

# Socialist Challenge

## Barbie - butcher for capitalism



**KLAUS BARBIE** the Butcher of Lyons committed crimes against Jewish people and the French resistance on a scale that can only provoke disbelief and revulsion. The fortress of Montluc in Lyons bears a plague that testifies to his savagery with the words '10,000 were interned, 7,000 perished.'

But our revulsion should not be reserved simply for Barbie. It should also focus on his masters and the sick system that they serve. When the Nazi regime came toppling down in 1945 Barbie was soon back working again.

This time he served new bosses — the US Counter Intelligence Corps who paid him £425 a month for information he had about Russians. Professor Erhard Dabringhaus who worked for CIC and was Barbie's controller, lamely excuses his employment on the grounds that he was 'an evil necessity'. The professor therefore lied to the French when they asked about Barbie.

Through his contacts in the agency he managed to get to Bolivia where under the name of Altmann he later worked for the Banzer government. His job there with the approval of the American CIA, was to organise cocaine trafficking for the government. Barbie was well suited to this task which involved using paramilitary bands to physically wipe out rival drug peddling gangs.

Of course the press would like to present Barbie as an individual psychopath and a creature of Nazism. But the Butcher of Lyon was also the butcher of the CIA who had no scruples about putting him on their pay role and protecting him from the French. After all if the CIA can employ the Mafia to do its dirty work then what's wrong with Barbie?

In Bolivia a decadent drug dealing military dictatorship — backed by US imperialism and its intelligence agency — soon found good use for his bloody talents.

What Barbie shows is that capitalism will go to any lengths, including murder and systematic torture and is more than prepared to hire mass murderers to do its work. As long as that system exists then it will produce its Barbies and find good use for them.

# NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT FOOT SAYS NO!



The Labour leaders are going to try and sell out Conference decisions over unilateralism.

Last week Michael Foot moved an amendment to the disarmament section of the party's general election manifesto, which would make the removal of nuclear bases 'negotiable' and dependent on discussions with other socialist parties in Europe.

Knowing the position of the leaders of a number of the European socialist parties on this issue, particularly Mitterand's, Foot reckons he will be able to hang on to US bases for a long time yet, if this is adopted.

These moves should come as no surprise. Healey has been strutting around stressing Labour's commitment to NATO and saying he

would not serve in a Labour cabinet which has a unilateralist policy. Most Labour Party members would reply to Healey by asking: 'Is that a threat or a promise.'

But Foot is determined to appease both Labour's right wing and the NATO alliance. And if this means defying the decisions of Conference so be it.

These policies will

take us further along the road of nuclear suicide. What is more they will disillusion great numbers of potential Labour voters who intend to vote Labour at the next election because of its Conference decision on unilateralism.

Obviously this is the season for sabotage by Labour's right. Not only are they sabotaging the anti-nuclear vote, but

by their frenetic desire to witch hunt Militant they are doing their damndest to lose Bermondsey for Peter Tatchell.

The impounding and shredding of 25,000 broadsheets, the cancellation of Tatchell's first by-election press conference, all because his broadsheets were printed on Militant's press gave every anti-Labour rag and news broadcaster the cha-

nce to paint Labour's candidate in Bermondsey as an outsider not wanted by his own national party.

When you have friends like that — who needs enemies? The only people who can be grateful to Foot and Labour's agents are the media and all those who do not want Labour to win either in Bermondsey or nationally.

# WATERWORKERS SPEAK OUT

## Organising the strike in Kent

By Les Hartop

FIFTY shop stewards attended a joint union coordinating meeting in Chatham last week. This is the first time that such a meeting had taken place and was a useful organisational advance.

Report-backs gave valuable morale boosters that other pickets in the region were as perky as their own. They also heard how their strike was beginning to bite. Aylesham industrial estate had been shut off, more sewage works were overflowing and the strategic Wigmore reservoir was emptying rapidly. The shutting off of the Isle of Grain was thought to be a matter of days.

It was also decided to send out a flying picket to get out a small group of workers who were thought to be the only ones still working in the division.

Several delegates registered their concern at the union representatives accepting bonus or productivity schemes and abandoning the parity principle.

Before arranging the next meeting, Jim Griffiths of the General and Municipal Union finished off by pointing the finger at industry as

the Kent workers' main target and the government as the real employer: 'We won't win until we get the people with profits. Because they've got more political clout than the trade union movement has ever had.'

Before leaving, the workers listened to a visitor from the Labour Party who offered them 'finance solidarity and publicity'. They were encouraged to 'wake up', their CLPs and prospective MPs and ask them for their help. Labour Party members should make collections in their meetings and amongst trades unionists.

As the dispute becomes more of a social issue, CLPs and MPs could make themselves useful by issuing statements countering the propaganda that the government puts out. When asked how many in the room took home less than £70 per week over a quarter of the stewards raised their hands!

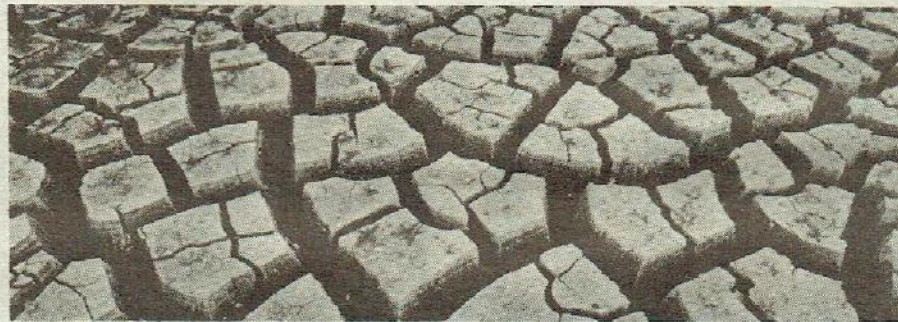
## 'Labour Party must support us'

On Merseyside the strike is solid with pickets out at all of the depots. Tom Ryder, branch secretary at Green Lane Depot spoke to Socialist Challenge.

'4,000 of us are out in the North West. In spite of the media attacks on us the strike is 100 percent solid and we expect it to stay that way. We recognise that this fight is against the whole pay policy of the Tory government which water-workers refuse to accept.'

'I don't expect troops to be a threat to this strike as long as we have the support of other trade unions. For example the AUEW are not crossing our picket lines and NALGO have assured us that they won't cooperate with troops.'

'We'd certainly like to see the Labour Party coming out in support of us but some of them seem to be too busy attacking people in their own ranks instead of taking on the Tories.'



## No productivity strings

IAN DRAYTON is a General and Municipal shop steward at Blackburn Meadows sewerage works in Sheffield. We asked him what he felt about any offer which gave money in return for increased productivity.

'First, a bonus scheme means you do ten hours work in eight hours in order to get the bonus. On our present scheme you get a maximum 33 per cent bonus money — what's the point of a maximum 66 per cent bonus you can never achieve? Even if you constantly earn 33 per cent bonus, works study comes along and says they've got to re-time the job.'

'Second, a bonus scheme means cutting corners — in other words cutting health and safety standards.'

'Third, when they introduced a bonus scheme in Sheffield on the clean water side, 164 jobs were lost.'

'There's only about 2-2,500 water workers in South Yorkshire, the money saved was passed on neither to the workers nor the rate payer. Too many people outside the industry who think we are being offered £5-£10 don't realise the implications of



Ian Drayton

productivity agreements. Everyone should have a decent basic wage.'

In Sheffield, the unions have decided that the only emergency cover they will operate is for hospitals and old people's homes. What effect did Ian think this might have? 'By doing this, the water staff are very stretched. Of course this raises the possibility of the army being used — there's a lot of concern that the army are already looking around to check things out.'

'At the moment NALGO members inside the gates seem to be doing whatever management wants. I've seen a letter from NALGO saying anyone disciplined for refusing to cooperate with the army will receive a large percentage of their wage in strike pay.'

'How many will stand by us, we shall see. We have heard that the power workers around here will refuse to cooperate with troops, should they bring in water to cool the power stations.'

'That's why our branch decided that a strike committee was needed — to raise money and win support through leafletting and speaking. The full time officials initially took away the impetus for the strike committee. But hopefully as the strike goes on both the officials and the stewards from other branches will realise the need for one. The more the involvement of the rank and file in the strike, the stronger it will be. We have to involve outlying areas, such as those on the reservoirs and get people out to the labour movement.'

## £865 a week to scab

By Brian Grogan

'MANAGEMENT is being paid £865 a week to keep the pumping stations going here' R Todd, a maintenance engineering at Beckton sewerage works told us. 'This is the biggest sewerage works in Europe. It caters for the whole of London. If the pumps collapse, they'll push the whole thing straight into the Thames or into the fields at Deepend.'

'The fact that they have to pay management such a high sum shows what a "desirable" job we've got here' added R Lardner. 'If the pumps breakdown — which they do every other day — then we've got to fish about inside to release them. You can get rid of the liquid sewage, but the solids remain — and the smell is something else.'

'Often its nylon that gets wound round the propeller which is difficult to release. How can you talk about "productivity" in such a situation? Its ridiculous. We

shouldn't be talking to management about that.'

'Our basic rate is only £84 per week. Added to this is £21 London weighting. The only thing we get for the dirt is £11 site money. And that's that — gross.'

The whole site is solid, including craft: 'I'm in the building workers union UCATT, and we're all out' explained C Whitby. 'We are getting no strike pay at all! Its a disgrace. They should officially declare our union's support for the water workers and pay us. But we'll stay out to the end.'

## 'Stop negotiating over nothing'

Roy Sinfield, Leabridge Rd Stores Depot

THE LATEST offer is rubbish. If they came out and openly said they want redundancies, at least it would be clear to the public what is going on.

It's not just the Water Council that's behind this, it's the government. They've said there should be a pay limit and that's it.

I didn't really want a strike but that's the only way to settle things. The union leadership is as much to blame as the government. They should get their finger out. Instead of wasting their time negotiating over nothing they should have instructed the other unions to come out.

There's too much talking and not enough action. We want an all out strike which involves the white collar workers too. This would make the strike more effective.

## Police wade in

By Ian MacDonald

A massive police assault broke the picket line at the Hampton works in West London last Saturday. At 6.30am around 180 police backed up by the Special Patrol Group escorted 12 scab lorries of coal from Proctors and Days through the picket line. Hampton works supplies over two-thirds of London with water.

'They wouldn't even let us speak to the drivers' said Ernie Eldridge, the local branch chair of the GMBATU. Understandably the pickets were a bit pissed off, but if anything this joint management and police action has strengthened their resolve to win.

'White collar workers are doing our jobs and getting fat bonuses for scabbing, proving this dispute isn't about money' Ernie said, 'it's political for them and us'. Looking to the future Ernie was very clear what should be done when they eventually go back. 'We don't want any overtime, none at all. We'll say to management "You employ some more people".'

## Metal Box stays in Hackney — O.K.?

By Brian Grogan

NEARLY 200 people braved the bitter cold last Friday to attend a public meeting called as part of a campaign to save jobs at Metal Box in London. The meeting was jointly sponsored by the Hackney North, Central and South Labour Parties and Hackney Trades Council.

Over half of the audience were workers from the local Clapton Metal Box factory. A whole contingent still dressed in their overalls had signed off the nightshift to be present at the meeting and hear the two local Labour MPs, Ernie Roberts and Stanley Clinton Davies, leader of Hackney council Anthony Kendall as well as the engineers convenor at Clapton and the T&G convenor from the Palmers Green factory in North London.

This meeting was the first time that workers from the different sections of the Clapton factory had been able to get together. The Metal Box management have refused facilities for a mass meeting on the site to discuss the 170 proposed redundancies. 108 further jobs are to go at Palmers Green and 20 at Bermondsey.

The main aim of the meeting was for the workers themselves to exchange information and suggestions on how the fight could be conducted — as well as take advice and solidarity from the representatives of the labour

movement bodies on the platform and in attendance. Unfortunately representatives of the Socialist Workers Party and other sectarian groupings didn't seem to appreciate this and effectively prevented the exchange between Metal Box workers happening.

Nonetheless, many useful pieces of information and suggestions were made. Leader of Hackney Council, Tony Kendall filled in the background to the firms redundancy plan. He pointed out that their £17.5m profit in Britain last year and £54m overseas profit showed the company was not as bad off as it pretended.

What's more he revealed that MB had taken a substantial stake in a supposed rival of MB — an Irish company call Bordens specialising in cans for milk products. MB found it more profitable to import these cans than produce them in Britain itself whilst allowing it to take over the production of MB exports to Ireland.

The fact that MB had an interest in this company and that two ex MB directors are

now on Bordens board shows that their claims of fierce competition as the reason for the job cuts was not true. It clearly operated a cartel resulting in large profits.

The Palmers Green convenor suggested that the company had a five year plan for job cuts and was moving its production from 'high wage' countries to low ones and from London into 'new towns' that have little trade union and low rates of pay — all with the aim of boosting profits.

## Jobs

He pointed out that jobs weren't the workers to be sold. Anyone taking redundancy pay was selling the jobs of their children and grandchildren.

Ernie Roberts developed this theme. He pointed out that MB was one of the biggest companies in the whole world with assets greater than that of many governments. It was quite within their resources to keep open the Clapton and Palmers Green plants.

He wanted to know how much transfer pricing across national boundaries and how much fiddling of accounts was going on. He thought that the workers should have the right to consult MB's books.

It seemed odd that 54 per cent of MB sales were in Britain netting £17m profit whilst the 46 per cent overseas sales brought in £54m profit.

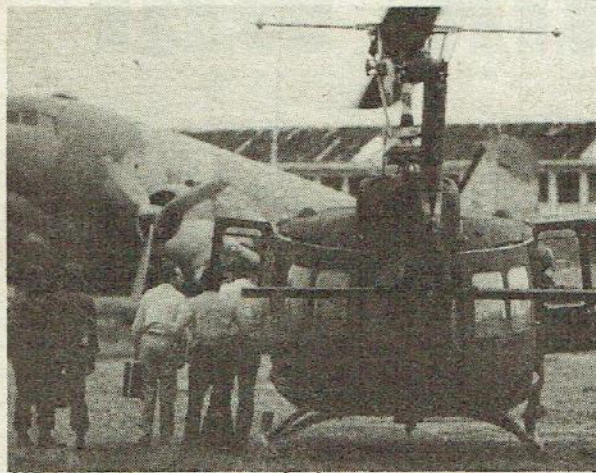
He read from MB's chairman's 1982 company report which boasted how 'smoothly' the previous round of redundancies had gone. He asked the MB workers present whether they would be happy to appear in the 1983 report as 'having gone smoothly to the slaughter'. United, he said, the MB workers couldn't be defeated.

Several people from the floor thought that their best contribution to the meeting was to demand that the MB workers present there and then declare for strike action.

The majority opinion at the meeting however, was best expressed by Rose Knight, a train guard from Kings Cross and a member of Hackney North Labour Party. She also explained that industrial action was necessary but that the best way to achieve this was for all the labour movement bodies and activists in the area to develop the widest possible campaign of support behind any of the actions the MB workers decided upon. In particular she called for support for a demonstration to mobilise the labour movement behind the MB workers.



Platform of meeting in support of jobs fight at Metal Box (left to right) Stanley Clinton-Davies MP, Peter Kahn (chair), Convenor MB Palmers Green, Ernie Roberts, MP, Convenor MB Clapton.



US 'advisors' in Honduras — hoping to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

## US manoeuvres threaten Nicaragua

1600 US troops are currently engaged in manoeuvres with the Honduras army only seven miles from the border with Nicaragua. A total of 7,000 troops are engaged in 'operation Big Pine'.

In addition to the land exercises, United States warships are simultaneously being deployed along the coast of Nicaragua. 'Big Pine' is the largest military exercise ever held in Central America. The 'enemy' for the Honduran and US troops is subtly code-named 'The Red Army'.

In the context of the continually worsening situation for imperialism in El Salvador, the presence of large numbers of US troops in Honduras constitutes a threat of imminent intervention in the region.

Since the beginning of January more than 60 counter-revolutionaries and 25 Sandinista soldiers have been killed in rebel incursions across the border from Honduras.

Last week the FSLN government responded by putting the Sandinista Defence Committees on alert. Guards at potential sabotage points were strengthened.

## Socialist Society rallies against NATO

UNILATERAL disarmament means Britain should get out of NATO — that was the message of the rally called by the Socialist Society last Friday night in London.

Pat Arrowsmith, long time peace campaigner and executive member of Labour CND pointed out that NATO was responsible for escalating the cold war at every stage. She regretted that some in CND seemed to think that unilateral disarmament could be achieved without leaving NATO, and pointed out that being in NATO meant remaining under the American nuclear umbrella.

Author and journalist Fred Halliday took up this theme, insisting on the prime responsibility of 'what used to be called US imperialism' for the nuclear arms race.

Guardian European correspondent John Palmer denounced the peace talks in Geneva as a fraud and a farce carried on between 'two bands of Brigands', and argued that the peace movement should not support this exercise which had no intention of reducing nuclear weaponry.

The nuclear armaments issue he said was a dagger pointing to the heart of the state. He eloquently praised the role of movements like the German Greens and the Greenham Common women in fighting the war mongers.

## CP moving right? — you ain't seen nothing yet

THATCHERISM is akin to 'creeping fascism'. What we need is an anti-Thatcher alliance including... the Tory wets! Thus Communist Party member Bob Rowthorn at last weekend's AGM of the Socialist Society.

In a debate to start off the weekend, Rowthorn astounded even those who already knew of the CP's rightward drift and the increasing penchant of the Eurocommunists for a coalition including the SDP. Rowthorn denounced 'ultra-left views on alliances' in proposing his Dimitrov mark II popular front.

He received a stinging rebuff from Tariq Ali, who called the recent arguments for an alliance with the SDP, especially

by Eric Hobsbawm as a 'disgrace'. Marxism Today, said Tariq Ali, besmirched the name of Marxism. Socialists should understand that the capitalist crisis would lead to a radicalisation of the working class which socialists would be able to link up with. Edward Heath, said Tariq, had tried to do what Thatcher is doing now but was rebuffed by the working class. It was betrayal to suggest we should form an alliance with him now.

## EL SALVADOR

# The fall of Berlin

By Paul Lawson

LAST WEEK the guerrillas of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front won their biggest military victory since the January 1981 offensive — the capture of the industrial town of Berlin in Usulután province. Although Berlin was rapidly retaken by government forces, its sudden capture by the FMLN revolutionaries; was a stunning psychological and political blow the increasingly crisis-racked government of Alvaro Magana.

The capture of Berlin, the culmination of a military offensive whose main centre was Morazan province 40 miles to the north, coincided with a crisis in both the army and the right wing coalition which rules the country.

The FMLN offensive started in mid-January with the capture of a number of villages in Morazan, which put them in a position to take the provincial capital of San Francisco Gotera. The regime rushed 6,000 of its crack troops to the province in an attempt to shift the guerrillas, but in one of the biggest pitched battles of the war they were driven back, with 260 government soldiers killed and 150 captured by the FMLN.

Just as the government troops regrouped for another assault the FMLN

struck their blow 40 miles to the south, capturing Berlin, a town of 30,000 people.

The successive defeats being suffered by the Salvadorean government troops is putting large swathes of the countryside outside of the effective control of the Magana regime.

The military reverses have also caused growing dissension inside the army. At the beginning of the year Colonel Sigifredo Ochoa led a revolt in Yabanas province north east of the capital San Salvador, demanding the resignation of Defense Minister general Jose Garcia.

Involved in the dispute was not only the military tactics being carried out by the army, but the fact that Garcia is well known as the



Salvadorean soliders on patrol

leader of the most extreme pro-American faction in the government. Ochoa's rebellion was only put down when 28 other army commanders eventually signed a loyalty oath to the present army leadership.

The dispute inside the army parallels that between President Magana and leader of the Assembly Roberto D'Aubuisson, well known as an organiser of the right-wing deaths squads and

the semi-fascist ARENA party. Since the sweeping success of ARENA last March in fake elections, the United States has been attempting to dislodge the politically embarrassing D'Aubuisson. As the FMLN has gone from military success to military success, the divisions inside the regime and the army have worsened.

The failure of the FMLN to hold Berlin for more than a couple of days

is of no consequence in the context of a guerrilla war. What it signifies is that the FMLN can strike virtually anywhere at its own choosing, and that the military as well as the political struggle is being won.

For the United States this poses acute problems. Vietnam showed that a demoralised army can collapse rapidly. The danger of direct United States intervention in the region is more acute than ever.

## PFLP position on the Fez agreement

After the recent Fez Arab summit which produced a 'peace plan' providing for a West Bank Arab state in exchange for recognition of Israel, a group of delegates to the meeting — including a minority of Arafat's Fateh organisation and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — denounced the agreement as a capitulation to imperialism. Here we publish an edited version of the PFLP statement.

THE 12th Arab Summit at Fez produced one outstanding resolution — the Arab peace plan. Looked at out of its political context, the plan is quite acceptable and is certainly an improvement over its precursor, the Fahd plan. Its points include the following demands: withdrawal of Israeli forces from all lands occupied in 1967; removal of all settlements built since 1967; freedom of worship for all; affirmation of Palestinian national rights, including self-determination, under the leadership of the PLO, and compensation to those who do not desire to return; the West Bank and Gaza Strip will be subject to a transitional period under UN control, not exceeding a few months; establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Taken on their face value, only one of these points is in contradiction with the political platform of the PLO — point no. 7, which by guaranteeing peace to all states in the region is an indirect recognition of 'Israel'.

Any proposal, however, cannot be truly evaluated without examining the nature of its initiators, their motivation and the timing.

The Fez Summit was convened on September 6th. It is noteworthy that it was not convened on June 6th, as an immediate response to the Zionist invasion of Lebanon, or even in July or August, as the genocidal war continued to rage. No as usual, the Arab Summit was convened after a major enemy attack.

The reason for this is very simple. The summit is not a vehicle for confrontation or defence or mobilising the Arab world. Rather, it is a vehicle for the reactionary Arab regimes to cloak their political treachery behind the facade of official Arab solidarity.

With all its patriotic rhetoric, there was a glaring omission among the summit's

resolutions. This is the lack of any condemnation of Zionism's main supporter: US imperialism. If the reactionary regimes were the slightest bit sincere in wanting to support the Palestinian struggle, they could have closed their bank accounts in the US, cut oil supplies or broken diplomatic relations.

The reason nothing like this was done is because of the subservience of the Arab region, and thus the Arab League, to imperialism. Many of the countries in the Arab League are directly tied to US imperialism and are acting in its interests. For the others, they are part of an area where the balance of power is in the hands of imperialism, Zionism and reaction. This is the current reality of the Arab world, and it is against this reality that the Arab peace proposal must be judged.

A closer look at the actual proposals reveals that seven out of its eight points are simply demands; patriotic demands, but totally unobtainable within the current balance of power. Thus they are no more than rhetoric.

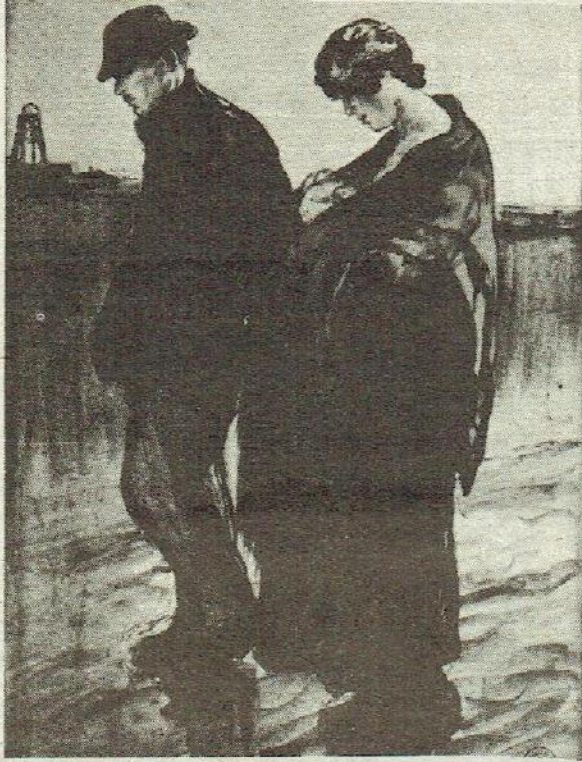
King Fahd knows full well that neither US imperialism nor 'Israel' will ever grant these requests, so what then is the real reason for this theatre of support to the PLO played out at Fez?

The Fez Summit was attended by all the Arab League members, with the exception of Libya and Democratic Yemen. All voted unanimously in support of the plan. It was to achieve this unity that reactionary regimes such as Saudi Arabia were willing to so radicalise the points in comparison to the original Fahd plan. We in the PFLP regret that the PLO saw fit to endorse this plan, and we have registered our reservations. The PLO should be in the forefront of denouncing such manoeuvres. The long-term effects of the Fez plan will not be in the interests of the Palestinian and Arab masses, as it lays the ground for further retreat and capitulation. The basis for legitimising relations with 'Israel' has now been laid with an Arab cover, while before the path was only through the US-sponsored Camp David accords.



In his second article on social democracy BOB PENNINGTON traces Labour's history from the end of World War I to the first Labour government of 1923, the general strike of 1926 and up to the debacle of 1931.

# Labour after the war



THE 'WAR TO END WARS' came to its bloody end in 1918 unleashing a wave of radicalism across Europe.

By 1919 there were over four million members in the TUC and Labour's vote was steadily increasing.

Two choices faced Labour. Should it place itself at the head of this growing radicalism and lead a movement for significant social change, and begin class war? Or, should it become a party separate and existing in its own right, but firmly wedded to parliament and constitutional change.

Without hesitation it chose the latter course. As Arthur Henderson said the party must operate solely by 'means of parliamentary democracy'.

So despite its new programme *Labour and the New Social Order*, and its adoption in the constitution of Clause Four which committed Labour to '... the common ownership of the means of production ... and control of each industry and service', it still played the game according to the rules of capitalism.

Both Sydney Webb, the author of Labour's new programme, and Philip Snowden had argued for gradualism and bringing socialism about with as 'little hardship to existing interests as possible'.

Very few people got round to asking either Webb or Snowden what was so radical about a programme that took over the powers and destroyed the privileges of the ruling class, but at the same time got their consent? Maybe the theorists of gradualism thought if it was done 'slowly and without violence' to quote Sydney Webb, the capitalists might never notice it had happened to them!

## Secret

By December 1923, when Labour took office it was certainly a responsible government. At a private and secret meeting even before they took over the government, MacDonald, Snowden, Thomas and Webb agreed according to Snowden that: 'We must show the country we were not under the domination of wild men.'

On that score nobody would have the slightest need to worry. Certainly not the big companies. In his first Budget Snowden got rid of a special tax on Corporation profits, which he admitted was fairly remunerative but was not a 'popular tax'. In this he was right. The Corporations thought anything that cut their dividends to be very unpopular, especially with their shareholders.

## Unrest

Strikes and unrest were certainly not popular with the Labour government. MacDonald wrote 'public doles, Poplarism, strikes, limitations of output are not only not socialism, but may mislead the spirit and policy of socialism'. If Labour was not exactly innovative in the domestic front, it was certainly conservative on the overseas front.

J.H. Thomas the Colonial Secretary exemplified this when he toasted the Empire and said the government 'were proud and jealous of, and were prepared to maintain

the Empire'. This no doubt reassured the establishment but did little to cheer Britain's colonial slaves, but then after all they were only foreigners.

When Labour fell as a result of losing a vote of confidence it left behind a record that was neither radical nor progressive. But office had made the leaders even more conservative. MacDonald moaned that '... the Party (not the cabinet) was not fit to govern'.

The new Tory government did not find everything going its way. And on 31 July 1925 — a day henceforth known as

The ex-King, Edward VIII in a *King's Story* wrote how MacDonald and his cabinet 'made their debut at Court colourfully clad in the uniforms of Ministers of the Crown'. How lovely they must have looked in their 'blue, gold braided tall coats and white knee breeches with sword.' Edward said that this and their 'courtesy went far to reassure my father.' In her *Diaries*, Beatrice Webb noted that 'Uncle Arthur (Arthur Henderson) bursting with childish joy over his Home Office Seals in the red leather box which he handed round the company.'

Red Friday — as a result of a miners' strike threat, backed by the TUC, it was forced to give a subsidy to the coal industry rather than the miners take a wage cut.

But this victory did not please everybody. J.H. Thomas was 'far from happy' and thought it 'dangerous for the future of the country' that 'employers and government should be compelled to concede through force what they refused to concede through reason'.

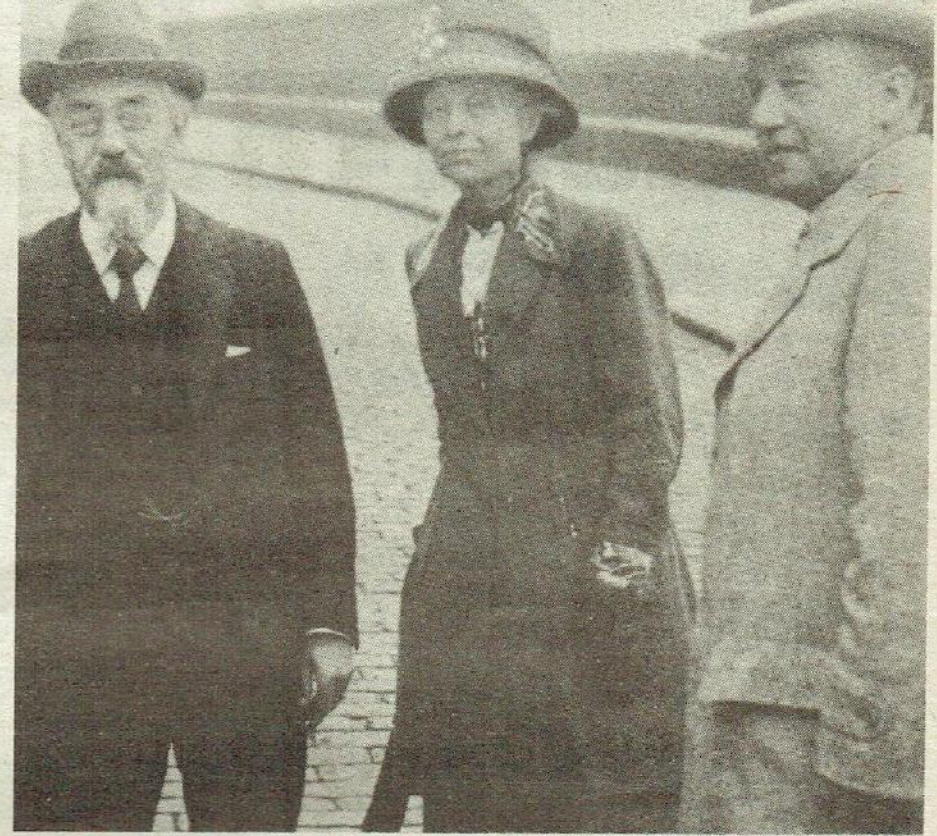
For the Tories *Red Friday* was a temporary setback and they started immediate preparations for a showdown with the miners. Meanwhile the TUC and the Labour Party carried on more or less as if it was business as usual.

## Differ

J.H. Thomas explained it was impossible to prepare 'deliberately and calculatedly for a general strike'. Unfortunately the ruling class begged to differ and 'deliberately and calculatedly' prepared for a general strike. So the workers led by men like Thomas got clobbered, whilst the government that had prepared won.

But then the strike had frightened the Labour Front Bench much more than it had scared the Tories. MacDonald told the House of Commons, 'with discussions of general strikes and Bolshevism and all that kind of thing I have nothing to do at all. I respect the constitution ...' Hardly a speech to encourage the miners and their allies, but it did make Mr Baldwin feel more confident.

The defeat of the general strike cost the workers dearly. Miners'



The Webbs with 'Uncle' Arthur Henderson in 1923

wages went down. A triumphant Tory government was able to cut the Labour Party's finances by making it law that people had to contract-in to pay the political levy.

The trade union rank and file smarting under the defeat of 1926 doubted the idea that militancy paid off.

From 1919 to 1921 the average number of workers involved in strikes and lock outs worked out at 2,108,000 each year. From 1927 until 1939 they only came to 308,100.

## History

Neither the Labour Party leaders, nor the TUC were dismayed by the defeat of the general strike. After all it had taught those 'extremists' and 'militants' that industrial action for political ends was just not on. The defeat strengthened their arguments for class collaboration. As Beatrice Webb wrote, it would lead 'to a rehabilitation of political methods...'

Whilst militancy and industrial action had taken a blow as solutions to the problems of the working class, the hope that a Labour government might

The Labour MP Stephen Walsh was appointed to the War Office in 1923. He then told the military: 'I know my place. You have commanded armies in the field when I was nothing but a private in the ranks'. He started his first meeting at the War Office by saying: 'Gentlemen, remember we must all be loyal to the King.'

defend them against wage cuts and unemployment still persisted amongst workers.

This was reflected in the 1929 general election when Labour with its 287 seats became the largest party in the House of Commons. Baldwin then resigned. The next day MacDonald saw the King and formed a government.

When Labour took over, unemployment totalled 1,164,000. In just over 13 months it had passed the 2 million mark.

Proposals to raise pensions, give cash to workers to induce early retirement and to boost purchasing power, along with controls of imports and for more public control of industry fell on stony ground.

Treasury orthodoxy calling for wage cuts, reductions in social services, and cutbacks in unemployment benefits won out.

MacDonald was determined to save Britain. His

cabinet accepted cuts, although a minority were against any cuts in dole.

MacDonald, his sense of responsibility and patriotism outraged by his cabinet's refusal to get on with the cuts, got shot of them. He went off, did a private deal with the Tories which led to the formation of a 'National Government'.

Then in alliance with the Tories and the National Liberals he went to the country on the slogan: 'Save the Pound, Save the Country'. Labour's vote divided by two million and the National Coalition romped home.

## How Labour's 'wild man' got tamed

THE 1923 General Election, which led to the return of the first ever Labour Government, took to Westminster quite a number of new Labour MPs. Included among these were the five so-called 'wild men' from Red Clydeside.

David Kirkwood, one of these 'wild men' later wrote a book, erroneously called *My Life of Revolt*, in which he described his first experiences when he entered the Mother of Parliaments.

He told his readers that before he entered the House, he knew little of 'The Great Ones, the Powerful Ones, the Lordly Ones' except 'that they, and the world they represented, were crushing my fellows down into poverty, misery, despair and death.'

But our 'wild red' soon lost his vindictive approach. He wrote that he 'found the House full of wonder ...' and tells how he 'had to shake himself' when he found himself talking 'with men whose names were household words'. How nice for Kirkwood that he found them 'all so simple unaffected and friendly'.

He records how Baldwin, after being denounced as a 'Uriah Heep' by Kirkwood, simply gently reproached him, and this 'pierced a link in my armour that had never been pierced before'. He then told of how one Tory responding to Kirkwood's speech denouncing the poverty of the crofters in the Hebrides went up to him and slipped him a £5 note.

The kind-hearted Tory told Kirkwood: 'I could not vote for you, but I should like to help these men if I may.' Kirkwood was beginning to understand that when you have Tories like that around all this talk about class war is just so much nonsense.

But then he was only agreeing with Labour's patron saint, Keir Hardie who earlier had written: 'The propaganda of class war can never take root in this country.' Hardie got it dead right about the parliamentary Labour Party, but he was, unfortunately for Labour, wrong about the Tory Party, who did, and still do, believe fervently in the class war. As long as they are waging it!

## Some historical landmarks in Labour's history

- 1917 Russian Revolution
- 1918 Labour adopts new constitution. No longer a federation, but becomes a party which is nationally organised, with individual membership and each constituency has its own party. General Election held. Despite wave of chauvinism promoted by National Liberal Tory coalition, Labour gets 2.5 million votes out of total of 11 million. Labour now the largest opposition party with 60 MPs.
- 1921 Formation of Communist Party of Great Britain. Black Friday. Coal bosses insist wages are paid on district not national level. Miners Federation call on Triple Alliance partners in transport and rail to support their strike. Miners' allies fail to act and Triple Alliance is sunk.
- 1922 General Election won by Tories. Labour gets 142 seats and polls 4.2 million votes, getting more seats than National Liberals and Asquith Liberals combined. J.T. Walton Newbold becomes first Communist MP at Westminster.
- 1923 For the first time ever, following December General Election Labour takes office dependent on Liberal votes. Labour has 191 seats, the Tories have 259 and the Liberals 159.
- 1924 Labour government defeated by combined votes of Tories and Liberals, MacDonald resigns. Tories win General Election getting 415 seats. Labour lose 40 seats but increase overall vote by over one million.
- 1925 Red Friday. Miners refuse to accept wage cut. TUC places embargo on all movement of coal. Tories backdown but prepared for showdown. TUC does not prepare.
- 1926 General Strike. Big defeat for trade union movement.
- 1929 General Election. Labour vote goes from 5,437,000 to 8,360,000 winning 287 seats, Tories have 260 seats and Liberals 59. MacDonald forms government.
- 1931 May Committee set up by House of Commons to recommend ways cuts could be made in national expenditure. Committee recommends 20 percent cut in unemployment benefit, along with cuts in teachers salaries, grants in aid, inservice police pay and public expenditure. Cabinet agrees on cuts totalling £56,250,000. TUC opposes all cuts. MacDonald proposes new list of cuts to cabinet, including 10 percent cut in dole. Eight Ministers dissent. MacDonald tells King he has 'resignation of cabinet in his pocket'. King George stresses to MacDonald that he must stay on as Prime Minister to form National Government. MacDonald heads National Government supported by Tories and Liberals. Snowden, Thomas and Lord Sankey join him. National Government imposes cuts totalling £70 million, including cuts of 10 percent in unemployment benefit. Henderson becomes new leader of Labour Party. MacDonald expelled from Labour Party. General Election. Labour contests 519 seats. National Labour contests 21, these were former Labour MPs who had gone with MacDonald. Labour loses 237 seats and has now only 52 MPs. National Labour has 13 MPs and Tories 471 and Liberals 33.

## '... Bennites, infantile leftists and infantile feminists'

LAST WEEK Socialist Challenge carried an article by Alan Freeman on the Annual General Meeting of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, where the campaign decided to register and where, after a bitter left-right divide over the issue of registration, the supporters of registration secured a two to one majority on the incoming executive body.

Alan Freeman argued that this result would cut the campaign off from the party rank and file, and that CLPD now risked being unable to provide an alternative to the policies of Labour's right wing.

VLADIMIR DERER, a campaign founder and leading advocate of its decision to register, replies.

ALAN FREEMAN accuses CLPD's Executive Committee's majority of running 'a scurrilous campaign'. In fact this would be a more apt description of his article (Socialist Challenge 279) which abounds with unsubstantiated allegations and factual inaccuracies.

Alan states that backing by the CLPD 'right-wing' of the Manchester Withington amendment is tantamount to support for 'a witch-hunt under democratic control.' In fact it would be very difficult to put the reforms proposed in the Withington amendment to any such purpose. Ironically pressure groups were given official recognition for the first time in the Militant Tendency Report.

### Groups

It was always unrealistic to assume that once such groups became influential the Party would continue to tolerate their activities without making them subject to regulation of some kind. The overwhelming support for the Register from the trade union delegates at the last conference confirms this. The left's failure to opt for a positive alternative to the Register (the Withington proposals) merely ensured the massive vote for the Register.

What Alan does not acknowledge is that outright rejection of the Register necessarily appears to most trade unionists as *carte blanche* to groups to campaign for whatever they please. To many trade unionists and other Party members this appears to encourage the creation of damaging divisions within the Party. Such views may be irrational. It is equally irrational however to ignore them.

### Choice

The choice is between the NEC having completely arbitrary powers and a method of control by conference. Alan's charge that CLPD has opted for the role of an arbiter between irreconcilable forces is ridiculous. The real upholders of the Register and of the conservative *status quo* are the unholy alliance of Bennites, infantile leftists and infantile feminists, which continues to campaign against the Withington proposals.

The Register is not particularly popular with anybody. But the scenes at Conference which followed Jim Mortimer's speech — at least half of those present gave it a standing ovation — it makes it difficult to share Alan's view that the decision to approve the Register 'is one of the most unpopular ones the Labour Party has ever taken'. Nevertheless the Register is unpopular among CLPs because it was designed as an instru-

ment to witch-hunt the Militant Tendency. In fact its provisions have proved inadequate for this purpose.

The NEC was in too great a hurry to go ahead with expulsions. This is the reason why Clause II(3) of the constitution is being used instead. The Register, however, is not dead, as some comrades like to believe. It may still be used against any group which fails to register. To rely on the goodwill of the present NEC is as naive as the assumption that refusal to register will evoke sympathy among the trade unions. Their respect for conference decisions is too well known to require elaboration.

To return to CLPD's position. A pressure group can only be effective while its members are in substantial agreement on its principal objectives, and if its demands are acceptable to the majority of people it seeks to win over.

The continued presence of those determined on a radically different line can only be resolved either by the subordination of the minority or by a split. To have advanced this argument before the decision on the Register was taken, and to have named those who hold different positions hardly amounts to a

scurrilous campaign.

CLPD supporters were entitled to know before voting which EC members supported proposals which would exclude delegates from affiliated organisations as well as other CLPD supporters from attending EC meetings. They were also entitled to know who wanted to deprive CLPD activists outside London and the South East (the only ones able to be in touch with HQ) from representation on the EC, as well as who wanted to prevent any internal discussion within CLPD under the pretext that controversial contributions were 'personal attacks'. Overall these proposals amounted to the introduction of a Stalinist regime.

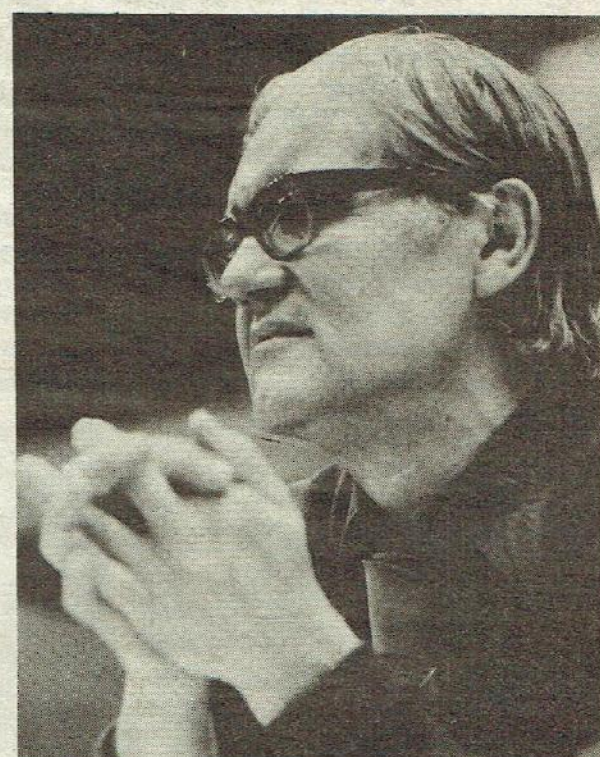
### Claim

Finally Alan's claim that those voted off the Executive were hardworking is ludicrous. The work recorded by those listed on the Secretary's statement (which was passed unchallenged) speaks for itself. (Harris 1½ hours, Race none). The participation of those voted off in innumerable ultra-left jamborees cannot be equated with hard work in CLPD.

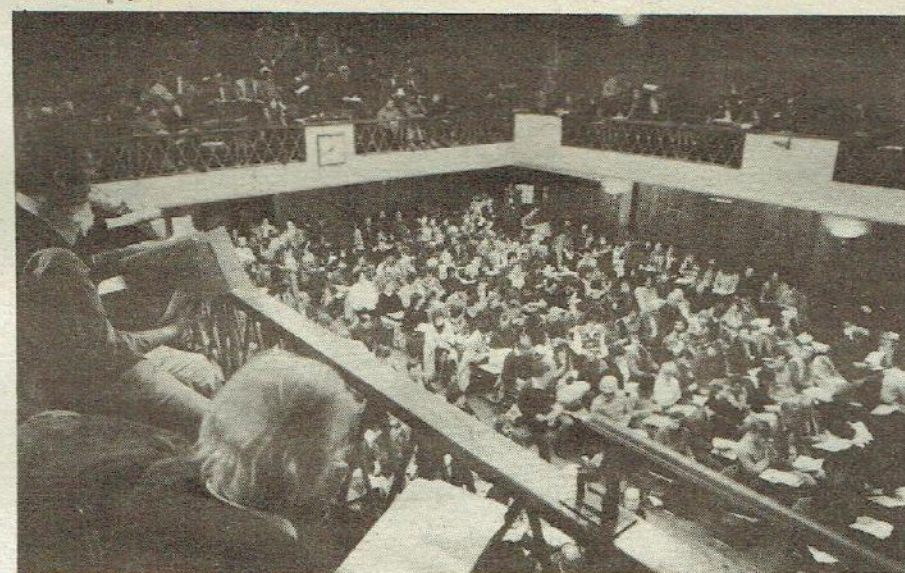
Alan also talks of CLPD's 'new leaders'. With the exception of Harris, Bloxham, Jones, Gaebler and Race, and those who retired voluntarily, all those elected to the 40 strong Executive Committee at the last AGM have been reelected.

Contrary to Alan's assertion CLPD has not turned its back on LAW. What we refused to do is to change the nature of CLPD by turning ourselves into a propaganda organisation to be used by LAW and the break-away group of Tribune MPs. CLPD still supports LAW but the methods we prefer to fight expulsion and the Register are those which CLPD proved to be effective in the past. No prison system has ever been changed by acts of individual violence against the warders.

Alan Freeman's conclusions that our actions have left us 'in a camp which is universally detested in the Labour Party' is insulting, but actually we don't mind that because who can object to a few fraternal or sisterly insults among comrades? We leave it to our ultra-left critics to add the petty-bourgeois norms of hypocritical politeness to their depleted 'theoretical' armoury.



Vladimir Derer, a founder of the CLPD.



CLPD conference in London.

## Labour and CND

YOUR EDITORIAL (SC 279) contains conclusions that are dangerous for our work in CND. Obviously members of Labour CND have made a choice about what we think the movement can win. We argue this at every opportunity inside CND. But when you conclude that 'This needs to be rammed home' and that our fight in the Labour Party creates conditions 'for winning the anti-nuclear movement to support for its natural and most powerful ally

— the labour movement', you are on a very slippery slope.

We should fight for CND to give priority as decided at its November conference to trade union and Labour CND. But the last thing we need in '83 is a long and bitter battle around winning CND to support Labour in the election — a battle that would divide the peace movement from top to bottom.

We should oppose moves of CND to endorse any candidate in the election. Our campaign then should be modelled on what we did here in

Hillhead and Queens Park.

CND lays out its policy and calls on voters to test that against candidate's pledges.

At our founding meeting in January, Gavin Strang, secretary of Parliamentary Labour CND stressed the peace movement would need to be more active if a Labour Government is elected on our programme. I agree.

Even if we do get unilateralism in the manifesto and even if we do win the election, we have got a third and even more taxing battle: to force the Labour leadership to carry it out. For that we need a strong and

independent CND whose mass mobilisations are above all what's created the mood in the Labour Party that has got us this far.

**Tony Southall, secretary Scottish Labour CND.**

**Ed comments:** We agree with Tony on his two main points — that mass mobilisation creates the best conditions for keeping a Labour Government to its promises, and that we should oppose CND officially endorsing any particular party.

Clearly for CND to endorse one or other party would, as Tony points out, split the movement. But that

doesn't stop us, as socialists, fighting inside the peace movement for its activists to campaign for a Labour victory, and against the standing of independent nuclear disarmament candidates.

The point is that there are some in the nuclear disarmament movement who think that it is basically irrelevant who wins the election. We should say no, only a government can send back the missiles and realistically it is only conceivable that a Labour government will do it.

The point of our editorial, and we apologise if this was not clear, was that now is the time for Labour CND to take the offensive to get Labour firmly committed to unilateralism in its manifesto, not that Labour CND officially endorse Labour candidates.

### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

#### Revolution/Socialist Challenge Celebration Rally

Come to the rally and hear speakers invited from



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

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

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

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE REVOLUTION YOUTH

### JOIN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

If you would like to be put in touch with Socialist Challenge supporters in your area or would like more information fill in the form below

Name .....

Address .....

Age .....

Union/CLP (if any) .....

Send to: Socialist Challenge, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.

# FIGHTING THE M

## HOW WILL THE LABOUR

A MAJORITY of Labour voters think it is justified to break the law to stop the siting of cruise missiles in Britain.

What is the best way to stop the missiles, and to commit the Labour Party to unilateral disarmament in practice?

HELEN JOHN from the Greenham Common

Peace Camp spoke to Valerie Coultas about their plans to stand candidates Women For Life on Earth candidates in the general election.

Next week Pat Arrowsmith explains her views on the fight against cruise and for unilateralism.

Why are you standing as a candidate in the general election against the Labour Party?

I'm not standing as a candidate against the Labour Party. I'm standing against right wing elements within it. That's not standing *against* the Labour Party. It's standing *for* the Labour Party.

This is the most important general election since the war and the prospect of Labour losing means the possibility of implementing unilateral disarmament is put further back.

If the peace movement and the women in the peace camps are standing against the Labour Party, or the right wing of the Labour Party, they will be accused of being opposed to the return of a Labour Government.

Well, we've been misunderstood from the beginning. Nevertheless, the confusion will settle.

I see no advantage in returning a Labour Government that doesn't have the will to bring into effect the policies that have been put before it. I watched what happened at the conference, our policies getting more than a two-thirds majority.

There's our friend Hattersley saying 'well, it doesn't automatically mean it will go into the manifesto'. And our friend Denis Healey saying 'it depends what you mean by unilateralism'.

There isn't any confusion in my mind at all. The Conference made the decision that the Labour Party should pursue unilateral nuclear disarmament. The right wing elements in the leadership have got to be challenged and brought into line with the Party.

Absolutely, but it's a question of how you do it. There are large numbers of people in the Labour Party who want to see unilateralism in the Manifesto. Will those people support you standing against the right wing?

Well I hope so. We would effectively be supporting Labour Party policy. The right wing are actively fighting against it. Anybody who votes for Denis Healey or Jim Callaghan is not going to get them working for the policies of the Party. They're going to be working 24 hours a day to defeat those policies.

**'I'm asking for a whole lot of things from a whole of people'**

But the point is there's a way of taking these people up within the Party. You're in the Labour Party and there's been a process of attempting to make these people more accountable.

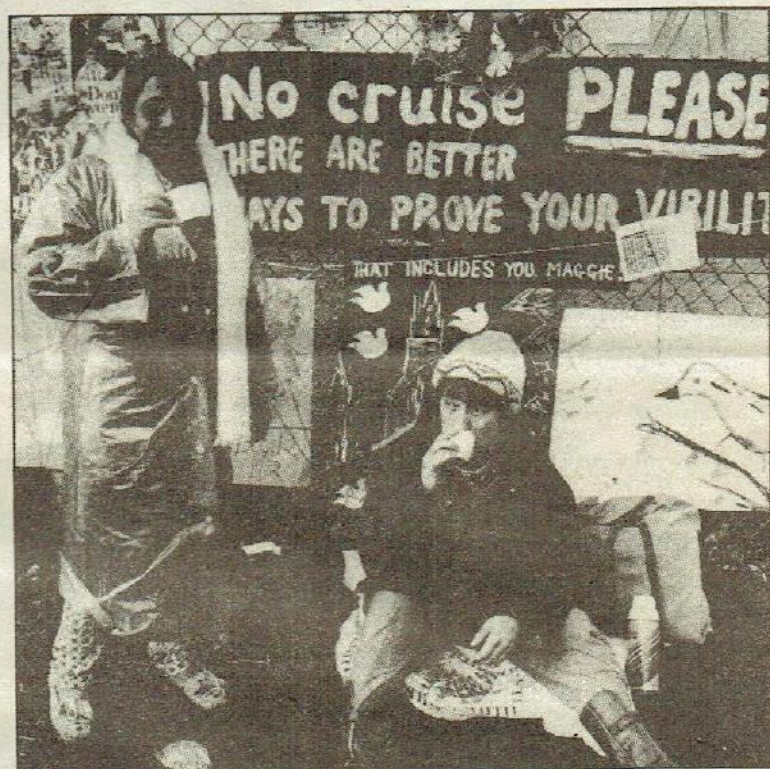
There are ways of fighting both in the unions and the Party to demand that policies are implemented.

Given the massive impact of Greenham Common women on the missiles movement, if you're seen as going with the people that are standing against the Labour Party you'll set back this process of democratisation, not take it forward.

### INTERVIEW WITH



HELEN JOHN (left) is one of the many women active in the Greenham Common Peace Camp. Women have been in the front line of the fight against nuclear weapons.



But I'm not going in with anyone against the Labour Party. We're standing against people who are challenging Labour Party policy and we're saying to them 'if you change your policy, if you pursue unilateral nuclear disarmament, then we will withdraw from standing'.

But you're asking the leopard to change its spots. Those individuals will not change their position unless they're forced to.

I'm asking for a whole lot of things from a lot of people. Perhaps they can be, shall we say, expelled from the Labour Party because they're not pursuing Party policy.

Do you think your standing against them is going to aid the people that want to fight in the Labour Party or hinder them?

Look, all I can say to you is — and I'm a member of the Labour Party — do we want to see a Labour Government returned in its present form where there is no control over the leadership at all?

And we see the same thing in the trade unions as well. Sid Weighell was a wonderful example of it — he was

mandated to behave in one fashion he chose to ignore that and there's nothing you can do about it.

**'Women have an important role to play'**

Well, there is something you can do.

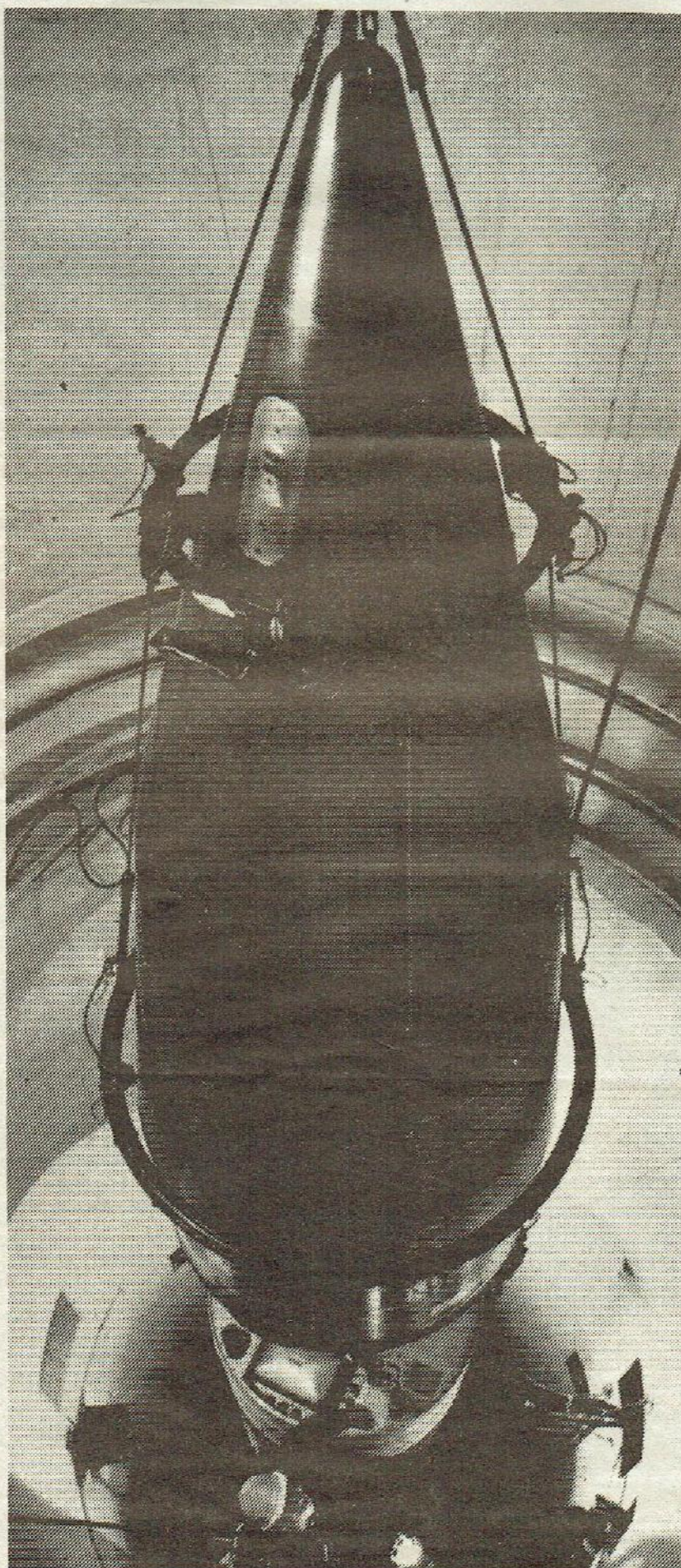
Fine, but it takes a long time. Now, they're probably going to put cruise missiles here in April. If you can convince me that you can change the Labour Party in time I won't stand. But until you can do that, I will.

We'll be very careful about which seats we choose. We're not going to choose seats, for instance, where there are unilateralist Labour candidates.

The main characters we're challenging are Healey, Callaghan, Shore, Hattersley and all these wonderful people who say the right things and do all the wrong things.

I think we'll just put a sharper focus on what they say and what they actually do.

Did you consider campaigning for Labour on the basis of unilateralism?



# MISSILES IN 1983 OUR PARTY SHAPE UP?

HELEN JOHN



Therefore there is a political context for these elections which is completely different from the usual two-party situation.

In other words, what you're saying is it's going to be even harder for the ordinary individual on the street who has to put their cross somewhere to understand what the hell they're being asked to do.

Well, if some women from the peace camp stand against certain right wing Labour Party MPs, that will be interpreted by a lot of ordinary people as an anti-working class stand.

Not by the time we have presented our position to them — but we haven't been able to do this yet. All the other parties are lining themselves up and saying what they're doing.

I guarantee that when we do what we were standing against and why, it will not add to the confusion the electorate have to face — it will clarify the position for them very much.

What I'm trying to say is that I think the ruling class want to crush the Labour Party and I think it would be tragic if the women from Greenham Common were seen to be part of a process of trying to electorally annihilate the Labour Party.

We have not got the slightest desire to injure the Labour Party, the section that wants to implement unilateral nuclear disarmament and actively want to assist it. That is very definite.

We are not out to injure the Party but what we are very clear about is that we are not about to let the Labour Party injure us with its right wing extreme element that has a hell of a lot of power — its present leaders.

I don't see that they are of any benefit to me, to the Labour Party or to humanity in general.

**'It's ironic, to have to leave the Labour Party to pursue Party policy'**

Yes, I think what we disagree on is the effect of you standing.

Well, all I can say is that after the election you'll probably have to come back and say 'I'm sorry, I didn't understand your point very well.'

Will you support people in the Labour Party who campaign for unilateralism even in the areas you're standing in?

Of course! We will be aiding and abetting them in every way we possibly can. We want to encourage them, but we want to make it easier for them to win over the right wing element that's trying to damage the cause.

But you're going to have to leave the Labour Party to do that?

Yes. It's ironic isn't it? To leave the Labour Party to pursue Labour Party policy. But I'm sure at a later date I can always rejoin the Party — or maybe the Labour Party will join Women for Life on Earth!

A full-length version of this interview with Helen John appears in the next issue of *International* magazine.

## CND DIARY

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

MORE is to be spent by the Tory government on defence next year than on anything else, except social security! The figures contained in the latest government white paper on public spending make the Tories' priorities abundantly clear. The defence budget jumps by a massive 10.9 per cent from last year, to a total of £15,987,000,000 (nearly £16 billion!).

THE GOVERNMENT is still trying to fudge the issue of how much money the Falklands War and garrison is costing but it does reveal that it is planning to spend £624 million in 1983-4, £684 million in 1984-5, and £522 million in 1985-6. This will bring the estimated total cost of the Falklands to £2.52 billion by 1985-6. All this, of course, assumes that there will be no further fighting — in which case the cost will go up ...

SOMEBODY has to be making money out of the imperialist war drive, and two companies' accounts revealed last week whose pockets were being lined. After years of losses and near collapse the Lockheed Corporation in the United States turned in a handsome \$207 million profit. Last year the U.S. government accounted for 81 per cent of its sales.

Meanwhile, Boeing reported a profit of \$91 million for the last quarter of 1982. Mr T.A. Wilson, Boeing's Chairperson, said that 1982 was highlighted by the increased levels of military business ...

BACK in Europe, General Bernard Rogers, NATO's supreme commander in Europe, condemned the Soviet proposal for a 500-600 km nuclear free zone in central Europe. Hardly surprising really, since NATO's nuclear weapons are supposed to offset Warsaw Pact conventional superiority.

Wily people these Russians ...

**Wed 9 Feb** Picket of George Bush visit. 4.30pm at the Guildhall, nr. King Street, London EC2.

**Until 13 Feb** YCND week of action against Trident and unemployment. Local actions around job centres and YOPs.

**Sat 12 Feb** Student CND national demonstration and human chain from M.O.D. to the D.E.S. Starts Jubilee Gardens, County Hall.

**Tues 15 Feb** Picket of Newbury Crown Court, where women arrested at Greenham Common are on trial.

**Sat 19 Feb** Labour CND Annual General Meeting. Delegates must be full national members of the LP and national CND. Credentials from 11 Goodwin St., London N4.

**Tues 22 Feb** National lobby of Parliament Against Cruise and Trident.

**Fri 25 Feb - Sun 6 Mar** Hounslow Council/Hounslow CND Anti-Nuclear Week. Details from (01)-577 3429.

**Sat/Sun 26-27 Feb** Conference Against Sizewell 'B', Blackfriars Settlement, Nelson Square, Waterloo, London. Details from 37 Cowley Rd, Oxford.

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

**Fri 1 April** 14 mile human chain from Greenham Common to Burfield via Aldermaston. Starts 1.30pm, followed by a festival at Aldermaston.

**Sat 2 April** Scottish CND demonstration in Glasgow.

**Sat 30 April** East London Labour Movement Conference Against Cruise and Trident, to be held in Queen Mary College.

**Sat 7 May** Youth CND Festival for Peace. Starts at 11am with a demonstration from Embankment marching to Brockwell Park. Bands, speakers and a festival village.

**Thur 12 May** Day of Action against Arms production at Thorn-Brymar's Brimsdown site in Enfield. Organised by London Region CND's Trade Union sub-committee. Details from LRCND, 6 Endsleigh Street, London WC1.

**31 May-3 June** Four day blockade of the US base at Upper Heyford. Details from 43 Peacock Street, London SE17.

**6 Aug** Hiroshima Day. Labour Party/TUC Day of Action against the missiles. Also marches from all over Britain to Greenham Common.

**22 October** Projected date for CND national demonstration in London.

parate campaign?

There's a swing now among women in the opinion polls from Tory to Labour, so what you'll be doing by standing against Labour is ...

We're NOT standing against Labour! We'll be challenging all sorts of right wing candidates — in the Conservative Party and the SDP. We are going right across the political spectrum with this, and challenging people who think that nuclear weapons have a place in our lives. We're saying to them 'you're wrong'.

**'The present leaders are no good to the Party or to humanity in general'**

In Britain, there's always been traditionally a two-party system and now there's a massive economic and political crisis.

All the political commentators are beginning to say 'what about the SDP, what about a third party, what about a Green party?'

The Communist Party for instance is advocating proportional representation and campaigning for a kind of 'popular front' government. It's beginning to campaign in CND to support the possibility of the SDP and the Liberals being won over to opposition to the missiles.

an individual — by joining the Party. That was my contribution to the Party — I gave it all that I having not got very far within our Party I then fortunately involved in Greenham Common think this campaign has got a reasonable chance of putting a ressure in the right places.

nk that to stand as we intend 'a title of 'Women for Life on nakes that point very clearly. nk there are a hell of a lot of who really feel now that have an important role to d I agree wholeheartedly with oliticians have had their way g, long while — they haven't o and delivered the goods. It ook as if even at this late hour still looking for other avenues re before they get down to the iness.

we are identified very strong- men at this time and that is first objective. To get a lot of to state very clearly that opposed to these policies.

nk large numbers of women or Margaret Thatcher for no eason than that she was a ater demand for women to be be active in this field to en- others to vote and take part ebate.



## German peace movement challenges the missiles

30,000 PEOPLE of all ages and political opinions poured into Bonn in October last year for a rally against the stationing of US missiles in Germany. This massive explosion of anger caused international astonishment.

In the first of two articles ANGELA KLEIN looks at the growing peace movement in West Germany.

IN GERMANY the peace movement has flowered. It is broad-based, politically explosive and in some ways even more powerful than other similar movements in Europe.

It is out of all proportion to the level of class struggle in West Germany, which remains relatively low. Why is this?

The rise of the peace movements in Western Europe was spurred by a number of general developments. These include the mounting attacks led by the USA against the colonial evolution, especially in Central America.

This offensive has been closely linked with a policy of threatening the Soviet

Union, and with severe economic attacks on the working class in Europe and the US.

In West Germany there are two factors to take into account. Firstly, it is crystal clear to everyone that a third world war in Europe would mean the physical annihilation of the German people. This is because of Germany's geographical location and because a war against the Soviet Union could only be won with atomic weapons.

Only the United States could wage such a war and it would use the 'European theatre' to do it. Regardless of who won, the German people would be wiped out. Germany

would be uninhabitable for a long, long time.

This fact is destroying the illusion among working people that the country can be defended by military means. So the peace movement has begun a debate on how war can be prevented in the long-term from ever happening.

### Proof

The decision of NATO to move the US military command in Europe from Stuttgart to London is proof beyond doubt that those who claim to be the 'protectors' of the West German people don't even believe their own propaganda.

The same goes for the NATO plans that call for withdrawing NATO troops to the west of the river Rhine in the event of a Soviet attack.

For these cynical politicians Germany between the Rhine and the Elbe,

(which contains 80 per cent of the German population), is already a nuclear no-man's-land.

Any rejection of NATO's blueprint means two fingers to US imperialism. The decision to wage war would be made in Washington. West Germany is not allowed to have nuclear weapons, or any control over occupation troops and atomic weapons stationed on its soil.

The NATO plans go hand in hand with a new strong-arm policy towards the Soviet Union, which has big implications for

relations with East Germany. Trade and credit relations are being tightened. Gains made under the 'detente' policy of the 1970s such as the opening up of communications between East and West, and the lessening of anti-Communist hysteria are being put in danger.

The West German working class is apprehensive about the abandoning of detente. It sees detente as an alternative to an aggressive stance toward the Soviet Union which would make it 'possible' to fight a war in Europe.

Detente was seen in

very different ways by the ruling class and the workers. For the bosses it was a way of maintaining the utopian objective of a status quo between the different social systems.

The workers saw it as a road to stopping war through an understanding with the East.

The appearance of a peace movement in East Germany is very important for developing alternatives to the US and NATO war-drive, and to the limitations of the 'detente' policy.

The peace movement has spread like wildfire to thousands of towns and cities. Half a million people demonstrated against Reagan in June last year. A poll carried out by the Christian Democrats (Germany's version of the Tories) showed that 49 per cent of the voters are worried about the missiles 'because they increase the risk of an atomic war on German soil'.

Some 58 per cent of people are opposed to the siting of the medium-range missiles if the Americans sabotage the Geneva arms negotiations.



## 4500 revolutionary candidates in French elections

WHEN Francois Mitterand was elected President of France in July 1981, it was greeted as a triumph by the left throughout Europe. His win was followed by socialist electoral victories in Greece, Spain and Sweden, and the revival of the electoral fortunes of the SPD in Germany. But only two years later disillusionment with the performance of the Mitterand Socialist-Communist government is widespread and the right wing is gaining strength. Meanwhile, in the forthcoming local elections the revolutionaries of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire and Lutte Ouvriere are standing more than 4500 candidates. JOHN ROSS looks at the recent developments in French politics.

The first two years of the Mitterand government have dashed the hopes of the European left. Mitterand imposed a wage freeze in the summer of 1982; abandoned his promise to reduce military service to six months; ploughed ahead with building up French nuclear weapons, and savagely attacked strikes. As a result the popularity of the government has fallen rapidly.

Every political commentator, including the government's own supporters, expect the right wing parties to make big gains in the March local elections.

government's waning popularity the right wing have launched a campaign for the early dissolution of parliament.

### Chirac

The Gaullist leader Chirac has announced a 60-point plan for 'saving the economy'. In practice the plan amounts to the destruction of many of the most important social gains of the French working class — including the abolition of the fifth week of yearly paid holidays, one of the few really popular measures of the Mitterand government.



Leading spokespeople for the revolutionary list: Arlette Laguilles (LO), Alain Krivine (LCR)

Despite the unpopularity of the Mitterand government, there has been substantial

downturn in working class struggle. Strong resistance to the government's austerity measures has occurred.

There has been a spectacular rise of the struggles of immigrant workers,

especially in the Citroen motor company. Citroen has been a centre of old-style company unionism linked to the fascist right. A long fight, culminating in the occupation of the Citroen-Levallois plant earlier this year, has succeeded in winning union rights and other gains for the workers.

Typically, Socialist Party general secretary Lionel Jospin has accused the immigrant workers of being manipulated by 'religious and political minorities'.

### Combat

In addition, 1983 started with a series of bitter strikes at Renault-Billancourt and Renault-Flins — traditionally among the most militant factories in France.

What is significant on the electoral front is that by-election victories by the right wing have occurred not because of the right substantially increasing its own vote, but because of working class abstentions. The danger is that the Mitterand government will succeed in severely demoralising the working class, allowing sweeping right wing victories.

The new political situation is recomposing the French left. The Communist Party is losing support still further, both in

the unions and local elections. The largest abstentions in by-elections have been in the old CP strongholds.

The old 'far left' outside the organised workers movement, which came into existence after May '68, now hardly exists.

Important oppositional currents exist inside the trade unions, winning up to 30 per cent of the vote against austerity in the Socialist-dominated CFTD, but no real opposition currents have emerged inside the mass parties themselves.

The one significant split from the CP, led by former Paris secretary Fizbin, has moved rapidly to the right. Fizbin is presenting himself as a candidate in the election, supported by the SP but viciously opposed by the CP.

For the first time in several years, the two Trotskyist organisations, Lutte Ouvriere and the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire are presenting a joint list in the elections. With 4500 candidates this will be one of the biggest revolutionary election campaigns in Europe since the second World War.

March will therefore see vital elections in Europe; in France and West Germany. Between them they will begin to reshape the course of European politics.



# Stop the missiles

# Trade Union CND Conference

On Saturday 29 January, 130 Trade Union CND delegates met at County Hall. PAT HICKE reports on the tasks confronting supporters in the 'Year of the missiles'.

An increased turn-out for 1983 Conference of trade union CND reflects the growing support for CND in the unions. Over the past year trade union affiliations have increased by 58 per cent. Twenty-two national unions are now affiliated, and about 25 workplace CND groups have been established.

While CND's influence is growing in the unions, a great deal needs to be done to win them to a perspective of mass action to stop the missiles and for unilateralism.

As the report on the past year noted, the TUC has done very little to implement Congress decisions. 1982 Congress didn't get the comprehensive plan for disarmament and redirection of resources to socially useful products that the 1981 Congress had instructed the TUC to prepare. Neither has the TUC prepared for a European Day of Action on 6 August 1983 which it was told to do at the 1982 Congress. Instead the TUC refused permission for a CND bookstall at the 1982 Congress. It is clear that action is needed to persuade the union leaders to turn paper policies into a real campaign.

On this point, however, TUCND had no clear direction. This was particularly evident on the question of the European Day of Action. Not only is this scheduled during the industrial holiday period for most of Western Europe — particularly France — but it's also a Saturday!

Much more useful was the suggestion for a five minute 'peace strike' around that time. Such an action would be a major

boost to the movement, and prepare the way for more effective mass action. Unfortunately, no plan of campaign emerged to build this.

A number of delegates stressed the importance of unilateralism in the Labour Party manifesto. The labour right was determined to exclude it, and there was no doubt that many trade union leaders were ignoring their own conference decisions, and collaborating with Labour's right wing to exclude the commitment.

A big weakness was the meeting's failure to discuss tactics in the general election. The question of whether or not TUCND should call for a vote for Labour was almost ignored, whilst one delegate wanted to 'build a movement so all-embracing that it doesn't matter who gets in'. The CP, in line with its coalitionist policy, argued for CND to be above party politics. The SWP, who turned out in some force, thought the question irrelevant — they saw the main thing as CND getting on the picket lines.

Both these approaches to the vital task of organising Trade Union CND ignore the real question facing trade unionists in the coming year: how to elect a Labour government committed to stopping missiles.



Greenham Common women gave 'Defence' minister Michael Heseltine a rough reception when he visited Newbury last Monday.

# Unilateralists challenge Foot

By Redmond O'Neil

LABOUR CND have launched a campaign to ensure that the Labour Party's general election manifesto includes a clear and full commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Already 144 of Labour's prospective parliamentary candidates for the coming election have added their name to the statement printed here. Joy Hurcombe national secretary of Labour CND told Socialist Challenge: 'We will now be campaigning for every single Labour candidate in the country to add their name to this statement. We are asking CND branches to approach candidates in their area to ensure they will be standing by Labour's conference decisions.'

A copy of the statement has been sent to Michael Foot accompanied by a letter from Labour CND asking for a meeting with the Labour leader before the document that will form the basis for Labour's election manifesto, is completed. In part this letter states:

'...this represents the genuine concern felt by prospective candidates that a clear commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament should feature prominently in the general election manifesto. Many candidates were selected as unilateralists by Labour Parties who supported both Composite 51 and the disarmament policies set out in the party's programme.

'It is their understanding that the Labour Party stands for abandoning all nuclear weapons, both British and American, on British soil or in British waters.

'A commitment that only relates to Cruise and Tri-

dent cancellation only relates to new generation nuclear weapons and cannot seriously lead to a non-nuclear defence policy.

'Many people in the peace movement, both in and out of the Labour Party have no faith in the Labour Party's ability to keep the conference commitment on unilateral nuclear disarmament. Yet we in Labour CND believe that there is no political alternative if we really want to achieve disarmament than through the Labour Party.

'We have to show that we can keep to our conference commitment. Anything less will damage the credibility of the Labour Party to its own supporters and to the electorate.'

It will be interesting to see how Michael Foot responds to this invitation.

He is quite happy to hold meetings behind closed doors to horse trade Labour's conference decisions with right wing MPs and trade union leaders. Will he be prepared to meet openly with those who represent the wishes of the overwhelming majority of trade union and Labour Party activists on the nuclear weapons question?

The threat of a sell-out to the right on Labour's election manifesto is a real one. Along with the continuation of the witchhunt this would deal a tremendous blow to Labour's chances in a general election.

It would also open the door to those who argue that Labour must do a deal with the SDP/Liberal Alliance.



Michael Foot — an imposter at a CND rally

Labour CND has a vital role to play in 1983 in uniting a broad coalition to force through the carrying out of the letter of conference decisions.

Socialist Challenge encourages all Labour Party activists to make the Labour CND AGM on 19 February a priority.

Labour CND AGM Saturday 19 February, County Hall, London SE1.

Agenda includes: Officers' reports, parliamentary report, position paper on activity in 1983, workshops and discussion on registration of Labour CND.

Delegates from Labour Parties affiliated to CND and as individuals who are members of both the LP and national CND.

Credentials from: Secretary, Labour CND, 11 Goodwin Street, London N4.

## Statement by Labour Parliamentary candidates.

'We the prospective parliamentary candidates for the Labour Party declare our support for Party Conference Composite 51 which was carried by a majority of over 4,900,000 to just over 1,900,000.

'We declare that it is our intention to fight the general election on clear

unilateralist policies in accordance with Composite 51.

'We therefore call on the shadow cabinet and the NEC to ensure that a clear and unambiguous commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament is contained in the general election manifesto.'

## Make bombs

— make a profit!

The government is giving British arms industries a free hand-out of £75m because inflation has fallen.

On 31 January Defence spokespeople told the Commons Public Accounts Committee that contracts signed in the late 1970s gave a guaranteed profit rate of 20 per cent because inflation was so high.

They still get the same

rate on all so-called 'non-competitive' contracts, which account for nearly half the government's £6bn defence equipment bill. In other words, while the government was telling the nurses it couldn't afford to give them £700m, it was giving the bomb makers £600bn absolutely free.

A 20 per cent profit rate can't even be justified, on 'commercial' grounds. The Commons Committee

heard that current profits in non-defence industries are about half this rate. But 'Ministers decided against reducing the 20 per cent rate because this could have undermined industrial confidence.'

We seem to remember that when Ken Livingstone tried something similar with public services, he was told it was illegal. Will Bromley council be suing Maggie Thatcher? We doubt it.

## North West YS conference fails to lead

By John Wilcock (Oldham YS) and Linda Wongsam (Openshaw YS)

OVER 700 branches of the Labour Party Young Socialists were represented at its North West regional conference in Morcambe last weekend. Revolution Youth and Socialist Organiser supporters fought together on a resolution from Oldham YS on CND which was passed. Having committed the NW YS to campaign against cruise and Trident, our supporters aim to get the regional LPYS right behind building the YCND festival in May.

Revolution Youth and Socialist Organiser supporters also fought together around resolutions on Ireland, Palestine and the witch hunt. We feel we made some telling points in the political debate, but when it came to the vote we were amazed at what happened.

The chairperson announced the National Committee recommendations on resolutions, then took votes for or against the recommendations rather than on the resolutions themselves.

When we objected we were told that the LPYS is 'the most democratic organisation in the labour movement'.

Apart from these resolutions delegates were treated to a weekend of Militant rhetoric. We were shocked by the absence of politics in their contribu-

tions. Every speaker had a tale to tell — how their neighbour died in poverty, lost their job, committed suicide, sniffed glue, got an industrial disease or got blown up by the IRA! But of course everything will be alright once we nationalise the 200 leading monopolies!

And in the meantime apparently, nuclear disarmament is an impossible dream and there's no point in fighting for Britain out of NATO, troops out of Ireland, self determination for the Palestinians or just about anything else.

We came away feeling that in this year when mass action on nuclear disarmament will be vital Militant's propagandistic and abstentionist approach will be far from adequate in giving a lead to the LPYS.

# ROUND AND ABOUT IN BERMONDSEY



## Mr O'Grady's friend

IS JOHN O'GRADY really the people's friend in Bermondsey? Well, he does have the unqualified backing of the other people's friend, Bob Mellish who served the constituency for 36 years.

Of course there are a few malcontents who claim Mr Mellish could have done a better job than he did, and that at times he got his priorities wrong — but then whose perfect? Last summer, Socialist Challenge staff writer BOB PENNINGTON took up the cudgels against the defamers and attackers of Mr Mellish, when he interviewed one of his constituents.

We are reprinting Bob's article, because we want to show that John O'Grady is the best candidate to carry on in the path of his sponsor. As the old saying goes: 'By their friends, ye shall know them.'



Is it true that Bob Mellish has always fought for the dockers in this area?

Oh yes. When he was first an up and coming MP under Atlee Bob Mellish was very worried about the reds and the Trots who were trying to subvert the portworkers. He even joined with three other MPs to work with M15 — he knew that the intelligence service was devoted to the cause of the dockers — to defeat the 1949 dock strike. In 1951 he supported the Labour government when it put seven dockers on trial for striking for higher wages, Bob knew the strike was led by reds.

Bob always had the support of the dockers didn't he?

Well most important he had the support of Arthur Deakin who was the boss of the TGWU and Arthur's right hand man, TGWU organiser Bert Fry. They promoted Bob from being an office boy into a full-time official for the TGWU docks section, where some unkind people claimed he was still Mr Deakin's office boy. Because Arthur and Bert always knew what was best for the dockworkers they did not bother holding an election for Mellish, they simply appointed him.

In 1946 when the parliamentary seat of Bermondsey and Rotherhithe became vacant his two mates made sure he got the TGWU vote which assured him of a seat at Westminster.

Surely Mr Mellish was not just interested in South London, he was very interested in international affairs.

Dead right. He liked Franco and Salazar. These two men had got rid of all those people who wanted to mess around with Christian values. That is why he was for a time the deputy chairman of the Anglo-Spanish group, which tried to make Spanish fascism more acceptable to the British public.

In 1954 he even left his beloved Bermondsey to go to Angola where he was able to report that Portuguese fascism was doing a good job of keeping the natives in order, as Mellish said he 'saw no signs of repression'.

For his honest and candid defence of catholic standards the Roman church made him a Knight of St Gregory.

He has done a lot for local people hasn't he?

Too right. He gave his support to a call for the release of Charlie Richardson who is a home-grown south Londoner who made torture a profitable profession. In the fifties he favoured the release of one 'scarface' Parsons. Maybe 'scarface' was a hoodlum and a gangster, but as Bob knew he was a local lad which is more than you can say for all these immigrants.

Mellish is not like those dogmatic socialists of the left. Surely he believes in the mixed economy and not all that nationalisation?

Quite right. Bob has been prepared to befriend any person trying to get the economy going. He was a big mate of Oliver Cutts who made a fortune by developing property in Bermondsey and Deptford. Cutts used to treat Bob to a meal twice a week at the Savoy. He even put up £4,000 of the £7,000 that the Mellish family needed to buy their pad in Deptford.

When Bob's eldest son was 21, Cutts spent £280 on his birthday party, but Cutts did not like the cake so he destroyed the caterer's car — that's what I call having a loyal friend!

Eventually Mellish got Cutts an MBE. However the courts convicted Cutts of malicious damage, perjury and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice, so a lovely friendship came to an end.

But surely Bob Mellish kept on trying to make the mixed economy work?

Oh, he was not easily

discouraged. He was a friend of T Dan Smith, the architect John Poulson, and the property tycoon Sir Eric Miller. Unfortunately Mr Smith and Mr Poulson were given free board and lodgings by the Queen, and Sir Eric blew his brains out before he too was taken to a state hotel. You see poor Bob was let down by his friends again.

Unlike those lefties Bob Mellish is not a sectarian, he will work with anyone for the common good eh?

Most definitely. In January 1962 he started a company with a Sunderland Tory MP called Paul Williams. For a fee this company was willing to act as industrial peacemakers. Again Bob's motives were misunderstood, and the suspicious members of the Sunderland Labour Party kicked up a fuss about him working with a die-hard Tory who later became chairman of the Monday Club, so Bob had to pull out.

Well you have to admit that Bob Mellish had done a lot to house Londoners, that's something you can't deny.

You are right there. When he was parliamentary secretary to the ministry of housing he worked really hard to promote the industrial building of tower blocks. But things went wrong. Within 14 years a lot of these estates were being pulled down. However Bob is an honest man and he admitted that building these blocks was 'an appalling blunder'.

Who else would own up to the wastage of millions of pounds of public money and to sticking people in homes that started to fall down around the inhabitant's ears

Well readers, you can see the record of Bob Mellish speaks for itself. Would you buy a second-hand Labour candidate from this man?

On Monday 7 February, the Bermondsey by-election campaign officially opened. Already the Bermondsey Labour Party has been hard at work preparing for this crucial dry-run to the general election. Mass canvasses have been called for on Sunday mornings at the party rooms. Last Sunday our Socialist Challenge reporter CAROL TURNER spent a morning out and about with candidate Peter Tatchell.

TEN THIRTY am at Lower Road, Rotherhithe. Shivering in the wind, and already wet through by the sleet, workers are arriving for the Sunday morning canvass.

'Hello. Have you signed in? Canvassing on the left, leafletting on the right.' Bermondsey Labour Party is geared up for Peter Tatchell's by-election. The Party rooms are spilling over with leaflets, posters, badges.

The first two workers I meet are packaging leaflets to advertise Monday evening's public meeting. One is Jeremy Hawthorne, secretary of the nearby Peckham Labour Party. The other is Alan, who tells us he doesn't have a constituency — he's just back from Africa!

By 11am, activities are in full swing. Workers reporting from all over London are assigned their patch to leaflet or canvass. Already they've signed in from as far afield as Hornsey, Islington, Woolwich and Wimbledon. Later, a group arrives from Eastbourne CLP. Labour Party activists recognise

that this by-election will be a trial run for the approaching general election.

Soon after 11 o'clock, Peter leaves with a small entourage to cover his Sunday pitch. First, down to East Street market in Walworth, where we hand out leaflets while Peter shouts through his loud hailer.

The reception is mixed. Many shoppers greet Peter by name and wish him luck. Others are hostile. 'Go back to Australia, you bloody draft dodger.' Peter takes advantage of the situation to explain his views. 'I'm proud not to have fought in the Vietnam War,' he says. 'I regard all those who did as war criminals.'

The media hate-campaign has taken its toll, and Peter feels obliged to counter the lies of the press. 'When I get to parliament,' he explains,

'I won't be like all those other MPs — I won't move to a house in Surrey. I live in a local flat and I know what it's like to be a council tenant. I will continue to share the problems of the local people.'

As we move down the market, we're followed by the fascists. Local NF thugs are on the corner, peddling their papers. We're urged by Peter to stick close together: 'You never know who'll pull a knife on you.' Peter has already had many threats on his life and his home.

More harassment comes from Southwark Council market officials who apologetically explain why he can't loud-hail inside the market. We move to the perimeter of the market. And finally go towards the local estates.

The small team of workers with Peter knock on doors: 'Would you like to meet Peter Tatchell, your local Labour candidate?' while Peter shouts again through the loud-hailer, 'What we need is more Labour rebels in parliament. When Labour is returned, we'll freeze rents for a year, we'll bring Britain out of the Common Market, and we'll get rid of unemployment.'

After two-and-a-half hours in the cold and rain, we make our way back to the party rooms. Everyone

is down stairs reviving with a pint. Canvassers are discussing the morning's response. There's a 50 per cent Labour vote among those so far contacted — but will it be for Peter?

A small group are standing in the corner. They're pointed out as O'Grady supporters. At first they don't want to tell me why they're very hostile to 'you lot'.

Why will they vote O'Grady when he's no longer a member of the Labour Party? They don't know, beyond saying that they think 'he'll carry on the tradition of Bob Mellish'. They will support anyone who stands for 'the old Labour Party'. But why? No reason that can be determined. Simply they believe that the press campaign around Peter's private life 'has brought us all down hill'.

Peter downs his pint stoically. He thinks the morning's response has been good overall. He's especially encouraged that the response of older people has been a good one.

Finally, the Labour Club closes, and everyone's off to the meeting upstairs to discuss the morning's results and to plan for the forthcoming weeks of the campaign.

## Bermondsey sabotage

By Jeff King

John O'Grady must really think 'that some one up there likes him'. Well if God doesn't certainly someone in the bureaucracy at Labour Headquarters has a soft spot for Bermondsey's alleged 'real' Labour candidate.

How else can we describe the decision to cancel Peter Tatchell's first election press conference and impound 25,000 broadsheets except as either bureaucratic incompetence, or deliberate sabotage.

This action really handed O'Grady and the Labour-hating press a scandal on a plate and they are certainly taking full advantage of their present from Transport House.

Obviously it was a sinister act to have the leaflets printed by the Militant supporters at Cambridge Heath Press. After all this Press is run by members and supporters of the Labour Party and surely instead of showing such a pro-Labour bias, the Bermondsey Labour Party could have found some local printshop with a Tory gaffer!

The obsession of the right wing in witch-hunting Militant has dealt a blow at Tatchell's election campaign. The job of the Party leadership and its full-time organisers is to get on with winning the seat for Labour and routing O'Grady and his supporters.

If the full-time officials can't get on with that job then Labour's National Executive should send people into Bermondsey who can.



Council tenants on the Heygate Estate leave their Sunday dinner to meet candidate Peter Tatchell.

# Southern collaboration back on course

By Martin Collins

Conor Cruise O' Brien once indicated that even clinical death would not convince him that Charlie Haughey could not stage a come-back.

Newspaper headlines are dominated by the Nixon-esque struggle of a man who refuses to go. Surrounded by political intrigue and open conspiracy Haughey has more escape tricks than Houdini. His political success over rivals can be put down to one factor — his ability to claim to the workers he is a Nationalist and to the bankers that he wants to sort out the economy.

In the recent elections, his ratings shot up by 10 per cent in a week after denouncing his rival Garret FitzGerald as a pawn of the British, and then dissipated this as he tried to hold back the support this got.

Meanwhile the real business of looking after the shareholders goes on. Garret FitzGerald revives the public side of the Anglo-Irish collaboration with new proposals on the Constitution.

Two things concern the southern government. The first is to step up the austerity offensive — cuts, unemployment, attacks on so-called union power — this would please both the Americans who are the

largest investors in the South, and the British who maintain the largest financial stake in the ailing economy.

The second is to eliminate the permanent source of instability created by the partition of Ireland. Not that they want to reunify Ireland with an all Ireland government, rather to set up some kind of 'condominium' with the British government openly running affairs.

The first steps in that are various forms of cross-border cooperation to combat military and political resistance to the British presence. The Americans are also happy with this, since beyond the St Patrick's day speeches of the Kennedy's lie a deep feeling that Ireland should really be fully involved with the NATO.

Right now both the austerity drive and the threat to Ireland's self-determination are resisted strongly by the workers and small farmers of the South.

Although prices are spiralling — Guinness now being well over £1 a pint,

and unemployment rocketing, the southern government lacks the ally of a strong trade union bureaucracy able to keep the workers in check. When the previous FitzGerald government introduced a blanket 15 per cent VAT surcharge, the immediate response of strike action and the national demonstration of shoe makers and leather workers was enough to exempt that industry. Occupations and other militant action that check government plans happen every week.

FitzGerald knows that to really smash the workers' resistance, attempting at the same time to avoid the complete collapse of the economy, he needs outside help. The British government are offering that, but not without strings.

On the military front, collaboration is also well advanced. Already strings of radar stations, quite outside of Ireland's military requirements have been set up under Anglo-American guidance. This is part of the job of shoring up NATO's Western European flank from possible Soviet air attack.

But the Irish workers jealously guard what limited neutrality they have left. The government was forced to stop public talks with the British at the time of the H-block struggle, and again over the Malvinas war, where political pressure forced the southern government break up the European 'unity' behind Britain's war.

The southern govern-

ment is working hard to prepare for future confrontation. Anxious to win the backing of the Catholic hierarchy, the anti-abortion laws threaten to be permanently embodied in the constitution. Despite the fact that abortion is already illegal in the South, this move is being promoted to guarantee the alliance with the church.

It says to the church that liaison with the British will not involve negotiation around these sorts of questions. The role of the church will become more important in Irish politics as the betrayal of sovereignty threatens to bring thousands of Irish youths onto the streets to fight imperialism.

Women have played a leading role in the Irish struggle, and the abortion attack is just one of a number of measures necessary to boost the role of the family in maintaining 'law and order'.

What the Irish need is a workers' party equally able to plan for the future. A party that would be prepared to form a government to take on the multinationals and to resist the British. A government that had the confidence to link with the workers in the North to get rid of the British presence once and for all.

For all their recent successes which we warmly congratulate, the nationalists in Ireland have yet to work out such a plan. If they were to do that, the kinds of successes seen in the Northern Assembly elections could be repeated all over Ireland.

## Colin Roach

By Tim Wright

In a tactful display of brute strength the police have once more shown their concern for the truth. Stoke Newington High Street was occupied territory last Saturday with every few yards police standing in pairs while full police vans waited on street corners and others patrolled the back streets. The occasion: an expected second picket of Stoke Newington Police Station to demand an independent public enquiry into the death of Colin Roach.

Intimidation is the police strategy; mass arrest and the threat of mass arrest, their tactic: Every time the Hackney black community has protested en masse since Colin's death, the police have swooped: their justification, lawlessness and looting.

Yet none of the charges of those arrested has related to theft or looting, but to typical demonstration crimes of obstruction and provocative behaviour. Merely the presence of black demonstrators appears to be 'provocative behaviour'.

### Task

At a Hackney Black People's Alliance meeting on Friday, 4 February, Darcus Howe of the 'Race Today' collective spoke of the history of the black movement in Britain. He talked of the early days in the fifties when the black community was too frightened in an alien society to do more than lobby councillors and MPs to voice its deep anxieties about police racism and corruption.

He spoke of the development of Black Power in the sixties and seventies, and the birth of black consciousness and pride. Only a minority were active, he said, and most blacks, though very discontented, would claim that 'you can't fight and win in this country'.

All this has now changed, he stressed, and since the New Cross Black People's Day of Action, when 15,000 marched, the black movement has come of age. Now blacks all over Britain are saying 'we are not going to take any

more!' The anger of the youth on the streets in the cities of Britain and the growing number of black campaigns bear witness.

### Resistance

No police intimidation will stop the growth of a movement.

The enemy's response, he said, has been to demand more power to the police: 'our primary slogan has to be "more power to us and less power to them"!'.

### Control

The march planned by the Roach Family Support Committee for Saturday 12 February must be a clear statement of opposition to police intimidation, and assertion of the goals of the Colin Roach campaign. Darcus Howe ended on Friday night by saying: 'I'm not fighting for civil rights anymore: I'm fighting for complete and total rights'.

### MEXICO: A coming revolution

TIM WRIGHT is available to address meetings concerning the growing struggle of the Mexican masses for organisational autonomy and against state repression, the dynamics and regional significance of that process, and the role of the PRT (Mexican section of the FI) in the leadership of the struggle. (With slides).  
PHONE: 01-359 8371.

## Bristol campaigns against deportations continues

BRISTOL social worker Mohammed Idrish has lost his appeal against deportation. The Bristol and Birmingham based campaign is now stepping up its activity.

A hundred people supported a meeting 21 January including representatives from all the black communities in Bristol, local Labour Parties and union branches.

Idrish attacks the immigration laws as a whole, explaining that: 'They explain the law the way they like and proceed the way it seems best.' He exposed how Home Office officials, although accepting his marriage had been 'genuine', repeatedly asked his wife: didn't she think it strange for a Christian to be married to a Muslim? Indeed, the break-up of his marriage had been made more likely by

Home Office harassment.

The meeting agreed to campaign in a number of ways: public leaflets and petitions in Bristol Broadmead at 1pm on Saturday 12 February and a rally from the centre of Bristol 12pm 19 February. It called for letters and resolutions to the Home Office from the Labour movement and black organisations and for the building of the 27 March CARL demonstration.

For information and donations c/o 62 Bedminster Parade Bristol 3 or c/o Radnor Rd Handsworth Birmingham.

## Caught in a Cold War

By Ronan Brady

COUNCILS throughout the country face enormous cuts while tenants face further hardship. But how have tenants of Labour Councils fared? CHRISTINE WINTER (Brent East CLP), a spokesperson for Brent Tenants talks to Socialist Challenge about the report; *Caught in a Cold War*.

'Tonight I went to visit a mother of a three-year-old child,' says Christine, 'water was pouring into the flat. The walls of the bedroom were covered in a black mould.'

Conditions in many of the councils estates are appalling. Yet rents have risen by 150 per cent in three years. 'We've had too many promises which weren't kept. We're just not going to take anymore!'

*Caught in a Cold War* paints a picture of increasing deprivation for the low-paid. Twenty nine percent of tenants are in arrears in Brent and this

figure has doubled in four years. While housing costs for a family-sized council house have increased 15 per cent, a large private house will have become 3.4 percent cheaper to run since September '81!

As the rent/rates bill increases in geometric progression, tenants are forced to minimise on heating. Hence the report's title. In Brent however this crisis is greater because as tenants turn off the heating — their homes begin to rot.

In 1974 the incoming Labour Council were met with an agreement to build a new estate at Church End by William Old.

The Church End development, built by William Old, depends on constant heating in all rooms. Its Resiform structure actually rots when heating is turned off. These wood-and-plasterboard hovels were originally commissioned by a Tory Council in very suspicious circumstances. However Labour has been in power in Brent for eight years.

'The balance-sheet isn't very promising: Labour just tinkered with it' says Christine. The end result is the black mould and an unusually high incidence of respiratory disease on the estate. In fact the right-wing dominated council seems about to cut a further £1000 from estate maintenance as well as to raise the rates.


Clearly we in the

Roach Family Support Committee

## MARCH AND RALLY

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For an independent enquiry into the death of Colin Roach




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SATURDAY 12th FEBRUARY

ASSEMBLE: 1 PM

HACKNEY TOWN HALL

MARE STREET

LONDON E8

CAUGHT IN A COLD WAR

council tenants and the fuel costs crisis



tenants rights information & research unit

Labour Party need to junk the attitude of 'tinkering with' local authority housing. This report spells out the limitations of the approach of Labour's right and large sections of the left as well. Rates increases will just mean more hunger and cold in Church End. Council services and officers have already been slashed.

'Tenants aren't stupid. We know what's going on.' It's now time that Labour Councils found out as well! *Caught in a Cold War* costs £3.50 (£1.75 unwaged) and can be obtained from the Tenant's Rights Information and Research Unit, 375 High Road, Willesden, London NW10. Make sure your library/organisation has a copy!

# Socialist Challenge

# NOW STEP UP THE ACTION!

By Pat Hickey



## BAN PLASTIC BULLETS!

Support for the Labour Movement Conference on Plastic Bullets has come from a cross section of the Labour Left.

From the enthusiastic endorsement of known campaigners like Livingstone, Balfe and Maynard, to the more hesitant approach of Benn and the Broad Left currents in the Unions; there is a concern that Party conference decisions should be implemented and that the misery caused by these appalling weapons should be ended.

At the other end of the spectrum, the official spokesperson on Ireland — Don Concannon now openly defies conference decisions maintaining relations with his Army friends.

As the General Election approaches, we need to know if the commitment of the Labour Left is serious. Have they thought through the consequences of removing Plastic Bullets? The first, and very obvious barrier will be the opposition of the Army.

They say that the Plastic Bullet is the best weapon available to 'deal with' the Nationalist Community. It is ideal for suppressing the youth on the streets and for sending demonstrators packing. They are not too bothered about a few deaths, or too concerned about some 'overzealous' use.

Faced with a Labour Government setting out to ban the plastic bullet they will do two things: firstly campaign for an upgraded variety of riot gun but even more effective, secondly to escalate the present 'shoot to kill' policy.

This policy which has already accounted for the murder of a number of Republican activists will claim more lives under a kind of 'instant death

sentence', which will then be blamed on the Labour Government. In all this they will act in liaison with the loyalist paramilitaries who may even earmark the victims to be picked off.

How do the Labour Lefts propose a government should deal with this ploy? The Army has already shown that it is prepared to defy parliament. It has already shown that it is prepared to work alongside loyalist mobs whipped up by the likes of Ian Paisley. The only answer that will avoid the withdrawal of Plastic Bullets being used to deepen the 'extra parliamentary' pressures to deflect a left Labour government from its declared aims, is to simultaneously withdraw the troops.

The debate taking place at the Plastic Bullets Conference on the 'political context' of the campaign will have to answer this question. The issue is not one of humanitarian concern for needless lives lost, but one that goes to the heart of the fact that the Alternative Economic Strategy has yet to answer the outstanding questions on an Alternative Foreign Policy.

**THE BREAKDOWN** of the latest talks on the water workers dispute puts the ball firmly in the union's court. The response now should be to massively step up the action.

The employers offer is nothing short of a provocation. After last week's talk about rises between £5-£10 a week, the reality was quickly shown to be very different. The improved offer amounted to only 50p a week on average, and more than half the water workers would get nothing. In return, the employers wanted increased productivity.

Trade union leaders' readiness to talk about productivity, rather than standing firm on the full claim, is an indication of their eagerness to settle the dispute at any price. Water workers should demand **NO RETREAT ON THE FULL CLAIM** and the action should be stepped up.

The employers strategy is to keep making offers, apparently generous, which turn out to be pie in the sky. This keeps the unions talking, and leads the members to hope that a settlement is 'just around the corner'. It distracts attention from the main question facing the strikers: how to make the dispute bite.

Time is on managements side. They are continuing to pay huge sums to staff scabbing on the dispute. Using scab lorry drivers and police to get supplies through the picket lines, gives them the room to wear down the

strikers.

The union leaders are so busy running backwards and forwards to ACAS, they are neglecting the real battlefield. This dispute will not be won at the negotiating table but at the depots. Because of the union's stance, the strike is having only a fraction of the effect it could have.

There can be no question that the water workers are capable of winning this fight against the Tories. But hitting industry is essential to success. The whole question of emergency cover should be reconsidered to this end. Most industry needs a steady supply of water.

Power stations are particularly vulnerable. Determined action can rapidly raise the stakes for the Tories. But this initiative will have to come from the rank and file water workers.

The Tories are determined to win. They see this as an important preparation for the general election. The labour movement cannot afford to allow this strike to go the way of the ASLEF and health workers disputes.

Every union and Labour Party branch should now be sending messages of support and donations to the water workers. Delegations must visit the picket lines. The Labour Party should put all its weight behind the dispute. Constituency parties, together with their affiliated trade union branches,

should build public meetings and organise tours for the strikers.

Labour's leaders must be forced to come out openly in favour of the water workers. They must demand that the Tories pay the full claim. This is essential if the blame for the inevitable hardship and inconvenience is to be placed at the door of the Tory government.

The media will be putting the pressure on the unions to accept arbitration. The TUC will soon be putting its oar in, to sell out the strike in the same way they sold out ASLEF. Only a fighting response from the ranks, uniting the working class for joint Labour Party/trade union action to kick out the Tories will give victory to the water workers.



Waterworkers' Picket line

Photo: Morning Star

## Brits Out of Lebanon

By Hilary Driver

**BRITISH SOLDIERS** arrived in Beirut last week to join the international 'peace-keeping' force in the Lebanon.

The Queen's Dragoon Guards will be policing a zone in southeast Beirut — along with 1,200 US marines who are renowned for keeping the peace the world over.

This is the first time that Brits have been involved in the antics of the US and the Israelis in Lebanon.

When these 'peacekeepers' really get down to it the results can be dramatic — hundreds of Palestinian refugees were viciously murdered last September with the direct involvement of Israel.

British troops should

fit in rather well with these butchers. They have a world-wide history as 'peacekeepers' especially in Northern Ireland where they have brilliantly 'kept the peace' for the last 13 years.

They went to Northern Ireland to 'protect' the Catholics, and quickly sparked off a prolonged war against them, murdering hun-

dreds of men, women and children in the process.

We can only hope that the Palestinian and Muslim people they are now 'protecting' will have learnt from this bloody history.

A howl of protest should go up from the whole of the labour movement at the sending of these troops to Beirut.

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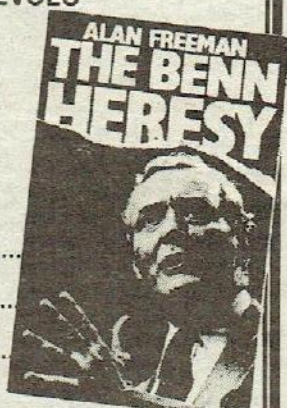
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