the West Midlands, local bulletins alone these lines have been launched. This type of bulletin or newspaper is now possible and necessary to organise those YS branches who want to build the YS through campaigning action in Britain as a whole.

MOLES EYE VIEW



Who calls the tune?

THERE'S A capitalist law which says: 'Them who pays the piper calls the tune.' And a smart business man like Tiny Rowland who is the big boss at Lonrho and proprietor of the *Observer*, reckons that's a good maxim.

So you can well imagine Tiny blowing his top when he read last Sunday's edition of his paper. There was his editor claiming that the Zimbabwean army had committed a series of atrocities against critics of the Robert Mugabe regime. Now that was a very naughty thing for Mr Trelford the *Observer*'s editor to go and write.

Here was Tiny trying to get on the right side of Mugabe when this blasted editor has to go and foul it all up. And that's not an easy job for Tiny. There are those

who reckon that Mugabe is just a bit suspicious about an outfit that co-existed with Ian Smith in the 'white paradise' of the old Rhodesia, and backed Mugabe's rival Joshua Nkomo. So just as things were looking up and Mugabe was getting a bit more matey, this goes and happens.

Anyhow Tiny sent a subtle message to his editor which explained to Trelford a few facts of life, such as he would close the flaming paper down if the story damaged his business interests in Zimbabwe. Some of Mr Trelford's friends got uptight about this and quoted the terms governing Lonrho's ownership of the *Observer*.

The government had insisted that a condition be inserted in the controlling company's articles of association when Lonrho bought the paper which said 'The editor of the *Observer* shall retain control over any political content published in the newspaper and shall not be subject to any restraint ...'. So democracy and a free press appeared to be sav-



ed by that little bit of paper.

But as a Lonrho mouthpiece said 'these safeguards had placed the corporation in a ridiculous position'. And when that means money is at stake, no self-respecting capitalist can be expected to tolerate it. As Lonrho reasons the editor is free to write what he wants as long as we agree with it.

Trelford must have been a bit dumb not to know that editors who don't write what their owners want have short-term employment prospects. That's how the *Observer* and all our 'free' press are run.

Moles Eye View is compiled by Bob Pennington. Contributions should be sent to arrive by Thursday am.

SOCCIALIST ACTION

Anti-Reagan demo: All out on 9 June!

Labour CND must defend unilateralism

LABOUR CND will hold its 1984 annual meeting this coming weekend at a crucial time for disarmament policy in the Labour Party. During the last nine months there have been moves in the party and in CND to dilute the firm unilateralist position of the party.

The best-known of these was the Kinnock-backed move by the national executive to remit the TGWU resolution to last year's conference, reaffirming the commitment to remove all nuclear weapons from British territory within the lifetime of the next Labour government.

This failed. But those who believe that the best way forward is a step-by-step approach, to win the non-unilateralists, have not given up hope of sufficiently watering down policy to achieve these ends.

Labour Party conference was overturned at the next, all in the name of just such a popular alliance — precisely shows that such an approach leads in the opposite direction to that intended.

By Carol Turner

Softly, softly catches no monkey at all. But it does give an opportunity to the 'multilateralists' of the Denis Healey variety to slam the party door on real opposition to nuclear weapons.

This is what's at stake at this year's Labour CND meeting. Last year it was Labour CND who fought so strongly to keep the commitment to unilateralism, and who helped build that support within the party. It was exactly that success which made it so unpopular in some CND and Labour Party circles.

Equation

Labour Party commitment on nuclear weapons in an extremely important factor in their equation. While the party as a whole remains publicly committed to a strong stand, it makes difficult the task of concession-merchants who want a popular, cross-party alliance on disarmament, through 'freeze', 'no first use', or similar policy.

Unilateralists in the labour movement remain firm in their opposition to this approach. Unilateralism's fate in the '60s — when deals behind closed doors meant the hard-won commitment of one

Role

This year, it is quite possible that those same forces will organise to make sure that Labour CND gets no chance to play the same role in 1984. That is why it is so important that every Labour Party member who is also

a national CND member should turn out for the annual meeting on Saturday, 28 April in County Hall between 11am and 5pm.

That is why resolutions like the one from Scottish and London Labour CND, which makes clear the priority of the unilateralist commitment, must be wholeheartedly supported at the Labour CND meeting. And that is why executive committee candidates should be chosen on the basis of their firm support to maintain party policy.

The alternative is a neutered Labour CND executive committed to disarmament by degrees — the backdoor road to ditching Labour's most popular policy.



PEACE CAMPAIGNERS have been on the march throughout Europe in an Easter weekend of protest against the missiles. In West Germany, over 100,000 took part in anti-nuclear demonstrations, the biggest of which saw 60,000 at the Mutlangen US Army missiles depot, near Hamburg.

Closer to home, 1500 people marched from RAF Edzell's anti-submarine base outside Edinburgh, to hear Bruce Kent address a rally, while 2000 people gathered at Holy Loch submarine base.

In South London, local CND organised a motorcade along essential service routes from Tulse Hill to Woolwich, while East Enders travelled the street of Hackney. Added together these demonstrations represent hundreds of thousands of people still in action against Reagan's missiles.

The next opportunity for large-scale British protest comes on 9 June, when CND have called the national anti-Reagan demonstration in London.

timed to coincide with the US president's visit to Britain for the World Economic Summit. The call, supported by London Region CND, has now been backed by Scottish CND as well.

Edinburgh CND is organising for Reagan's visit too. The national event in London coincides with the Edinburgh Miners' Gala, and local CND groups will be building a big 'jobs not bombs' contingent. CND general secretary Bruce Kent will be on that platform along with Arthur Scargill and other prominent miners' leaders, showing solidarity between the missiles movement world-wide and workers' struggles at home.

Scottish and London Labour CND resolution:

THIS AGM commends the parts played by Labour CND in ensuring an unequivocal position at Brighton 1983 in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament and support for CND. It believes that Labour CND's main task now is to ensure the further visible strengthening of the party's unilateralist commitment. That will be best achieved through getting all levels of the party fully associated with the on-going campaigns of the peace movement.

Labour CND will therefore:

- 1) organise to campaign for a clear reaffirmation at this year's conference of unilateralism, that is an end to all nuclear weapons of any kind on British soil or in British waters in the lifetime of the next Labour government;
- 2) campaign for the party to be seen as a leader in all continuing campaigns to that end, and particularly now in the anti-Trident campaign, Greenham women's peace movement, and on-going action against cruise;
- 3) campaign for opposition to the new generation of weapons — cruise, Pershing, Trident, etc — to

be put at the centre of Labour's Euro-election campaign, wherever possible in conjunction with our allies in European socialist parties;

- 4) campaign in collaboration with our allies in Trade Union CND for a policy of no-collaboration by Labour controlled local authorities with the government's 1983 civil defence regulations;
- 5) organise for massive, country-wide party support for the 9 June mobilisation against Reagan's visit.

To assist these aims we will:

- 1) organise a major day school/weekend conference and subsequent publication in 1984, if possible in collaboration with Trade Union CND, of:
 - a) taking the fight for unilateralism through the labour movement and
 - b) the non-nuclear defence alternatives that demonstrate that security can be achieved outside of cold war strategies
 - c) alternative employment;
- 2) initiative publication of a regular (at least quarterly) bulletin to service our work in the party.



LONDON LCND is holding an even-of-AGM fringe meeting at County Hall, starting at 8pm on Friday 27 April. The theme will be mobilising Labour Parties for the Reagan demonstration called by national CND for 9 June. Speakers include Joy Hurcombe, vice-chair of CND and former LCND secretary, and Walter Wolfgang, CND national council member.

Stop the campaign against Libya!

THE SHOOTING of a policewoman and eleven demonstrators from the Libyan People's Bureau was a stupid and reactionary act which socialists should unequivocally condemn. But the reaction of the British government in mounting the siege of the embassy and breaking off diplomatic relations was motivated solely by political hostility to the Qadhafi regime.

The government insist that the activities of the Libyan People's Bureau are 'unacceptable' and charge that it organises acts of terrorism. But the Tory government is curiously selective about investigating the activities of foreign embassies.

To give just one example, the South African embassy has a long record of organising illegal acts in Britain. Just two weeks ago the South African ambassador was recalled to Pretoria after three people, including two South Africans, were arrested on charges of organising illegal arms sales to South Africa.

Pretoria's notorious

security agency BOSS has organised dozens of burglaries of the premises of Anti-Apartheid and other organisations opposed to the regime, and conducted long campaigns of harassment against its opponents in this country.

The illegal activities of other foreign powers are not only ignored but given active encouragement by the British government. A

full search of the United States embassy in Grosvenor Square would doubtless yield some very interesting results.

By Keith Parkes

The sinister building in Grosvenor Square is of course the headquarters of the CIA in Britain. They, and their agents at Menwith Hill listening station, intercept the phone calls of British citizens and organisations and maintain detailed surveillance of British 'subversives'. And of course the Grosvenor Square embassy is the one embassy which is known to have a large arsenal on the premises.

Four years ago it was revealed by *World in Action* that navy personnel at the Chilean embassy were proven torturers, in-

cluding one ex-commander of a Chilean concentration camp where hundreds of Chilean leftists had been murdered. The British government is happy to be on the best of diplomatic and military relations with such people.

As we report on page 9 the siege in St. James's Square has been a Godsend for the Tories, enabling them to build sympathy for the police at the height of the miners' strike. Just like the Malvinas war it has been used by the government and the media to whip up patriotism and obscene racism.

The way in which the press and television have dealt with Qadhafi and the political orientation of the Libyan government has hit new depths. No attempt whatever has been made to present any rational ex-

planation of Libyan politics — racist insults have sufficed.

The shooting has been a golden opportunity to whip up the US-led campaign against Libya. International public opinion is being prepared for new acts of aggression against Libya, which has been subject to constant violations of its air space and territorial waters in the past two years.

Whatever our criticisms of the Qadhafi regime and its methods, socialist must oppose the imperialist campaign against Libya and the attempts of the Reagan regime and its allies to overthrow Qadhafi and install a reactionary pro-imperialist regime.

● *Libyan seige, reactionary theatre — see page 9*

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